

OBEDIENCE THAT COMES FROM FAITH

“Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith” (Rom. 16:25, 26)

There you have it! Faith in its fullest form produces obedience. That is, it usually does. Demons believe and shudder but do not obey (Ja. 2:19). After all, they are demons. If you allow them to influence you, you won't obey either. If you doubt that there are people like this, challenge your unbelieving friends with this question: “If you were convinced that Christianity is true would you become a follower of Christ?” Sadly, many will not! Perhaps Paul describes such people when he wrote of those who “believed in vain” (1 Cor. 15:2). If you believe, but do nothing about it, you are joining with demons and believing in vain! Salvation comes from faith that produces obedience.

Everyone who is saved is obedient. Why would anyone call Jesus Lord and then not obey Him? In this regard Abraham is a good example. Yes! He “believed” God, but the Scriptures are also explicit that Abraham also “obeyed” God. For example, by faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, “obeyed” and went, even though he did not know where he was going (Heb. 11:8). James reminds us that Abraham was considered righteous by what he “did” when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar (Ja. 2:21). You see that faith and actions work together and Abraham's faith was made complete by what he “did” (Ja. 2:22). You see then that a person is justified by what he does and “not by faith alone” (Ja. 2:24).

While there are many examples in the life of Abraham of obedience that comes from faith, please focus on these three. Remember! Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things we do not see. Abraham's obedience came from faith, not sight.

- God promised Abraham the land of Canaan. God told him: **“Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All; the land that you see I will; give to you and your offspring forever” (Gen. 13:14, 15)**. Abraham, however, was dead for over 400 years before his descendants actually inherited the Promised Land. During his life he didn't inherit even one foot of the Promised Land (Acts 7:5). Yet Abraham never did anything that would cause anyone to doubt his complete confidence that God would keep His promise.
- God promised Abraham that he would have descendants as numerous as the stars of the heavens (Gen. 15:5). Abraham did see 8 sons born and several grandchildren, but certainly he did not see descendants as numerous as the stars. None of his sons were virgin born. It was his faith, however, that gave him the strength to obey God and conceive children (Rom. 4:18-22).
- God promised Abraham that in his “Seed” all the nations on earth would be blessed (Gen. 22:18). Jesus was the “Seed” through which all the nations of the earth have been blessed (Gal. 3:16). As you know Abraham died almost 2,000 years before Jesus was born. Yet Jesus said: **“Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad” (Jn. 8:56)**. Abraham “saw” Jesus by faith. It was obedience that comes from faith that enabled Abraham to call things that are not as though they were (Rom. 4:17).

AS WE HAVE SAID, ABRAHAM DID NOT SEE ANY OF THESE PROMISES COME TRUE WITH HUMAN EYES! YET BECAUSE HE BELIEVED GOD HIS ACTIONS WERE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT HE BELIEVED! HIS FAITH PRODUCED OBEDIENCE!

Pilate said: **“What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?” (Matt. 27:22)**. This is a good question. Most who read these words believe in Jesus. The birth of Jesus divides the civilized world into B.C. and A.D. Most also believe that He was raised from the dead. The question is, what are you going to “do” about it?