

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

Paul's epistle to the Romans begins and ends with an interesting phrase. **Rom. 1:6** says his goal as an apostle to the Gentiles was to preach the gospel "*unto the **obedience of faith.***" Paul ends the gospel by praying that the Romans be established by the gospel *for the **obedience of faith*** (**Rom. 16:26**).

The theme of the entire book is that the gospel of Christ is the power of God to save all who believe (**Rom. 1:16**). This is because the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of Christ "*from faith to faith.*" (**1:17**) Obviously, "*faith*" cannot be used the same way both times it is found in **verse 17**.

The gospel is the faith first mentioned in **verse 17**. It is the faith that has been delivered to the saints once for all (**Jude 3**). It is the faith we must examine ourselves to make sure that we are in it (**2 Cor. 13:5**). This is because we will be judged by the faith, the gospel of Christ, the word of Christ (**John 12:48**).

The second "*faith*" in **verse 17** is the faith in our heart because we believe the faith (word of Christ). Paul said this is the purpose of preaching. But **this belief saves us only if we obey**. It is unto our obedience of the faith. Belief is also equated with obedience in **Romans 10:16-17**. Abraham's faith was counted to him for righteousness because his saving faith took **steps**, and our faith must **walk** in the steps of Abraham's faith (**Rom. 4:12**).

A faith that does not work or does not obey is not the faith in Romans (or the New Testament as a whole). The only works that do not justify are the works that are not of faith (such as personal morality or works of the law). Works **of faith** do justify (**James 2:24**).