

Why Stop the Chariot?

John Isaac Edwards

In Acts 8 we read of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. We pick up the story at verse 35, “Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him” (verses 35-38). There is a statement in verse 38 that makes some things stand out: “And he commanded the chariot to stand still...” (Acts 8:38). Has it ever occurred to you that the man of Ethiopia stopped the chariot? I’m asking the question, “Why stop the chariot?”

If Some Things Men Say Are True, Why Stop the Chariot? If some things men would have us believe are true, there would have been absolutely no need for the eunuch to stop the chariot.

If being a good, honest person is all it takes. The eunuch must have been a man of integrity to have the job he did. He was given the charge of all the queen’s treasure (v. 27). The fact that the eunuch stopped the chariot shows that it takes more than just being a good, honest person to go to heaven.

If just being religious is good enough. The eunuch was a religious man. He “...had come to Jerusalem for to worship” (v. 27). If just being religious is enough, why stop the chariot?

If just reading the Scriptures is all that is required. This man was a Bible reading man. Verse 28 says he “Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.” Why stop the chariot, if there’s nothing more to do?

If justified by faith only. The Ethiopian had faith. He confessed, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (v. 37). If one is justified by faith only, or by just confessing his faith in the Lord, why stop the chariot?

If saved by accepting Christ into your heart and praying “the sinner’s prayer.” Many have been told that to be saved they just need to accept Christ into their heart and pray “the sinner’s prayer.” If this is so, why stop the chariot?

If baptism is not necessary. A lot of folks think there’s no need to be baptized. Why stop the chariot, if it’s not necessary to be baptized to be saved?

If sprinkling or pouring is sufficient. We’ve been told that sprinkling or pouring is sufficient for baptism, that it’s not really necessary for the whole person to be immersed in water for salvation. If this is true, why do we read these words, “And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him” (v. 38)?

Why You Need to Stop the Chariot. Let me suggest to you some reasons why you need to command the chariot to stand still.

The shortness and uncertainty of your life. How much longer do you plan to live? We have no guarantee that we will see the sun rise tomorrow. In Luke 12, we read of a man who had plans for “many years” but he did not live through the night (vv. 16-20). James said, “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:13-14). Since anything can happen to you at any time, you need to stop the chariot!

The value of your soul. If you were to make a list of your most valuable possessions, would you include your soul? Jesus asked, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). Your soul is your most valuable possession. It’s worth more than the whole world, and it can be lost! Because of that, you need to stop the chariot!

Judgment is coming. Paul reasoned with Felix about “judgment to come” (Acts 24:25). Hebrews 9:27 records, “And as it is appointed

unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” We have a picture of the judgment scene in Matthew 25: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left...Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels...And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (vv. 31-33, 41, 46). In light of the fact, that you will appear before the Lord to be judged and your eternal destiny in His hands, you need to stop the chariot.

You must obey the Lord to be saved. The Lord taught, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...” (Mark 16:16).

You are the one who must stop the chariot. No one else can do it for you as obeying the gospel is a personal decision only you can make. Will you stop the chariot?

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