



## Observing All Things

**S** In Matthew 28:18-20, we have these words: "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."

The universality of this passage of scripture cannot be denied. Jesus begins with stating that "all authority" has been given to him. Not some authority, not authority over religious things only, not authority over morality only, but ALL authority. The life of the Christian is to be characterized as living under the authority of Christ. Indeed, that is the essence of what it means to make Jesus our Lord. This universal forever excludes the notion that one may be a Christian and still be a worldling.

What Jesus tells the disciples next is to make disciples of ALL the nations. Again, another universal command. Jesus didn't say, make disciples of the nations that would hear you. He didn't say not to worry about the nations that don't have Bibles. Jesus said ALL nations. Again, the collective obligation of Jesus' disciples is to spread the gospel to ALL nations. Not some, but all. This universal forever excludes the notion that one may be a Christian, yet believe that all of those who have not heard the gospel will somehow be "saved."

Jesus tells his followers how to make disciples. Baptizing them and teaching them. These words are, in the Greek language, participles. The action of the participles are carried out in the lead verb ("make disciples"). The inescapable conclusion is that one cannot be a disciple without having been taught and having been baptized. The description, however, of the things to be taught in this verse is indeed universal. Jesus said, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." It is incumbent upon us, as Christians, if we are going to respect the words of our Lord in the great commission, to teach those who would be Christians to observe ALL of the things that Jesus commanded. There can

be no exceptions. This universal forever excludes the notion that we may observe some things that Jesus commanded, but other things we don't have to observe.

Now, I wish to point out a couple of distinctions here that we often fail to recognize in this passage. It doesn't say, "teaching them all things that I have commanded." Some mistakenly suggest that if we must make disciples by teaching, then we must teach them everything that Jesus commanded before they become Christians and that is simply impossible to do. But, it doesn't say that we are to teach everything that is commanded, but to teach them to observe everything that is commanded. That can be done relatively quickly, by letting those who would become Christians know that they are to faithfully hold to the commands of Jesus in their life, as they continue to learn those commands, and that whatever may come, they are to always observe those things.

Another thing that the passage does not say: it doesn't say "teaching them to obey all things that I have commanded." It says, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." This is a distinction upon which I wish to focus for the remainder of this article.

Now, before we even get started, I'm not suggesting that because Jesus didn't say that we have to "obey" that therefore we do not have to obey Jesus. Yes, we do have to obey if we want to be saved (Hebrews 5:9). However, there are some who ridicule the idea of obeying Jesus and say things such as "which commands are we supposed to obey?" And they point to things such as washing feet, the holy kiss, women wearing veils, and other things that indeed were commanded, yet obviously are not practiced today. Then these who so criticize very smugly conclude that there is something wrong with our hermeneutic because we do not obey these commands. I would like to point out the fallacy of this thinking.

Jesus said to "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The word "observe" is not the same as the word obey. I must admit that if Jesus had said, "Obey all things," then it would be impossible for me to do such, namely, because

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# Proclaiming Versus Explaining

**Q** rthur Balfour once said, "I am more or less happy when being praised, not very uncomfortable when being abused, but I have moments of uneasiness when being explained."

As I pondered these words, I began to reflect on the seriousness of preaching and the possibility that we may be making God terribly uneasy by giving explanations of what He has said. Perhaps a better approach might be to simply say, "Thus saith the Lord", and let it stand at that. In the midst of all of our explaining the original message could well be lost despite our best intentions.

One musical person was talking about those pieces called "Variations on a Theme by Haydn" or "Bach" or "Schumann," and said "the variations are so many and so varied that the hearers wonder what the original theme was." True! True!

I know that there is a place for explanation. The Ethiopian needed it when he was reading the prophet Isaiah and came to the words, "As a sheep led to the slaughter or a lamb before its shearer is dump, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken up from the earth." (Acts 8:32-33) This opened the door for Philip to tell the good news of Jesus.

My fear is that in our efforts to explain God we forget to simply proclaim

Him. In the words of the apostle Paul, "Preach the Word!" After all the variations it's refreshing to hear the simple words, "And the Lord God said. . ."

John Gibson  
Little Rock, AR

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some commands in the Bible are given to women, and I am not a woman; I am a man. It would be impossible for me to obey the command, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22). I simply cannot obey that command, but I can OBSERVE that command. I can respect the fact that God desires wives to submit to their husbands. I can teach that fact of the gospel to others. I can expect out of Christian women for them to obey this command. I cannot directly obey that command, but I can observe that command.

Now, having said this, we often use the word "obey" in the sense of "observe." That is, often times in our desire to be pleasing to the Lord and to submit to His will and not our own, we tell others that they must "obey the Lord," "keep the commandments," and etc. Now, if one were to take such things to the extreme literal of their interpretation, then one must obviously come to the conclusion that such things are impossible to do. However, if one understand by "keep the commandments" and "obey the Lord" and other similar imperative statements, that we are saying exactly what Jesus told us to do in the great commission, namely, "observe all things," then

there can be no criticism. For one does not necessarily have to literally obey all things in order to observe all things.

Let me illustrate. For one to literally obey Jesus' command to wash one another's feet (John 13:14), then I would of necessity have to wash someone else's feet on a more or less regular basis. However, for me to observe this command, doesn't necessarily imply that I must wash another's feet. I may do that to observe this command, but I also may recognize that this example was one that Jesus took from the culture of the day, and that the lesson that Jesus was teaching was in regard to serving one another.

A second illustration is found in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 where Paul's directs women to wear a veil. The context clearly indicates this practice to be related to culture (verse 16). To literally obey in this context would mean that women would have to wear veils in the assembly today. However, to observe such, would not necessarily mean that we must do exactly what they do, but recognize the principle involved in this passage, namely, that women are to respect the authority of their husbands and whatever cultural practices indicate that respect.

This distinction between "obey" and "observe" really makes all of the difference in the world in understanding how we can literally obey some things that are within the scriptures (such as "This do in remembrance of me," 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25) whereas, we are not required to literally obey other things in the scripture (such as, "Salute one another with a holy kiss"). We are required

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## Sermons and Study Topics

Week of 8/1/04

Morning .....	J.R. Burr
Scripture .....	TBA
Evening .....	J.R. Burr
Scripture .....	TBA
Sunday Morning Bible Study .....	J.R. Burr TBA
Wednesday Evening Bible Study .....	The Book of Micah

## Weekly Record

Week of 7/25/04

Sunday Class .....	53
Sunday A.M. ....	81
Sunday P.M. ....	54
Wednesday .....	45
Contribution .....	\$1616.76
Budget .....	\$1778.13

## Job Versus Ministry

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ome people have a job in the church, others involve themselves in a ministry. What's the difference?

- If you are doing it just because no one else will, it's a job. If you are doing it to serve the Lord, it's a ministry.
- If you quit because somebody criticized you, it was a job. If you keep on serving, it's a ministry.
- If you'll do it only as long as it does not interfere with your other activities, it's a job. If you are committed to staying with it even when it means letting go of other things, it's a ministry.
- If you quit because no one praised you or thanked you, it was a job. If you stay with it even

though nobody recognizes your efforts, it is a ministry.

- It's difficult to get excited about a job. It's almost impossible not to be excited about a ministry.
- If our concern is success, it's a job. If our concern is faithfulness, it's a ministry.
- An average church is filled with people doing jobs. A great and growing church is filled with people involved in ministry.

Brethren, think about it! If we are not already involved, let's get involved in ministry for the Lord and "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing" (Psa. 100:2).

Mike Riley  
El Paso, TX

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to observe, but not necessarily, literally, obey. Understanding this preserves the integrity of the "Command, Example, Necessarily Inference" hermeneutic, because being obedient to commands becomes not so much literally obeying ALL commands, but without a doubt, observing ALL commands. "Obeying" examples, (examples can't really be "obeyed" per se, but followed) means observing those examples. "Obeying" implications (the term "necessary inference" isn't really correct, but implication is) means that we must observe the things that the scriptures imply. You can see, that one can definitely "observe" "commands, examples, and necessarily inferences" without being strictly, literally, obedient to them. So let's observe what our Lord commanded be done in Matthew 28:20, "teaching them to observe all things...."

## Kevin's Korner

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s I write this note, July is almost complete. Sunday will be the first day of a new month. The coming of August heralds in the start of a new school year, our youth rally, our annual visit to Lost Valley, the end of "summer," and a whole host of other things. It is a winding down to some degree. Of other things, it is a winding up and preparation for things to come. It is a time of transitions. Regardless, we continue, as Christians, to be steadfast in the service of our Lord (1 Cor.15:58).

We do have some great events that are upcoming for which we need to be preparing by inviting our friends and neighbors to these events. Our youth rally is certainly an event to which we need to invite the youth of our community to attend. Our gospel meeting, which will be held this fall, is

an event to which we need to invite all of our friends and neighbors. Our men's breakfasts and ladies Bible classes will resume in the fall and we can both attend these events and invite our friends to come to these events. Our monthly potlucks are always good opportunities to invite our friends. And of course, our regularly scheduled services do not need to be neglected in this regard. There are so many opportunities to which we can invite our community associates. What is the limiting factor? It's true for you as well as me, the limiting factor is self. God doesn't ask us to be successful, he simply asks us to work. Now, we can do that!

As many are already aware, today I am in Stark City, MO holding a gospel meeting. Having begun today, the meeting will continue until Friday, August 6th, 2004. Everyone is invited to attend. Since Stark City, MO is so close, I will be driving back and forth

between here and there. If anyone would like a ride to the meeting, please meet me at the church building each evening about 5:00 PM and you can ride with us. Brother J.R. Burr, the regular preacher in Stark City will be filling my shoes while I am out. I expect that you will get a treat in having him preach to you this morning and evening. Thank you brother Burr for coming!

### **Elders:**

Clay Bozarth, Leon Duncan,  
Bruce Foster, Bill Fort, Glenn  
Quigley

### **Deacons:**

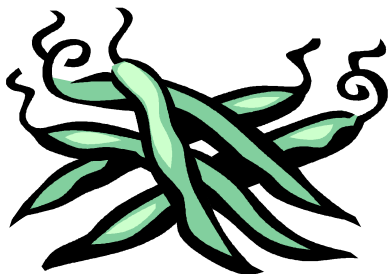
Ken Smith, Brent Stevens,  
Rusty Windle.

### **Preacher:**

Kevin Cauley... 870-423-6707

# Praise Prayers and Proclamations

- We are truly thankful to God for the wonderful new Lord's day that he has given us today to worship him in Spirit and in Truth!
- I heard this past week that Gary Bragg's surgery went OK and that his tongue transplant was successful.
- Let us remain constant in prayer for the following individuals: Ora Cauley, Lucille Fort, Opal Hull, Jim McVey, David Stevens, Reck Wallace.
- Remember our shut-ins: Curtis Hull, Edith Mischler, Art Roberts.
- Today at 2:00 PM there will be a reception at the building honoring Hugh and Geneva Atchley's 50th wedding anniversary! Wow! What a great example they are to us.
- The monthly elders and deacons meeting will be this evening after services.
- If you can, please sign up to take Art Roberts lunch on one Sunday of the month. The list is on the bulletin board.
- Our youth rally is scheduled for the weekend of the August 27th, 28th. Please be making your plans.
- Also the last Sunday of this month is our monthly singing at the nursing home. Please make your plans now to be with us there.
- Please check the back bulletin board for several other opportunities this month and next to participate in spiritual activities.
- Please pray for my efforts in Stark City in preaching the gospel!
- The pantry item for this week is Green Beans.



## Welcome!

To the Berryville church of Christ.

### Family Times for Worship and Study

Sunday Morning Bible Class:..... 9:30 AM  
 Sunday Morning Worship: ..... 10:30 AM  
 Sunday Evening Worship: ..... 6:00 PM  
 Ladies Bible Class: ..... 10:30 AM  
 Wed. Evening Bible Class: ..... 7:00 PM

### Serving Each Other

	August 1st, 2004	August 8th, 2004
<b>Sunday Morning</b>		
Songs:	Ken Smith	Larry Elliott
Preaching:	J.R. Burr	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Rusty Windle	Bruce Foster
Scripture Reading:	Larry Elliott	Ray Duncan
Lord's Table	Dan Hand	Brent Stevens
(assist)	George Eddings	Ken Smith
	Jerry Roller	Brandon Foster
	Jack Gentry	Glenn Williams
Closing Prayer	Clay Bozarth	George Eddings
<b>Sunday Evening</b>		
Songs:	Glenn Williams	Bruce Foster
Preaching:	J.R. Burr	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Ken Smith	Dale Pinkley
Scripture Reading:	Perry Foster	Jerry Roller
Lord's Table	Dale Pinkley	Rusty Windle
	Brent Moore	Jack Gentry
Closing Prayer	Ray Duncan	Perry Foster
<b>Wednesday</b>		
Songs:	Rusty Windle	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	John Gass	Clay Bozarth
Invitation:	Ken Smith	Leon Duncan
Closing Prayer:	Bob Moore	Glenn Quigley

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