

**TEACHING GOAL**

To study the importance of obedience.

**DOCTRINAL STANDARDS**

Q. What is the duty which God requires of man?

A. The duty which God requires of man, is obedience to His revealed will.

S.C. 39, L.C. 90 W.C. of F. XIX, Savoy 19, Young 74-75

**SCRIPTURAL BASIS**

**Study Passage:** Luke 11:27-28

**Support Passages:** John 3:36, 14:15, I John 2:3-4, Acts 5:29, Romans 13:1-7, II Thessalonians 1:6-10, Hebrews 13:17

**BIBLE STORY**

I Samuel 15: Saul's disobedience and its consequences.

**.MEMORY ASSIGNMENT**

I Samuel 15:22b-23a

22b “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams.” 23a “For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.”

**APPLICATION**

We must obey God's laws regardless of the consequences brought.

## SUMMARY

It was a simple order, carried out at considerable effort, but easily understood. "Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated."<sup>1</sup> Saul did not do this. He spared Agag the king of the Amalekites and the soldiers took spoils, sheep and oxen and the choicest of the things that were all to be destroyed. The results were devastating to Saul, king of Israel. Almighty God was now hostile to Saul and we may learn from this that, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams." No one can glorify God, which is man's chief end, with disobedience and we certainly will not enjoy Him if He is our enemy.

Obedience to God is our first priority. Love for God and our neighbor is based upon it and obedience to any other authority is secondary to it. However, love for God and our neighbor appears to present a great problem to many people. Many do not seem to understand the true nature of love. Is it simply a feeling of felicity or gratitude? Of course, toward God we may indeed have such feeling as a child would towards his father, however, the basis of all love is commandment keeping. John states, "By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments."<sup>2</sup> And Jesus states, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."<sup>3</sup>

As we have observed with Saul, the consequences of disobedience are terrible. Jesus tells us, "He who believes (ho pisteuwn) in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey (ho apeithown) the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abides on him."<sup>4</sup> Thus Jesus equates belief with obedience and from this we clearly understand that man's first priority is obedience to God.

In His sovereign providence, God has delegated certain authority to man and we are to obey this authority.<sup>5</sup> The Elders of a particular church are to be obeyed likewise civil government is to be obeyed.<sup>6</sup> What is contemplated here is the authority that God has in fact delegated. Not everyone who claims to be an Elder is one to whom God has delegated authority. Similarly, not everyone who claims to be a king is God's minister. He who is an Elder meets the requirements set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 and one who is God's civil minister meets the requirements set forth in Romans 13:1-7. This latter text teaches that governing authorities are those who reward keepers of God's commandments and who punish those who disobey God's commandments. All other so called authorities are usurpers, of the devil, and certainly not ministers of God. This, of

course, is not to deny God's sovereignty over tyrants or over Satan, however, Satan and tyrants are not "a cause of fear for good behavior" and they are not "a minister of God to us for good!"

These usurpers only promote evil and if we do evil we will have no fear of punishment from Satan or from unrighteous demagogues! Wicked kings (Isaiah 10) are often used by God to bring justice to a sinning nation, nonetheless, these are not the ministers of God contemplated in Romans 13. Nor do they qualify to be church fathers. We are to obey every human institution for the Lord's benefit<sup>7</sup>, yet sin never benefits the Lord.

The apostles spent much time in prison because they "obeyed God rather than men"<sup>8</sup> their highest authority being the law of God. An interesting situation developed in Thessalonica<sup>9</sup> where Paul was reasoning with the Jews in the Synagog there. Out of jealousy, the Jews dragged Jason and other Christians before the civil authorities where they were charged with treason. Paul, Jason and the others were indeed saying, "there is another King, Jesus!"<sup>10</sup> The implication is, of course, that God's law is higher than that of Caesar's.

The Christian has no other choice than to obey the laws of God. The consequences of disobedience are unthinkable. We must obey the laws of God regardless of the penalty imposed by an ungodly government or other enemies of King Jesus.

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<sup>1</sup> I Samuel 15:18

<sup>2</sup> I John 5:3

<sup>3</sup> John 14:15

<sup>4</sup> John 3:36

<sup>5</sup> Hebrews 13:17

<sup>6</sup> Romans 13:1

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<sup>7</sup> I Peter 2:13

<sup>8</sup> Acts 5:29

<sup>9</sup> Acts 17:1ff

<sup>10</sup> Acts 17:7