

Speak Where The Bible Speaks & Be Silent Where The Bible Is Silent

II Pet 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

A great principle of the restoration movement is the silence of scripture. We understand God often speaks with silence, therefore, Campbell said: "We speak where the Bible speaks & are silent where the Bible is silent."

Martin Luther insisted he could do anything the scriptures did not forbid. Ulrich Zwingli said he could only do what the scriptures authorized. They parted company because they could not agree.

Silence as a Rule of Language

When one option out of a category is specified all other options are excluded. When God told Naaman to dip in the Jordan river, even Naaman understood it excluded all other rivers and he got angry about it. When God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, He didn't tell him every place else not to go ... he got mad about it and rebelled.

Bread and fruit of the vine specified excludes all other foods in the Lord's Supper. Because the Lord specified immersion, sprinkling and pouring is excluded. Because the Lord specified vocal singing instruments and clapping to make noise are excluded. Because the Lord specified prayer in Jesus name, prayer in anyone else's name is excluded.

This is just common rules of language without which words would have no meaning. Pharmacists understand it in filling your prescriptions exactly, builders follow exactly architects drawings and blue prints, cooks follow recipes exactly if they want the same results. If we did not understand language this way language would be useless.

Suppose, I invite you to dinner at 7:00pm tonight Sunday July 10, 2011. The time is specified therefore it rules out all other times. The day is specified therefore it rules all other days. The year is specified therefore it rules out all other years. But notice what is not specified: dress, therefore silence allows you to be free to dress any way you choose as appropriate.

Lords Supper the first day of the week is specified but not the time therefore we are free to partake at any time the congregation we worship with feels appropriate for them.

In the music category, singing is specified but style of songs and whether we sing in unison or four part harmony is open to each congregation to decide.

In the category of what we teach or preach we are taught to preach the Gospel Mark 16:15-16 and preach the word, II Tim. 4:2. We are taught to teach whatsoever things Jesus has commanded us. Matt 28:19 Paul teaches us to teach the same thing he delivered to Timothy

II Tim.2:2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Christians are taught to assemble Heb. 10:25 but not where to worship, the length of worship or order of worship.

How God Wishes To Be Obeyed

Deut. 6:4-5 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: Deu 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Moses by inspiration in Deuteronomy 6 urges the people to love the Lord, to fear the Lord and obey the Lord. Careful obedience means listening closely and obeying what God desires. God did not consider keeping His law as legalism but an act of love and Godly fear. The Jewish Publication Society in the new JPS translation of the Hebrew scriptures occasionally intensifies the verb shamar, which is translated careful in the book of Deuteronomy. They translate this verb as be very careful 2:4, take utmost care 4:9, be most careful 4:15, observing scrupulously 17:10, be most careful to do exactly 24:8, be sure 6:17 & 12:19, and make sure 12:23. The Lord expects His people to take His Word and Commandments to heart cf: (Deut.4:39-40).

Jesus Obeyed the Rule of Silence

Jesus uses words very similar to that of Deuteronomy when he often clearly stated He did not act on his own initiative but came to do the Father's will and to accomplish his work cf:

John 4:34 Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

John 5:19 Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

John 5:30 I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

John 5:36 But I have greater witness than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

John 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

John 7:16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

John 8:26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. **Joh 8:27** They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. **Joh 8:28** Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. **Joh 8:29** And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

John 12:49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. **Joh 12:50** And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

John 14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

Jesus used language very similar to that found in Deuteronomy to describe how He precisely delivered the commandments of the Father. Jesus recognized that commandments that bring life

deserve to be handled accurately. Jesus also showed that conscientious obedience demonstrates love cf:

John 14:31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

NAS But so the world may know that I love the Father, I do exactly as the Father commanded me.

Jesus lovingly, carefully and accurately obeyed the will of the Father, even to the point of death. Jesus did not view keeping God's commandments as legalism but rather proof that He loved the Father.

In a like manner the Holy Spirit never speaks or acts on His own authority cf:

John 16:12-13 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Joh 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

God's Word

The Bible plainly teaches do not add to the Word of God nor take away from the Word of God.

Deu 12:8 Ye shall not do after all *the things* that we do here this day, every man whatsoever *is* right in his own eyes.

Just because a man sees nothing wrong with a belief or an act, does not mean that God approves of it. Cf:

Prov 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

Deut 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you

Deut 12:32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Prov 30:5-6 Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him. **Pro 30:6** Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Rev 22:18-19 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: **Rev 22:19** And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

The early second generation church fathers recognized this principle by quoting and paraphrasing those verses cf:

Didache 4:18 “Thou shalt not forsake the commandments of the Lord, but thou shalt keep what thou did receive. Adding nothing to it and taking nothing away.” (aka The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles)

Epistle of Barnabus 19:11 Thou shalt keep those things which thou hast received neither adding to them or taking away from them.

Tertullian “Any doctrine not as old as the apostles is thereby condemned by the silence of Holy Scripture.”

When People Act Without Authority

Thru Leviticus Chapters 8 and 9 the Bible records 10 times that Aaron, Nadab & Abihu did just as the Lord commanded. Then the Sons of Aaron broke that pattern of obedience after the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. cf:

Lev 9:23-24 And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people. **Lev 9:24** And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: *which* when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

Lev10:1-3 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. Lev 10:2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Lev 10:3 Then Moses said unto Aaron, This *is it* that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

King Saul on his own initiative presumed because he was king he could offer burnt offering and sacrifice at Gilgal. cf:

I Sam 13:8-14 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. 1Sa 13:9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. 1Sa 13:10 And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. 1Sa 13:11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; 1Sa 13:12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. 1Sa 13:13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. 1Sa 13:14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.

Saul did the work of a priest and offered sacrifice rather than following orders:

1 Samuel 10:8 And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, *and* to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.

Since Saul was not a priest, he acted on his own authority, rather than follow God's instructions cf:

Lev 1:7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire: **Lev 1:8** And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* upon the altar:

When the Ark was returned to Israel, care was taken that proper respect was shown. Uzzah only tried to be helpful ...

1 Chron 13:9-10 And when they came unto the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled. **1Ch 13:10** And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.

David became angry at the Lord's outburst on Uzzah, just as some become angry today at the suggestion that God will not accept their good intentions. But what men see as harmless, is not necessarily so to God. Only after consulting the Law, did David understand no one was to carry the Ark but the Levites. Then 2 chapters later David says:

1 Chron 15:2 Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever.

1Ch 15:12-15 And said unto them, Ye *are* the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, *both* ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto *the place that* I have prepared for it. **1Ch 15:13** For because ye *did it* not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. **1Ch 15:14** So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark

of the LORD God of Israel. 1Ch 15:15 And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD.

Today's post Modernists believe in their hearts that they can help and improve by modernizing God's plan for the church from the old fashioned way.

Jer 6:16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein*.

Jer 23:16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, *and* not out of the mouth of the LORD.

Jer 23:26 How long shall *this* be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own heart;

Jer 23:32 Behold, I *am* against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

Jer 23:33-34 And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What *is* the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD. Jer 23:34 And *as for* the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and his house.

Matt 15:14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Col 2:20:23 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, Col 2:21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Col 2:22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Col 2:23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

NIV verse 23 “ Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom with their self-imposed worship, their false humility ...”

NAS verse 23 “ These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion ...”

I Cor 4:6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and *to* Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

Acts 15:1-2 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. Act 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

Acts 15:24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment:

Heb 1:5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

Even Jesus subjected Himself to the rules cf:

Heb 7:14 For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

Exo 28:1 And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, *even* Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

One is astonished at how men presume the right to speak and act on their own initiative and they do what neither the Lord Jesus nor the Holy Spirit ever dared to do. We see them inventing and adding strange forms of worship, recasting the organization of the church, assuring people of alternative ways of obeying the gospel, and ignoring the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures. Cf:

II John 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

We must never presume the right to act or speak in the hushed silence of God.

Respect for the silence of scripture made our forefathers refuse instrumental music in worship and they chose to not create a national organization to manage the mission work of the church.

Regarding instrumental music in worship we are often quoted from the Old Testament to prove it is authorized in the New. Often when you go to the doctor he changes your perscription. Do you obey the old perscription or the new? A scriptural example is Moses cf:

Exo 17:5-6 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Exo 17:6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Later God changed the prescription and told Moses cf:

Num 20:8-12 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. Num 20:9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. Num 20:10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? Num 20:11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts *also*. Num 20:12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

Because Moses didn't take the new medicine but took the old God said Moses "believed me not" and Moses couldn't enter the promise land. What does this have to do with instruments of music in our worship? God uses the Greek word psallo translated sing or singing or sang eight times in the New Testament and never tells us to play ... do you really think God forgot to tell us something?

Today those in the change movement are asking "where does the bible forbid us to do so?". How could such men be learned in the ways of scripture?

II Pet 3:15-16 And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; 2Pe 3:16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

Quoted freely and paraphrased from:

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'We Must Respect The Silence Of Scripture' by John Waddey

'Speak Where The Bible Speaks, Be Silent Where The Bible Is Silent' by Phil Sanders, Spiritual Sword.

'Silence' by Stafford North