

The Old Paths

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“According To All The Lord Commanded”

Jarrod Jacobs

God has always required obedience from His people if they wished to be blessed. To show that this true, let us begin by reading three passages in the Old Testament that teach us about obedience (Rom. 15:4). *“Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they”* (Ex. 39:32). In the book of Numbers, we read, *“And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they”* (Num. 1:54). The third passage we will read is found in Numbers 2:34. After dividing into 4 segments and camping around the tabernacle, the text says, *“And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses....”* These three passages set the tone for our study. It is important that we read these passages and understand the degree of obedience the Israelites showed, because God demands no less of us today. Let us take those three passages and study three things that are required of men today in order to live a life *“according to all that the Lord commanded.”*

Action

In the passages in Exodus and Numbers, we find the phrase, *“Thus did....”* If we ever plan on pleasing God, we must be active in His work! We will never please

God without action. Only a fool would think that God does not want us to be active in His work. I do not make this statement lightly. Rather, I am repeating the plain words of Scripture. Jesus taught that one’s action or inaction made the difference between God calling someone a “wise man” or calling someone a “fool” (Matt. 7:24-27; Lk. 6:46-49)! James also made a distinction between the hearer and the doer. He said the hearer who did not act had merely deceived himself, while the doer was *“blessed in his deed”* (Jas. 1:22-25). To the Philippians, the apostle wrote, *“work out (or work to completion) your own salvation with fear and trembling”* (Phil. 2:12). We do this by obeying *“all that the Lord commanded.”* There is no other way.

Obeying The Right Source Of Authority

In the three Old Testament texts we cited, we see that God’s people did, *“according to all the Lord commanded....”* In other words, they obeyed the right source of authority! Their authority did not rest in the rule of parents, the rule of society, or the rule of what is “popular.” They were living and acting *“according to all the Lord commanded.”* Friends, God demands no less of us today. He commands us to *“speak as the oracles of God”* (I Pet. 4:11). The apostle Paul tells us, *“whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”* (Col. 3:17). This means that everything we do must be done by

His authority, and no one else’s! The truth is that when we obey “all that the Lord commands,” we will have learned a lesson that most of this world has not! Let us never go by what “seems” right (Prov. 14:12; Jer. 10:23). Let us always ask, *“What saith the Scripture?”* (Rom. 4:3). This is what pleases God!

Complete Obedience

In the books of Exodus and Numbers we see that the people did *“all”* God told them! In like manner, God demands our complete obedience today. Jesus said only those who *“do”* the will of the Father will go to Heaven (Matt. 7:21; Rev. 22:14). Jesus promised eternal life to those who are obedient (Jn. 8:51). In fact, He went on to say that one cannot be a friend of Christ without obedience (Jn. 15:14).

As we read the New Testament, this theme of obedience is found again and again. For example, Hebrews 11 lists those faith heroes who were obedient to God. He then continues in Hebrews 12, and tells Christians to be obedient as those people were! In his epistles to the Christians, the apostle John teaches that fellowship with God will not come unless we are “abiding” in Christ’s doctrine (II Jn. 9), i.e., obedient. We must obey God’s word completely in order to have a home in Heaven!

How about us? Are we doing all the Lord has commanded? If not, then repent and obey Him before it is too late!

Point To Ponder

“Most people know HOW to be silent. Few know WHEN!”
(Study: Prov. 10:19, 13:3, 17:28, 21:23)

The Church In Laodicea

Aric Russell

The seventh and final letter to the churches of Asia is Christ's letter to the church in the city of Laodicea.

This last message is found in Revelation 3:14-22. Laodicea was about 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia, and it was an epicenter of trade routes, so it became one of the wealthiest cities in the ancient world.

As with every other letter, we realize the message is from the Lord Jesus Christ. In contrast to the other six churches, Jesus has nothing positive to say about the church in Laodicea. Jesus begins the message with condemnation. He says, *"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'--and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked"* (Rev. 3:15-17). Jesus emphasizes their "lukewarm," apathetic nature three times. As a result of their state, Jesus said He was ready to "spit them out" if they did not repent. With their apathy came a spiritual blindness. They claimed to be rich, blessed and self-sufficient. Perhaps they were rich in material things. But, spiritually, the Laodiceans were in a wretched, pitiful condition, made all the worse because they could not see their problem. This was a church filled with self-deception.

Next, Jesus gives the remedy

to this problem in Revelation 3:18-19. He says, *"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent."* Even though this church was in bad shape, Jesus loved them and He gave them some great advice they needed to listen to if they wanted to renew their relationship with God. First, He wanted them to buy refined gold from Him. In other words, He wanted them to have the true riches that only come from Christ (Matt. 6:19-21). Second, He wanted them to trade in their fashionable black garments for white garments so that they can cover up their spiritual nakedness. Third, instead of using the salve their city sells, they needed to use some spiritual salve that will open their eyes to how they are living their lives so they can see the changes they need to make and be reconciled to God. Jesus rebuked them because He loved them, and He wanted them to repent. Jesus did not want His church to fail. He wanted them to succeed. Even though they got off track, He would rather they repent and start doing good rather than

get farther off track.

Revelation 3:20 says, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."* This verse teaches us two things. First, it shows that this church had shut Jesus out of their lives and they were in desperate need to repent. Second, it shows how Jesus is always there for us waiting for us to invite Him back into our lives. He is not just waiting silently. He is knocking at the door, trying to get your attention so He can come in and dine with you.

While this statement would have been devastating to this church to know that they had shut the door on Christ, it would have also been comforting to know that He still wanted to be part of their lives if they were willing to repent. Jesus ends this letter by saying, *"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."* What a comforting promise for those who remain faithful. We will get to sit with Christ and enjoy all the benefits of Heaven. This is a promise to every faithful Christian.

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