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THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

DOES IT MATTER WHAT GOD DOESN'T SAY?

Those who accept the Bible as the verbally inspired revelation of God to man recognize that every single word in the Bible has significance. Consider 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "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." What God says in His Word matters! Without it we would not know of God's plan for our salvation nor how to respond to it. That response includes faith in Jesus Christ (John 8:24; Mark 16:16), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession of faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10), immersion in water into the death of Jesus to reach His blood whereby our sins are washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4), and faithful service as a Christian (Hebrews 12:28). What God commands us to do to be saved from our sins matters

But, what about what God doesn't say in His Word – does that matter? May we speak where God has NOT spoken and still please God? May we add to His words with impunity? Or, must we respect the silence of God? The inspired Peter wrote, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..." (1 Peter 4:11). The word "oracles" simply refers to what God has revealed to man, that is, His written Word, the Bible. This passage indicates that we are to speak as the Bible speaks. The logical implication from this passage is that where the Bible has not spoken we are not permitted to speak. Therefore, it is presumptuous and sinful to add to what God has already spoken (See Deut. 4:2; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

Respecting what God has said as well as what He has not said is equivalent to submitting to His authority. God authorizes religious teaching and practice by what He has said, not by what He has not said. What that means is that if one cannot find a religious teaching or practice in God's spiritual law then God has not authorized or given man His permission to teach or practice it. The New Testament is the spiritual law to which all are subject today (Matthew 26:28; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 9:15; Galatians 6:2). The Old Testament law served its purpose and is no longer in force as a binding spiritual law having been taken away at the death of Jesus (Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:14-16; 2 Corinthians 3:1ff).

The purpose of this article has been to encourage each of us to examine closely what we believe and practice in our efforts to serve God. Surely each of us want to make sure that we are speaking only as the oracles of God and not embracing human religious traditions and practices that have no basis in scripture.

Do you have a Bible question? Send your questions to Green Plain church of Christ, 3980 Murray Paris Rd, Hazel, KY 42049.