

Where God Said Nothing

*“For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke **nothing** concerning priesthood,”* Hebrews 7:14.

This verse refers to the earthly lineage of Jesus Christ. Not only was He to come from the nation of Israel, but specifically He was to be of the tribe of Judah. It was as Jacob prophesied upon his deathbed, *“the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to Him shall be the obedience of the people,”* Genesis 49:10. The *“Shiloh”* of this verse referred to the *“Messiah”* of Old Testament prophecy (meaning the anointed one), or to the *“Christ”* of New Testament fulfillment.

Jesus was born while the *“law”* of Moses was still in effect, Galatians 4:4, a law which He came to *“fulfill,”* Matthew 5:17, and which He, by His death upon the cross, did fulfill. Consequently, that law was *“taken out of the way,”* *“nailed..to the cross,”* Colossians 2:14, and Jesus therefore became *“mediator of the New Testament,”* Hebrews 9:15-17. And Jesus, during this biblical time period, serves as our *“high priest,”* through Whom we can *“come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need,”* Hebrews 4:14-16. However, if Jesus *“were on earth”* and still living under *“the law”* of Moses, He could *“not be a priest,”* Hebrews 8:4. Why could He not thus serve? Because under the law of Moses God specified that the priests would come from the tribe of **Levi**, Deuteronomy 18:1; 21:5, but Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, a tribe concerning which Moses *“spoke **nothing** concerning priesthood,”* Hebrews 7:14. Please bear in mind that nowhere in Moses’ law was there a command, saying to people of other tribes, *“you shall **not** serve as priests.”* However, God specified the tribe from which the priests were to be taken, and He said *“nothing”* concerning people of other tribes serving as priests. Hence, even Jesus Christ, the Son of God, could not have served as a priest on earth while that law was in effect!

In today’s world religious division is rampant. Countless activities are engaged in, supposedly in an effort to worship and serve God, and concerning which the Bible has said *“nothing,”* either by way of authorizing or specifically condemning such actions. And religionists feel completely at ease in their actions, and they seek to justify such by saying, *“where does the Bible say **“thou shalt not** do these things?”* You see, they seek justification for their actions — not on the basis of what God has said, but on the basis of what He did not say!

It is amazing how people think that **the silence of God** gives consent, whereas they do not so reason with reference to **the silence of man**. Frankly, most of us become somewhat upset when people take liberties with **our** silence. To illustrate, around 1980, my wife and I, and our two youngest children planned to fly a round trip from California to Florida. For four of us that was quite expensive, so I paid part of it by check, and charged the balance on our Visa Card. The following month I was not pleased when I discovered that the Travel Agency had charged our credit card for an additional amount of \$ 962.00! Granted, I had not specifically told them *“do not charge our credit card for any amount in addition to what we have specified.”* I simply gave permission for them to charge us with a certain amount, but they charged the agreed upon amount, **plus** an additional \$962.00! To say the least, I was not *“a happy camper,”* and in very short order they were apprised of my displeasure. They presumed upon my silence!

God, through the Bible, has told us what He wants us to **know**, and what He wants us to **do**. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work,”* 2 Timothy 3:16,17. If the scriptures equip us *“for **every** good*

work,” and if by them we can be “*complete*,” then what else do we need by which to be guided religiously? Can a work, in the sight of God, be considered a “good work” if it is nowhere authorized in the sacred scriptures which were divinely designed to equip us “*for every good work?*” Jesus said to Satan, “*man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,*” Matthew 4:4. If we are to “*live...by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,*” then what about those words which **do not** proceed “*from the mouth of God?*”

To be sure, there are many things concerning which we may have questions, but upon which God has not spoken. In such cases we should keep in mind the principle stated in Deuteronomy 29:29: “*The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*” We can not know more than what God has “*revealed*,” nor can we afford to act beyond what God has “*revealed!*” This should not be hard for us to understand — especially in view of Revelation 22:18,19, which says: “*For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*”

With reference to what we believe, teach and practice by way of worshipping and serving God, we must be ready to “*test all things*,” and “*hold fast that which is good*,” I Thessalonians 5:21. We “*test all things*” by comparing such with the Scriptures, mindful that whatever we do, whether “*in word or deed*,” must be done “*in the name of the Lord Jesus*,” Colossians 3:17, for He is the One Who has been “*given all authority*,” Matthew 28:18. If a given belief, or religious practice, is that concerning which Jesus said absolutely “*nothing*,” then we had better leave it both untaught and undone!

However, notwithstanding the principles which have been set forth, the religious world is engaged in countless activities concerning which Jesus in His “*New Testament*,” Hebrews 9:15, has said a sum total of “*nothing*.” And activities concerning which the religious world is divided, even though Jesus earnestly prayed for the unity of all believers, John 17:20,21. Included in that list is sprinkling and pouring in the place of immersion or Bible baptism, the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship, praying unto Mary or to some “*saint*,” local church support of human institutions to do the work of the church, and countless other items too numerous to list in our limited space. “*But*,” someone says, “*the Bible does not say you can not do these things.*” And that is correct, but the Bible has told us what to teach and what to practice religiously. If we are permitted to act in the silence of the Scriptures, then “*Pandora’s Box*” is opened to justify virtually anything and everything! To illustrate, several years ago in a Unitarian church in Texas, a lady (?) performed a belly dance as a part of the “*worship*” (?) activities of that church. On the assumption that one is authorized to act in realms concerning which God has said “*nothing*,” how could one condemn what she did, and what that church openly condoned?

Yes, religious division pervades the religious world. However, most division is not based upon what the Bible has said, but upon what it **does not say!** Without doubt, the greatest contributing factor to religious division, and to the unbelief it generates, John 17:20,21, is that of presuming upon God’s silence, and then teaching and practicing that concerning which He has said “*nothing*.”

Conclusion:

If it is not in the Bible it is that concerning which God said “*nothing*.” But **what** if something is taught and practiced in the realm of religion concerning which God said “*nothing?*” Beloved, if it is not in the scriptures, it: (1) is not a “*good work*,” 2 Timothy 3:16,17; (2) it does

not pertain “*to life and godliness,*” 2 Peter 1:3); (3) it cannot be done “*by faith,*” 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 10:17; (4) it involves going beyond “*the doctrine of Christ,*” 2 John 9; (5) it constitutes “*lawlessness,*” Matthew 7:23; (6) it becomes as it were “*another gospel,*” Galatians 1:6-9; and ((7) it involves adding to the word of God, Revelation 22:18,19.

Beloved, God must be the Object of our worship, John 4:24. He knows what it takes for us to please Him, and concerning which He has spoken in the sacred Scriptures. In those areas about which God has said “*nothing,*” it behooves us to **say** nothing and **do** nothing! We already have our hands full doing what God **has** authorized, so let us not presume upon His silence! —Bobby Witherington