**Authority of God**

**Silence of the Scriptures**

When was the last time you heard someone attempt to justify a religious practice by saying, “Well, God didn’t say *not* to do it!” The prevalent opinion among our religious friends is that they are at liberty to do as they please in areas in which God has chosen to remain silent. As a result, most modern religious organizations claiming to follow Christ bear little to no resemblance to the church we read about in the New Testament. Do the scriptures provide any indication of how God feels about His silence? Well, let’s see…

**Leviticus 10:1-3**

God had given priests Nadab and Abihu instructions on properly burning incense to Him, but we find that they were destroyed by fire from heaven because they “offered strange fire to the Lord which He had *commanded them not*.” God did not have to itemize all the kinds and sources of fire they were not to use. He simply specified what He wanted. When those priests chose to act in the area of God’s silence, He was not glorified, He was dishonored (v.3) and they suffered the consequences.

**Hebrews 7:14**

In this passage, the Hebrew writer is making the point that Jesus is our High Priest, but that He can serve in that capacity only because the Law of Moses is no longer in effect. Notice the inspired writer’s argument: “For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses *spoke nothing* concerning priesthood.” The Holy Spirit is making it crystal clear that it is unlawful to act in an area in which God has spoken nothing. God did not have to “say not to” ordain priests from the tribe of Reuben, Benjamin, Simeon, Judah, etc., etc., All He had to do was specify the tribe of Levi and all others were automatically excluded. The only way to glorify God is to do what He says in the ways He has authorized. To act by my own authority glorifies no one but myself; God is dishonored.

**Music in Worship to God**

It is clear from Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 that God wants us to make music in His honor when we worship Him. In fact, every New Testament passage addressing music in worship states clearly that He wants us to sing. With regard to playing mechanical instruments in worship, He has “commanded us not”. He has “spoken nothing” concerning musical instruments in the New Testament. If we learn anything from Nadab and Abihu as well as the book of Hebrews, it is that we truly obey God and honor Him only when we do what He has authorized and not what we would like. The silence of God is not a license to act on our own.

**1 Corinthians 16:1-2**

As you study your New Testament, it is apparent that local churches engaged in efforts such as supporting the preaching of the gospel, providing assistance for needy saints and facilitating the spiritual growth of their members. These efforts cost money. As it turns out, 1 Cor. 16:1-2 is the only passage that reveals how first century churches raised their funds. The free-will offering by the saints when they come together on the first day of the week is the only approved method. Regarding “chariot washes” and chili suppers, God has “commanded us not”. He has “spoken nothing” concerning church-owned business enterprises. Had God felt compelled to list everything man could devise that He did not want, the necessary volumes of scripture would have been endless. Nearly any activity can be “justified” with the “didn’t say not to” argument. The only way to glorify God is to “learn not to exceed what is written.” (1 Cor. 4:6)