

Our Salvation Rests Upon Our Obedience to God



By Roy Knight

From the beginning of creation, God had laws. *“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die”* (Genesis 2:16-17). To those who would break that law there would be consequences. When both the man and woman partook of the fruit, the consequences were immediate. Genesis 3:16-19 says:

“To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

Not only this but Adam and Eve were thrust out of the Garden and separated from the Tree of Life which eventually brought their physical death. Transgressing God’s laws is sin and sin ALWAYS has consequences.

Genesis 4 gives us an insight into the great struggle between right and wrong in the mind of Cain. As he and his brother offered up their sacrifices unto God it says in Genesis 4:4-7,

“And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. (God had instructed Cain and Able – Hebrews 11:04) And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.” The Lord then came to Cain and asked, Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”

The word “well” implied the idea of obedience. God is saying in essence, “If you obey, will I not accept you? Yet, if you disobey will you not be rejected?” Cain chose poorly. Though the command not to kill is not mentioned in Genesis 1-4, it was quite obvious that it was wrong. When Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him, the consequences were apparent. God said to Cain in Genesis 4:11-12, *“So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.”*

God, being who He is, required respect of Himself as well as His word. God, being good, expects those whom He has created to also be good. Goodness is defined by His word and not our whims. The thoughts of mankind can sweep in any direction, thus God set before us a standard by which to live. To those who will live by his commands God would accept but to those who will reject them God would also reject.

As Abraham followed the Lord, it is said of him, *"And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness"* (Genesis 15:6). Though Abraham was not a perfect man, and none of us are, God had provided a means to return to Him through a blood sacrifice. In centuries hence, that sacrifice would culminate in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross of Calvary. It is said that one can trace Abraham by his altar fires (Genesis 12:7-8; 13:4,18; 22:9). This shows the heart of Abraham and his desire to be in true fellowship with God. That fellowship rested upon a humble obedience to God's commands and a sacrifice for when one had sinned.

Being right with God was foremost in the mind of Job. Job 1:5 says, *"So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus Job did regularly."*

There are some, who like Abraham and Job, who desire to be in fellowship with God. They understand the great love of God and desire to be pleasing to Him. Today, we live under God's new covenant and our sacrifice is Jesus Christ, yet our acceptance still rests upon our willingness to obey Him. Jesus said, *"If you love Me, keep My commandments"* (John 14:15). Sadly, many will not keep them but instead will follow the dictates of their own heart. That is why Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14, *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."*

Today, God's commands are expressed in how we worship Him. We proclaim His word (Acts 20:7), pray (Acts 2:42), give (1 Corinthians 16:2), partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7) as well as lift up our voices (acappella) in praise to Him (Ephesians 5:19). We not only find God's commands on how to worship but also in matters of our salvation. He has commanded us to believe in His Son (John 3:16). We are then told to repent of our sins (Luke 13:3,5). Repentance is a change of mind based upon godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:9-10). We, too, are commanded to confess our faith in Jesus as the Son of God (Romans 10:9). We are then to be immersed in water for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1ff). It should be our desire then to live faithfully to Him (Revelation 2:10).

God, likewise, has given us commands on how to live and conduct ourselves. Titus 2:11-12 states, *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all*

men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age”.

We are free to accept God and His commands or we are free to reject them. Even though God loves every soul (2 Peter 3:9), He does not require every soul to love Him. That being said, there will be consequences for those who chose to live wickedly and selfishly. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 states, “...when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power...”. It is not God’s desire that any should perish. We make that choice for ourselves when we choose to obey or disobey.

It is our prayer that you choose to obey the Lord.

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