

# *Redwater Restorer*

*"The voice of one crying in the wilderness..." (Matthew 3:3)*

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## *The Obedience Of Faith*

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The doctor wrote out a prescription for Jim. Jim could neither read, nor pronounce the name of the drug, but he had faith in his doctor. Jim drove to the pharmacy and handed the slip of paper to a young lady behind the counter, and in no time at all had a small bottle of pills. The instructions said to take one pill three times daily. Jim didn't like the idea of taking medicine, but he had faith in his doctor. He had been diagnosed with high blood pressure and the doctor told him that if he would take this medication his blood pressure would remain within the normal range. Jim had faith in his doctor, but decided that he would not take the medication. A few weeks later, Jim suffered a stroke due to high blood pressure. Although the above story is fictional, it has its basis in reality. Jim claimed to have faith in his doctor, but how much faith did he really have?

One of the most prevalent false teachings today is the doctrine of "faith only". Proponents of this teaching insist that salvation comes by faith alone separate from any action on our part. A simple study of the original language here can clear up this assumption. The word faith is translated from the Greek word pisteuo (pronounced pis-tyoo'-oh), and is rendered "believe" 239 times, "commit unto" 4 times, "commit to (one's) trust" 4 times, and "believer" once in the King James Version, (Thayer's). The word carries with it the connotation of conviction and trust. Vine's Expository Dictionary defines it as

signifying "reliance upon, not mere credence."

One makes a tremendous error in assuming that a simple acknowledgment of the existence of God, or His Son is equivalent to placing faith in them. James reminds us in 2:19, *"Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."* So when we say we believe God exists we have just then reached the level of the demons. They, too, acknowledge that much.

Many today have tried to divorce works from any context of faith. Such is unreasonable, and foolish. Jesus Himself said, *"This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent"* (John 6:29).

One wonders why any would desire to separate faith from works. The concept of "easy believe-ism" is so common because men generally do not wish to do the will of God. Like the hamburger restaurant, we would like to hear the Lord say "Have it your way!" when it comes to spiritual matters. But it is sobering when we read Jesus' warning in Matthew 7:21, *"Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."* It is a working faith that saves us.

In fact, the word faith itself implies

## *The Obedience of Faith (Cont.)*

obedience. Paul wrote in Romans 10:16, *"But they have not all obeyed the gospel For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report."* Here Paul equates obedience to the Gospel with believing the report of God. In Romans 1:8, Paul praises the Roman church because their *"faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."* What type of faith did the Romans have? Let the apostle answer that question. Using similar phraseology, Paul writes in 16:19, *"Your obedience is come abroad unto all men."* Again, Paul equates obedience with having faith.

Also of note is the fact that Paul combines the terms twice in the book of Romans, calling it the *"obedience of faith"*, (See Romans 1:5 and 16:26, American Standard Version).

Some will cry, "But what of the Philippian Jailer? He was told that he only had to believe." It is true that in Acts 16:30-31 when the Jailer asked that all-important question, *"What must I do to be saved?"* Paul's answer was *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."* But we must ask how were he and his family to believe? Would a simple acknowledgment of the existence of Christ be sufficient, or would more be required? Let the narrative speak for itself. Verse 32 tells that Silas *"spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."* This implies that there was more to believing on Jesus than just recognizing his existence. Then verse 33 reveals that the Jailer *"...took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his straightway."* There can be no doubt what kind of faith the Jailer had! It was a working faith that moved him to obey the Gospel

immediately, (straightway) upon hearing it.

The Hebrew writer warns, *"But without faith it is impossible to please (God)..."* (Hebrews 11:6). Of course, this brings us to the conclusion that our faith in God must be that working, obedient faith that is described in the New Testament. James warns us *"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."* (James 2:26). We then of necessity infer that our faith today must be an active one, rather than just lip service to the Almighty. We would do well to remember Paul's instruction to the Galatians in 5:6, *"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love."* If we want to restore the New Testament church we must allow the Bible to interpret itself rather than forcing man's interpretation upon it. Then and only then will we enjoy the salvation that was enjoyed by the church in the first century.

(Works cited: Wuest's Word Studies in the New Testament; Notes From the Thayer's Lexicon; Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words;)

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