

Today, for salvation, all men must obey the gospel. Please read Mark 16:15,16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10. We must be sure that we are following what God says rather than what man says (Matt. 7:21-23; 15:9,14). If you would like, please send for more information on this.

Concerning worship we are told: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Truth is God’s Word (John 17:17). Simply put, we must have book, chapter, and verse (authority) for everything that we do in religion (Col. 3:17). We must also be sure that we properly use the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15 cp. 2 Peter 3:16). Let us consider some examples:

The Lord’s Supper. Jesus only authorized the use of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine to be used (Matt. 26:17,26-30). The Lord’s Supper is to be taken every first day of the week which is Sunday (Acts 20:7). We must not take away or add to or in any way substitute what the Lord wants (Rev. 22:18,19).

Music in worship to God. God has told us what kind of music He wants in worship to Him today. It is singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16,17). Nothing less or more will please God. The early church understood this and therefore did not use any mechanical instruments of music in worship to God. Nowhere in the New Testament is it authorized. To offer mechanical music to God is equivalent to offering “strange (or unauthorized) fire” before the Lord as did Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1,2). One cannot go back to the Old Testament for authority because it is no longer of force (Heb. 7-10; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Rom. 7:6,7; Gal. 5:1- 4).

In order to be pleasing to God we must obey Him in all things. If we do not do what God says, we do not please Him. Jesus said: “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)?

The law of exclusion, that is, respecting the **silence of the Scriptures** is very important. In other words, we must not go beyond the Word of God (1 Cor. 4:6; 1 Peter 4:11); not adding to or taking away (Rev. 22:18,19). It is a matter of authority (Col. 3:17). Christ has all authority or power (Matt. 28:18). Do we truly love God? ♥



“Holding forth the word of life”

WOL

(Phil 2:16 cp. John 6:63, 68)

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Authority In Religion

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Anyone who is serious about serving God in a pleasing manner should seek to understand how God, in His Book, authorizes. God, early on and throughout the Bible, has given us examples of how He authorizes. It behooves us all to understand this subject very well.

God plainly told Adam “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ¹⁷But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:16,17). In this case God was authorizing all but one tree for a food source and we can see why it is said this way, but in religion only a few things are authorized and so it is said differently.

Nadab and Abihu were priests and sons of the high priest Aaron. In Leviticus 10:1,2 we find “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. ²And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.” A study of the word “strange” will reveal that it is speaking of something unauthorized, but here let us note the phrase “which he commanded them not.” It is obvious that Nadab and Abihu did that which God did not tell them to do. In other words these priests did that which was unauthorized.

Unlike Adam in the garden where every tree but one was authorized; with Nadab and Abihu, in religious services then, only one source for the fire was authorized (Lev. 16:12; Num. 16:46). They got the fire from a strange (unauthorized) source. The source they got the fire from was unauthorized because God did not command it. In other

words, God said nothing about it; God simply told them the one source for the fire. This is reasonable, practical, and very understandable because we use these principles in everyday life. When we go into a restaurant for example, do we tell the person taking our order everything we do not want or do we tell them only what we do want? And if the server brings an item or items that we did not order are we obligated to pay for it? Of course not, because we did not authorize it. If we order from a catalog do we name everything that we do not want or do we list only the things we do want?

This is the law of silence or law of exclusion and is seen throughout the Bible and throughout worldly affairs. Let us look at another very plain example: Hebrews 7:14 “For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.” The Hebrew writer had been addressing the priesthood being changed and therefore a change also of the law (v.12). Under the Old Testament system the priests were to be taken from the tribe of Levi (Exod. 27:21; 28:1,43). God did not name the other eleven tribes and say “Do not take the priests from them.” God simply named the tribe from which the priests were to be taken. Thus the statement in Hebrews 7:14.

As a side note, Jesus was not a priest on earth and He could not be a priest of the Levitical priesthood because He was of a tribe not authorized (Heb. 7:17 and context). But Jesus is now Priest as the Hebrew writer shows and He is also King as Peter preached (Acts 2:22-36). Just as was prophesied in the long ago: Jesus would be priest and king at the same time (Zech. 6:13), but He would be so in Heaven. Jesus is now high priest and is now ruling His kingdom from His throne in Heaven. Now back to our subject at hand.

Cain and Abel of Genesis 4 is another good example (Gen. 4:1-7). We learn more of this in Hebrews 11:4 “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.” What was the difference between Abel’s offering and Cain’s offering? Faith. But what does that mean? By studying (2 Tim. 2:15) and searching the Scriptures we learn more about this “faith.” Romans 10:17 says “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” It is clear that Abel heard God’s word concerning the offering and that he complied and pleased God. It is equally clear that Cain heard God’s word on the matter, but

chose to do his own thing and he and his offering were rejected by God. Cain offered that which was unauthorized by God. For more on this consider Romans 14:23 “...for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.” That is, we must have book, chapter, and verse for all that we do in religion (John 4:24; Col. 3:17). The New Testament is the system of faith for us in this Age (Acts 6:7; 14:22; 16:5; Rom. 1:5; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 1:23; Jude 3, etc.).

Noah and the ark is a very good example of general and specific commandments concerning authority. In Genesis 6:14 God instructed Noah to build the ark for the purpose of saving him and his family (Heb. 11:7), a family of righteousness. Please consider this, before God told Noah to build the ark, was Noah authorized to do so? No. But God said to Noah “Make thee an ark.” Had God given no further instructions, then Noah would have been at liberty to make it out of any material he saw fit and also of any design. That would have been a general command. But God gave further instructions (specifics): “of gopher wood ... the length,” etc. Could Noah have made the ark out of any wood he wanted and be pleasing to God? No. Noah understood these specific commands and obeyed God (Gen. 6:22). Friends, this is a goal for which we all should strive. After all, Jesus said “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

What about us in the New Testament Age? “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18). This simply means that Jesus has all authority. It should be no surprise then that Paul said “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of [authority of] the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17). Since Jesus is the Savior (John 4:42) and we must obey Him in order to be saved (Heb. 5:8,9), it behooves us to be certain that we have His authority for everything we do in religion. That is what Paul said in Colossians 3:17.

The New Testament is the covenant all men are under today (Heb. 9:14 17; 1:1, 2; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14, etc.). If we cannot find authority for what we are doing and teaching in religion we had better stop doing it. We do not want to be in the same boat as Cain, Nadab, and Abihu! Please study the context of 1 Samuel 15:22 and consider this verse: “... Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”