

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

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THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Jim Stauffer

1 Pet. 4:11 *if any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; is any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

This verse sets forth the principle that God is the authority for our lives and very specifically for what we say and do in his service.

Two very important principles will be set forth as a result of our perusal of God's Word. It is a book of facts, commands and promises. The facts are to be believed, the commands are to be obeyed and the promises are to be enjoyed as the reward God has for the faithful.

The fact supreme is that God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth has granted to Christ all authority in heaven and earth. **Matt. 28:18** *And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.* Jesus further advises obedience to God's commands are imperative to salvation. **Matt. 22:37** *And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* **Heb. 5:8** *though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation;* Our most basic understanding of our God and His commitment to us is to believe in the promise He has given. **Acts 2:38** *And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.* **Gal. 3:16** *Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 17 Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. 18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise. 19 What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to*

whom the promise hath been made; and it was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator.

These facts, commands and promises are not revealed by His silence. They are given to us in His Word revealed by the Holy Spirit to chosen men who recorded them for us to understand. **(1 Cor. 2:9-13)**

Two attitudes reflect man's response to God. 1) We must speak where He speaks and remain silent where He is silent. 2) We may speak where He speaks and where He is silent we have liberty to act on our own.

When God reveals His Will to man, He authorizes His desire for the church either specifically or generically. Anytime He specifies it eliminates all choice and options. Only that specified is acceptable. In other words the fact He did not specifically forbid it does not allow us the liberty to practice it.

Remember the attitudes of Zwingli and Luther. Zwingli said we can only practice what God authorizes and Luther believed we had liberty in any area not specifically forbidden.

Silence Does Not Authorize - God speaks His will in words – **1 Cor. 2:9-13** (The Spirit spoke the mind of God in words the Apostles could pass on – silence does not tell us what is in the mind of God)

Two points:

Faith comes by hearing the word of God – **Rom. 10:17**

We are to walk by faith and not by sight – **2 Cor. 5:7** We are warned against going beyond revelation – **Gal. 1:8,9; 2 Joh. 9**

A New Testament example: Binding circumcision was binding something God was silent on – **Acts 15:1,24**. Now we know in the past under the old law circumcision was an expressed command of God to the Israelites. This points out two errors. 1) We must understand the difference in the covenants and respect that and 2) We must recognize since we are under the new covenant, God is silent on circumcision.

Old Testament Examples

Rom. 15:4 teaches us the Old Testament provides us with examples *for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope*. Let us understand if we ignore the lessons of these Scriptures we will not have hope.

continued on page 2

First Passover after The Exodus – Num. 9:1-14

Notice Moses seeking the word of God for exceptions to specific adherence – those prevented on the 14th day of the first month – some were unclean from handling a dead body, others had been on a long journey – God speaks and authorizes them to observe The Passover in the second month.

David built a cart for Ark of Covenant – 1 Chron. 13:6-14; 15:12-15. God had spoken His Will on the design and transportation of the Ark – Ex. 25; Num. 4:15 (He was silent about a cart but this did not allow David the freedom to authorize it). What was the result? Of course you will remember Uzzah was stricken dead when the oxen stumbled and he reached out to steady the Ark. We must recognize God keeping His will in this matter and acting justly is not cruel and unusual. What is unusual is our tendency to ignore such examples and expect no negative results.

Another New Testament Example - Jesus' priesthood was not of earthly lineage. He was of the tribe of Judah. The Law for earthly priests (Law of Moses) was silent about priests from Judah. (Heb. 7:14) If silence gave liberty, Jesus could have been an earthly priest but the Hebrew writer expressly points this out. (Heb. 8:1-5) What the writer of Hebrews is trying to teach us is that Jesus is our High Priest and He is a heavenly priest not an earthly one such as those of the tribe of Levi. He does this by making a point about the silence of God on priests from the tribe of Judah.

Silence Does Not Give Consent – It Prohibits
Scripture makes it clear God has provided instruction for all we need. (2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16,17) We must do all in the name of (by authority of) the Lord. (Col. 3:17)

We must therefore reject the authority of men where God is silent. 1 Cor. 4:6 *Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other.*

There is no doubt men have struggled to live by these principles taught from Scripture. Debates have been conducted to clarify whether man is speaking for himself or from God's word. That will always be the case and will always be necessary. It is imperative, if we believe the Bible to be the word of God, that we *contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all delivered to the saints.* (Jude 3) If we shy away from this responsibility we show a lack of trust in His promises and a doubt about the facts He has given and it leads us to a failure to obey His commands.

“REPROACH CHRIST”

by William V. Beasley

Upon being assured of his identity, the Roman Proconsul purportedly told Polycarp, “Swear, reproach Christ, and I will set you free.” With just a few words, regardless of what he had in his heart, Polycarp could have saved his life. . . and lost his soul. Try to place yourself in the place of Polycarp, as you read the

account as set forth in the next two paragraphs:

The Proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp. On hearing that he was, he tried to persuade him to apostatize, saying, “Have respect for your old age, swear by the fortune of Caesar. Repent, and say, ‘Down with the Atheists!’” Polycarp looked grimly at the wicked heathen multitude in the stadium, and gesturing towards them, he said, “Down with the Atheists!” “Swear,” urged the Proconsul, “reproach Christ, and I will set you free.” “86 years have I have served him,” Polycarp declared, “and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?”

“I have wild animals here,” the Proconsul said. “I will throw you to them if you do not repent.” “Call them,” Polycarp replied. “It is unthinkable for me to repent from what is good to turn to what is evil. I will be glad though to be changed from evil to righteousness.” “If you despise the animals, I will have you burned.” “You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour, and is then extinguished, but you know nothing of the fire of the coming judgment and eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. Why are you waiting? Bring on whatever you want.”

It is certainly not beyond possibility that we (who are living today) could be placed in the same situation as Polycarp of old. Peaceful (only when in a weak, minority situation) Islam is working toward the goal of being able to dictate, “Convert or be beheaded!” At that time the Christian will either lose his life. . . or his soul! The half-converted, who love life, wife, children, aged parents, etcetera more than they love God, will persuade themselves that saying a few words (“There is no true deity but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.”), is to be preferred to a painful death. “After all, if I am dead I will not be able to serve God, and who will take care of my children, grandchildren, parents, etcetera.”

By so doing they might be able to save their earthly life. By so doing they will certainly have lost their soul. Jesus said, “. . . whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:33). In explaining the Shahada (the “few words” given above) it is said, “The first part, ‘There is no true deity but God,’ means that none has the right to be worshipped but God alone, and that God has neither partner nor son.” To articulate words which mean “God has neither partner nor son” is to deny Jesus Christ. . . even if said with mental reservation (i.e., I know that what I am about to say is not true, I truly believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but it is being said for a higher good). Sounds like a lie to me! “Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie” (Revelation 22:15).

Yes, beloved, we need to be preparing ourselves to die for Christ. Preparing ourselves, our children, grandchildren, and every brother and sister-in-Christ to be willing to give up our earthly life to lay hold on a heavenly life. We, like Paul, need to have “the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better” (Philippians 1:23).

Like a Thief in the Night

by Michael Hickox

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” (2 Pet. 3:10)

It can be difficult to envision the earth being burned up. It can be even more difficult to remind ourselves that this dissolving of the earth may be seconds away. The earth may be gone before tomorrow.

Peter told the Christians he wrote to that some will find this so hard to believe that they will ridicule the promise of the Day of Judgment (**2 Peter 3:3-4**). What this ridiculing ignores is that the earth is only here by God’s Will and He therefore has the authority to do what He wishes with the earth, as He demonstrated during the flood (**2 Pet. 3:5-7**).

If we walk by sight, we will see this earth as a place that will last. We will assure ourselves that we will wake up tomorrow and continue to “advance” our lives on earth (**cf. James 4:13**).

If we walk by faith, we will see this earth as a place that is only still here because of God’s patience with mankind (**2 Pet. 3:9**). We will realize that this world is temporary and that the years we spend here will seem very short when we reach our eternal destination.

Consider what James told the Christians he wrote to: *whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” (Jas. 4:14-15)*

James was pointing out that physical death can come to anyone at any time. Likewise, the Day of Judgment may come at any time.

When a person understands this and puts this knowledge at the forefront of his or her mind, it will change everything about that person’s life.

After Peter said that the world will be gone in an instant, he wrote: *Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? (2 Pet. 3:11-12)*

Since the world may be gone at any moment, we should prepare ourselves for what will come after the world is gone, so we may enjoy the “new *heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*” (**2 Peter 3:13**)

Since the world could be gone at any moment:

- 1) We should care only about things that really matter (**Col. 3:2**)
- 2) We should fear no one but God (**Luke 12:4-5**).
- 3) We should build our hopes on the everlasting rock that is Christ (**Mat. 7:24,25**)
- 4) We should walk in the light so the darkness doesn’t overtake us (**1 Thess. 5:4,5**)
- 5) We should lean on God’s wisdom and not our own (**Pro. 3:5**)

For “*there are many plans in a man’s heart, Nevertheless the Lord’s counsel – that will stand.*” (**Proverbs 19:21**)

“Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.” (Matthew 25:13)

Are you ready for that Judgment Day?

GOD IS A JEALOUS GOD

One of the interesting things about being in Ethiopia is the fact that most of the people we regularly associate with wear the same clothes from day to day. This is especially true in the countryside where most of the people live in abject poverty, go without shoes, and could not buy clothing even if they thought about it. The point is this: These folks do not have a choice about what to wear.

You and I have choices; we make choices every day. We probably don’t think much about what to wear in the sense that we are alarmed about having to wear the same thing even for a few days at a time. We have lots of clothing—in fact, we have lots of everything! We make choices, but rarely don’t stop to give thought to them. We just take for granted that we have what we have; we are entitled; and the only time we get upset is when we don’t have or can’t get what we think we “just have to have.”

When it comes to the matter of religion, we don’t have a choice. Yes, we have choice in the sense that in the exercise of our free will we can determine if we will or will not serve God. But we don’t have a choice in the sense that we can serve God just any way we choose. Or, that we can please God but reject His will. Or, that we can substitute our choices for being obedient to Him. To put it another way, monotheism, one God, is not just something we believe about God. It is something that God says about Himself. This is at the core of who God is.

For example, God is jealous. In fact, His name is *jealous*. **Exodus 34:13-15** says: *“But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and one of them invites you and you eat of his sacrifice.”* This is a warning to the Israelites about the danger of idolatry. While we sometimes view jealousy as a weakness, God purposely describes Himself in this way. The word jealous (qanna in the Hebrew language) means “red” or “flushed.” It reflects how the face is flushed when the heart is full of emotion.

Because God is a jealous God, He punishes the disobedient. He is a consuming fire. He is angry at sin. He takes vengeance on His enemies. His jealousy will not permit His people to bow down to idols. He demands total loyalty. He says: “I am a jealous God. I am the only true choice you have.”

We must not go shopping for a “god” of some kind. While we have a choice about what to wear, eat, what car to drive, etc., we don’t go shopping for some divine being that has the best features—features that we value. In making choices, remember that God has chosen us; He picked us; we are His and nobody else can have us. God is jealous for you and me.

Randy Harshbarger

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

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NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: J.R. DANIEL, MARY CZIRR, IRENE HURD AND JAN PATRICK. GRANT CLOTHIER IS IN OVERLAND PARK NURSING AND REHAB CENTER.

LORETTA TAPP IS HAVING HEALTH ISSUES THAT CURRENTLY PREVENT THE RESUMPTION OF CANCER TREATMENTS SO FAR.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY MORNING AND WEDNESDAY EVENING: EVIDENCES

SERMON SUNDAY AM: "SUFFERING"



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10