

# The Authority of the Scriptures

## Introduction

1 Thessalonians 2:13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, **but as it is in truth, the word of God**, which also effectively works in you who believe.

1. **The person who has truly “accepted” Jesus as Lord, will carefully obey His will, as revealed in His word.**
2. **The teaching of the apostles, contained for us in the New Testament documents, is nothing less than the Lord’s Word**  
**Galatians 1:11-12**
3. **In determining what our own faith and practice will be, it is very important that we **respect the authority of the Scriptures**.**

## How the Lord’s Authority is Communicated to Us

1. **There are three basic avenues through which we may learn what the Lord wants us to do:**
  - A. **Direct command.** For example, we partake of the Lord’s Supper because there is a direct command to that effect.

Luke 22:19-20 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.”

- B. **Approved apostolic example.** We partake of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week because we see New Testament congregations doing that in God’s Word.

Acts 20:7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread....

- C. **Necessary inference.** We partake of the Lord's Supper every first day of the week because that such is implied by the passages involved.

**Acts 20:7**

**1 Corinthians 11:20-29; 16:1-2**

- 1) **We can compare the implication of the teaching in the Old Testament to keep EVERY Sabbath day.**

**Exodus 20:8-11**

2. **The Bible is our authority for the Lord's will, and it is our only authority.**

John 12:48 He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

3. **It is a very serious thing to add to, take away from, or change God's Word in any way.**

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

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.

2 John 9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

**Revelation 22:18-19**

## Two Attitudes Toward Scriptural Authority

1. God's silence is **permissive**.
  - A. Many people follow this approach. It says that if God did not specifically forbid a thing, then it must be acceptable.
  - B. This is behind the thinking of those who justify a practice by saying, "Where does it say not to?"
2. God's silence is **prohibitive**.
  - A. Following this approach, we assume that if God did not authorize a thing, then it must not be done.
  - B. The crucial question is not "Where does it say not to?" but "Where is the scriptural authority for it?"

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

- C. This approach takes seriously God's right to stipulate what He wants mankind to do and does not presume to offer God what He has not asked for.

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.

3. The question of whether to use mechanical instruments of music in worship is a good "test case" to show the difference between these two approaches.

Ephesians 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

**Colossians 3:16-17**

#### **4. Bible examples that illustrate the prohibitive nature of God's silence:**

##### **A. Noah**

Genesis 6:14 Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.

##### **1) Anything wrong with building the ark out of some other kind of wood?**

##### **B. Nadab and Abihu**

Leviticus 10:1-3 Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.' " So Aaron held his peace.

##### **1) How did these men fail to glorify God?**

##### **C. Jeroboam**

1 Kings 12:32-33 Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

##### **1) Anything wrong with what he devised in his heart?**

## **D. Naaman**

2 Kings 5:10-14 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean." But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.' Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

### **1) Anything wrong with dipping in some river other than the Jordan?**

## **5. The Bible clearly warns against presumptuous sin**

### **A. Presumptuous: rude or arrogant: inconsiderate, disrespectful, or overconfident, especially in doing something when not entitled or qualified to do it**

Psalms 19:13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.

2 Peter 2:10 and especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries,

## The Danger of Substituting Man's Way for God's Way

### 1. Some dangerous substitutions:

- A. **Human wisdom** substituted for **divine wisdom**. We need to guard against what the KJV renders as “will worship”

Colossians 2:23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

- B. **Our own preference** substituted for what God prefers.

- C. What **“others”** are doing substituted for what God has commanded.

- D. Things that are **“successful”** substituted for things that are faithful.

### 2. The end does not justify the means!

3. Uzzah learned this lesson the hard way  
**1 Chronicles 13:7-10; 15:1-2, 12-15, 25-26**

4. Unlike those described in, we must be content to follow  
“sound doctrine.”  
**2 Timothy 4:2-4**

5. We must strive to worship God not only in “spirit,” but also in  
“truth”  
**John 4:23-24.**

## Conclusion

1. **It's an old saying, but it's still true: we need to speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent.**
2. **To “receive” Jesus is to “walk” in Him — we must obey Christ!**

Colossians 2:6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

3. **We allow Christ to rule in our lives when we respect and obey His word  
Colossians 3:16-17**
4. **Submit to Christ's rule by obeying the Scriptures in becoming a Christian — and then living faithfully as a Christian.**

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