


When God is Silent

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- ▶ God has spoken – Hebrews 1:1-2
 - ▶ God has spoken in the Scriptures – 1 Corinthians 2:11-13; Ephesians 3:3-4

 - ▶ But what about when God is silent?
 - ▶ Two approaches:
 - ▶ Whatever is not expressly forbidden is allowed in religious practice
 - OR
 - ▶ God's silence is limiting and prohibitive rather than permissive

 - ▶ Question: Does the Bible itself sanction the principle that the silence of the Scriptures is prohibitive?
 - ▶ The Bible is not silent on this question!

▶ Does the Bible itself sanction the principle that the silence of the Scriptures is prohibitive?

▶ Examples

▶ Jeremiah 7:28-31

▶ “And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, *which I did not command*, nor did it come into My heart.”

▶ Leviticus 10:1-2

▶ “Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, *which He had not commanded them*.”

▶ “Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered *unauthorized* fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them.” (NIV)

▶ Does the Bible itself sanction the principle that the silence of the Scriptures is prohibitive?

▶ Examples

▶ 1 Chronicles 13:1-14; 15:1-13

▶ “Because you did not carry it the first time, the Lord our God broke out against us, *because we did not seek him according to the rule.*” (ESV)

▶ Deuteronomy 10:8 – “At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord...”

▶ David understood the silence of Deuteronomy 10:8: “Then David said, ‘No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites, for the Lord has chosen them to carry the ark of God and to minister before Him forever.’” (1 Chronicles 15:2)

▶ Does the Bible itself sanction the principle that the silence of the Scriptures is prohibitive?

▶ Examples

▶ Hebrews 7:13-14

▶ “For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses *spoke nothing* concerning priesthood.”

▶ Want to know what God wants us to think about His silence?

▶ This is divinely-inspired reasoning

▶ Does the Bible itself sanction the principle that the silence of the Scriptures is prohibitive?

▶ Examples

▶ Acts 15:1, 24; Galatians 1:6-9

▶ “Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law’ – to whom *we gave no such commandment* –”

▶ “We have heard that some went out from us *without our authorization* and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said.” (NIV)

- ▶ Does the Bible itself sanction the principle that the silence of the Scriptures is prohibitive?
- ▶ Not only do examples in the Scriptures teach this principle, but direct statements teach it
 - ▶ Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32
 - ▶ “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, *that you may keep the commandments* of the Lord your God which I command you”
 - ▶ This answers the question about adding things He has not spoken – that He is silent regarding
 - ▶ Exodus 25:40
 - ▶ “And see to it that you make them *according to the pattern which was shown you* on the mountain.”
 - ▶ What about things not according to the pattern shown, things He was silent regarding?

- ▶ Does the Bible itself sanction the principle that the silence of the Scriptures is prohibitive?
- ▶ Not only do examples in the Scriptures teach this principle, but direct statements teach it
 - ▶ Matthew 28:18-20
 - ▶ “teaching them to observe all things *that I have commanded you*; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”
 - ▶ 2 John 9
 - ▶ “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.”

- ▶ Does the Bible itself sanction the principle that the silence of the Scriptures is prohibitive?
- ▶ Not only do examples in the Scriptures teach this principle, but direct statements teach it
 - ▶ 1 Peter 4:11
 - ▶ “If anyone speaks, let him speak *as the oracles of God*. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, *that in all things God may be glorified* through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”
 - ▶ Leviticus 10:1-3
 - ▶ “Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. And Moses said to Aaron, ‘*This is what the Lord spoke, saying: “By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.”*’ So Aaron held his peace.”



- ▶ Some points of application

- ▶ Baptism

- ▶ Mode – Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38-39; Romans 6:4-6; Colossians 2:12

- ▶ God has spoken: immersion

- ▶ God is silent: sprinkling, pouring

- ▶ God is not pleased when men presume upon His silence

▶ Some points of application

▶ The Lord's Supper

▶ Elements – 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

▶ God has spoken: unleavened bread; fruit of the vine

▶ God is silent: beans, rice, donuts, apple juice, coffee

▶ God is not pleased when men presume upon His silence

▶ Day – Acts 20:7

▶ God has spoken: first day of the week

▶ God is silent: any other day

▶ God is not pleased when men presume upon His silence



- ▶ Some points of application

- ▶ Worship

- ▶ Sing & make melody in your heart to the Lord –
Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16

- ▶ God has spoken: sing

- ▶ God is silent: drums, keyboard, humming

- ▶ God is not pleased when men presume upon His silence



- ▶ Some points of application

- ▶ Organization of the church

- ▶ Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:2

- ▶ God has spoken: elders in every church overseeing flock among them

- ▶ God is silent: elders oversee other churches; councils; hierarchies

- ▶ God is not pleased when men presume upon His silence