

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 1



"WE WILL
SERVE
THE
LORD
OUR
GOD
AND
OBEY
HIM."

GOD'S RIGHT TO COMMAND

Scripture Texts: Exodus 20:1-2; Leviticus 18:1-5; Joshua 24:20-24; John 14:8-15

The fact of the Creation gives God the right to demand that we obey Him. But God does not use His divine power to force man to obey Him. The free choice of man is part of the divine plan for this world. God has the right to place commandments before His Creation. God's Laws are not given to be a hindrance, but to help mankind. What does it matter whether we build our living on the Law of God or on the principle of doing as we please? How can we know, without trying both ways ourselves, whether it is better to do as we please, or to do as God commands?

We have but to read our newspapers and listen to the newscasts to see judgment at work. Our eyes are opened to the world situation, and the truth comes home to us that "he who will not be ruled by God will be ruled by tyrants."

MEMORY VERSE: *If ye love me, keep my commandments.—John 14:15*

God Is His Own Authority

Exodus 20:1-2 And God spake. When God speaks, it is the Word of authority. How blessed we are that God does communicate! In old times He spoke to holy men, and what He said to them helps us know Him better. God chose to reveal Himself to man in every age. **I am the Lord thy God.** We have here God's own affirmation of complete authority. He is the one and only true God, besides Whom there is no other, a jealous God forbidding His chosen ones – the Hebrews – to seek after any other god or to question His own claim upon them. God is Lord and Master. He has never changed in any age. He requires the same of us, His new Israel. **Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.** Israel must never forget that its deliverance had been brought by God, not by human means; nor does He want us to forget.

Past Experience Encourages Future Obedience

Leviticus 18:1-5 After the doings of the land of Canaan. The exodus from Egypt was to lead Israel into Canaan. What is their gain if they merely exchange one slavery for another? God wills that His people have a real deliverance, entire and complete. He warns them of the temptations and idolatries lying in wait for their new home. Spiritual decay, which had so cursed them in Egypt, must never raise its ugly head in the Land of Promise. As it is with freedom, so it is with pure religion – the cost of both is obedience, vigilance, and effort. **Ye shall do my judgments...ordinances...statutes.** We see clearly that God's requirement is obedience to His Word. As for the ways of Canaan, Israel was not to do them, not to **walk** in them. Israel was to **do...keep...** and **walk** in the righteous ways of the Lord. Notice how closely God identifies Himself with those commands, saying "my statutes," "my judgments," "mine ordinances," as opposed to "their ordinances."

Absolute rejection of Canaan's idolatry and absolute obedience of His supreme will was God's command to Israel. In a world where no absolutes are the basis teaching, the Lord God still commands these same absolutes for His people. Absolute rejection of all the gods of this world and absolute acceptance of, and obedience to, the Lord of lords, and King of kings, and only true God.

An Individual Choice

Joshua 24:20-24 We will serve the Lord. When man was created in the image of God, it was this moral righteousness that differentiated him from the rest of the animal world. He was given the freedom to choose

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God's way or to follow the way of disobedience. If man would **forsake the Lord**, He would do him no hurt. If man would honor God and keep His commandments and walk in His ways, then man could be assured of God's blessing and of His abiding presence. The promises of God are always conditional. God's benefits are freely given to those who obey, but His judgments are reserved for those who disobey. **The Lord our God will we serve.** Thus the covenant became a seal binding them to God's holiness and freeing them to grow into the Godlike image in which they had been created.

What happened to a nation also happens in the lives of individuals. The gods of the world clamor so loudly for our worship, and the way of sin is made so attractive that we are constantly being pulled in two directions. The choice is left to each of us. God's grace is sufficient for us.

God Reveals Himself Through His Son

John 14:8-15 I am in the Father, and the Father in me. It is proper that we bring this lesson to a climax in the New Testament, and most particularly, with the Words of Jesus, God's Son.

When God sent His Son into the world to redeem the world, He sent Him with only one price, His life. When God sent His Son to conquer sin, He sent Him with only one weapon, a sinless life. With this weapon, He conquered, breaking the power of sin and restoring man to the divine relationship. The highest ideal and authority possible is this of God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. He purchased each soul, and His ownership gives Him complete right to command. Christ's commandments are not grievous, but are a blessing and are of a great advantage to those who love and obey them. God gave commandments not to punish or to restrict us, but because He loves us and wants us to enjoy the full life. Whose commands are you obeying?

If ye love me, keep my commandments. The issue is that simple. God has always received much lip service; missing has been heart service. Love responds to loyal, spontaneous obedience. Obedience was the requirement for ancient Israel and is no less essential to the Christian today.

JUST A THOUGHT

“The judgment is that a man has to choose, and that he chooses as he does, and that he gets what he has chosen, and ends up chained to it.”

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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