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was silent about ox carts, silent about a horse drawn wagon, silent about camels, mules, goats, or even about the ark being carried by the king. God's silence forbade any other method. Maybe David thought he had a good idea. A great parade, lots of people, David the king in the lead, a brand new ox cart, sure sounds like a great way to take the ark to Jerusalem. But this was not what God ordered!

### Applying God's Authority

The principles of authority can be applied to the religious issues and questions we face. While there are many different "plans" of salvation what is God's order? God requires hearing the gospel, believing, repenting, confessing Jesus as the Christ and being baptized for salvation (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:37). Some men change God's order to: hear, believe, repent and pray for salvation. But any "plan" of men that adds or alters God's order is contrary to God's authority and is wrong.

Men argue about the mode of baptism, but God's order shows baptism is immersion as clearly seen in the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:36-39). Men have tried to alter God's order by pouring and sprinkling water for baptism. This is not God's order.

God's order requires that candidates for baptism must be those who believe and repent (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). God's authority excludes men's addition of sprinkling babies for baptism.

What does God's order authorize for music in the worship of the New Testament church? In the New Testament God only ordered and authorized singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Playing on instruments of music is not mentioned or authorized.

God authorized the first day of the week, the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10) as the day Christians are to assemble together and worship. But men have added many different "special" religious holidays to God's order all of which are unauthorized.

God's order authorizes Christians to give on the first day of the week for the support of the Lord's work (1 Cor. 16:2). Men have added many different money raising and making schemes and violated God's order. God also orders Christians to partake of the Lord's Supper every first day of week (1 Cor. 11:23-28; Acts 20:7). Yet, men have altered that divine order to once a month or twice a year or to other days.

God has authorized the organization of his people in independent congregations. Elders are ordered to "tend the flock...which is among you" (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2), not flocks or human organizations beyond the local congregation. The work of the church by God's order is to: 1. Preach the gospel to the world (Mt.

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28:19, 1 Tim. 3:15); 2. Edify saints by the teaching of the Word (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 14); 3. Relieve needy saints (Acts 6:1-6; 11:27-30; 1 Tim. 5:16).

Many are ignoring God's order in the work of the church and who is to do that work. Men have added to God's order with Popes, presidents, conferences, councils and a wide variety of human missionary organizations and benevolent organizations, none authorized by God. It is an addition of men to make the church a provider of food, entertainment and recreation. God didn't order that! His work is far too important for men to turn it aside to food, fun and games. It is just as much a violation of God's order for a congregation to contribute money to a human organization to do the work God ordered the church to do "among you." God didn't order that either!

What is God's order concerning the matter of benevolence? Just as God as provided an order for salvation and worship, He has also given us an order and a pattern on how and to whom the church is to provide benevolence.

Who is to do the work of the church? This seems like a silly question to ask, kind of like asking, "Who is buried in Grant's tomb?" The work of the church is to be done by the church. This is God's order. The church is to be "the pillar and ground of the Truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). In order to uphold the Truth, the church must carry out the work God has given it: evangelism, edification and benevolence. When the church follows God's divine order, it reveals the glory and fullness of Christ and the wisdom and planning of God (Eph. 3:10, 21; 1:23).

Too many do not want to follow God's divine order just as He gave it. They do not want to let the church do the work of the church. They will give the church's work of evangelism to human organizations like missionary societies and "church" schools and colleges. They will give the church's work of benevolence to a multitude of human organizations like orphan homes, widows' homes, teenage mothers' homes, "church" hospitals, etc. Did God order any of these human organizations? Are any of these the pillar and ground of the Truth, the glory and fullness of Christ or the wisdom and planning of God? Are you following God's divine order or man's additions?

Respect and obey God's orders. When He tells us what to do and how to do it, let us give Him exactly what He ordered, not taking away, not adding to. Let us not go beyond His silence, nor think we have a better idea.

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**"Whoever transgresses  
and does not abide in  
the doctrine of Christ  
does not have God."**

2 John 9

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# "I Didn't Order That!"

## A Study on Authority



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Wayne Greeson

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# “I Didn’t Order That!”

## A Study on Authority

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Each of us in certain areas of our lives have “authority.” We use this authority to place orders, to tell people what and how we want something done. When you authorize someone to do something, you expect and demand that they faithfully follow your authority. Right!

Suppose you surfing the net and you go to Walmart on-line. You decide to order a pair of socks and a shirt. Three days later, your order arrives and you receive one small package and two large ones and the packing slip reads, “One pair of socks, one shirt, one riding lawn mower and one vacuum cleaner.”

Immediately you get on the phone to Walmart customer service to explain. “The shirt and socks are mine,” you say, “But I didn’t order that lawn mower or vacuum.” You see, you understand that you only authorized Walmart to send you the shirt and socks. Suppose the service person offered his sincere apologies and told you, “I am sorry, but you must pay for the riding lawn mower and vacuum, because when you placed your order, you didn’t say not to send them.”

Would you feel obligated to pay for the extra items? You would probably say, “Of course I didn’t say not to send a lawn mower and a vacuum. But I specifically ordered only a shirt and socks.”

What if the Walmart person, not clear on how your personal authority works, said, “Well, why don’t you take this lawn mower? There is nothing wrong with it, it works great. Besides, I bet you really need a good lawn mower.” At this point you might throw up your hands in disgust and say, “But I didn’t order that! I don’t care what you think!”

You see how important “authority” is? You also understand, that when you order something, you demand and expect that your silence be respected. If you say nothing about a mower and a vacuum, your silence means you did not want them.

What if you took your car to the service station. “I want you to change the oil,” you tell the attendant and leave. When you come back for the car, the mechanic has not only changed the oil but also the tires and hands you a bill for \$500. And all the mechanic can say is, “But you didn’t say not to change the tires” and “But I thought you needed new tires.”

“But I didn’t order that!” you would shout.

### Principles Of Authority

**1. You Want Exactly What You Ordered, No More, No Less.** When you give an order, you say exactly what you want and you give the store authority to act and bill you only for what you asked. If the store sends any less you will be upset. “They didn’t send what I ordered.” If the store sends any more than what you authorized, you would be angry, especially when the bill arrives.

**2. Your Silence Forbids More Than Your Specific Order.** If you order a shirt and a pair of socks, you were silent about a riding lawn mower and a vacuum. Your silence does not authorize a store to add a riding lawn mower and a vacuum to your order. Your silence does not authorize a mechanic to put new tires on your car. Your silence forbids more than what you specifically ordered or authorized. It would be foolish for any store to think it was authorized to charge you for every item you were silent about.

**3. What Someone Thinks You Need Is Not What You Specifically Ordered.** Every salesman you meet tells you, you need his product. If you were charged for everything every salesman thought you needed, you would be forever broke. Your order is your authority for what you want, not what the salesman thinks you need.

### God's Authority

The same principles of authority you expect a sales clerk or the garage mechanic to follow, God expects us to follow in matters of religion.

**1. God Wants Exactly What He Ordered, No More, No Less.** God has given us His complete and perfect order. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We need His authority for whatever we do. “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of (by the authority of) the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” (Col. 3:17).

God warns us against adding to or taking away from His order. “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19).

**2. God’s Silence Forbids More Than His Specific Order.** Some excuse their unauthorized actions in religion by arguing “But God didn’t say not to?” But God’s Word says, “Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son” (2 Jn. 9).

**3. What “I Think” Is Not What God Specifically Ordered.** “There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death” (Prov. 14:12). God says, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts’” (Isa. 55:8-9). We cannot guess what God wants or like. We must follow what God has ordered, not what we think He wants.

### Examples Of God's Authority in the OT

God ordered the priests to use a specific kind of fire (Lev. 16:2). Two priests, Nadab and Abihu, offered a fire, God “had not commanded.” God punished them with a fiery death (Lev. 10:1-2). Maybe they thought it did not matter what kind of fire or maybe they were too lazy to get the proper fire. What these priests thought did not matter. God wanted the fire He ordered, no more, no less.

God ordered Moses to take the rod, gather the assembly of Israel and speak to the rock to bring forth water. Moses took the rod, gathered the assembly, spoke to the assembly and struck the rock (Num. 20:8-13). God told Moses exactly how He wanted Moses to get water from the rock. God did not say, “Do not strike the rock.” He did specifically tell Moses to “speak to the rock.” God’s order to Moses excluded any other action. Anything other than God’s order, “speak to the rock” was unauthorized. God did not have to say to Moses, “don’t strike the rock, don’t jump on it, don’t pick it up, don’t throw something on it, don’t spit on the rock, etc.” All God had to tell Moses was, “speak to the rock” and everything else was excluded and wrong. It did not matter if Moses thought the right thing to do was to strike the rock. God told Moses, “You did not believe me!” (Num 20:13).

God ordered the priests to carry the ark of the covenant on their shoulders (Num. 4:15; 7:9). King David began to move the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. He gathered 30,000 men, played music and placed the ark on a new ox cart driven by priests. But before it got to Jerusalem God struck Uzzah dead for touching the ark. David had not followed the “due order” (2 Sam. 6:1-7; 1 Chron. 15:13). God said exactly what he wanted and He expected that and no more or less. God never said, “Do not carry the ark on an ox cart.” But he did say carry the ark “on the priest’s shoulders” and that excluded all other ways of carrying the ark. God

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