**By What Authority (5) – The Silence of the Scriptures**

*Luke 20:1-8*

**Introduction**

1. The question posed by the Jewish leaders to Jesus shows the importance of authority – **Luke 20:1-8**
   1. Previously:
      1. **The Need for Authority** – implied by their question, and Jesus’ response.
         1. Need for authority shown – secular, biblical history, inherent within conversion, no authority = sin.
      2. **The Source of Authority** – implied by their question, and Jesus’ response.
         1. Improper sources of authority demonstrated – from men.
         2. Proper source of authority demonstrated – God, Christ, HS through apostles, written word.
      3. **Establishing Authority** – implied by their question (Jesus must be able to demonstrate), and reasoning to Jesus’ response regarding John the baptizer (John evidently demonstrated to others) is the ability to demonstrate authority.
         1. Command, Example, Necessary Inference – an inspired hermeneutic.
      4. **The Doctrine of Expediency** – as a subpoint to establishing authority, understanding the dual nature of authority (generic and specific). Within generic authority is the concept of Bible expediencies (something lawful which aids in carrying out a command or authorized action).
         1. **NOTE: Expediencies aren’t specified. However, that does not mean there is silence concerning the action or object of expediency (if it is lawful there is revelation to appeal to as proof).**
   2. Understanding the meaning of God’s silence is important if we are to grasp the nature of authority.
      1. **NOTE: The idea of inclusive generic authority misunderstood leads to unauthorized action with an appeal to God’s silence.**
         1. **MISUNDERSTANDING** – For a thing to be prohibited it must be specifically excluded – conclusion, everything scripture does not specifically forbid is authorized.
      2. **We must be able to fully grasp the nature of revelation and its purpose to recognize the nature and thrust of God’s silence.**
2. Authority – *exousia* – power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission (Thayer).
   1. “from the impersonal verb exesti, ‘it is lawful’” (Vine).
   2. (1) the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience; (1a) the right to act in a specified way, delegated from one person or organization to another (New Oxford American Dictionary)
   3. Includes power to permit, and prohibit – WHAT ABOUT WHEN AN AUTHORITY (SUCH AS GOD) IS SILENT ON A MATTER?
3. Is Biblical silence prohibitive or permissive?
4. God and Revelation
5. The Need for Authority Implies the Need for Sufficient Revelation
   1. **Colossians 3:17** – “whatever” is all inclusive.
      1. *Pas* – pert. to totality with focus on its individual components, each, every, any (BDAG)
      2. We must have authority for the totality of what we do.
   2. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – scripture is that which “thoroughly” equips us – it is an adequate revelation for us to be able to establish authority for the totality of what we do.
      1. Scripture (revelation) is the communication of said authority.
   3. I.e. GOD HAS NOT BEEN NEGLIGENT TO REVEAL TO US ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING WE NEED TO KNOW TO BE PLEASING TO HIM.
      1. Including what is required, what is prohibited, and what is permitted though not required.
   4. Therefore, if there is not verifiable authority revealed for a matter via command, example, or necessary inference it cannot be that God will be pleased by the doing of that thing.
6. Any Conclusions Reached About What is Pleasing to God without Revelation are Presumptuous (speculative at best)
   1. **Romans 11:33-35** – Paul’s very point is that without revelation of God’s plan of salvation we would not be able to know one bit of it.
   2. If we do not have “book, chapter, and verse,” then how can we possibly know what God thinks on the matter?
   3. After Paul had made a similar point to the Corinthians that he did with the Romans – **1 Corinthians 4:6** – don’t think beyond what is written.
      1. These things – chapter 3 – concerning being fellow workers for God, planting/watering, God giving increase.
      2. Think beyond? – **1 Corinthians 3:11** – both Paul and Apollos were saying the same things – CORINTHIANS HAD THOUGHT BEYOND WHAT WAS WRITTEN BY MAKING PAUL OR APOLLOS MORE THAN THE OTHER. (Philosophers and philosophy)
      3. I.e. anything additional to what is revealed is to be rejected.
   4. **2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17** – walking by faith means by the direction of God’s revelation.
      1. Doing something without authority revealed in scripture is acting without faith.
      2. **1 Corinthians 2:5** – action on “authority” that is from men is walking by faith in something/someone other than God.
   5. Acting on generic authority is NOT presumptuous:
      1. It may be that the specific thing was not mentioned by God.
      2. However, if He has revealed a class, and a thing falls within that class, then He has spoken on it.
      3. EXAMPLE: Song books – not specifically mentioned, but not completely silent.
         1. Sing – revealed – **Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19**
         2. Song books – fall within generic authority as an expediency to carry out the specific command to sing.
      4. EXAMPLE: Church building – commanded to assemble **(cf. Hebrews 10:25**), necessarily implied within the command is a choice of place to assemble.
7. God and Silence
8. God’s Intentional Revelation Implies Intentional Silence
   1. **1 Corinthians 2:9-12** – we cannot know God’s mind (will, desire, etc.) without Him revealing it to us.
   2. **Psalm 19:7** – ***“perfect”*** (complete) implies God left nothing out.
   3. **Deuteronomy 29:29** – the explained reason for God’s revelation gives an implied reason for that which He has kept separate from us.
      1. Secret – to hide, be absent.
      2. SECRET in contrast to REVEALED
         1. REVEALED – ***“that we may do all…”***
         2. SECRET? – opposite – not do (else He would have revealed it.)
   4. God’s intentional silence demonstrated by the argument for the change of law for Christ’s priesthood – **Hebrews 7:11-16**
      1. **(vv. 11-13)** – not according to same order, another tribe.
      2. **(v. 14)** – ***“Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood”*** (for the tribe of Judah).
      3. **(v. 16)** – not according to the Law (spoke nothing about priest from Judah – only Levi).
      4. God only wanted priests from Levi, so leaving the other tribes out in His revelation was intentional.
9. Speaking Where God Has Not Spoken Amounts to an Addition
   1. **Hebrews 7:12** – ***“of necessity”*** is so due to the offense of adding to a law of God.
   2. **Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:5-6** – adding to God’s revelation is prohibited.
      1. Claiming authority from God’s silence is adding to what He has revealed.
      2. “Men are not to mingle revealed truth with their own imaginations and traditions. In speculating on the unseen, the risk of error is indefinitely great, and that error God reproves by manifesting its falsehoods.” (Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Proverbs 30:6).
   3. Examples:
      1. **Nadab and Abihu** – **Leviticus 10:1-3** – not commanded them – result? **(v. 2)** – fire devoured them.
         1. **(v. 3)** – God not regarded as holy, nor glorified.
         2. They added to…
      2. **Moses** – **Numbers 20:7-8, 11-12** – told to speak, but struck – result? **(v. 12)** – not enter promised land.
         1. **(v. 12)** – did not hallow God – regard Him as holy.
         2. He added to – (**cf. Exodus 17:6** – God said strike) – however, now in **v. 8** God WAS SILENT ABOUT STRIKING.
      3. **David (transporting the ark)** – **1 Chronicles 13:7, 9-12; 15:13** – did not follow proper order – result? **(13:10)** – God’s anger aroused.
         1. **Cf. Exodus 25:12-14** – God gave instructions on the transportation of the ark.
         2. They added to – He SAID NOTHING about a cart.
      4. **David and Nathan (request to build God a house)** – **2 Samuel 7:2-3, 7** – Nathan gave consent when God was silent – result? – God showed such was unauthorized.
10. The Silence of the Scriptures
11. Only Two Possibilities for the Role of Silence in Authority
    1. Permissive – because God didn’t say NOT to we can?
    2. Prohibitive – because God didn’t grant authority then we can’t?
12. Unauthorized Practices Appealing to Silence
    1. Instrumental Music – **Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16** – God said to sing, but He didn’t say NOT to use mechanical instruments?
       1. Specifying singing makes the silence of mechanical instruments prohibitive.
    2. Institutionalism:
       1. Supporting human institutions w/ the treasury of a local church – God didn’t say NOT to give money to orphan’s and widow’s homes.
          1. Every example of church benevolence includes needy saints only, and money being sent from one church to an individual directly, or to another church in the care of the elders. (**cf. Acts 11:29-30; Romans 15:25-26; 1 Timothy 5**)
          2. There is not an example of a church sending money to a human institution of any kind.
       2. Missionary society for evangelism.
          1. Only thing the Bible mentions is the church/individual Christian’s evangelizing. **(cf. Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 8:4)**
          2. There is not an example of an institution separate from the church involved in evangelistic efforts.
    3. CONSIDER – If God’s silence on a matter permits that matter there is no end to what we can claim authority for.
       1. ANY LIMITATION ON WHAT WE CAN RIGHTLY ARGUE FROM SILENCE IS ARBITRARY.
       2. The logical end to this way of thinking is the permissiveness of anything and everything not specifically forbidden.

**Conclusion**

1. We must have authority for everything we do.
2. Authority is revealed.
3. If we cannot find generic or specific authority by command, example, or necessary inference we do not have the authority to act.