

DOOR TO THE KINGDOM--OBEDIENCE

By Keith Greer

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'" {Matthew 7:21-23}

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is clearly showing entrance into this spiritual kingdom is not going to be by "an appearance of righteousness". This is not a new requirement of God. Obedience has always been a necessity with God. Allow me to show this to be the case.

"Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. "{Deuteronomy 4:1.2} What did God expect of His people? Adherence to the standard!

"Then Samuel said: "Has 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 heed than the fat of rams. "{1 Samuel 15:22} What was Saul's fatal mistake? He disobeyed the word of the Lord, given by the prophet Samuel, and lost his kingship!

"Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan." {1 Kings 12:30} The Law of Moses forbade worshipping of idols, Exodus 20:3-5. The kingdom divided and the people went farther away from God.

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them' " {Numbers 20:12} What did the disobedience of Moses cost him? He was not allowed to enter the Promise Land! Yes, even the great lawgiver Moses was required to obey the words of God! No excuses, no justification, and no "special treatment" was given to Moses. Why? All of God's people must obey His voice – period!

"Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, "{Hebrews 5:8,9}

Did you notice where the Lord places the emphasis? He is the author--to all WHO OBEY HIM? God speaks-man must listen- and obeys His voice!

"But why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things which I say?" {Luke 6:46}

"If you love Me, keep My commandments. "{John 14: 15}

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all." {Ecclesiastes 12:13}

What do all these passages have in common, old or new? God does not speak just for man to hear some mere words. He speaks and man's duty is to obey Him in ALL THINGS! From the beginning of time God has demanded and expected obedience from man. All Adam and Eve had to do is not eat of the tree God had COMMANDED them not to eat from, Genesis 2:16,17. Noah was saved when God sent a flood upon the earth, it was because He was obedient. "Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did." {Genesis 6:22}

If anyone desires to enter the kingdom of heaven they must submit to His authority. This is not an option to "take it or leave it." Yes, God made man a free moral agent to make his own choices. The door swings one way only – obedience to God if one hopes to be with God in heaven someday. ***