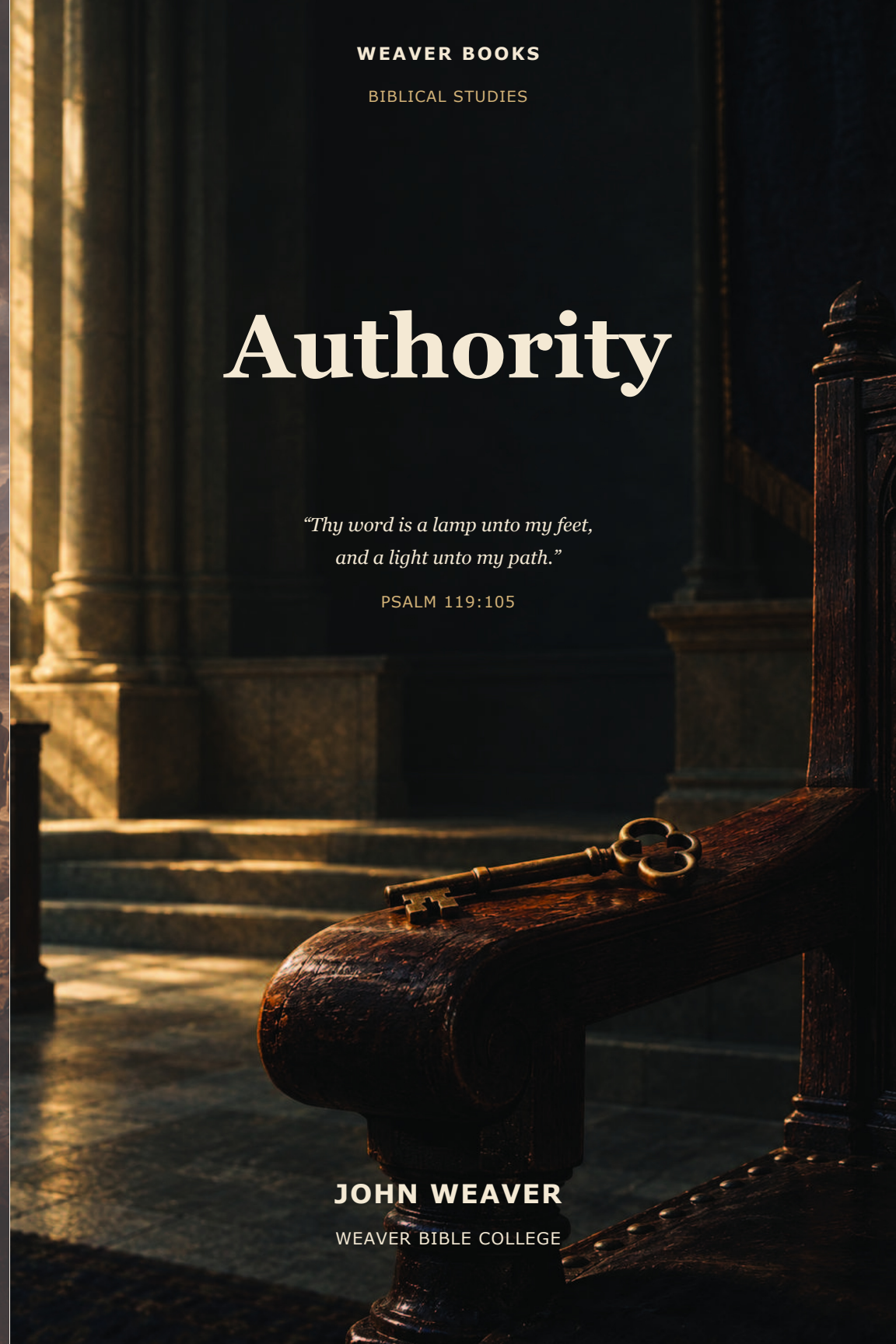
WEAVER BOOKS

BIBLICAL STUDIES

Authority

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

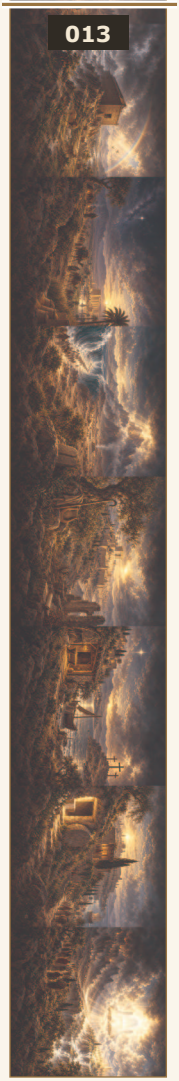
PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE





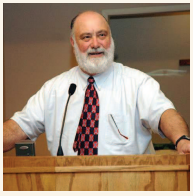
For there is no power but of God.

ROMANS 13:1, EXCERPT

Authority is neither self-created nor without limits. John Weaver examines submission, humility, civil responsibility, and the recognition of legitimate authority. Drawing on biblical accounts, these messages consider how obedience to God shapes the exercise of human office and why the possession of power does not make every command rightful.

“Government is not God. It cannot do as it pleases, and politicians cannot do as they please.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

BOOK 013

WEAVER BOOKS

Authority

Civil Government

John Weaver

Weaver Bible College

LIBRARY BOOK 013

Authority

John Weaver

Weaver Books
Weaver Bible College

Edited from the sermon corpus of John Weaver.

Contents

Chapter 1: Authority - Part One of Two 5

Introduction to Authority and the Centurion's Faith 5

The Nature of Authority: Lawful vs. Unlawful 6

Biblical Examples of Authority and Its Source 6

Sphere Authority: Delegated and Limited 7

The Three God-Ordained Institutions 8

Principles of Civil Government and Constitutional Limits 10

Executive Orders and the Abuse of Power 15

Oaths of Office and the Duty to Resist Tyranny 18

Chapter 2: Authority - Part Two of Two 27

Introduction and Review of Authority Principles 27

Constitutional Limits on Federal Authority 29

Distinction Between Authority and Power 31

Principles of Authority 31

Five Principles of Authority 32

Unlawful Authority Is Usurped Authority 33

The Centurion's Compassion and Humility 35

Authority Recognizes Authority 39

Submission to Christ's Sovereign Word 40

Honored by God 43

Honor and Faith Recognized by Christ 43

Topical Index 49

Scripture Index 51

Study Guide Link 53

CHAPTER 1

Authority

Part One of Two

SCRIPTURE READING - Luke 7:1-10 (KJV)

Introduction to Authority and the Centurion's Faith

This is the first part of a two-part message and is essentially the introduction. The exposition of this passage will wait until next week.

“Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying that he was worthy for whom he should do this: for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come

> unto thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent returning to the house found the servant whole that had been sick."

The Nature of Authority: Lawful vs. Unlawful

> Years ago, I had a friend give me a T-shirt—I still have that T-shirt—and on the front, in big, bold letters, were two words: "Question Authority." So you would have to ask this question: Why in the world would anyone want to question authority? The answer is very simple: because most authority is usurped, self-arrogated, and fictional.

The statement is even true in relation to what we would call civil government. Let me ask a question in light of the situation we have been in for several months: Does the federal government or the state government have the authority to close churches, deny work, and demand that you stay home? If they have such authority, you must ask: From where did they derive that authority? From whom did they derive that authority? And when was that authority derived?

You have to understand that there is a lawful, legitimate authority, and that lawful, legitimate authority is authority ordained by God. On the other hand, there is also an unlawful and illegitimate authority, usually derived by power, force, wickedness, and ignorance.

Biblical Examples of Authority and Its Source

I do not suppose there could be any greater illustration of that than Revelation 13:2. The Bible says: "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." Here you have a satanic power and a satanic authority.

The interesting thing is that the word for “authority” in verse 2 is a standard Greek word occurring throughout the New Testament. When you refer to authority, it is the word exousia, which literally means power, authority, strength, and jurisdiction.

If you look in your Bibles to Matthew 21:23, you will see that the chief priests and the elders questioned the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says that when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?” They wanted to know, first, the nature of his authority and, second, the source of his authority.

Sphere Authority: Delegated and Limited

Such a question may not be appropriate to the God of heaven and earth, but it is appropriate to men who are claiming authority over our lives, our property, our faith, and our family. Illegitimate and unlawful authority must always be challenged, exposed, and nullified. No one is obligated to obey unlawful, illegitimate, usurped authority.

When we consider authority, we have to consider what is known as sphere authority. All authority is located in spheres. The reason is that there is not one individual on earth—no one has unlimited authority. The only one who has unlimited authority is the sovereign God of heaven and earth. All lawful authority is delegated; that is, it is given and derived from God. All lawful authority is not only delegated, but it is also limited. Authority, then, must stem from a proper source in order to be valid.

Let me give you an illustration of unlawful, unreasonable, usurped authority. Suppose I looked at Francis and said, “Francis, I give you authority to go into Steve’s house and take whatever you want.” First, where would I derive such authority? What would be my source? Clearly, I do not have authority over that. Moreover, it would be a denial of private property and a violation of “Thou shalt not steal.” God has never given me authority to violate His law, nor authority to give someone else authority to do something contrary to God’s law. No man has ever been given authority to violate God’s law. I do not care who he is.

God created only three institutions. First, He created the family, which is a ministry of education. At the creation of the family institution, He ordained authority in the home and gave the head of the home a limited, delegated authority. As a husband and father, I have authority from God to bring up my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But I do not have authority from God to teach my children to be liars, thieves, rapists, and murderers. I have authority over my wife for her benefit, blessing, and protection, but I do not have authority to abuse, beat, mistreat, or fail to provide for her. My authority is not only derived; it is also limited. Simply because I have authority over my children and my wife does not mean that I have authority over your wives and children.

We are talking about a sphere of authority. If I leave my house, my wife, and my children, I cannot go into Steve's house and say, "Let me tell Lorraine what she needs to do," or, "Let me tell these children what they need to do." I have no authority to do that. When I leave my sphere of authority, I do not carry my authority with me. My authority is located in my particular sphere.

The Three God-Ordained Institutions

Secondly, God created the church as a ministry of grace. The family is basic and foundational. Without a family, you do not have a church, and without a family, you do not have a civil government either. Therefore, the family is foundational as a ministry of education.

As a pastor, God has given me certain authority. I have authority under God to speak, exhort, rebuke, and reprove with all authority. That is what the Bible says in Titus 2:15: "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. And let no man despise thee." I have authority to teach, preach, exhort, and rebuke in the totality of the Word of God. However, since this is delegated authority, it is also limited. In 2 Timothy 4:2, God said through Paul, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

When I reprove, rebuke, exhort, and speak, I must do it first of all with longsuffering, or patience, because not everybody sees everything immediately. But I must not only do it with patience; I

must do it with doctrine—that is, biblical doctrine. I have no authority to rebuke, reprove, and exhort outside of the Bible. For instance, I could not look at Steve and say, "You must part your hair on the left-hand side." Or look at Gary and say, "You must never wear the color blue." Or look at James and say, "You must never eat turkey." I have no authority to tell him not to eat turkey. He is going to eat turkey anyhow. Gary is going to wear blue, and Steve is going to part his hair the way he always has.

The point I am trying to make is that although I have authority, it is limited authority. It is limited in the Word of God; it does not go over and above and beyond the Word of God.

I also have no authority to come to this church and tell the pastor what he should do, nor do I have the authority to come to this church and say, "Well, you ought to do things this way." No, I have no authority to do that. If I leave my sphere of authority, I do not carry that authority with me.

Thirdly, God created an institution of civil government, and He gave that institution specific, limited authority. If you read Romans 13:1-4, you will find that civil government, or the civil magistrate, is charged with two basic functions: first, the punishment of the wicked; and second, the protection of the righteous. This is why God ordained civil government: to punish the wicked and protect the righteous. The family does not have the power of the death penalty. The church does not have the power of the death penalty, with the exception of excommunicating someone and turning him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

The apostle Paul says that the body may be saved, or the soul may be saved. But understand this: we cannot execute anybody in the church. The only one that has the power and authority to execute would be the civil magistrate.

Now, according to the Bible, civil government has two basic functions: punishment of the wicked and protection of the righteous, with the promotion of the righteous included in that protection. At no level in government has the government ever been given authority over education. It has never been given authority over the home or over welfare. It has never been given authority to

appropriate or confiscate the property of others. It has never been given the power to meddle in the affairs of people and seek to control and manipulate their lives. Civil government has no authority in the church or in the home unless the law of God is being violated.

A murder in the church is just as wicked as a murder out on the streets. A murder in the home is just as wicked as a murder out on the streets. So if someone murders someone in the church, yes, the civil authority may kill him, but it is not interfering in the church; it is simply getting the murderer. The same thing is true in the home as well. Government, civil government, and the church are two separate jurisdictions. They are not one and the same. The family, the church, and civil government each have their limited sphere of authority, and if one leaves that sphere, he does not carry that authority with him.

Each of these institutions is also an aspect of the kingdom of God. The family, the church, and civil government make up the kingdom of God. They are to complement each other, which means they are to complete each other. They are not to fight against each other, seek to control each other, or overthrow each other. They are to work together according as God has ordained in His Word.

I want you to see some things today that, I hope, will open your eyes and get you ready for Luke chapter 7. There are principles that most Christians and most Americans have forgotten. First of all, as Christians and Americans, we receive our rights from God and not from government. Government cannot give rights. It may grant privileges, but it cannot give rights.

Principles of Civil Government and Constitutional Limits

Secondly, in our republican system of government, we delegate authority to our representatives. They work for us; we do not work for them. Yet everything has been turned topsy-turvy: we now have government as our master and ourselves as its servants. It is like Solomon's passage in Ecclesiastes chapter 10, verse 7: “I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.” Government is riding the horse, while we the people walk in the dirt. The second principle is that, in our republican form of

government, our representatives are to work for us; we are not to work for them.

Thirdly, government has been established and ordained to secure our rights. It is government's duty, obligation, and responsibility to protect and preserve our God-given rights. Listen to the Declaration of Independence: “That to secure these rights”—we already had them; they did not come from government—“that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” If there is no consent, it is not a just power, but an unjust one. If government is to have legitimate authority, it must be by consent of the people.

It is true that God chose David to be king. Yet the Bible also shows that the people said to David, “We want you to be our king.” God ordained David to be king, but with the approval and approbation of the people as well. Thus the just powers government has are derived from the consent of the people.

Gary D. Barnett writes, "It has taken little time for the people of the United States to become a comatose society due to the fraud called coronavirus. An easier takeover of the minds of Americans could hardly have been imagined. This has been due in large part to mass ignorance that has been bred into the people over many decades. Ignorance will always be evident in the herd. So in order to survive as a free soul, one must open his mind and change his perceptions so that an escape from ignorance is possible."

"Accomplishment of this freedom requires a belief in only what one can prove," I would add, in accordance to the Bible. "So question everything and believe only in self," and I would add the Bible. He continues, "Accept love, empathy, caring, joy, humility, kindness, compassion, and truth. And this will lead to a joining with others instead of fear and divisiveness. At this point, fear is the single common denominator of human action. And that fear has led to chaos and large-scale submission."

"This is a recipe for tyranny. And this is well known by the engineers of this fake crisis, as they structured this pandemic in a manner to cause global upheaval through isolation, and pitting everyone against his neighbor. By doing this, infighting has taken

the place of sanity. And instead of questioning the government's false narrative, people are questioning each other. That leaves the real criminals free to continue their plot, to restructure society, to fit their agenda of total control."

And then one author said it like this, and I just quoted the scripture from Ecclesiastes 10, but here it is: "We are fast approaching the stage of ultimate inversion, the stage where the government is free to do anything it pleases, while the citizens may act only by permission—which is the stage of the darkest periods of human history, the stage of rule by brute force." Wow.

Now, in light of what I'm discussing and what I'm going to share with you next week in light of authority, we need to consider Article 6, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the United States Constitution. Now, let me make a statement before I go any further. Whether you like the Constitution or not is immaterial. Whether you agree with it or not is immaterial. If you say, "Well, the Constitution was initiated in fraud," I understand that because the founding fathers went to that convention, what?

To work on and rewrite the Articles of Confederation. And then instead of doing that, they came up with the Constitution. So regardless of whether that happened—and it did happen—or whether you believe it was wicked or right is immaterial. The point I'm trying to make is right now, the Constitution is supposed to be the document which binds our government. Okay. So it is in existence. It is here, whether we agree with it, whether we like it or not.

Thomas Jefferson said this: "To violate man's rights means to compel him to act against his own judgment or to expropriate his values. Basically, there's only one way to do it: by the use of physical force." Now listen, "There are two potential violators of man's rights: the criminals and the government. The great achievement of the United States was to draw a distinction between these two—by forbidding to the second, that is the government, the legalized version of the activities of the first." So he said, we wrote this Constitution to keep the government from becoming the criminal element. He goes on to say this: "It cannot be repeated too often that the Constitution is a limitation on government, not on private

individuals—that it does not prescribe the conduct of private individuals, only the conduct of government. That it is not a charter for government power, but a charter of the citizen's protection against the government." So what he is saying is the Constitution was indeed to protect each of us from the government and to keep it from becoming a criminal gang.

Article 6, paragraphs 2 and 3, state:

“This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding.”

“The senators and representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several state legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several states, shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support this Constitution; but no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.”

Paragraph 2 of Article 6 states that the Constitution is to be the supreme law of the land. As Christians, of course, we believe that the Word of God is the supreme law of the land.

Here is the Constitution. Although it said very clearly that the Constitution is the supreme law of the land, it also said that no state has any right, power, or authority to violate the Constitution. No state, then, can pass any law or write any constitution that is going to be in violation of the United States Constitution. Moreover, judges are bound by the Constitution. Senators, representatives, judicial officers, police, and all public officials are all bound by the Constitution. Any law passed by Congress or any state that violates the Constitution is automatically null and void.

From AmJur, second edition, that is, American Jurisprudence, section 195, consider this in light of some of the laws, statutes, rules, and regulations: "The general rule is that an unconstitutional statute, whether federal or state, though having the form and name of law, is in reality no law, but is wholly void and ineffective for any

purpose. Since unconstitutionality dates from the time of its enactment, and not merely from the date of the decision so branding it, an unconstitutional law, in legal contemplation, is as inoperative as if it had never been passed and never existed." That is, it is void ab initio, which is Latin for "from the beginning."

American Jurisprudence states, "No law, any law that violates the Constitution is null and void, since unconstitutionality dates from the time of its enactment, and not merely from the date of the decision so branding it unconstitutional." So if Congress, or the state of Georgia, or the state of Florida, passes an unconstitutional law, it has no binding effect upon me. It is unconstitutional from its enactment. I do not have to wait until some court comes along and says, "Well, it's unconstitutional."

How would I know whether it is unconstitutional? I need to study my Constitution. I need to know what the Constitution says. American Jurisprudence is saying that any law violating the Constitution is null and void from the beginning. You do not have to wait for some court to declare it unconstitutional.

"Such a statute leaves the question that it purports to settle just as if the statute had never been enacted. Since an unconstitutional law is void, it follows that generally the statute imposes no duties, confers no rights, creates no office or liabilities, bestows no power or authority on anyone, affords no protection, is incapable of creating any rights or obligations, does not allow for the granting of any relief, and justifies no acts performed under it. Once a statute is determined to be unconstitutional, no private citizen or division of the state may take any further action pursuant to its provisions. A contract that rests on an unconstitutional statute creates no obligation to be impaired by subsequent legislation. No one is bound to obey an unconstitutional law, and no courts are bound to enforce it. A law contrary to the United States Constitution may not be enforced. Once a statute has been declared unconstitutional, courts thereafter have no jurisdiction over alleged violations. Persons convicted and fined under a statute subsequently held unconstitutional may recover the fines that they paid."

Executive Orders and the Abuse of Power

Now this is American Jurisprudence, a law work. This is what lawyers go to; this is what they read, or at least what they should be reading. One of the problems, I would say the biggest problem we have today, is that even most Christians do not read their Bible. They have no idea what biblical law is about. Most Americans have never read the United States Constitution, nor their state constitution; they have no idea what is put there.

Most Christians, unhappily, and most Americans, unhappily, believe that government can do whatever it pleases, and that politicians can do whatever they please. If that is so, then government is God. But government is not God. It cannot do as it pleases, and politicians cannot do as they please. The Bible tells you very clearly in Psalm 115, verse 3, that only God is sovereign: "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased." He can do that because He is God, but government is not God. Politicians are not God.

Oftentimes we speak of tyranny, totalitarianism, and despotism. Let me give you a definition. Totalitarianism is a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience or submission to the state.

I hope you remember the Battle of Thermopylae. I think it was in 490 BC, when Xerxes, the Persian emperor, brought over a million soldiers to that pass, where King Leonidas of Sparta was defending it with 300 men. Leonidas ordered his men to stand: “You stand and you fight with me. We’re going to fight this invading horde.” According to the movie 300, Xerxes said, “Unlike the cruel Leonidas who demands that you stand, I only require that you kneel.” That is a tyrant. He says, “I don’t want you to stand. I want you to kneel.”

In other words, tyranny always wants people to kneel and voluntarily submit without any thought of resistance or independence. James Madison, known as the father of the Constitution because he was secretary at the Constitutional Convention, said, “Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives them.” If that is so, we are a

disarmed people, I can assure you. Thomas Jefferson said, “When tyranny becomes law, rebellion becomes duty.” Patrick Henry said, “The liberties of a people never were, nor ever will be secure when the transactions of their rulers may be concealed from them.”

How many of us really know what goes on behind closed doors? We don't. In light of these quotes, here's a question: What about executive orders? Before answering, listen to a quote from Judge Andrew Napolitano. Here's what he said: "It is hard to believe that any judge in America would permit a criminal trial of any person for violating a standard of behavior that has not been enacted into law by a legislature."

Let me stop there. The quote goes on, but what he is talking about is social distancing, wearing a mask, and not meeting in groups larger than three or fifty. These are standards of behavior. His point is that it is hard to believe any judge would permit a criminal trial for violating a standard that has not been enacted into law by a legislature.

We know this because, under our system of representative government, separated powers, and guaranteed liberties, only the legislative branch can craft laws and assign punishments for noncompliance. This is Constitutional Law 101—the simplest and most basic principle. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch has written that the executive branch—President Trump—cannot enforce a law that it has written. If it does, we will have approached tyranny.

Here is a pop quiz on the Constitution: What is the first freedom protected by the Bill of Rights? If you guessed speech or press, you are close. The first protected freedom is religion. The two religion clauses in the First Amendment keep the government out of our pockets for religious purposes and out of our churches for all purposes. This was at least the founders’ intent. The tyrannical behavior of many state governors, who have issued executive orders purporting to regulate private behavior on private property, even religious behavior in houses of worship, and have enforced these orders as if they were laws, has ignored this. In America, governors do not write laws; only legislatures do. There are no pandemic, public health, or emergency exceptions in the Constitution.

Law professors Lawrence O. Gostin and Eric A. Freeman of Georgetown University write: “Mass quarantines are too blunt a tool, sweeping up many people who pose no risk to the public. Even under a declared public health emergency, the rule of law stands precisely to prevent the state from depriving individuals of liberty based on irrational and exaggerated public fear. Civil confinement of individuals who have not committed an offense is a massive deprivation of liberty that requires a clear justification beyond public fear.”

They continue: “Legal standards on the state’s police powers to protect the public’s health and safety are well-developed. Civil confinement of individuals who have not committed an offense is a massive deprivation of liberty that requires a clear justification beyond public fear. State statutes and constitutional law require sound scientific evidence of significant risk reflecting a delicate balance between public health and civil liberties.”

“Current quarantines and calls for travel bans are reminiscent of 19th-century views of walling off borders, which is impossible in a modern globalized world. Although the states undoubtedly have the authority to issue quarantine orders, the Supreme Court has set clear standards for civil confinement, recognizing that quarantines implicate fundamental liberty interests. It is not enough that the individual belongs to a class of people who could present a risk.”

In other words, you are not sick, but I still want you to wear a mask and practice social distancing because you might infect others. That is immaterial.

Secondly, consider executive orders, beginning with the very first one. In 1789, George Washington issued his first executive order to the heads of the departments under him. He said, “To impress me with a full, precise, and distinct general idea of the affairs of the United States.” By precedent, that first executive order went only to the people who worked for him and were under him.

Jake McAulay, a constitutional scholar, explains: “As you may note, it was addressed to officials of the executive branch of the national or federal government. It was applicable only to those already under his authority as head of the executive branch. Properly

understood, this is the nature of executive orders. They are directives or public instructions addressed to and binding upon persons who are already under the authority of the executive, but they have no binding effect on anyone else."

"They are not law and they do not have the force of law. Only legislatures have lawmaking power, and that power is specified and limited by the Constitution. If the governor of a state wanted to do so, he could direct his department heads and employees in the executive agencies of the state to wear masks and stay six feet apart while they are in state office buildings. He could arguably order them to do so because they work for him. But he cannot order the rest of us to do that because we do not work for him. He works for us.

"Executive orders have their purpose and place. But it is crucial that all Americans, and especially those in law enforcement, understand that they are not law and cannot be lawfully enforced. Therefore, I would like to remind all law enforcement agents that when you took your oath of office, you swore obedience and fidelity to the United States Constitution and the constitution of your state. You did not swear allegiance to a mayor or a governor or a judge or a president."

"Your fidelity to your oath and to the rule of law requires that you abstain from enforcing any edict or order from a governor or any executive which lacks constitutional authority. In the words of founding father James Madison, we are right to take alarm at the first experiment with our liberties."

Oaths of Office and the Duty to Resist Tyranny

"Finally, your duties require that you shelter and protect the citizenry from all acts of lawlessness, even and especially when they originate with civil authorities." That is usually where lawlessness originates—with civil authorities. Gary Barnett wrote, "We're definitely facing a horrible pandemic, but it's not due to any virus. The real pandemic in the United States government and the enforcers for the controlling ruling class are waging war on American citizens and will not relent until the people themselves stop it." He says that you cannot expect help from a corrupt political

system, because that is why we are in the mess we are in now. No vibrant society can exist in a state of submissive obedience when you do not think for yourself and do not act for yourself.

Let me ask this question. You can research all this for yourself, but what in the world is an executive order? Here is the answer: The United States Constitution does not directly define or give the president authority to issue presidential actions, including executive orders, presidential memoranda, and proclamations. Instead, this implied and accepted power derives from Article 2 of the Constitution, which states that, as head of the executive branch and commander in chief of the armed forces, the president "shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed."

How does that relate to executive orders that would apply to any of us? His executive orders would have to apply to the individuals under him who are working under him. With an executive order, the president instructs the government how to work within the parameters already set by Congress and the Constitution. In effect, this allows the president to push through policy changes without going through Congress.

By issuing an executive order, the president does not create a new law or appropriate any funds from the United States Treasury. Only Congress has the power to do these things. An executive order must identify whether it is based on powers given to the president by the United States Constitution or delegated to him by Congress. Therefore, any executive order that does not define where his authority comes from would be null and void anyhow.

In light of all the executive orders that have been going on in Georgia, Florida, and other states, we need to consider the oaths these individuals take when they enter office. The United States Constitution speaks of the president's oath. Article II, Section 1 says: "Before he enter on the execution of his office, he shall take the following oath or affirmation: 'I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of president of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.'"

The article explains: "The framers fittingly placed the oath of the office clause between the preceding clauses that set forth the organization of the executive department and succeeding clauses that specify the contours of the president's executive power." This is not an empowering clause, but a limiting clause, because it limits the president's executive power. Yet presidents and governors say, "I'm going to do this by executive authority," when they really have no executive authority to do anything.

Joseph Story, who was a chief justice, wrote in 1842: "A president who shall dare to violate the obligations of his solemn oath or affirmation of office may escape human censure, nay, may even receive applause from the giddy multitude, but he will be compelled to learn that there is a watchful providence that cannot be deceived, and a righteous being, the searcher of all hearts, who will render unto all men according to their desires. Consideration of this sort will necessarily make a conscientious man more scrupulous in the discharge of his duty and will even make a man of looser principles pause when he's about to enter upon a deliberate violation of his official oath."

I certainly agree with that. But today most people have no concept of God, no concept of biblical law, and no concept of what they are doing when they take an oath.

Did you know that most presidents—practically all presidents—have taken their oath with their hand upon the Bible? In the old days, that oath was taken with the hand upon Deuteronomy 28, where the blessings and curses of the law are spelled out. George Washington, when he was inaugurated as president and took his oath, bent down and kissed the Bible. Unhappily, today most presidents and most governors think hardly anything of it.

George Washington took his oath of office on April 30, 1789, before the Supreme Court was ever in existence. The oath of the vice president is the one with which we are most familiar: “I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and

that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office for which I'm about to enter, so help me God."

Any military man who ever entered the military took this oath, basically, and so did every law enforcement officer.

Think about the oaths of governors. Here is the governor's oath in the state of Georgia: "Before he assumes office, he does this: 'I do solemnly swear or affirm that I will faithfully execute the office of governor of the state of Georgia and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the constitution thereof and the Constitution of the United States.'" The lieutenant governor takes the same oath. Probably all governors in every state would take the same oath or one very similar.

Their primary allegiance is to the constitution of their state and the Constitution of the United States. Their allegiance is not to their party, not to their power, and not to their platform. If they do not have allegiance to the constitution of the state and the Constitution of the United States, then they would effectively become tyrants.

One of the representatives from Florida years back, Democrat Alcee Hastings, when asked what the rules were in Congress, responded, and I quote, "There are no rules. We make them up as we go along." Well, if there are no rules, we are not a republic, because a republic is ruled by law. If there are no rules, then we are already under despotism and totalitarianism.

Thomas Jefferson said it like this. In the 1700s, he said, "The issue today is the same as it has been throughout all history, whether man shall be allowed to govern himself or be ruled by a small elite."

I want to challenge you to read the Florida constitution. Listen to what the Georgia Constitution says, Article 1, Declaration of Rights: "All government of right originates with the people, is founded on their will alone, and is instituted to protect the rights of the individual and for the good of the whole. Its only legitimate ends are to secure justice for all, preserve peace, protect the rights, and promote the happiness and general welfare of the people. The rights enumerated in this article are inalienable by the state and shall be preserved inviolate by the state." In other words, nothing can violate or alienate these rights.

Freedom of religion: “No law shall be enacted respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” If no law can be enacted respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, then no executive order, emergency order, pandemic, war, or scheme of anything can affect it. It is to be inviolate.

The Maryland state constitution, Article 44, declares: “That the provisions of the Constitution of the United States and this state apply as well in time of war, as in time of peace, and any departure therefrom or violation thereof under the plea of necessity or any other plea is subversive of good government and tends to anarchy and despotism.” Thus, nothing can violate the rights in the Maryland Constitution. The Tennessee Constitution, Section 4, states: “The declaration of rights hereto annexed is declared to be part of this constitution of the state and shall never be violated on any pretense whatsoever.”

Our rights did not originate with government; they came from God. It is the duty of government to protect and preserve these rights. When government fails to do that, it fails to do that which God ordained it for.

What are they required to do? They are required to punish the wicked and protect and promote the righteous. When they cease to do that, they cease to be an ordination of God and become tyranny and despotism. If you study Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2:13–14, you will understand this principle: God has never ordained a totalitarian or tyrannical government. Any government that is tyrannical is not of God.

Several months back, when a church in Louisiana refused to close, a police officer confronted the pastor. The pastor responded, “But we have a right to worship God.” The officer, either ignorantly, stupidly, or both, said, “Your rights are suspended.” You cannot suspend a right; you can suspend a privilege, but not a right. If a right can be suspended, it is not a right.

Jonathan Mayberry wrote, "There are moments that define a person's whole life. Moments in which everything they are and everything they may possibly become balance on a single decision.

Life and death, hope and despair, victory and failure teeter precariously on the decision made at that moment. These are moments ungoverned by happenstance, untroubled by love. These are the moments in which a person earns the right to live or not."

We are living in that moment of time as to whether we will live free or become more and more enslaved; whether we will repent and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and follow His law or live as do the heathen; whether we will have the limited form of government ordained by God and by our forefathers or submit and kneel to a usurped, wicked, tyrannical government.

No one—no president, no congressman, no cop, no deputy, no mayor, no governor—has the power to suspend the Constitution. If they suspend the Constitution, they suspend their own power and authority. The only authority they have is from the Constitution, but no one has the power or authority to suspend it.

Here's Section 242, Title 18 of the United States Code. Section 242, Title 18, makes it a crime for a person acting under the color of any law to willfully deprive a person of a right or privilege protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States. Did you hear that? It makes it a crime for a person acting under the color of any law to willfully deprive a person of a right protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States. For the purpose of Section 242, acts under color of law include acts not only done by federal, state, or local officials within their lawful authority, but also acts done beyond the bounds of that person's lawful authority, which teaches limited authority. If the acts are done while the official is purporting or pretending to act in the performance of his or her official duties, persons acting under the color of law within the meaning of this statute includes police officers, prison guards, and other law enforcement officials, as well as judges, care providers in public health

facilities, health departments, and others who are acting as public officials. It is not necessary that the crime be motivated by animus toward the race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin of the victim. The offense is punishable by a range of imprisonment up to a life term or the death penalty, depending upon the circumstances of the crime and the resulting injury, if any. So

Title 242 says any person under the color of law who deprives us of a constitutional right can face prison or the death penalty.

So let me answer your question: What have all the executive orders been doing? They have been closing churches, businesses, restaurants, and even private homes, demanding that you shelter in place.

Here is our problem: Constitutions are not self-enforcing documents. They do not cry out for help, “Alarm!” or “Help! I’m being perverted.” We, the people, must demand that these constitutions be obeyed by those who have sworn to uphold them.

If you leave it to government, if you leave it to politicians, they will deny more and more rights, liberties, and freedom so that they may keep more and more control at our expense. A constitution is not a self-enforcing document.

Remember, I started this message with “Question Authority.” Here is why you should question authority: Someone with lawful authority can always point to its source, perhaps even quote it, explain it, and give you a logical reason. Someone with unlawful, illegitimate, and usurped authority cannot point to a source. Therefore, that person will rely on force to make you kneel and obey. All unlawful, illegitimate, usurped authority is arrogated to oneself. It is stolen.

It is based upon the deception and arrogance and wicked determinations of someone's brain or own will. There is a vast difference between authority and power. I could come over to Steve's house and say, “Lorraine, I want you to get up right now and fix me a steak dinner. I want it this way, and I want it done just like this. Go ahead and get started. Do it right now.” I have no authority to do that. I know Lorraine; she would probably say, “Well, yes, if you want one, I'll fix it.” She probably would, but I have no authority to do that.

Suppose I did say, “Lorraine, I want you to fix me a steak. I want a baked potato, I want salad, I want this, I want that,” and went down the line. She might say, “Well, you know, if you ask, I might do it, but you don't have any authority to tell me,

I said, "No, Lorraine, you're right. I don't have any authority." Then I pulled out my pistol, stuck it to her head, and said, "But you will do it, won't you?" See, that's power. I may not have authority, but if I have power over her, I can make her do what I want. There is a vast difference. I don't have any authority over her, but I could have power over her. Where government does not have authority, it always exerts power.

There is a difference between lawful authority and unlawful authority. To resist lawful authority is rebellion. If you refuse to obey unlawful authority, it is not rebellion; it is resistance. Rebellion can only be against lawful authority. If there is no lawful authority, there is no rebellion; it is only resistance.

Thomas Jefferson's personal motto was this: "Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God."

Now, Lord willing, next Sunday I want to share with you from Luke chapter 7 some of the most important points dealing with authority. You and I need to learn to question authority. When someone says, "You must do this," we need to ask, "Really? Why must I do that? Where is the authority derived? Who said it? Show it to me." Someone asked me this morning, "What do you live by?" I live by, first, the Bible, God's law; secondly, the Constitution.

If it's not biblical, if it's not constitutional, I ignore it, because it has no binding influence upon me whatsoever. I'm obligated to obey that which is biblical, that which is constitutional.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for Your Word. Thank You for Your truth. Lord, help us to understand this. Help us, Lord, to grasp it. And help us, Lord, to question the authority of man, because most of it is pure fiction, usurped and self-arrogated.

Help us to never question Your authority, for You're the sovereign God of heaven and earth, and You have the absolute right to tell us how to live, how to act, what to do, and when to do it. We bow before Thee in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Authority

Part Two of Two

Introduction and Review of Authority Principles

This is the second part of the exposition from the hour-long introduction given last week. The subject is simply authority. Last week I dealt with the historical and constitutional view of authority. Today I will look at some of that, but mainly expound this passage.

"Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying that he was worthy for whom he should do this. For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

"Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter

under my roof. Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed.

"For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, "I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

I began this message last week by telling you the two words on the front of a T-shirt given to me, in big, bold letters: "Question Authority." If you listened well to that message and remember anything about it, you will understand the importance of those words, "Question Authority." Most authority today is illegitimate, unlawful, and usurped. Lawful, legitimate authority is delegated authority, and it is limited. There is a proper source from which authority flows, and there is always a limitation placed upon it. Unlawful authority simply demands that you submit. It demands that you surrender, and you do so without question.

Ward Churchill said, "The American people are free to do exactly what they are told." When you stop and think about that in light of what is happening, consider a cartoon I saw this week. It showed adults, Americans, crawling on all fours with their face masks on. Below it said, "Americans were informed that the coronavirus does not go below three feet." So they were crawling around.

That is what he is saying: Americans are free to do exactly what they are told. Not only does unlawful authority demand immediate and unconditional submission, it always grasps for more and more power. R. J. Rushdoony, back in 1971, said this:

"The authority of the state is everywhere in decay. But everywhere the state is grasping for more power as the cure-all for man's problems. The powers of the state are thus likely to increase markedly in years ahead, but that increase is the forerunner of the state's collapse as a saving agency."

When you stop and think about this quote and the illustration of a drowning man, the rescuer gets to the drowning man. What does the

drowning man do? He almost drowns the rescuer. He is seeking to save himself regardless of what it takes. Thus Rushdoony is saying that the more the state's authority, quote unquote, decays, the more it is grasping for power as well. Practically everywhere you turn, you hear the word simply, “obey, obey, obey.” Yet, as I pointed out last week, our God-given rights never, ever stop. There is never a time when we do not have those rights.

The United States Department of Justice, in a recent statement of interest in support of the plaintiffs in the case of Temple Baptist Church against the city of Greenville and its mayor, stated that there is no pandemic exception to the fundamental liberties the Constitution safeguards. The city and its mayor had banned drive-in services for the church and started fining people who drove to those services. The Department of Justice said, “Indeed, individual rights secured by the Constitution do not disappear during a public health crisis.” It continued: “These individual rights, including the protections in the Bill of Rights made applicable to the states through the 14th Amendment, are always in force and restrain government action.”

We certainly have a right to question authority, especially when it contravenes biblical authority, the Word of God, the commands God has given us, and the rights God has given us. Unlimited submission belongs to God alone. It does not belong to any man or any government.

Just a few days before the Declaration of Independence was signed, Pastor Samuel West said this in a sermon: “Unlimited submission belongs to God alone. Unlimited submission and obedience is due to none but God alone. And to suppose that he has given to any particular set of men a power to require obedience to that which is unreasonable, cruel, and unjust is robbing the Deity of his justice and goodness.” To suppose that God has given someone unlimited authority is robbing God of his justice and his goodness.

Constitutional Limits on Federal Authority

Here is a thought that most people have never really entertained: congressional legislation is not necessarily binding upon the states. Any law that Congress passes is not necessarily binding upon the

states. You have to remember that the states created the federal government. The federal government did not create the states. The states and the people have reserved powers and rights that were not delegated to the federal government. For instance, the Ninth Amendment very clearly says, “The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights”—we are talking about the Bill of Rights and the first ten amendments—“shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.” We have plenty of other rights that are not listed in the Constitution. Then the Tenth Amendment says, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people thereof.”

Any power or authority that was not given to the federal government is reserved to the states and to the people. Moreover, the states themselves were to interpose themselves between a corrupt and unconstitutional federal government and the people who resided in those states. In other words, there is a biblical doctrine of interposition. I was trying to explain interposition to a fellow this past week. I said, suppose that you are being beaten to a bloody pulp by a thug on the street, and I walk by and see you being beaten within an inch of your life. Do you want me to walk on by and totally ignore what is happening to you? Or would you like me to reach down, pull the thug off of you, and save your life?

He said, “I’d like for you to intervene.” I said, “Then you do believe in the doctrine of interposition. You want me to interpose myself between you and the thug.” Obviously, that is what interposition is.

Long before the War of Northern Aggression, United States Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina said this: “Stripped of all its covering, the naked question is whether ours is a federal or consolidated government, a constitutional or an absolute one, a government resting solidly on the basis of the sovereignty of the states, or on an unrestrained will of a majority, a form of government, as in all others unlimited ones, in which injustice, violence, and force must ultimately prevail.”

Another interesting thing John C. Calhoun said is this: “The Constitution has admitted the jurisdiction of the United States

within the limits of the several states only so far as the delegated powers authorize. Beyond that, they are intruders and may be lawfully expelled." Let that sink in. The only authority the federal government has is that which the states gave it; when it goes beyond that, it is an intruder and may be lawfully expelled.

That is why the United States Constitution is referred to, number one, as an express powers document, and number two, as a limited powers document. An express powers document means that the only power the federal government has is that which is expressed in the Constitution. A limited powers document means that the only power it has is that which is limited to the Constitution.

Distinction Between Authority and Power

When you stop and think of what is happening and has been happening in the last several months in our country, we have to ask concerning the rules, regulations, and directives whether we are being quarantined or whether we are being tyrannized. Quarantine is when you restrict the movement of sick people. Tyranny is when you restrict the movement of healthy people. There is a big difference between quarantine and tyranny. I pointed out in the closing of the first message that there is also a vast difference between authority and power.

I could walk up to Marshall and say, "Marshall, I authorize you to give James $1,000." Marshall could reply, "You don't have any right to authorize me to give James $1,000." I would say, "You're right. I don't have that authority." But I could pull out a pistol, stick it to his head, and say, "You will give him $1,000." That is power. I might not have the authority, but now I have the power to do so. Usually, unlawful authority exercises force and power.

Principles of Authority

Before we get to Luke 7, let me give you five principles concerning authority. First, when you hear the word authority, it is synonymous with ruling. There is no way to exercise rule without authority. Proverbs 29:2 says, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." Authority and ruling are synonymous. In Mark 10:42, our Lord said,

"But Jesus called them unto him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them." Here authority and rulership are together as well. The concept is easily seen because it is impossible to rule without authority. You have to have authority to rule. Authority and rulership are usually synonymous.

Five Principles of Authority

Secondly, those who have lawful authority make it evident in their lives. It is evident in their actions. In Matthew 7:29, concerning Jesus Christ, the Bible says, "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." He taught them as one having authority, not as the scribes. Mark 1:22 says, "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes." Then Mark 1:27 says, "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." The same thing appears in Luke 4:36, because he commands those unclean spirits and they obey him. Authority is therefore not only equated with rulership; it is also evident when someone has lawful authority.

Third, when one has lawful and legitimate authority, there can be a proper delegation of that authority to those under him for specific tasks and duties. I could say, "I'm the head of my house." Does that mean I do everything in the house? No, not at all. Alice says she does everything in the past. I usually tell people, "Well, I have to wash the dishes, mop the floor, iron the clothes, wash the clothes." Alice just sits there and smiles and says, "Yeah, right. Yeah, sure."

The truth of the matter is this: I may have authority over my wife and children. I have authority in my house, but that does not mean I must do everything. I can delegate that authority.

The same is true in a church: as a pastor, I can delegate authority, and the same applies to civil government. The Bible says in Mark 13:34, "For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his

work, and commanded the porter to watch." Here the Lord has given certain authority to perform certain tasks. In Luke 9:1, the Bible says, "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases." Lawful authority can be delegated. Unlawful authority is no authority at all, and therefore cannot be delegated.

Unlawful Authority Is Usurped Authority

The fourth principle is this: all unlawful authority is usurped authority.

Hold Luke chapter 7, but turn in your Bibles to the book of 1 Timothy, chapter 2. We need to understand the word usurped. The word usurped literally means to seize, to grasp, and to hold power or rights or authority that belongs to someone else. In other words, you are supplanting, you are occupying, you are taking that which does not belong to you.

If you look in 1 Timothy 2:12, the apostle says this: "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

I want you to understand that this verse is in the context of the church. If you look in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 15, he says, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." So when you look in 1 Timothy, God is telling us how women ought to behave in church and how men ought to behave in church.

He says, "I suffer not a woman to usurp authority over the man." Thus, a wife who rules over her husband is usurping authority. A woman who claims to be a preacher or a pastor is usurping authority. Anytime women in church try to teach the men, it is a usurpation of authority.

Before I leave this point, look at the context beginning in verse 11. The apostle says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And

Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

The apostle Paul gives three reasons why women should not rule over men. First, the woman is to be in subjection according to verse 11. Secondly, the creation order: Adam was first formed, and then Eve. Thirdly, because the woman was in the transgression. I know that sin came into the world by man, but Eve was the first one who sinned, and then she gave that fruit to her husband. So here are three reasons. Now turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 11:3.

In this passage, you will see that there is an order that God has ordained. There is no way that you can get around this ordained order, because here it is spelled out very clearly. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, the apostle says, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God." Here is God's order: God, Christ, man, and woman. That is the way that God has ordained authority. This is why the apostle said in 1 Timothy chapter 2, "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man." But please understand this.

I don't care if it is the home, the church, or civil government. Anytime someone usurps, seizes, steals, or takes that which does not belong to them in the sphere of authority, it is usurpation and theft. So here is the fifth principle: There is a tendency to despise and even challenge lawful authority when one does not wish to be reproved and rebuked.

For instance, the Bible says in Titus chapter 2 and verse 15 that Paul told Titus, "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." The word despise is interesting. It means to condemn, to disparage, or to despise anyone who is using lawful authority.

As a pastor, suppose I come along, Joshua is doing something wrong, and I give him a loving, kind, biblical reproof and rebuke. I am not saying this about Joshua, but the average response of the average professing Christian is, "Well, who do you think he is to tell me something like that? Well, he's not my Lord, he's not my man." In other words, we have a tendency to rebel against lawful authority,

especially when that lawful authority is attacking us in the sense of reproving and rebuking. The apostle says, Look, you cannot do that: "Let no man despise." When a person despises lawful authority, it proves that they are indeed a biblical fool.

A fool in the Bible is not a mentally deficient person, but someone who will not listen and receive rebuke and reproof. Proverbs 14:9 says, "Fools make a mock at sin." And Proverbs 19:29 says, "Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools." Obviously, when you start to think about lawful authority and its use, unhappily, there are so many that will despise it.

Having considered these principles, look back in your Bibles at Luke chapter 7. I want you to be astonished and amazed at the understanding this Roman centurion had concerning authority. His concept of authority is not only clearly biblical, but it also produced what we would call a very practical resolution to a sick servant. In verse 2 we read, “And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.”

First, consider the fact that he was a centurion, which means he was a Roman soldier. A centurion had authority over at least a hundred soldiers, maybe more; that is why he was called a centurion, because he had authority over a hundred soldiers.

The Centurion's Compassion and Humility

Now consider the phrase, “a certain centurion's servant.” The word servant there is actually the word for slave. This man was a slave, and yet the Bible says that this slave “was dear unto him and was sick and ready to die.” We normally think of soldiers as rough, uncaring, uncompassionate, unconcerned, and desensitized to sickness and death because they see so much of it and oftentimes provide the means of so much of it. Yet here is a Roman soldier who was concerned about a slave.

The Bible says in verse 2 that this slave was dear unto him. The word dear is a very interesting word. The Greek word is entimos, and it literally refers to that which is dear, precious, and honorable. His servant was someone extremely honorable, someone who had

integrity and character. Here was a Roman soldier indeed concerned over his sick slave.

The first principle concerning biblical and lawful authority is very clear: Lawful and biblical authority does not deter, destroy, or nullify compassion and common sense. Here was a centurion, a Roman soldier, concerned about his slave. Biblical and lawful authority does not run roughshod over people. It is not cold, uncaring, unconcerned, unethical, and uncompassionate. Biblical and lawful authority does not use people. When authority is unlawful, that is when people are being used and abused. Hold Luke 7, but turn in your Bibles to 1 Kings chapter 12.

This is the story of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. Solomon had died, and Rehoboam was now king. Jeroboam, who had fled from Solomon and was in Egypt, was called back.

"And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king. And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) that they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying, Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee. And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed. And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto this people that spake unto thee, saying,

Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

Here is the wisdom of the old men. They say to Rehoboam, “If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day,” and the word servant literally means a slave. They tell the king, “If you will be a slave unto this people this day and serve them,” and answer them and speak good words to them, then they will

The counsel was, “King, you don’t live for yourself. You live for the people. You live to minister to them. You live to be their servant. You live to be their slave. And if you live to be their slave, then they’re going to turn around and be your slaves.” In other words, it is a two-way street. It is a ministry. But Rehoboam forsook this counsel and took the counsel of the young men: “My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s loins. He laded you with heavy burdens. I’m going to add to it. He beat you with whips. I’m going to beat you with scorpions.”

You know what happened? The kingdom divided. He had no authority, power, or right to do that. He used force and abuse, trying to run over the people and make them submit to his unreasonable, unconscionable demands. He lost the kingdom; it split, and the ten tribes went to the north while the two tribes stayed to the south. Please understand this: lawful, biblical authority is always compassionate. It always uses common sense and understands that it is to be used as a ministry.

The second principle is this: a right perception of authority will always produce humility. Look back at Luke chapter 7, verses 3 through 6. The Bible says, “And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not

thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof."

The elders said he was worthy: he loved their nation and had built them a synagogue. Evidently, the centurion was wealthy enough to build a special building for them to meet in. But what did the centurion say? "I'm not worthy." Real biblical authority understands what we would call biblical humility.

Everyone likes to be encouraged, but consider this from a scriptural standpoint: encouragement should be given when we do things over and above our duty. We need not be encouraged merely for doing our duty; that is required of us. Therefore, our Lord said in Luke 17:10, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Commendation goes over and above duty. Until we have done our duty, we do not deserve a pat on the back, because duty is simply duty—something we have to do.

How then is it that biblical authority and lawful authority produce humility? Here is the answer: when someone recognizes the true source of authority, he recognizes that the only way he can have any authority is through the providence of God, who gave it to him. Authority is not earned, merited, or something that you work for. Authority is a gift from God. The husband did not work for authority to be named the head of the house; God made it that way. The pastor did not work for authority to be head of the local church under Jesus Christ; God made it that way. Likewise with civil government: God made it that way.

In Psalm 75:5-7, the Bible says, "Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck." That is, do not be arrogant, proud, haughty, or high-minded. Here is why: "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another." God is the one who takes down people in authority, and God is the one who sets people up in authority. Therefore, biblical and lawful authority are not proud, arrogant, or haughty. They are not seeking to run over people and trample them. Real biblical authority humbles you.

This is true even in relationship to the king. Deuteronomy 17:18 says, "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites." He had to have his own personal copy of the law. "And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them."

Authority Recognizes Authority

Deuteronomy says of the king, “that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.” Note that his heart must not be lifted up against his brethren. Anytime you are proud, arrogant, haughty, high-minded, and determine that you are going to run over people and make them do what you want them to do, you do not have lawful authority. You have unlawful authority. Biblical humility stems from recognizing that God has given you authority. The only reason you have it is that God gave it to you.

Here is the third principle: authority recognizes authority. In Luke 7:8, the centurion said, “For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.” This was a Roman centurion. He had a commander, and that commander probably had someone over him; the highest, of course, would be Caesar. Yet this centurion had men under him.

It is like the modern-day military. There is a private, a corporal, a sergeant, a master sergeant, a lieutenant, a captain, and on up the line. A corporal has authority over a private, a sergeant over a corporal, a master sergeant over those under him, and a lieutenant over the master sergeant. Authority recognizes authority. Though this Roman centurion had authority over a hundred soldiers, he still recognized the authority of his commander and of Caesar. He also recognized that some men under him had delegated authority given

to them from him. Lawful and biblical authority always recognizes other authorities.

The president of the United States does not have authority over the governors of each state. He cannot tell the governors what to do; the governors are the heads of their states. The president does not have authority over the church or over your home. He does not call the shots.

When someone has lawful, legitimate authority, it always recognizes others who hold authority, whether it is a small amount or a great amount. You are not going to try to disparage or castigate the authority they have.

God created only three institutions: the family, which is a ministry of education; the church, which is a ministry of grace; and the civil government, which is a ministry of justice. He gave each one delegated, limited authority, and each is to complement the others. The family can do things the church cannot do, the church can do things the state cannot do, and the civil government can do things that neither the home nor the church can do. Each one is an aspect of God's kingdom, and each one has authority in God's kingdom. If there is a lawful authority, then that authority will not trample over or try to stamp out the authority of the others.

The fourth principle is that those who are under authority recognize superior and sovereign authority. In Luke 7:7-8, the centurion said, "Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

Submission to Christ's Sovereign Word

Here was a Roman centurion who was set under authority. When he saw and heard Jesus, he recognized a superior and sovereign authority. The Roman centurion had to obey those who were over him, and those who were under him had to obey him. He knew that he had to submit to his commander, and those under him had to submit to him.

The centurion was saying, "When my commander speaks, I jump." All he needed from his commander was his word; his word was sufficient. Likewise, when he gave an order to those under him, his word was sufficient. Therefore, he looked at Jesus Christ and said, "You just simply speak the word." The centurion recognized in Jesus Christ the power and authority that He received from God. He understood that since Christ was sovereign, all He needed to do was speak.

Here is where we fall short so many times. Here is where we err, and here is where we sin. Because we as Christians are usually more like Naaman the Syrian, rather than like this Roman centurion.

Naaman the Syrian was a great warrior. There was only one problem with Naaman, and that was he was a leper. He had captured a little Israelite maiden, and she was a house servant to him and his wife. This little maiden said to his wife one day, "Would to God that my master were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy."

The king of Syria heard this. "And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel." "And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy."

"And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me." The king of Israel thought, "He's trying to start a war. I can't cure anybody of leprosy."

Elisha hears it and says, "You send him down to me. And he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." So Naaman proceeds to the house of Elisha. "So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha."

"And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou

shalt be clean." But Naaman was wroth and went away: "Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage.

Naaman has come to Elisha, and Elisha does not even get up out of his chair or go outside. He sends a messenger and says, “Go tell him to wash in the Jordan seven times, and he’ll be clean.” Naaman turns away in a rage. Why? He said, “I thought surely he would come out, and call upon his God, and strike his hand over me.” In other words, he was looking for an experience—some emotional, supercharged thing where the lightning flashes, the thunder rolls, and the hair stands up on his neck. Instead, Elisha sends a word.

Finally, Naaman’s servant says, “If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?” Naaman says, “Sure.” The servant replies, “How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?” Naaman does so, and he is cleansed.

But here is the problem: most Christians today are not dependent upon Christ’s word. They want the experience, the emotion, and everything they think should go with it. The centurion said, “Lord, speak the word. I don’t need lightning or thunder. I don’t need my hair to stand on end. Lord, you are sovereign. Just speak the word. Just as my commander’s word is sufficient for me, and my word is sufficient for those under me, your word is sufficient. Speak it, and my servant will be healed.”

I suspect that one reason you and I do not really recognize the sovereign authority of Jesus Christ—remember, he said in Matthew 28:18, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth”—is that we are not in submission to that authority. Consequently, we do not recognize that all our Lord needs to do is speak the word.

God will never use you in a position of authority unless you are willing to be in submission to authority yourself. God will never use you to rebuke and reprove someone if you are not willing to be rebuked and reproved yourself.

I have been preaching for 57 years—56 years. I do not even remember; I never stopped to count it up. But I remember when I started preaching as a young Christian. I had far more zeal than knowledge.

We had a pastor, and in his office, where I have been so many times, there was an old gold couch. That thing was so ugly to me; I never did like it. But the pastor would call me and say, "You need to come in. Let's talk awhile." I would say, "Fine."

I would go in, and we would talk and fellowship. The next thing I knew, he would look at me and say, "Now, John." When he said that, I knew I had done something wrong. I did not know what, but I knew I had done something wrong. He would tell me what I had done or said, what I should not have done, or what I should have done. I would end up on my knees on that floor, my face buried in that old gold couch, weeping and crying and asking God to forgive me.

Honored by God

I do not know how many times I was rebuked or reproved. But by God's grace, I took the reproof and the rebuke. If we do not learn to submit to authority—God's authority, biblical authority, and lawful authority—God will never use us in authority. Until we realize that unless we are willing to be rebuked, God will never use us to rebuke others, we have not learned to submit to His authority and His reproof.

Honor and Faith Recognized by Christ

The fifth and final principle is that those who rest in and honor biblical authority will be honored by God. In Luke 7:9, when Jesus heard the centurion speak, "he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." This was a centurion who had great faith. "And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick."

Here was a centurion who honored our Lord by saying, "Lord, you don't have to come under my roof. You don't even have to be here.

Just speak the word and it will happen." And our Lord said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Look back in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 2, lest you think I am exaggerating. Eli and his sons had sinned against God. Here is what God told them, beginning with verse 27: "And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?" "And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?"

Now look what he says to them: "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." So God says, "You honor me, I'm going to honor you."

What did this centurion do? He honored our Lord by saying, "Lord, you don't even need to be present. Just speak the word." And how did our Lord honor him? He said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." He was a man of great faith.

It is true that this man had to be convicted by the Holy Spirit, regenerated by God, and converted. But understand this: it was his understanding of authority that led him to see the greatness of Christ's sovereignty and superiority and to submit to that authority. He said, "Lord, I'm a man under authority. I understand authority." Until you and I learn to submit to God's authority, we are never going to be used by God.

Authority matters, and the source of authority matters as well. If you comprehend that God the Father has given Jesus Christ all authority in heaven and earth, it will make a difference in how you live, pray, and act. Jesus Christ has the absolute right to tell you how to live, talk, act, walk, what to do, when to do it, where to go, and

how to go, because He's God. He's sovereign. He has all authority in heaven and earth.

Once you grasp that, and that all He needs to do is speak, you do not need thunder and lightning, emotions, or sensations. You just need to obey. R. J. Rushdoony said, "The godly man recognizes that he has been called and chosen by God. He is therefore under authority. His choices have been made by God and set forth in Scripture. The Ten Commandments spell out God's choice and law. Man has no free option. One way is sin and the other faith, obedience and blessing. The godly man rejoices in God's word and choice, and it is his joy that God shall choose our inheritance for us."

In Matthew 11:28, our Lord says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Then he says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Look at what he said in verse 29: "Take my yoke upon you." What does a yoke speak of? Submission and obedience. Everyone has heard of a yoke of oxen. You take two oxen and place them in a yoke. Those animals may weigh two thousand pounds each. They can be as strong as a bulldozer and have wills of their own, but once you get them in that yoke, they are going to obey the driver.

I have never driven a yoke of oxen, but I plowed mules, and I know gee and haw really well. Once you get those mules in their harnesses and in the trace, you pull the reins left or right, slap them on the rear with it, and they are going to go straight. You pull to the left, you gee and haw, left and right, and they are going to go. They are going to obey.

This is what our Lord is saying: "Take my yoke upon you. Submit yourself to me. I'll be your driver. You will find out that my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Just as those oxen submit to the yoke and are driven by the driver, our Lord says, "You submit to me and I'll drive you." The question is this: He has spoken, and it is in his Word. Will you submit and will you obey?

You do not need lightning flashing and thunder rolling. You do not need great emotions and great upheavals. All you need is His

word. All you need to do is say, like little Samuel, “Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth.” His word is sufficient, for He has sovereign authority.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow before Thee this day. We thank You for Your word, Your truth, Your authority, and Your yoke. Help us, Lord, to obey and to understand that Thy yoke is easy and Thy burden is light. Help us to love Thee, live for Thee, honor Thee, and glorify Thee in all that we say and do. Help us to be willingly yoked unto Thee and driven by Thee for Thy honor and Thy glory. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

Source Notes

Chapter 1: Authority - Part 1 of 2
JW01584 | YouTube

Chapter 2: Authority - Part 2 of 2
JW01585 | YouTube

Topical Index

Chapter titles and section headings are listed with the pages on which they begin.

A

Authority p. 5

Authority - Part 1 of 2 p. 5

Authority - Part 2 of 2 p. 27

Authority Recognizes Authority p. 39

B

Biblical Examples of Authority and Its Source p. 6

C

Constitutional Limits on Federal Authority p. 29

D

Distinction Between Authority and Power p. 31

E

Executive Orders and the Abuse of Power p. 15

F

Five Principles of Authority p. 32

H

Honor and Faith Recognized by Christ p. 43

Honored by God p. 43

I

Introduction and Review of Authority Principles p. 27

Introduction to Authority and the Centurion's Faith p. 5

O

Oaths of Office and the Duty to Resist Tyranny p. 18

P

Principles of Authority p. 31

Principles of Civil Government and Constitutional Limits p. 10

S

Sphere Authority: Delegated and Limited p. 7
Submission to Christ's Sovereign Word p. 40

T

The Centurion's Compassion and Humility p. 35
The Nature of Authority: Lawful vs. Unlawful p. 6
The Three God-Ordained Institutions p. 8

U

Unlawful Authority Is Usurped Authority p. 33

Scripture Index

Scripture references identified in chapter readings, headings, and manuscript text are listed with their page locations.

Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 17:18 p. 39

Deuteronomy 28 p. 20

Psalm

Psalm 75:5-7 p. 38

Psalm 115 p. 15

Proverbs

Proverbs 14:9 p. 35

Proverbs 19:29 p. 35

Proverbs 29:2 p. 31, p. 32

Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes 10 p. 12

Matthew

Matthew 7:29 p. 32

Matthew 11:28 p. 45

Matthew 21:23 p. 7

Matthew 28:18 p. 42

Mark

Mark 1:22 p. 32

Mark 1:27 p. 32

Mark 10:42 p. 31, p. 32

Mark 13:34 p. 32, p. 33

Luke

Luke 4:36 p. 32

Luke 7 p. 31, p. 32, p. 36

Luke 7:1-10 p. 5

Luke 7:7-8 p. 40

Luke 7:8 p. 39
Luke 7:9 p. 43
Luke 9:1 p. 32, p. 33
Luke 17:10 p. 38

Romans

Romans 13 p. 22
Romans 13:1-4 p. 9

1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 11:3 p. 34

1 Timothy

1 Timothy 2:12 p. 33

2 Timothy

2 Timothy 4:2 p. 8

Titus

Titus 2:15 p. 8

1 Peter

1 Peter 2:13-14 p. 22

Revelation

Revelation 13:2 p. 6

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

Your companion study guide

Authority

Follow the Scripture references, reflect on each lesson,
and use the written-response space to apply what you learn.



Scan to open the matching study guide

Downloadable PDF | 8.5 x 11 inches
No sign-in required

studyguides.weaverbiblecollege.com

If you cannot scan the code, visit the address above
and search for this book by title.