

“WE OUGHT TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN”

INTRODUCTION

On Pentecost day when Peter preached the gospel, some 3,000 obeyed and were added to the church. Immediately afterward Peter healed a crippled man. People praised God, and Peter took advantage of the situation to preach another sermon. The Jewish leaders grieved because of this, but about 5,000 souls became believers. The apostles were questioned seriously, and commanded not to teach any more in the name of Jesus. To this charge, Peter asked them to judge whether they should listen to them or to God. Peter and John continued to preach boldly, and multitudes were obedient. The apostles were arrested and imprisoned, but an angel delivered them from the prison, and then continued preaching. They were rebuked for this by the Jewish leaders, who feared they would bring Jesus' blood upon them. The apostles answered, *“We ought to obey God rather than men.”*

With this response before us, let's examine it point by point, beginning with the word “GOD”, and reversing the analysis.

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, let's look at GOD WHO IS TO BE OBEYED.

Exodus 5:2. “And Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go.’”

A. This question is worth answering, because of WHO GOD IS.

1. By the time the ten plagues were completed, Pharaoh truly came to know who God was, and he did let the people of Israel go.
2. He learned that GOD **all powerful**, can bring **consequences for acts of rebellion** and can **destroy those who refuse to obey Him**.

B. JUST WHO IS THE GOD WHOM WE SHOULD OBEY?

1. First, God is the creator of the universe, from the stars which are millions of miles and light years away, as well as the dust of the ground and the air we breathe. Gen. 1:1; Read Psa. 104:1-35
2. Second, this God has laws that must be obeyed, or else. Psa. 19:7-9
3. Third, this God is the final Judge, and all will face Him in eternity. Gen. 18:25
4. Fourth, this God will take vengeance on all those who rebel against Him. 2 Thess. 1:6-9

II. 2nd, let's look at the word OBEY.

A. “Obey” means to submit to and comply with commands or requirements.

B. It is not enough to just to “know” that God **is**, but His will must be obeyed.

1. The wicked of Noah's day refused to heed the warning of Noah about a coming flood that would destroy the wicked. 2 Pet. 3:6-7
2. The wicked of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for their ungodly conduct. Jude 7
3. Even the wicked Jewish leaders were to face the consequences of their deeds in the destruction of Jerusalem that came upon that generation. Matt. 23:35-36; cf Rev. 18:2, 10, 20-21, 24 (Explain fully)

C. All the ungodly shall perish because of disobedience. Matt. 7:21; John 12:48

III. 3Rd, let's look at the word "OUGHT" in "ought to obey God."

Matt. 23:23 "....these things ought you to have done..."

- A. The word "ought" is a word that shows what is required, or must do to please the God who expresses His will.
- B. The word "ought" is rendered "must" in the ASV and NKJV.
 - 1. We "must" believe in God before coming to Him. Heb. 11:6
 - 2. We "must" teach only those things in the gospel. Mark 16:16; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 9:16; Acts 20:27
 - a. The apostles knew they "ought" to obey God in preaching, even if it displeased the authorities.
 - b. The apostles knew they "ought" to obey God, even if it meant imprisonment or death.
 - 3. We "must" be worshipers of the God of heaven. John 4:20
 - 4. We "must" walk so as to please God. 1 Thess. 4:1
 - 5. We "must" behave ourselves in the church. 1 Tim. 3:15
- C. We are **obligated** or **required** to do what God commands, no matter what the consequences may be, and we should never mistake what God requires with what we "want" to do. Cf Acts 9:26

IV. 4th, let's look at the word "WE" in "we must obey God".

- A. In the immediate context, the "we" referred to the apostles, while under threat by the Jewish authorities.
- B. In principle, the "we" applies to **anyone** who has any concept of doing the will of God, especially to **Christians** who are committed to the will of God. Matt. 7:21; 10:28
 - 1. Remember the county clerk in another state who lost her job because she refused to issue so-called "same sex" marriage license?
 - 2. One judge was under fire for even **saying** he would not perform such immoral people in marriage, even though he never had the occasion to do so.
 - 3. Remember when Darius of the Medes and Persians who was tricked into signing a decree that anyone who made a request of anyone but him should be cast into the den of lions?
 - a. Daniel refused to do so, but prayed unto his God in heaven, and was cast into the den of lions.
 - b. The king liked Daniel, and was sorry for what happened, but he expressed to Daniel that his God would deliver him.
 - c. God **did** deliver him, and Daniel prospered as a result.
 - 4. Remember Daniel's 3 friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego;, who were cast into the furnace of fire for refusing to bow down and wor-

ship the king's golden image, and God was with them and they were not burned, and one like the Son of God was with them in the fire?

- I. Finally, let's remember the **contrast** between “God...and men.”
 - A. The apostles said they were obligated to obey God **rather than men**.
 1. It is right and proper for Christians to obey civil authorities where “men” are involved but **only** when such obedience is in harmony with the will of God as revealed in the New Testament.
 2. When there is a conflict between God and man, God's will must take priority over the dictates of men.
 - a. In the first century, many Christians were beheaded because they refused to deny Christ and acknowledge Nero as Lord.
 - b. Stephen was stoned to death because he faithfully preached the truth of God to people who were enemies of God.
 - c. We must boldly stand by God's will, as He will be with us, no matter what the consequences, for one Christian and God makes a majority. Rom. 8:31
 - B. Any precept or requirement must be either from **heaven** or from **men**.