

Obedience to the Gospel

By studying the scriptures, we realize that man is a responsible being who must respond to God's call (Joshua 24:14-15). The Bible teaches that the gospel is God's power to save the lost (Rom. 1:16). The Bible emphasizes obedience in 2 Thess. 1:7-9, where the apostle Paul taught that God will punish those "that know not God, and . . . obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus." We must understand the gospel and the meaning of obedience to the gospel. Consider the following points.

First, in obeying the gospel, there are certain facts that we must believe. Paul discussed these facts in 1 Cor. 15:1-4. In verse one, Paul talks about the gospel: "Now I make known unto you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand." In preaching this gospel, Paul delivered certain facts that we must accept. In verse three through four, Paul states these facts: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared. . . ." Of these facts, Paul said, "By which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except you believed in vain." Believing these marvelous facts of the gospel is fundamental to our salvation.

Second, we must accept the commands of the gospel. Paul shows that we must obey the commands of the gospel in Rom. 6:17-18: "Whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered; and being made free from sin, ye became servants of righteousness." What form of teaching did Paul deliver, and what form did they obey? Their obedience culminated in baptism: "All we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life (Rom 6:3-4)." Our baptism follows the other Bible commands. We must believe (Mark 16:16), repent of our sins (Acts 17:30) and confess the Lord (Rom. 10:9-10). Obeying these commands makes us free from sin and servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18).

Finally, in obeying the gospel, we receive and enjoy the promises of the Lord. Accordingly, we receive the remission of our sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). Baptism washes away our sins (Acts 22:16). The waters of baptism save us (1 Pet. 3:21). Following baptism, we walk in newness of life. We receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10), if we are faithful unto death.