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THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

DOES OBEDIENCE ANNUL GRACE?

There is much misunderstanding as to exactly who is a Christian. Many believe that anyone who accepts that Jesus Christ is the Son of God automatically, at that point in time, becomes a Christian. However, James 2:19 states that “the devils also believe, and tremble.” Surely none would argue that believing demons are Christians just because they believe in Christ. According to Bible teaching, a Christian is one who not only has believed in Jesus Christ but has submitted in obedience to the will of Christ. Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). Doing the will of the Father is synonymous with obeying His will. The book of Hebrews states that Jesus is “the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9). Is He the author of eternal salvation to those who refuse to obey Him?

Submission in obedience to the revealed will of Christ in the New Testament is not an exercise of human merit. It is, rather, an exercise of faith. The faith that saves is the faith that obeys. Consider the events recorded in Acts chapter two. When those who had been convicted of sin asked, “Men and brethren what shall we do?” Peter’s inspired answer was “Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:37-38). Was the obedience of this command a means of “earning salvation” for the three thousand who did so? When Peter in verse forty declared, “save yourselves from this untoward generation” was he dispensing with God’s grace? No indeed! Submission to the commands of Christ in no way annuls the grace of God but rather appropriates it!

God in His grace offers to all the FREE GIFT of salvation (Titus 2:11-12). However, that which separates the recipients of the gift from others is the exercise of their faith in obedience to what God commands for salvation. We are saved by grace (God’s part) through faith (man’s part) as clearly stated in Ephesians 2:8-9. God has never spiritually blessed the disobedient. The Bible says that Jesus will come with His “mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that OBEY NOT the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:7-8).

Dear reader: have you obeyed the gospel? Have you submitted yourself in obedience to what the Lord requires for your salvation from sin? If not, or, if you are not sure, please contact us and let us help you to be certain. God in His grace provides the way. If you would receive the benefits of His grace you will gladly exercise your faith to obey His will today. Green Plain church of Christ 3980 Murray Paris RD Hazel, KY 42049.