



## Scriptures and Doctrine :: What are the “powers and authorities” in Col. 1:15?

### What are the “powers and authorities” in Col. 1:15? - posted by roadsign (), on: 2009/11/17 8:25

Col. 2:15 “Disarming the rulers and authorities, he has made a public disgrace of them, triumphing over them by the cross” NET

I have always assumed that these rulers and authorities refer to those in the spiritual realms, however, I can't see anything in the context that suggests that. The greek words in themselves do not require such an interpretation, and in fact, more often are given other renderings.

From the verses before or after it seems that this more likely refers to the authority of the Law and the power it had/has over the people when they are still “alive” in the flesh.

Any thoughts?

You may want to check the verse out here

(<http://net.bible.org/verse.php?bookCol&chapter2&verse15>) NET Bible

### Re: What are the “powers and authorities” in Col. 1:15? - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2009/11/17 9:04

Based on Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which is almost a duplicate letter, we can know these "rulers and authorities" are the same as the "wicked forces in heavenly places" and the "principalities and powers" that rule over the hearts and minds of men through "the god of this world."

### Re: What are the “powers and authorities” in Col. 1:15? , on: 2009/11/17 9:04

Hi Diane,

Interesting question.

I think the answer lies in the fact that God gives earthly systems of government both their powers and their authority. In the same way, the Mosaic law had the power of life and death over a person, in a good way. However, it had been hijacked by men and added to, and misadministered, because of sin.

When Jesus came, and died, it was, in God's estimation, high time to take control back in such a way as to redirect how HIS authority and power would be ministered on earth. By the sending of the Holy Spirit on all who would believe, (made possible by the cross), He enabled men to live spiritually free from what in God's estimation were now dead and defunct systems. AND from the spiritual hijacking which had taken place through men in bondage to sin.

Col 2:10 seems to be the new status quo in God, and the verses which follow up to v 15, are an explanation of how the changes took place.

It is interesting that Col 2:16 refers to new moons and sabbaths, because of course, the planets and stars were the object of worship of those rejecting God in those days. Here God emphasises that even the previous legitimate religious significance of new moons and sabbaths has been altered.

A few verses from elsewhere spring to mind. They are:

Eph 4:8

Matt 17:26

Luke 20:22 - 25

Rom 8:12 - 15

Gal 4:1- 7; Gal 5:25 - 31

John 6:32 - 36; John 8:12 - end

Heb 13:13 - 17

The oversight here, is spiritual, under God, nothing to do with local government either religious or civil.

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2009/11/17 13:58

Quote:  
----- Based on Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which is almost a duplicate letter, we can know these "rulers and authorities" are the same as the "wicked forces in heavenly places" and the "principalities and powers" that rule over the hearts and minds of men through "the god of this world."  
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Yet, in Eph 6 these powers are "the rulers of this sinful world". The context there makes this clear. That is not so in Colossians - not to imply that these "rulers and authorities" in Colossians are not referring to spiritual forces.

Yet, we cannot discount the immense authority that Law has over the conscience. Not only is this the context of Colossians and also the passage in question, but also, it strikes at the heart of a human quality: The conscience is ruled by authorities of some kind (Laws) which are powerful human motivators - even "dictator-like". We know that it is near impossible to move people to go against their conscience - even if they know that what you require is good.

This is the very problem which Paul was constantly fighting against: consciences still under the power and authority of the Law. Colossians is about this issue, is it not?

Quote:  
----- In the same way, the Mosaic law had the power of life and death over a person,  
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We do know that the law kills. But how? How can a list of rules have any power - other than by what one submits themselves to?

Quote:  
----- He enabled men to live spiritually free from what in God's estimation were now dead and defunct systems.  
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In other words, Jesus demolishes the power of the law through becoming a new authority through redemption - that is, being their "head" through the law of the Spirit - achieved through his death and resurrection. Is this correct?

Then the Law can only find its death within the conscience through the redeemed.

If the rulers referred to in Col. 2:15 are indeed angelic beings, it may be that the condemnation that the law produces gives them power. And thus, by liberating the conscience, these beings are stripped of their power to condemn as well as rule.

All that to say: I don't believe we should extricate this verse out of context, and then form a theology from it. We find out

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rselves wandering too far from the implications of “Law”, and too focused on demonology – as if demons themselves are our biggest problem.

Just some rambling thoughts for now.....

Diane