

"By What Authority – Part 3"
with Seventy Richard Neill
Adult Study Class Study Notes
November 23rd, 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vp7wBlDZwww>

<https://www.livinghopebranch.org/by-what-authority-part-3/>

Summary

The study class explores the profound concept of divine authority as revealed through scripture, church history, and personal spiritual experience. Seventy Richard Neill begins with a review of the creation story, emphasizing Jesus Christ's integral role alongside the Father and the ongoing cosmic battle between Jesus and Satan over agency—the God-given power to choose. The redemption of Adam and Eve is underscored as the foundation for all humanity's salvation, highlighting God's eternal plan and involvement. The city of Enoch exemplifies righteous living under divine authority, illustrating how a unified, faithful community draws down God's glory.

Richard then addresses the perennial question: "Where does authority exist on earth?" Using biblical examples like John the Baptist's inquiry to Jesus, the challenge from religious leaders to Jesus' authority, and the calling of apostles James and John, it shows that true authority comes from God and is recognized by those who follow Him. The confusion concerning legitimate authority in the latter days is explored through Joseph Smith's experience, the restoration, and the inspired messages directing attention toward divine authority restored through the Smith lineage.

The class further delineates various forms of authority in the church: personal agency, scriptural authority grounded in God's word, and priesthood authority vested in church offices. Richard emphasizes the participatory nature of authority within church membership, including branch leadership and conference delegates, illustrating a divine system of shared stewardship and governance. The importance of respecting and submitting to authority as a reflection of covenant-making is passionately testified, reinforced by a dream urging believers to recognize, accept, and live under God's authority.

Highlights

1. **Jesus Christ's divine authority is foundational**, affirmed since creation and central in the cosmic struggle for human agency.
2. **Redemption of Adam and Eve sets the precedent** for salvation and God's eternal plan for mankind.
3. **The city of Enoch exemplifies** a community living in righteousness under God's direct authority.
4. **Earthly authority always originates from God**, as shown in biblical interactions with Jesus and John the Baptist's inquiry.
5. **The confusion about authority** in the latter days was addressed through Joseph Smith's First Vision and subsequent revelations restoring divine authority.
6. **Authority in the church is multifaceted**: personal agency, scriptural authority, priesthood authority, and membership participation all contribute to God's divine order.
7. **Submission to God's authority through covenant is essential** for spiritual growth, unity, and living according to the Father's will.

Key Insights

1. **Divine Authority as the Root of All Legitimate Power:** The class deeply reveals that all authority, whether in heaven or on earth, derives from God the Father through Jesus Christ. This principle challenges believers to seek and recognize the source of true authority in their lives and communities, inspiring trust and obedience in God's plan.
2. **Agency as a Divine Gift and Responsibility:** Agency is portrayed not simply as freedom but as the sacred authority God grants each individual to choose righteousness. The battle between Jesus and Satan is essentially a battle over this agency, reminding us that authority involves stewardship and moral responsibility.
3. **Redemption as a Continuous Divine Process:** The redemption of Adam and Eve illustrates God's mercy and the ongoing nature of salvation. This historical event is foundational, showing that God's authority includes the power to redeem and restore, giving hope and purpose to all believers.
4. **Authority's Manifestation in Righteous Community:** The city of Enoch demonstrates that when people live united in righteousness and submit to God's authority, divine blessings and glory become manifest. This insight calls the faithful to build communities based on shared spiritual values and obedience.
5. **The Quest for Authentic Authority:** The confusion highlighted in Joseph Smith's time reflects humanity's ongoing struggle to discern true authority amid diverse claims. This insight encourages believers to seek God directly through prayer and revelation, affirming the importance of spiritual confirmation.
6. **The Role of Covenants in Establishing Authority:** Covenants are not mere agreements but sacred commitments that confer authority and require submission. This understanding elevates ordinances like baptism and marriage as vital moments where believers acknowledge God's authority over their lives.
7. **Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount as Foundations for Living Under Authority:** The dream and concluding exhortation emphasize that prayer and studying Christ's teachings are practical, transformative ways to align with divine authority, fostering humility, forgiveness, and spiritual empowerment.

Conclusion

Richard encourages the class to study and live by the Sermon on the Mount, underscoring prayer as a vital expression of submission and connection to divine authority. Each individual is called to embrace their place within God's eternal authority, fostering unity, righteousness, and spiritual growth.