



How To Face The Enemy

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. (Acts 6:8)



FACING THE OPPOSITION

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed. . . (Psalms 2:2)



INTRODUCTION

The power and authority of Jesus was challenged often during His earthly ministry. After Jesus was baptized in water and the power of the Holy Ghost came upon Him, His power was challenged by Satan in a series of three temptations

(Matthew 4:1-11).

Satan tempted Jesus to use His power for personal benefit by turning stones into bread. He tempted Jesus to show His power by jumping from the highest point of the temple. Satan offered all the kingdoms of the world if only Jesus would worship him.

The authority of Jesus was also challenged by the religious leaders of the day. They challenged His doctrine, manner of presentation, and the demonstration of God's power in His life and ministry.



BEHIND THE CHALLENGE

Always remember that Satan is behind every force that challenges true spiritual power.

Some opposition to spiritual power comes through the circumstances of life. The "cares of the world" can become great and many. Satan is behind any circumstances that hinder the flow of God's power in your life.

Most opposition comes through other people around you, but you must always remember that it is not the people themselves who are opposing you. They are allowing their thought and behavior patterns to be influenced by Satan. Satan is actually the force operating against your spiritual power and authority.

REASONS FOR THE CHALLENGE

There were reasons why the authority of Jesus was challenged. They are the same reasons why Satan will challenge your spiritual power:



UNBELIEF:

Read the story of the raising of Jarius's daughter from the dead in Luke 8:49-56. Jesus performed a great miracle, but before doing so He had a problem similar to some challenges you too will face.

When Jesus entered Jarius' house He encountered unbelief. Whenever you trust God for a manifestation of His power, faithless people will tell you why it cannot happen, why it should not happen, and why it is not God's will for it to happen.



POPULAR OPINION:

Do not make the mistake of thinking that because you are in the mainstream of God's power you will be loved by everyone. Popular opinion challenged the authority of Jesus. Read the story in Mark 5:5-15. Jesus performed a great miracle, but popular opinion was against Him:

And they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts

(Mark 5:17)

On another occasion, people laughed at Jesus (Mark 5:40). You must be ready, if necessary, to stand alone. Not everyone will welcome your ministry. It says in the last days people will heap to themselves teachers "having itching ears." The popular ministries will be those saying what people want to hear rather than the message God wants to give.



TRADITION:

The scribes and Pharisees opposed Jesus's authority because it did not agree with their religious traditions. Jesus often said "Ye have heard," and would refer to a tradition of the religious leaders. Then He would say "But I say unto you," and proceed to share a powerful truth from God. Jesus experienced opposition because His teaching of power and authority did not agree with man-made traditions.

The demonstration of God's power may not be approved by the traditions of your culture or denomination. If this is true, then you will face opposition for the same reasons Jesus did.



CREDENTIALS:

The authority of Jesus was opposed because He was not an approved religious leader. He did not hold the credentials of a scribe or Pharisee. They questioned His

authority because He was a carpenter's son from the poor village of Nazareth:

Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

And His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? (Matthew 13:55-56)

Even one of the men who was to be a Disciple asked:

... Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?...

(John 1:46)

The people questioned:

... By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority? (Matthew 21:23)

Your power and authority may be challenged by those who feel you are not in the proper tribe, clan, or social level. You may be challenged because you do not have a formal Bible college education or hold credentials with a certain denomination.

It is more important to hold the credential of spiritual power than those of any denomination of man. The most important thing is to be a man or woman approved by God (Acts 2:22).



DOCTRINE:

Jesus was opposed because of His doctrine:

And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, what thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him. (Mark 1:27)

The power demonstrated by Jesus did not conform to the doctrines held by the religious leaders of the time. His teachings did not agree with the theories and beliefs they had developed and labeled as doctrine.



MANNER OF TEACHING:

Some opposed the manner in which Jesus taught. He taught with authority, not with the dull monotony used by the Scribes. Some will oppose your manner of presentation. They will say you are too emotional or teach with too much authority.

The presentation of Jesus was simple, yet powerful. Some will advise you to preach deeper, theological messages with less demonstration and emotionalism. But remember what Paul said: And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (I Corinthians 2:4-5)

SPIRITUAL ERROR:

The demonstration of power is challenged by those who are in spiritual error:

Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. (Matthew 22:29)

You may be challenged by those who are living in spiritual error because they deny the power of God.



MISUSE:

You may be challenged by those who tempt you to misuse spiritual power. Satan challenged Jesus in this area. He tempted Jesus to use His power for personal benefit and to prove His position. Satan will tempt you in this manner also. He will tempt you to use your authority to gain a place of prominence. He will suggest ways power can be used for personal benefit. This is one of the greatest challenges you will face.



YOUR LIFE WALK:

You will face opposition when you live the life of faith and power. Those who walk by faith are an irritation to those who walk by natural sight.

Stephen was a man of faith and power (Acts 6:8). His life-

style and testimony so irritated the religious leaders of the time that they were "cut to the heart" (Acts 7:54) and they stoned him to death.



MEETING THE CHALLENGE

As you move beyond the point of spiritual blessing into the realm of power and authority, you too will be challenged. This is what to do when Satan challenges your authority:



RECOGNIZE THE SOURCE:

Remember that all challenges to true spiritual power come from Satan. It is not circumstances or people who are the challengers. You must recognize the true source of opposition in order to effectively deal with it:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Ephesians 6:12)



DO NOT SPEND TIME IN DEBATE:

Because your battle is not with flesh and blood, do not waste time in argument or debate with man. Satan is not

affected by logic, intellect, or theological debate.

Jesus did not spend time in argument or debate over His spiritual authority. He asked a few questions which focused attention on the spiritual condition of His challengers, and then said. . .

. . . Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

(Matthew 21:27)



FACE THE OPPOSITION:

Do not flee before the opposition. Do not stop the flow of God's power to please people. Face opposition in the power of God.

When Jesus entered the house of Jarius to raise his daughter He faced the forces of unbelief. He did not let this stop Him. He did not flee the house in terror or defeat. He faced the opposition and accomplished the purpose for which He had come.



TAKE AUTHORITY:

Remember the authority delegated to you by Jesus. He said "I have given you power over all the power of the enemy."

He has given it to you, but you must use it. When faced

with a challenge of Satan, take spiritual authority over that challenge. Take authority in the name of Jesus. Take authority on the basis of God's Word. Apply the power principles you have learned in this ministry.

You have been given power over ALL the powers of the enemy. Overcome the negative forces of unbelief! Take your rightful place of authority in God.