

The Danger of Acting Without Authority

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ possesses all authority (Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 1:20-23). We must not go beyond the things that are written (1 Cor. 4:6) or preach another gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

Nadab and Abihu were killed because they offered strange fire to the Lord (Lev. 10:1-11). Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, made wholesale changes in worship, thus causing Israel to sin (1 Kings 12:25-33). King Uzziah was stricken with leprosy because he usurped the priestly function of offering incense (2 Chron. 26:16-21).

NEW TESTAMENT ADMONITIONS

Jesus Christ repeatedly warned against lawlessness, i.e., acting without divine authorization (Matt. 7:21-23; 23:27-28). Our Lord denounced vain worship that is according to the traditions of men (Matt. 15:1-14; Mark 7:1-13). The inspired apostles repeatedly warned against heresy (1 Cor. 11:17-32; 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

CONCLUSION

Paul said, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." In other words, the message we preach and the methods we employ must be consistent with the authority of Christ (Col. 3:16-17). In like manner, Peter said, "Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever" (1 Pet. 4:11). Once again, this is an acknowledgement of the necessity of submitting to the authority of our Lord.