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IF I NEVER SPOKE AGAIN

What would you say if you knew whatever you were about to speak would be the last thing anyone would ever hear from you again? Would you let those you loved the most know how much they truly mean to you? Would you tell those who made you fume with hot lava in the pit of your stomach finally once and for all what you really think of them? It's a very interesting thought as it makes you wonder what is the most important thing you could say to anyone, knowing above all else, this is what you'd never want to regret missing the opportunity to say knowing it would be your very last. When I think about it, above all else, this is what I would want to say to anyone, from my closest

friends and family members to my most bitter enemies...OBEY! Obey God. Above all else, obey the Almighty God! From trusting God, believing in God, loving God, sacrificially serving God, or thanking God for all He has done for us, nothing else matters if we don't commit and seek to OBEY God! "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel," (Ex. 19:5-6). This has been God's message from the very beginning, emphasizing how

vital it is that we, above all else, learn to obey Him. While there are many who recognize Him, speak about Him, thank Him, or even devotedly serve Him, the one thing so poorly neglected has been to obey Him. This is the message above all others God has sought to impress upon mankind stressing its unanimous sovereign place in God's expectation of us through the promises of severe painful consequences when we fail and overwhelming blessings in rewards when we comply. "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them," (Deut. 30:19-20). For our benefit, the history of God's dealings with His chosen people when they chose to rebel against His

commandments has been preserved as a testimony to His own expectations of us today. "Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did," (1 Cor. 10:5-6).

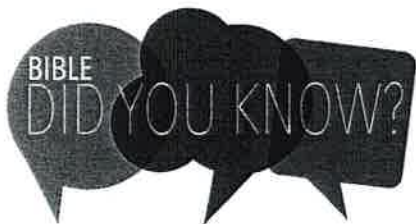
Whenever I need to be stirred up with the reminder of how vital it is that I learn obedience above anything else, I think of the warning and consequence God instructed parents to carry out with their own children who refused to learn. "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with

stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear,” (Deut. 21:18-21). And when I need to be stirred by the loving mercy of God available when I stumble in any form of disobedience, I think of God’s perfect obedient Son, bleeding and suffering on a cross as a public display of how much God hates disobedience, yet how much He loves the disobedient. “They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them,” (Neh. 9:17). And even in God’s invitation of mercy extended to all who disobey, it is a merciful opportunity to learn to be obedient once again, being given the opportunity to obey the gospel. “But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which

you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness,” (Rom. 6:17-18). God’s merciful invitation to be granted forgiveness for our disobedience is all made possible through the example of His perfect obedient Son, who calls us to obey Him.

“Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,” (Heb. 5:8-9). OBEY!

– Daniel Ruegg



Contrary to normal human assumptions, greatness is not a matter of dominance but of service – of being dominated by the will of God.

“If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”

Mark 9:35

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



POOL OF SILOAM FOUND

In August of 2005, an incredible find was unearthed in the Old City of Jerusalem. The event did not make national news. It should have!

Workers repairing a sewage-pipe break uncovered the Pool of Siloam in Old Jerusalem. This pool was a major gathering site for the Jews. The Pool of Siloam is central to the account of the miracle of Christ healing a man blind from birth (John 9:1-7). Christ put clay on the man's eyes and then told him to wash at the Pool of Siloam. Obeying Christ by washing in the pool completed the miracle (verse 11). This created an incredible stir among the Jewish elite of Christ's day (verses 14-41). Why? Jesus Christ had made the clay with His own spit on the Sabbath day. The Jews considered this act a breaking of the Sabbath command. Jealous and insecure, the Pharisees declared that Christ was not of God for healing the blind man on the Sabbath (verse 16). A study of the whole chapter makes plain that the entire incident was used by God to show the Pharisees how blind they were to God and what God was doing on this Earth. Of course, they failed to learn that lesson.

Why is all this important today? Here is what the Los Angeles Times reported about this incredible archaeological find: “‘Scholars have said that there wasn’t a Pool of Siloam and that John was using a religious conceit’ to illustrate a point, said New Testament scholar James H. Charlesworth of the Princeton Theological Seminary. ‘Now, we have found the Pool of Siloam...exactly where John said it was.’ A gospel that was thought to be ‘pure theology is now shown to be grounded in history,’ he said” (August 9). Do we get it? The scholars are wrong – again. The Bible is accurate – always!

