



LESSON 8

BABYONIAN-STYLE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

JUDEAN CENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT

We learned in Lesson 7 that the Judean system in first-century Jerusalem was transplanted from Persia (Babylon). Those Babylonian/Jewish traditions have survived into modern times and can be found in political and religious customs around the world. One of its features is the amassing power under centralized government ... symbolized by the age-old model of the centralized Tower of Babel.

History is replete with man's use of Babylonian/Serpent-type government. From the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11) to the present day, powerful families - often banking families - have controlled and subjugated nations through powerful centralized governments.

During the time of the judges, Israel practiced a unique form of government described today as a "Theocracy." God was the King in Israel. He alone was the Lawgiver [Legislator]. The judges interpreted and applied God's law, but they were prohibited from making or changing law.

The nation of Israel had experienced bondage under man-made government first under the kings in Israel, then in Assyria, Babylon, and Persia. The nations around them also had central governments. Yet Israel had been different ... until they changed their minds and opted for a man-made government with kings like the other nations (1 Sam. 8). From that time on, Israel lived under the curse of that choice, enslaved to their own kings, and later under the nations by which they were captured.

Approximately 500 BC, having been absorbed into Persian culture under Babylonian-style government, a representative group of Persians, Israelites, and a mixed multitude were sent by King Cyrus to Jerusalem. They built a Babylonish temple and established a Babylonish religious hierarchy there. In this lesson we will begin to examine this form of Babylonian culture.



The Tower Of Babel



The Tower Of The United States

Ancient and Modern Examples of Man's Attempt to Centralize Power and Authority

CONTROL THROUGH CENTRALIZED POWER AND AUTHORITY

We saw in the last lesson that the rulers in Jerusalem criticized Jesus because He taught people without having received formal training by the Judean authorities – the “teachers of the law.” He did not have recognized credentials (degrees, diplomas, certificates, licenses, etc.) issued by the Pharisees. To them, He was an “unlearned” man (John 7:15) ... but in the eyes of God that was an advantage. They questioned his “authority.”

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. As Jesus was teaching in the temple, Matthew 21:23 states that the chief priests and the elders of the people (so-called “authorities”) asked Him, “By what _____ doest thou these things? and who _____ thee this authority?”
2. According to Acts 4:7 the Judean rulers, elders, scribes, and high priests asked Peter and John, “By what _____, or by what _____, have ye done this?”

In the above verses Jesus and His disciples were being challenged for speaking and teaching without having received permission [license] from the Judean powers. Clearly, the Judean source of power was NOT God. Anyone teaching without permission from the Sanhedrin was doing so “illegally.” This is typical of Babylonian-style central government. It is their method to program and subjugate the masses.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AUTHORITY AND POWER

At this point we need to distinguish between the terms “authority” and “power” as they refer to different concepts. The translators often render them as interchangeable equivalents. This is misleading. They are NOT equivalents as the definitions below illustrate.

AUTHORITY

In the New Testament the word “authority” is the Greek **exousia**. It means delegated or granted authority. **Exousia** is derived from the root word **exesti**, meaning “it is permitted, or authorized.”

Authority must be given by a high power or a sovereign. For Christians, God is the only **power**. He delegates **authority** down to others in his behalf according to his will. For us, authority can come ONLY from God – our only “Power.”

POWER

In the New Testament the word “power” is the Greek **dynamis**. It means “strength” or “ability to act.” **Dynamis** is derived from the root word **dynamai**, meaning “inherent ability.”

To have **power** is to have ability or strength to act – the physical ability/force to conquer, defend, or maintain ownership.

Power = inherent strength or ability.

Authority = permission given by a “power.”

Some dictionaries confusingly treat **power** and **authority** as if they are the same. Even *Strong’s Concordance* is confusing on this point as it defines **exousia** as “ability, force, capacity” - terms that are associated with the Greek word **dynamis**. However, a careful comparison of the Greek root words, **exesti** and **dynamai**, more clearly reflects the difference in concepts.

AUTHORITY vs POWER: TWO SEPARATE THINGS

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. In Luke 9:1 Jesus gave his disciples _____ (**dynamis**) and _____ (**exousia**).

The use of two separate Greek words (**dynamis** and **exousia**) in Luke 9:1 indicates a difference between the terms. Jesus gave them two things – the ability or power (**dynamis**) to act, as well as permission or authority (**exousia**) to act.

FIND THE ANSWERS

2. In Luke 4:36 the people were amazed because Jesus spoke with _____ (**exousia**) and _____ (**dynamis**).

The above verse indicates that Jesus taught with authority (**exousia**) as well as the power/ability (**dynamis**) and could not be contradicted.

FIND THE ANSWERS

3. Speaking of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 3:22 says, “Who is gone into heaven [has ascended the throne of the kingdom], and is on the right hand of God [is reigning under God]; messengers and _____ (**exousion**) and _____ (**dynamion**) being made subject unto Him.”

Again we see two separate things mentioned: **exousia** and **dynamis**. God (the Power) gave Jesus all authority in God’s system. Authorities in Christ’s Reign must subordinate themselves to Jesus. In other systems of men, authorities derive their positions from a man-made “power” at the top in that system. In the US, the “power” is Congress. These are man-made and not in God’s system.

FIND THE ANSWERS

4. Luke 20:20 indicates the chief priests and the scribes made efforts to deliver Jesus “unto the power (**dynamis**) and authority (**exousia**) of the _____.”

Every system of government is created from a “power” at that top. All authority must flow from that “power.” In Rome that “power” was Caesar. His governors were given authority under him. In Jerusalem the Sanhedrin was the “power.” The priests wanted Jesus arrested by Caesar’s system.

In Christ’s system the “Power” is Yahweh, and Jesus is his highest Authority.

Again, in the preceding verses we see a difference between **authority** and **power**. These terms are not identical. If they were the same, statements like those we have just read would be redundant. The use of two separate Greek words would not have been necessary if power and authority were synonymous. Obviously, these two terms are not equivalent. However, the verses below demonstrate that the translators often deceptively used the words interchangeably.

SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

Consider the meanings of **power** and **authority** as given on page 72. Complete the following verses on this page by writing the correct word in the blanks. (Notice that the King James version often translates it wrongly.)

FIND THE ANSWERS

Romans 13:1 states:

1. "Let every soul (person) be subject unto the higher _____ (**exousiais** -plural). For there is no _____ (**exousia**) but of God: the _____ (**exousiais** -plural) that be are ordained (authorized) of God."

Addressing the system of Christ's Reign, the above Scripture identifies the source of "all authority" therein. All authority through Christ must originate from the "Power" (God). Any other authority originating from men is not in Christ's Reign. The "higher authorities" of Romans 13:1 refers strictly to those in Christ's Reign. Contrary to popular opinion and current church teaching, this verse does NOT refer to rulers or officers in man-made systems that have established their own powers.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

FIND THE ANSWERS

2. In Matthew 28:18 Jesus says, "All _____ (**exousia**) is given unto me in heaven and earth."
3. According to Luke 10:19, Jesus gave his disciples _____ (**exousia**) to tread on serpents and scorpions (deceivers and malicious men), and over all the _____ (**dynamis**) of the enemy.
4. According to John 1:12 Jesus gave to those who received Him the _____ (**exousia**) to become the children of God.

The above Scriptures describe the delegating of authority. In God's Kingdom He is the "Power." Under Him, Jesus was given the highest position of authority. God delegated it to Him. Jesus in turn gave (delegated) authority down the chain of command to his apostles. Authority is "jurisdiction" (permission to act in the name of the "power"). All authority must be delegated down the chain of authority.

FIND THE ANSWERS

Romans Matthew 8:5-13.

1. In verse 9 the centurion says, "For I am a man under _____, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

The above verse refers to delegated authority. The centurion knew Jesus had been given authority by God to heal the servant. He understood the chain of authority.

ACTING IN SOMEONE'S NAME

Authority is a legal term which refers to the scope or area of jurisdiction or commission granted under someone who is a "power." Authority can be delegated to another or it can be withdrawn by the power source that granted it. When authority is delegated, the grantor (power) does not give up power – he extends it. The one receiving authority has permission (or license) from the grantor to act (use authority) in the grantor's name as if enacted by him personally.

FIND THE ANSWERS

2. In John 5:43 Jesus said that He came in his Father's _____.
3. Jesus says in John 10:25, "... the works that I do in my _____ name, they bear witness of me."
4. According to John 12:13 the people cried, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh **in the name of the** _____."
5. Following his conversion, **in whose name** (by whose authority) did Paul boldly preach? (Acts 9:27-29) _____
6. James 5:10 indicates the _____ spoke **in the name** (by authority) of the Lord.

The above verses are examples of delegated authority – action taken on behalf (in the name) of a "power." The prophets and Jesus acted in God's name (by authority from God). The disciples and apostles acted in the name of Jesus (by authority from Jesus).

Authority is the lawful jurisdiction (right or permission granted) to act; it is not the act itself. The action, then, is performed in the name of the one who grants the authority.

POWER INDICATES INHERENT ABILITY

The Greek word dynamis (dunamis) implies ability to act. In addition to “power,” **dynamis** is translated into other English words in the *KJV* – all suggesting strength or inherent force.

Place each word in the correct verse below.

ability
might
mighty deeds

mightily
miracles
strength

violence
virtue
works

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Mark 6:2 refers to the “mighty _____” (**dynameis**) wrought by Jesus’ hands.
 2. Acts 2:22 speaks of the “_____ (**dynameis**) and wonders and signs” which God did through Jesus.
 3. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 Paul states that Jesus told him, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my _____ (**dynamis**) is made perfect in weakness.”
 4. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:12, “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and _____ (**dynamesin**).”
 5. Paul, speaking to the Christians in Ephesus, says in Ephesians 3:16, “That He (God) would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with _____ (**dynamei**) by his spirit in the inner man.”
 6. Matthew 25:15 states, “And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several _____ (**dynamin**) . . .”
 7. In Colossians 1:29 Paul says, “Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his (Christ Jesus’) working, which worketh in me _____ (**dynamei**).”
 8. Hebrews 11:34 speaks of quenching the _____ (**dynamin**) of fire.
- Read Mark 5:25-34.**
9. After the woman had touched his garment, verse 30 indicates Jesus immediately knew that _____ (**dynamin**) had gone out of Him.

The above Scriptures show the intent of the Greek word **dynamis** (power, strength, force): action through inherent ability. Authority must be established under the higher power. It is granted from God. However, man-made governments claim their own power. Thus, authorities formed under man’s own powers result in ungodly acts and oppression of others.

Power (force) was never intended for man because he misuses it. In fact, men usually establish and exercise their own ungodly power over others through physical violence – a common characteristic of man’s centralized governments. However, these have NO AUTHORITY in God’s system! Unlike men, God does not misuse power.

EXAMPLES OF MISUSED AUTHORITY AND POWER

FIND THE ANSWERS

Read Matthew 20:20-28.

1. In verse 25 Jesus tells His disciples, “Ye know that that princes of the **nations** exercise _____ over them, and they that are great exercise _____ upon them.”

Read Mark 10:35-45.

2. In verse 42 Jesus tells his disciples, “Ye know that they which are accounted (thought) to _____ over the **nations** exercise _____ over them: and their great ones exercise authority upon them.”

Read Luke 22:24-30.

3. In verse 25 Jesus says, “The kings of the **nations** exercise _____ over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called _____.”
(Note how the *King James* translators deceptively used the term “Gentiles” in the verse above.)

In the preceding Scripture verses, Jesus describes how man rules (lords over) people under Babylonian-style central government. In each case Jesus then tells his disciples to NOT do the same. The words dominion and **lordship** are both translated from the Greek word **katakurieuo** meaning “to lord over, i.e. control, subjugate.” This describes man’s method of government – control, subjugation, and oppression.

The word **benefactors** in Luke 22:25 is rendered from the Greek word **euergetes** meaning “a worker of good.” How ironic: these subjugators and oppressors call themselves “workers of good.” Obviously, the good that they work is strictly for **their own benefit** rather than the people’s well-being! This is man’s idea of government – not God’s.

FIND THE ANSWERS

Read 1 Peter 5:1-11.

4. In verse 3 Peter tells the elders [older men] not to be _____ (katakurieuo) over God’s heritage, but that they should be ensamples (leaders by example) to the flock
5. In verse 8 Peter warns, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil [man-made powers], as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may _____ ...”

Here, Peter describes, perfectly, man’s concept of centralized government – lording over and devouring others. Peter instructs Christian leaders NOT to follow this ungodly practice.

SAUL'S SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Following the stoning of Stephen, Acts 8:3 states, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the **ecclesia** [KJV mistranslated "church"], entering into every _____, and hailing men and women committed them to _____."

Read Acts 9:19.

2. According to verses 1-2, Saul went to the high priest to get "_____ to Damascus to the synagogues," so that he could arrest any Christians he might find there.
3. In verse 14 Ananias states that Saul had _____ from the chief priests to bind anyone that called on Jesus' name.

The above verses clearly show that the source of Saul's authority to arrest Christians came from the Judean government "power" (the Sanhedrin) – with the Judean high priest as head. This wicked system authorized Saul to destroy those who denied its power. Verse 7 indicates that men journeyed with Saul. These Judean government agents ("police" or "law officers" in today's vernacular) were part of Saul's authority from the Sanhedrin. However, Jesus intervened and showed Saul the error of his ways. Paul repented and accepted true authority under Jesus.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF MISUSED AUTHORITY

FIND THE ANSWERS

Read Acts 4:1-21.

4. According to verse 18 the Judean government leaders (verses 5-6) commanded Peter and John "not to _____ at all nor _____ **in the name of Jesus.**"
5. After asking if it was right to obey them (Judean government leaders) more than God (verse 19), Peter and John said in verse 20, "For we _____ but speak the things we have seen and heard."

Here we see the Judean government's attempt to supersede the authority of Christ. It forbade Peter and John to act under Jesus' authority. However, Peter and John clearly state whose authority they recognized. In fact, they pointed out that the Judean government derived its power and authority from men, not from God.

FIND THE ANSWERS (Select the logical answer)

Read Acts 5:17-42.

- _____ 1. After bringing the apostles before the council (Sanhedrin – high priests), the Judean leaders reminded the apostles that they had been ordered to (verse 28):
- A. pay a fine.
 - B. get a license.
 - C. not teach in Jesus' name (authority).
- _____ 2. In verse 29 the apostles answered:
- A. "We ought to obey God rather than men."
 - B. "We will take it under advisement."
 - C. "We don't need authority."
- _____ 3. According to verse 33, the Judean leaders took council to:
- A. consider the merits of the apostles' message.
 - B. slay the apostles.
 - C. turn the apostles over to the Roman authorities.
- _____ 4. In verses 38 and 39 Gamaliel advises the council:
- A. to exercise their authority and kill the apostles.
 - B. to frame the apostles as conspirators against the Romans.
 - C. to leave the apostles alone and not risk further exposure.

Again, we see the Judean government trying to force their man-made authority on the apostles and prevent them from exercising Jesus' authority. One of the Sanhedrin leaders admitted they might be fighting God's power, however, they wanted their own power to be supreme (not unlike American government today).

PILATE'S INVALID AUTHORITY

FIND THE ANSWERS

Read John 19:1-16.

5. In verse 10 Pilate speaks to Jesus: "knowest thou not that I have authority (**exousia**) to _____ thee, and have authority (**exousia**) to _____ thee?"

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Jesus replies in verse 11, "Thou couldest have no authority (**exousia**) at all against me, except it were _____ thee from above [delegated from a higher power]: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

[Note: Three times in verses John 19:10 and 11, the translators incorrectly rendered the Greek word "**exousia**" into "power" instead of the correct term "authority."]

2. After Jesus' statement, verse 12 indicates Pilate sought to _____ Jesus.

In an attempt to get Jesus to speak, Pilate proclaimed his **authority**. Jesus, however, responded that Pilate's authority came from Rome and that he (Pilate) could only do Caesar's will. In effect, Jesus said that Pilate was a man under authority, from a different "power" than the one Jesus recognized. Pilate's authority came from Rome's man-made government. Pilate served Caesar.

THE NATURE OF CENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT

A characteristic of man's Babylonian government is its exclusive self-interest – the need to protect and preserve itself first and foremost. Any threat against its authority and power must be attacked and destroyed. So it was with the Sanhedrin-controlled hierarchy in Jerusalem.

FIND THE ANSWERS

Read John 11:47-53.

3. According to verse 48, the chief priests and Pharisees were concerned that the Romans would take away their _____ and _____.
4. In verse 50 Caiaphas, the high priest, tells the council that it would be "expedient" for Jesus to _____ rather than let the Judean nation perish.
5. Verse 53 states, "Then from that day forth they [the Judean Sanhedrin] took counsel together for to put Him [Jesus] to _____."

Jesus was teaching the people about freedom and about Godly government. In the process, He was exposing the wickedness and nature of man-made centralized government. Because so many of the people were hearing Jesus' teachings, the Judean government rulers were afraid of potential dissent that would cause the Roman authorities to take away their privileged positions of lordship (dominion) over the people. To protect themselves from such a threat, they deemed it necessary to kill Jesus. They plotted to murder an innocent man to save their coveted positions. Such has been the characteristic of man-made governments and politicians throughout history: self-preservation at all costs!

In the next lesson we will continue to see how the Judean leaders subjugated and plundered the Judean people and how it dealt with threats to its power and authority.



LESSON 8

BABYONIAN-STYLE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

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1. authority; gave
2. power; name

Page 73

1. power; authority
2. authority; power
3. authorities; powers
4. governor (meaning leader or chief person in charge, #2230)

Page 74

1. authorities; authority; authorities
2. authority
3. authority; power
4. authority

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1. authority (indicating he had been commissioned to act in behalf of the Roman government)
2. name (meaning “in his authority”)
3. Father’s (indicating He acted on behalf of the Power – God the Father)
4. Lord (referring to God the Father)
5. Jesus’ name (indicating that Jesus authorized him to preach)
6. prophets

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1. works
2. miracles
3. strength
4. mighty deeds
5. might
6. ability
7. mightily
8. violence
9. virtue

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1. dominion; authority (referring to authority in man’s system)
2. rule; lordship
3. lordship; benefactors
4. lords (meaning rulers or subjugators)
5. devour (referring to the plundering nature of man’s government)

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1. house; prison (Note: the ecclesia included private residences.)
2. letters (written authorization)
3. authority (exousia)
4. speak; teach
5. cannot (indicating they had no choice but to obey their true authority)

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1. C (They did not want the apostles to exercise Jesus' authority.)
2. A (They told the Judeans that God's authority superceded theirs.)
3. B (To elimante the threat of further exposure by the apostles.)
4. C (He feared they might be fighting against God, and he didn't want their position exposed.)
5. crucify; release (Pilate had authority under Caesar)

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1. given (Pilate's authority was granted to him from "above" – by Caesar.)
2. release (suggests Pilate understood Jesus' statement)
3. place (position); nation
4. die
5. death

NOTES