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And the government shall be upon his shoulders and of the increase of his government there shall be no end! Isaiah 9:6-7

You know something but you don't know it.

You have the knowledge or the theory...maybe not even that...you are just vaguely aware; haven't paid much attention, until something clicks together and you go...you have, in the words of Homer Simpson, a d'oh moment!

d'oh

interjection \ 'dō\ —used when you realize that you have just said or done something stupid or foolish

It's as if we see something for the first time, something that we were blind to before.

THE PROBLEM

The people in Isaiah's time were like this: darkened and dull, seeing but not seeing, hearing and not getting it. They were disobedient and rebellious to God. The people that God had saved and redeemed out of Egypt now lived in rejection of the Word of God and embraced their own human wisdom. Carrying on life aware but not connected to reality.

The prophet describes it like this: **Is 6: 9-10**

“Be ever hearing, but never understanding;
be ever seeing, but never perceiving.”

¹⁰ Make the heart of this people calloused;
make their ears dull
and close their eyes.

Isaiah asks God how long does this have to go on?

And he answered:

“Until the cities lie ruined
and without inhabitant,

until the houses are left deserted
and the fields ruined and ravaged,

¹² until the LORD has sent everyone far away
and the land is utterly forsaken.

¹³ And though a tenth remains in the land,
it will again be laid waste.

But as the terebinth and oak
leave stumps when they are cut down,
so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.”

Isaiah 9 comes to us in this context. The people of God were plundered by the Assyrians and all they had hoped in was destroyed. They had lost their way to such an extent that they had turned to consulting the dead via mediums and spiritists to try and get some help.

But Isaiah and his family are part of the remnant, the holy seed, that lives by faith and trusts God despite the sense that God is hiding and that all has turned completely and horribly wrong.

Isaiah addresses Israel like this: 8: 19-22

¹⁹ When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. ²¹ Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. ²² **Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.**

They were walking and living out their lives in enduring darkness. Death-darkness which had cast a pall or shadow over their lives. In this deep darkness they could neither see nor hear the truth or reality. There was only fearful gloom and great distress. They had rejected the word of the Lord and embraced hopelessness. Distressed, hungry and famished they turned to cursing the earth, God and their king.

The words Gloom and utter darkness are found only in this passage.

But in the Bible there are moments, ah ha moments; much better than d'oh moments, kairos moments when God breaks into our chronos time with a revelation, putting something together in such a way as to astound us and change our minds and set us on a new direction.

Into this appalling gloom Isaiah prophesies:

9 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress.

In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

² **The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;**

on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.

⁴ For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.

⁵ Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.

⁶ **For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,**

and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called

**Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

⁷ **Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.**

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

Here's the kairos moment: God breaking in to our existence in the most amazing, utterly universe changing way unimaginable to our paltry minds. This is more than just a d'oh moment; silly me! This is mind boggling in its vast dimensions of incredibility.

a child is born, a son is given and His name; the characteristics that he will embody and live out with every fibre of his being are those of: wonderful counsellor, mighty God, everlasting Father and Prince of peace.

This ain't no ordinary child. This is royalty.

He has supernatural wisdom, a wisdom that will wonderfully undergird the Kingdom of God

He is mighty God, he has warrior power to bring liberation. And he is God- divine and authoritative and all- powerful.

He is the enduring Father to all humankind. He is not going away. He is compassionate and kind and provider and protector, the intimacy we long for.

And he is the consummate Prince of peace whose reign will bring wholeness and completeness...the full meaning shalom. Well-being, progress and freedom from anxiety the full realization of his favour.

He is a royal son and the government will be on his shoulders and of the increase of his government there will be no end!! Jesus is in charge.

The metaphor of shoulders means authority to rule. He bears power and authority the rule in His person, as the Prince and executive officer of the Kingdom and there is nothing that is going to stop the execution of this and the increase of His Kingdom of peace.

Prophetically Isaiah 22:²² ***I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.*** The key is the authority to legislate and make decisions.

Mt 28 ¹⁸ Jesus approached and, breaking the silence, said to them, All authority (all power of rule) in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.¹⁹ Go then and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ Teaching them to observe everything that I have commanded you,

In Greek scripture the word for power is *dunamis* and authority is *exousia*. *Exousia* is used here not *dunamis*. The word authority comes from 'author': Jesus' ultimate authority resides in his authorship. He made all things. He holds authority over all because he made it all.

BUT WHO'S IN CHARGE?

The question of who's in charge, who has power and authority is an age old one. This question is at the heart of all conflict on earth.

I like to think I'm in charge!
But I have to confess I am not always in control.

There is a difference between power and authority: another d'oh moment for me.

There was the time on the farm at about 10 when I got to ride a farmbike for the first time.

I was really impressed with the sense of power! It was exhilarating to a sheltered city girl!

Right up until the moment I hit the fence and broke something.

D'oh! I had the authority but I was not in control.

You see the bike has a lot of power but it doesn't have the authority to do anything.

I hold that authority and its up to me to learn how to master the power and to dictate where the bike goes.

Or I can bind it up and stick it in the garage and say Ha you rotten bike you are never going to hurt me again!!

Like this microphone has power, power to amplify me. But it lacks one major thing and that's authority. It can't turn itself on or up. I control it and I delegate it to the soundy to turn it up or down.

Power is the strength or force needed to rule or do something

Authority is the right to do so.

These two work together.

Power exercised without authority is usurpation and it's usually out of control.

The bike took over from me.

Feelings get out of control and express themselves because we have not learned to understand them and to bring them under our authority.

If you do not know you have the authority to do something, you can have all the power but it is either useless or it is used in the wrong way.

In this room there is lots of power. Strong physical people. Strong minded and skilled intelligent people. We have power over things.

But do you now who has most authority in this room?

It just may be that it's the ones who know where authority comes from.

The pray-ers who keep watch and interedede.

Who is in charge of the earth has never been in doubt.

It looks as though Satan has the lion's share.

The power to wreak havoc across the earth, to plunge humankind into darkness, appalling darkness.

But the truth of this is that it is all usurped, stolen and given by us. It is real. But it is power without true authority.

The government is on his shoulder. In Genesis and in Matthew God delegated power and authority to humankind. To us!

²⁷ So God created man in His own image, in the image *and* likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them.²⁸ And God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and **subdue it [using**

all its vast resources in the service of God and man]; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth.¹⁵ And the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden **to tend and guard and keep it.**¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, **You may freely eat of every tree of the garden;**¹⁷ **But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and blessing and calamity you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**

So Adam's task was to subdue the earth and have dominion over it.

It was to tend, guard and keep it.

Ps 115: 16 the highest heavens belong to the Lord but the earth he has given to humankind.

Psalms 8 You made them rulers over the works of your hands and put everything under their feet.

But Adam screwed this up and the serpent came in and deceived him and stole and usurped his God-given governmental authority. And humankind lay on their backs and went: ok. It's easier this way.

In Isaiah 9 the prophecy declares: the government will be on **his shoulders!**

This is the seat of authority and Jesus as the God-man **in death and resurrection** took back from Satan what Adam forfeited.

God never lost authority or power, He won back what Adam lost, he crushed the serpent's head.

Eph 1:22 And God placed everything under his feet and appointed him head over everything for the church.

Col 2:10 He is the head over every power and authority.

And Satan's limited authority is still only delegated to him by the actions of people.

Because the government is on his shoulders You Have Authority in Jesus' Name

1. Establish in your mind and heart that Jesus Christ is Creator and Owner of all rights over this earth and you and me. He is the ultimate authority.

He is the King on whose shoulders the government and authority of the earth rests.

2. Having established this know this. He has delegated to you and me authority over our own lives, over those we are in leadership over and authority to rule and reign on the earth. He waits to govern through us. He wants to release his power through us wielding his authority. We are to keep the garden, watch over it and prevent Satan from getting in.

3. the church has this authority. Foundationally to pray and intercede and to worship...a priestly calling; but it also has kingly calling.

The first decree that Jesus made over the church was:

You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you shall loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

We think the church is a worship service, or a building or a group of people but we have got it wrong. We are seeing but not seeing...

The church of that day was an assembly of people set apart to govern the affairs of a state, like a parliament. Jesus was talking about a people who would legislate spiritually for Him, extending his kingdom government over the earth.

Biblically, gates are where judges sat to rule and decisions were made. Gates open and close, bar or allow. As such they symbolize government.

The gates in this verse refer to the governmental plans of hell.

In this first decree about the church, Jesus is saying: the kingdom government of hell will not prevail over His kingdom government on earth- the church. He will give keys - the authority to lock the gates of hell and release the government of heaven.

This is how it is supposed to be.

Christ's authority to wield his power to govern the earth is delegated to His people – the church.

In Christ we are both priests and kings and queens.

For you are a royal priesthood.

We pray and worship and we legislate. We decree and declare. We take authority over whatever prevents the increase of his government.

A story to finish which attempts to illustrate the exercise of authority. We were told to turn the world upside down, we must understand our authority in Christ and learn how to use power and to take back the ground that Satan has usurped.

After having worked all day on my sermon, studying scripture and rereading a book on authority in prayer¹, I decided to go for a walk in the cemetery, to think and pray. As I was heading up the hill I realized that there was a bird flapping its wings on the side of the castle/ tomb there. So I went closer and could see that the starling had one of its feet trapped in some netting that had been put up a hole, presumably to stop such birds from nesting on the castle. It was hanging upside down and desperately trying to free itself.

It did not make me feel very good. So I wondered what I could do. I tried a long stick to see if I could free it, to no avail. I thought about climbing over the fencing which had spikes on it and then trying to scale the wall to help it, but to be honest I doubted that that would have won the day!!

So I prayed. And I prayed that this bird would be set free in the Name of Jesus; on the basis of what I had been reading about authority given to us over the birds of the air and the whole of creation as stewards of the earth, I commanded that the bird be set free.

I thought maybe I should walk around the castle 7 times like Joshua and claim this miracle. I got round about twice and nothing was happening.

Trust me I was tempted to give up and go home.

On my third time around the other side I asked the Lord to show me how to pray. I heard the whisper: Fowler's snare. So taking out my trusty iphone I looked it up. And I realized that the Fowler is a picture of Satan and that we...caught as it were in the

¹ Authority in Prayer by Dutch Sheets

snare he sets have been thoroughly set free by One who has authority, and on no doing of ourselves. This bird had no hope of getting out by itself and friends neither do we. So in the Name of Jesus I once again took up the authority given to me in Jesus' Name to bind up the snare of Satan and to loose this bird as a symbol of the work that Jesus has completely done on the cross. And I can tell you I was expecting a miracle. I was expecting that that bird would be supernaturally set free. So I'm walking around again and looking at this bird when all of a sudden this younger woman appears walking up the hill.

So I turned to her and said this bird is caught in the netting. And yes its still alive. So she said I'll climb the fence and did so and then scaled the wall and meantime this bird starts screaming at us. I mean it just opened its beak and bellowed. She couldn't free it but pulled the netting out of the hole and lowered the bird to me. While she held it I managed to free its leg from the fowler's snare and in a moment it was gone...free as a bird!!

And I thought: what just happened here! What are you trying to teach me Lord? The fact is I was on the point of giving up when I thought to ask God for the way to pray. I then used the scripture to pray as I thought God was saying. I was not expecting human help! But you know God sent someone and together we were able to free the bird. Neither of us could have done it on our own. It was a miracle. I have no doubt it would be dead otherwise.

We don't just have to lie down and accept the things around us that trap and ensnare ourselves, the world, our friends and family.

You and I have been delegated authority in the Name of Jesus to deal with this.

We have God-given authority to decree and declare changes.

The power of the spoken word. Knowing in whose Name you speak.

In whom I stand is critical.

And the government shall be upon his shoulders and of the increase of his government there shall be no end! Isaiah 9:6-7

This is a profound message to the church.