

Christ

A BIBLE STUDY ON

HIGHER AUTHORITY

is the  
Head

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# *Higher Authority* *Bible Study*

// Life Celebration Event //

# *Introduction*

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If we lived under a totalitarian government, with a dictatorship control over all aspects of our life, there would be little question who the highest (human) authority in our nation was. Thank God we do not have that kind of political system! The government and culture we do have, however, means that there is often a lack of clarity regarding who has authority in one area or another, or competition among different people, voices, or forces to exert authority. This can easily lead to confusion and conflict.

Who claims authority in the following areas of our society, and what effect does competition for authority in those areas have on you as an individual and on the community at large?

- Health and medicine
  
- Education
  
- Business and commerce
  
- Truth
  
- Justice

- Marriage and family
- Religion and spirituality
- Sexual morality
- The value of life

# *The Competition*

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1 // **Read the following Bible passages** and relate them to the conflict between God's authority and its challengers.

**Daniel 3:1-18** – How does this account show someone setting up his own authority and god as superior to the Lord?

How do believers today face similar challenges?

**Mark 7:1-13** – How does this account illustrate the arrogance of presuming an “expertise” that makes one wiser than God and his Word?

How do believers today face similar challenges?

**2 Chronicles 18:1-27** – How does this account show what happens when false teachings and human priorities are placed up against the authority of God and his Word?

How do believers today face similar challenges?

**Exodus 32:1-6,19-24** – How does this account show someone giving into the wishes of the crowd and its pressure to exceed God's authority?

How do believers today face similar challenges?

**1 Samuel 13:5-14** – How does this account show someone placing their need to solve a problem or relieve a difficult situation above the Lord's authority?

How do believers today face similar challenges?

**Numbers 20:2-12** – How does this account show someone treating his feelings as having more authority than the Lord?

How do believers today face similar challenges?



# *The Creator Rules, the Creator's Rules*

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2 // **Scan Job 39-41, Psalm 2, and Isaiah 40:9-31, reading portions.** What does the truth that God created and sustains the world – and everyone and everything in the universe – say about his authority over it (and us)?

3 // What words might you use to characterize a person, group, or nation that chose to challenge the Lord's authority and asserted that his, her, or their authority was as great or greater?

4 // **Read Mark 1:21b-28.** What made and makes Christ's teaching different?

What made and makes Christ's authority different?

5 // What the demon (unclean spirit) said about Jesus's identity was absolutely correct; even his fear that Christ came to destroy was a correct fear, since the Son of God has that power. What was the demon, speaking through the man, trying to do with Jesus' authority?

6 // **Read John 10:14-18.** Jesus had divine authority not just to teach undeniable truth and command unwilling evil spirits, but also to do something even more important. What else did he use that authority for?

7 // Why does it make a difference that Christ's suffering and death came by his own divine authority, and not by accident, evil, or mere circumstance?

8 // **Read Matthew 28:18-20.** If it hadn't been clear to his disciples before, it should have been clear to them after his resurrection: What kind of authority, as the Christ and Son of the living God, did Jesus have?

How did and does Jesus put that authority to work for the world's benefit?

9 // **Read Ephesians 1:17-23.** How is Christ's authority particularly important to his people on earth, the Church?

10 // A friend tells you this: “Yeah, sure, OK, Jesus is in charge of Christians, and looks out for the Church. That only makes sense, since it’s his thing. But it’s going too far to presume that his authority goes anywhere beyond that. People who don’t want to be Christians don’t owe anything to Jesus, and you have no business saying that what he wants should matter to anyone outside the Church.” How might you respond?

11 // **Read Philippians 2:9-11 and Revelation 1:7,8.** What do we know will eventually happen with those who resist or deny Christ’s authority here on earth?

# God's Word Has God's Authority

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12 // **Read Luke 6:46-49.** What will those who profess to follow Christ do with the things he says, which we have written for us in the Bible?

13 // In John 1, Jesus is identified as “the Word,” making clear that all that the Lord has said, in both the Old and the New Testaments, is written for us with all of Christ’s divine power and authority, so all the Bible is his teaching, not just the quotations we find in the four Gospels. **Read Hebrews 4:12,13.** Does the power and authority of the Scriptures apply only to Christians? Explain.

14 // **Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17.** Why are we as Christians going to particularly respect and treasure the authority of the Word over every aspect of our lives?

15 // A family member says to you, “Sure, the Bible is important – that’s where we learn what God has to say about love and stuff like that. I like learning about Jesus. But something written in the Bible centuries ago doesn’t necessarily still apply to us or our world today; just because the Bible says something doesn’t mean it’s right or that we need to follow it.” How might you respond?

# God Has Something to Say About Life

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16 // Some people – even some who say they accept all of Scripture as God’s authoritative Word – make the argument that since words like “abortion” and “euthanasia” don’t appear in the Bible, the Bible doesn’t have anything to say about it. Furthermore, they argue that since the most fundamental command Christ gave us is to love our neighbor, the Christian approach to life issues is going to focus on being compassionate to people who are struggling with such things, and not judging them for the choices they make.

How do the following passages make clear that the Bible does indeed address the full range of “life issues,” and that choices to do things like aborting a child, euthanizing the suffering, asking for assisted suicide, and treating embryonic lives as mere property or subjecting them to experimentation are in fact against God’s will and authority, and should be condemned as sin?

- **Genesis 9:5-7**
  
- **Psalm 31:15**
  
- **Exodus 20:13**
  
- **Psalm 51:5**

- **Psalm 139:13-16**
  
- **Luke 1:39-44**
  
- **Matthew 10:29-31**
  
- **Proverbs 31:8,9**



# *What God Says About Life Means Something for our Lives*

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17 // In arguing for a right to abortion, but also in regard to things like claiming “autonomy” to end one’s own life, people today will say things like, “I can do what I want with my body” or “What anybody does with his or her own body is nobody’s business but his or her own!” **Read 1 Corinthians 6:19,20.** What does this passage say in regard to such arguments, especially for Christians?

18 // When you are watching the news one night, a pro-abortion protester is interviewed and says, “I don’t have a problem with Christians. In fact, I follow Jesus myself. But I have a problem when people who call themselves Christians presume to tell other people that they are wrong to do things they have every right to do, like choose abortion. They should just leave those questions of right and wrong to Jesus and quit pretending they know better than everybody else.” **Read Luke 9:1-6 and 10:1,17-20, and refer again to Matthew 28:18-20.** Explain why Christians today do indeed have the authority to identify right and wrong in society, and where that authority comes from.

19 // Jesus gave his apostles authority over evil spirits when he sent them into the world as his representatives. While he has not charged Christians today with casting evil rulers out of office or throwing abortion clinics into the sea, he has still given us the same kind of authority over evil, because we speak and teach his Word. What are ways – perhaps not so spectacular, but still real and significant – that we as believers in our society can work to “cast out evil” and “trample on snakes and scorpions”?

How does having Christ’s authority give us confidence in doing these things?

20 // How does **John 14:15-24** help us answer the charge that those today who truly follow Christ will not judge anyone’s behavior as wrong or presume to tell others what is right, but will instead be “compassionate” and accept people’s choices, whatever they might be?

21 // **Read John 5:22-27.** What warning is there for those who wish to enjoy Christ's love and salvation but reject his authority over people's lives and bodies?

22 // **Read Romans 13:1-5.** What is the relationship between God's authority and the state's?

23 // Governments are made up of sinful human beings, so certainly they will make mistakes and do things contrary to God's will. **Read Acts 5:29.** What should Christians do when the government or its agents command us to do or accept things that are clearly against the Lord's commands?

24 // Many people today, some Christians included, encourage us to look at the issue of abortion and simply accept that the matter is settled. “The law is clear, the Court has ruled, and the government has made its policies, there’s no going back. It’s tragic, but you (we) lost, and it’s long past time to move on to areas where you (we) can actually make a difference now.” How does the knowledge that we have a Higher Authority who guides our actions, speech, and attitudes help us in dealing with “encouragements” like this or any sense of defeat where life issues are concerned?

How does this same knowledge that we have a Higher Authority in Christ and his Word help us to instead be confident of victory when competing “authorities” suggest or even command that we make choices or support policies that take, misuse, or devalue human life?

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## OUR MISSION

The mission of Christian Life Resources is to use life and family issues as bridges to **convey the love of God** and to **share the message of salvation through Christ**. We love because HE first loved us.

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*A Heart Ministry*

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