

Is Obedience Essential To Salvation?

by Bill Crews

According to what the New Testament of Christ teaches, what is the place, the importance, the purpose of **obedience** — *our obedience* to the commandments of God?

Matthew 7:21 reads: *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.”* Obedience is essential to our entering the kingdom of heaven.

Hebrews 5:8-9 reads: *“Though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation.”* Obedience is essential to our receiving eternal salvation.

1 Peter 1:22 reads: *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to (KJV — in obeying) the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently.”* Obedience is essential to the purifying of our souls.

Jesus said: *“If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments”* (John 14:15). Obedience grows out of love for Christ and is proof of our love for Christ.

1 John 2:4-5 reads: *“And hereby we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”* Obedience is proof that we know Him. Anyone who does not obey Him cannot know Him.

Romans 6:17-18 reads: *“But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching (KJV — doctrine) whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness.”* Obedience is essential to being made free from sin, and that obedience must come from the heart.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 reads: *“And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus.”* At His second coming and the judgment the Lord will render vengeance to those who have not obeyed His gospel.

Men Teach That Obedience Is Not Essential To Salvation

To say that obedience is essential to salvation is not to say that man merits or earns salvation, for that is an impossibility — as impossible as living a sinless life, as impossible as rendering flawless obedience to God all the days of one’s life. Everyone sins; salvation is a matter of God’s forgiveness; and man cannot possibly earn forgiveness. All of the passages that are misunderstood by men to teach that our salvation does not depend upon any doing or works on our part are really passages denying that men can be justified by the works of the law of Moses or any such law (which would demand perfect obedience). These were designed to answer the Judaizing teachers who were denying the sufficiency of Christ and the gospel and casting man’s hope of salvation in the works of the law of Moses (they were especially telling Gentile Christians that they could not be saved without practicing circumcision and obeying the works of the law of Moses). They were shown the consequences of such teaching.

Obedience And Salvation By Faith

To say that obedience is essential to salvation is not to say that salvation is not by faith. Salvation is by

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