

## **“The Righteousness Which Is Of Faith ...”**

*“But the righteousness which is of faith saith thus, Say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down) or, who shall descend into the abyss, (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach, because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:6-10).*

This lengthy quotation sets a contrast between what the righteousness “*which is by faith*” does not do and what it does do. It must also be admitted that there is also a contrast between it and the righteousness which is of the law. Notice first what the righteousness which is by faith does not do. It does not rest itself upon seeking to accomplish that which cannot be accomplished. No man can ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from there: none can descend into the abyss and raise him from the dead. These were acts only God could work. And no sinner, no matter who he is, can of himself justify himself; only God can justify the man who has sinned. The sinner cannot keep the law so perfectly he has thereby set aside and rectify those laws he already had broken. No man can work enough good deeds to set aside the wrongs he commits. We are saved “*not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us*” (Titus 3:4).

On the other hand, “*the righteousness which is by faith*” saith, “*The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart.*” Rather than seeking righteousness in such an impossible manner as ascending into heaven or else descending into the abyss, he receives his righteousness from the heart, it is as near as in our mouths and heart! And it is thus that the “*word of faith*” which proclaimed that Jesus was Lord and had risen from the dead was in our heart. It is in our heart when we truly believe that Jesus is Lord and has been raised from the dead. It is with our mouth in which the tongue has ability to confess the faith which is in the heart. Such a faith is readily seen in the eunuch. When he had said, “*Here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?*” Philip responded, “*If thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest.*” His response was, “*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*” (Acts 8:37f). The “*word*” of faith was in the Eunuch’s heart (“*if thy believest with all thy heart*”). The word of faith was on his tongue (“*I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God*”).

With the heart men believeth UNTO righteousness. With the mouth confession is made UNTO salvation. Faith and confession do not instantly bring salvation, they do put such a person in the direction of it. The little word "unto" provides a significant study. Repentance, which is neither faith nor the confession of faith, is said to be UNTO life (Acts 11:18). Baptism is said to be UNTO remission of sins (Acts 2:38). It is a strange quirk of doctrine which teaches one must believe what the word of faith says about Jesus ... that He is the Son of God; believe what the "word of faith" says about His resurrection; but not believe what the "word of faith" says about baptism! Belief is UNTO righteousness. Repentance is UNTO life. Confession is UNTO salvation. Baptism is UNTO remission of sins. All four are UNTO the same end -- salvation; and salvation is not reached until all four steps have been taken! "Wise" and mighty teachers may deny the part baptism plays in salvation. They may also convince millions of people that baptism has nothing to do with salvation. But, they will not change the truth that the righteousness which is by faith includes believing and doing what Jesus said about baptism: "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mk. 16:16). NEXT: "Whosoever Shall Call On The Name Of The Lord Shall Be Saved."

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