Level 2 Lesson 6

AUTHORITY OF THE BELIEVER
By Andrew Wommack

In today's session I want to talk about the authority God has given us as believers. In order to address this, we're going to have to deal not only with the authority we have but the authority of Satan. He has been blown out of proportion. Christians have been led to believe we are fighting a being whose power is superior to ours, and we are just barely are able to cope with him. That's not what the Scripture teaches at all. It does say in Ephesians 6:12, *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* So Satan is a factor; he does exist. He has a hierarchy of principalities and powers that we're dealing with, but in the verse just prior to that, it says that we have to stand against the wiles of the devil. The only power Satan really has against us is deception. He doesn't have power to just overcome us.

In Genesis 3 we see that when the first temptation came against Adam and Eve, Satan didn't come with some superior force. For instance, instead of inhabiting a mammoth or an elephant, putting his foot on Adam's head, threatening them, and saying "Serve me or else," he inhabited a snake, the most subtle creature God made. The word "subtle" means "sly, deceptive, or cunning." The reason Satan came through the snake was because he really didn't have the power to force Adam and Eve to do anything. He could only deceive. He came against the nature and character of God and began to criticize Him, saying, "God doesn't really love you—He's holding things back from you." He used deception to tempt Adam and Eve to sin against God. They were the ones who had all the authority, and the reason Satan had to do it this way was because he didn't have power to come against God.

There's so much more I don't have time to go in to, but one of the main points I want to get across is that concerning the authority of the believer, you have to recognize that Satan has zero power and authority over you. He is a defeated foe. His only power against you is to come against you with lies and deception. If your life is being destroyed, you can say "Satan is the one who is firing these shots at me," but you are the one who is giving him the ammunition. You're the one who has to respond to his lies and deception. If you didn't yield to Satan, he would have no inroads or power against you. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 it says, *"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."* These scriptures are talking about the weapons of your warfare, and every weapon mentioned refers to your mind, dealing with thoughts. Satan doesn't have the power to do anything to you except through deception.

I want to quickly summarize some things. In the beginning God, of course, had all authority. All power and authority has to emanate from God because He is the only one

who has power in Himself. Everything else is delegated from Him. When He created the heavens and the earth, He had all power and authority. Then in Genesis 1:26, when God created Adam and Eve, He said, *"Let them have dominion…over all the earth."* Put that together with Psalm 115:16, which says, *"The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men."* God had ownership of everything by right of being the Creator, but He gave dominion, or authority, over the earth to physical human beings. Satan has never had the right and power to rule over the earth. He took it through deceiving man to sin. God gave that power to mankind, and when man fell, he yielded his God-given authority and power over to the devil. Satan was never given power by God to oppress man or to rule this earth.

Scripture does say that Satan is the god of this world, but it's not because God made him the god of this world. God never put Satan in a position above mankind. He gave mankind dominion and authority over this earth. The only reason Satan has ever been able to oppress, dominate, or cause the problems he does is because people yield their God-given authority to him. This posed a real problem for God, because He was a Spirit, and He had given authority over this earth to physical human beings. Only people who had a physical body had the authority and power to rule and exercise influence in this earth. Satan had to come to us and get us to yield our authority to him. That's the reason that he likes to inhabit a body. In Scripture, demons had to have a body to possess because Satan can't do anything unless he is using a physical human body to work through. Because God was a Spirit and had given authority to physical human beings, now in a sense He had His hands tied. It wasn't because God didn't have power and authority but because of His integrity. He gave authority to physical human beings, and to be true to His own Word, He couldn't just take it back and say, "This isn't the way I wanted it; time out, stop, we're going to do it over." No, God bound Himself by His own Word. Throughout history He looked for someone He could flow through, but the problem was that all men were corrupted and had yielded themselves to Satan. So what was He to do?

What God finally did was come to the earth Himself and become a man. This is tremendous when you understand it, because now the devil was in big trouble. He had been using mankind's power, and God couldn't intervene directly to solve all these problems, because man was willfully, legally yielding his God-given authority to Satan. Satan was wrong in what he did, but man gave him the authority and power that was theirs to give. But now, here came God, and He was no longer only the Spirit but was in the form of physical flesh. This put the devil in a bad situation, because God not only had authority in heaven, but becoming a man gave Him authority on the earth. Jesus said in John 5:26-27, *"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."* He was referring to His physical body.

Jesus came and exercised God-given authority. The devil tempted Him, and Jesus never yielded to him. Satan lost in every battle with Him. Then Jesus took our sins, died for them, went to hell, rose again, and said in Matthew 28:18, *"All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth."* He won back the authority God had given mankind, which

man misused, and as God in the flesh, Jesus now had all authority in heaven and in earth. In the very next verse He said, "Now you go, and you do these things." In effect He was saying, "I now have all authority in heaven and earth, and I'm sharing it with you." This time, however, there's a unique difference in the authority God has given back to us as believers. It is joint authority between us and the Lord Jesus Christ. It's no longer given to us solely as it was to Adam and Eve. They could give the authority away, allow the devil to oppress them, and basically be hopeless, but today our authority is shared with the Lord Jesus Christ. It's like having a joint bank account that requires both signatures in order to cash a check. Our authority is shared with the Lord Jesus, and His authority is shared with the church.

Although we may fail, God is never again going to sign this authority over to the devil. Satan is absolutely powerless. He has no ability to do anything in your life except what he deceives you in and what you voluntarily yield to. You may give him authority in your life, you may suffer personally for it, but the God-given authority that was given to man will never again pass solely to the devil. It is now shared between us and the Lord Jesus, and He will remain faithful regardless. You need to recognize that you're the one who now has authority and the power. Satan is fighting you with thoughts, and your weapons are such that you can take these thoughts captive. You can recognize that it's wrong for the devil to oppress you physically and find out what the Scripture has to say about healing. John 8:32 says, *"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* You're the one who has power and authority. God has given it to you, and the only thing that keeps you from exercising it is that you haven't yet taken your thoughts captive. You haven't used these spiritual weapons to renew your mind and to realize what you have. It's encouraging to find out that you're one with authority and power.

I pray that you'll take this, meditate on it, and God will give you the revelation that you're the one Satan trembles at. You shouldn't be trembling at Satan, because you are the one who has God-given power and authority. If you resist the devil, he will flee from you (James 4:7).

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Genesis 3:1. Satan does exist, but his real power exists in his ability to deceive us. What did the serpent (the devil) try to get Eve to question?

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2. Read Genesis 3:1. Why do you think Satan used deception?

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3. Read Genesis 1:26, 28. Who gave man his authority? _____

4. Read Psalm 8:4-8. How did God create man?

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5. Read 2 Corinthians 4:4. What does this scripture indicate happened?

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6. Read Matthew 4:8-9. Do these verses strengthen this point? _____

7. Read Matthew 28:18. After Jesus' death and resurrection, who now has all authority in heaven and in earth? _____

8. Read Matthew 28:18-19. To whom has authority been delegated to, according to this verse? _____

9. Read Ephesians 1:19. The exceeding greatness of God's power is toward whom?

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Scriptures to Use with Questions

Genesis 3:1 – *"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"*

Genesis 1:26 – *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."* Genesis 1:28 *"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."*

Psalm 8:4-8 – "[4] *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?* [5] *For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.* [6] *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:* [7] *All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;* [8] *The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."*

2 Corinthians 4:4 – *"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*

Matthew 4:8-9 – "[8] *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;* [9] *And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."*

Matthew 28:18 – *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."*

Matthew 28:19 – *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."*

Ephesians 1:19 – *"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."*

Answer Key

1. Read Genesis 3:1. Satan does exist, but his real power exists in his ability to deceive us. What did the serpent (the devil) try to get Eve to question? **God's Word (Has God indeed said?).**

2. Read Genesis 3:1. Why do you think Satan used deception? **He could not make them disobey by force. He had to deceive them to give up their authority.**

3. Read Genesis 1:26, 28. Who gave man his authority? **God.**

4. Read Psalm 8:4-8. How did God create man? **With dominion over the works of His (God's) hands.**

5. Read 2 Corinthians 4:4. What does this scripture indicate happened? **That Satan took man's authority and became the god of this world (this system, or age).**

6. Read Matthew 4:8-9. Do these verses strengthen this point? **Yes.**

7. Read Matthew 28:18. After Jesus' death and resurrection, who now has all authority in heaven and in earth? **Jesus.**

8. Read Matthew 28:18-19. To whom has authority been delegated to, according to this verse? **The believer.**

9. Read Ephesians 1:19. The exceeding greatness of God's power is toward whom? **To us who believe.**

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