

obedience to the faith

The following paragraph is taken from "What is Faith", under "Introduction to Romans", on the Theme Study Outline page.

Faith comes into play regarding creeds or religion we adhere to and convictions adopted to guide our lives. One's embracing of a particular creed, religion or denomination inherits the 'faith' of that particular creed, religion or denomination. Christianity, Islam and Buddhism are classified as 'faiths. General reference is made discerning between the Catholic faith and Protestant faith. Each denomination has its own set of by-laws and doctrinal statements. Certain creeds, religions and denominations demand accountability; in others, not so much. We have certain expectations regarding our faith, as well as our faith towards us. Are we living up to those expectations and is there reward and/or consequences? They who claim no existence of a divine being and don't accept intelligent design, evolution becomes their faith by which their steps are ordered and wherein there are consequences.

Romans 1:1-5 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

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The Faith

The topic of this chapter is the phrase... 'obedience to the faith among all nations', with particular focus on 'the faith'. As Paul refers to 'the faith', in this introduction to Romans, he ends with the expression... "made known to all nations for the obedience 'of faith'" (Rom 16:26). A focus on 'of faith', is the topic discussed in the counter chapter titled, "of faith". Though related, there is definite distinction to be made between these two terminologies!

Brought into question is, within context, what is 'the faith', in which among all nations are to be in obedience to?

By way of introduction to this subject, it needs to be made perfectly clear, as expressed elsewhere within this Theme Study, that nobody, but Nobody, was ever justified under the Old Testament based on the premise of Romans 10:9-10 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The death, burial and resurrection are at the heart of Paul's gospel, a mystery hid in the prophets (Rom 16:25-26; 1Cor 1:22-24; 2:7-8; Lk 18:31-34), so when we begin this study on obedience to 'the faith', among all nations, we're not talking about a 'faith', adhered to by OT saints.

Also, this mystery, not being revealed till the ministry of Paul, we're going to show both the similarities and differences between that preceding 'faith' from that of 'the faith', for the obedience among all nations.

Israel's Expectation

To be clear, the pious Jew anticipated the arrival of One who would come in fulfillment of promises made to Abraham, Moses and David, as seen expressed in the words of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist...

Luke 1:67-77 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, 68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. 76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

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- hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David
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- To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins

There was guesswork, from the priests and Levites sent to John the Baptist, by Jews inspired by Pharisees, as to who he was... Christ? Elias? That prophet? (Jn 1:19-24). It was John's mission to make Jesus known to Israel therefore baptizing Him with water to fulfill all righteousness (Jn 1:25-34; Mt 3:15). Though boldly proclaiming Christ to be the Lamb and Son of God, at Jesus' baptism, it was also John who sent two of his disciples, while in prison, to ask... "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Mt 11:2-3).

Who was Jesus?

From the very beginning of the New Testament, we see various acknowledgements as to who Jesus was.

Luke 1:31-35 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and **bring forth a son**, and shalt call his name **JESUS**. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the **Son of the Highest**: and the Lord God shall give unto **him the throne of his father David**: 33 And **he shall reign** over the house of Jacob for ever; and of **his kingdom there shall be no end**. 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the **Son of God**.

Matthew 4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the **Son of God**, command that these stones be made bread.

Matthew 8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, **Jesus**, thou **Son of God**? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Matthew 12:23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the **son of David**?

Matthew 14:33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the **Son of God**.

Matthew 21:15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the **Son of David**; they were sore displeased,

Matthew 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the **Christ**, the **Son of the living God**.

Matthew 26:63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the **Christ**, the **Son of God**.

Matthew 27:54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the **Son of God**.

John 1:49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the **Son of God**; thou art the **King of Israel**.

Mark 14:60-62 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? 61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, **Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?** 62 And Jesus said, **I am**: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten **Son of God**.

The 'Gospel of Jesus Christ' in the Gospels

The terminology 'gospel of Jesus Christ', is found once in the Gospels and it is enlightening in what context it is found, within this topic. In comparison, the phrase 'gospel of Christ', is found eleven times in Paul's epistles (Ro 1:16; Ro 15:19,29; 1Co 9:12,18; 2Co 4:4; 2Co 9:13; 2Co 10:14; Ga 1:7; Php 1:27; 1Th 3:2) and not at all in the general epistles.

Mark 1:1-5 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; 2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

- The beginning of
- the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God
- As it is written in the prophets...

In context, the 'beginning of' the 'gospel of Jesus Christ', the Son of God, is prophecy surrounding the proclamation and anticipation of a restored kingdom back to Israel in fulfillment of Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic Covenants. As already stated, these were things anticipated by the pious Jew.

Christ's crucifixion was a stumbling block, hid away in the prophets, to even which John and Peter yet knew the scriptures that Christ must rise from the dead, when standing before an empty tomb.

1 Corinthians 1:23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock...

John 20:8-9 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

- For as yet they knew not the scripture
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After the resurrection, Jesus was proclaimed both Lord and Christ, awaiting at the right hand of God, in fulfillment of prophecy while yet handing Israel again opportunity to respond to the kingdom offer.

Acts 2:32-38 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

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- Men and brethren, what shall we do?
- Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost

Acts 3:19-20 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

- Repent ye therefore, and be converted

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Saul's (Paul) Persecution of the Church

There was great persecution against the church at Jerusalem and at the heart of this persecution was the eventual apostle to the Gentiles, Saul of Tarsus.

Acts 8:1-4 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. 4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

- at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem
- As for Saul, he made havock of the church

This persecution against the church, via the hands of Saul, was abruptly halted in Acts 9 by the One Who truly was being persecuted, as represented in the church.

Acts 9:1-6 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

- And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest
- And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

The Faith Preceding 'the Faith'

We now look for clues as to the 'faith', that preceded 'the faith', in which Paul held the nations accountable in his introduction to Romans.

Saul's conversion created both an amazement, as well as concern, on the part of those who heard of Paul's turnaround!

Acts 9:10-15 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

- Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem
- And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name

Acts 9:19-21 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. 21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

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- But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem
- and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests

Galatians 1:21-23 Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; 22 And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: 23 But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.

- But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past
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Preacheth the Faith Which Once He Destroyed

For those who seek to rightly divide the word of truth, there is often a question raised as to what Paul understood and preached, along his timeline, since his conversion in Acts 9?

The question here in Galatians 1:21-23, is what exactly is meant in... 'now preacheth the 'faith' which once he destroyed'? What precisely constitutes this 'faith'?

The Jewish believers, at the time of Paul's conversion, were being established in the Apostles doctrine since Acts 2, that was founded in Jesus' teachings (Mt 5-8) and His commandments (Jn 17:1-20).

Acts 2:41-47 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. 42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

- they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship
- the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved

In reflection back to Paul's conversion, from the amazement and concern on the part of those who heard about Paul or who was going to rub elbows with Paul, we can glean the following...

1. In persecuting the church, the Lord claimed Paul to be persecuting Him (Acts 9:4-5).
2. Ananias heard by many of Paul, how much evil he hath done to Christ's saints at Jerusalem (Acts 9:13-14).
3. Those at Damascus, hearing Paul preach Christ in the synagogue that he is the Son of God was amazed knowing that he destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem (Acts 9:19-21).
4. Those in the churches of Judaea, which were in Christ, had heard only that he which persecuted them in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed (Gal 1:21-23).

The Common Denominator

The question here raised is how does 'the faith', which once he destroyed, compare now to 'the faith' Paul promotes for the obedience among all nations, in his introduction in Romans? The answer is quite simple! The main focus in the gospels, as well as in the early Acts period, under the preaching of the Twelve and Paul's pre-Acts 13 ministry, is

that Jesus Christ is the Son of God! The 'faith', which he once destroyed, was those he persecuted claiming and promoting Jesus Christ to be the Son of God.

The immediate focus of Paul, after his encounter with the Lord, is clearly spelled out in Acts 9:20 "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, **that he is the Son of God.**" In the context of 'preaching the faith he once destroyed', centers directly on who Jesus and others claimed Him to be and that being the Son of God. In other words, the common denominator between the faith, he once destroyed and 'the faith', he admonished the nations to be in obedience to, is Jesus being the Son of God!

The Uncommon Denominator

If the common denominator, between the 'faith' that Paul once destroyed, and 'the faith' promoted in Romans 1, for the nations is the same, then what is the difference between the two 'faiths'?

The beginning of the framework of the gospel of God (Rom1:1-4), in Paul's introduction, concerns God's Son Jesus Christ which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh. Paul then immediately jumps to Christ's resurrection from the dead. In doing so, Paul is skipping all aspects that Peter brings out in his preaching in Acts 2, to the nation of Israel. In other words, David's kingship lineage and Jesus setting at the right hand of God, in anticipation of Israel's repentance, is totally omitted in promoting obedience to this... 'the faith' among the nations! In Romans 1, Paul picks up on Christ's resurrection, outside of the Messianic aspect of prophecy, directed to Israel! Paul is moving on from the mere concerns of Israel...

Romans 1:1-4 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

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Contrasting 'the gospel of Jesus Christ'

To further emphasize this point, lets contrast the sole reference of the expression, 'gospel of Jesus Christ', to Paul's reference to the 'gospel of Christ', in his introduction to Romans.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Mark 1:1-5 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; 2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

- The beginning of
- the gospel of Jesus Christ
- the Son of God
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The Gospel of Christ

Romans 1:1-5 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5 By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

- an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God
- Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures
- Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh
- And declared to be the Son of God with power... by the resurrection from the dead
- By whom we have received grace and apostleship
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Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

- For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ
- for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth
- to the Jew first, and also to the Greek

The 'beginning' of the 'gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, references that time prophesied when John the Baptist arrived on the scene preparing the way of the Lord, in preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, to the Jew. As already pointed out, Luke 1 announces the birth of John the Baptist, with anticipation of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic, New and Davidic covenants.

As a side note, it should be pointed out that nobody was put 'in Christ', during the time period between John the Baptist and the crucifixion of Christ. Position wise, those that are least in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist. This statement involves hopes and callings.

Luke 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

In looking again at Paul's introduction to Romans, where we see Paul jumping from God's Son, made of the seed of David to be declared the Son of God via the resurrection from the dead, it cannot be overlooked what's eliminated... to be replaced. Again, as already pointed out, what is eliminated is reference to any of the covenants associated with Abraham and David. However, both Abraham and David are now used as illustrations as to how God saves today (Rom 4), in contrast to justification under the OT.

Here, 'the gospel of Christ' is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Obedience to the Faith Among all Nations

Obviously, Jesus being the Son of God is the subject of 'the faith', as was under the ministry of the Apostles. The question now arises... what are the components of this 'the faith', that the nations are to be obedient to?

The book of Romans is all about answering that question, from all angles, with deduction found in the closing chapter.

Romans 16:25-26 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

- Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel
- and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery
- which was kept secret since the world began
- But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets
- according to the commandment of the everlasting God
- made known to all nations for the obedience 'of faith'

The obedience to 'the faith', among all nations, is wrapped up in Paul's gospel, and the preaching of Jesus according to the revelation of the mystery. One of the major discernments, that Paul makes in Romans, is between God justifying the circumcision 'by faith' and the uncircumcision 'through faith'! Justification 'through faith' is 'of faith' and both of these are detailed within the Theme Study, with same titles.

The best way to sum up this chapter, in demonstrating distinction between the 'faith' once destroyed by Paul, to 'the faith' now promoted by Paul, for obedience among all nations for his name, is commentary found in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 3:10-11 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid
- which is Jesus Christ

1 Corinthians 4:16-17 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. 17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

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Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the common denominator throughout the New Testament, beginning with John the Baptist! Having stated that, in rightly dividing the word of truth, we find that Paul's ways, which be in Christ, is often unique to this dispensation of the grace of God for Gentiles, as revealed throughout Paul's epistles.