

## Authority in the Gospels

### Introduction

This is an article the subject of which I never had the slightest inclination to write about nor do I recall what motivated me to do so. As for the subject matter, I don't have to give the reason because it's obvious to just about everyone. Nobody is fond of the word authority and what it represents which usually translates into someone or some impersonal power lording it over us. That's one half of the equation. The other half—and this is the real rub—is that the person endowed with authority, no matter how small, enjoys every minute of it...or so we think.

There are different flavors of authority. The one that gets most people uptight is the one associated with religion. What comes almost immediately to mind is that this well-known alignment is contrasted with spirituality. By reason of its familiarity by now this association is pretty much thread bare and as most of us have come realize, represents an immature conclusion. However, that conclusion is of an intellectual order in a way external to ourselves. It's a whole different ball game when dealing with real life situations when emotions get involved.

On the other hand, there's a new phenomenon that has come on the scene. It's actively replacing the old one which is as old as the hills. It's so new that we've just begun to wrap our heads around it. That consists in simply ignoring things pertinent to religion. Another way of putting it is treating such matters as one among many and of no special interest. Not even the slightest emotion is involved. In times not so long ago people would take out their frustrations on the nearest ecclesiastical authority. It was an easy target, right out there for all to behold.

Most people agree that the 1960s was when this rebellion came into the open, flourished for a while, then petered out. What followed was a period of when things began to settle down...not a return to things as they were beforehand but at least some stability had taken root. The institutions were buffeted, changed here and there but did not collapse. At the same time but pretty much out of sight, society was moving on while the church attempted to play catch-up which it did with some success. However, it took several giant steps backwards with three general trends: emphasis upon orthodoxy, the clergy sex scandals and a general falling away from church attendance. All this has been and continues to be well documented and is familiar to a lot of people, even in a cursory fashion. Oh yes, then there was a growing interest in spirituality from the East, chiefly Buddhism. It remains attractive because it offers a direct, unmediated

way to transcendent reality coupled with inner peace. As for getting there, awareness is key.

What about the next step in this so-called evolution? Not clear, obviously, but there seems to be a growing sense of what an Icelandic farmer many years ago told me as *kua horfa*. This translates literally as cow watching. It doesn't apply to us watching a cow but the other way around, a cow engaged in watching. If you have the chance to be by a field with a herd of cows, make a noise to get their attention. As soon as they hear you, they look up and give you a casual glance. While doing this they're chewing and return at once to munching grass on one end and pooping on the other. Both are going on at once, no interruption all day long. All their *kua horfa* takes is approximately five seconds, ten at the max.

Such is the way young people deal with the religion of their parents. Some of that generation and the one or two before it had strayed from religious practices while others remained in the fold. In other words, a mixed bag. As for any of those generations, any talk about *kua horfa* would be alien. This is a phenomenon that hadn't manifested itself earlier which means that they're at a loss even to wrap their minds around it. Without realizing it fully, it's far better to face an enemy making a frontal assault than to be ignored. Being attacked or hassled represents what we all crave most—attention, even if negative—and now has been tossed out the window. As for those doing the *kua horfa*, their attention is directed elsewhere such as social issues, the environment and technology in the sense of how it ties in with AI. It's still too early to see what these young people have to offer us.

While the more recent New Evangelization as presented by the Catholic Church has been in place a while now, chances are it will have little success in dealing with this *kua horfa*. Part of the reason is that is so new and so alien. Tied in with that movement is a semi-relinquishment, if you will, which take the form of opting for a smaller, leaner-meaner church. This church, of course, would still be official and would relish being persecuted in order to give glory to God. Good luck on that. Those member of it who are sincere just can't comprehend the *kua horfa* attitude. They'd prefer a confrontational stance, not one of complete disregard. They'd be left groping for a model other than the martyr one as an ideal but would be at a loss to come up with one. No small wonder that those rooted in traditional religious communities and beliefs find this quite frustrating.

One side note to all this, if you will. Those adhering to traditional religious practices may show spite toward those not in line with them. They have recourse to the fact that

sooner or later everyone runs into dire circumstances and cry out for help. When they do, automatically they turn to God. While true, such an I-told-you-so attitude is pretty much wishful thinking. It may work on occasion but certainly isn't a winning strategy because the mind set is one based on getting revenge.

In many ways it's a real blessing to be living at this particular time when things are so fluid. While obviously I'm not qualified to get into this, I find it helpful to present a list of Gospel references pertaining to authority as Jesus uses it. In this way it may serve to offset that Chief Bugaboo which the younger generation...those doing *kua horfa*...dislike the most. Obviously it isn't a cure-all but a small step, better than nothing. Someone somewhere may just latch onto it and take it to a new level. Accompanying these scriptural verses are notations which hopefully will flesh out their meaning from the vantage point of *lectio divina*. All references pertain to the notion of authority which in Greek is *exousia* and also refers to power, permission or the license to do something. Closely allied to it is *exesti*, it is allowed, it is possible; from *eimi* or to be. Note the preposition *ex-* which is very important insofar as it signifies from-ness. One doesn't operate willy-nilly but with a specific gift, if you will, enabling you to realize it. The same, of course, applies to the person from which the *ex* derives. Actually the one delegating *exousia* is more under the gun than the one who's on the receiving end.

All this sounds Jim-dandy. Blow it by the generation just noted when they're confronted with authority in any shape, form or flavor. I'm afraid it will be just another occasion to pull off a *kua horfa*. That means the scriptural references pertinent to Jesus Christ have to be looked at a bit differently, namely, the *lectio divina* angle as noted in the last paragraph. Even the thought of going about such a project is daunting enough. Nevertheless, we can't be held up by this, for who knows what will come down the line later on.

When we look at all this more closely, getting a better understanding doesn't come from our own efforts. I liken it to going into a CVS or the like and purchasing a lottery ticket. Once...and this is a gazillion to one...we might get lucky and hit the jackpot. The jackpot isn't something we deserve, it just happens at random. We were fortunate to be in the right place at the right time. That's how fragile the whole enterprise is when we get right down to it. Better to focus upon enjoying what we won and relish in a deeper sense of what these verses contain. The sheer luck of having won big might make us more disposed to taking these verses to heart and apply them as we see fit. Even then it's a gamble. In conclusion, the uncertainty of this enterprise is what makes it so exciting.

Please note. Sometimes the same examples are found in more than one Gospel. Though the wording is different in each case, they are noted. However, the second incident isn't delved into as much because the same information had been offered earlier.

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## Gospel of St. Matthew

### **Mt 7.29: for he taught them as one who had authority and not as their scribes.**

This verse is a partial sentence, the one before it running as follows in order to complete it: "And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching." Because of this, the two verses are considered here as one unit. *Logos* for saying is the well known noun for word, word-as-expression. It refers to an indeterminate number of people or *ochlos* going back to the beginning of Chapter Five when Jesus ascended a mountain with his disciples. There he opened his mouth right after which came forth these *logoi* or words. Thus we can take the two verses as issuing forth from that mountain as the very end as the first verse of Chapter Eight notes. The verb *teleo* in vs. 28 conveys a sense of completion, of bringing to a successful conclusion. It isn't a type of end after which comes nothing; instead, it's a fulness that hasn't been present earlier and now has become a reality.

As for the crowds—*ochlos* more like a throng, almost an undisciplined mass of people—they are noted at the beginning of Chapter Five as well. Chances are they aren't the same people who stayed on the mountain throughout all Jesus' *logoi*; rather, people were coming and going all the time which means they were ascending and descending the mountain making quite a commotion. Nevertheless, the common response to Jesus' *logoi*? All were astonished, *ekplesso* being the verb whose root means to strike and here is prefaced with the preposition *ek* or "from" making it a more a vivid way of putting their response. This *explelso* results from Jesus' teaching or *didache* consisting, of course, of his *logoi* which are taken as a whole. It was the way Jesus was able to communicate them that made this possible. So if some ascended the mountain, stayed there for a short time and then left, they'd be able to come away with the fulness of his *didache* intimated by *teleo*, the completion of these *logoi*.

As for the core of this verse as it pertains to the theme of the document at hand, Jesus engages in teaching or *didasko* (from which *didache* is derived) as one who has authority, *exousia*. Again, this would apply to all his *logoi* since the beginning of Chapter Five, so to comprehend what this *didache-exousia* consists of, it's necessary to go through all that material. Note that the *exousia* is prefaced with *hos* or *as*. This infers that as soon as a person heard Jesus speak—and stayed on the mountain with him hopefully from beginning to end—his *exousia* would become self-evident in all its fulness. That person would then not just have (*echo*) *exousia* but would be it by way of participation. At a later time the same person would run into the scribes as in a synagogue. What they imparted was obviously just fine but somehow lacked that having or special *echo* associated with *exousia*.

This leads to a contrast brought on, if you will, with another *hos* pertaining to the scribes or official teachers of the Jewish faith at the time. In order to better understand the *exousia* at hand, it's helpful to be aware that the scribes were teaching everything in accord with their religion. Objectively it isn't at odds with what Jesus was setting forth. However, he presented his *didache-exousia* in a manner not in the form of a lecture. That approach never succeeds and had been in place since the beginning. However, now it was being superseded quietly yet firmly with how Jesus related with people and their needs.

**Mt 8.9: For I am a man under authority with soldiers under me; and I say to one, "Go," and he goes and to another, "Come," and he comes and to my slave, "Do this," and he does it.**

In this instance it's a question of authority belonging to a Roman centurion who approaches Jesus wishing to have his servant cured. That is, he is paralyzed and in terrible distress, *basanizo* also as to put to the test as with torture. What's interesting is that the centurion, member of the hated occupying Romans, is concerned over a servant which goes by the noun *pais*. Chances are this *pais* was of great value such as being in charge of the centurion's household. While *pais* can apply to a servant, generally it refers to a child and may be suggestive of a certain dearness instead of the more customary *doulos*. As for *doulos*, it also means servant but more clearly refers to a slave. *Doulos* is used in this verse in reference to someone else, clearly as a slave. Jesus must have been taken aback at how a highly placed military man showed concern for someone who isn't even a part of his family. Also he was struck at the humility of someone in authority who approaches him, a mere Jew. Jesus couldn't help but respond straightaway that he'll gladly cure the *pais*. It'd come as no surprise that he was curious to find out more about this unusual relationship.

The centurion demonstrates a spontaneous, genuine sentiment of humility which must have intrigued Jesus even further. The adjective is *hikanos* which also means sufficient, adequate and here with the negative *ouk*. It's more specific. That is to say, the centurion manifests this with respect to Jesus coming under the roof of his house. Translation? A Jew is invited to enter the private residence of a Roman authority not as a guest but as someone who's more than a guest, someone whom the centurion recognizes as having more *exousia* than he. The centurion respects Jesus, not wanting to trouble him as much as possible, and presents an option. Instead of coming to his home, all Jesus has to do is say the word...utter the *logos*...and the *pais* will be cured.

Immediately after this deferential approach the centurion recognizes a correspondence between the *logos*...word-as-expression...of Jesus and his own status of a military man. He does this by saying he's a man characterized by two examples of "under" or *hupo*: he being under authority or *exousia* as well as having soldiers under him. Then the centurion proceeds to give a quick example of the second *exousia* (it derives from the first one) which he does in a kind of unreflective, almost childlike way. His *exousia* consists in bossing around soldiers at will.

Such words couldn't help but floor Jesus, *thaumazo* more along the lines as to be astonished. This made him spontaneously turn to his disciples...those under or *hupo* him...and say that he hasn't witnessed such faith in Israel. To bring this home Jesus adds a double amen. The disciples too were taken aback and had a difficult time trying to understand this contrast between a hated Roman authority and the entire nation of Israel. Since by default they are members of Israel, their faith was lacking compared with the centurion. Indeed, it was an embarrassing situation. After continuing to address the disciples a bit more about this contrast, Jesus tells the centurion to go home. He didn't say outrightly that the *pais* was healed but what he asked in accord with the faith had demonstrated so wonderfully was effected.

As for the centurion, nothing more is heard of him. The same with the *pais* and others of that household. Thus all who were present had a demonstration of genuine faith by an occupier of their land contrasted with the sovereign nation of Israel. Not only that, they marveled at how willfully and easily he had put his authority...his *exousia*...at the disposal of Jesus. This experience must have continue to bother the disciples, something they didn't forget for a long time. Only the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost would be able to put them at rest. Then when they became leaders within the budding church they could better appreciate the centurion's attitude towards authority. It'd come as no surprise that they adopted it at once. Who knows. Perhaps some of the disciples maintained contact with this centurion for some time afterwards. In fact, he along with

his *pais* may have become Christian. This was the type of person you wouldn't want to walk away from.

**Mt 9.6: But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, take up your bed and go home.”**

The context of this verse? A paralytic is brought to Jesus to be cured while some scribes were present. Almost certainly these religious officials were following Jesus to keep tabs on him, waiting for an occasion to trip him up. Although it isn't recorded, Jesus doesn't heal him as expected which must have taken everyone by surprise, including the paralytic. Rather, tells him to take heart because his sins are forgiven, *tharseo* also as to be of good courage. No doubt this man hadn't a clue as to what Jesus meant. Here he was laying flat on the ground looking up at everyone and wondering to himself how and why he was sinful. Was Jesus referring to his personal sins, having knowledge even the paralytic was unaware of or was he speaking of human nature in general?

No small wonder that the scribes, presumably the only educated ones of the group who were among simple peasants, leveled a charge of blasphemy against Jesus. Not only that, they relished doing it. Jesus didn't simply know their thoughts but saw them, *eido* being the verb along with *enthumesis*, literally what's in (*en-*) their hearts, *thumos* as one's very being. This prompted Jesus at once to ask why are they thinking as such, *enthumeomai* being the verbal root of *enthumesis* along with *poneros* which conveys a wickedness more forceful than another adjective commonly used, *kakos*.

As a kind of preface to speaking of his *exousia*, Jesus continues with a rhetorical question, one the scribes are unable to answer. The question centers around which is easier (*eukopos*: easy labor): to forgive sins or to say arise and walk. This leads directly to Jesus healing the blind man, all the while laying flat on the ground watching this exchange. However, before actually doing this Jesus makes it clear to everyone but especially the scribes that he has *exousia* to forgive sins. Note that Jesus locates this *exousia* not in heaven nor anywhere else but in a here-and-now situation.

This dramatic situation leads to another two verses later: “When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God who had given such authority to men.” Note that this verse takes place after the cured paralytic leaves and goes home which means those who had brought him there, the scribes and others plus Jesus, were left by themselves. The crowds or *ochlos* which infers a hodge-podge group of people without any particular order couldn't help but express their fear, *phobeo*.

Concomitant with *phobeo* is their giving glory to God, *doxazo*. Thus fear and glory are one and the same in reference to the miracle that had just happened. Perhaps it would be more accurate to attribute *phobeo/doxazo* to the *exousia* that they had just witnessed. More precisely, vs. 8 says that God had given *exousia* to men whereas vs. 6 has it attributed to the Son of man on earth. Again, the *ochlos* uttered this. As for the scribes, no response. We can assume their silence meant they were put in their place. Nevertheless, did they file a report to their superiors in Jerusalem? Most likely not. Their silence manifested with the paralytic's cure was too embarrassing for others to know. However, chances are that eventually those in Jerusalem found out and were less than pleased with the scribes.

**Mt 10.1: And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal every disease and every infirmity.**

This verse begins with the conjunctive *kai* or "and" which suggests a close connection with the previous chapter when Jesus bade his disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers. The verb is *deo* or to be in need of and intimates something more pressing than the common verb for prayer, *proseuchomai* usually in reference to beseeching. Although the disciples are Jesus' most intimate group as well as his laborers, he enjoins upon them the task to pray for people to do his work which turns out to be what they've doing and will continue to do.

As for the calling at hand, the verb is *proskaleo* where the common verbal *kaleo* (to call, to summon) is prefaced with the preposition *pros-* signaling direction towards-which, a more direct type of call implying no for an answer. This *proskaleo* seems to have taken some time after Jesus had asked for laborers to bring in the harvest. Shortly before this he was observing the twelve moving among the people but realized sooner or later they would be confronting spirits about which they had little or no knowledge. Thus he considered it time to delegate his *exousia* in this regard.

Of course this *exousia* isn't his full authority as being divine but a share in it as inferred by the verse at hand. Notice how this *exousia* parallels the function of those called *ergates* or workers, this term often associated with workers in the field as is the case at hand. It must have been confusing for the disciples to first hear Jesus asking them to pray for such workers after which they were delegated to assume that role, all this pretty much at once. However, the prospect of sharing in Jesus' *exousia* as it pertains to dramatic elements of ministry undoubtedly is attractive. First thought that came to their minds? They would be the center of attention. The danger? They could be tempted to break away from Jesus and go off on their own which, of course, would spell disaster.



As for the actual *exousia* delegated to the twelve disciples, it consists literally of (genitive case being used) spirits which are unclean, *pneuma* and *akathartos*, the adjective suggestive of being defiled. After this comes the ability to cast them out. Similarly the disciples are to have *exousia* to heal not just diseases and infirmities but every one (*pas*) of them. That's a sure sign for being the center of attention.

Next we have the names of the disciples who are sent out to the lost sheep of the house of Israel with specific instructions not to go among the Gentiles. Most likely the twelve didn't consider their own kinsmen as lost which have caused some puzzlement. Furthermore, they hadn't a clue as how to exercise the *exousia* given them for these people whom Jesus designated as lost. They figured it would manifest itself when they came across someone possessed with an unclean spirit or ill in any sort of way. That covered a lot of territory and a sure promise that they'd be busy right from the start.

Before Jesus dispatched the twelve disciples, he gave them detailed instructions how to comport themselves plus offered encouragement which continues right through the end of Chapter Ten. All this is very important and appreciated. However, it had nothing to do with actual know-how as to implement the *exousia* given to them. In sum, these words were meant to take their attention off this and focus it upon those they are to serve. Once they did, the *exousia* would manifest itself accordingly and without them trying to manipulate it.

**Mt 20.25: But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them."**

The conjunctive *de* or "but" is evocative, making us want to know what went before to prompt Jesus to speak as such. The context is when the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached Jesus asking him to have her two sons have a prominent place in his kingdom. The other disciples got wind of this, were indignant (actually were burning with jealousy), *aganakateo* also as to be displeased, vexed. This, of course, was something Jesus couldn't tolerate for a moment, for it would jeopardize the very foundation of the church he was about to establish. If any dissension weren't nipped in the bud it would manifest itself to others who'd want no part in Jesus. Of course, this never entered the head of the mother of James and John. She'd be horrified if she realized what she was doing.

Jesus wastes no time. Immediately he called the twelve disciples, *proskaleo* as in the last excerpt and with the same force and urgency, emphasis upon the *pros-* or direction towards-which. As with that *proskaleo*, the twelve must have been off doing something

or other, perhaps tied in with the missionary work as described. Right away they knew something was up and could tell by the look on Jesus' face when they had assembled. Keep in mind too that the disciples had been engaged in casting out demons and curing people. No small stuff indeed. Without a doubt, they knew they were in for a reality check, one they'd rather not undergo.

Usually such a circumstance involves a lecture as would be the case if a typical rabbi or other religious authority were involved. However, Jesus knew that this doesn't work. God the Father had tried it on the first man, woman and serpent just before expelling them from the garden. He lined them up and let all three have it. The serpent who presumably had been standing crawled away while the two humans left with this burning resentment in their hearts. Such was the essence of the so-called fall. People despise being lectured at. It may be a short term solution but not one for the long haul. The memory of that lecture, not so much the banishment from the garden, remained deeply embedded in the first man and first woman and without them being aware of the fact, passed it on to future generations. The same applied to the serpent who now found himself armed with a weapon he'd use to great effect on subsequent generations.

Now Jesus is confronted with a situation that indeed needed correction but one that doesn't come off with a lecture. If he did, might as well let the disciples slog it out over who's greatest among them and with Jesus. Even if he offered the best advice in the world, it'd have absolutely no long term effect. Instead, Jesus begins with something obvious to the disciples. Without mentioning the dreaded Roman occupiers he speaks of the rulers of the Gentiles and great men so familiar to everyone. Actually Jesus is showing respect to these foreigners without having to bring up the obvious. The verb *katexousiazō* is connected with *exousia*, being prefaced with the preposition *kata* which here could be taken in two ways working at once, down and in accord with. Jesus was both correcting and chiding the disciples at the same time almost without them having a clue as to what was going on. Indeed, another experience that would come to fuller light with the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Jesus continues, again being careful not to be perceived as delivering a lecture. He speaks of himself as Son of man...his commonality with all people...as having come not to be served but to serve. The verbs here are *diakoneō* which is along the lines of rendering a service, not necessarily associated with being a slave. Then he adds that the Son of man is to give his life as a ransom for many. With that Jesus breaks off, walks away and lets the twelve stew in their own juices. The sixty-four thousand dollar question remains unanswered. Did they get it or not? Leaving it unanswered is the central to this experience. Hopefully later in their ministry they would remember that

when dealing with someone at fault, coming off with a lecture is not the best way to go. It's a temptation to be avoided. At first this approach doesn't seem important but in the long run really counts. In this way they would be true disciples of Jesus, offering the cure to the Original Lecture just described. They would participate with Jesus in the broader mission, if you will, of correcting God the Father by reminding him that lectures are the best way to antagonize people even if they're at fault. Although we don't see it directly, we can begin to feel more the need for the Holy Spirit to come and set this all aright. This is especially true when the matter of *exousia* is involved.

**Mt 21.23: And when he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?"**

This verse begins with the conjunctive *kai* or "and" which usually signals a close connection between present action and what had taken before. Also *kai* serves to usher along the reader and keep him involved in the text.

The preposition *eis* or into is used with regard to the temple or *hieron* also as sacred or holy place. It was quite spacious and almost always congested. Mention of the chief priests and elders with regard to this *eis* suggests that they had been following him beforehand or at least had spies on the look-out. The occasion at hand was Jesus teaching, *didasko*. The subject matter isn't disclosed, just the situation with Jesus "into" the temple area which includes those whom he's teaching and the official religious representatives.

In order to ask the question contained in this verse, these authorities had to be paying attention to what Jesus was teaching. Certainly he was aware of this and knew they weren't in the least bit interested. The crowd was aware of their presence and felt ambivalent. They knew of the existing hostility towards Jesus and easily could tell by the expression on their faces that they weren't paying attention to him engaged in teaching. Rather, malicious intent was all over them. At some point along the line they chimed in and asked Jesus about the source of his authority or *exousia* behind his teaching. For all practical purposes Jesus was talking to the wind. Not only did the chief priests and elders want to know the *poios* or whatness of his *exousia* but the *tis* or the who-ness of it.

The people listening to Jesus now realized that these authorities who had so much control over their lives and whom they feared were out to get Jesus. At the same time many were ready to scatter into the larger crowd occupying the temple square and

loose themselves so as not to be associated with Jesus. This leads to the next verse where Jesus decided to ask the chief priests and elders a question. As soon as they heard this they knew from experience that he was setting a trap from which it'd be difficult to extricate themselves.

Jesus agreed to answer the chief priests and elders as to the source of his *exousia*. First they must tell him the source of the baptism of John, *pothen* meaning from where. Did it come from heaven or from men? This set in motion precisely what Jesus wanted, an argument among themselves, the verb being *dialogizomai*. This verb often applies to being engaged in reasoning but here signals genuine discord, especially with emphasis upon the preposition *dia* or through prefaced to the verbal root. And so this *logizomai* or reckoning marked by *dia* continues among the authorities with Jesus simply looking on and they watching him from the corner of their eyes.

The *dialogizomai* boiled down to two options of a dilemma unable to be resolved with regard to the source of John's baptism. Behind all this as everyone knew but not mentioned is the fact that John has been murdered by King Herod. Never would the chief priests and elders bring this up either among themselves nor in the present situation. As for the *dialogizomai* at hand, the first part consists of the baptism coming from heaven. If they take that route, Jesus will ask why they don't believe in him. If they go the second route...that baptism is from men...the authorities will fear the crowd or *ochlos* which was right there. The *ochlos* turned out to be more fearful than anything Jesus would say. Should they agree to the second option (John's baptism coming from men), they were dead meat. In fact, it'd come as no surprise that some among the crowd had been baptized by John, hence perfect reason to hold him as a prophet. That's partly why they were in the temple attracted to Jesus whom they saw as his successor. Thus John was correct. He was a herald of the one to come, the one right in their midst.

Thoroughly frustrated, the chief priests and elders approached Jesus sheepishly all the while they being the center of everyone's attention. Jesus was the only one who didn't look upon them with scorn but with pity at being so...well...so hard of heart. To their credit, they simply said "We do not know." Jesus took advantage of this public humiliation by say that neither will he tell them by what *exousia* he is doing these things. "These things," it seems, consists not only of the teaching in which he had been engaged but everything else the authorities had either seen or heard about.

Everything stops then and there. Jesus continues his teaching about two sons asked by their father to work in his vineyard. Chances are the chief priests and elders didn't bother to remain and listen but took this as an opportunity to slink away among the

crowds of the temple's plaza.

**Mt 28.18: And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."**

Another verse which begins with the conjunctive *kai* translated as "and" just before Jesus' ascension into heaven which isn't mentioned but implied. Already the disciples had gathered on a mountain in Galilee as Jesus bade them, not knowing what is about to happen. They were used to being on mountaintops, but this was different. No crowds.

As for the coming of Jesus to the eleven disciples, there's no indication if he did this physically as by climbing up the mountain or by appearing suddenly as recorded elsewhere. Actually this is the first approach in Matthew's Gospel, the verb being *proserchomai* where the preposition *pros-* again is indicative of immediacy.

Once the disciples got used to Jesus' presence, they all worshiped him, *proskuneo* being another verb with the preposition *pros* prefaced to it meaning that they gave him direct, unequivocal attention. However, it's followed immediately by the fact that some expressed doubt, the *dis-* of *distazo* referring to the number two which makes it all the more intriguing. Some who did this aren't mentioned but kept to themselves, perhaps in deference to their role as disciples. At the same time this *dis-*ness was evident on their faces and set them apart without making a show of it.

Jesus was focused upon bringing to a close his presence on earth. He had an urgent sense to leave which the disciples picked up without asking him the usual questions as to what comes next and what they are to do now. Rather, Jesus uses this occasion as an opportunity to tell the eleven that not such and such *exousia* has been given to him but *exousia* in its entirety. That includes both heaven and earth. As soon as he utters these words he bids them to make disciples...make all nations disciples as they themselves are...first by baptizing them. This is to be done in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The disciples knew the Son as Jesus (obviously) as well as the Father to whom Jesus referred constantly. But the Holy Spirit? That is mentioned just four times in Matthew's Gospel which means the disciples were just vaguely familiar with it. That, of course, was about to change with Pentecost approximately a month away.

Finally Jesus expresses this *exousia* in terms of bidding the disciples to teach as well as to observe all that he had commanded them, *didasko* enhanced by *tereo*. As for the latter, at first it seems like a daunting task. It implies recalling all that Jesus had imparted to

them for the past three years. How were they ever to collate that? It's easy to infer this must have been a hot topic of discussion while being confined in Jerusalem awaiting the ill-defined (at least then) promise of the Father of which Acts 1.4 speaks. The noun for that is *epaggelia* fundamentally as announcement or summons. Chances are that those who had expressed doubt or *distazo* so recently were tempted to follow through on it and return to their former lives. However, to their everlasting credit they did not give in.

And so Matthew's Gospel concludes with him saying that he is with the disciples...present, not future tense...in two distinct ways. The first is "all the days" and the second is "until the close of the age." The noun *sunteleia* signifies completion but more than that. The preposition *sun-* or with prefaced to a root generally meaning end as fulfillment suggests a fuller form of Jesus being with or *meta* them as he had just expressed. As for *aion*, it suggests a long duration of time, not so much forever-ness. While some may have thought of *aion* as reaching a completion, in the near future that idea will be expanded with the presence of the Holy Spirit. This *Pneuma* or essentially breath will fill it out to include both *aion* as just described but include a reality much greater or more comprehensive.

### Gospel of St. Mark

**Mk 1.22: And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority and not as the scribes.**

As noted often with regard to the verses in the Gospel of St. Matthew, the conjunctive *kai* usually translated as "and" plays an important role as both connecting what just went before the verse at hand as well as serving to move the reader along. Such is the case with many of the verses in this section.

In vs. 23 Jesus enters the synagogue at Capernaum on the Sabbath right after having calling his disciples. Note the three occasions of the preposition *eis* or into which come in rapid fire succession: *eisporeuomai* or to enter into, into Capernaum and into the synagogue. The suddenness of all this ties in with the way people responded to Jesus' teaching or *didache*, *ekplesso* or literally to strike out from (*ek-*). It used along with the preposition *epi* or upon with regard to *didache*. In other words, an *ek* followed by an *epi* or a from followed by an upon.

Closely bound up with this sudden transition from *ek->epi* (preceded by the threefold *eis*, if you will) is the way Jesus was teaching, *didasko* from which *didache* is derived.

This isn't described as well as we'd like, deliberately so, because we're invited to delve more deeply into the source of the *ek-plesso*. Two important connectives which go by *hos* or "as" in this regard require attention. The first is with respect to *exousia* contrasted at once by the second *hos* which leads to the scribes. In sum, one *hos* is set against the other *hos* with that of Jesus being superior.

All this means that those who have frequented the synagogue over the years have been so accustomed to the manner of teaching associated with the scribes. That means while their teaching is certainly authentic, over time it has become stale and no longer is meaningful. People still went to synagogue but did so out of obligation if not fear. Then Jesus comes along and changes everything without altering the religion.

**Mk 1.27: And they were all amazed so that they questioned among themselves saying, "What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."**

This verse continues from the previous one with regard to Jesus teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. An important interlude took place not directly related to the situation at hand. That is to say, a man with an unclean spirit in the synagogue suddenly spoke up. We have here two examples of the preposition *en* or in: in the synagogue and the man in the spirit or *pneuma* which was unclean, *akathartos* also as undefiled and suggestive of being unclean in the moral sense. Apparently he was present when Jesus began his teaching and remained quiet like everyone else. Then suddenly (*euthus*, immediately) the teaching of Jesus prompted the unclean spirit within the man to cry out, *anakrazo* or literally to shout out above (*ana-*) which implies a disruption.

Actually the man showed no hostility to Jesus, he being hopelessly captive to this unclean spirit. More specifically he or rather this spirit, blurts out literally "what to us and to you" while using Jesus' name as associated with Nazareth. This perhaps was to shame Jesus as having come to Capernaum from such a backward town and thinking he's offering the people something special. Jesus knew at once it wasn't him but the spirit within him doing this. He simply rebuked the man for claiming he was there to destroy them, *apollumi* as to destroy in the utter sense. The verb here to be silent is quite strong, *phimoo* more along the lines to muzzle. As soon as this happened, the unclean spirit left but did so coming off with a loud voice. Such is the introduction, if you will, for the verse at hand.

Vs. 22 has the verb *ekplesso* or to be astonished at Jesus' teaching whereas vs. 27 has *thambeo* or astounded which connotes a sense of alarm and rightly so given the

circumstance. Associated with this *thambeo* is the fact that people raised questions among themselves as to what all this means. This is reflected in the verb *suzeteo* or literally to inquire with (*sum-*) and has the preposition *pros* as signifying directness with regard to themselves. I.e., a *sum* followed at once by a *pros* or a *with* followed by immediacy. No small wonder all they could come off with is “What is this?”

The collective astonishment leads at once to a collective exclamation with regard to a teaching or *didache* which is new. The implied old teaching belongs to the scribes noted with regard to 1.22. As for this *didache*, it started when Jesus spoke in the synagogue. With the sudden intervention of the man possessed by the unclean spirit it shifts almost automatically over to an action, the casting out of this spirit. That’s what is really new here.

Now this teaching which the people exclaimed as new...words put into direct action...they correctly associate with the *exousia* manifested by Jesus. It’s put in a twofold form, if you will: *epitasso* and *hupakouo* or literally to enjoin upon and to listen under, an *epi* followed at once by *hupo* or upon followed by under. Thus we have a pair consisting of above and below operative as one unit, if you will. Such is one manifestation of Jesus’ *exousia* for all to behold.

As for the man from whom the unclean spirit had been banished, nothing more is said of him. Presumably from this point on he had a special place of honor in the synagogue. As for the unclean spirit, it had to go somewhere though we don’t have the details. One thing is for certain. It kept a healthy distance from Jesus as he continued his ministry.

**Mk 2.10: But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins— he said to the paralytic—“I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home.”**

*Hina* is the word for “but,” also as “in order that.” In a way, this makes the verse at hand a partial sentence belonging to the one before. Without a doubt, the situation is dramatic, a group of men actually removing the roof of a house (*apostegzao* is the verb) in order to let down a paralytic where Jesus as *Logos* of God was speaking the *logos* to those inside (cf. vs.2). Clearly it shows the devotion of those towards the man on the pallet. Their desperation was so great they had disregard for the owner and would worry about that later.

According to vs. 1, this house belonged to Jesus (“he was at home’). Removal of the roof is followed by making an opening, *exorusso* or to dig out. As for the second instance, it could apply to the ceiling of a second floor within the house, not the roof which had just



been removed. One can only imagine what Jesus and those inside must have thought while this was going on.

Instead of curing the paralytic, Jesus told him his sins were forgiven. This is similar to the situation in 9.6, a paralytic also involved whose sins Jesus had forgiven. As with that man and those with him, they must have been surprised and even caused initial disappointment. In other words, their attention was on healing the man. In the situation at hand this extreme drama didn't phase the scribes in the least. They were more focused on finding an occasion to trip up Jesus. As for the removed roof, hole in the ceiling and the paralytic being dropped down inside? The scribes obviously saw it but were barely aware this was going on.

Now begins some give-and-take between Jesus and the scribes, most likely along the same lines as in other incidents. There's a great controversy over forgiveness of sins which must have astounded those present including the paralytic. It was something completely unexpected. And so these bystanders, if you will, were held in abeyance as this discussion went on, hoping it'd come to an end so Jesus could heal the man lowered down into the house. As for Jesus, he must have found this discussion (if it could be labeled as such) thoroughly boring and predictable.

Jesus sticks to his guns. He doesn't make a move to heal the paralytic but rebukes the scribes putting a question to them. Which is easier, to forgive sins or to cure the man laying there before all to see? Before he takes further action, in vs. 8 we have a correspondence between what's deep inside him as well as the scribes. For Jesus it's literally a knowing-upon or *epigignosko* in his spirit or *pneuma* whereas for the scribes it's a questioning or *dialogizomai* (to distinguish through) that's going on within their hearts or *kardia*. Note the two verbs with two different prepositions prefaced to them, *epi* and *dia* or upon and through. The first is with respect to *pneuma* or literally breath and the latter with respect to *kardia*, also as inclination, desire, purpose. In the case at hand, the former has precedence over the latter.

The knowing of vs. 10 is *eido* fundamentally as to see, to perceive and is directed specifically towards the scribes, not so much to others who were present. This is followed at once by an association of *exousia* with regard to the Son of man to forgive sins, the result being the cure of the paralytic. Jesus tells this man to rise and go home, simple as that. The man did so but without any mention of being overjoyed nor thanking Jesus. Perhaps Mark wants instead to focus in upon those present who were both amazed and gave glory to God, *existemi* and *doxazo*, the former literally as to stand out. It'd come as no surprise that the scribes were not part of those so engaged.

**Mk 3.15: and have authority to cast out demons.**

This short verse is an incomplete sentence and is part of the verse both before and after it. As for what comes before, Jesus literally made twelve (*poieo* with regard to unmentioned apostles) with two purposes in mind: to be with (*meta*) him and to be sent out to preach, the two verbs *apostello* and *kerusso* being as one. The third is added in vs. 15 and is connected with *exousia*, that is, with respect to demons. *Exousia* in this regard is important because the disciples will be dealing with spiritual entities with which they are unfamiliar as this early stage in their ministry. Also it is a kind of practice for later when they are governing churches.

Vs. 16 follows by naming the twelve disciples.

**Mk 6.7: And he called to him the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.**

Another verse beginning with the conjunctive *kai* or “and” which is common in St. Mark’s Gospel. It serves to enhance his well-known fast paced narrative. It’s preceded by Jesus having moved about the villages while engaged in teaching, *didasko*. After having done this for an unspecified amount of time, Jesus summons the twelve and sends them out in pairs, that is, not alone, both for safety-sake and for companionship. In addition to this, they’d have time to reflect on their individual relationship with Jesus. Later when on their own while founding churches the apostles will look back fondly on this experience, grateful to Jesus for having taken that approach. They would do the same when sending out others on mission.

Once together, Jesus gives the apostles *exousia* over unclean spirits, this by now a fairly common practice. Although teaching, healing and other missionary endeavors are important, *exousia* with regard to these invisible yet troublesome spirits is necessary. The actual way Jesus did this isn’t specified, but we can assume that he either laid hands on each disciple or breathed upon them as he had done after his resurrection.

Once endowed with this *exousia*, Jesus enjoins them to travel lightly. They did have success in exercising this *exousia* which also spread out to anointing those who were sick in order that they might be healed.

**Mk 10.42: And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them."**

The context is James and John having approached Jesus, asking to sit at his left and right hand in glory. Jesus puts it succinctly, "You do not know what you are asking" [vs. 38]. After telling them that they will share in his suffering through the image of drinking from a cup and being baptized, the other disciples got wind of this and naturally were indignant, *aganakteo* also as to feel irritation in a strong way. In other words, they were jealous and wanted in on the action. Such an attitude was focused literally around (*peri*) James and John which suggests they were isolating the two.

Jesus couldn't help but see this being played out and summoned the entire twelve, something that has been noted thus far a good number of times. Note the use of the verb *dokeo* when he addresses them. It's in the familiar context of those who expect to rule over the Gentiles; not those doing it at present but those who have such ambitions. Their desire to rule translates into lording it over them, *katakurieuo* which consists of the verbal root for *kurios* or lord prefaced with the preposition *kata* which here refers to rule not so much over but down...pressing their authority down...on subjects.

In addition to this lording it down, if you will, Jesus mentions the great men belonging to the Gentiles (i.e., 'their') exercising authority over them. Automatically there comes to mind the Romans who are in charge though not mentioning them by name. The verb for this is *katexousiazo*, the verbal form of *exousia* which also has the preposition *kata* or down prefaced to it. So when Jesus is comparing the behavior of James and John as the other disciples who were indignant to this way foreigners are dominating the native population, it was profoundly embarrassing but in a gentle sort of way.

**Mk 11.28: and they said to him, "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?"**

This verse is part of an extended sentence beginning with the previous one comprised of two sentences, each beginning with the conjunctive *kai* translated as "and." It opens with "they" coming to Jerusalem which is used from the beginning of this chapter and lacking names but presumably the disciples with Jesus and most likely others, not to mention the ever present scribes.

The second sentence of vs. 27 has Jesus walking in the temple, *peripateo* literally as walking around which suggests he was looking for opportunities to teach. Jesus caught the sight of not only the scribes but elders who approached him. They asked by what *exousia* he's doing "these things" as well as who had given him *exousia* to carry them out. This presumes that during his *peripateo* Jesus paused here and there to either teach or to heal or both though it goes unrecorded.

Jesus refers to John's baptism, the memory of which is still painfully fresh in everyone's minds including some in the temple area who could have been at the Jordan River. After having asked them as to where John got his *exousia* (the word isn't mentioned but presumed), they argued among each other, *dialogizomai* having been mentioned earlier with regard to a similar situation (cf. Mt 2.1). Thus Jesus' divine *exousia* is set against the legal religious establishment, the latter being in a state of uncertainty and confusion by reason of not being able to respond. Indeed, it was a spectacle for all to behold in the temple area.

After admitting their ignorance, Jesus responds by not telling them by what *exousia* he's doing what upsets them so much.

### Gospel of St. Luke

**Lk 4.6: and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will."**

This verse is a part of the previous one which also begins with the conjunctive *kai* or "and." The same applies to the one before that, vs. 4, all this showing close, compact action.

The verse at hand is a consequence of the devil or *diabolos* (also as slanderer) doing two actions at once. That is, *anago* and *deiknumi* or to lead up and to show or to make manifest. The first image that comes to mind is a mountaintop or somewhere high enabling Jesus to see all the kingdoms of the earth. Obviously this is impossible in the physical sense which suggests that the *anago* isn't exclusive to an elevated position. Also the devil didn't take Jesus by the hand to bring him to a position for *deiknumi*; rather, he inferred it after which Jesus complied knowing full well he was about to rebuke him.

As for *deiknumi*, note that the text says the devil did it in a moment of time. *Stigme* can refer a grammatical connotation such as a period or colon, that is, a very small point. Applied to time or *chronos*, it suggests the smallest bit, barely perceptible but enough to take in the entire world.

Once the two were in a position to see the entire earth...not so much the planet but the various kingdoms...the devil spoke as though he had complete dominance over them all. That makes him say boldly, "to you I will give." This must have amused Jesus though

given the situation, he wouldn't shown it. Instead he played along while the devil claimed to possess "this" authority or *exousia* which implies lordship over people and the accompanying glory or *doxa*. Because just about all rulers over kingdoms were pretty much dictatorial, both *exousia* and *doxa* were less than desirable.

The devil makes the bold yet real claim that all this has been given to him, *paradidomai* or to hand over beside (*para-*). He makes a twofold fatal mistake, using self-condemnatory words without realizing it. The first is that he acknowledges someone had given both *exousia* and *doxa* supposedly belonging to earthly kingdoms. The second is that he thinks he possesses both and can distribute them freely. By such words the devil was indirectly acknowledging Jesus himself had allowed him to possess both.

The punch line comes in vs. 7 when the devil and Jesus both have emerged from that *stigma* or minuscule moment of time. The devil tells Jesus that all he had seen there will be his but under one condition. That condition consists in worshipping the devil, the *proskuneo* implying direct, unequivocal attention. If that weren't bad enough, he throws in *enopion* or face-to-face, in person. The conjunctive of vs. 8 or "and" contains Jesus' immediate retort which is lifted from Dt 6.13-14 about this *proskuneo* belonging to God alone and no one else.

**Lk 4.32: and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority.**

Obviously this verse beginning with the conjunctive *kai* belongs to the preceding one which makes the two a complete sentence. Vs. 31 says simply that Jesus went down to Capernaum and was teaching (*didasko*) on the Sabbath. The location of this teaching isn't given until vs.33, the synagogue obviously presumed.

Those listening to Jesus were astonished, *ekplesso* or literally to strike from (*ek-*). This from-ness, if you will, is in conjunction with regard to the upon-ness (*epi*) of his teaching, *didache*. In other words, an *ek* that leads to an *epi* or a from to an upon. Those in the congregation noticed that this *didache* is also called *logos* or word as expression. Not only that, the *logos* of Jesus or *Logos* himself was literally in (*en*) *exousia*. As in other situations and without mentioning it, this *exousia* contrasts with that of the scribes.

**Lk 4.36: And they were all amazed and said to one another, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out."**

The context is a man in the synagogue having an unclean spirit, here a *daimonion* which is *akathartos* or morally unclean or impure. Note that *daimonion* is used, not *pneuma*.

This makes it potent but not as much as *pneuma*. The man asks if Jesus had come to destroy those belonging to the synagogue, *apollumi* inferring an utter sense of destruction. Nevertheless, he...perhaps through the intervention of the *daimonion*...recognizes that Jesus is the Holy One of God.

The situation is quite dramatic. First Jesus muzzles the *daimonion*, *phimoo*. Next it threw the man down literally “into the midst” or into the very middle of the congregation, *rhipto* being the verb along with *mesos* and *eis*. Then the *daimonion* came out of the man without causing him any harm. This leads to the verse at hand which gives context to the conjunctive *kai* as “and.”

The amazement or *thambos* this created was so great that literally it was “upon (*epi*) all” those present. They couldn’t help but exclaim to each other, “What is this *logos*?” The actual *logos* is associated with the rebuke of Jesus, *phimoo* which reflects an inner *exousia* along with *dunamis*, the latter reflecting the capacity to do something. Here both apply to spirits which are unclean, *pneuma* being used instead of *daimonion*. What everyone witnessed was a transference, if you will, of *phimoo* to *epitasso*, a muzzling literally to a putting upon (*epi-*) in the sense of carrying out a duty.

**Lk 5.24: But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins—he said to the man who was paralyzed— “I say to you, rise, take up your bed and go home.”**

*Hina* is the word for “but,” commonly used as “in order that.” The context is the paralytic being let down through the tiles (cf. vs. 10) of the roof into the house where Jesus was present. The scribes were there, of course, ever waiting for an opportunity to trip up Jesus. They thought they found an excuse when Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic before healing him.

Though healing is tantamount to the paralytic as well as to all present, forgiveness of sins is more important for the long run. Once the healing took place and after his sins were forgiven, the man who had been a paralytic rose and went home though not without glorifying God, *doxazo* as in vs. 26.

Naturally amazement seized everyone present, *ekstasis* literally a standing out or from (*ek-*), the verb being *lambano*, to take or to receive. The result? Like the man just cured, they glorified God and exclaimed that they had seen strange things, *semeron* as sign modified by *paradoxos*, literally things beside or contrary to opinion, *doxa* which happens to derive from the verbal root *doxazo*.

**Lk 7.8: For I am a man set under authority with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it."**

The conjunctive *kai* translates here as “for” which follows the centurion’s words expressing his unworthiness for Jesus to come under his roof to heal a slave dear to him. *Doulos* is the word for slave compared with *pais*, also as child, as in the same account of Mt 8.9.

There are two instances of the preposition *hupo* or under with regard to the centurion: he with regard to *tasso* or ordained and with regard to soldiers in his command. Jesus is completely overwhelmed by the simple way the centurion expresses his *exousia*, more in a detached, business-like fashion. This intimates that his focus of attention is directed more to their welfare as is the case at hand.

The astonishment Jesus had...his *thuamazo*...is directed towards the *ochlos* or crowds with him. The centurion’s faith was stronger than he had seen among his fellow Israelites. This must have taken them by surprise, even angered them, for the centurion represented Roman oppression.

**Lk 9.1: And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases,**

Here the conjunctive *de* is used for “and” after the cure of the ruler’s child. While she was not possessed by any evil or unclean spirit, the situation gave occasion for Jesus to delegate his power and authority or *dunamis* and *exousia* to the twelve apostles. It is to have twofold *epi* or “upon:” with regard to all demons or *daimonion* as well as to cure diseases, *therapeuo* which fundamentally means to be an attendant.

While that is the most obvious task at hand, vs. 2 fleshes it out further by saying that the twelve are to preach the kingdom of God as well as to heal. *laomai* is the verb for the latter and leans more toward healing compared with *therapeuo* which implies more long term attention.

**Lk 10.19: Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you.**

This chapter begins with Jesus having sent out seventy men described as “others,” most likely those closest to him and his band of twelve disciples. Their first priority is to pray

to send out laborers into his harvest, this term commonly used in reference to spreading the Gospel. In addition, they are to heal the sick and proclaim that the kingdom of God has come upon them (cf. vs. 9). In other words, they have the fulness of divine life already present implying there's no need to go out and look for it. At the same time someone had to bring this to the attention of people, hence the role of the seventy.

The verse at hand begins with *idou* or behold which is both an expression of astonishment by Jesus at the successful missionary endeavors by the seventy. They joyful told him that demons were subjected to them in his name, *hupotasso* literally to place under. To that Jesus said that he had seen Satan fall like lightning from heaven. This implies that Satan is more formidable than the demons and despite the seventy's success, can undo what they had accomplished. Another way of putting this is that Jesus felt the need to inject a sense of humility into those who had just returned.

With this warning in mind, Jesus continues addressing the seventy telling them that he has given them *exousia* to tread upon serpents and scorpions, most likely to be taken as another way of speaking of the demons they had just subjected. They are identified as being aligned with the power or *dunamis* of the enemy, namely, Satan. Should the seventy treat this *exousia* with humility and reverence, Jesus says that nothing will hurt them, *adikeo* fundamentally as to do wrong but also to injure.

**Lk 19.17: And he said to him, "Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities."**

The context is the parable of a nobleman going on a trip and giving ten of his servants (*doulos* or slave) money to trade and make a profit. Two points are worth noting. He goes to a far country and is hated by his fellow citizens. Such is the context under which these ten servants had to operate.

When the nobleman returned, he was pleased with the servant who had gained him ten pounds more and exclaimed well done, *euge* being an adverb for well, rightly. Because of his faithfulness (*pistos* being an adjective) over what the nobleman considers a little, he will have *exousia* over ten cities. This is the only servant to whom he delegated *exousia* compared with the others entrusted with his money.

**Lk 20.2: and said to him, "Tell us by what authority you do these things or who it is that gave you this authority."**

This and the first verse of Chapter Twenty form one sentence, the context being Jesus



teaching in the Jerusalem temple as well as preaching the gospel. This is the first and only time preaching in Luke the gospel is associated with Jesus, the verb being *euaggelizomai* also as to announce good tidings.

The exact context isn't given but left to be inferred. What counts here is that it riled the chief priests and scribes, Jesus doing this literally on their own turf. They want to know the *exousia* by which Jesus is doing both as well as the source from which it came. This leads Jesus to bring up the memory of John the Baptist, the same issue discussed with regard to Mk 1.28.

**Lk 20.8: And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."**

This verse is to be considered in light of the previous one where Jesus deals with the chief priests and scribes concerning John the Baptist. By refusing outrightly to tell them the source of his *exousia*, he frustrates them all the more. Afterwards Jesus tells a parable about a man who planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants. These men maltreated those whom he later sent to check up on them, even to the point of killing his son. While the text says that Jesus is speaking as such to the people in the temple area, obviously he has in mind the religious authorities listening in and identifying themselves as these tenants. As for the vineyard, a parallel between it and the temple area in which this dialogue is taking place is easy to be made. Even to draw an association with hirelings is an insult to their well-trenched authority.

**Lk 20.20: So they watched him and sent spies who pretended to be sincere that they might take hold of what he said so as to deliver him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor.**

Here *exousia* is within the context of the governor or Pontius Pilate who goes unmentioned, a Roman and not a native son. "They" refers to both the chief priests and scribes. The verb *paratereo* or literally to watch beside suggests a watching from a distance. It reveals the cowardly nature of the religious authorities along with spies described by the verb *hupokrino* literally to pick out or to decide from under. In others words, these spies (most likely hired and therefore of dubious character) reflected by their *hupo*-ness, if you will, the *para*-ness of their masters.

**Lk 28.25: And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors."**

The conjunctive *kai* as “and” comes right on the heels of a dispute that broke out among the disciples, *philoneikia* translated as fond of strife and indicative of an all too human tendency. Jesus shuts them down at once by referring to kings of the Gentiles or the dreaded Romans who engage in both *kurieuo* and *exousiazo* or being lords and exercise *exousia*. At the same time Jesus calls those with *exousia* as benefactors, *euergetes*. While the Romans remain a constant threat, they can be beneficial as well.

Jesus continues by reversing the common order or rule: the greatest as the youngest and the leader as the one who serves, *diakoneo* being more properly associated to what the disciples are summoned as following Jesus. Thus *diakoneo* stands directly opposed to both *kurieuo* and *exousiazo*.

### The Gospel of St. John

**Jn 5.27: and has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of man.**

This and the verse before it form one extended sentence. The former begins with *hosper* or “for as” and is balanced out, if you will, by *houtos* or “so.” That is to say, the Father has life (*zoe*, also as existence) in himself. This fact governed by *hosper* spills over into granting the Son to have the same *zoe* in himself. Thus there’s an equivalence between *hosper* and *housos* or Father and Son.

This equivalence spills over into the verse at hand where the Father gives the Son *exousia*. The purpose? To make judgment, *poieo* and *krisis*. No other reason for this is necessary than he being the Son of man.

**Jn 5.30: I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.**

A manifestation of this *hosper-houtos* relationship continues in this verse, that is, Jesus can do (*poieo*) nothing on his own *exousia*. It comes to him from hearing which results in judging, *akouo*->*krino*. The Father is the source but given the *hosper-houtos* relationship, there’s no need to mention it but to infer it.

Jesus speaks almost nonchalantly about all this because he isn’t seeking his own will but the will of the one who had sent him. Thus we have one *thelema* balanced out by another *thelema* which has made a transition into the former *thelema* by a sending or

*pempo* which also means to carry. Thus we could posit a time gap of sorts between the two, time simply as a means to spell it out. The same applies to the past tense of *pempo* which here is a matter of description.

**Jn 7.17: if any man's will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.**

This and the previous verse form one sentence. In the former Jesus speaks nonchalantly once more as he does when it comes to *pempo* or sending, that is, from the Father. That reflects a freedom he enjoys and wishes to pass on to those listening to him if they could only see his words as reflecting this fundamental reality. Thus the teaching or *didache* Jesus is doing is intimately tied in with this *pempo*.

Should a person wishes to do “his” will or *thelema*, “his” referring to the Father who, incidentally, isn’t mentioned by inferred. Such willing on the part of a person results in the ability to discern (*ginosko*, the common verb to know) between two things. That is to say, whether the teaching or *didache* is from God or from Jesus’ own *exousia*. Here *exousia* is presented as being independent of God which is not. Jesus speaks as such so as to make clear the distinction between what is true and what as false as the subsequent verses show.

**Jn 7.18: He who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.**

This verse is an overflow from the previous one when it comes to *exousia-as-doxa*, that is, *exousia* as not from God but from oneself or when one seeks personal glory.

In contrast to this...the conjunctive *de* as “but”...the person who seeks the glory which belongs to the one who has done the sending or *pempo* is true. The way Jesus is speaking here refers to himself as well as those invited to assume this relationship involving *pempo*. There’s assurance of no falsehood involved, *adikia* also as wrong-doing or injustice.

**Jn 8.28: So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me."**

This verse follows upon those whom Jesus is addressing as not understanding that he’s speaking of the Father. That’s the human *ginosko*. In the verse at hand Jesus says that

this *ginosko* will be transformed later when “you”...again, those present...will have lifted up the Son of man. In other words, when they realize they are responsible for crucifying him. As soon as this *hupsou* or raising takes place, the transformed *ginosko* is realized, the two acting as one.

As for the transformed *ginosko*, it consists simply in *ego eimi* or “I am” which echos the words of the Lord to Moses in Ex 3.14, “I am who am.” Bound up with this I am-ness is that Jesus does nothing literally “from myself,” *exousia* not in this verse. Instead of this *poieo* or doing, he speaks in accord with what the Father has taught him, *didasko*. Thus there’s an association between Jesus teaching those in attendance and Jesus receiving teaching.

**Jn 12.49: For I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak.**

Another verse where the importance of *pempo* or to send plays a vital role in what Jesus both speaks and does. The way he does this is almost as though he were a kind of shadow...an inaccurate image...but where he enjoys the closest living relationship with the Father who does all the *pempo*. This exceptionally freeing experience to speak not on one’s own self is really what Jesus wishes to hand over, *exousia* implied but not mentioned. Instead, Jesus is the receptacle of a commandment or *entole* which is what he speaks, this noun also as injunction or ordinance.

**Jn 14.10: Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works.**

Jesus puts a rhetorical question to his disciples not expecting an answer but simply to emphasize the fact that he is in the Father and the Father is in him. I.e., he wishes that they grasp (*pisteuo* in the sense of trust) this double *en* or in-ness. They don’t, of course, but will do so after Pentecost with the help of the Holy Spirit.

In the second sentence Jesus uses the words “I say to you” which can be overlooked but are important in order to bring home to the disciples the reality of which he is speaking. This consists of him not speaking...a transference of the *laleo* from the disciples to himself...with regard to his own authority (*ap’ emautou* or from myself). Immediately Jesus balances this *laleo* by putting it with regard to the Father. Here the *laleo* comes from the Father dwelling in Jesus, *meno* or remaining which does his works. That is to say, *meno* leads to *ergon*, a kind of rest to action.

**Jn 16.13: When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.**

The most important word here for the disciples is the one beginning this verse, *hotan* or when. It's in conjunction with the Spirit of truth, *Pneuma* associated with *aletheia*, neither present nor made known but due to come. So we have this *Pneuma* of truth which will direct the disciples not just in truth but in all truth. That means there's a distinction between *aletheia* directly affiliated with *Pneuma* and *aletheia* in its entirety. Thus *aletheia* is twofold: directly of God and applicable to all other circumstances. The verb *hodegeo* or to lead in the way is intended to put the disciples at rest, that they don't have to do such *hodegeo* but simply walk along in it.

Along with this *hodegeo* the *Pneuma* will do some speaking, *laleo* as with Jesus, but not of his own, *aph' heautou* or from himself. It will be dependent upon what he hears, *akouo*. This will be imparted to the disciples not by *laleo* but by *anaggello* which infers a carrying back (*ana-*) of a message. That *ana-*, of course, comes from the Father and passes through Jesus. Such *anaggello* doesn't pertain to the present but what is to come, *erchomai*. It doesn't mean that the disciples will be able to foretell the future but will be able to take up the Spirit's *hodegeo* and project it forward for others to go on the same path as they are doing.

Some concluding remarks...

One way to sum up the *exousia* references with regard to Jesus is to see them through several of the verses from the Gospel of St. John. An alternative to this noun is the phrase "of myself" or "of himself." This suggests that *exousia* is intimately associated with the one saying it which applies not just to Jesus but to the Holy Spirit. Thus it's more personal and more readily accessible.

The phrase also plays a small role in doing away with common ideas associated with a prophet, that is, he isn't someone with a long white beard, robes and a thunderous voice. This obviously isn't what Jesus is about. You can't act like that as a *navy'* (from *nava'*, to cause to bubble forth) to whom the divine *davar* or word as expression is imparted. Rather, a prophet is someone who prefers obscurity, does his thing with *davar* quietly moves of the scene.

The other factor that emerges through the mediation of John's references to *exousia* is

that it as well as equivalent phrases such as “from myself” has its source in the verb *pempo* or to send. The whole thing depends upon this *pempo* which originates in the Father and belongs in different ways to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. That goes a long way to freeing us up to better grasp the *exousia* as presented through these Gospel verses. Hopefully all this will mollify any hang-ups associated with the word authority as pointed out in the Introduction.

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