

## Faith Leads to Obedience: Not to be Saved but Because we are Saved

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Paul met Jesus Christ along Damascus road (Acts 9:4; 22:7 & 26:14). About A.D. 57, while still at Corinth, he wrote the Epistle of Romans to prepare the Saints at Rome for his upcoming visit. The theme of Romans is: "...I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes..." (Romans 1:16; [http://www.ldsces.org/inst\\_Manuals/nt-in/nt-in-08.htm#8-39](http://www.ldsces.org/inst_Manuals/nt-in/nt-in-08.htm#8-39)).

Paul was so consumed by the principle of the **Gospel of Christ is the power of God** that he said: "For me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21). But it is in the Roman epistle that he developed the theme of the **Gospel is the power of God**, showing that [salvation comes from justification by faith in Christ Jesus, "whom God set... to be a propitiation for our sins (Romans 3:25 & Isaiah 53:4-12) an observation later confirmed by John (1 John 2:2 & 4:10). Paul is clear about salvation by faith in Christ and not mindless adherence to the law of Moses or external circumcision. In fact, Paul later declared the ceremonial law to be a schoolmaster that led us to Christ, [‘who is the end of the {ceremonial} law for righteousness to everyone that believes {Romans 10:4}] that we might be justified by faith (Galatians 3:24). And "after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:25; 2 Peter 1:5-8).

The sad story of Romans is that the "Israel [of God], which followed after the law of righteousness... [did] not attain... righteousness... because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law for they stumbled at that stumbling stone" (Romans 9:31-32), whom John explicitly pointed out to be the Lamb of God (John 1:29 & Revelation 13:8), and who was foreshadowed, that is typified by the Old Testament’s sacrificial system (Hebrews 10:1-12 & Colossians 2:17).

The law contained in ordinances, which was implemented by earthly high priests (Hebrews 9:9), was nailed to the tree (Colossians 2:14 & Hebrews 9:26). Since Christ’s death on Calvary’s cross, we ought not to erroneously think that the ceremonial law is the Royal Law (James 2:8; Matthew 22:36-40 & 5:27-28), which Paul described as holy, just and good (Romans 7:12), which God gives power to obey the Royal Law through the Holy Spirit that He places in us, who in-turn, motivates us to follow God’s decrees and keep His laws (Ezekiel 36:27 & 11:19-20; Isaiah 30:21).

Brethren, do not unthinkingly divorce faith and works and credit your misconception to Paul’s writings. The Bible clearly states that faith without works (obedience) is dead (James 2:17 & 20). God wrote the Royal Law in our minds that we might obey it (Hebrews 10:16; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Micah 6:6-8). And Paul recognized God’s claim of obedience to the Royal Law when he chided as in reproached Roman Saints with rhetorical questions and critiques, which stated: "[You who] preach a man shall not steal, [do you] steal? [You who say that] a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? Apart from the obvious lamentation of their hypocrisy, the implication here is on the salience of obedience. It was the absence of obedience that led Paul to declare to the Roman Saints that because of their duplicity, the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles. More profoundly, however, was Paul’s observation that their circumcision was made uncircumcision when they broke the law (Rom 2:21-26).

To exist in name only is worthless! He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. He is a Jew, who is one inwardly and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit, whose praise is not of men but of God" (Romans 2:28-29). We are the trees of righteousness (Isaiah 61:3), known by our fruit (Luke 6:44) and "being made free from sin..., [we] have [our] fruit unto holiness" (Romans 6:22), which God expects (John 15:16) because it glorifies Him (John 15:8).