



# The Good News

January 26th, 2020

Volume 20, Issue 4

## ***The Old Testament - A Lesson in Obedience***

By Michael McCleary

**A**t some point in our discussions with others, we will inevitably come across those that believe that the Bible should not be read from a Legalist perspective (the concept of Law) but rather from an emotional perspective (God is all love, etc). They may try to convince us that we should not be so concerned with specific laws or commandments, but rather we should seek a loving relationship with God based on our emotions. However, we must impress upon our friends that it is the New Law that we now live by and in order to have a relationship with God in the 21st century we must do as He commands in the New Law. In order to do this, we must emphasize to them just how important God's authority is, and just how important it is to have God's authority for everything we do and say. To do this, there is no better place to go than the Old Testament which shows us exactly how God felt about His commands.

### **Examples of those that did not obey His commands –**

**Nadab and Abihu – Lev. 10:1-2.** We find in this text that Nadab and Abihu went about offering a sacrifice to the Lord using censers and incense. However, they added something to the process that God did not command them to do and so they were consumed. We learn in **Heb. 12:29** that our God is “a consuming fire”. It is in this context that the Hebrew writer says “...let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (v.28). In teaching that our emotions can guide us to a deeper understanding and relationship with God, being afraid of God is discouraged. Yet, the Hebrew writer says it is necessary. Why? Because instead of God being **all** love, we realize He is both good and severe (**Rom. 11**) toward those who obey and disobey His commands.

**King Saul – I Sam. 15.** If we read the entire chapter, we learn that God gave Saul very specific

commands regarding the Amalekites. He was to destroy every single person and animal of the Amalekites and not leave any alive. Instead of doing this, Saul killed the people, but left the king and the best of the animals alive. While some today might consider this “acceptable” or “close enough”, God clearly did not, and the result of Saul's disobedience was confirmation that he would not be allowed to remain as king.

### **Examples of those that obeyed all the commands of God:**

**Noah – Gen. 6.** We find that Noah is told precisely how to build the ark and the kind, number, and gender of animals he is to save. We find that Noah did exactly as the Lord had instructed and he and his family were spared from the flood.

**Abraham – Gen. 22.** We read that God commands Abraham to offer up his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to God. Now, we learn later in Hebrews that Abraham had such faith that he believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead if he did this. But what we find from the text is that Abraham did not question God but rather did exactly as God commanded. Only as Abraham is about to sacrifice Isaac does God stop him.

What we learn then is that God is pleased with those that do **exactly** as He commands, and ultimately destroys those who do not do **exactly** as He commands. With such a consistent lesson being found in the Old Testament we must ask ourselves and our friends a question: “Are we doing **exactly** as God commands in the New Law?” Let's be sure to do **all** that God has commanded us, understanding that our God is indeed a “**consuming fire**”.