



Introduction to “ ‘By What Authority...’ ”

Review of Previous Article

From the beginning the One-and-Only God, YHWH, has been committed to covenantal or relational co-existence with “others.” Such co-existence necessarily required God to embark on his mission of creating “others.” Ultimately, God desired the company of “colleagues” with whom, to whom and for whom he could consciously relate. God therefore launched the historic journey of creating humanity for himself and for “others.” In order that the mutual relationship between himself and Creation might be free and responsible, God permitted the possibility of both good and evil — of acceptance and rejection.

Thus, history has revealed the existence of both good and evil. There have been “naturocentric” good (e.g., sunshine, planting, harvest) and evil (e.g., disease, disaster, death), anthropocentric good (e.g., mutual support, compassion, giving) and evil (e.g., immorality, violence, murder), and theocentric good (e.g., loving God, witnessing to God) and evil (e.g., attempted possession of God, hatred and murder of God). Meanwhile, throughout history God has been engaged in emptying himself (*kenosis*) of uncreation so that both he and mankind might become human and thus co-exist with each other in mutual, covenantal presence. At the same time, mankind has been engaged in the attempt to empty itself of Creation in order to achieve uncreation and thus to contractually possess divinity.

Mankind’s millennial efforts to contradict the divine intention have now reached a crisis. On one hand, mankind’s attempts to achieve departure from the created order through rapture or death threaten to terminate Creation through the global exercise of violence. On the other hand, God has inaugurated his own true humanity as Jesus Christ and is now prepared to consummate Creation with the full and eternal transformation of humanity into his own image. Thus, the time has come for representatives of mankind to understand, accept and celebrate God’s human intentions.

Overview of This Article

Since the loss of a derivative god-consciousness about 3,000 years ago, mankind has vainly sought to recover this vanished authority that enabled him to survive and prosper. The authoritative direction of this commanding god-consciousness helped mankind to utilize inanimate elements and to domesticate plants and animals. However, it also was used by mankind to dominate other human beings. In the absence of this god-consciousness, there have been three notable developments in the struggle over authority:

1. The surrogate authority of religio-political and economic power structures emerged, claiming their own deification. For example, the Pharaohs regarded themselves as the emanation of the god, Ra. Adolf Hitler believed himself to be God.

2. There was the birth of the individual, autonomous authority of “divine” reason during the Axial Age (800-200 BCE). This has persisted into modern times.

3. With the emergence of postmodernism during the past 25 years, there has been a profound loss of confidence in the legitimacy, power and effectiveness of existing authority — whether corporate power structures or individual reason.

Meanwhile, for 3,000 years the One-and-Only God, YHWH, has sought to convey the ultimate truth of his own authority (from the Latin word *auctor*, which means “creator”). The simple yet profound reality is that YHWH himself, as Creator, is Ultimate Authority. Beginning with the liberation of the Chosen People from Egyptian slavery, YHWH revealed his authoritative and creative presence in countless ways, including various symbols and, ultimately, Temple metaphors.

While rejecting the philosophic dualism between “soul” and body (Genesis 2:7) and the monism of pantheism, Judaism understood the “prophetic dualism” between the authoritative Creator and his creation. Yet Judaism did not grasp the enshrined promise and fulfillment of familial dualism, in which YHWH would become human and manifest himself as Jesus Christ in order to be our Adamic Father, our Friend (John 15:15) and our Brother.

Furthermore, neither Judaism nor any other religion has understood that, in becoming human, YHWH acted authoritatively to inaugurate the end of the old Creation, which necessarily existed by command and is tainted with domination, evil and death. Mankind has not perceived that, by his sacrificial death, YHWH also acted to inaugurate the end of self-existent divinity, of autonomously existent mankind, and of all attempts at the nihilistic destruction of Creation. Nor has mankind appreciated YHWH’s inauguration of an eternal and irrevocable new Creation, which will prosper by mutual consent. The time has now come to acknowledge that YHWH’s incarnation as Jesus Christ is the manifestation of ultimate Authority.

... [F]or ... [by, with and unto (Greek, *en*)] him we live, and move, and have our being
... For we are also his offspring. — Acts 17:28.