



It May Not Be What You Think

It's possible that we may misunderstand what we see and hear. When we do we are apt to misconstrue and form an erroneous conclusion. No one is immune to this happening.

EXAMPLES OF ERRONEOUS CONCLUSIONS

What Was Seen

As Hannah was praying, her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard, so Eli the priest thought she was drunk.

1 Samuel 1:13

What Was Heard

Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awaken him out of sleep." The disciples said, "If he has fallen asleep, he will recover." Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep.

John 11:11-13

What Was Taught

Because of what he had been taught by the Pharisees, Paul the Apostle said, "I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

Acts 26:9

THE POINT IS THIS

It can happen to us if we are not careful. We need to see clearly what is happening. We need to fully understand what is said. We need to examine carefully what is taught.

We need to be especially careful as we interact with one another in the congregation.

Misunderstandings lead to erroneous conclusions that can do a lot of harm.

Be careful! It may not be what you think.

Deja Vu (All over again)

“On Monday, the tactics were exactly and intelligently handled by [King] James to put the burden of proof on the Puritans. Unless they could show that there was something in scripture **explicitly condemning** the bishops’ administration of confirmation, or the use of the cross in baptism, or of the ring in a wedding service, or kneeling to receive communion, or the wearing of the surplice, or about the institution of episcopacy itself, he would not interfere with the accustomed ceremony or government of the church. That church, for all its abuses, was a comfortable bed in which to set a monarchy.”¹

* * *

The above quotation of King James in 1604 brings to light a position that has been held over and over during religious discussions or debates: “*Unless there is something in scripture that **explicitly condemns (or forbids)** a particular action, there is to be no objection.*”

Today we are hearing once again this sentiment among churches, preachers, and elders. It’s not a new argument. It’s old. Very old! When scriptural authority cannot be found, it is sought in the silence of the scriptures, or in the obscure recesses of a “general command.”

For a moment, consider how exhaustive the scriptures would be if everything forbidden was explicitly condemned. The Index would be larger than our Bibles. And God would have had to include every devise of men that would be conjured up until Christ comes again.

King James is quoted as saying, “We have kept such a revell with the Puritans heir these two days”² after he had dismissed all the Puritan arguments. The Puritans were humbled trying to prove their objections simply because the Bible is not a complete set of “thou shall nots,” but rather a book of facts to believe, commands to obey, and promises to cherish. What specific scripture **explicitly condemned** the Church of England’s actions?

When challenging those who object to innovations with “**where is it explicitly condemned or forbidden?**” objectors will fare no better today. Why?

There is something inherently wrong with the position of King James and of those today who find liberty in the silence of scripture. To wit: (1) Authority must be found in what is written in scripture, not what is not written. (2) Authority based on the silence of the scriptures is an open door that allows anything and everything not explicitly forbidden.

Many of those who champion this view today would object to “confirmation, or the use of the cross in baptism, or kneeling to receive communion, or the wearing of the surplice [a loose-fitting, white ecclesiastical gown with wide sleeves, worn over a cassock], or about the institution of episcopacy.” But on what grounds? They are not **explicitly forbidden!**

Let’s take the “**unless explicitly forbidden**” position to its logical conclusion. Here’s a sampling of things that are not explicitly condemned: prayer books, creed books, clerical robes, instrumental music, choirs, burning of incense, altars, animal sacrifices, confirmation, baptizing of infants, metropolitan bishops, ad infinitum.

The folly of such thinking becomes evident. The wisdom of “scriptural authority based on what is written” also becomes evident. Don’t be silenced by those who challenge with “Where is it explicitly forbidden?”

¹GOD’S SECRETARIES: THE MAKING OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE by Adam Nicolson, pg 53 (emphasis mine, Ron)

²[Ibid, pg 54]



Pearls from Proverbs

DECEIT

The act or practice of causing one to believe what is not true; mislead.

*He who speaks truth tells what is right,
But a false witness, deceit.*

12:17

*Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil,
But counselors of peace have joy.*

12:20

*The wisdom of the sensible is to understand his
way, But the foolishness of fools is deceit.*

14:8

*Do not be a witness against your neighbor
without cause, And do not deceive with your lips.*

24:28

*Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows
and death, So is the man who deceives his
neighbor, And says, "Was I not joking?"*

26:18-19

*He who hates disguises it with his lips,
But he lays up deceit in his heart.*

26:24

WARNINGS

*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for
whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.*

Galatians 6:7

*Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts
good morals."*

1 Corinthians 15:33

Where the Fault Lies

A shooter who misses the target tries to determine what he did wrong, not what's wrong with the target.

A Christian who misses the mark (sins) is to look to himself and not find fault with the target (the command of God).



MISPLACED FAULT

And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours."

Matthew 25:24-25

PROPERLY PLACED FAULT

"I [the wayward son] will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight.'"

Luke 15:18

CONSIDER

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

James 1:13-15

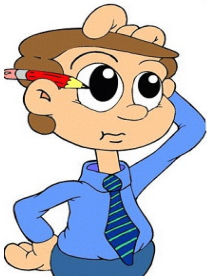


Justifying a fault only compounds it.

The last place some people look for fault is within themselves.

Defending a fault only proves one has no intention of correcting it.

Pride hides man's faults to himself and magnifies them to everyone else.



Ponder This

Trying Not to Lose

This mind-set causes an athlete to be more concerned about the runners behind than the finish line. More than one race has been lost this way (I speak from experience). This is a sure way to “snatch defeat from the jaws of success.” Speaking of running, the Apostle Paul often compared living for Christ to running a race. In one place he said, “Run in such a way that you may win” -- not “run in such a way not to lose.” (1 Cor.9:24)

CASE IN POINT

The one-talent servant had this mind-set. “But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money.” When asked why he didn't try to make gain he replied, “I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground.” Mat.25:28,25

LESSONS FOR US

To succeed in living for Christ, one must strive to win, refusing to be encumbered with “trying not to lose.” And put to good use the talent (ability) God has given you. Hidden talent is of no value to you or to your Master. Fear of failure must not keep you from doing the Lord's bidding.

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:1-3

Musings of a Preacher



CATCH-22

A catch-22 is a paradoxical situation in which an individual cannot or is incapable of avoiding a problem because of contradictory constraints or rules. Often these situations are such that solving one part of a problem only creates another problem, which ultimately leads back to the original problem.

BIBLE EXAMPLE

Jesus answered and said to them, "I will also ask you a question, and you tell Me: Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" They reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." Luke 20:3-6

CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLE

Some say it is a sin to worry,
and that's worrisome to me.



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