



## **Obeying God Versus Man**

### **Jeremiah 35:5-11**

*But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against the land, we said, 'Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans and the army of the Syrians. "So we are living in Jerusalem" (Jeremiah 35:11—ESV).*

For many years, the Rechabites perfectly obeyed the arbitrary rules of Rechab, Jonadab's father, so they would not drink wine even though Jeremiah gave them a pitcher full. Interestingly, many individuals and groups will turn from obeying the laws of God or the commandments of Jesus in the Bible to establish for themselves arbitrary laws and traditions they will not break, even to their own hurt. For example, a house would be more secure and comfortable in the long term than living in a tent, but Rechab forbade his family and descendants from ever living in a house. Planting and harvesting your own field of grain or vegetables would give your family more food security than raising only animals and depending on trading them as your only reliable source for a well-balanced diet. It would be worse to think that some manmade rules are made as a substitute for honoring God and obeying the moral laws of God, and even worse when these commands are imposed on an entire family forever, but many have done and still do this in less obvious ways than Rechab did. Perhaps even worse would be supposing and teaching that people can choose which moral laws of God and commands of Jesus to obey or disregard without consequences. No manmade rules or societal practices can substitute for learning about Jesus and following Him. Disobeying God always has consequences that we may not see immediately. Jesus said that if we love Him, we will follow Him and obey His commands. His commands are always for our benefit. Jesus demonstrated the extent of His love for us when He died on the cross to save us from the eternal consequences of our sins, so we know He is worthy of our trust and obedience. We can see the problems of obeying Rechab's commands forever. Perhaps they did not know the true God, for they finally disobeyed Rechab and fled in fear to Jerusalem, where they would be killed or put in exile by the Babylonians.