



Says Who?

by Will Hesterberg
ITEM Development Director

“Authority is a dirty word, dirty, despised, despicable.” So began John Stott, speaking at an Urbana Conference of over 17,000 university students in 1973. Stott, a noted English preacher, pointed out that appreciating, accepting, and acting on authority was becoming a thing of the past. That certainly applies today – children question parents’ authority; citizens’ ignore civil laws; church members reject their leaders’ direction; even professing Christians sometimes doubt Scripture’s authority.

Without a trusted authority, people lack focus, direction, motivation, confidence. We see Jesus demonstrating his authority during his earthly ministry, especially in Matthew 7-10. Matthew 7 ends by telling us **Jesus speaks with authority**. Matthew 10:1 reveals that **Jesus sends his disciples out with authority**, his authority over demons, diseases, and distresses, authority Jesus demonstrated in Matthew 8 and 9.

In chapters 8 and 9, we see **Jesus serves with authority** in thirteen different sections. Jesus demonstrates his authority over the natural world by stilling the wind and waves, over the spiritual world by commanding demons, over the physical world by healing leprosy, paralysis, blindness, dumbness, bleeding, and even death, and over the human world by commanding men to follow him.

Sandwiched directly in the middle of these thirteen sections, Matthew records a discussion between Jesus and his Jewish detractors concerning his authority. Jesus declares a paralyzed man’s sin forgiven. The Jewish leaders object that only God has the power and right to forgive sin. Then Jesus proves he is God with the authority to forgive by healing the paralytic. “So that you may know that

the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, ... Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” Jesus shows he has both the authority and the ability, both the position and the power, to do all things.

All this has been leading up to Matthew 10 when Jesus sends his disciples out to show and spread the good news that the kingdom of heaven has come. They would face rejection and danger. What could motivate them and enable them to set out on such a mission?

Today Jesus still calls His followers to demonstrate and deliver the good news of the kingdom. And we still face difficulty, danger, and rejection. Maybe you struggle with his calling. It is not easy to share the gospel. You face opposition and rejection from family, friends, fellow employees, and neighbors. You are questioned about what right you have to talk about others’ need for forgiveness. You doubt you can answer others’ questions. What can enable you to follow through?

Jesus has challenged us at ITEM to equip disciples in other countries to spread His kingdom. Many of them face the same difficulty, doubt, danger, and dread that the early disciples faced. How can we encourage them to continue?

It is the same way Jesus did with the first disciples – by His authority. **Jesus still sends with authority**. To believers Jesus’ authority is not a dirty, despised, or despicable concept but a fact and our assurance to act.

So, do we believe Jesus still has the same authority to send His followers to spread the good news of the kingdom? Will we obey?

In the U.S. send to ITEM, PO Box 31456, St Louis, MO 63131 or through PayPal at www.ITEM.org.
Email: lwhesterberg@gmail.com.

Contributions to ITEM in Canada may be sent to ITEM, c/o Action International Ministries, 3015 A, 21st Street NE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2E 7T1.

Phone # 618-939-5069.

Opportunities to Pray for ITEM

1. Praise for Jacob Bluebaugh, who taught Biblical Theology at KRBC in Ukraine in January.
2. Praise that investors contributed 7.1% more in 2017 than in 2016 amounting to \$235,530 in general fund receipts.
3. Praise that over 1100 households receive ITEM's monthly newsletter.
4. Praise that over 1200 Christian pastors and leaders were trained in 2017.
5. Pray for Jason Polk, who will be teaching Church Planting in Kenya in February.
6. Pray that the remaining teachers will volunteer for 2018 classes, especially in India.
7. Pray for Eric Van Alten who will teach Post Reformation History in Latvia in February.

for the hope that lies within them. Pray that the work of KRBC would continue to produce rich fruit. Pray that it would spark a vibrant and energetic faith among the churches in Ukraine.



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Good Theology Does Matter by Jacob Bluebaugh (Instructor)

During the week of January 22, students of Kiev Regional Bible College gathered for a new session as Jacob Bluebaugh taught a course on the Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God. The class began with 16 students on Monday and by Friday, it had grown to 22!

Over the course of the week, students observed the covenantal structure of Scripture, God's unified redemptive plan worked out in the covenants, and saw how all of Scripture is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Many students commented that this course was providential for them since they often hear the argument that God changed in His dealings with man when we moved from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

Each night also contained moments when all of us were amazed at God's Grace; we often rejoiced at what we beheld in Scripture despite Israel's unfaithfulness and marveled at the hope we have despite our own unfaithfulness. Apart from personal encouragement, students learned how Biblical theology answers the false teachings which have popped up in Kiev recently. It was a true joy to work with this class and see their desires to know more of Scripture so that they can give an answer

So What Can I Do?

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Maybe, as you have been reading these newsletter articles over the years, you've wondered, "What can I do?" Here are a few ideas.

- Of course, first and foremost, you can pray, using our "Opportunities to Pray."
- You can gather a group of friends to regularly pray for ITEM's work or share the needs and opportunities of ITEM with your pastor, church leaders, missions committee, and friends.
- You can invest in ITEM in the locations we write about. Small amounts are needed and welcome.
- You can also share this newsletter with friends who might want to know more about training national Christian leaders.
- You can encourage your pastor to consider becoming an ITEM instructor and help him get to the field.
- You can learn more about our fields at www.item.org.
- You can read the articles at family mealtime and pray for ITEM as a family.