

Spiritual Authority God—Our Defender and Protector

Sam Soleyn
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We have been giving considerable consideration to the matter of the relationship between God and ourselves and especially as it regards spiritual authority. We've laid out an entire foundation as a background against which to view the matter of spiritual authority. We looked at it within the context of warfare, particularly the warfare between God and Satan, on the one hand, and how that warfare affects us, who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, on the other hand. Now, this lends itself to an incredible array of very significant considerations. Everything, from prophecy to current issues, like the role of women in the church; issues involving matters of oversight and accountability—all those things, being the permutations of spiritual authority within the context of warfare.

In addition to this, as we review such familiar topics as “the armor of God” in **Ephesians 6**, we'll see again just an incredible difference in perspectives from the traditional ways of viewing these Scriptures to viewing the Scriptures against the background of war and conflict between God on one hand and Satan on the other—and ourselves, who are believers, on the side of the Lord, as His people, as His interests, represented in the earth—and how this all clashes as the conflict engulfs us and surrounds our lives. So what I'd like to do now in the next set of programs is to begin to take a look at how we might apply the concepts of spiritual authority, within the context of warfare, to a whole array of subjects. The first of these subjects that I'd like to tackle is the subject of the role of women in the church. Once again, we are beset with a fairly well settled controversy, that is, as we approach this we begin to see that there is a controversy that is well defined. It's not so much that it is *resolved*, but *it is* well defined.

The controversy is: how are women to be liberated in the church, and at the same time, what do the Scriptures *mean* that seem to restrict the woman's role? Now, historically, the woman has been seen in the church as someone who is not quite as good as the man... not quite as capable as the man because there are Scriptures that say, in effect, that the woman should not be permitted to speak in a particular form of assembly, spoken to in the **15th chapter** of the book of **I Corinthians**. Or, the Scripture that says, as Paul makes it very clear in **I Corinthians**, the **10th chapter** and going on into the **11th chapter**, that the head of a woman is a man. In fact, let's read some of these things and

begin to talk about how do you apply the background that we've talked about in relationship to warfare between God and the enemy and so on, and how it affects us who are believers—as opposed to the way we have historically viewed these subjects.

Let's take this one, for example, it's the **11th chapter** of the book of **I Corinthians**. Now, what's interesting to me is that these things are plainly stated in Scripture so what we often have... we have people who say, "Well, these are historical concepts and they're not meant to be brought forward and applied today. They are sort of how Christians in the New Testament were immersing out of Judaism and everything wasn't well settled." I would say that is rubbish. And the reason I *would* is that if you apply that logic to *any* passage, you can set aside the plain meaning of Scripture. So either the Scriptures are meant to be instructional to us or they are not. *Either they apply or they don't. The problem is* that when you want a different result from what the Scriptures *seem* to say, but you have no context in which to understand it, then you are bound to play "fast and loose" with Scripture. I would rather that the Scriptures interpret *themselves* rather than have the credibility of men determine what it means, because usually when *that* happens the problem becomes as simple as this: if you have a preference for the interpretation of Scripture, then you simply arrange the Scriptures in a manner that support that preference. Well then, *you* are the authority. It's *not* the Holy Spirit that is interpreting the Word, it's that *you* are.

So, let's take a look now at a very controversial passage of Scripture, but then I'll show you how easy it is to understand it once we have the appropriate context. All right, here it is, "**Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man,** (now, in case you want to follow along in this reading, it is **I Corinthians 11:3**) **and the head of Christ is God.**" All right now let's stop there for a moment. Is the head of Christ, God? What is *your* answer? If your answer is yes, then you have answered correctly. Look at this again. I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ. Now, is Christ the head of every man? If you've answered yes then you have answered correctly. *Why* then, are we going to make a *difference* in the meaning of *this Scripture*, "**and the head of the woman is man...**" because that comes right in between, "**the head of every man is Christ...**" and, "**the head of Christ is God.**" And by the way, it is the *same* word, so whatever it means—whatever *that word* means—it means that it applies to man, in relationship to Christ, it applies in relationship to Christ and God and it therefore applies in relationship to the woman and the man.

Now, here is the matter, plainly spoken: is it a diminishment of Christ for the head of Christ to be God? Is that a diminishment... does that make Christ less? No. The head of a man is Christ. Does that make man less because the head of a man is Christ? No. Is it demeaning, does it make him unimportant or insignificant? No. How, then, do we come up with the idea that "the head of a woman is a man" is meant to be demeaning, and to relegate a woman to a secondary position—second-class citizenship, as it were? It's simply this: it's our failure to understand that the appropriate context that causes us to

see *these* as meant to be applied, competitively, and by that, in a demeaning manner.

Now, we'll explain this, and when we're done you will see that those who would pick and choose and spiritualize—or relegate to non-importance by the use of pseudo-historical information—that, in fact, they do not serve the Body of Christ well. They simply go with the prejudice of the moment and those who agree with the meanings as presented in such a fashion *already* have a prejudice in their lives and they are simply looking for those teachers who will play to whatever they lust after. And the Scriptures warn against these days coming when men will not endure what is true but they'll have itching ears and they'll heap to themselves teachers for whatever they lust for. (Inserted – actual verse—**“For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.” – II Timothy 4:3,4**) Now, when you do that, neither do you end up with the truth, nor is it that what you end up with is useful or valuable to you because God will only support what is true. If you end up with something that is *not* true then you've managed to deceive yourself.

Here, I did the unusual thing of putting the Scripture in its context and showing you that *if it does not mean* that the head of a woman is a man *then it does not mean* that the head of every man is Christ and it does not mean that the head of Christ is God. Now, **verse 4** says, **“Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. And every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is just as though her head were shaved.”** (Inserted – **I Corinthians 11:4,5**) Now, there is a dishonoring of *the head* that is possible, specifically in the context of praying or prophesying. Now note this: the Scriptures are *not* saying that you should not pray and they are *not* saying that you should not prophesy. They are saying, simply, that you should not pray or prophesy, uncovered. A woman who prays or prophesies, uncovered, not only dishonors her head, but endangers herself, and here is why. It goes on to say, “she is in the presence of angels...” (Inserted – actual verse —**“For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.” – I Corinthians 11:10**)

Verse 8, “For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.” Now he addresses the question of whether or not this means that the woman is inferior to the man. He says, “No, *it's not about* superiority or inferiority because, frankly, you cannot have a man without a woman.” In other words, *every* man has a mother. So, it's not that the man is inherently important and the woman is not, or that the man is more valuable, and he's not because this kind of ...headship, if you like... and we'll get to what the word means in a moment, it's not about somebody being important and another being unimportant and he makes the point *clearly*, by saying, “Look, if we're talking about the relative value of a man or a woman then that relative value would be about whether or not the man could survive, or

even *be*, without the woman and vice versa.” So, he dispenses with the idea of competition, which means that he allows us free to continue to consider the question in the manner in which the question ought to be looked at. Not about whether a man is more important than a woman or a woman more important than a man *but* something about *authority*, and then he adds this, **“For this reason, and because of the angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.” (I Corinthians 11:10)**

Because of the angels... well, there was one time when a woman met with an angel and the outcome went badly, not only for her, but it went badly for the entire human race. Do you remember who the woman was and what the name of the angel was? It was the original encounter between a human and an angel—fallen angel, in the Garden—Eve was the woman and Satan was the angel. So, it would appear then, that this whole matter of warfare was actually the very first happening from the original time of the creation of man. It’s as though we were born into the war. So, that’s our context for looking at this matter of headship. What does it mean then, and what is the implication when it says that a woman should not pray or prophesy uncovered? Let’s see what it means. Consider this: humans were made a little lower than the angels. We are a species that is lower than the angels. (Inserted – actual verse—**“What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.”-Psalm 8:4,5)**)

We’ve been discussing this for many programs as we talked about the superiority of the angelic creation over the human creation, and just a cursory reminder, the angelic are much more powerful, physically, than we are in the realm of time and space. They are invisible unless their purposes for coming into time and space require them to materialize, but their general entrance into time and space is that of being invisible and because of that, of course, they enjoy a huge advantage over humans who, not only are visible but are limited by human form, by a form that requires them to *be* in one moment, in one instant. They certainly can move with great speed; angels can move with greater speed in time and space than any human could. So, all of these things considered, including their closeness to God, their much longer life than humans have, their ability to study humans, and their ability to see humans from a different standpoint than humans, themselves—namely, they see humans from the long view of human history and from an eternal point of view as opposed to a temporal one.

They enjoy substantial advantages over the human being and so do the *fallen* angels, who are the enemy of man and, of course, they are the enemy of man because they are the enemy of God. Together, they represent the opposing force that we call “the enemy”. Individually, they are enemies, and collectively they represent *the enemy*. Now, since every human being is categorically weaker than angels, then someone has to act on our behalf when we are being addressed by angels because the angels could very readily destroy us. Just imagine, for a moment, that you are sitting in your living room and an angel was in the room with you. Exactly what could you do to defend yourself if that

angel decided to kill you? Exactly what could you do to defend yourself? Where would you look for the angel, how would you defend yourself? Well that's my point. My point is that any angel, any demon, *if unrestrained* could destroy a human being *at will*. It's not a big deal for them.

Now, how are we actually protected from the demonic? Well the demonic, although it's the enemy of God, *is restrained by God* because, of course, evil is not the equal, but opposite, of God. Evil is subject to God like everything else is subject to God and God sets limits on what evil might do, and evil personages might do in relationship to us. So God puts limits on it. Now, those limits may be mitigated, somewhat, by the persons, themselves, and their relationship to God. So if they don't want the protection of God, if they refuse the protection of God, then you will find a greater occupation of that person by a demonic spirit. Now, demons do not necessarily just want to destroy every human being because they would rather live in a human being and, in a sense, "thumb their noses at God" in the process but if they were unrestrained, and this is my point, *if they were unrestrained they could do anything they wanted to with any human being—male or female*. Now, one of the greatest truths that the believer has upon which to rely is this: that God acts on his behalf.

How do we know that God actually acts on our behalf? What cues us into that as the truth? This is not a simple subject; this is hugely important because we are actually speaking about the way we might be defended against our enemy. This is incredibly important. How do you know that you can trust God to defend you against your enemy? After all, God is invisible... the enemy is invisible. *You* are visible and you are the weakest link, as it were, in the chain. How do you know that you can trust God? Well that's what these Scriptures are about. The Scriptures are meant to assure us of that reality. *It is common for God to give humans physical symbols in which they are meant to live to remind them of these eternal realities upon which they absolutely depend*. An example of that is: in the Old Testament, the Jews were given the Paschal feast. What did that remind them of? That God was their deliverer. Year by year they ate of the feast and year by year they were reminded of God's faithfulness as their deliverer.

In the New Testament we have symbols in the same way. For example, week after week we take the Lord's Supper. What does the Lord's Supper remind us of? It reminds us of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross; it reminds us of His resurrection and His life in us—and collectively ourselves as the body—and furthermore it reminds us of the wedding supper of the Lamb. Now, are the symbols of bread and wine, which call to our minds the Lord's death on the cross, the giving of His body, the giving of His blood and calls to mind His resurrection and calls to mind the feast of the Lamb which is yet to come, the wedding supper of the Lamb. Is that valuable to us? Of course it is. How are we meant to be reminded in this way? Well by regular participation, we are meant to be reminded that this is, in fact, a provision of God for us.

Now what does all of this mean then? This is what it means. In the book of **Ephesians, chapter 5**, we are given this incredible reminder and this is *one* of those great reminders. Here it says, **“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.”** (Inserted – **Ephesians 5:22-24**) Same context... the head of the woman is the man. He goes on and he ends it by saying, **“This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.”** (Inserted – **Ephesians 5:32**) Now I will present this message in two parts so I will elaborate more... I will come back and elaborate upon this Scripture and other Scriptures, as well, but for now I want to move it now into just a pointed conclusion.

Here is the thing: every human is subject to being destroyed by any demon at any time. Any one of us can be destroyed at any time by a demon but God acts on our behalf and prevents it from happening. They are *not* free to destroy us because God is for us. This is the great truth. This is a truth somewhat like: Jesus died on the cross for our sins and was raised again, He has accepted us into Himself and at the end of the age there will be the consummation of this relationship between Christ and the Body. *The reminder of that* is the Lord’s Supper. What is the reminder to us that the Lord is our defender and our protector and we are free to live in that belief over against the regular, pressing attacks of the enemy day by day? What allows us to believe that? Well, the analogy between a husband and a wife... God puts that great principle right on our doorstep, right in our living room, right in our faces, so to speak, every day and here is what it means: the husband is a type of Christ and the wife, a type of the Bride of Christ.

God gives the man greater authority and the woman, lesser authority—each one symbolizing something great, something profound. The greater authority that God gives to the man is meant to symbolize God’s great authority in relationship to the enemy; the lesser authority that God gives to the woman is meant to symbolize the weakness that humans—all humans, men and women—have in relationship to the struggle with the demonic. Yet, God requires the man to act by giving himself in defense of the woman. So, **“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...”**(Inserted – **Ephesians 5:25**) So He doesn’t give the man greater authority and then allow him to act as though he is greater than the woman. He gives him greater authority and requires him to serve the woman by protecting her. On the other hand, He gives the woman less authority to symbolize the fact that all human beings, in relationship to the demonic, are weak and incapable, requiring us to trust God in the same way, requiring a woman to depend upon the covering of her husband.

Covering, therefore, of a woman is indispensable for her actions and her activities in relationship to the demonic, which is everything about life, and oversight. In regard to the man it is the critical thing to remind him that it is not his authority, but the authority of Christ that he uses on behalf of his wife. *Therefore, in the Kingdom, to have authority*

is for the benefit of those subject to your rule and not for your own benefit. Now, we'll pursue this matter in the next broadcast and we will lay out all of the remainder of this subject, so you need to view both tapes together to get the full impact of what I'm saying. I hope that you'll do that, and I'll see you the next time. I'm Sam Soleyn... God bless you.

Scripture References:

I Corinthians 11:3

II Timothy 4:3,4

I Corinthians 11:4,5

I Corinthians 11:10

I Corinthians 11:8,9

Psalm 8:4,5

Ephesians 5:22-24

Ephesians 5:32

Ephesians 5:25