

Romans #6

"Through who we received grace and apostleship, unto obedience of faith among all the nations for his name's sake" (Rm. 1:5).

Twice, in this epistle Paul spoke of "obedience of faith"; here and at the epistle's end. *"But now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all the nations unto obedience of faith..." (16:26).*

There is some question as to whether the definite article "the" should be imposed in the reading; whether the passage should read *"obedience of faith"* or *"obedience to the faith"*. As the ASV translated it, *"obedience of faith"*, the thought is the obedience which faith produces. If it is correct to read *"obedience to the faith"*, the idea is the obedience to the doctrine (faith) which conviction produces. There is no problem with either translation for obedience is the same in either sense, whether it is the action which grows out of our faith or our obedience to the revealed faith. In Romans 1:17, Paul said: *"the righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith"*-- that is from the faith preached to the faith produced.

In Romans 1:5 Paul avows his apostleship -- his work to produce obedience of faith among the nations. It is very important that since Romans deals with the significant theme of "justification by faith" that ere the apostle launches out into an extended study of that topic, he should speak of the "obedience of faith", vitally showing that his theme "justification by faith" is not to be understood as "justification by faith only"! *"As the body without the spirit is dead, even so faith if it hath not works is dead"* and *"Ye see how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only"* (Jms. 2:24, 19).

Someone has somewhere said that "the faith that saves is the faith that obeys". We believe this is true. The grand chapter on faith (Hebrews 11) gives many examples that the faith which pleased God is an obedient faith, a working faith. We read that by faith Abel offered; Enoch walked, Noah prepared and Abraham obeyed to go out and offered (Hb. 11:4; 5, 7, 17). We are reminded that the work of God is faith that Jesus is His Son (Jn. 6:29). We are taught that while neither circumcision avails anything or uncircumcision; that which does avail is *"faith which works by love"* (Gal. 5:6). Jesus said, *"He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life, but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life..."* (Jn. 3:36). True faith

always involves obedience. Acceptance by God requires our faith to act, which act is thus an "act of faith".

Nothing demonstrates this any clearer than baptism. Paul wrote, *"Having been buried with him in baptism; wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead"* (Col. 2:12). Our burial with Christ and our resurrection with him is contingent on our faith in Christ.

The apostleship of Paul was to proclaim the gospel to every creature, causing them through that preaching to come to believe in Jesus Christ and obey his gospel. Paul expressed it another way in Romans 10:13-15. He wrote, *"For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him in whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?.."* Paul, as sent by God to all the world, preached the gospel which produced faith, leading those in whom that faith was produced to *"call on the name of the Lord"* and thus be saved!

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