

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (1 Peter 4:11).

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OUR NEED FOR AUTHORITY

John Isaac Edwards

Men see the need for authority in the home, school, business, and government. We must recognize our need for authority in religion.

1) **AS SEEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.** When Nadab and Abihu offered unauthorized fire before the Lord, *“there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them”* (Lev. 10:1-2). When Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, which none were allowed to touch (Num. 4:15), *“God smote him there for his error, and there he died”* (2 Sam. 6:6-7). If you don’t think we need authority in religion, you might want to have a little talk with Nadab and Abihu or Uzzah about that!

2) **AS TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.** Workers of iniquity will hear the Lord say, *“I never knew you: depart from me”* (Mt. 7:23). To work iniquity is to engage in unauthorized practices. Not only do we need authority in religion, but this authority must come from the Lord. Paul taught, *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”* (Col. 3:17). If there is no book, chapter and verse for a thing, then we must leave it off!

A good question for us is, *“By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?”* (Mt. 21:23).

GOD MEANS WHAT HE SAYS

John Isaac Edwards

God said, *“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it...”* (Dt. 4:2). God says what He means and means what He says!

1) **GOD MEANT WHAT HE SAID TO ADAM AND EVE.** When God said, *“of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”* (Gen. 2:17), did God really mean that? Absolutely (Gen. 3:22-24)!

2) **GOD MEANT WHAT HE SAID TO THE PRIESTS.** God said for the priests to get *“fire from off the altar”* (Lev. 16:12). Did God really mean that, or was fire — fire? The death of Nadab and Abihu shows that God meant every word of it (Lev. 10:1-2).

3) **GOD MEANT WHAT HE SAID TO MOSES.** When God told Moses, *“speak ye unto the rock”* (Num. 20:8), did He mean speak? Just ask Moses, if

you don’t think so (Num. 20:11-12).

God’s law is strict! God hath spoken unto us by His Son (Heb. 1:1-2). Everything said in the New Testament, God means. Thus, we must just do what God said do — no additions, no subtractions, no substitutions.

IF BAPTISM IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION

John Isaac Edwards

Most people have been told they can be saved without being baptized. If baptism is not essential to salvation:

1) Why did Jesus say, *“He that believeth and is **baptized** shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mk. 16:16)?

2) Why did Peter command, *“Repent, and be **baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 2:38)?

3) Why did Ananias tell Saul, *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be **baptized**, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord?”* (Acts 22:16)?

4) Why does the Bible say, “The like figure whereunto even **baptism** doth also now save us...” (1 Pet. 3:21)?

5) Why does **every** case of conversion in the book of Acts involve folks being baptized (Acts 2-19)?

Does anyone have any answers to these questions?

IS THE CHURCH REALLY IMPORTANT?

John Isaac Edwards

Many look upon the church of our Lord as not being all that important. The importance of the church is seen in that:

1) **GOD PLANNED IT.** The church is “*According to the eternal purpose*” of God (Eph. 3:10-11). If God planned or purposed the church, then it must be important, don’t you think?

2) **THE HOLY SPIRIT REVEALED IT.** The church is revealed on the pages of the Bible by the Holy Spirit (Eph.

3:3-6). There are more than a hundred references to the church in the New Testament. If the church isn’t important, why does the Bible say so much about it?

3) **CHRIST DIED AND BLED FOR IT.** The church is so important that “*Christ gave himself for it*” (Eph. 5:25), and purchased it “*with his own blood*” (Acts 20:28). The price paid for a thing shows its importance!

Have you recognized the importance of the church?

SOME THINGS FAITH ALONE WILL NOT DO

John Isaac Edwards

Faith is important (Jn. 8:24; Heb. 11:6), but it takes more than faith alone to be pleasing to God. Faith alone...

1) **WILL NOT JUSTIFY AN INDIVIDUAL.** The only time the words “*faith only*” occur in the Bible is in James 2:24 when James said, “*Ye see then how that by works a man is justified,*

and not by faith only.”

2) **WILL NOT KEEP ONE FROM BEING DENIED BY THE LORD.** John 12:42 records some who believed, but “*did not confess*” Jesus. The Lord will only confess those who confess Him (Mt. 10:32-33).

3) **WILL NOT SAVE A PERSON.** Jesus said, “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...*” (Mk. 16:16). The little word “*and*” ties faith and baptism together, making both essential to salvation.

4) **WILL NOT BRING US INTO CONTACT WITH CHRIST’S BLOOD.** The blood of Christ, shed “*for the remission of sins*” (Mt. 26:28), was shed in His death (Jn. 19:33-34). Thus, we must reach His death to contact His blood. This is done in baptism (Rom. 6:3-4).

To have faith alone is to come up short!

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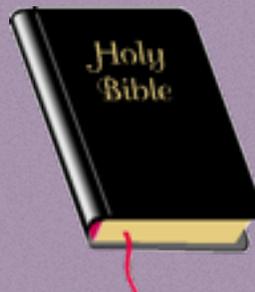
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