

Series: Questions

Title: Will You Not Hear and Do (God's Words)?

Text: Jer 35: 12-13

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**Jeremiah 35: 1: The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, 2: Go unto the house of the Rechabites and speak unto them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink. 3: Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habaziah, and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites; 4: And I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which *was* by the chamber of the princes, which *was* above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door: 5: And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine. 6: But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, *neither* ye, nor your sons for ever: 7: Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have *any*: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye *be* strangers. 8: Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters; 9: Nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed: 10: But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. 11: But it came to pass, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians: so we dwell at Jerusalem.**

**12: Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, 13: Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the LORD. 14: The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. 15: I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them*, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me. 16: Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me: 17: Therefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered. 18: And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: 19: Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.**

The book of Jeremiah is not in chronological order. This prophecy came about 10 years before Zedekiah became king of Judah. At this time Jehoiakim is king of Judah. He did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. Jehoiakim led the people into idolatry which led to base sin of every kind contrary to God's command. So God is using the Chaldeans to purge the nation of these idolatrous men, while chastening his elect among them.

As this is happening, God told Jeremiah to call the Rechabites into the temple and offer them wine to drink. The Rechabites were Gentiles, the descendants of Moses' father-in-law, Jethro. One of Jethro's descendants was a man named Rechab, thus the name "the Rechabites." The Rechabites were proselytes worshipping the one true and living God—that is the reason they were permitted into the temple. Rechab had a son named Jonadab. Jonadab joined with King Jehu in tearing down the idols and groves of Baal worship in Israel during the days of Elijah.

Before he died, Jonadab gave these strange commandments for his descendants to follow. Jonadab's reason was v7: "*that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers.*" For 300 years they had obeyed their father. So when Jeremiah offered them wine they quickly, stedfastly, refused that they might continue obeying their father

Afterward, God asks Judah and Jerusalem, "*Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the LORD.*" *The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.*"

**Subject:** Will Ye Not Hear and Do (God's Word?)

**Proposition:** God our Savior commands his sanctified children to hear his words and obey, to receive and do.

The LORD's purpose in showing the Rechabites obedience is not to say we should obey the commandments of Jonadab. The LORD's purpose is to contrast the Rechabites obedience to their father with Judah's disobedience to theirs.

**Divisions:** We will see the 1) Contrast in who gave the commands 2) Contrast in how often they were given 3) Contrast in the number of witnesses 4) Contrast in the commands themselves 5) Contrast in the promise connected with them

## CONTRAST WHO GAVE THE COMMANDS

The Rechabites command came from a mere man, on earth, Jonadab. Yet, his sons performed every command. Their obedience was constant. They passed the test set before them. Bear in mind, it was an insult to refuse food or drink in those days. They were risking being thrown out of Jerusalem which would have meant death at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. Yet they refused to disobey the command of their father. The motive of their obedience was the honor and love of their father. They said, "*For Jonadab our father commanded us.*" That was the motive they gave for their obedience.

But God says to Judah, "*Notwithstanding, I have spoken to you...*" God says, "What is Jonadab compared with me? What is his authority compared with mine?" God's saints believe our Father because his is the word of the one true living God of heaven. Christ Jesus our Redeemer is the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is above all!

Christ's love toward his people melts our hard heart. God our Father gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life. Man in the earth cannot save or destroy eternally. The God of heaven is he who has power to save and to destroy eternally. The precepts of Jonadab were arbitrary and external. God's command is for our good. When sent in power, God's command reaches to the heart and conscience. The gospel is not an offer, it is a command from God the Father, to believe on his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Father spoke, not from earth, but from heaven, commanding, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Mt 17:5). God's word comes as a command, not an offer. "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

Men and women want to make great sacrifices and offerings to earn God's acceptance. If you put dirty clothes in a washing machine then you took a soapy wet rag and washed the outside of that washing machine until it shined like new. Will it clean the clothes inside? That is sacrifice without heart obedience. If we white the outside of the sepulcher inside is nothing but dead men's bones. A man can be reformed outwardly but until God performs a work of grace within it is all sacrifice with no heart obedience. God told Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites. But Saul brought back the fattest sheep to offer to God.

1 Samuel 15: 22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23: For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

A sinner first has to be created anew within by God and made to obey this command from the heart, "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (Joh 6:29). That is the command of God himself. Will you hear and obey the word of God?

When we lift up Christ in our preaching, as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent, and we cry, "*Look and live*", we are not speaking our own words but the words of God. To reject our words would be insignificant. But to reject the testimony of the God of heaven is the greatest offense of all! "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" (1 Jn 5: 10). The gospel commands our obedience because it has the authority of God Almighty behind it.

But depraved sinners, left to themselves, will reject the command of God while they believe and keep the commandments of men or of a church or of some creed. Christ said, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?" (Joh 5:43-44)

To you who have not believed on Christ, what a shame it will be that sinners all over the world obeyed the commands of men while you have the gospel of the true and living God of heaven and earth and refused to obey him. Christ said, "If the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you" (Mt 11:21-22).

Seeing that the true and living God of heaven and earth has commanded us to believe on his Son that we might have eternal life, will we not hear and obey God's word?

## CONTRAST HOW OFTEN THE COMMAND WAS GIVEN

Jonadab gave the command to his children one time. Yet, God says in verse 14, "*unto this day*", 300 years later, his sons obeyed. The voice of Jonadab was a cry coming faintly from far down the ages. His sons obeyed. But God says in verse 14, "*I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking but ye hearkened not unto me.*"

Again and again God has sounded forth his command in our ears to believe on his Son and follow him. His mercies "are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lam 3:23). Jonadab was long since dead. He could not see when his children disobeyed nor give correction for it. But God lives forever. He has declared his gospel to us every day. We have the witness of creation, the witness of God's word and the witness of his preachers. And each elect child is ever at the center of God's

attention. Our heavenly Father leads his redeemed, chastens and corrects his regenerate child and ever keeps us at the feet of Christ!

Beholding how God has born witness to us every day, will we not hear and obey the true and living God?

### **CONTRAST HOW MANY WITNESSES GAVE THE COMMAND**

Jonadab was one man who commanded his immediate children. Then one father would pass it to his immediate family. But God says in verse 15, “*I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them...*”

How many preachers have preached to us in 12 years in this place? We have had at least three pastors visit and preach for us each year. Some years we had four and five. That means there have been at least 40 preachers declare the same gospel to us! In this place alone, God has sent prophet after prophet declaring the good news that in Christ mercy and truth are met together. Over and over we have heard from the mouth of multiple witnesses that Christ is the fulness of the Godhead bodily and God’s saints are complete in him. God has sent one preacher after another to us declaring to us the good news that the good work God begin in his people, he will finish.

If we had 40 witnesses telling us the same thing concerning any earthly matter—we would believe beyond all doubt. Does that not show us the depths of our depravity. To have so many witnesses speak the same good news and yet not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ declares our total inability if God leaves us to ourselves.

Beholding how many witnesses God has sent us who have all declared the same gospel of our glorious, triumphant Redeemer, will we not hear God’s word and obey and cast all our care on his Son, Christ Jesus?

### **CONTRAST THE COMMANDS THEMSELVES**

Jonadab’s commands were not preceded by grace and pardon. They were simply commands. These commands were harsh and strict: drink no wine, plant no gardens, build no homes; they must dwell in tents and be always moving. God promised his people they would once again build houses and plant vineyards in that land but Jonadab forbid it in his sons.

Contrast that with Christ. First grace comes giving spiritual life, a new heart, convincing us of our total inability to save ourselves. Yet, granting faith and repentance to believe on Christ our Savior to follow him in believer’s baptism, God gives his regenerated child the power to obey. Then the Holy Spirit purges our conscience making us know that God has given the believer forgiveness of all our sins in Christ. He has justified his people from all things from we could not be justified by the law of Moses. Then Christ unites his new babe with his church, our brethren, under the preaching of the gospel where Christ continues to minister to us all our days.

Then comes Christ’s light and easy yoke. Christ commands each believer to continue in him and love one another. What a light and easy yoke! Christ commands us, “This do in remembrance of me.” He even gave us an ordinance so we could be reminded off his broken body and shed blood by the bread and wine. How light and easy! Christ commands us to be in subjection one to another and to regard our brethren better than yourselves. He commands us to bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ—the law of love. Christ commands, “If your brother sin against you seven times in a day and seven times turn again to thee saying I repent, thou shalt forgive him.” He commands that as much as possible we are to live peaceably with all men. He commands us to be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Christ teaches us the good news that “I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God” (Gal 2:19). All Christ’s commands are a light and easy yoke because with each command comes the grace and power of God to make us servants of righteousness.

But left to themselves, Judah was too proud to confess their sin and inability to keep God’s law. Instead, they not only disobeyed God’s commandments, they rejected God himself by rejecting his prophet. They scorned and killed his prophets, rejected God’s commands and made themselves new commandments. God said,

Jeremiah 2: 11: Hath a nation changed *their* gods, which *are* yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for *that which* doth not profit. 12: Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. 13: For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

Seeing how Christ has fulfilled the law for us and made us the righteousness of God in him, will we behold so great salvation, so great love for us, and then refuse to hear and do as Christ commands?

### **CONTRAST THE PROMISE CONNECTED TO THE COMMAND**

Jonadab could not guarantee that his children would live long. And if they did obey and live long, they would only live long on an earthly piece of ground in which they were strangers. Jonadab could not do for his seed what God does for his. He left them commandments but no steadfast hope of inheritance.

But Christ’s blood guarantees acceptance with God for all for whom he died. Christ successfully gives each obedient child peace of conscience, protection from our enemies, all the exceeding riches of an eternal inheritance in God’s kingdom of grace and glory. God who cannot lie promises his people shall awake with Christ’s likeness and see him as he is. Our

heavenly Father has given us the sure hope of eternal salvation in heavenly Jerusalem in heavenly Mt Zion in Christ Jesus our All! We will one day have no sin, only perfect conformity to our Savior. God crowns obedience to our Master with every blessing so that it is written, "*Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments*" (Ps 112: 1). Those who obey God by his grace and power so that they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and follow him has "*promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*" (1 Tim 4: 8).

But because Judah and Jerusalem hearkened not unto the LORD, the LORD said in verse 17, "*I will bring upon [them] all the evil that I pronounced against them.*" Every sinner who refuses to obey God, who will not turn from their idolatrous, sinful way and believe on Christ and follow him, God promises to bring upon them all the evil God pronounces in this book for all eternity.

On the other hand, Jonadab being a picture of Christ, we see what shall become of all who obey and believe on Christ. God said in verse 19, "*Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.*" The immutable God of glory promises Christ his Son that due to Christ's blood and righteousness, he shall not want a man to stand before God forever. In fact, each and every one Christ redeemed, the Spirit shall make obedient to believe on Christ so that each and everyone shall stand before God perfect in the last day and for all eternity!

Sinner believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. Disobey and you shall be damned forever. And for you who believe, let us start brand-new today devoting our lives entirely to obeying our Lord and our Savior! As Mary said, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (Jo 2:5).

**Amen!**