

Call to Obedience #389  
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA  
[www.schultze.org](http://www.schultze.org)

By Pastor Reimar A. C. Schultze

## Why Don't Men Obey God

We all realize the importance of obedience. Without obedience to man's laws, society would be unmanageable, schools could not function, industries would collapse, families would deteriorate. Without compliance to natural laws, airmen and fishermen would face disaster. Yet what is most amazing is, although we know we can and must obey both human and natural laws, we refuse to believe that we can and must obey God's laws.

This attitude of unwillingness and helplessness when it comes to obeying God is my subject matter for today. I shall appeal to your heart and your head to show you that obedience to God is possible and necessary. It brings you wagon-loads of immeasurable blessings.

### Man Can Obey God at Any Stage of His Spiritual Life

God created man in His likeness. Two of the qualities that make man like God are that he has freedom of will and the capacity to choose good or evil. In the Garden of Eden, God gave man an opportunity to exercise his free will for the first time. Adam, by choosing to eat the forbidden fruit, chose to disobey. Because *he* made the choice, God judged *him* guilty and drove him out of the Garden. Because Adam had freedom of choice he could not say, "The devil made me do it." Nobody made him do it. He did it. Yes, even when sin entered the spiritual bloodstream of man because of Adam's sin, **God never removed His grace and the power to obey from man.** You can never blame your disobedience on your sinful, carnal nature. Never!

Let us look at some notable Bible characters to illustrate this point:

1. Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)

These were the first men born with a carnal, sinful, selfish nature. Because of that, did they lose their ability to obey God? A thousand times NO!!! Cain chose to give in to the carnal nature, disobeying God. Abel chose the will of God by obeying God. Nobody has any excuse for disobeying God. **Man's exile from the Garden did not disable him from walking with God!**

## 2. Enoch (Genesis 5:20-24)

Most people chose disobedience since the fall. But Enoch, after walking 65 years in disobedience, decided at age 65, to walk in obedience and fellowship with God. This pleased God so much that He *took him*: Enoch was spared death. Yes, **even though he had a sinful nature, this man walked with God before there was such a thing as a "rebirth"**.

## 3. Other Old Testament Saints

Here are some more of *so great a cloud of witnesses* that prove that unregenerate man can obey God: Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Job, Elijah, Elisha, all the other prophets and a few kings *did that which was right in the sight of the LORD*. Man can obey God in any spiritual stage of his life. Again, God has never removed His grace from man to obey Him. He never will. And contrary to public opinion, Jesus was not in hiding in heaven during the Old Testament Period, **Jesus was always there to help His people even before His incarnation**. He appeared to Abraham, Joshua, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, to Daniel and others. None of these men were sinless, but yet they obeyed God. You can obey God without being perfect, but you cannot be perfect without obeying God.

## 4. The Disciples of Jesus

**The disciples of Jesus obeyed before the Holy Spirit was given them as much as they obeyed after He was poured out.** Jesus said so to His Father: *...they have kept thy word. ...I am glorified in them* (John 17:6, 10). Jesus said this even though they fell far short in their spiritual graces (Pentecost would take care of that). Obedience means so much to Jesus. When He sees it, He gets excited. He will boast of it before the throne! You *can* do it and when you do it some of heaven will fall into your soul. When you obey Him, He will

call you His friend (John 15:14). You will begin to sit in *heavenly places*. But it starts with you.

### **The Marvelous Measure of Blessings for Your Obedience**

*And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.*

*Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.*

*Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.*

*Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.*

*Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out (Deuteronomy 28:2-6).*

This is from the Laws of Moses. The obedient were so happy that it made them dance, shout, lift up their hands to heaven and sing to the Lord, even before Pentecost. They knew they could obey God and they did it. And don't think that the Old Testament era was the Dark Ages. There was darkness there alright, but not enough to prevent man from coming to the Light (Jeremiah 29:13). Again, God will give a blessing if we obey, a curse if we disobey. It has been this way since the beginning of human kind. **It has always been man's choice whether he gets blessed or cursed.**

If you as a Christian say, "I cannot obey God," you are riding on the back of the devil, brainwashed by him to make you think that your faith will compensate for your disobedience. It will not.

Let us get this straight: **the problem is not that you cannot obey; the problem is that you don't want to.** Had God not given us the ability to obey, He could not judge us. I am calling you in love to obey. I warn you as a watchman over your soul to align your will with God's will. I am calling you to a place where the honey is dripping from the trees.

### **Obedience is Not a Fruit of the Holy Spirit**

There is a perception that obedience is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. Not so, it is not listed as a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. Obedience is a *prerequisite* for both following Jesus and being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Again, the power for man to obey God was given to him when He created him. It was not given at Pentecost. **The Holy Spirit will never fill a disobedient heart.** People received the Spirit *because* they obeyed God: *And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him* (Acts 5:32).

Only those on Pentecost who lived in obedience received the Holy Spirit. Those in the Upper Room were in obedience. The multitude of Jews from all nations were *devout*, meaning they were obedient. Many conversions and "Spirit baptisms" are fake because there is no spirit of obedience in the seekers after God. That is why you don't see many "new converts" attending prayer meetings afterward, nor do you see them witnessing or seeking to bring others to Christ, nor do you see them change their lifestyles or music, nor do you see many women begin to dress modestly, etc. They think they are saved because they are told they are saved. But the evidence of "old things having become new" is missing. God cannot do anything with a disobedient heart. Obedience is your choice. God will not do it for you.

### **The Work of Christ**

This now raises the question: "Since man can obey God, then why does he need the work of Christ?" It is because:

1. Everyone is born a sinner and has sinned at one time or another. Paul wrote: *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23). Obedience alone cannot save us, we also need Jesus. We need His forgiveness and cleansing from sin to make it to heaven. Again, without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22).

2. God wants us to live on a higher spiritual plane than Enoch and Elijah did. He wants us to live on His plane altogether. That can only happen when we are born of God and filled with His Spirit. Jesus did pay the price for such a life and He wants us to get in on it.

3. Without Christ in us, we cannot evangelize the world. The world needs a Savior who can save to the uttermost.

So, my friend, in conclusion:

- All men can obey God.
- All who will obey God are living under an umbrella of blessings and favor with God.
- Yet in addition to obeying God, all must be washed by the blood of the Lamb.

This verse, better than any I know, connects obedience with the blood:

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:7).*

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