

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Respecting the
LORDSHIP
OF Christ

- 1—Jesus is Lord and Christ (King)
- 2—Christ has ALL Authority
- 3—What is TRUE Obedience to Christ
- 4—Reasons for Being Obedient to Christ
- 5—The Importance and Necessity of an Obedient Life
- 6—The Outcome of Disobedience

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Lesson One

"Jesus is Lord and Christ"

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18-20); born of the virgin Mary (Matt. 1:23); grew up as a human being (Luke 2:52); lived a sinless life (1 Pet. 2:22); and then offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins (Phil. 2:8). As a result, God raised Him up from the grave and set Him on His Own Right Hand:

- 1) **Exalting Him highly;**
- 2) **Given a name which is above all other names;**
- 3) **So that all should bow before Him;**
- 4) **And that all should confess that Jesus is Christ and Lord to the glory of God (Phil. 2:9-11).**

The Apostle Peter stated by inspiration that this was foretold by David (Acts 22:32-33). Daniel also indicated this in his vision about One like a Son of Man ascending to the Ancient of Days....and He was given: ***"dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him."*** (Dan. 7:13-14). Jesus is **KING** over His kingdom!

KING OVER HIS KINGDOM

The Prophet Daniel foretold of Jesus being given a kingdom, but David was told by God that one of his descendants would sit on the throne of this kingdom (2 Samuel 7:13-14). Peter indicated that this kingdom was set up with Jesus sitting on David's throne in about AD 29-30 (Acts 2:33-35; 8:12; Col. 1:13-14). Jesus did not come to set up an earthly kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom! (John 18:36-37). The Jewish people were expecting an earthly kingdom because they had already pre-judged what kind of a kingdom it would be. Jesus made it clear that His kingdom is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, joy, and peace (Rom. 14:17). It is called the "kingdom of heaven" because it is of heaven, not of this earth. Jesus is reigning on His Throne in heaven, not on the earth. He came so that God could reign in the hearts and lives of men—not in a political or material manner. The kingdom of Christ is His church (Matt. 16:18-19; Luke 22:29-30). When Christ returns for His own, then He will give up His reign and deliver the kingdom up to the Father (1 Cor. 15:23-27). John, the baptizer, came preaching: ***"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"*** (Matt. 3:2). About three years later, Jesus is sitting (figuratively speaking) on the throne of David (in heaven!). Paul stated clearly that ***"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God"*** (1 Cor. 15:50). Those who make up this kingdom must be "born again" of the water and the Spirit! (John 3:3-5). It is a spiritual birth into a spiritual kingdom! But, it is also an "everlasting kingdom" (2 Pet. 1:11).

JESUS IS LORD

Jesus is to be confessed as "Lord" to our salvation (Rom. 10:9). To confess Him as Lord is to confess Him as "Deity!" But, it is also giving recognition to his authority over us. In Jesus' time on earth the word (κύριος) was used with reference to idolatrous gods, Roman Emperors, and high ranking officials in the empire (1 Cor. 8:5). Among the Jews, it was used with reference to God—denoting His Sovereign authority over mankind (or over heaven and earth) (Matt. 11:25; 9:38; Acts 17:24; Rev. 4:11). Two of the words in the Old Testament that were used of Deity were (Adonai and Yahveh). When the New Testament quotes passages with these two names, they are used to identify Jesus (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1—Mark 1:3), etc. The 12 disciples used the term to refer to Jesus. He stated: ***"You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."*** (Jn. 13:13-14). Jesus taught the people as ***"One having authority!"*** and He did! (Matt. 7:29). While on earth Jesus was Lord, but it was after his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension that He was so highly exalted by God, the Father (Phil. 2:9-11). He has been seated at the right hand of the Father, been given a name that is above every name, and at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (in heaven, on earth, and under the earth), and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father!

But, it is one thing to recognize and confess that Jesus is Lord and quite another to truly let Him be the Lord of my life! Confessing Jesus as Lord is required, but so is obedience as well. Confessing without obedience is hypocrisy (James 2:22-27). Jesus openly rebuked the people in one of His audiences with these words: ***"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?"*** (Luke 6:46). He went on to point out the blessings that come to the person that not only hears Jesus' words, but does them! (Luke 6:47-49). The Apostle John stated it this way: ***"He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous."*** (1 John 3:7). He warns his readers not to deceive themselves in thinking otherwise. If Jesus is truly Lord of our lives, we will be obedient to His Will—without questioning! Love for the Lord will cause us to be obedient servants of Jesus (1 John 5:3).

THE DEMANDING "LORD"

Towards the end of Jesus' public ministry, many of His disciples turned and walked no more with Him. Why? Why would anyone in their right mind turn from the only One who could give them eternal life? (John 6:59-69).

The answer given was brief and to the point: "***This is a hard saying who can understand?***" Jesus wanted followers who trusted in Him so His demands would be followed. Discipleship to Jesus is not determined by our wishes or our convenience, but by His Will or His commands. He sets the standards to be met for those who want to answer His call. The very concept of being a disciple is one who is willing to be taught and willing then to put those things into practice in one's life.

Several different expressions are used to communicate Jesus' demands for being His follower. Some of the more obvious are found in Matthew and Luke's Gospels. The following will give a general idea of what would be involved.

- 1) **Take up one's cross (Matt. 16:24).** Whatever burdens or hardships that may be placed on us because we are a disciple of Jesus, we must willingly bear it!
- 2) **Deny one's self (Matt. 16:24).** A person will either do his own will, or the will of someone else, or the Will of God. He makes the choice! Jesus is calling for us to do the Will of the Father in heaven if we want to follow Him.
- 3) **Lose one's life (Matt. 16:25).** To try to keep one's life for himself is to lose it, but to give up one's life for righteousness, he will gain it.
- 4) **Hate parents and family (Luke 14:25-26).** The concept of hate in this place carries with it the idea of loving them less than God. If we love them more than God, then when a choice has to be made between listening to them or God, we will choose our family over God!

Jesus' demands are not arbitrary, but practical. A choice has to be made as to which will be first in our lives—God or other things, or other people! (Matt. 6:24). It just isn't possible to serve two masters! If we are not willing to renounce all, we cannot be a true follower of Jesus. Jesus wants to be the Lord of our lives, the King over His subjects—for our own good!

Many want the blessings that Jesus offers, but are not willing for Him to be the Lord of their lives. Many voices are calling out and making their appeal for people to follow them. They make an appeal to our selfish interest to get a following. The appeal that Jesus makes is to let Him be the Lord of our life and He will give us "eternal life" with the Father (Rev. 2:10). It is up to us to make the choice of who we will follow. Why not follow Jesus—for only He can give us eternal life (John 6:68; 14:6).

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. When was Jesus to be given the position of King over His domain? (Dan. 7:13-14)

2. Was Jesus "Lord" and "King" while He was on earth?

3. What is the difference between being "Lord" and "King?"

4. How does Jesus identify His kingdom? (John 18:36-37; Rom. 14:17)

5. How does one come under Jesus' kingship? (John 3:3-5)

6. Why must one confess Jesus to be Lord? (Rom. 10:"9)

7. Did Jesus acknowledge His Lordship? (John 13:13-14)

8. Why did some of Jesus' followers leave Him? (John 6:66-69)

9. What are some of the demands of Jesus if we are to let Him be the Lord of our life? (Matt. 16:24-25; Luke 14:26-27)

10. How do we show our hypocrisy to Jesus as Lord?

Lesson Two

"Christ Has All Authority"

Jesus' activity in the Temple was very unusual. He not only taught as one with authority; but, He was making changes in their lucrative sacrifice trade. He had no authority from them to do this. And they pressed him..... ***"By whose authority are you doing these things?"*** This is a legitimate question and one with tremendous consequences! Such a question infers:

- 1—Authority is needed for our religious practices.
- 2—Proper respect should be given to properly constituted authority.
- 3—There is grave danger of punishment to the disobedient.

Jesus had obviously not secured authority from them. His authority came from a much higher source...God Himself. This was an authority they had not properly respected. ***"My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves."*** (Matt. 21:13)

Our Problem Today!

Our problem is no different today! When Jesus asked, ***"John's baptism is it from heaven or men?"*** He was not asking this of Atheists but religious leaders who claimed to be God's children; claimed to believe in God's Word; but, who differed widely in their beliefs! WHY DID THEY DIFFER SO WIDELY? What was wrong? Was it their approach to Scripture? Was it their method of approaching the Word of God?

Jesus' question needs strong consideration by us! We have the same situation today that they had. We have many religious people all claiming to be God's children; they claim to believe the Bible as their guide religiously; but who differ widely in their beliefs! Do we really respect Jesus' authority—His Lordship? Are we willing to ask the question: "Where is your authority for your religious beliefs and practices? Are we willing to ask: "Is the authority from heaven or from men?"

External or Internal Authority

We need to make a distinction between EXTERNAL and INTERNAL authority. If our authority is from heaven, it is External Authority. If it is from men, it is Internal Authority. Does religious Authority lie in man's own **Conscience, Feelings, Judgments, or Reason**; or, does it lie **Outside** of man? The answer to this question makes a **World of Difference!** And the Word of God gives a clear-cut answer!

Jere. 10:23—*“O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walks to direct his steps.”*

Prov. 14:12—*“There is a way which seems right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.”*

The answer to Jesus’ question was also obvious! We do not dare trust our **Feelings, Experiences, and Judgments** instead of the Word of God! We can become like Israel of Old: **Judg. 17:6**—*“Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”* They followed their own thoughts & feelings. They failed to serve God acceptably! INTERNAL AUTHORITY is a rejection of God’s Authority over us!

Rejecting Jesus' Authority

Such has taken various forms over the years:

Materialism: *“Man’s natural abilities are to be used exclusively in the formulation of religious beliefs. It does not need the aid of the supernatural or divine revelation.”*

Liberalism or Modernism: *“The Bible is not a reliable guide.”* They deny all miraculous elements of Bible. They exalt man’s reasoning over the Bible.

Mysticism: *“Common meaning of words is disregarded.”* They give some mystical and spiritual meaning to words. They discard all of the external forms of religion.

These and other efforts are men’s way to be their own guide; their own authority; and their own god! They have fallen into the same trap that Mother Eve fell into: Gen. 3:5—*“...ye shall be as gods...”* She disbelieved God’s Word and disobeyed God. Men still yield to this temptation today!

Christ has ALL Authority!

Jesus’ question infers we need an External Authority...one from heaven! If man is incapable of guiding himself, He needs God’s help! This is what Jesus is trying to tell men...you need God! And the God of Heaven has given all Authority to Jesus: *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth...”* (Matt. 28:18). **One of the purposes of Jesus’ coming was to serve as that help for man** (Heb. 1:1-2). Since Jesus did not write down His message, it was necessary for the Spirit of God to inspire men to write it down. **John 16:13**—*“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak on his own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak...”*

The very existence of this book is testimony to itself!

Eph. 3:3-5 _____

1 Cor. 2:10-13 _____

The Bible's claim about itself:

2 Pet. 1:3 _____

Jas. 1:25 _____

2 Tim. 3:16-17 _____

It claims to be a complete, reliable, and sufficient guide for man!

Concluding Thoughts

A very obvious reason for the mass confusion in the religious world is that every one has turned to his own **Internal Authority: Feelings, Conscience, Judgment, Reason, etc.**, Rather than letting the Word of God speak freely and fully. In order for the Bible to be our authority, the following thoughts need to be examined carefully:

1. It must be believed to be the Word of God, not the word of men!
2. We must understand that God has spoken to the mind of man in words he can understand.
3. Our **Reason** must not sit in judgment upon the Bible; rather, **Reason** must be used to come to a correct understanding of it and acceptance of it.
4. **My Experiences** must conform to the Bible, not the Bible to **My Experiences!**
5. I must not try to explain away what I do not like or want to believe.

In short, there must be **Respect** for Divine Authority over my life. Without respect for His Word, I do not respect God, Himself. (Luke 6;46)
Do you respect God's Word in your life?

Do you believe that Jesus truly has all authority over your life?

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you believe the Bible to be the verbally inspired Word of God? (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:10-13).
2. Do you believe God accepts acts of worship for which there is no Bible Authority? (Revelation 22:18-19).
3. Do you think people can walk by faith while doing things not taught in the Bible? (Romans 10:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14).
4. Do you think God speaks to people today in any way except through the Bible? (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3; Jude 3).
5. Do you think that subjective emotional experiences are as authoritative as an objective revelation from God?
6. Is the knowledge gained through subjective emotional experiences more "relevant" than knowledge gained through the study of the Bible?
7. Do you think one who has had a subjective emotional experience is more spiritual, heavenly-minded, than one can become by a study of the Bible?
8. Do you think teachers of false doctrines should be denied church fellowship? (2 John 9-10).
9. Which of the following are considered your Authority in religion:
 - ___ What is right in our own eyes (Proverbs 12:15; Deuteronomy 12:8).
 - ___ Men's own ideas (Jeremiah 10:23; Acts 5:29).
 - ___ Your feelings (Proverbs 14:12).
 - ___ Your own understanding of things (Romans 10:1-3; Proverbs 3:5).
 - ___ My heart (Proverbs 28:25-26).
 - ___ The Bible only.

Lesson Three

"What is True Obedience to Christ?"

Man is not only a created being, but a responsible being that has the power of choice. This choice is a question of whether we will be obedient to God or disobedient to God and go our own way. If that was all there was to this issue, there would be no problem for man. But the choices we make have consequences that we have to face—and some of them are not very pleasant, even in this life! But the Word of God says that there are also "eternal" consequences of our choices that should cause us to sit up and take notice! If we believe this, then we obviously will want to avoid any undesirable outcomes to us or to our loved ones.

THE STATED PURPOSES OF GOD'S LAW

The Apostle Paul stated that God is not the author of confusion, but peace, and that He expects His creatures to also be orderly people (act according to His Law)! (1 Cor. 14:33, 40). All men, from the beginning of time, have been under Law to God in one form or another. We know this because the Bible clearly states that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). If all have sinned, then there had to be a Law that they were responsible for—for where there is no law there is no transgression (Rom. 4:15). Why did God give us Law in the first place:

1. **To show man how he ought to live—strict adherence to God's Law (Deut. 4:2, etc.)**
2. **To show man what is right (Rom. 7:7).**
3. **To know the consequences of disobedience to God (Rom. 6:23).**
4. **To pronounce righteous those who keep God's Law (Rom. 2:13).**

According to the last point above (#4), the Law of God is designed to pronounce that a person who keeps God's Law is just before God by his keeping the Law (perfectly, understood).

TWO WAYS OF BEING JUSTIFIED

According to the Scriptures, there are two ways that man can be just in God's sight: (1) By perfect Law-keeping; or (2) By grace through faith. In this lesson we want to see what is involved in the first way of justification that is listed—**"Perfect Law keeping!"** Is it really possible for man to keep God's Law perfectly and not break one Law? Is it possible for a human being to obey God in every detail and never go against His Law? *"Theoretically,"* it may be possible, but from a reality standpoint, there has only been one perfect man—

Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God who became flesh—being tempted in all points like us, but without sin (Heb. 4:15). To our knowledge, there has not been another perfect person. But....what if man could keep God's Law, what would be understood?

Rom. 2:13—He is just before God!

1 Pet. 2:21-24—He is sinless like Jesus!

Titus 3:5—He does not need the mercy of God!

Rom. 11:6—He has earned or merited his way to Heaven!

Rom. 4:4—Eternal Life is owed to him as a Debt!

Eph. 2:8-9—He can boast in his accomplishments!

Rom. 4:14—The necessity of faith is made void!

Gal. 2:21—The Death of Jesus on the Cross was in vain for that person!

It should be obvious that the perfect person has no need of God's mercy—he is perfect, without fault! He is not lost, so he does not need to be saved! Salvation and forgiveness is for sinners, not for perfect people!

THE INHERIT WEAKNESS OF LAW

Have you ever heard someone make this comment: *"That person is so good that God ought to save them!"* That may sound good, but it is contradictory! If a person is "good enough," he does not need to be saved—for he is not lost! To admit the need to be saved is to admit that I am sinful. On the one hand, it is to see a person's need for the grace of God; and then, turns around and thinks that the person is so good that he deserves heaven!

The writer(s) of both the Roman Letter and the Hebrew Letter mention the "weakness" or "fault" of the Law. (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 8:7-8). It is very simple—**It cannot save anyone, but only condemns the law-breaker!** The Law, which is perfect, has no place for man's weakness or sinfulness in regards to being just before God (Rom. 7:12). Isaiah stated man's condition clearly—our righteousness is like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). It must be clearly understood that man is either a perfect law-keeper or a sinner in need of God's grace! (Rom. 7:24-25). Our "goodness" is worthless, unless it is perfect "goodness!"

Since we are sinful people, we are under the sentence of eternal death for our law-breaking. We need deliverance from such a curse! We can strive to keep the Law of God as good as we can; but unfortunately, we cannot keep it perfectly and are therefore under the curse of death. There is no deliverance in "Law-keeping!" Why? Because it requires perfection! But this does not mean we shouldn't be obedient to Christ, the Son of God!

JESUS ILLUSTRATES GRACE

Jesus told the story of two men who went into the Temple to pray. One man was a Pharisee (a strict sect of the Jewish Religion). The other man was a Publican (a tax collector) that was looked down upon by the Jewish people as a traitor to the Jewish people. The Pharisee did not go in humbly, but arrogantly thanking God that he was not like other men—especially like the tax collector. He also reminded God of all the "good" things he had done.....as though God owed justification to him. However, the Publican would not even raise his eyes toward heaven and cried out for mercy to God. Jesus indicated that it was the Publican that went to his house justified rather than the Pharisee. Why? Luke 18:9, 14 indicates two thoughts:

- 1. Because there are those who trust in themselves that they are righteous.**
- 2. Because those who humble themselves will be exalted, but those who exalt themselves will be humbled.**

It is important to see that our "goodness" is worthless unless it is perfect goodness! Otherwise, we must depend upon the mercy of God to save us. This passage shows us clearly that "good, sincere, 'righteous' people" can be lost. Why? Because they are depending upon their own goodness to get them to heaven, rather than the Grace of God. (See Matthew 7:21-23). Cain and Abel illustrate this concept way back in the very beginning of things. They both brought a sacrifice to God. Abel brought a blood sacrifice—recognizing his need of God's mercy. Cain felt that God should accept whatever he brought—showing his lack of faith, but also his arrogance. Cain's disobedience invalidated his relationship to God. Abel was accepted before God on the basis of his obedient faith. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is given to help us clearly see that we are saved by the Grace of God, but through an obedient faith on our part.

MAN'S WORKS OF FAITH

Salvation by Grace is "universally" offered to mankind through the preaching of the Gospel. However, not all will accept God's offer since He has placed some conditions that man must meet in order to receive the Grace of God. These conditions do not in any way earn or merit our justification—but the conditions must be met if one is to be justified by the Grace of God. When the Apostle Peter stood before the thousands of Jews on the Day of Pentecost (recorded in Acts 2) and preached the Gospel for the first time. He was able to convince 3,000 that they were lost and needed the grace of God to cover their sins. They asked what they must do. They were told to ***"Repent and be baptized..... for the remission of sins."*** (v. 38). Their faith had to be put into action!

Lesson Four

"Reasons for Being Obedient to Christ"

The strong emphasis on faith in the Bible certainly indicates its great importance in our lives. We cannot over-stress its necessity to be right with God, but we can pervert its proper place in the salvation of a man's soul. Below are just a few of the passages indicating its necessity.

- John 1:12** _____
- John 3:16** _____
- Rom. 1:16-17** _____
- Rom. 5:1** _____

However, it is a grave mistake to conclude from the above passages that justification before God is by "faith alone!" The very opposite is taught in many different ways. Please notice that Rom. 5:9 states that man is justified by Jesus' blood. One of two things is obvious:

- 1) Faith and the Blood of Christ are in conflict;
- 2) Or, they are both involved in our justification.

It should be obvious that if both are necessary to our justification; then, we are not justified by any "one" thing! If we look closely at this context, we can see that several things are involved:

- Rom. 5:1** _____
- Rom. 5:2** _____
- Rom. 5:9** _____
- Rom. 5:17-18** _____
- Rom. 5:19** _____

All are obviously involved, all are essential, and all mesh together to provide redemption for fallen man. It should be obvious that justification by faith alone is an impossibility. To hold to a "faith alone" doctrine would automatically eliminate God's Grace, Christ's Blood, Christ's Righteousness, and Christ's Obedience! The very term is very misleading. Man's salvation involves both God's Work and Man's Work in order to be completed.

My Obedience shows my Faith

Without obedience, my faith would be dead!

- Jas. 2:17** _____
- By obedience, I show that I do believe in Jesus as the Son of God!
- John 6:66-69** _____

My obedience shows that I respect Jesus as Lord of my life! To stress "faith only" as a means of our redemption or forgiveness is going straight into the face of the concept of Jesus being Lord (2:24)! He is only Lord of my life when I believe in Him to the point of being submissive to His Will. Jesus is not only the Messiah (the Christ, the anointed one that was to come to redeem mankind), but He is also Lord of those who trust in Him and are responsive to His Will in their lives. Thus, *"to be faithful unto death,"* means that I will continue to be obedient unto death!

**My Obedience shows my open allegiance
to Christ as Lord!**

We are all generally acquainted with the concept that if we wanted to be a part of a group, organization, or institution, etc., that there is some kind of activity expected of us. It is often referred to as an initiation into the group or an act that helps to identify us with an organization. Baptism is an act of faith in the promises of God that is required of the "lost" person in order to be "saved" or belong to the group of saved persons (the church—Acts 20:28). When God sent John the baptizer to preach and baptize people, his purpose was to "cull" out honest and sincere people who could make up the group of Jewish people who were prepared for the coming of the Kingdom of God. It not only separated them off from those who were "unbaptized," but it also separated them off as a group of people who believed sincerely that John was sent by God. Thus, it was not a new thing for God to require an act of "initiation" that would identify us as belonging to this new redeemed people of God.

"To Fulfill all Righteousness"

The Gospel of Mark says that John came preaching *"the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."* (1:4) He evidently taught the people to be willing to confess their sins as well (1:5). Jesus, the perfect Son of God, came to be baptized of John (Matt. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:22). If Jesus was sinless, why would He come to the Jordan River to be baptized of him. He had no sins to confess; nor did he have any sins to be forgiven. John seems to have recognized this fact—or the Holy Spirit through him acknowledged this fact—when he refused to baptize Jesus saying that he (John) needs to be baptized by Jesus. But Jesus insisted upon obeying this command of God given through John. Jesus gave the reason—*"Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness."* (Matt. 3:15). Righteousness is "right doing!" Jesus always did that which was right, so why shouldn't He obey this command of God as well. Even though he had no sin to confess or be forgiven of—it was still right to do what God commands! Jesus was thus presenting Himself as an example for all men—we are to be obedient to God in all that He commands of us.

God's Righteousness

When Jesus said that He wanted to fulfill all righteousness, it was a way of stressing the need for man to be submissive to the Will of God in all things. The expression, "**God's Righteousness**," can be understood in two ways, at least:

1. That God is righteous in all that He does (Ps. 11:7). He is perfect and complete in His righteousness; but, man on the other hand is imperfect and incomplete in his righteousness (Tit. 3:5). He needs righteousness to be imputed or credited to him from God (Rom. 4:3). But when we become Christians, we are to walk in or practice righteousness (1 John 3:10).
2. God's righteousness can also be understood in the sense of the plan by which God is able to make man righteous through His Son. When we submit to this plan, we become righteous in the sight of God

It is in the second sense that we are discussing God's righteousness. In Paul's discussion about his unbelieving Jewish brethren, he stated that he desired for them to be saved (Rom. 10:1-3), which obviously shows that they were lost! He then stated why they were lost: "**For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.**" They rejected God's means of making them righteous—through His Son! They refused to believe in Him or submit to Him in order to be righteous. They believed that they could be righteous by doing what they wanted to do. It is still possible today for people to reject what God requires of us in order to be righteous, and believe that I can be righteous without submitting to God's plan of righteousness.

Jesus submitted to John's baptism because it was something that God commanded to be done, but we submit to Jesus' baptism in order to be made righteous by the blood of Jesus. We are sinners and need God's righteousness. We need the forgiveness of our sins in order to be acceptable to God. It is in the act of baptism, accompanied by faith, repentance, and confession, that we receive this forgiveness and a right standing with God. Those who refuse to be baptized have no promise of forgiveness or being made righteous before God. We can be like the Pharisees and lawyers among the Jews concerning John's baptism: "**But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.**" They rejected the counsel of God against themselves and so can we if we refuse to be baptized by Jesus' baptism.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why is there such an emphasis upon faith in the Bible?
2. Why is faith called "dead?"
3. Is there only "one thing" by which we are saved; or, is there several things?
4. How does obedience indicate my faith?
5. How does my obedience show that Jesus is Lord of my life?
6. Can a person show his allegiance to Christ as Lord without a faith that is obedient?
7. Why did Jesus want to fulfill all righteousness?
8. How is Jesus' obedience different from ours?
9. Why had the Jewish people that Paul talked about not submitted to God's righteousness?
10. What part does obedience play in our being righteous?

Lesson Five

"The Importance and Necessity of an Obedient Life"

We continue to look at the topic of obedience because of its importance to our showing respect for the Lordship of Christ. We have also seen that our faith is worthless without obedience—James calls it a "dead faith!" But our obedience also shows our allegiance to Christ as Lord. As we continue to look at obedience we want to see how important it is in regards to our salvation from past sins and to our eternal salvation.

We have already seen in past lessons that an obedient faith is necessary in order to be saved and to become a child of God. Let's look at some passages that emphasize this concept:

Matt. 28:18-20 _____

Mark 16:15-16 _____

Acts 2:38 _____

Acts 22:16 _____

1 Pet. 3:21 _____

Gal. 3:26-27 _____

Rom. 10:9-10 _____

In order to receive remission of sins, have my sins washed away, to come into a relationship with the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, and to be saved.....I must believe in Jesus, repent of sin, confess Christ before men as Lord, and be baptized (immersed) in water. Jesus said that those who will enter into the kingdom of God will be those who obey the will of His Father (Matt. 7:21).

But the Scriptures also emphasize the necessity of continued obedience in order to continue receiving God's forgiveness and keeping my relationship with the Godhead.

1 Jn. 1:7-9 _____

Phil. 2:12 _____

The New Testament uses examples in the Old Testament to illustrate the importance and necessity of Obedience. An example of this is found in Hebrews 3:12-19. Notice how the words "faith," "unbelief," "rebellion," "obedience," and "disobedience" is used. And also notice how faith and obedience are inseparably tied together.

Verse 12 _____
Verse 16 _____
Verse 18 _____
Verse 19 _____

Deuteronomy 28:1-14

Look down these verses and see how much emphasis is placed on their obedience to God and the blessings that will come.

- V. 1—Set thee high above all nations of the earth.
- V. 3—Blessed in city and in field.
- V. 4—Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, of the ground, your cattle, kind, and flock.
- V. 5—Blessed shall be your basket, and your storehouse.
- V. 6—Blessed will be your coming in and going out.
- V. 7—Your enemies will be smitten and flee 7 ways.
- V. 8—Your storehouses and all you set your hands to do will be blessed.
- V. 9—You will be a holy people unto the Lord.
- V. 10—All people shall see you are called by the name of the Lord and be afraid of you.
- V. 11—There will be plenty of goods, fruit of your body, cattle, and fruit of your ground.
- V. 12—God will open unto you good treasure—give rain in season, bless the work of your hands, and you will lend to nations, not borrow.
- V. 13—You will be the head, not the tail....above, and not below.

The Obedience of Noah

In Noah's day, the wickedness of man had become so great that God took action against their disobedience and destroyed all humans on earth except for Noah and his family (Gen. 6). Why did he save these eight souls? (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

Heb. 11:7 _____

It would seem to be obvious that these eight souls were saved by God's grace and through their faith that was obedient to God. Noah believed what God said about destroying all humans and began to build an Ark to the saving of his family (Gen. 6:13). If Noah had not believed God, he certainly would not have built an Ark. Noah was "***moved with godly fear.***" When one believes God, he has to act. Noah was moved to act out of Awe, Reverence, and even terror of what God said He would do. He respected the Word of God and acted upon it as directed in order to be saved from the flood. And it was said of Noah that he "***did according to all that God commanded him, so he did.***" Man's righteousness comes from a faith that conforms to God's righteousness—not by a "dead faith!"

But....obedience not only blesses, but it condemns as well! Notice that Noah's obedience "***Condemned the world!***" (Heb. 11:7) Noah was not only given the job of building an Ark, but was also commissioned to preach the coming destruction of the world (1 Pet. 3:19-20; 2 Pet. 2:5). So, Noah not only believed God and built an Ark, but he preached to others to warn them to repent and turn back to God. His obedient faith condemned the world's unbelief! (2 Pet. 2:4-9).

Concluding Thoughts

God announced the coming destruction of the world in Noah's day. He has also announced the destruction of this present heavens and earth and that the disbelieving and disobedient will be cast into a lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever. Will we be like Noah?

- a) Be moved by godly fear not only to believe God;
- b) But, to act upon it by obeying God, ourselves;
- c) And then, speak to all who will listen to warn them of the coming punishment of God.

It should be obvious from this study that all men need to obey God not only to be saved from past sins, but to also escape the eternal punishment awaiting the disobedient.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is a "dead faith?"
2. Why must faith be obedient in order to be valid?
3. What must my faith lead me to do in order to be saved or become a child of God?
4. Who will be permitted to enter into the kingdom of God?
5. Is continued obedience necessary for one to go to Heaven?
6. Is it proper to use the Old Testament to help illustrate something taught in the New Testament?
7. Did God promise blessings to those who obeyed Him and curses to those who do not?
8. How do you know that Noah had to be obedient God to be saved from the flood?
9. Is man capable of guiding himself sufficiently in order to be right with God?
10. What are some of the terms that are used to identify those who do not accept the Bible as their guide?
11. If Christ has all authority, then who has authority greater than His?

"The Outcome of Disobedience"

Most of us are deluged with people wanting to sell us something! They call us over the telephone, advertise on TV and the Internet, as well as in stores, etc. In most instances, we are able to turn them down and say "No thank you!" But there is one offer to buy that we should not turn down! It is too important not to buy it! Jesus illustrated its importance by telling two Parables—(1) The Parable of the Hidden Treasure; and (2) The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (Matt. 13:44-46). In both cases the person saw the value in the item and paid the cost! Jesus offers mankind salvation. It is free because we do not have enough money to buy it. But, if it is free, then why are we supposed to buy it? We buy it in the sense that we accept it on His terms! What He offers is free, but not unconditional. There are conditions tied to it. But what if we say "No!" to His offer?

Mark 16:15-16

Let's look closer at what it means to be disobedient to Jesus and His offer of Salvation.

The Results of Disobedience

1. **Disobedience** to Jesus is to bring the judgment of God on our soul (Jn. 12:48-49).
2. **Disobedience** to Jesus is to reject God, Himself (Jn. 10:30; 2 Jn. 9).
3. **Disobedience** to Jesus is like calling God a liar. We are saying that we do not believe you. (Jn. 2:4-11).
4. **Disobedience** to Jesus shows that we love (prefer) darkness rather than light (Jn. 3:19-21).
5. **Disobedience** to Jesus shows contempt for His love for us (Heb. 10:28-31).
6. **Disobedience** to Jesus leaves us with no one else to turn to for help or for salvation (eternal life) (Jn. 6:68).

On and on we could show the results of disobedience to God and to His Son. The book of Deuteronomy gives a long list of things that will happen to the Jewish people if they are disobedient (Deut. 28:15 to end of chapter).

Deut. 28:15-68

What are the cursings of disobedience found in Deut. 28:15-68?

- a) V. 16—Cursed in the city and in the field.
- b) V. 17—Your basket and store will be cursed.
- c) V. 18—The fruit of your body, land, kine, flock shall be cursed.
- d) V. 19—You will be cursed when you go out and come in.
- e) V. 20—All you set your hand to do will be cursed and you will be vexed and rebuked.
- f) V. 21—Pestilence will cleave unto you until you are consumed off the land.
- g) V. 22—You will be smitten with consumption, fever, inflammation, extreme burning, the sword, mildew and pursued until you perish.
- h) V. 23—The heavens will be as brass over you...the land like iron.
- i) V. 24—Rain will be like powder and dust.
- j) V. 25—You will be smitten before your enemies and flee 7 ways and you will be removed into all kingdoms of the earth.
- k) V. 26—Your carcass will be meat for fowls and beasts.
- l) V. 27—You will be smitten with the botch of Egypt, emeralds, scab, itch, and you cannot be healed.
- m) V. 28—You will be smitten with madness and astonishment of heart.
- n) V. 29—You will grope at mid-day and not prosper, but only oppressed and spoiled.
- o) V. 30—You will be betroth to a wife and another will have her. You will build a house and another will live in it. You will plant a vineyard and another will gather the grapes.
- p) V. 31—Your ox will be slain before your eyes and you will not eat of it. Your ass will be taken away violently and will not be restored to you.
- q) V. 32—Your sons and daughters will be given to another people and your eyes shall fail with longing for them.
- r) V. 33—The fruit of all your labors will be eaten by another nation. You will be only oppressed and cursed.
- s) V. 34—You will be driven to distraction (mad).
- t) V. 35—You will be smitten in the knees, legs, and with botch that cannot be healed.
- u) V. 36—You and your king will serve another nation not known and you will serve other gods.

- v) V. 37—You shall become an astonishment, a proverb, a byword among all nations.
- w) V. 38—You will carry much seed out, but gather little; for the locust shall consume it.
- x) V. 39—You will plant vineyards, dress them, but neither drink of the wine, nor father grapes; the worms shall consume them.
- y) V. 40—Your olive trees shall cast its fruit before time—and give no oil.
- z) V. 41—You will beget children who will be taken into captivity.
- a) V. 42—The locust will consume your fruit of the trees and the land.
- b) V. 43—Strangers shall be over you.
- c) V. 44—They shall lend to you and you shall be the tail and not the head.
- d) V. 45—Curses will pursue you until you are destroyed.
- e) V. 46—You shall be for a sign and wonder upon you and your seed forever.
- f) V. 47—You shall serve enemies, if not God.
- g) V. 48—God will bring nations against you whose language you do not know.
- h) V. 51—Nations will eat the fruit of your cattle and land until destroyed. They will not leave wine, corn, oil, kine, or flocks.
- i) V. 52—Your gates will be besieged until they are overthrown.
- j) V. 53-57—You shall eat the fruit of your body—the flesh of your children.
- k) V. 59—Your plagues will be wonderful—of seed, great plagues of long continuance, and sore sickness of long continuance.
- l) V. 60—God will bring the distress of Egypt.
- m) V. 61—Every plague and sickness not written in the book will be brought against you.
- n) V. 62—You will be left few in numbers.
- o) V. 63—The Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to naught.
- p) V. 64—You will be scatter among all peoples to the end of the earth and serve other gods.
- q) V. 65—You will find no ease, but rather a trembling heart, failing eyes, and sorrow of mind.
- r) V. 66—Your life will hang in doubt; there will be fear day and night and no assurance of your life to be spared.
- s) V. 67—You will long for the night when it is day; and long for the day when it is night.

- t) V. 68—God will bring you into Egypt again in ships and sold as bondmen—and none will want you.

Concluding Thoughts

In reality, when we reject Jesus' offer, we lose the benefits of His death for us and all that goes with it:

- a) The removal of guilt.
- b) Peace with God.
- c) A Relationship with God.
- d) I lose being a child of God.
- e) I lose being a new creation with a new outlook and new opportunities, etc.

In Saunders, WV, a Dam broke and the town was covered with water, rock, silt, and waste. More than seventy people were killed. People had been warned of its dangers time and again. One person remarked: *"Maybe we had been warned too many times."*

It is possible that we humans can hear God's offer of Salvation so much that it just falls on deaf ears. We pay no heed—thinking there is plenty of time later. Or, we hear it so often that our hearts become hardened to it.

Heb. 3:13 _____

Or, will we come to the point where what Stephen said to the Jewish people, could also be said to us?

Acts 7:51-54 _____

Jesus was the Master Teacher! But, even He did not try to force people to accept His offer. He continually and emotionally called for them to come and receive what He had to offer, but they would not accept Him.

Matt. 23:37-39 _____

Has the offer of Jesus to save you become trite—uninteresting? Do the warnings of eternal punishment for turning down His offer bring no fear to your heart? The dangers are real—we all need to accept Jesus' gracious offer!

