

The Kingdom and the Power

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Jesus' first ministry words were: "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." People said He spoke "as one having **authority**." Later, He sent out his disciples to preach, heal and cast out demons while saying the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand (*Matt. 10:5-7*). Paul would write later: "The kingdom of God is not in word but in power" (*1 Corinthians 4:20*). What can we learn from Scripture about Kingdom Authority and Power?

Two Greek words are often translated in the English New Testament with the single word "power". They are ***dunamis*** and ***exousia***. Besides "power", *dunamis* also means virtue, capacity, and the ability to conclude something. *Dunamis* also connotes power exercised physically, with "force." It is a dramatic spontaneous display of power that has a forceful, conclusive impact. *Dunamis* is the Greek root of our word "dynamite!"

Jesus' mighty works were called *dunamis* (*Matt. 11:20*). He promised his followers would be endowed with *dunamis* (*Acts 1:8*), a promise fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (*Acts 2:4*). Jesus said he would return one day in *dunamis* "power...coming with the clouds of heaven." (*Mark 14:62*). When the gifts of the Spirit are in evidence (*1 Cor. 12:6-11*), we witness spiritual *dunamis*! Paul urges us to desire the best spiritual gifts, including miracles and healings. The very essence of the Gospel resides in the *dunamis* of the Holy Spirit, without which the Gospel becomes empty words, a mere form of godliness lacking *dunamis* power (*2 Tim. 3:5*).

Unfortunately, the devil also exercises a kind of *dunamis*. In *2 Thes. 2:9-10*, we learn that "the coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power [***dunamis***], signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved." The Anti-Christ will work miracles that do not point to the truth of God's Kingdom.

Is the battle in which we find ourselves simply a power struggle?! No! First of all, God limited Satan's power (see *Job 1:12*). More to the point, Jesus confirmed that we have *authority* over the enemy's power. Here enters the second New Testament Greek word often translated into English as "power": *exousia*. It also means authority, privilege, strength, "unrestrained right"—and sovereign power. Nothing can restrain God's sovereign authority over the works of the enemy. Jesus said: "Behold, I give unto you power [*exousia* – i.e., *authority*] to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over *all the power* [*dunamis*] of the enemy" (*Luke 10:19*).

Jesus warned that many would work miracles without really knowing Him: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (*Matt. 7:22-23*). In other words, they may exercise spiritual *dunamis*, but they don't have Kingdom *exousia*. They make the mistake of thinking the Father's *dunamis* is their own.

To know Jesus is to accept His authority in our lives, not simply to desire or exercise miraculous power. All authority comes from the Father: "The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing His work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (*John 14:10*). Jesus connected the power of His mighty works with the presence of the Kingdom of the Father. The Father gave the Son of Man "authority and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away..." (*Daniel 7:14*).

If you want to see more spiritual power working in your life, make sure Jesus is not only your Savior, but also the Ruler of your life. The more His authority is at work **in** your life, the more you will see His authority working **through** your life to expand His Kingdom in your sphere of influence.

Abba, we acknowledge and submit to Your Kingdom authority in our lives, and we pray as Jesus taught us that we may see Your Kingdom come into being on earth as it is in heaven.