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A table of contents for *The Bible Student* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bible-student_01.php

(iii) *It is a Conditioned Walk*, conditioned by His Commands and not by our desires, or standards of judgement, or denominational prejudices.

When the people of God so obeyed His Word there were promises of blessing—of life, of well-being, and of prolonged days.

Such ordering of our ways will ever carry the divine approval and the divine blessing, wherein we shall find developing spiritual life, enjoyed spiritual well-being, and continued enrichment in heavenly things.

THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST

DR. JOHN BOYD

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews said of the Lord Jesus Christ that though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience (5:8). Obedience is the duty of a servant. Let us then consider the Lord as Jehovah's Servant, who fully carried out His obligations.

The Hebrew word for servant (lit. one who works for another) is translated in the Septuagint by two Greek words, both of which the New Testament applies to the Lord Jesus Christ. In each word obedience is in evidence.

(1) *PAIS* (Matt. 12:18). This word, usually translated child, is from a root meaning 'to smite'. It indicates one who is chastened, one who receives disciplinary guidance—his past faults corrected, and instructions given him for the future. That is, he is told what he must do. Whilst the Lord had no faults to be corrected, He ever presented Himself as One who came into the world to do what His Father had told Him. He was the Father's serving-Son. Some forty-eight times in the Gospels He spoke of His having been sent of the Father, being always conscious of His mission into the world. He was sent to do the Father's will (John 4:34), to do the works the Father gave Him (John 9:4), to speak the Father's words (John 12:49). Concerning this mission He could say, 'I do always those things that please Him' (John 8:29).

(2) *DOULOS* (Phil. 2:7)—a bonds slave. This has its origin in a word meaning 'to bind'. Christ was God's bondservant, bound by oath to do His will (Heb. 10:7). This bondservice He carried out in absolute obedience to His Father.

A third Greek word for servant, *DIAKONOS*, is also used of Christ (Rom. 15:8). While the first two words indicate a relationship to the one served, this one considers a servant rather with reference to the quality of the service rendered. Thus Christ was a minister, or servant, of the circumcision with a view to confirming the promises made to the fathers. The same word is found in verbal form in Matt. 20:28, where the Lord's service is seen as giving His life a ransom for many. How thoroughly obedient to these tasks He was! 'For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea' (2 Cor. 1:20, R.V.). His obedience unto death, even the death of the Cross, God attested when He raised Him from the dead, and highly exalted Him.

The mind of the obedient servant is ever expressed in the words, 'I must'. The will of his master is binding. In this study of the obedience of Christ let us consider how the word 'must' filled His vision, and dictated His policy. 'Must' implied a foreknowledge of the will and plan and purpose of God.

The Lord's first recorded words on earth were, 'I must be about My Father's business' (Luke 2:49). How different He was from other men! They seek their own things; they like to be independent of God; they want to be free to do what they please. But Christ was conscious of His Father's mission; He came to do the Father's will; He, though in the form of God, did not think only of holding as a prize His equality with God, but also put Himself into a position to take orders from His Father (John 12:49). With this in view He became man. Whilst still God, and still equal with God, He became also God's servant. To do His Father's commandments was His constant aim. Everything else was subordinate. In Luke 2:49 the 'I' is in the position of emphasis. 'As for Me', He said, 'it is My bounden duty to be in My Father's things'. The words, 'Wist ye not' (lit., 'Had ye not known') imply that previously He had given Joseph and Mary cause to know that He had been constantly about His

Father's things, and that therefore He should have been found in His Father's house.

Thus, His first recorded saying gives us the pattern of the Lord's service on earth. He was ever mindful of His obligation to His Father. This was seen in three ways.

The Constraint of the Lord's Bondservice was evident in His Words

'I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also, for therefore am I sent' (Luke 4:43). The Lord resisted the temptation to remain in Capernaum, where He was becoming popular by reason of His miracles and His teaching. His mission was to many cities, to announce to them also the good news of God's rule over men. He was working to the Father's schedule, not His own. His preaching, too, was ever those things the Father had given Him, as is so frequently emphasised in John's gospel. His words (3:34), His teaching (9:16), His message (14:24), were all from the Father.

The Compulsion of the Lord's Bondservice was evident in His works

'I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day' (John 9:4). He must use His opportunities; He must work in God's appointed time; He must glorify the Father in His work. The faithful servant will not cease his work till the end of the day—he is fully occupied. The Father had given Christ a work to do, and to finish it was His consuming passion (John 17:4).

The Coercion of the Lord's Bondservice was evident in His Ways

'He must needs go through Samaria' (John 4:4), not merely because it was the shortest route, but that He might meet with a woman athirst for the Water of Life. He must bring to Himself His other sheep, those not of the Jewish fold (John 10:10). He must abide at Zacchaeus' house, to confirm him in his new-found faith (Luke 19:5). He must go His appointed way, despite Herod's threatenings (Luke 13:33).

Most of all the Lord's Passion showed His whole-hearted willingness to serve the Father. Often throughout His sojourn on earth He had mentioned that His suffering and death were the

goal of His incarnation. Toward that goal He steadfastly set His face (Luke 9:51). He went with set purpose to Jerusalem, where He knew that all the things written by the prophets concerning Him should be accomplished, namely, that He would be delivered to the Gentiles, to be mocked, to be shamefully entreated, to be spat upon, to be scourged and killed (Luke 18:31-33).

The Lord knew what was in store for Him, but on He went, not as one who could not avoid it, for He voluntarily sought this path. He went not as one without foreknowledge of the sufferings, for He often spoke of them beforehand. He would do the Father's will, cost what it may.

The agony in Gethsemane reveals to us His obedience even unto the death of the Cross. Considering what was to befall Him on the morrow He prayed for a possible alternative, so awful was the prospect. Yet even in this, as the perfect Servant, He bowed His will to that of His Father.

He knew the nature of the death He would experience. He had said, 'The Son of Man *must* be lifted up' (John 3:14). This lifting up, like the serpent Moses upraised on the pole, indicated that He would be put upon a cross. Crucifixion was the goal He sought, with its shame and nakedness, with its scoffing and reproach, with its suffering and thirst, with its solitude and darkness. He knew what He must endure, yet even the shame did not turn Him from His objective.

Then dawned at last that day of dread
 When, desolate, yet undismayed,
 With wearied frame and thorn-crowned head
 He, now forsaken and betrayed,
 Went up for me
 To Calvary,
 And, dying there in grief and shame,
 He saved me—Blessed be His name!

The word translated 'obedience' in the New Testament suggests a bending of the ear to hear, attentively listening for the master's commands, with the intention of fulfilling them to the letter. The obedient servant is well portrayed in Isa. 50:4-6. None fits the picture like Christ. From God He got a word in

season for the weary; His ear was awakened morning by morning to know His Father's wishes; He was not rebellious to His Father's commands, however unpleasant they may have been; He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; He hid not His face from shame and spitting. What perfect obedience! What a loyal Servant!

In Heb. 5:8 we read that at Calvary Christ 'learned obedience by the things which He suffered'. He was not then learning to obey. He had obeyed the Father before. When He came into the world He came to do the Father's will (Heb. 10:7). His whole life on earth had been one of obedience, but now in His person He was experiencing it in a new way. He was being perfected in it. Though twice designated the Son of God He was gaining this new, fuller experience of obedience in a practical way, realising in His own person the fulness of what it meant. The sufferings of Christ were real sufferings. They throw into relief the reality of His obedience, and heighten our appreciation of it. He went the whole way.

The attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ to all this suffering is well expressed in Phil. 2:4. He looked not to His own things, but to His Father's things—His Father's plan of redemption, with all that it entailed. Thus Christ took on Him the form of a bondservant—being made in the likeness of man. In this guise He further humbled Himself, as in obedience to the Father He went to the awful death of Calvary. This was the way by which the Father had chosen to redeem man, and this plan the Lord obeyed to the letter.

The obedience of Christ has had far-reaching effects for man. One man, Adam, had disobeyed God, and this act of disobedience had brought untold misery on all the human race. At Calvary Christ's one act of obedience to His Father's will has made it possible for God to justify the many who believe in Christ. This is but the beginning of many such blessings that came to the believer through the work of Christ on the Cross, so succinctly described by Paul as 'the obedience of One' (Rom. 5:19).

This consideration of the obedience of Christ should produce in our hearts admiration, gratitude and worship—admiration

for the perfection of its execution, gratitude for the multiplicity of its benefits, worship for the Person of its manifestation.

The Father appreciated His obedience, highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name. One day every knee will bow before Him in worship, and every tongue will confess that Jesus, the obedient Servant, is worthy to be Lord of all.

STUDIES IN PHILIPPIANS

R. NORTH

CHAPTER 3

Christ the believer's Object

Warnings against Judaism (v. 1-3)

By his use of the word 'Finally' at the beginning of ch. 3 we may either conclude that Paul was bringing his letter to a close at this point, but the Spirit of God constrained him to continue, or that he used the word to mark a transition to another subject. In either view his exhortation 'Rejoice in the Lord', repeated and amplified in ch. 4:4, where the actual conclusion begins, is particularly inspiring in a prison epistle; and no one would appreciate or respond to this animating appeal more than the saints in Philippi where Paul had suffered and had been shamefully treated before.

In his desire to safeguard the saints from the ravages of Judaizing teachers he calls upon them three times in v. 2 to 'Beware'. 'Dogs' is a term which the Jews applied to the Gentiles. The prominent idea in Mt. 7:6 and in 2 Pet. 2:22, where the same word occurs, is that of uncleanness. 'Evil workers' are not simply evil doers, but workmen who do not handle aright the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15), deceitful workers whose end shall be according to their works (2 Cor. 11:13, 14). 'The concision' is a term of reproach, indicating that which was partial in contrast to 'circumcision' which was a total cutting off of the flesh. By an ironical play upon words Paul refused to call 'circumcision' that which had lost its spiritual significance, and was merely outward