

OBEDIENCE

- I. Representative Biblical references to "obedience"
 - A. Old Testament - Heb. word *shama* - "to hear, listen, obey"
 - Exod. 19:5 - "if you obey My voice ..., you shall be My possession"
 - Exod. 24:7 - "All that the Lord has spoken we will do; we will be obedient"
 - Deut. 6:4 - "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one"
 - Deut. 11:13 - "if you listen obediently to My commandments"
 - I Sam. 15:22 - "to obey is better than sacrifice"
 - Ps. 81:11 - "My people did not listen to My voice; Israel did not obey Me"
 - B. New Testament
 1. Greek word *hupakouo* - "to listen under, to obey;" opposite is *parakouo* - "to listen around, beside, disobedience" (cf. Rom. 5:19)
 - Rom. 1:5 - "obedience of faith among the Gentiles"
 - Rom. 16:26 - "obedience of faith"
 - II Cor. 10:5 - "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ"
 - II Thess. 1:8 - "those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus"
 - Heb. 5:9 - "He became to all who obey Him the source of salvation"
 - I Pet. 1:2 - "that you may obey Jesus Christ"
 - I Pet. 1:14 - "As obedient children...be holy"
 - I Pet. 1:22 - "you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls"
 2. Greek words *peitho* and *peitharcho* - "to persuade, convince;" opposite is *apeitheo* - "unconvinced, disobedient" (cf. Eph. 2:2; 5:6)
 - Acts 5:29 - "we must obey God rather than men"
 - Acts 5:32 - "the Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him"
 - Rom. 2:8 - "do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness"
 - Gal. 5:7 - "who hindered you from obeying the truth?"
- II. Defining "obedience"
 - A. Base words
 1. English word "obedience"
 - a. Etymology - Latin *oboedire* - *ob* = towards; *oedire* = "to hear"
 - b. Meaning: "to hear or listen towards"
 - c. Popular English usage: "to follow, heed, comply with commands or injunctions within a sphere of jurisdiction."
 2. Hebrew word *shama* - "to hear, listen; obey"
 3. Greek word *hupakouo* - "to listen under; obey"
 4. Old English word *herknen* ("hearken"); both hear and obey
 - B. Change in context of meaning
 1. Relational context
 - a. All of the base words have a personal/relational context
 - b. Obedience pertains to listening to (and responding to) God, Moses, prophets, Jesus, Paul, parents, etc.
 2. Legal context
 - a. Nowhere in the New Testament are the words for "obedience" or "disobedience" used in direct connection with the Law or any corpus of behavioral rules and regulations. (cf. Isa. 42:24)
 - b. Yet, "obedience" developed a Law-based interpretation
 - (1) rule-keeping
 - (2) commandment compliance
 - (3) performance according to precepts
 - (4) "works"

- III. Historical perspectives
- A. Greek perspective
1. Primary emphasis on seeing spiritual things rather than hearing (see mysteries, visions)
 2. Hear or obey yourself; your reason, thoughts, feelings
- B. Hebrew perspective
1. Emphasis on hearing God rather than seeing God
 2. Developed into
 - a. Historical remembrance of having heard God
 - b. Futuristic expectation of seeing God (Isa. 60:4,5)
 3. Prophetic rebuke for failure to hear, listen, or obey
 4. Rabbinical emphasis on legalistic hearing/obeying the Law
- C. Christian perspective
1. Radically new meaning of "obedience" in new covenant
 2. Relational context of obedience becomes ontological
 3. The Word to be heard/obeyed is a Person (Jn. 1:1,14)
 4. Receptivity of Christ is the "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26)
 5. Indwelling presence of Spirit of Christ is...
 - a. "law written in our hearts" - Heb. 8:10; 10:16; Jere. 31:33
 - b. basis of revelation - Phil. 3:15
 - c. dynamic for expressing what God wants to do in us
 6. The Christian individual is still responsible...
 - a. to listen in order to discern what Christ wants to do
 - b. to be convinced and persuaded that what he has heard from Christ is what God wants to be and do
- IV. The historical obedience of Jesus Christ
- Heb. 5:8 - "He learned obedience from the things which He suffered"
- Phil. 2:8 - "He humbled Himself becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross"
- Rom. 5:19 - "through the obedience of the One, the many will be made righteous"
- A. Jesus' obedience was not...
1. legalistic compliance with Law; keeping the rules
 2. precise performance of a programmed plan; doing the dictates
- B. Jesus lived by the obedience of faith
1. listened to God through trials, hardships, suffering
 2. continued to listen to God unto death on a cross
 3. such listening to God unto death allowed Him to take our death and invest His life in us.
- V. Obedience in the Christian life.
- A. Listening
1. We "listen under" the direction of God's Spirit
 2. "My sheep hear My voice" - Jn. 10:27
 3. We are persuaded/convinced we have heard what He wants to do
- B. Receptivity
1. "Obedience of faith" - Rom. 1:5; 16:26
 2. Our receptivity of His activity
 3. He is the dynamic of His own demands
- C. Spontaneity
1. Not proceduralized external actions of obedience
 2. Branch obeys the Vine (Jn. 15:1-11). To abide is to obey.
- D. Liberty
1. Christians are free to obey. Not slaves to sin.
 2. We are most free when we obey. Free to be man as God intended.