

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

PREACHING THROUGH THE BIBLE: ROMANS Romans 1:1-5, 16-17; and 16:25-27

I. INTRODUCTION

A. AUTHORSHIP

1. IDENTIFIED IN TEXT—[1:1](#)
2. HOW PAUL IDENTIFIED HIMSELF
 - a. In **Romans**—“a **servant** of Jesus Christ, called to be an **apostle**”
 - b. **Normal** pattern—‘**apostle**’—in 9 of 13 epistles
 1. Four letters *without* ‘apostle’
 - Philippians, I and II Thessalonians, Philemon
 2. Only two letters with no identity at all
 - I and II Thessalonians—simply from “Paul, Silas, and Timothy”
 - c. Identity as ‘**servant**’—in three epistles
 - Romans—servant of Jesus, and apostle
 - Philippians—servant of Jesus Christ [only]
 - Titus—servant of God and apostle of Jesus Christ

B. PAUL—THE PERSON

1. KEY BIOGRAPHICAL PASSAGES

- [Acts 9:1-31](#)
- [Acts 22:3-4](#)
- [Philippians 3:5-14](#)
- [Gal 1:13-14](#)

2. IDENTITY

- Born in Tarsus of Cilicia—first decade AD?
- Tribe of Benjamin
- Raised in Jerusalem
- Pharisee
- Studied under Gamaliel
- Persecuted the Church
- Converted on road to Damascus
- Called ‘Saul’—Acts 13:9 (Saul also called Paul)—Luke changed to Paul in Acts 13:13

3. CHRONOLOGY OF LIFE [APPROXIMATE]

30s

- Conversion and Call—mid-decade—possibly as early as 32-34?
- Damascus → Arabia → Damascus
- Jerusalem—met with Apostles—3 years after conversion (**Gal 1:18**)
- To Syria/Cilicia—and Tarsus

40s

- Ministry in Antioch—1 year
- First Missionary Journey—47-49 AD?
- Jerusalem Council—c. 50 AD?—14 years after first trip to Jerusalem (**Gal 2:1**)

50s

- Second Missionary Journey—50-52? AD
 - In Corinth—1 ½ years—about 50-52 AD
I and II Thessalonians
- Third Missionary Journey—52-57 AD
 - In Ephesus—2-3 years
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
 - In Greece—three months (56-57 AD?)—probably Corinth
Romans
- To Jerusalem—arrested—57 AD
- To Caesarea—house arrest—57-59 AD
- Journey to Rome—59 AD

60s

- Imprisonment in Rome—first time?
Colossians
Philemon
Ephesians
Philippians
- Release from Prison?
I Timothy
Titus
- Second Roman Imprisonment?
II Timothy
- Martyrdom in Rome—AD 64-68?

C. COMPOSITION

- PROBABLY 56-57 AD—DURING 3RD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

- AFTER LEAVING EPHESUS AND GOING THROUGH MACEDONIA
- DURING THREE MONTH STAY IN GREECE—PROBABLY CORINTH—[Acts 20:1-3](#)

D. RECIPIENTS

1. CHURCH IN ROME

1:7—*to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints*

2. SPECIFIC NAMES—GIVEN IN CHAPTER 16

3. MAYBE INTENDED TO BE CIRCULAR LETTER FOR THAT REGION

E. PURPOSES

1. STATES PAUL'S **INTENTIONS**

- To visit them—as he has long desired—[1:11](#)
- To give them a 'spiritual gift' and 'establish' them—when he visits—[1:11](#)
- To visit them—on the way to Spain—[15:22-29](#)

2. ASKS FOR ROMANS' **FINANCIAL HELP**—FOR HIS GOING TO SPAIN—[15:24](#)

3. ASKS ROMANS TO **PRAY** FOR HIM—[15:30-32](#)

- The safe accomplishment of his mission in Jerusalem
- His ability to come to Rome

4. **COMMENDS** PHOEBE AND GIVE GREETINGS TO ROMAN CHRISTIANS—[chapter 16](#)

5. **STRENGTHENS** THE ROMAN CHURCH

- Belief**—gives them a strong **doctrinal** base—[chapters 1-8](#)
- Promise**—reminds them of **God's faithfulness**—[chapters 9-11](#)
- Practice**—shows how to **live as Christian examples**—[chapters 12-15](#)

F. NATURE OF LETTER

1. MOST SYSTEMATIC EXPRESSION OF PAULINE THEOLOGY

2. UNLIKE OTHER PAULINE LETTERS

- To a church he did not start—or had not visited yet
- Not addressing specific problems—but laying out general theology and practice

3. MAYBE A CIRCULAR LETTER—TO GO BEYOND ROME—TO THE REGION

4. MAYBE CHAPTER 16 A SEPARATE LETTER—APPENDED LATER

G. ORGANIZATION

1. INTRODUCTION—**1:1-15**
2. THEME—JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH—**1:16-17**
3. GOD’S JUSTICE—**1:18 through Chapter 4**
 - God’s Wrath against All Humanity—1:18-3:21
 - Justification by Faith—3:21-31
 - Abraham’s Example—chapter 4
4. GOD’S SALVATION—**Chapters 5-8**
 - Results of Justification—5:1-5
 - Basis of Justification: Christ’s Obedience—5:6-21
 - Baptized to Walk with Christ—chapter 6
 - Powerlessness of the Law—7:1-13
 - Conflict between Two Natures—7:14-25
 - Life in the Spirit and Victory in Christ—chapter 8
5. GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISE—**Chapters 9-11**
 - Israel’s Disbelief and Gentiles’ Belief—chapter 9
 - Salvation through the Word of Faith—chapter 10
 - Israel Not Abandoned—chapter 11
6. CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR—**Chapter 12 through 15:13**
7. PAUL’S EXAMPLE OF MINISTRY AND FUTURE PLANS—**15:14-33**
8. GREETINGS AND CONCLUSION—**Chapter 16**

H. PROPORTION OF CONTENT—433 VERSES

1. GREETING AND INFORMATIONAL—14.1% [**one-seventh**]
 - 1:1-15—Introduction
 - 15:14—through Chapter 16—Paul’s plans, greetings and closing
2. DOCTRINAL—39.5% [**two-fifths**]
 - Chapter 1:16—through Chapter 3
 - Chapter 5
 - Chapter 7:1-13
 - Chapter 8
 - Chapter 10
3. PRACTICAL—46% [**almost half**]
 - a. Examples of theological principles—24.48%—[**almost ¼**]

- Chapter 4—Abraham’s example
- Chapter 7:14-25—Paul’s struggle (and ours)—flesh vs spirit
- Chapter 9—Israel’s disobedience and the Gentiles—now
- Chapter 11—Israel’s restoration—future

b. Application to Christian Life—21.7%—[over one-fifth]

- Chapter 6
- Chapter 12—through 15:13

I. THEMES

1. THE LAW AND FAITH

a. Two Dominant Themes

- ‘Faith—Believe/Believes’—mentioned 63 times
- ‘Law’—mentioned 78 times

b. The Law—powerless to save—8::3

c. The Power of Faith

1. Justification by Faith—1:16-17
2. Obedience of Faith—1:11 and 16:26

2. UNIVERSAL CONDITION AND PUNISHMENT OF SINFUL HUMANITY

a. Everyone is a sinner—3:23

b. God’s justice is impartial—2:11

c. Payment for sin is death—6:23

3. GOD’S LOVE SAVES—chapter 5

- a. Through Christ’s death—reconciling sinners to God
- b. By God’s grace—through Christ’s righteous sacrifice
- c. Justification—obtained by Christ for all persons
- d. Result—eternal life offered through Christ our Lord

4. UNION WITH CHRIST AND OBEDIENT WALKING WITH HIM—6:1-7:13

5. LIVING IN THE FLESH—OR THE SPIRIT—7:14-8:25

6. CERTAIN VICTORY IN CHRIST—8:26-38

7. THE WAY OF SALVATION

10:9-13—*that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture*

says, “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

8. “MAY IT NEVER BE”

3:4—a person’s unbelief never nullifies God’s faithfulness—He will always be faithful

3:6—the fact God punishes unrighteousness never makes Him unrighteous—He is always just

3:31—faith never nullifies the Law—it establishes the Law

6:2—though God forgives by grace, we should never sin to make grace increase

6:15—we should never sin because we are under grace and not the Law

7:7—the Law is never sin(ful)—it helps us to know what sin is

7:13—the Law, which is good, is not a *cause* of death—no—*sin* causes death

9:4—the fact that God chooses whom he desires to do his will—never makes Him unjust

11:1—God has never rejected His people (Israel)

11:11—Israel stumbled—but never fell away (completely) in a way it cannot be restored

II. BIBLICAL TEXT—Romans 1:16-17

1:16-17—**16** *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* **17** *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”*

III. EXPOSITION—JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

A. OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT

1. FIRST SAID BY HABAKKUK

Hab 2:4—*Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him; but the righteous will live by faith.*

2. SO THIS PRINCIPLE WAS IMBEDDED IN THE MEANING OF THE LAW

3. HIGHLIGHTED BY PAUL—HERE—IN **ROMANS 4**

a. **Abraham**—the perfect example of ‘justification by faith’

b. He believed God—and was justified—*before* he was circumcised

B. THE RIGHTEOUS MAN LIVES BY FAITH

1. THE MAN WHO IS ‘RIGHTEOUS’

a. **Righteous** = ‘just’ = justified = justification = **δικαιος**

b. **Faith**—has two dimensions = **πιστις**

1. Assent—knowing/affirming the truth

2. Trust—relying on the source of this knowledge

2. JUSTIFICATION

- a. Is not *just* a status—legal position of being ‘right’
- b. It is *more*—being in right **relationship** to the offended party
- c. It comes by being united with the justifier—assuming His status—**6:5-7**

3. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH--

- a. Is not *salvation* by faith—but *justification* by faith
- b. Salvation comes **by grace—through faith—Eph 2:8-9**

4. WHAT PAUL WAS OPPOSING

- a. Justification by works of the Law—as a cause of salvation
- b. Justification by status—birth and ethnic (Jewish) background
 - 1. Not based on—outward circumcision—**3:25-27**
 - 2. But based on—inward circumcision of the heart—**3:28-29**

5. **EXAMPLE**—HISTORICAL APPLICATION

- a. Roman Catholic misinterpretation—reading **verses 17-18** together
- b. Luther’s re-interpretation—reading **verses 16-17** together
- c. Reformation principles—*sola fide—sola gratia—sola Scriptura*

6. JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH—IS *NOT* WITHOUT WORKS

- See “the obedience of faith” (below)

IV. BIBLICAL TEXT—Romans 1:1-5; 16:25-27

1:1-5—*1 Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, 4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name’s sake.*

16:25-27—*25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the*

commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

V. EXPOSITION—THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

A. PROPORTIONALITY OF MATERIAL IN ROMANS

1. REVIEW OF STATISTICS

- One-eighth = Introduction—information—greetings-closing
- 40% = Justification by Faith—and Salvation by Grace
- Half = Practical Explanations
 - ¼ = examples—illustrating doctrine
 - ¼ = application—how to live obediently

2. IMPLICATIONS

- **Romans**—is not just a theoretical treatise—but also a practical manual
- **Justification** by faith—is not just a theoretical doctrine—but a basis for practical action
- **Faith** itself—is not just a concept or mental process—but also an engaging action

B. MEANING OF WORDS

1. OBEDIENCE = ὑπακοή

- a. Root words = ὑπο + ακουω
- b. Literal meaning = ‘to listen under’
- c. Meaning = to listen in such a way that follows counsel/command—that complies
- d. Usage in NT
 1. NT passages—14
 2. Used 6 times in Romans
- e. Other key passages—illustrate usage
 1. Obedience of Christ

5:19—*For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.*

- a. Christ accomplished our righteousness—by His obedience
- b. We are not justified by what we do—but by what He did
- c. The nature of Christ’s obedience

1. He did not need to be justified—so His obedience was not a cause
 2. He obeyed *because* He was righteous already—rightly related to the Father
 3. Obedience is the result of a right relationship with God—not the cause
 - d. So—our obedience is a result—not the cause—of justification
 - e. Our obedience is a *necessary* result of justification—if we are right, we obey
2. How God used Paul

15:18—*For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed.*

- a. One purpose of salvation/righteousness of the Gentiles—is their obedience
- b. This is one of the stated purposes of the letter—in **1:5**
- c. Paul, himself has been fulfilling this purpose that he calls the Romans to fulfill

2. FAITH = **πίστις**

a. **Belief**

1. Affirmation of truth—that involves two aspects
 - a. **Understanding**—knowing that something is true
 - b. **Assent**—giving affirmation based on conviction that it is true—*assensus*
 - c. Primarily—a mental and internal process
2. A statement of truth
 - a. An explanatory statement—that defines/expresses truth
 - b. Collection of such statements—truths we believe/follow—‘statement of faith’

b. **Trust**—relational/internal → external process

1. Confidence—based on certainty of a truth—or truth-giver
2. Dependence—relying on a truth—or truth-giver—because it is reliable
3. Entrusting—oneself to a truth—or truth-giver—*fiducia*
4. Primarily—a relational process—moving from internal towards external action

c. **Faithfulness**

1. Reliability—of the one who gives the truth
2. Obedience—of one who follows the truth-giver

C. MEANING OF PHRASEOLOGY

1. POSSIBLE MEANINGS OF PHRASE—ὕπακοήν πίστεως

a. Obedience **to** the ‘faith’ [genitive **objective**]

- Typically means—adhering to a set of doctrinal principles
- Probably the meaning of **Acts 6:7**
- Certainly necessary—but not the *primary* meaning here

b. Faith that **produces** obedience [genitive **subjective**]

- Goes beyond mental assent—to doctrinal truths
- This is trust that transforms character—and produces results
- Faith produces faithfulness—obedience

c. Faith and obedience—that **identify** the subject [genitive **attributive** or of **identity**]

- Faithful obedience
- Both words—equally and together—identify the one exhibiting faith and obedience
- Obedience—shows the *kind* of faith one has—willingness to follow through
- Faith—shows the *kind* of obedience—reliable and dependable and consistent

2. CONCLUSIONS—WE MAY DRAW

- a. Faith begins with truth—**doctrine** and **personal** embodiment in God
- b. We **believe** it—*assensus*
- c. We also **trust** and follow the truth-giver—*fiducia*
- d. We are **loyal**—exhibit the characteristics of the one we trust/follow—**obedience**
- e. Obedience—is the *product* of righteousness—that is relational—not just pronounced

D. CONTEXT OF PHRASEOLOGY

1. THIS PHRASE IS CRITICAL TO CONTEXT OF ROMANS

- a. Sets the whole context of the letter
 - Bracketing the book at each end—chapters 1 and 16
- b. Gives a key purpose of the letter—calling Christians to obedience
- c. Defining the universal scope of the letter
 1. For all Gentiles to obey—*the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles*
 - a. **εθνοί**—Not just technically all ‘non-Jews’

- b. Also means—all ‘nations’—all people groups
- 2. Beyond Gentiles—but for Jews also—as stated by Paul later
 - a. Expectation of obedience—and failure of Jews—given in **chapter 9**
 - b. Certainty that they would return to obedience—given in **chapter 11**
- d. Gives a key purpose of the letter—faith must lead to obedience

2. SIMILAR PHRASING IN **ACTS 6**

- a. After selection of the deacons

Acts 6:7—The word of god kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

- b. In Acts—this probably means
 - Obeying the body of ‘faith’ expressed in the word of God—i.e. doctrinal beliefs
 - Simply—a statement of historical fact—they were following the teachings of Apostles
- c. In Romans—the meaning is different
 - A more complex statement—of deeper theological import
 - More than just a narrative, descriptive historical statement
 - But a statement of purpose for the whole book

E. ‘OBEDIENCE OF FAITH’—AS FAITHFULNESS—IN ROMANS

1. EXPLAINS AND AMPLIFIES ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

- a. Explains—describes the *kind* of faith that justifies
 - 1. Not just mindless or meaningless assent—in words alone
 - 2. But faith that results in obedience
- b. Amplifies—on the basic definition of justification
 - 1. Basic statement of justification = *the just person lives by faith*
 - 2. “Obedience of faith”—shows *how* righteous persons live—by *doing* what faith demands

2. HOW ROMANS DEFINES ‘OBEDIENCE OF FAITH’

- a. Positive Example—**Abraham**—**chapter 4**
- b. Personal Application—**chapters 6-7**
 - 1. Following Christ and His example—**chapter 6**

2. Being united with Christ—and the struggle for victory—**chapter 7**
 - c. Negative Example—Israel’s *disobedience*—**chapter 9**
 - d. Manual of Practical Applications—**chapters 12-15**
3. KEY PASSAGES—ILLUSTRATING OBEDIENCE OF FAITH
- a. United with Christ—**chapter 6:1-12**
 1. We are buried with Christ
 - So that we might **walk** in newness of life—**6:4**
 2. We die with Christ
 - So we might **live** with Him—**6:8**
 3. Present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead
 - [present] your members as **instruments** of righteousness to God—**6:13**
 4. One purpose of *righteousness*—freed from sin—in order to **obey** God’s word

Rom 6:17-18—*But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became **obedient** from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of **righteousness**.*
 - b. We **die** to the Law—**chapter 7:4-6**
 1. Through Christ’s body—He enables us to do so
 2. In order that—we can be joined to Him [Christ]
 3. Purposes
 - a. So we can **bear fruit** for God—**verse 4**
 - b. So that we **serve** in newness of the Spirit, and not in oldness of the letter—**verse 6**
 - c. We **dedicate** ourselves to God—**Rom 12:1-2**
 1. Present your **bodies** as living and holy sacrifices—[dying to self]
 - This is our spiritual **service** of worship—**verse 1**
 2. Not conformed to the world—but transformed by renewal of the mind
 3. So we might **prove** what the perfect/acceptable will of God is—**verse 2**
 - d. **Chapters 12-15:13**—Manual for Christian living
 1. Sacrificial **service**—completely devoted to God—**chapter 12**

2. The church **serv**ing God as a unified body—**chapter 12**
3. Be at **peace** with all persons—humble—respectful—not vengeful—**chapter 12**
4. **Obey** the government—**chapter 13**
5. Love your neighbor—[a product of righteousness]—**chapter 13**

13:10—*Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law.*

6. **Behave** properly—morally—**chapter 13**
7. Tolerate one another's differences—do not offend your brother—**chapter 14**
 - a. Those *strong* in **faith**—should accommodate those *weak* in **faith**
 - b. Here 'faith'—is not just doctrine—but how one *lives* in relation to the law/faith
8. **Self-denial** and **mutual-acceptance** of one another—**chapter 15**
9. Paul's example—**15:18**
 - a. He speaks only of what Christ has **accomplished** through him
 - b. The result of Christ's work through Paul
 1. The Gentiles have **obeyed**
 2. Both in word and **deed**
 - c. This highlights one of the purposes of Romans
 1. Not just to explain theology—though that is a key purpose
 2. Also to set the right example in evangelizing the **εθνοι**—all nations/Gentiles
 3. Thus bringing—**obedience**—*among* all nations and *known* to all nations