

THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

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"TO OBEY IS BETTER..."

1Sam. 15 is an account of Saul, King of Israel, disobeying the commandment of God. Although God had commanded him to "go and smite Amalek & utterly destroy all that they have, & spare them not", he spared King Agag and the best of the sheep and oxen.

Later when Samuel met Saul, he (Saul) said, "Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord." Samuel replied: "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" Saul tried to shift the blame on the people for his disobedience by saying that the people had spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice unto God. Samuel said to 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."

Samuel pointed out further to King Saul that he had rebelled against the Lord by rejecting his word and that the Lord had rejected him from being king. Saul then confessed his sin to Samuel.

Today, we are to obey God's word. See Mt. 7:21; John 15:14; Rev.

22:14; Heb. 5:9; Jas. 1:22, 25; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rom. 6:17-18; Acts 5:29; Luke 6:46; James 2:12, etc.

Obedience is better than any sacrifice of any kind!

From this account we learn several lessons. (1) God does not accept substitution of any kind for obedience! (2) It is a mark of stubbornness & rebellion against God! (3) When God speaks, He commands & demands respect. (4) When God commands, we must obey!

Let us now consider some specific things that to obey is better than.

I. TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN HEARING ONLY! WE MUST HEAR GOD'S WORD, BUT HEARING IS NOT ENOUGH!

A. See Mk. 4:9; Mk. 4:24; Luke 8:18; Romans 10:8, 17.

B. Must also be doers of the word! See James 1:22

II. TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN FAITH ONLY! YES, FAITH IS ESSENTIAL, BUT FAITH ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH!

A. Faith without obedience would have left Noah & his family to perish! See Heb. 11:7; Gen. 6:22

B. Abraham would not have sojourned in the land of promise if

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Editorial...

WHAT IS THE CHURCH? (Concl.)

This question should be carefully considered and studied in light of what is revealed in the Scriptures relative to it.

In our first two articles we showed what the church is from a negative viewpoint. We showed that:

I. Negatively, THE CHURCH IS NOT:

- A. An Old Testament Institution.
- B. A Material (physical) Building or a Meeting House.
- C. A Denomination.
- D. A Combination of Denominations.
- E. A Secret Order (such as Free masonry) or a Human Institution of Any Kind.
- F. An Earthly Kingdom.

We also showed that:

II. Positively, THE CHURCH IS:

- A. A New Testament Institution.
- B. A Spiritual House (Building).

C. A Spiritual Kingdom! It is the Kingdom of Heaven! It is the Kingdom of God!

D. The Body of Christ.

E. The "Called Out". [An Assembly].

(1) The word that is translated *church* basically means *a calling out of* or *an assembly* according to such scholars as Robert Young, W.E. Vine, James Strong, Thayer's Lexicon, etc.

(2) Writing to Christians (in 1 Peter 2:9-10), Peter said: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but now are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

We were in the kingdom of darkness but have been called out of it and translated into the kingdom of light. Listen to the apostle Paul in Col. 1:13-14. He said: "Who (referring to God- CRS) hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

(3) In admonishing saints Peter said: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:13-16).

(4) It is obvious from the Scriptures that we are not to love the world or be a friend of the world in the sense of partaking of the sin-

ful things of the world. We are to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world" because we are a "called out" people whose goal is to live a life of holiness. (See 1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4; James 1:27; Hebrews 12:14, etc.)

F. The "Saved".

We learn from Acts 2:47 that the "saved" make up the church. It says "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." [NKJV says: "...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."]

But who are the saved?

(1) Not "faith only" believers. See James 2:19, 24; John 12:42-43.

(2) Not those who merely pray. See Matt. 7:21; John 9:31; 1 Peter 3:12; Prov. 28:9, etc.

(3) Those who have heard the gospel (Rom. 1:16; Rom. 10:17; Acts 18:8), believed it (Mark 16:15-16), repented of sins (Acts 2:38), confessed faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and have been baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 Cor. 12:13, etc.)

G. A Manifestation of the wisdom of God.

In Eph. 3:8-11 Paul said: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

(1) The church makes known

the wisdom of God by its very existence – and as it operates.

(2) The church also makes known God's wisdom by declaring it – preaching it to others. In 1 Tim. 3:15 Paul mentions "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

In writing to the church of the Thessalonians, Paul said: "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not speak any thing." (1 Thess. 1:8).

(3) "Manifold" means "much-varied" according to Thayer & Vine. ---Vincent renders it "variegated".

NOTE: The same word is in the SEPTUAGINT in Gen. 37:3 where it mentions Joseph's coat "of many colours". The word seems to suggest the idea of "many sided or tinted."

(4) God's manifold (variegated-much-varied, many-tinted, many sided) wisdom is declared by and through the church!

(5) One cannot cast reflection on the church of God without casting reflection on the manifold wisdom of God!

NOTE: God's wisdom so designed the church to enable it to carry out all the work that God has assigned to it and authorized the church to do.

FURTHER NOTE: When the church is set up as God ordained that it be and when it functions accordingly, it can and will accomplish all that God intended that it do and accomplish.

We must be careful and be sure that we abide in the doctrine of Christ in all that we say and do. (2 Jno. 9-11; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; James 1:25, etc.)

"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

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"TO OBEY IS BETTER..."

his faith had been without obedience! (See Heb. 11:8; Gen. 12:1-4).

C. Faith only would have left the Israelites under bondage to Pharaoh rather than delivered from Egypt. (See Heb. 11:29; Exo. 14:29-31).

D. Today, faith only will not avail! It will leave a man in his sins, out of Christ, without justification, and lost! (See Gal. 5:6; Rom. 6:17-18; Gal. 3:26-27; Jas. 2:13-26 & Mk. 16:16)

NOTE: Even the devils have faith! (See James 2:19).

III. TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN TO PRAY AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR OBEDIENCE!

A. Under the law of Moses we read: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." (Prov. 28:9).

B. Read what Jesus said in Lk. 6:46; Mt. 7:21; Mk. 16:15-16. Also read what is written in John 9:31 & 1 Peter 3:12.

C. Christians have the privilege of prayer, but it is not acceptable to God as a substitute for obedience!

IV. TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN PLEASING MEN!

Remember King Saul said: "I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, ...because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice." (1 Sam. 15:24)

A. Many desire to be popular with the majority & have the praises, honor & glory of men.

--In order to accomplish this, one will have to please men rather than God, but we should not seek to please men according to Gal. 1:10.

B. The apostles plainly said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29). Obeying men is rebellion against God!

C. We should never teach false doctrine to please men! (CRS)

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SENTENCE SERMONS

We should esteem all of God's precepts concerning all things to be right & hate every false way.

* * * * *

A person can always borrow trouble – even without any collateral.

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Smiles and good humor are the seasoning that makes everyday living "taste" better.

* * * * *

Keep your words soft and sweet – you might have to eat them some day.

* * * * *

It doesn't take much of a man to be a Christian – but it does take ***all*** of him!

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