

Lesson 1: Defining Authority

1. Understand the meaning of authority
2. Understand various aspects of authority from the Scripture



Authority Defined

- ✓ Several Greek words translated “authority” in New Testament
- ✓ Primary word – “exousia”
- ✓ From Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words:

“denotes ‘authority’ (from the impersonal verb exesti, ‘it is lawful’). From the meaning of ‘leave or permission,’ or liberty of doing as one pleases, it passed to that of ‘the ability or strength with which one is endowed,’ then to that of the ‘power of authority,’ the right to exercise power, e.g., [Matthew 9:6](#); [21:23](#); [2 Corinthians 10:8](#); or ‘the power of rule or government,’ the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others, e.g., [Matthew 28:18](#); [John 17:2](#); [Jude 1:25](#); [Revelation 12:10](#); [17:13](#); more specifically of apostolic ‘authority,’ [2 Corinthians 10:8](#); [13:10](#)...”

Authority Defined

✓ From Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon

“(1) power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission....(2) physical and mental power; the ability or strength with which one is endued, which he either possesses or exercises....(3) the power of authority (influence) and of right; Mt. 21:23....(4) the power of rule or government (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed, (generally translated authority)...Mt. 28:18...”

Authority Defined

- ✓ “the power to enforce laws, exact obedience, command, determine, or judge” (American Heritage Dictionary, p.124)
- ✓ “legal or rightful power; a right to command or to act; jurisdiction” (Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary)
- ✓ Key Words
 - ✓ Power
 - ✓ Enforce
 - ✓ Laws
 - ✓ Obedience
 - ✓ Command
 - ✓ Judge
 - ✓ Right
 - ✓ Act

Matthew 8:9

- ✓ “I too”
- ✓ “am a man under **authority**”
- ✓ “with soldiers under me”
- ✓ **Right** to **command** or order or rule
- ✓ Implied **power** to **enforce**
- ✓ Obligation to do (**act** based on) what is ordered;
submission

Matthew 21:23-27

- ✓ “By what authority?”
 - ✓ Right to act
- ✓ “Who gave you this authority?”
 - ✓ Men recognized need
 - ✓ Jesus acknowledged it
 - ✓ One must be given the right to do something (act) by someone who has the right to grant it
 - ✓ Every man has a head (except God)
- ✓ Two possible sources of authority or right
 - ✓ Divine
 - ✓ Human
 - ✓ Need to be concerned with the divine source

Matthew 9:6

- ✓ “...the Son of Man has **power** on earth to forgive sins”
- ✓ Authority
- ✓ Right, yes, but even more so, power

John 19:11

- ✓ “...unless it had been given you from above”
- ✓ Authority – right to act, in this case **power**
- ✓ Granted by God
- ✓ Right and power are granted by God

Recap

- ✓ Authority includes the right to command
- ✓ Authority includes the right to act
- ✓ The right to act is granted by one who has the authority to grant that right
- ✓ Two possible sources of authority – human and divine
- ✓ We ought to be concerned with the divine source