

## TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE

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In 1 Samuel 15 we have an account of Saul, King of Israel, disobeying the commandments of God. The Lord through Samuel told Saul to "go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both men and women, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Saul smote the Amalekites and utterly destroyed all the people. But Saul and the people spared King Agag and the best of the sheep and oxen and all that was good and would not utterly destroy them.

When Samuel met Saul, he said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord." And Samuel said, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Then Saul tried to shift the blame for his disobedience by saying "they have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." And Samuel said unto Saul, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? BEHOLD, TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE, AND TO HEarken THAN THE FAT OF RAMS. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." We also learn from the fifteenth chapter of First Samuel that the Lord rejected Saul from being King over Israel because he had rejected the Word of the Lord. Thus we can see that OBEEDIENCE IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE and to hearken is better than the fat of rams. When sacrifice was substituted for obedience, it was a mark of stubbornness and rebellion.

Today, obedience is better than any sacrifice or substitution of any kind. God simply does not accept substitution of any kind. It is a mark of stubbornness and rebellion against God. When God speaks. He commands respect. We show reverence for God when we are very careful to follow very implicitly every detail of his commands!

TO OBEY IS BETTER than faith only. Faith without obedience would have left Noah and his family to perish. (See Heb. 11:7; Gen. 6:22). Abraham of old, would not have sojourned in the land of promise if his faith had been without obedience. (See Heb. 11:8). Faith only would have left the Israelites under bondage to Pharaoh rather than delivered from the land of Egypt. (See Heb. 11:29; Exo. 14:29-30). Today, faith only will not avail. (Gal. 5:6). It will leave a man in his sins (Rom. 6:17-18), out of Christ (Gal. 3:26-27), without justification (James 2:14-26), and therefore lost! (See Mark 16:15-16).

TO OBEY IS BETTER than to pray as a substitute for obedience. Under the law of Moses we read, "whoso turneth away his ear from hearing the law even his prayer shall be abomination." (Proverbs 28:9). Jesus Christ said in Luke 6:46, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" We learn further that Jesus said in Matthew 7:21. "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." In Mark 16:16 we read that Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Prayer is not acceptable to God as a substitute for obedience!

TO OBEY IS BETTER than pleasing men. There is a desire on the part of many to be popular with the majority. In order to accomplish this, one will have to please men rather than God. We should not seek to please men but God. (See Gal. 1:10). We ought to obey God rather than men. (See Acts 5:29). Saul feared the people and thus obeyed their voice. In so doing, he manifested rebellion toward God. It pleases men for a person to teach that one church is as good as another although such is NOT taught in the Word of God! It pleases men for a person to teach that it does not matter how we worship God although such is NOT taught in the Word of God. It pleases men for a person to teach there is nothing in a name although such is NOT taught in the Word of God!

Let us honestly endeavor to follow God's truth as revealed in the New Testament because TO OBEY IS BETTER than being lost in hell! (CRS)