

## Spiritual Authority The Flawless Choice of God

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We have had this fantastic opportunity to talk about the Kingdom of God over the years and more and more God is refining and revealing many of the mysteries of the Kingdom. We have been, for some weeks, talking about *that* part of the Kingdom that has to do with spiritual authority. We began by saying that spiritual authority, commonly perceived today, is about who gets to rule over whom because in the norm, the way that the church thinks about spiritual authority is in the context of a congregation or even a denomination that has a structure of authority and that requires people to fall in the line of that authority in one way or another. Contrasted with that, really un-Biblical notion, is the fact that there is an entirely different way, Biblically, of looking at this very thing. That way is this: you begin with the fact that *we have a need* for spiritual authority *because we have an enemy*, an enemy that is not flesh and blood and an enemy who is both the enemy of God and man.

Ask yourself this question, “Why is Satan so mad at us?” Classically, we are confronted with the fact that, in the majority of cases, it cannot be said that we’ve done anything that would justify the anger and the hubris that the enemy has had *for us* and *toward us* all these many millennia. His unrelenting opposition to us would seem to have to come from somewhere... some source, some reality, some reason *other* than that we have done things to offend him. If we’ve done things to offend him and that’s why he’s angry with us then he holds a grudge for a very, very long time. He doesn’t just hold a grudge toward us; he holds a grudge toward our children and our grandchildren for generation after generation. The fact is that *that’s* not so.

*It’s not really about us*, although we would like to think that it is and although it affects us very personally. The source of his anger toward us is really his anger toward God. God wanted to have heirs and He chose creatures that were capable—in His choice these creatures would show that God’s love is boundless, unfathomable. So God chose *not the likely creatures*—the likely creatures would have been the angels—but then the angels were made to serve and they only know how to serve. Well, when God chose *us* He had to give us freedom *to* choose because if He simply created creatures who were programmed to respond according to their program, then at the end of the day we’d

simply have fulfilled our design requirements.

But if He was going to choose to make creatures who were truly capable of being His children the thing that would make them able to be His children would be that they were able to *love* their Father, and to *choose* to love their Father. Because it wouldn't just do for God to love us; it had also to be true... it had to be true in this respect as well, that *we would love God* because, after all, the object of a father and children is that of fellowship, of belonging together and being of the same family, as it were. So we had to choose to love God. Well, God would first show that He loved us, and by showing that, we would then respond and reciprocate by loving Him... *that* was the plan. But inherent in this was that we had to be given the right to choose because love cannot be enforced. If you simply respond because you've been programmed, whatever your response is cannot be construed as love.

*Love, above all else*, from the point of view of the respondent, is the *most* voluntary of all acts because love puts *you* at risk, when you love. Love makes you *vulnerable* to another, so when God loved us it made Him vulnerable to us but when we love God it would also make us vulnerable to God and *that's the essence of free will*... that's the essence of free choice. You hear people talking about how we are creatures of free will but free will isn't just about choosing what you're going to have for lunch or choosing where you will go, and all that. Free will is to choose to put yourself at risk, *in the interest of another*... that's love. And to put ourselves at risk we had to avoid being governed by the soul—which is our natural inclination—and trust God and be governed by His Spirit. That's essentially the task. Would we actually amount to that? Satan said, “no” and he intends to prove, and has relentlessly pursued this pattern of activity—*this objective—to prove that we were the unworthy choice, and therefore that God was wrong and that he was right.*

Now, in furtherance of that idea, Satan has taken advantage of, and intends to continue to take full advantage of, the known weakness of the human being, and that is the tendency of the human being to operate by the government of the soul. In short, the human being has *this* about him: when he operates in his soul he is always preoccupied about his provision and his protection and he always wants to know, with respect to these two things: what needs to be done, how can it be done and can he do it. In short, he relies on no one but himself both for the understanding of what needs to be done and for the methodology by which it is to be done *and* for the power by which it is to be done. These three things are called the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life and they are given this extremely strong label, “lust” because everyone understands what a “lust” is. The “lust” is that which blinds you to everything else. You use the word, “lust” when you want to describe something that takes you *beyond* every other impulse—it's *the extreme* of the impulse with respect to that particular predilection or desire or taste. When you lust after something *you've gone beyond* all reasonableness, beyond all restraint; it is what you will *do* if you are unimpeded in the process.

So when it talks about the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, it's not talking about sexual desire and just pure pleasure, it's talking about the impulsion... the *uncontrollable impulsion* toward the thing you consider worthy of your time, effort, reputation and everything else. And there are two things that the human finds worthy of that kind of single-minded, unobstructed devotion: the one is your provision and the other is your protection. It's what Adam and Eve reached for in the Garden when they picked the fruit. Their eyes were opened and they were immediately concerned about how they would provide for themselves—clothing to wear—and how would they protect themselves. In fact they ended up hiding from God. To the soul, these lusts are the ultimate goal and therefore they justify every activity in the pursuit of them.

Satan has crafted a set of schemes meant to take complete advantage of *these exact things*. *The more you run toward these goals, the more Satan pulls you toward them with these things that he has crafted*. These things that he has crafted are summarized in the word, “schemes” because a “scheme” is a specific intent to take complete advantage of one's blindness, and since a “lust” is the quintessential description of blindness, then the “scheme” is the appropriate response to that degree of blindness. This “scheme” is called the “world” and in the “world” Satan has put together a series of systems meant to address every form of the need for provision and the need for protection. Every way you can think of the need for provision and protection and every need for provision that you can think of and every need for protection that you can think of, *these are the systems* that Satan has put in place.

The compendium of such systems is referred to as the “world”. It's a scheme to take complete advantage of the human desire for provision and for protection and *the obsession with these desires*, manifested in the term, “lust”—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. It holds before humans the *illusion* that *you can be God, you can be your own God... knowing good and evil. You can decide for yourself, you can provide for yourself; you don't have to depend upon anyone else*. God, on the other hand, wants the human being to understand that *there is a greater way* and that the purpose of our creation was that we might be *transformed* from this lowly estate of inferior creatures to the sovereign estate of a divine nature.

This transformation involves nothing short of the involvement of the person of God, Himself, with the human being. Anticipating that this was His plan, God gave the human being a spirit and when the time comes for God to draw man up to Himself, He comes—Spirit to spirit. The nature of this transaction is that *you* must make a decision to forego your obsession, your lust—the lust of the soul toward provision and protection, the three lusts: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life—you need to forego that. And quite true, *when you do*, your condition is *akin to death* because you do not know how you are going to be provided for and you do not know how you are going to be protected out of the capabilities of your reason and your resources.

*So, trusting God is that form of death and dying but when you consent to this then the Spirit of God will meet you in that place and He will give you a new understanding. He will open your spirit to the impulses of the Spirit of God.* Now with this new understanding, you are suddenly a new creature; you've gone from the darkness of being governed by your soul and *with that, enslavement* in the schemes of the devil—you've gone from *that* into the Kingdom of God. God translates you then, from the powers, from the control of principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world... spiritual forces in the heavenly realms. He transforms you from a person subject to *that* form of control to someone who is now led by the Spirit and moved, materially, from the evidence of your control (being in the kingdom of darkness) moves you and puts you into the Kingdom of the Son of God.

He continues this transformation in you day-by-day, moment-by-moment, and the nature of the transformation is that you stop being governed by what you need in the way of provision and protection. You stop being governed by *that*, and by the impulsiveness of being provided for in terms of your provision and your protection, through your single-minded devotion (lust of the flesh, lust of the eye and the pride of life). As you are going through this transformation, the thing that replaces those lusts, those impulses—those *extreme impulses*—the thing that replaces them for your direction and for the energy by which you pursue them is the Spirit of God. And He begins to speak to your spirit and He begins to tell you of an entirely different way to live... not looking for what you will eat and what you will drink, and so on, but *hearing God*.

Now, to the average person, this is silliness... silliness run amok, but in the war it is the only way to escape the attraction of the world and the entrapment that it produces. Because, you see, Satan has no way of anticipating what you are going to say or do if your response is by the Spirit, and more than that, if your response is by the Spirit, Satan knows that God will rise up and act in your defense. Because if you put your trust in Him, God will act *for* you, so whenever *your* response is according to what God is saying and doing, Satan will, typically, not follow-up. He will flee from you, as a practical matter.

I'll show you how the two come together. Jesus, on one occasion, was tempted by the devil (well, He was on numerous occasions tempted by the devil) but there is a record of a *particular* set of temptations and it is in the books of **Matthew** and **Luke**, the **4<sup>th</sup> chapter** of the book of **Matthew**, the presentation of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness is given to us. Now, the first temptation, Satan comes and he says, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones be made into bread." (Inserted – actual verse—"The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.'" -Matthew 4:3) What needs to be done? If you are hungry, what needs to be done? Well, what needs to be done is that you need food. How is this to be done? Well, here are stones... they can be turned to bread. Can you do it? Well, if you are the Son of God, You can. He appeals to Him—lust of the flesh, lust of the eye

and the pride of life.

Every temptation is like that, and what does Jesus respond? His response is *not*, “Well, let me think about this, I’m hungry; God wouldn’t be mad at me. He’s given me all of this power, surely He would understand if I turned just these many stones into bread. After all, I’ve been fasting and in His presence for forty days.” No. His response has nothing to do with the soul. This is His response: He says, “It is written, man shall not live on bread alone.”(Inserted – actual verse-“**Jesus answered, ‘It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”-Matthew 4:4**) Because God had established a precedent among humans; for forty years He had taken the Israelites through the wilderness to teach them one simple thing, and that is: God can actually feed you with bread from Heaven if *He* wants to, *so trust God*. After forty days, Jesus responded perfectly. *After forty years*, the Jews did *not* respond perfectly.

But Jesus’ response is, “It is written, man shall not live on bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” *In that instant, God gave him exactly what was needed and that’s how He responded*. You notice Satan didn’t argue with Him, he simply changed. Satan takes Jesus to a high mountain and shows Him all of the kingdoms of the world. I believe that Satan showed Him the entire structure of his control of the planet, because if he had just shown Him the kingdoms of the world in that day, really the only kingdom of any note in that day was the Roman kingdom... perhaps the Greek kingdom, but that was already in decline. But for him to show Him the kingdoms of the Kosmos, I believe that Satan showed Him the whole structure of how Satan was ruling the planet because, by then, Satan was ruling *everybody’s* soul by this imperative—the imperialism of the world ruled everyone. And I believe that Satan’s view was somewhat like this, “Hey, if you’re going to do business around here, you’ve got to deal with me.”

And Jesus’ response was, “It is written... it is written.” And he quotes what the Spirit of God gave Him... what was needed in the moment. And His answer was, “It is written, *you* will worship the Lord, your God, and Him only will *you* serve.”(Inserted – actual verse—“**Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written’ ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”-Matthew 4:10**) The third temptation, Satan takes Him to the pinnacle of the Temple and says to Him, “Ah... it is written” (See, Satan has seen how Jesus responds... the first time, “It is written” second time, “It is written”) So now he comes with the threshold of, “*It is written.*” He quotes Psalm 91, “It is written.” “He will give His angels charge concerning thee and they will bear thee up lest thou should dash thy foot against a stone.”(Inserted – actual verse—“**‘If you are the Son of God,’ he said, ‘throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”-Matthew 4:6**)

Here is the trick: When Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone but by what *God* says.”(Inserted – **Matthew 4:4**) *He really meant by what God says.* Today, if you will think that what God says is just what’s written in the Bible—so you commit the Bible to memory and you try to draw out the appropriate verse for the moment—you are whistling in the dark. It doesn’t happen that way. I’m not saying that you shouldn’t know what’s in the Bible but *it’s not the written word* that is what God is saying at the moment—*it’s what He’s saying at the moment* that He’s saying at the moment. Which means that if you flow in the Spirit, if you listen, your spirit has already been brought in fellowship with the Holy Spirit so you are able to hear God. The way you are to operate, when you operate in the power and the authority of Christ, is by listening to what the Spirit—with whom you *already* fellowship with your spirit—listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the human spirit. *When you do He will tell you what is God’s word in the moment.*

So, Satan quoted the Scripture but it was not what God was saying. Why was it not what God was saying? Because Satan is the enemy of God and God wouldn’t tell him anything. So Jesus turned away the written word in favor of what God was saying and it saved His life. It saved His life. In this warfare then, what keeps us from being entrapped by the requirements of the soul is listening to the Holy Spirit Who speaks to our spirits. And our souls, then, submit to the Father of our Spirits and we live... we triumph. It works somewhat like this, I’ll give you an example: In the National Air and Space Museum at the Smithsonian Institute, in Washington, D.C., there is a prototype of the X-29—it’s a form of fighter aircraft with forward-swept wings. Now, these forward-swept wings are a configuration that are designed to cause the nose of the aircraft to point very quickly in a dogfight because that’s what gives the advantage.

Now, forward-swept wings, however, make the aircraft inherently unstable--so much so that it cannot be flown by the normal hand-mind coordination of a pilot. So it’s flown by three separate computers that are massively parallel that work in tandem with each other and two of them can actually outvote the third. There is redundancy and parallelism in the computers and it takes *that* to keep the craft aloft. For example, if you pull back on the stick of this aircraft and it started to both move forward rapidly and rise, when you let go of the stick, if you are human, and if it were flown purely by human controls it would keep going in the direction it was going and would, essentially, flip over and kill you, if you were the pilot. Instead, the computers sense it and they take over and make these in-flight corrections. Now, because of that, the craft is well able to very rapidly turn and maneuver, and it has such an advantage over contemporary aircraft that it is somewhat almost like a Sopwith Camel being in combat with a Spitfire... aircrafts from two different wars.

The *prize* of this aircraft is *its instability*; because of its instability it can perform maneuvers that are not possible because of stresses on the airframe of a conventional aircraft. But because it’s unpredictable, the enemy cannot figure out exactly what

maneuvers it is going to make. *God prepared us for battle* and when we step into the theater of battle—*the moment* we are born again, we step into the arena of conflict and war...the moment we are born again. *God prepared us for that*. The ability to fly by the Spirit makes us unpredictable to the enemy. God *did* give us choice, yes, as human beings but our choice was *never* meant to be the choice of being governed by the soul. The choice was always meant to be the choice that comes because we are flying by the control of the Holy Spirit.

As we are flown by the controls of the Holy Spirit we are totally unpredictable to the enemy and the enemy has no opportunity to decide ahead of time what we are going to do, *and more importantly, what God will do because of what we do*. So we keep him off balance. God has prepared us as instruments of war. *When all of this matter is concluded, what will be known is this: that God was right and the enemy was wrong: that God is triumphant, the enemy will be defeated, and mankind... this entirely unsuitable creature, flown by the Spirit of God, will experience a transformation in his nature that causes him to defeat the enemy on one hand, and on the other hand, to be suitable as a son of God. This, after all, was the reason that the whole thing started and it was the reason that God made the choice that He made. In the end, the choice of God will be seen as perfectly flawless.* I'm Sam Soleyn... God bless you.

### **Scripture References:**

Matthew 4:3,4

Matthew 4:10

Matthew 4:6