

Man Must Obey God

Dub McClish

As the Israelites approached Sinai on their journey from the Red Sea to Canaan, they murmured against God. This time they complained because of hunger, accusing Moses of bringing them into the wilderness to starve. Their fickle hearts had already forgotten the rigors of Egyptian slavery, and they yearned to be back there.

God promised to “rain bread from heaven” and to satisfy them with flesh (Exo. 16:4, 12). The “flesh” was a one-time bounty of quail, while the “bread” was the famous manna (which lasted throughout the wilderness trek). Concerning the manna, He gave them plain instructions: They were to gather only a daily portion for each person each day for the first five days of each week, but on the sixth day He ordered them to gather a double portion to relieve the need to gather any on the seventh. By this means God both tested Israel’s submission to His will and helped introduce the sanctity of the Sabbath, which He would soon order in the Decalogue.

Some of the Hebrews provoked God by their immediate disobedience concerning the manna. Despite the prohibition against gathering manna on the seventh day, some foolishly sought to do so (vv. 27–28). The command of God in this matter was as simple, direct, and clear as that given to Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:16–17), but, like them, some ignored and despised it.

This flagrant violation of the Divine mandate typifies the history of all men, Jew and Gentile alike. As with the manna, God has often given commands to men to prove their faithfulness to Him. The command to Israel to march around the walls of Jericho (Jos. 6:2–5), the command to Naaman to dip seven times in Jordan (2 Kin. 5:10), and even the Lord’s statement that men must be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16) fall into this category.

The principal thing God has always required of man is obedience – unquestioning, trusting compliance with the Divine will. Samuel taught this lesson plainly to King Saul: “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry” (1 Sam. 15:22–23). Whether or not we understand why God commands something is totally beside the point. Careful, willing obedience will ever be the proof of man’s love for God and for His Son (John 14:15; Rom. 6:17; 1 John 2:5). This principle remains so notwithstanding those characters who constantly ridicule “commandment-keeping” and hurl the specious term, “legalist,” at those who dare to exalt God’s law!

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Lighthouse*, weekly bulletin of Northpoint Church of Christ, Denton, TX, August 1, 2010, of which I was editor.

Attribution: From *thescripturecache.com*; Dub McClish, owner, curator, and administrator.