



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## Using Authority (Luke 9:53-55)

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*In these notes we highlight samples of the authority that is available to followers of Jehovah God; commenting on its use in earlier and contemporary times.*

### INTRODUCTION

Leaders typically have more authority than they are effectively using. However, there is a fine line here. Abuse of authority may reap undesired results. We may lose the favor of the people and of God. It is possible to win a skirmish and lose the campaign! **Can you recall an instance where you or another won a prize that cost more than it seemed to be worth?**

### LIGHTNING BOLTS ARE EXCESSIVE

*Luke 9:53-55 but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them? But Jesus turned and rebuked them.*

Jesus was taking a shortcut, walking through Samaria. Jewish travelers typically avoided passing through this hostile neighboring state. The brothers James and John sought to ask God for a display of retaliatory power. Nearly 900 years earlier, Elijah had called down lightning on two successive squads of soldiers coming to apprehend him under orders from King Ahaziah (2Kings 1:9-16). The captain of the third squad begged Elijah for mercy and simply asked the prophet to accompany them back to Judah for an audience with the king. The captain's soft approach won Elijah's grace. Jesus' soft response to hostility from Samaria was a display of grace. The Apostles John and Peter later ministered in that region, responding in love (Acts 8:25). God has granted authority to those in civil government for the purpose of maintaining order (Romans 13:4). **Consider the ways that government can apply a hard approach, losing favor with the people and with God!**

### PRAYER IS EFFECTIVE

*Proverbs 2:6 For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.*

Israel's first king (Saul) was under siege and greatly outnumbered by the Philistine Army. Saul disregarded God while struggling with falling morale and desertion in the ranks. His son, Jonathan, trusted God for guidance and found a crack in the canyon wall separating the two army encampments. Jonathan led a commando raid that started a panic in the Philistine forces, lifting the siege (1Samuel 14:6).

2000 years later, a British Officer was in prayer, reading Scripture in anticipation of a morning assault. The British were encamped in an adjacent canyon, facing off with a much larger Turkish force. Suddenly, General Abernathy saw that they were at Michmash, the site where Jonathan found the narrow opening in the canyon wall (1Samuel 14:4). A quickly assembled British commando force followed Jonathan's path and routed the Turks. **Have you asked God for wisdom, a breakthrough in your challenges?**

### INTERCEDE FOR RELIEF

*Psalms 35:26a May all who gloat over my distress be put to shame and confusion;*

David prayed against those who were pursuing him, meaning to destroy him. God distracted his adversary, King Saul (1Samuel 31:1) as well as the warriors of the Amalekites (1Samuel 30:16). There are several other examples of God sending a spirit of diversion to rescue His people. These are found in Exodus 14:24, 23:27, Deuteronomy 7:23, Joshua 10:10, and 1Samuel 14:20. **How are you reacting to your adversaries?**

### A PRAYER

Father God, Your Son commanded me to love my enemies and pray for those who persecute me (Matthew 5:44). Help me to respond with forgiveness as I face those who attack and malign my character. Strengthen me for the challenges and the campaigns ahead. I pray for this provision in the Name of Jesus, Amen.