

## Doctrine of Obedience

1. Parents have a right to expect their children to obey them though sometimes the obedience demanded is ill advised and even sinful as when Rebecca taught her son Jacob how to deceive Isaac.
  - *Genesis 27:8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.*
  - *Genesis 27:13 And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.*
2. Having produced tragic results Rebecca counseled Jacob to flee in order to protect his life.
  - *Genesis 27:43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;*
3. Ignorance of God is no excuse for disobedience.
  - *Exodus 5:2 And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.*
4. God promised Israel a special relationship based upon gospel obedience. Never was His covenant with them unconditional.
  - *Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:*
5. During their wilderness journey the pre-incarnate Christ in the form of an angel was sent to guide Israel. Gospel obedience to Him was expected.
  - *Exodus 23:20 Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. 21 Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. 22 But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.*
6. Blessing and cursing is directly associated with obedience to the known will of the Lord.
  - *Deuteronomy 11:27 A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: 28 And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.*

7. The fear of God is associated with gospel obedience. When the heart does not fear God the will openly moves the mind and body to disobey Him.

- *Deuteronomy 13:4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.*

8. Under the Old Testament economy a disobedient child could be put to death publically.

- *Deuteronomy 21:18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them:*

The child was to be taken to the elders of the city.

- *Deuteronomy 21:20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard.*

Then the people would stone the child with stones unto death.

9. Specifically the church is to obey all the commandments and statutes of God as set forth in Scripture.

- *Deuteronomy 27:10 Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day.*

10. When a covenant nation does not obey the commandments of God the general population will be reduced.

- *Deuteronomy 28:62 And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.*

11. When a covenant nation has been dispersed and forced into exile for gospel disobedience it is possible for individuals to repent and be returned to divine favor and blessing.

- *Deuteronomy 30:1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee. 2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; 3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.*

12. Time after time a covenant nation is commanded to repent and obey.

- *Deuteronomy 30:8 And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.*

13. A faithful pastor, a faithful national leader of a covenant nation will exhort the people to obey God as Moses did.
- *Deuteronomy 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: 20 That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.*
14. In times of spiritual renewal people want to obey the Lord.
- *Joshua 24:24 And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.*
15. In times of spiritual decline there is a stubborn and open disregard for the will of God.
- *1 Samuel 8:19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;*
16. In matchless grace God sometimes concedes to the will of stubbornness while offering the overarching terms of obedience producing blessing and disobedience resulting in heartache and hardship. When Israel wanted a king like other nations God gave them what they wanted but with fearful warning.
- *1 Samuel 12:14 If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: 15 But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers.*
17. In all particular moments and matters of life God expects obedience. When King Saul did not do as he should have in dealing with the Amalakites the Lord demanded an explanation.
- *1 Samuel 15:19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?*
18. Though God will listen to the excuses given, He first challenges, and then renders a just judgment to teach that obedience is better than sacrifices.
- *1 Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.*

19. When the soul is determined to disobey God neither His past mercies nor great miracles are appreciated enough to arrest the dark passions of the mind. Nehemiah confessed this while reviewing the history of the Hebrews. Nehemiah also remembered the covenant faithfulness of God.
- *Nehemiah 9:17 And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.*
20. It was a proverb among the Jews that obedience always brought blessing and disobedience always brought cursing. Since Job was in a period of lost prosperity he must have done some great evil to be in such a condition.
- *Job 36:11 If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures... 36:12 But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.*
21. Godly rulers enjoy the Ruler of the Universe causing citizens to obey legitimate laws.
- *Psalms 18:44 As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.*
20. Children that disobey their parents shall have their lives devoured by the wild beasts and birds of prey of human nature.
- *Proverbs 30:17 The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.*
22. Military success is promised to covenant nations that have obeyed God.
- *Isaiah 11:14 But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.*
23. When a covenant nation is in exile and repents and begins to obey God where it is, the heart of God is moved to restore fellowship. And so it is in principle that any professing Christian, though in exile to a land of disobedience, and broken fellowship, can repent and begin to obey God in small matters will have fellowship restored.
- *Jeremiah 7:23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.*
24. The past promises of God become the keys to a present prosperity of the soul and hope for the future blessings of God.

- *Jeremiah 11:4 Which I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God:*
- *Jeremiah 11:7 For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice.*
- *Jeremiah 26:13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.*

25. In utter exasperation God will remove covenant blessings and administer covenant discipline.

- *Jeremiah 12:17 But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.*
- *Jeremiah 18:10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.*

26. Sometimes a covenant people believe they know best how to conduct their lives and where the best geographical location is because a false prophet has arisen to misguide their hearts. In such times the various prophetic voices must be discerned. The voice of the true prophet of God will guide the soul to safety. When false prophets told the people in exile they could flee to Egypt for safety, Jeremiah told them differently. They were to submit themselves to the king of Babylon and one day return home.

- *Jeremiah 42:11 Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. 12 And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land. 13 But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God, 14 Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell: 15 And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there; 16 Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.*

27. The church is promised many blessings for gospel obedience. The church is the true covenant nation of God.

- *Daniel 7:27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*

- *1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*
28. It is good that the sins of a covenant nation be openly confessed and in particular confession is to be made that the voice of God has not been obeyed.
- *Daniel 9:11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.*
29. When the gospel comes to a soul according to the principle of divine grace, God causes His covenant people to want to do right, and so they come to do His will and to build His temple. In the *New Testament* economy the temple of God is the heart. Every Christian should be able to say, “*My heart, His home.*”
- *Zechariah 6:15 And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.*
30. Even nature must be, and is, obedient to the Sovereign of the Universe.
- *Matthew 8:27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!*
31. As nature must obey Christ so must the demons when they are given a direct command.
- *Mark 1:27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.*
32. The omnipotent power of God is made available to the Christian through faith so that nature itself will obey a direct command.
- *Luke 17:6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.*
33. When the will of man came into conflict with the will of God the apostolic commitment was to the will of God.
- *Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*
34. The Holy Ghost will be given as a gift of divine grace to those who obey the gospel.

- *Acts 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

35. The sin of disobedience might be remembered for generations.

- *Acts 7:39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,*

36. There is a fearful warning that goes out to those who do not obey the truth.

- *Romans 2:8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,*

37. As the will can be yielded to obey God, so the will can be surrendered to the service of Satan and sin.

- *Romans 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. ...16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*

38. As the Old Testament saints were accused of not obeying the truth, so the sins of the parents are passed on. The church at Galatia was rebuked for not obeying the truth.

- *Galatians 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*

39. No logical answer can ever be given to the inquiry as to why gospel obedience ceased.

- *Galatians 5:7 Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?*

40. Children are told they are to obey their parents in unequivocal terms, for it is not only the right action to take but it also pleases the Lord.

- *Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*
- *Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*

41. As nature and the demons obey God, as children are to obey their parents, as Christians are to submit to the known will of their Sovereign, so employees are to submit to their employer with a sincere heart and in the fear of God.

- *Colossians 3:22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:*

42. The time is coming when all acts of rebellion against the Lord will be judged in a severe manner once and for all.

- *2 Thessalonians 1:8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

43. The church has a right and a responsibility to judge those who do not obey the gospel.

- *2 Thessalonians 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

44. Christians are to be law-abiding citizens and obey the rules of society.

- *Titus 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,*

45. Jesus Christ does not only demand obedience He modeled it Himself perfectly.

- *Hebrews 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*
- *Romans 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

46. One of the most difficult responsibilities within the local assembly is for Christians to submit to ordained pastoral authority. And yet it is required if the church is to have an impact on its culture. How can Christians invite others to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ when they themselves violate the foundational principle by dishonoring elders?

- *Hebrews 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

Know the response of Philemon to Paul's authority becomes a wonderful example of submission to pastoral authority.

- *Philemon 21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.*

47. The apostle James understood how difficult it is to obey and to bring the tongue into conformity with the will of God.

- *James 3:3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. 4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!*



48. Christian wives must learn above all women to be in submission to their own husbands, especially if they are unconverted in order to win them to Christ.

- *1 Peter 3:1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;*

Sarah offers a godly example of a wife submissive to her husband. *1 Peter 3:6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.*

Women must also learn to be silent in the church and not assert an improper authority.

- *1 Corinthians 14:34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.*

49. Self judgment in the matter of gospel obedience, or the lack there of, must begin in the church.

- *1 Peter 4:17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*

50. In summary, God has ordained the universe to be structured under authority, and characterized by a ruling principle of obedience. Beginning at the top of the divine order and working in a logical but not chronological order the following becomes clear.

- ❖ All of creation is subject to God: angels, men, demons, and nature, including disease and death.
- ❖ Jesus Christ was subject to the will of the Father and modeled perfect obedience. *Hebrews 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.*
- ❖ Every Christian is to obey every known will of Christ.
- ❖ Every Christian is to obey the pastors in a local assembly.
- ❖ Every Christian wife is to obey her husband.
- ❖ Every Christian child is to obey its parents.
- ❖ Every Christian employee is to obey his employer.
- ❖ Every Christian is to be subject to the laws of the land insofar as none violate the will of God.

51. Chaos and confusion reigns when deliberate disobedience manifests itself in any area of the moral universe.
52. The God of grace gives grace for the purpose of gospel obedience.
- *Romans 1:5* By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:
53. A large part of gospel obedience is in the will. A conscious decision must be made to obey the Lord through yielding.
- *Romans 6:16* Know ye not, that to whom ye yield [surrenders] yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?
54. Obedience to God causes other people to notice, and becomes a source of encouragement and inspiration to young Christians, or to Christians in difficult situations.
- *Romans 16:19* For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.
- Titus rejoiced at the obedience of the saints in Rome to the gospel.
- *2 Corinthians 7:15* And his [Titus'] inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. *16* I rejoyce therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.
55. The theme of gospel obedience forms part of one of the great doxologies of Scripture.
- *Romans 16:25-27* Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, *26* But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: *27* To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.
56. Gospel obedience includes not just outward acts, but an inward attitude of submission.
- *2 Corinthians 10:5* Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.
57. The elect of God are characterized by obedience.
- *Romans 6:17* But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

- *1 Peter 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

58. The none elect will not obey the gospel.

- *Romans 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*