New Testament study of the word “Obey”

This study is a companion to the “Have the rule over” study. Both were prompted by the much abused passage in Hebrews 13:17 where we find the words, “Obey them that have the rule over you.”

This type of thinking comes from the KJV translators who seemingly agreed with the mistaken idea that God intends for His Son’s Body to be established upon a hierarchical system. This is so far off from the “servant-hood” example modeled by Jesus when He walked this earth. If we are going to escape the bondage so rampant today, we must hear the voice of the Spirit of God as He quickens to our spirits the Truth. May you find rich treasures in this study which shows the meanings of the Greek words used in translation of the New Testament, as well as numerous passages that reveal Truth in this matter.

1. Greek #3982
   peithō (pi’-tho)

Definition: “A primary verb; to convince (by argument, true or false); by analogy to pacify or conciliate (by other fair means); reflexively or passively to assent (to evidence or authority), to rely (by inward certainty)”

Translated: “agree, assure, believe, have confidence, be (wax) content, make friend, obey, persuade, trust, yield”

2. Greek #3980
   peitharchēō (pi-tharkh-eh’-o)

Definition: “From a compound of G3982 and G757; to be persuaded by a ruler, that is, (generally) to submit to authority; by analogy to conform to advice.”

[ G757 definition = “A primary verb; to be first (in political rank or power)” ]

Translated: “hearken, obey (magistrates)”

3. Greek #5219
hupakouō *(hoop-ak-oo'-o)*

Definition: “*to hear under (as a subordinate), that is, to listen attentively; by implication to heed or conform to a command or authority*”

Translated: “hearken, be obedient to, obey”

4. Greek #5218

hupakoē *(hoop-ak-o-ay’)*

Definition: “*From G5219; attentive hearkening, that is, (by implication) compliance or submission*”

Translated: “obedience, (make) obedient, obey (-ing)”

5. Greek #1096

ginomai *(ghin'-om-ahee)*

Definition: “*to cause to be (“gen” -erate), that is, (reflexively) to become (come into being), used with great latitude (literally, figuratively, intensively, etc.)*”

I have omitted the translated use of the following Greek word. The definition is included here only because it was used in combination for the benefit of showing the Greek meaning of the one English word used in the verses following the next definition.

Greek #5255

hupekoos *(hoop-ay'-ko-os)*

Definition: “*From G5219 [above]; attentively listening, that is, (by implication) submissive*”

Translated: “obedient”

6. Greek #544

apeitheo (ap-i-theh'-o)

Definition: “*to disbelieve (wilfully and perversely)*”
Translated: “not believe, disobedient, obey not, unbelieving”

1. Greek #3982

peithō (pi'-tho)

Definition: “A primary verb; to convince (by argument, true or false); by analogy to pacify or conciliate (by other fair means); reflexively or passively to assent (to evidence or authority), to rely (by inward certainty)”

Translated: “agree, assure, believe, have confidence, be (wax) content, make friend, obey, persuade, trust, yield”

- The words “to him they agreed” were used in the KJV. See bold words for this Greek word’s use in the EMTV.

Acts 5:40: “And they were persuaded by him, and when they called the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and released them.”

- The word “assure” was used in both the KJV and the EMTV.

1 John 3:19: “And in this we know that we are from the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.”

- The word “believed” was used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Acts 17: 4: “And some of them were persuaded and were joined with Paul and Silas, both of the devout Greeks, a great multitude, and not a few of the chief women.”

Acts 27:11: “But the centurion was persuaded by the helmsman and the ship owner, rather than by the things being said by Paul.”

Acts 28:24: “And some were persuaded by the things being said, but others refused to believe.”

- The word “confidence” was used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

2 Corinthians 2:3: “And I wrote this very thing to you, lest when I came, I should have sorrow from those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all.”

Galatians 5:10: “I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will be intent on nothing else; but he who troubles you will bear his judgment, whoever he may be.”
Philippians 1:25: “And having been persuaded of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, that your boasting may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my coming again to you.”

Philippians 3:3: “For we are the true circumcision, worshipping by the Spirit of God, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh,”

2 Thessalonians 3:4: “And we trust in the Lord concerning you, that the things which we command to you, you are both doing, and will do them.”

Philemon 1:21: “Having been persuaded of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even beyond what I say.”

- The word “confident” was used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Romans 2: (17-18&19&20): “Behold, you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and boast in God, and know His will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are persuaded that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.”

Philippians 1:6, 14: “having been persuaded of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus; ...and most of the brothers in the Lord, having been persuaded by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word fearlessly.” (See context)

- The words “having made Blastus ... their friend” were used in the KJV. See below for its use in the EMTV.

Acts 12:20: “Now Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; and with one purpose they came to him, and persuading Blastus, the one over the king’s bedroom, they asked for peace, because their country was fed from the king's country.”

- The word “obey(-ed)” was used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Romans 2:8(&9): “But to those who are contentious, and who disobey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that works evil, both of the Jew and of the Greek;”

Galatians 3:1: “O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was portrayed publicly among you as crucified?”

Galatians 5:7: “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?”

Hebrews 13:17: “Obey your leaders, and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls, as giving an account, in order that they may do this with joy and not groaning, for this would be unprofitable for you.” (Look again at the definition of the Greek word “peitho” and think about what this verse really means. I must say, I do not agree with the use of “obey” in these verses. This misuse of “obey” is where so many get their distorted views on the ekklesia’s “need” for hierarchical order).
James 3:3: “Consider that we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we guide their whole body.”

Acts 5:36-37: “For before these days, Theudas rose up, claiming himself to be someone, to whom was joined a number of men, about four hundred. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this arose Judas the Galilean, in the days of the census, and caused considerable number of people after him to revolt. That one also perished, and as many as were persuaded by him were dispersed.”

- Various verb tenses of the word “persuade” were used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Matthew 28:14: “And if this reaches the governor’s ears, we will influence him and make you secure.”

2 Corinthians 5:11: “Knowing, therefore, the fear of the Lord, we persuade men; but we have been made known to God. And I also hope to have been made known in your consciences.”

Galatians 1:10: “For do I just now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”

Matthew 27:20: “But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowds that they should ask for Barabbas, but they should destroy Jesus.”

Luke 16:31: “But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded should one rise from the dead.’”

Luke 20:6: “But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.”

Acts 13:43: “And when the synagogue service was broken up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.”

Acts 14:19: “But there arrived from Antioch and Iconium Jews, and having persuaded the crowds and having stoned Paul, they dragged him outside the city, supposing him to have died.”

Acts 18:4: “And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.”

Acts 19:26: “And you observe and hear that not only at Ephesus, but almost in all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great multitude, saying that they are not gods which are made by human hands.”

Acts 21:14: “And when he remained unpersuaded, we were silent and said, ‘Let the will of the Lord be done.’”
Acts 26:26: “For the king knows about these things, to whom also I speak freely; for I am **persuaded** that none of these things escapes his notice, since this thing was not done in a corner.”

Romans 8:38: “For I am **convinced** that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 15:14: “Now I myself am **confident** concerning you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, having been filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish others.”

2 Timothy 1:5, 12: “**taking recollection of the genuine faith** that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am **persuaded** is in you also. ...For which cause I also suffer these things; but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I have been **persuaded** that He is able to guard that which I have committed to Him until that Day.”

Hebrews 6:9: “But we are **persuaded** concerning you, beloved, of better things and those pertaining to salvation, even though we speak in this manner.”

Hebrews 11:13: “These all died according to faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and **welcoming** them, and confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” (The word seems to be missing in the translation here, unless “welcoming” is the translated word.)

Acts 26:28: “And Agrippa said to Paul, ‘In a short time, you are **persuading** me to become a Christian!’”

Acts 19:8: “And he entered into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, debating and **persuading** the things concerning of the kingdom of God.”

Acts 28:23: “And having appointed for him a day, many came to him at his house, to whom he was explaining and solemnly testifying to the kingdom of God, and **persuading** them of the things concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning till evening.”

- The word “trust (-ed)” was used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Mark 10:24: “And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus, answering again, says to them, ‘Children, how difficult it is for those who **trust** in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!”

2 Corinthians 1:9(&10-11): “Yes, we have had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not **trust** in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and is delivering us; in whom we trust [Greek #1679] that He will still deliver us, you also laboring together for us in prayer, that thanks may be given by many persons on your behalf for the gift given to us through many.”
2 Corinthians 10:7: “Do you look at things as they appear? If anyone has **persuaded** himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's.”

Philippians 2:24: “But I have been **persuaded** in the Lord that I myself will also come shortly.”

Philippians 3:4: “although I also am having confidence [Greek #4006] in the flesh. If any other person thinks to have **confidence** in the flesh, I even more.”

Hebrews 2:13: “And again: ‘I will put My **trust** in Him.’ And again: ‘Behold I and the children to whom God has given Me.”

Hebrews 13:18: “Pray for us; for we are **persuaded** that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live commendably.”

Matthew 27:43: “He **trusted** in God; let Him deliver Him now if He'll have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.’”

Luke 11:22: “But when a stronger than he comes upon him, he overcomes him, he takes away his full armor in which he had **trusted**, and distributes his spoils.”

Luke 18:9: “Also He spoke this parable to some who **trusted** in themselves that they were righteous, and despised the others:”

- The word “yield” was used in the KJV, as opposed to “persuaded” in the EMTV.

Acts 23:21: “Therefore you must not be **persuaded** by them; for more than four hundred of them are lying in wait for him, who have bound themselves by a curse neither to eat nor to drink until they kill him; and now they are prepared, waiting for the promise from you.”

2. Greek #3980

peitharcheō (pi-tharkh-eh'-o)

Definition: “From a compound of G3982 and G757; to be **persuaded** by a ruler, that is, (generally) to **submit** to authority; by analogy to conform to advice.”

[G757 definition = “A primary verb; to be first (in political rank or power)”]

Translated: “hearken, obey (magistrates)”

- The word “hearkened” was used in the KJV, but “followed” was used in the EMTV.

Acts 27:21: “Now when they had abstained from food for a long time, then stood Paul in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have **followed** my advice and not put to sea from Crete, and to spare yourselves this hardship and loss.”
- The word “obey” was used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Acts 5:29, 32: “But Peter and the apostles answered, and said: ‘We must obey God rather than men.’ ...And we are His witnesses of these words, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

Titus 3:1: “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work,”

* This is how Titus 3:1 in the KJV reads: “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,”

The word “subject” comes from the Greek word “hupotasso” which is typically translated with the usual King James era bias toward hierarchy in the “church.”

Having studied the various uses of the word translated “obey” we can see how far off the translators were in using it to bring in their “hierarchy” agenda. We have lived with it for hundreds of years. But the Spirit of Truth is bringing to many the understanding that we are equal in Christ Jesus. He is tearing down the false idea that God ordains some to “be in authority” over others. I would like to suggest for reference this article by Maurice Fuller: http://www.ekklesia4him.net/obedience_leadership.html

Please keep in mind this particular part of the definition of the word translated “obey”: “by analogy to conform to advice.”

3. Greek #5219

hupakouo (hoop-ak-oo’-o)

Definition: “to hear under (as a subordinate), that is, to listen attentively; by implication to heed or conform to a command or authority"

Translated: “hearken, be obedient to, obey”

- The word “hearken” was used in the KJV, while “answer” was used in the EMTV.

Acts 12:13: “And when Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a servant girl came to answer, named Rhoda.”

- The word “obedient” was used in the KJV. See below for its use in the EMTV.

Acts 6:7: “And the word of God was growing, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem was being multiplied exceedingly, and a great many of the priests were obeying the faith.”

Ephesians 6:5: “Slaves, obey your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in simplicity of heart, as to Christ;”
The word “obey (-ed)” was used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Mark 1:27: “Then they were all amazed, so that they were disputing among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? What new doctrine is this, that He commands even the unclean spirits with authority, and they obey Him?’”

Mark 4:41: “And they feared exceedingly, and were saying to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!’”

Luke 8:25: “But He said to them, ‘Where is your faith?’ But becoming afraid, they marveled, saying to one another, ‘Who then is this? For He commands both the winds and the water, and they obey Him!’”

Luke 17:6: “So the Lord said, ‘If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.”

Romans 6:12(&13), 16: “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts, nor present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ...Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as obedient [Greek #5218] slaves, you are slaves to whom you obey, whether of sin resulting in death, or of obedience [Greek #5218] resulting in righteousness?”

Ephesians 6:1: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”

Colossians 3:20, 22: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ...Bondservants, obey your masters according to the flesh in all things, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.”

2 Thessalonians 1:8: “in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (See context)

2 Thessalonians 3:14: “Now if anyone does not obey our word in this letter, take note of him, and do not associate with him, that he may be ashamed.”

Hebrews 5:9(&10): “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, having been designated by God a High Priest ‘according to the order of Melchizedek,”

Romans 6:17: “But thanks be to God, that though you used to be slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from your heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.”

Romans 10:16: “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?”

Philippians 2:12: “So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;”
Hebrews 11:8: “By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go forth to the place which he was about to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

1 Peter 3: (5&6): “For thus formerly, the holy women who hoped on God also adorned themselves, subjecting themselves [Greek: ‘hupotasso’) to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, of whom you became children, when you do good and are not afraid of any terror.” (Consider the context here!)

4. Greek #5218

hupakoē (hoop-ak-o-ay’)

Definition: “From G5219; attentive hearkening, that is, (by implication) compliance or submission”

Translated: “obedience, (make) obedient, obey (-ing)”

- The word “obedience” was used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Romans 1:5: “through whom we received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the nations for His name,” (See context)

Romans 5:19: “For through the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the One many shall be constituted righteous.”

Romans 6:16: “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as obedient slaves, you are slaves to whom you obey [Greek #5219], whether of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”

Romans 16:19, 26: “For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I rejoice on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent to what is evil. ...but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the eternal God, for obedience to the faith—”

2 Corinthians 7:15: “And his affections are far greater toward you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him.”

2 Corinthians 10: (4&)5-6: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty by God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to avenge every act of disobedience, whenever your obedience is fulfilled.”

Philemon 1:21: “Having been persuaded of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even beyond what I say.”
Hebrews 5:8: “though He was a Son, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” (See context)

1 Peter 1:2: “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.”

- The word “obedient” was used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Romans 15:18(&19): “For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ did not work out through me, in word and deed, for the obedience of the Gentiles--in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”

1 Peter 1:14: “as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves after the former lusts, as you did in your ignorance;”

- The word “obey” was used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Romans 6:16: “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves as obedient slaves, you are slaves to whom you obey [Greek #5219], whether of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”

- The word “obeying” was used in the KJV, while the EMTV used the following.

1 Peter 1:22(&23): “Since you have purified your souls by obedience to the truth through the Spirit in sincere love for the brothers, love one another fervently from a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.”

5. Greek #1096

ginomai (ghin'-om-ahee)
Definition: “to cause to be (“gen” -erate), that is, (reflexively) to become (come into being), used with great latitude (literally, figuratively, intensively, etc.)”

I have omitted the translated use of the following Greek word. The definition is included here only because it was used in combination, for the benefit of showing the Greek meaning of the one English word used in the verses following the next definition.

Greek #5255

hupekoos (hoop-ay'-ko-os)

Definition: “From G5219 [above]; attentively listening, that is, (by implication) submissive”
Translated: “obedient”

- The word “obedient” was used in both the KJV and the EMTV.

2 Corinthians 2:9: “For to this end I also wrote, so that I might put you to the test, to see if you are obedient in all things.”

Philippians 2:8: “And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

- The word “obey” was used in the KJV, while “obedient” was used in the EMTV.

Acts 7: (38&39(40-41): “This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, whom our fathers did not desire to be obedient, but they rejected him and returned in their heart back to Egypt, saying to Aaron, 'Make for us gods who will go before us; as for this Moses who led us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.' And they made a calf in those days, offered a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.”

6. Greek #544

apeitheo (ap-i-theh′-o)

Definition: “to disbelieve (wilfully and perversely)”

Translated: “not believe, disobedient, obey not, unbelieving”

- The words “not believe” were used in both the KJV and the EMTV.

Romans 15:31: “that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,”

- The words “believed not” were used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Acts 17:5: “And the Jews who did not believe became envious, and took some wicked men from the marketplace, and forming a mob, they threw the city into disorder, and came upon the house of Jason, and sought to bring them to the people.”

Acts 19:9: “But when some became hardened and disbelieving, speaking evil against the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and separated the disciples, each day debating in the school of a certain Tyrannus.”

Romans 11:30-31: “For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now you were shown mercy through their disobedience [Greek #543], even so these now were disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also might be shown mercy.”
Hebrews 3:18: “And to whom did He swear that they would not enter into His rest, except to those who disobeyed?”

Hebrews 11:31: “By faith the prostitute Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.”

- The words “believeth not” were used in the KJV. See below for the Greek word’s translated use in the EMTV.

John 3:36: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; and he who does not believe the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

- The word “disobedient” was used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Romans 10:21: “But to Israel he says: “the whole day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people.”

1 Peter 2:7-8: “Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,’ and ‘a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.’ They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.”

1 Peter 3:20: “who formerly disobeyed, when the longsuffering of God was waiting in the days of Noah, when the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water;”

- The words “did not obey” were used in the KJV. See bold words for its use in the EMTV.

Romans 2:8(9): “But to those who are contentious, and who disobey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that works evil, both of the Jew and of the Greek;”

1 Peter 3:1: “Wives, likewise, subject [‘hupotasso’] yourselves to your own husbands, so that even if some are disobedient to the word, that by the conduct of their wives, without a word, they shall be gained for Christ,”

1 Peter 4:17: “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who are disobedient to the gospel of God?”

- The word “unbelieving” was used in the KJV, while the more correct “disbelieving” was used in the EMTV.

Acts 14:2: “But the disbelieving Jews aroused and embittered the souls of the Gentiles against the brothers.”

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