

Dangers of Disobedience

Introduction

The mark of a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is steadfast obedience to Him:

“And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them” Matthew 21:6.

“His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it” John 2:5.

Obedience brings blessings but the dangers of disobedience are dire as Paul and John make clear:

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” Acts 17:30-31.

“...despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God” Romans 2:4-11.

“And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts” Revelation 9:20-21.

The scripture is replete with accounts of the dangers of disobedience and their dire consequences:

Adam and Eve

“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” Genesis 3:17-19.

The Nation of Israel

“But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments...but will walk contrary unto me; Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins” Leviticus 26:14-15, 23-24.

“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...The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me” Deuteronomy 28:15, 20.

King Saul

“And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. 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” 1 Samuel 13:13-14.

King Solomon

“And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant” 1 Kings 11:9-11.

Israel’s Returned Exiles

“And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do...And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass...and some of them had wives by whom they had children” Ezra 10:10-12, 19, 44.

The Apostle Paul

The apostle Paul is of particular interest to today’s believer with respect to obedience to the *directive* will of God, which is *not* to be confused with the *permissive* will of God, Acts 21:14. Paul was warned repeatedly *not* to go to Jerusalem or remain there – the Lord’s *directive* will for Paul was set out – graciously - in Acts 23:11 **“And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome”** - but constrained himself so to do, Acts 20:22-23, 21:10-14, 22:17-18, see below. **“...the LORD being merciful unto him...”** Genesis 19:16 notwithstanding Paul was then detained in Jerusalem by the Romans and lost two years out of his ministry. Acts 24:23-27, 27:30-36, 42-44, 28:16, see below, show clearly how Paul’s attempts at ministry while he was under the permissive rather than the directive will of God yielded no recorded fruit in that nobody got saved even though he gave his testimony *twice*, to Jews and Gentiles in turn, ministered to all 276 individuals aboard ship and was even honoured by Gentiles following a miraculous deliverance and a succession of miraculous healings, Acts 22:1-21, 26:1-23, 27:30-37, 28:1-10.

Contrast those scriptures with the fruitfulness of Paul’s ministry when he *was* in the directive will of God e.g. Acts 13:12, 47-49, 16:9-15, 30-34, 17:10-12, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10. Note that fruit *is* manifest in Paul’s ministry where he is again following the directive will of God as set out in Acts 23:11 when Paul is finally ensconced in Rome, Acts 28:16, according to Acts 28:28, 30-31 **“Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it...And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”**

See below for the lesson for today’s believer therefore with respect to effective ministry.

“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me” Acts 20:22-23.

“And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done” Acts 21:10-14.

“And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me” Acts 22:17-18.

“And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him. And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix’ room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound” Acts 24:23-27.

“And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat...And the soldiers’ counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land...And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him” Acts 27:30-36, 42-44, 28:16.

The Lesson for Today’s Believer

Insofar as **“For there is no respect of persons with God”** Romans 2:11 it is incumbent upon today’s believer for effective ministry to obey the directive will of God with respect to the following injunction, even if uttered from an unlikely source, according to Ephesians 6:6 **“Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”**

It is of course impossible to obey the following injunction if the only perfect bible is professed to be the non-extant original writings.

“Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart” Job 22:22.

Conclusion

For all those things hath mine hand
made, And all those things have
been, saith the LORD: But to this
man will I look, Even to him that is
poor and of a contrite spirit, And
trembleth at my word.

Isaiah 66:2

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