

Matthew 8 Study Guide

Authority is the legal right to command in the sphere of your authority. In this chapter a Roman army commander tells Jesus that he has the authority to command the soldiers under him to go or come, and they will do it. So the question this chapter raises and answers is, if Jesus is a king, what authority does he have and over who or what.

Read: The first example is found in verses 1-4. What does Jesus do that shows his authority?

The second example is found in verses 5-13. What does Jesus do that shows his authority?

How is this different from the first example? _____

Some people might say Jesus is really doing these things through the power of suggestion. It is like giving someone sugar pills as medicine, and the sick person gets well because he thinks he is taking medicine. This example shows that Jesus is not curing people by the power of suggestion.

Jesus' miracles are so impressive that many people want to become his disciples (followers). In the next story two people come offering to follow him, but Jesus discourages them.

In verses 18-20, what does Jesus say to the teacher of religion that discourages him from following? Quote it exactly.

What do you think that means? _____

Remember that a religious leader probably lived well because he received gifts from those he taught. So what would be discouraging to him in what Jesus said?

In verses 21-22, another man comes and wants to follow Jesus. He evidently had a father who was still living. The man as a son had the responsibility in that culture to care for his father until

his father died. (And that was a good thing.) So he asks Jesus that he might delay following Jesus until he has fulfilled his obligations to his father. (It sounds like his father had died, but because burial was on the same day as death, it is unlikely that was the case.)

What was Jesus' answer to this man? Quote it exactly. _____

That answer seems strange. What do you think Jesus meant? _____

Do you think this man ended up following Jesus? _____ Why do you think so?

The point of these two stories about would-be disciples is that there is a cost to following Jesus.

What would that cost be for the first man? _____

What would the cost be for the second man? _____

Apply: What do you think the cost of following Jesus would be for you? _____

Read: The next story that shows that Jesus has authority is in verse 23-27. What does Jesus do that shows his authority?

What was the reaction of his disciples? _____

Over what does Jesus have authority? _____

The final story that shows Jesus' authority is in verses 28-34. What does Jesus do that shows his authority?

Why do you think the people of the town wanted Jesus to leave? _____

Put all these stories together. Is there anything you can think of over which Jesus does not have authority?

Think critically: After you have thought about this last story, remember the two men who wanted to be disciples. Remember also the last verse, verse 34. (Notice that the people of the town did not become followers of Jesus, even though they knew about the miracle he had done.) In each these cases, Jesus had the authority to command these people to follow him, but he does not. Why do you think he did not command them to follow him?

Does that change your answer to the question just above this last one? _____

How? And Why?
