

## **Authority 2016- Part 2**

### **The King's Absolute Authority**

**INTRO.:** If there is one thing lacking in religious community today, it is an appreciation for the authority of the Scriptures. Despite the fact that the NT states over and over again that it is the standard by which our lives will be judged, and thus we must be careful to obey it, there continues to be a kind of carefree, and careless, attitude about what the NT says among so many who claim to be Christ's disciples. In this lesson, we want to notice how the Bible itself approaches the subject of authority, to see if we are taking God's word as seriously as we ought.

#### **I. First, let's notice what the Bible writers said about the seriousness of Bible authority:**

##### **A. *You do not question it* – Eccl. 8:4.**

1. "Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say to him, 'What are you doing?'"
2. We understand this in the physical realm, do we not?
  - a. Parents have authority, they are kings in the household. What parent wants to feel obligated to have to answer his/her children for every decision they make and every command they give?
  - b. Should the company owner feel obligated to answer to the employees for his decision?
  - c. We understand that we can't march ourselves up to the front door of the White House, ring the doorbell, and demand a personal answer from the president for why he signed into law a bill we did not like.
3. God is the ultimate King – He is King of kings and Lord of lords (**1 Tim. 6:15**). His authority is absolute. "Where the word of a king is, there is *power*" - from a Hebrew word meaning "domination." The king's command dominates! His authority is absolute, above being questioned.

##### **B. *You do not add to it or take away from it* – Deut. 12:32; Rev. 22:18.**

1. Preacher told a story about studying with an elderly woman about the necessity of baptism, and reading **Acts 2:38**. She answered, "That's not in my Bible!" He said, "It's in every Bible!" She answered, "Well, it's not in my Bible!" He looked at it, and sure enough, it wasn't in her Bible; she had taken a pair of scissors and cut the verse out!
2. That certainly would be a violation of the principle contained in **Deut. 12:32** and **Rev. 22:18**. But what about the person who cuts the verse out with their mind, who simply ignores what the verse says to do? Who teaches others that the verse really doesn't say what it clearly says? Would that not also be a violation of the principle to not add to or take away from what God has said?

##### **C. *You do not transgress it* – 2 John 9.**

1. The word “transgresses” in the KJV and NKJV is translated “goes too far” in the NASB.
  - a. The Greek word literally means “to step away from.”
  - b. We talk about someone “overstepping” their authority? That’s this word.
  - c. Jesus set us a clear path to walk when He gave us the commands and examples of the NT. We transgress when we step off the path of Jesus’ teaching and overstep our authority, and when that happens, John says that God is not going to step off with us.
  - d. When we overstep our authority, when we go beyond what the teaching of Christ says, no matter how good it looks, we do not have God!
2. And so, the Bible writers encourage a very serious approach to consideration of what the Bible does and does not authorize us to do.

**II. Now let’s look at what several Bible characters understood about the Bible’s authority:**

**A. *Balaam understood that you do not do less or more than what God says – Num. 22:18.***

1. Balak’s representatives offer the prophet more money than he could ever imagine, and all he had to do was take a few days out of his schedule and curse these pesky Israelites.
2. Balaam understood what it meant to be under God’s authority - you don’t do any *less* than God says, and you don’t do any *more* than God says. You do *exactly what* God says, in *the way* He said to do it! That’s a very serious approach to what God says, isn’t it? How many of our churches today are as serious about obeying God?

**B. *Joshua understood that you do not turn to the right or left of what God says – Josh. 23:6.***

1. Navigators understand how important it is to stay right on the path laid out, how dangerous it is to stray just a little bit.
  - a. The ship that strays off course just a little bit, the plane that strays just a tiny bit, the space ship that is off course just a fraction of a degree will miss their target, and may be lost forever.
2. Joshua understood that God is the navigator who will see us to our destination, and he understood the importance of exacting obedience to the navigator’s instructions. Again, how many churches are teaching and practicing that kind of exacting obedience to what God has said?

**III. And then, let’s look at a couple of examples of what God thinks about not doing what He has said in the way He has said to do it:**

**A. *Nadab and Abihu – Lev. 10:1-3.*** Notice two things from this:

1. *It doesn't make any difference how many things you get right, if you get one thing wrong. Lev. 16:12-13* gives instruction for burning incense on the Day of Atonement, which appears to be what God wanted done whenever incense was burnt.
  - a. Nadab and Abihu were priests – got that part right!
  - b. Each took his own censer – got that part right!
  - c. They put incense on it – got that part right!
  - d. But they put the wrong fire on it - they got that part wrong, and God rejected it, and He rejected them!
  - e. “Look at all the stuff we are doing right!” is no excuse for doing one thing wrong.
  
2. *God doesn't have to specify what **not** to do when He specifies what **to** do.*
  - a. What made Nadab and Abihu's fire unacceptable? It was from a source that God had not commanded. Nadab and Abihu transgressed God's command by doing something other than what God had specifically said He wanted.
  - b. When God said, “Get your fire from this altar,” He didn't have to take Nadab and Abihu around to every other altar and say, “Now don't get fire from this altar.”
  - c. What are we saying? We are saying that “But God didn't say not to” is not justification to go beyond what God has specifically said He wants.
  - d. Nadab and Abihu learned the hard way that God takes just a slight variation from His commands very seriously.

**B. Uzzah – 1 Chron. 13:7-12.**

1. Just as God had given specific instructions for fire in the burning of incense, He had given specific instructions to Israel for the transporting of the Ark of the Covenant, and among those instructions was that no Israelite was to touch it. Some 400 years after those instructions were given, Israel had opportunity to move the ark, and they did so without consulting the instructions God had given. They put the ark on an oxcart, and Uzzah drove the oxcart. The oxen stumbled, the oxcart tipped, and the ark was about to fall, when Uzzah saved the day by stretching out his hand and steadying the ark. Immediately God struck him dead. Why?
  
2. *First, because **time** doesn't negate God commands.* 400 years didn't negate God's commands about the ark; 200 years doesn't negate God's commands about the church.
  
3. *Second, because a **good heart** doesn't negate God's commands.* Uzzah wanted to save the ark from certain catastrophe. What he was feeling in his heart did not negate what he did with his hands. Do you know people who are doing wrong things with a

good heart? What they are doing is still wrong!

4. *Third, because what we perceive to be a special circumstance doesn't negate God's commands.* Listen to me: When God specifies a way to do something, that way will always be the best thing to do in every circumstance. "You mean Uzzah should have just let the ark tumble?" If that is the consequence Israel had to pay for their disobedience, then so be it!
5. *Fourth, because two wrongs don't make a right.* It didn't 3000 years ago, and it doesn't today. Start out paying close attention to what God says, and you won't find yourself in an "Uzzah" situation, where you feel like you have to do something else wrong in order to get yourself out of a mess that is of your own making.
6. The answer when you get it wrong the first time? **1 Chron. 15:12-15** – Go back and do it right.

**CONCL.:** Often, when the prophets of old would speak something God had told them to say, they would begin with, "Thus saith the Lord." That phrase occurs 548 times in the OT. I hope that what we have looked at this morning will impress upon you the need to pay close attention to what the Lord has said to us as individual Christians, and to us as a church of Christ.

**Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38** – That's what the Lord has said about being saved from your sins, and we aren't asking you to do any more, and we aren't asking you to do any less, in order to have the forgiveness of sins and the hope of heaven. We are asking you to take seriously what the Lord said, and to do exactly what He has said, and we know that when you do, He will give you what He has promised.

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