

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”
- ✓ Key Words
 - ✓ Power
 - ✓ Enforce
 - ✓ Laws
 - ✓ Obedience
 - ✓ Command
 - ✓ Judge
 - ✓ Right
 - ✓ Act

Matthew 8:9

- ✓ “I too”
- ✓ “am a man under **authority**”
 - ✓ Under another’s rule
- ✓ “with soldiers under me”
 - ✓ They are under my rule
- ✓ **Right/power to command** or order or rule
 - ✓ Only has that because he has been granted it by the one who rules him
- ✓ Implied **power to enforce**
- ✓ Obligation to do (**act** based on) what is ordered; submission

Matthew 21:23-27

- ✓ “By what authority?”
 - ✓ Right to act
 - ✓ By whose direction and rule are you doing this?
- ✓ “Who gave you this authority?”
 - ✓ Who appointed you to do this?
 - ✓ 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
- ✓ Two possible sources of authority or right to do something
 - ✓ 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, right to rule; in this case **power**
- ✓ Granted by God
- ✓ Right and power are granted by God
 - ✓ If God doesn't grant it, then you don't have it

John 5:26-27

- ✓ “For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself”
- ✓ “...and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man”
- ✓ **Right/power** to execute **judgment**
- ✓ Granted by God

Matthew 28:18-20

- ✓ Key words: All; given; Jesus
- ✓ All authority given to Jesus by His Father
 - ✓ All rule
- ✓ His authority the foundation of the gospel
- ✓ Jesus had the **right** and the **power** to **command** this
- ✓ And He **commanded** that the baptized be taught “to observe all things that I have commanded you”
 - ✓ Do **(act)** what is commanded
 - ✓ Compare to Deuteronomy 4:2
 - ✓ “that you may **keep** the **commandments**” involves not adding to nor taking away from

Matthew 28:18-20

- ✓ “teaching them to **observe** all things that I have commanded you”
- ✓ Right to **do** or **act** based upon what **is** commanded
 - ✓ The action may be duty, obligation, choice
 - ✓ Not based upon what **is not** specifically prohibited



- ✓ Choose the correct answer(s):
 - a) All personnel not specifically prohibited may enter
 - b) Only authorized personnel may enter
 - c) The sign's instruction is difficult to understand
 - d) The sign's instruction is readily understood

1 Corinthians 7:4

- ✓ Authority here refers to **right**
- ✓ Here is a right one does not have
- ✓ Authority here is not power, in the sense of ability
- ✓ Authority does not always carry the idea of power in the sense of ability
- ✓ Might does not make right

1 Corinthians 9:12, 18

- ✓ Authority is translated right (NKJV, NASB)
- ✓ But not required
- ✓ Just because it is a “choice” whether to “reap your material things” does not imply God has not spoken regarding it
 - ✓ Verse 14

1 Corinthians 8:9

- ✓ Authority is translated Liberty
- ✓ May eat the things, or may not eat the things
- ✓ But because it is a liberty (exousia) of yours does not mean God has not spoken regarding it. Even this liberty here is regulated.

Acts 5:4

- ✓ Authority is translated “control” in NKJV
 - ✓ “in your own control”
 - ✓ “under your control” (NASB)
 - ✓ “in your authority”
- ✓ Before being laid at the apostles’ feet, it was under Ananias’ “control” (exousia)
- ✓ We might say that it was therefore under his authority, under his decision-making
- ✓ But that does not imply that he is free in his decision-making and his control of that money **without regard to whatever else God has said**

Other Scriptures

- ✓ John 1:12 – translated “right”
- ✓ Revelation 22:14 – translated “right”
- ✓ Romans 13:1 – “powers” and “power”
- ✓ 2 Thessalonians 3:9 – “authority” in NKJV; “right” in NASB
 - ✓ Idea of right in the sense of a “liberty”