

The Silence of Scripture

Leviticus 24:10-16

Introduction: What do these things have in common?

- Voting on church membership
- Official clergy distinctions
- Celibacy
- Special garments for clergy
- Bingo games, carnivals, bake sales, and the like to raise money
- Church supported organizations
- Instrumental music in worship
- Partaking communion once a month/year

None of these things are authorized nor found in God's word! You can verify it yourself by reading the Bible. However, many religions practice some if not all of these things. Why? The answer lies in two different views toward the scriptures.

I. Two views:

A. The worldly view: "We can practice things not found in the New Testament. We must avoid only those things specifically condemned in scripture."

B. The scriptural view: "We can practice only what is found to be taught in God's word." In other words, silence on a subject is not permission to do it!

II. The scriptural view is illustrated in the Old and New Testament.

A. Lev. 24:10-16

1. Only the difficult cases came before Moses (Ex. 18:26).
2. The command of God was clear on this matter (Ex. 20:7).
3. They either didn't know how to punish him, or they didn't want to punish him, so the case came before Moses. (We wouldn't punish him at all today.)
4. The scriptures were silent concerning the punishment. Therefore, could they handle the matter as they want?
5. God means what He says! No deviations! He "shall bear his sin."

B. Num. 9:1-14

1. The case where some men were unclean and reasoned that they should participate in the Passover.
2. The law did not specifically address this situation. Therefore, could they do as they wanted?
3. God gave a law without a list of exceptions. Therefore, they still participate.

C. Num. 15:32-36

1. Here is a man caught violating the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11).
2. Moses didn't know what to do with him. God said stone him.
3. God means what he says! Just because a specific situation is not addressed is not permission to do contrary to God's command (Lev. 10:1-2)!

D. God wants complete obedience (Deut. 8:1-3). Why? So we will understand we don't live life to serve our physical and material needs. We live life by God's words. We live life the way God wants us to live life.

E. If there is no command, there is no right to speak (Acts 15:24). Silence is not authority to make up our own rules!

F. We can't exceed what is written (1 Cor. 4:6).

G. We must abide in what God has revealed in His word (2 John 9-11).

III. The worldly view lacks any scriptural evidence.

A. "If the Bible doesn't condemn it, why can't we allow it?" From a practical point of view, this brings up many rhetorical questions.

1. Once we allow a practice of a thing not authorized in scripture, why not another unauthorized practice? (ex. Kitchens or gyms.)

2. Where do we draw the line on things not authorized?

3. If we allow a practice not authorized, can we prohibit the practice of anything else not authorized?

4. What prevents a person from making up things not specifically condemned?

5. If I can do something not authorized in God's word, am I not implying that God did not tell us everything we need to know to live righteously (2 Pet. 1:3)?

6. If God permits something He did not authorize, then is the Bible a reliable guide to any religious practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17)?

7. If the Bible is not our only source of authority, why use the Bible to justify some things and not others? Why use the Bible at all?

8. If we won't use our Bibles in all matters, how do we know we are pleasing God?

B. "Are we saying God intentionally remained silent on certain issues?"

1. If intentional, then God obviously means what He says.

2. If unintentional, then some things not authorized in scripture would be all right since God forgot to let us know. Is that our view of God?

Conclusion: The only way to end division is to agree to use the Bible as our only guide. We must understand that promoting any practice not authorized in scripture is promoting a religion where the Bible has no purpose. Sadly, that is the world we live in (Rom. 12:2).