

OBEY OR DISOBEY

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Introduction

As parents we all desire obedience of our children when we give them instruction. I am sure that everyone who has ever had any kind of dealings with children has been witnesses to disobedience. It is true that it seems as though children will obey others better than they obey their own parents. Think about this; your boy or girl from time to time deliberately do just the opposite of what we have instructed them to do; thusly they often get in trouble at home. The very same child that disobeyed at home and gets in trouble may never get in trouble at school. Why is this? In my opinion the children that disobey at home but obey at school have a greater respect of the authority of their teachers than they have for the authority of the parents.

Let me give you an illustration of obedience and disobedience. Let us imagine that we are a boy or girl playing on the school's basketball team. There are only sixteen seconds left on the scoreboard; the score is tied and the coach calls a time out. The coach tells you to set a pick for Johnny as he is the best shot on the team. You do exactly as the coach instruct; Johnny gets the ball, makes the shot and your team wins the game. Of course Johnny will get a pat on the back from the coach and the team; but so will you because you made it possible for Johnny to get open and net the ball. Now let us look at the other side of the coin; we are in the same position; the score is tied, sixteen seconds are left on the clock and the coach calls a time out. The coach tells you to set a pick for Johnny, but instead of setting the pick for Johnny when you get the basketball instead of passing it to Johnny you shoot the ball yourself; the ball hits the rim but is short and the opposing team gets the ball and scores and your team loses the game. Can you expect to get a pat on the back from the coach and your team mates? I don't think so! You might spend the next game sitting on the bench.

Again let us use our imagination and say that you are working on a job; you have been working very hard for quite some time and the boss takes pity on you and tells you to go get a drink of water and take a fifteen minute break. You go get a drink of water but instead of taking fifteen minutes off you take thirty minutes off. The boss comes looking for you looking at his watch and he asks "Why didn't you do as I told you"? You reply; "I did I went and got a drink"! The boss says; "I told you to take a fifteen minute break; not a thirty minute break". Yes you obeyed in part but not in full; can you expect a raise in your wages for your disobedience? I don't think so; in fact you may be looking for a new source of employment.

Parents expect obedience, teachers expect obedience and employers expect obedience. Most of us come to this knowledge very early in life. If we learn this while we are yet young why is that so many disregard obeying God? Just because

we cannot see God do we think that we can get away with disobeying Him? God expects obedience from all mankind. While we are young [before we reach the age of accountability] God will overlook and forgive disobedience of children; but when we know right from wrong God expects obedience.

Much of this booklet will be devoted to the subject of disobedience to God. We will discuss the causes of disobedience, the result of disobeying God and we will notice what the Bible says about those who have disobeyed God.

Disobedience Provokes His Anger

Let us face the facts when children disobey their parents; parents usually become angered. When students disobey the teachers; teachers usually become angered. When employees disobey the employer; employers usually become angered. So why do we expect anything different of God.

Disobedience does provoke the anger of God; The Bible clearly declares that not everyone keeps the covenant of God: (Psalms 78:10) *“They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;”* A covenant is a mutual agreement between two or more parties. So in the case at hand the people had come to a mutual agreement with God; that is there had been a meeting of minds with God. But as the text infers they did not “keep the covenant of God” or to say it in another way they refuse to live up to their part of the covenant. Because they did not “keep the covenant of God led to their refusal to “walk in His law”. This is plain simple disobedience. Did God look kindly upon their disobedience or was he provoked to anger? (Psalms 78:40) *“How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!”* How often had they provoked God? I am not sure but I do know that they provoked Him at least ten times: (Numbers 14:22) *“Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;”* These men had seen the Ten Plagues in Egypt; they witnessed Pharaoh’s army pursuing them down to the Red Sea and how the sea was parted and they passed through as on dry land and they saw the destruction of Pharaoh’s army when they attempted to follow them in the parted sea; yet they would “not hearken” to the voice of God. There was no one to blame for God’s anger being provoked except them. God gave them His law through a mediator by the name of Moses and they refused to keep His Laws. The sad thing about this is that God was a “husband” to them: (Jeremiah 31:32) *“Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the*

hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:” Considering what God had done for them in Egypt and the care He provided them in the wilderness there is little wonder that the anger of God was provoked.

Years later Isaiah also wrote about God’s anger being provoked: (Isaiah 3:8) *“For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.”* Jerusalem is said to be “ruined” because there was no way of recovering them since they refused to repent. What was the cause of their ruin? Jerusalem was “ruined” and Judah was “fallen” because of “their tongue and their doings against God”. Like them our tongues can provoke the anger of God: (James 3:5-8) *“Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! (6) And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. (7) For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: (8) But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”* When you consider the human body you will find that the tongue is indeed a small member of our bodies. The tongue can ignite a greater fire than any match can ignite. Uncontrolled tongues have been the cause of many murders. Uncontrolled tongues have been the cause of many splits of the Lord’s church and uncontrolled tongues can certainly provoke the anger of God. It was uncontrolled lying tongues that provoked the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior. James states that no man can “tame the tongue”; everyone will at one time or another have a slip of the tongue and say things that he or she does not really mean; sometimes these slips will be wicked, cruel and sinful. When we sin with the tongue what can we do? Repent my friend, repent: (Luke 13:3) *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”* This is good advice for any sin whether it was committed by the tongue or any other form of disobedience.

Results Of Disobedience

When children disobey their parents the results can be many and varied. For instance disobedience may result in an old fashion spanking. Or some have had their allowance taken away. Some teenagers get grounded. Still others get what is called “time out” where they are required to sit by themselves and be quiet. Let us remember that no disobedience toward God goes unpunished: (Proverbs 11:21) *“Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished: but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.”* (Proverbs 17:5) *“Whoso mock-*

eth the poor reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished.” (Proverbs 19:5) *“A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.”* These references should give us the idea that we cannot escape the consequences of any disobedience to God.

As the disobedience of children can have different punishments the result of disobeying God can have differing results as well; at this time I would like to mention some of the different results of disobeying God.

Disobedience To God Forfeits His Favor

Saul learned the cost of disobedience the hard way: (1 Samuel 13:14) *“But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.”* What was the disobedience that cost Saul so much? You and I might think it was a small thing that Saul did; we might even like to think that Saul was only trying to be pleasing to God; after all, the only thing that he did was to offer a sacrifice. What is so wrong with that? Saul was not authorized by God to offer sacrifices; only a priest had God’s authority to offer sacrifices. Saul knew what he was doing was wrong; therefore it was disobedience to God.

Men seek the favor of both God and men: (1 Samuel 2:26) *“And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.”* The literal meaning of this verse is that the child Samuel grew and was good [acceptable] before God and man. It is amazing how similar this is to the account of Jesus when he was twelve years old. Almost everyone loves children; so it is not surprising to read that as a “child Samuel” was found to “be in favor with men”. Nor is it surprising to read that Samuel “was in favour with the Lord”; Jesus publicly demonstrated his feelings toward children: (Mark 10:13-14) *“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. (14) But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”* Jesus was “displeased” with his disciples because they took too much upon themselves when they rebuked those who brought their children to Christ to be blessed. No doubt it was a pleasure for Jesus to receive and to bless the “little children”! Jesus knew that his church would soon be established and that these children who were before him very well could be future members of his body.

In the longest chapter of the Bible we are told to seek the favour of God with all our hearts: (Psalms 119:58) *“I entreated thy favour with my whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word.”* We cannot demand God’s favour as a debt; but we can seek God’s favour in a humble manner. Our request for God’s favour is to be based upon what He has promised in His word. David was determined in his heart and he entreated God’s favour with his whole heart. Our requests for God’s favour should be made in the same way. God’s favour can be found: (Proverbs 3:4) *“So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.”* But be forewarned not everybody will receive God’s favour: (Proverbs 12:2) *“A good man obtaineth favour of the LORD: but a man of wicked devices will he condemn.”* From the scriptures it is easy to understand that the wicked sinner shall forfeit God’s favor.

Disobedience Forfeits God’s Promised Blessings

Looking to the children of Israel as they wandered in the wilderness we find a perfect example of those who at one time had a promise from God; but through disobedience God forfeited that promise: (Joshua 5:6) *“For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD sware that he would not show them the land, which the LORD sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.”* Surely we remember that God had promised them a land of “milk and honey” but because “they obeyed not the voice of the Lord” that promise was taken from them: (Numbers 14:23) *“Surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it:”* Because of disobedience their leader Moses was not even allowed to pass over into the promised land of milk and honey; he was only allowed to view it from a distance.

If we insist in doing what is evil in the sight of God and will not obey the voice of God [I.e. His prophets, His Son or the apostles] God will repent of any good that He had formerly promised: (Jeremiah 18:10) *“If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.”* Verses seven through ten contain what might be the decree of God meaning that herein we find how God will deal with mankind: (Jeremiah 18:7-10) *“At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; (8) If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do*

unto them. (9) *And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; (10) If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.* If they would not obey then God would withhold the good that He had promised and instead of granting the good He would punish them for their disobedience.

The Hebrews writer wrote some frightening words concerning one who lost his blessing: (Hebrews 12:17) *“For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”* This of course is in reference to Esau: (Hebrews 12:16) *“Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.”* We have the actual account of Esau selling his birthright recorded for us. However, this is a warning to everyone who acts like Esau and is a “fornicator or profane person”. A “fornicator” is anyone who transgresses God law or sins against his own body. Esau threw away the highest reward that he could receive when he came out of the field tired and hungry. Many Christians throw away the highest reward possible [I.e. eternal life in heaven] often for trifle moments of pleasure. We need to be careful that we do not make the same mistake that Esau made.

Beware, Disobedience Will Bring A Curse

Our actions will bring a curse upon us; one day a blessing and the next a curse; (Deuteronomy 11:26-28) *“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; (27) A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: (28) And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.”* Set before them was “a blessing and a curse”. Of course there were conditions. They were promised a “blessing if ye obey” or a “curse if ye will not obey”. Today we have set before a “blessing” if we will obey the gospel’s commandments or a “curse” if we choose not to obey. The blessing that we are promised is eternal life in heaven; or the curse of eternal death [I.e. eternal separation from God] if we choose not to obey. The decision to obey should not be a hard decision to make.

What was the promise that the people of old were given? If we turn to Deuteronomy 28 we will see what the promise was that God made to them: (Deuteronomy 28:7-12) *“The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one*

way, and flee before thee seven ways. (8) The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. (9) The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. (10) And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. (11) and the LORD shall make thee plentiful in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. (12) The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. Would you choose to obey or disobey? It appears to me if anyone chose to disobey a poor decision would be made. They had been given fair warning: (Deuteronomy 28:15) “*But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:*” To see what the curses were read verses 16 through 44. It is quite a long list that should make anyone think twice about disobeying.

There is good news for us who are living in these last days; we have been redeemed from the law: (Galatians 3:13) “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*” The word here used here for “redeem” properly means, to purchase, to buy up; and then to purchase anyone, to redeem, to set free. Those who have been “redeemed” are us; both Jews and Gentiles. The price that Jesus paid was his own blood; that was an awful price to pay for people who are sinners.

Who Are The Disobedient?

Generally speaking the “disobedient” are the wicked: (Ephesians 2:2) “*Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*” Does Paul not describe those who are wicked here? Notice the title he gives them at the end of this verse; “children of disobedience”. In time past they had walked in the same paths of the worldly and they walked “according” to Satan. This was a path they had chosen; no one forced them to so live. Walking in this path denotes continual sin and it is sure to bring destruction and eternal death. Brethren, great are the persuasions of those of the worldly and we must always be on the guard not to be overtaken by their evil schemes. I know of no better way to

describe the worldly than to say they are wicked and so are their ways. When Paul wrote “in time past” he was referring to the time before their conversions, so we see that it is possible to be converted and to change our paths of life.

I would like to take a closer look at the characteristics of the “disobedient”: (Titus 1:16) *“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”* Oh yes it is true that there are many who “profess that they know God” but by their “works they deny him”. This makes them liars and hypocrites. There are many in the world today who will profess that there is a God, that there is only one God, one true God and one living God. However, if they deny God by their “works” they become an abomination. While it is true that their profession that they know God may fool men it will not fool God and at the Day of Judgment He will tell them to depart: (Matthew 25:41) *“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”*

Read how Paul describes the sinners to Titus: (Titus 3:3) *“For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”* This is Paul’s attempt to promote humility in his readers; nothing will promote humility faster than to remind people of their past. If you were told that in times past you were “foolish, disobedient, deceived, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another” would this not bring you down off your high horse immediately? Think about each of these characteristics very carefully; have you ever been or are you still guilty of any of these wicked and disobedient ways?

Men Are Prone To Make Excuses For Disobedience

Due to the fact that we do not like to be proven to be wrong we are quick to make excuses; I would like to give you an excellent example of this that can be found with Adam and Eve when they were first found by God to have transgressed God’s commandment to them: (Genesis 3:9-13) *“And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? (10) And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. (11) And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? (12) And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. (13) and the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”* It seems as though the man was the first to make an excuse; probably due to the fact that God

spoke to him first. In verse twelve Adam states “the woman whom thou gavest me, she gave me the fruit and I did eat”. With this statement Adam is actually blaming God; or as some would interpret this Adam is saying “It is Eve’s fault”. Adam is claiming that the woman ate of the forbidden fruit first; I did not do anything that she didn’t do. Did Adam make it sound any better? Adam is trying to excuse himself by saying “I did it but it was not my fault. Even though Adam stated the truth, the truth in this case was a lame excuse. The woman, Eve was just as quick to make an excuse when she said “The serpent beguiled me”. In other words she is saying “If it had not been for the serpent I would never have eaten the forbidden fruit”. Eve said that the serpent used lying words and by deceitful language tricked her into eating of the forbidden fruit. The serpent made promises to her that were false [promises that he was not able to fulfill]; which should be a warning to us today as in religion there are many who will lie to us and make promises they are unable to fulfill. Let us always go to the word of God; rely and trust what He says.

The Bible also records other excuses that other people made: (Luke 14:18-20) *“And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. (19) And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. (20) And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.”* Here we have “a certain man” who made a great supper and invited a great number to be his guests. When the meal had been prepared he sent a servant out to tell those invited that everything was ready and it was time for them to come. Verse eighteen says “they all began to make excuse”; they simply did not want to attend this great feast. In this parable Jesus is referring to the feast that God has prepared for those who will accept His invitation of eternal life. Like this “certain man” who went to great expense to supply this great meal God also went to great expense to supply eternal life for us; God made the sacrifice of His only begotten Son: (John 3:16) *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* In this parable this “certain man” made an invitation to many; likewise God also made and continues to make an invitation; it is done in the form of the gospel. People today are no better than the people that Jesus spoke of as there are many today who make excuses for not accepting God’s invitation.

Is there such a thing as a valid excuse today for not accepting God’s invitation? According to Paul there are no valid excuses: (Romans 1:20) *“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:”* As Paul declares this is nothing new, ever since the

creation all mankind has had evidence of Jehovah God; therefore, there is no valid excuse. The various works of creation all prove the existence of God our Creator.

Warning, Disobedience Will Be Punished

Even as children we expected to be punished in some way for disobedience; can we expect anything less from God? His inspired word clearly forewarns that sinners will be punished: (Isaiah 42:24-25) *“Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the LORD, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. (25) Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.”* Who gave Israel to be overthrown and spoiled by the Roman soldiers? It might be argued that it was through the superior wisdom, power and strength of the Roman army if the question of who was not answered for us; the correct answer as to who did this is that it was God and is confirmed by the question “did not the Lord?” Why would God do such a thing? God poured out the fury of His anger because of their disobedience to His law. Should they not have taken a lesson from their childhood? No doubt they as children were just like you and me and they expected to receive punishment from their parents if they disobeyed and should have expected no less from God. Disobedience to God is sure to bring punishment at the Day of Judgment!

There will be no need to complain about the punishment received as it will be “just”: (Hebrews 2:2) *“For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;”* The law that God has set before us is truth and “just”. It will abide whether men obey it and even if men disobey. Every transgression and disobedience will receive a just recompense. When God destroyed the sinners of the world with a flood they received only that which they deserved; it was a “just recompense of reward”!

The law that is referred to in this context was spoken by angels: (Acts 7:53) *“Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.”* This occurred at Mount Sina: (Acts 7:38) *“This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:”* This must be understood as the children of Israel as they were the church of God at that time. Since the angel was speaking on behalf of God these words are sure, stedfast and will not pass because they must stand until all has been fulfilled. The last things to be fulfilled

is the return of Christ and the Judgment. It is at this time that everyone will receive a “just recompense” for their disobedience.

Rest assured disobedience will be punished: (Isaiah 13:11) *“And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.”* This chapter foretells the destruction of Babylon. Verse eleven does not mean the whole world as in the flood; rather it means that Babylon will be punished for their evil. It is referred to as the “whole world mostly because of its many inhabitants; just as the Roman empire is called the whole world: (Luke 2:1) *“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.”* By some standards Babylon was a small world, but a wicked world and sin will not go unpunished.

Sometimes the punishment of God was quite severe: (Jeremiah 11:22) *“Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will punish them: the young men shall die by the sword; their sons and their daughters shall die by famine:”* Do not think that God’s punishment ended with the Old Covenant; God will punish sinners of the “last days” also. No sinner will be able to escape the Judgment; all sinners will be punished at that time: (Matthew 25:41) *“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”* We should reflect upon the words of Jesus “depart from me” often. By doing so we would be reminded of the punishment that awaits sinners. It is when Jesus says “depart from me” that our punishment will begin and it will be without end: (Matthew 25:46) *“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”* It is at this time we will regret the sins that we committed and all the crying we may do will go unheeded: (Matthew 25:30) *“And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* Weep as loud and long as you can but your fate is already determined and it will be “everlasting” (Matthew 25:30).

God’s Punishment Is Just

While it is true that our God is a loving God it is also true that our God is “just”: (Nehemiah 9:32-33) *“Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepeth covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. (33) Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly:”* This was

indeed a hard time for the children of Israel; while the truth of the matter was they deserved any evil they were receiving. In verse thirty three Nehemiah reminds them that God is a “just” God. This confirms the words of Moses: (Deuteronomy 32:4) *“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.”*

Daniel also declares that God is “just” in His punishment: (Daniel 9:9-11) *“To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; (10) Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. (11) Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.* First, Daniel says that mercy and forgiveness belongs to God. Satan is the father of all liars but God is the father of those who are merciful and forgiving! But in verse ten he asks the question “have we obeyed the voice of our God”? He answers his own question in verse eleven by stating that “all Israel” had “transgressed” God’s law. What was the result of their transgression? Daniel wrote “the curse is poured upon us”. Daniel is telling them that the punishment they were then receiving was “just” [I.e. they were receiving what they deserved]. God’s law threatened them with a curse and it was upon them. The new Covenant threatens us with the “second death”: (Revelation 21:8) *“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”*

Daniel also wrote that when God punishes He does so in righteousness: (Daniel 9:14) *“Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.”* The prophet is quick to clear God of any wrong doing by say God is “righteous in ALL his works”; which would include the punishment he brought on those who would not obey his voice. No charge of unrighteousness is ever to be charged against God because he is just and righteous in ALL his works.

Paul declared that God is both “righteous” and “just”: (Romans 3:26) *“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”* As we read this chapter we notice that Paul continues the subject of “justification”. Paul is telling us that God is naturally and essentially “just” in Himself and this is clearly seen in His love, mercy, grace by which sinful men are justified through the blood of Christ when they obey the gospel’s commandments.

Because Jehovah God is “just” he also sends His blessings upon the wicked: (Matthew 5:45) *“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”* Sunshine and rain are indeed blessings that all of God’s creation enjoys. Surely we realize that the sun belongs to God and it is He who sends it. If God were to withhold His sun from the wicked would He not be punishing the righteous as well? Since all the world benefits from God’s sun and rain He is “just” to everyone; our God could not be otherwise. Jesus informs us that by doing this God is “perfect” and instructs us to do likewise: (Matthew 5:48) *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”*

Warning Against Disobedience Are Given

Anyone who has ever read the Bible cannot deny that we are duly warned not to disobey: (1 Samuel 12:15) *“But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers.”* What was their sin? (1 Samuel 12:10) *“And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.”* Because they forsook God they received punishment such as famine, sword, or pestilence, particularly captivity and subjection to their enemies. Brethren, this should serve as a warning to anyone who has any thoughts of forsaken the Lord; you are sure to receive punishment if you carry out your thoughts. Now it is true you might escape God’s punishment in this life but you will not escape God’s punishment at the Day of Judgment!

God’s warnings against disobedience were even extended to nations: (Jeremiah 12:17) *“But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.”* While this warning was particularly given to a nation we as Christians should also take warning. Several nations did not obey, and were destroyed; such as the Moabites, Ammonites, and Chaldeans and not one vestige remain. Those that will not be ruled by the grace of God shall be ruined by the justice of God. And, if disobedient nations shall be destroyed, much more disobedient churches from who better things are expected.

Examples of Disobedience

There is no better place to start than to start with the first man and woman and the first disobedience: (Genesis 3:6) *“And when the woman saw that the*

tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.” Here we have the first man whom I believe that before he disobeyed was perfect; I say this because he was created in the image of God and God is perfect: (Genesis 1:26) *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:”* The name of this man was Adam. God placed Adam in a garden called Eden: (Genesis 2:15) *“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”* Please notice that the first commandment given to Adam was to “dress and keep” the garden. God saw that it was not good for Adam to be alone: (Genesis 2:18) *“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”* As far as I am able to determine Adam and Eve only had two commandments; the first was to “tend and keep” the garden of Eden and the second was this: (Genesis 2:16-17) *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: (17) But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* You wouldn’t think that that would be too hard to obey would you? We all know what happened; Adam and Eve both disobeyed and ate of the forbidden fruit. Had God expected too much of them when He commanded them not to eat of one tree? It appears that He did because they did eat of the forbidden tree! Well this was the first disobedience and mankind has been disobeying God ever since.

Going on in Biblical history we now turn to Pharaoh as our next example of one who disobeyed: (Exodus 5:1-2) *“And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness. (2) And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.”* Moses had been sent back to Egypt to free the children of Israel from their Egyptian bondage. Moses and Aaron went to the palace and after being properly introduced to Pharaoh they relayed God’s commandment to him. Pharaoh not only denied knowing God he refused to obey God’s commandment. Pharaoh had no respect of God’s deity; neither did he have any respect for the Lord’s commandment. The world in which we live is a whole lot like Pharaoh; they don’t know God nor do they have any respect for His commandments.

Two names that will be recognized are Nadab and Abihu; they too were guilty of disobedience: (Leviticus 10:1) *“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.”* This chapter begins with the sin and punishment of two sons of Aaron. This

sin of offering “strange fire” is a sin of disobedience resulting in wanting to do things your way. Their sin was so grave that Moses commanded Aaron and others not to mourn the death of Nadab and Abihu: (Leviticus 10:6) *“And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which the LORD hath kindled.”* If there should happen to be anyone who might be thinking “that God is love and will not punish disobedience” I want you to read this: (Leviticus 10:2) *“And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.”* This is a display of the wrath of God showing His displeasure of disobedience.

Even the man that God chose to lead His people out of Egyptian bondage and the man that God chose to relay His Law to the people was disobedient; of course this is in reference to Moses: Here is the commandment that God gave to Moses: (Numbers 20:8) *“Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.”* This is what Moses did: (Numbers 20:11) *“And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.”* Some have suggested that the rock only brought forth a few drops of water; therefore, Moses smote the rock; whether this is true or not I cannot say. The one thing that I am certain of is that Moses disobeyed God! How was Moses to approach the rock to bring forth water? God told him to “speak to the rock”: (Numbers 20:8) *“Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.”* With this in mind we can clearly see Moses’ disobedience. What was God’s punishment for Moses’ disobedience? (Numbers 20:23-24) *“And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, (24) Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah.”* Both Moses and Aaron were punished for their disobedience; they were not allowed to enter or lead the people into the promised land of milk and honey. Here we have a priest and God’s chosen leader punished for disobedience. Let no one think that they can escape being punished by God for disobedience.

I’m sure that everyone will remember the name of “Saul”. He too by disobedience sinned: (1 Samuel 28:18) *“Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the*

LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.” Here we see that Saul became afraid when he saw all the Philistines and he sought advice from the Lord but the Lord did not answer him: (1 Samuel 28:5-6) *“And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. (6) And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.”* Saul’s spiritual leader was dead at this time and everyone had lamented him: (1 Samuel 28:3) *“Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.”* With no one to advise him; what did Saul do? He turned to a woman with “familiar spirit”: (1 Samuel 28:7) *“Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.”* Saul showed himself to be weak and void of faith in Jehovah God. When the woman with “a familiar spirit” was brought before Saul he requested that she bring forth Samuel from the grave: (1 Samuel 28:11) *“Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.”* Samuel did come forth from the grave and he told Saul how displeased God was with him and informed Saul of his punishment: (1 Samuel 28:15-18) *“And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. (16) Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? (17) And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: (18) Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.”* Have you ever thought that your sins affect only you? This may not always be the case as is evidenced with the sin of Saul: (1 Samuel 28:19) *“Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”* Friends, I think that you will agree that our sins often affect those whom we love the most.

Finally we go to another man who deliberately disobeyed God; his name was Jonah: (Jonah 1:2-3) *“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. (3) But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a*

ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.” God gave Jonah a specific order to go to Nineveh and preach. As verse two indicates Jonah attempted to run and hide from God by going to Tarshish. He should have known that he could not hide from God; neither can we hide from God. Here is what happened to Jonah. Jonah was overtaken by a great tempest: (Jonah 1:4-14) “*But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. (5) Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. (6) So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not. (7) And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. (8) Then said they unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou? (9) And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land. (10) Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. (11) Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us? for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous. (12) And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you. (13) Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring it to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them. (14) Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.*” So the sailors threw Jonah into the sea: (Jonah 1:15-16) “*So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging.*” Now God still had work for Jonah to do; therefore he provided for Jonah’s rescue with a “great fish”: (Jonah 1:17) “*Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*” In the fish’s belly Jonah prayed to God; resulting in God speaking to the fish: (Jonah 2:10) “*And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.*” After this God repeated His commandment to Jonah: (Jonah 3:1-2) “*And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, (2) Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.*” Why would God give

Jonah a second chance? The answer is very simple; “Jonah repented” and “prayed to the Lord”. This is a very important lesson as throughout the years there have been many Christians who have disobeyed God and went back into the world and God will give them a second chance if they will only repent and pray. If this should be your situation won’t you follow the example of Jonah?

Conclusion

It only takes a causal reading of the Bible to recognize that disobedience angers God. When anyone becomes aware of this fact it is amazing that the commandments of God are so vastly ignored today. There are very few countries or nations today where the Bible is not available to everyone who desires to possess one. Even if you can’t afford to purchase your personal Bible you won’t have to search very hard until you find someone who is willing to supply you with your own Bible. One of my high school class mates was a prisoner of war for five and a half years and he told me that the prisoners weren’t allowed to have Bibles but his fellow prisoners had enough scriptures memorized that they were able to have worship services [of course they could not do so openly; it had to be done in secret codes]. There is no excuse for anyone not to know the commandments of God; therefore, there is no excuse for disobedience. If you provoke the anger of God it is your own fault.

Even looking back to our childhood we all know what the results of disobedience it. As children when we disobeyed we had privileges taken away; when we disobey God should we expect anything less from Him? Considering that God is our Creator He has the right to expect our obedience and He has the right to punish us when we disobey. As children our punishment might have lasted for only a few moments or perhaps a day or week. But the punishment for disobedience will never end: (Matthew 25:41) *“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”* Yes, when we grow up and become adults our parent’s punishment ends; but that is not the case of those who disobey God and never repent; their punishment will be “everlasting”.

Complaining about God’s punishment is ungrounded because God is just and righteous in His judgment and punishment. God is just as just in giving His blessings as He is in handing out punishment. If we sin we are transgressing the laws of God: (1 John 3:4) *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”* God has given us all the warning that is needed; we have a full and complete listing of God’s do’s and don’ts and He has

further given a full and complete warning of what will happen if we don't obey. If we are not found fit to enter into God's promised heaven there is no one else to blame but ourselves.

Obey or disobey is a choice that each of us must make for ourselves; no one can make this decision for us. I know what decision I have made; what decision will you make?

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