

*Obey God  
Rather  
Than Men*



## We Ought To Obey God Rather Than Men

*“So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’” Acts 4:18-20*

*“And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, ‘Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to ring this Man’s blood on us!’ But Peter and the other apostles answered and said:*

*‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’” Acts 5:28-29*

The apostles met fierce opposition to the doctrines of Jesus Christ that they were teaching in Jerusalem. They were threatened and then thrown in prison because of the things they preached. However, God miraculously delivered them from prison and they went immediately into the temple area and preached. When confronted again, the apostles very faithfully affirmed, “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

There is still great opposition to the truth in Christ Jesus. We should not be surprised at this. Jesus told his apostles they would face formidable opposition: “If the world

These facts cannot be denied; God has decreed them.

We want our services and our lives directed by God's Word. We do not add or subtract from it. We worship in spirit and truth, with the Bible as our authority, not men. We know the Bible is true, we have God's commands, His decrees, we just want to live and worship according to God's word. Just as God loves us all, we do not hate other men. But just like God we do not love the sin men are involved in. We want all to receive the salvation God has made available to us. We just want to adhere strongly to the decrees of God, not those of men or the courts.

Proverbs 30:5-6, “Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”

...George McCall  
Austin, Texas

Cancel the counsel leads you astray  
That you may be wise in the end.  
Sift every word through the sieve of God’s way,  
Whether from foe or from friend.

The counsel of men is often so flawed  
That gives no regard to God’s Word.  
Rather than men, we ought to heed God,  
Obeying His truth that we’ve heard.

Cease now from hearing instruction that turns  
Your feet to the left or the right.  
Stay on the pathway that your heart discerns  
Is true to God’s Word and His light.

...David Edwin Hall

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Volume 34 - Number 4- Jul/Aug 2015  
BC is published every other month. Send all inquiries, address changes and subscriptions to the editor: L Scott Gage, PO Box 3425, Fayetteville, AR 72702-3425 Voice & Fax 479-521-6809 Email: Lsgage129@cs.com

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God says on homosexuality? God does not push people away; their sins separate them from God. Another “reverend” felt that his denomination was wrong on the issue of same sex marriage, and was causing great harm, and that his congregation was struggling on how to maintain its integrity. How can they possibly maintain their integrity if they are disregarding God's word?

Finally, a woman wrote, "You have religious objections, why do you choose to be a member of a denomination that teaches exclusion and discrimination? There are congregations that worship the same God but treat all members as equals. Why not join them instead?" This statement is stunning to me. It is a problem with the denominational world today. All thinking that they can worship however they want, and teach whatever they want to teach so that everyone is happy with the situation. She also supposes that we can “join” any church we choose and be pleasing to God in the way we serve.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church....” He is the one with the authority. Remember the definition of edict, “an official public proclamation or order issued by authority.” Accepting any congregational decisions apart from God's Word is wrong. The woman had the idea that we can pick and choose what to believe. Who decrees?

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**People must decide whose decrees they are willing to believe and obey.**

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People must decide whose decrees they are willing to believe and obey. This has been the situation down through the ages. Men want to disobey God so that they can do what they want to do, no matter how God views it. So many people will say that God is love, and that He would not punish anyone by sending them to hell. What they forget is that God is also our judge, that He is concerned with truth, justice, and punishment of evildoers.

hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (John 15:18-19). It is interesting that Jesus uses the word “hate” in this passage because the world has turned the word around in our current dialog and those who teach certain truths about Jesus and his church are being called “haters”. We should be prepared for such attacks from the ranks of the world because the world has always been opposed to Jesus and the truth.

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**The world finds it difficult to understand how we can hate sin but still love a sinner;**

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I pray that when the world refers to the followers of Christ as haters that they are not correct. We have been called to love even our enemies (Matt. 5:43-48). The world finds it difficult to understand how we can hate sin

but still love a sinner; however, that is exactly what the word of God enjoins upon Christians.

Christians are called to obey God rather than men and at the same time to be gentle to those who oppose the truth. Paul wrote to Timothy, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will” (2 Tim. 2:24-26). Notice the words “gentle”, “patient” and “humility” in these verses. These words described the attitude that a Christian is to adopt in teaching those who oppose the truth. However, also notice the word “repentance” in respect to those opposed to the truth. The patient and gentle teaching of the word is to lead men to repentance. One of the things that is absent from the dialog with those in opposition to the truth today is this

matter of repentance. The opposing forces today want to normalize all sorts of perverse behaviors and have them accepted with no repentance. In effect, they are saying that we

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### **We must not change the standard of truth.**

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must change the standard of truth. This is much like an NFL football team ignoring the ruling of being offsides. They would contend it is alright for their defensive players to go across the line of scrimmage, stand next to the quarterback and grab him the minute the ball is snapped. We know this makes no sense. It destroys the game. We cannot ignore the commands of God and his call for the world to repent. The church is no longer the church, the called out, when we change the standard of truth.

The Apostle Peter encourages us to be willing to suffer as Christians for the sake of the truth. Peter writes: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the

hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil" (1 Pet. 3:15-17). Peter again reminds us that our approach to those who oppose the truth is to be with meekness and we must be sincere. While no one is perfect and all have sinned, it is still the task of the Christian to strive to be obedient to the truth and to call others to the same standard of conduct. We must not condone the use of physical threats or force as a means of converting the lost to the truth. Our struggle is a spiritual battle (Eph. 6:10-17) and it is not a carnal warfare that we wage. Our weapons are not guns and bombs. We go forth armed with truth, righteousness, and the gospel of peace, faith and the helmet of salvation. May we always be gentle and patient with those who oppose the truth and may we always obey God rather than men.

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to make his own gods, making images of created things to worship, and it is shown that they are fools. Man became so depraved that he dishonored his own body, men craving men, and leaving the natural affection with women, committed abominable acts in lust. There is no doubt that this refers to the homosexuality practiced even today. In

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### **...it is also wrong for us to be counted among their supporters.**

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verse 29 begins a list of gross unrighteousness and sin, which includes this homosexuality along with these gross sins. Verse 32 states, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." God has decreed what is wrong, homosexuality among the list, and we cannot ignore that decree. The latter part of the verse states that not only is the practice of such wrong, but it is also wrong for us to be

counted among their supporters. We cannot be among those who approve such activities.

Same sex marriage has been given the okay by our government. Men have dared to contradict what God has said. Marriage was instituted by God. He called for man and woman to marry, to be fruitful and multiply. Such was and is God's plan, but men don't want to hear it because of their lust and wickedness.

In our local paper, a "reverend" said that his denomination gave various congregations the option to marry or not marry same sex couples. Can you imagine God giving congregations the option to follow one of His commands? A woman "pastor" stated that the declaration of the court was a day of celebration. She said, "The God I hold dear to me doesn't push people away." Evidently she doesn't hold God too dear; she readily violates God's word where we are told "women keep silent in Church". Is it any wonder that she has no regard for what

something, or decreed that something would happen, it was always right and true. Ours is to watch, obey, follow, and decide which decrees matter to us, those of God or those of man.

Recently the Supreme Court sent down a decree that same sex marriage was legal and allowed in all the land. Will such a decree stand? Will it stand against what God has decreed? Let's notice a few decrees that God has given: I John 3:4, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." I John 5:17, "All unrighteousness is sin." Rom 3:23, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Rom 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." When God speaks about sin, its consequences, lost souls, the forgiveness of sins, that the full gospel must be obeyed,

He is decreeing the things that matter in regard to the salvation of our souls. There is no altering His decrees.

If we believe that God is Almighty, the Creator, that His word is true, then whatever He decrees we will believe and obey. If not, we are against God; we are not in fellowship with Him, re-

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### **...man is without excuse.**

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gardless of what we may think. Rom 1:18, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness." God leaves no doubt; He is willing to tell us about sin, what we should not do and how we should not live, as opposed to what we should do and how we should live.

Read Romans 1:19-32. You will note that God has provided man with certain things that reveal Him to man, so that man is without excuse. Further, man thought he was wise enough

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## **Who Decrees?**

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In Acts 17:2-7 Paul was being accused of speaking against the decrees of Caesar. He was sent away in the night to avoid being arrested. I feel that we as Christians have a right to speak out against the decrees of "Caesar" in our time. DECREE- "an official order, edict, or decision as of a church, government, court or royalty." EDICT- "an official public proclamation or order issued by authority---decree." Let's look at some decrees mentioned in the scriptures.

Heb 11:23 – "By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was

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### **Moses' parents were not afraid because of their faith in God.**

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born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict." What was the king's edict? He had decreed that all male Hebrew babies born were to be killed. You

will note that Moses' parents were not afraid because of their faith in God. Did the decree of Pharaoh thwart God and His plans? No, his decree did not supersede what God wanted to happen in the lives of His people.

Read I Kings 12:25-30. After the death of Solomon, the kingdom of Israel was split. Jeroboam became the ruler of the north 10 tribes, those who had split away from the house of David. God had promised to help him, but he forgot to trust in God. He reasoned with himself, if the people continued to go down to Jerusalem once a year to worship as they had been taught, then he feared that he would lose them. He worried that they would be befriended in the southern kingdom, and he would lose their support. He feared that they would turn to Rehoboam as their king. So he built two golden calves, putting one at Bethel and the other at Dan. He told the people that they did not need to go to Jerusalem, it was too far, and that they

could worship their gods that he had set up for them. This was, of course, a direct decree against what God had said they must do. Did his decree stand? Look at the consequences of his actions. Eventually his country was taken into captivity and disbursed, never really able to be fully recognized again.

Read II Kings 23:36-37 and Jeremiah 36:22-26. When Jeremiah had dictated what God had said would befall Judah, the word was told to

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### **He did not like what the words of God said.**

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king Jehoiakim. However, as the words of the prophet were read, Jehoiakim took a knife and cut the pages up and threw them into the fire. He did not like what the words of God said. Was God's word destroyed? No, the things that God had said truly came to pass concerning Judah.

Read Dan 6:7-16. The Babylonian king got lost in the praise of his noblemen. He went on an ego trip. He had a statue built of himself,

and sent out the decree that he and only he was to be worshipped for thirty days. Daniel, who was one of the king's favorites since he had interpreted the king's dream, would not bow to the king's statue. We know the story, Daniel was thrown into the lion's den, and God saved him from the jaws of the lions. Thus the decree of the Babylonian king made no difference in the life of Daniel.

You will notice that the decrees, proclamations, or edicts of men in all these cases failed.

Men are not able to supersede what God has said, and never will be able to put aside God's truth. Prior to Daniel being thrown into the lion's den, he had interpreted the king's dream. Notice in Daniel 4:24, "This is the interpretation O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king." Who is the most High? God.

In Acts 17, Paul was speaking against what men deemed decrees of Caesar. Caesar was not God. God

used the apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, as a spokesman for what God wanted taught. Jeremiah was a spokesman for God concerning God's decrees toward Judah. Acts 16:4-5, "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." These decrees from God, through the apostles, were true. God's decrees are always true and they always come to pass. Note that this is the way that churches were established and grew, and this is what happens when we follow what God has said. What Jeremiah said about Judah came to pass. What Daniel said about the king of Babylon came to pass. Decrees from God are sure, always true, and always right. Isaiah 10:1, "Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees..." I was surprised at the number of times the "decrees" of God are men-

tioned and called by that name. Exodus 18:20, "Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform." I Kings 2:3, "And observe what the Lord your God requires; walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you

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### **If we believe in God...we will follow and obey His decrees.**

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may prosper in all you do and wherever you go." I Kings 8:61, "But your hearts must be fully committed to the Lord our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands..." Leviticus 18:4, "You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees, I am the Lord your God."

If we believe in God and want to please Him in order to have a home in heaven, we will follow and obey His decrees. His decrees are always true and any time in scripture when He decreed