

TRANSITION BY OBEDIENCE (1) By Keith Greer

"But someone will say, You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works." {James 2:18} Unfortunately, most of the religious world completely misunderstands the role of faith in God's plan for mankind's eternal redemption. The **faith-only** doctrine has resulted in many grave teaching mistakes. Such teaching earnestly contends that there is absolutely **NOTHING** sinful men can do to save themselves. Works have nothing to do with salvation; it's simply a free gift given to us by a merciful, gracious God. What these folks miss is the role works of obedience plays in God's plan. First, let's freely admit that mankind, by himself, is hopelessly unable to do anything about his own sin problem. This situation came about through his own fault. "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." {Isaiah 59:1,2} We choose to sin, thus creating the need for God to provide a remedy. Open your Bibles and hearts, and let's see what He says about solving the problem.

From Unrighteousness to Righteousness Through Christ. Natural state—"As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one.'" {Romans 3:10} "For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all." {Romans 11:32} Since everyone chooses to sin (we are not born in sin), we have all been separated from God by our sins—broken fellowship. Prescribed action—"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." {Romans 10:10} God presented the medicine that could cure our ailment—sin. We need to have faith in God's provided means for obtaining forgiveness. New relationship—"For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." {2 Corinthians 5:21} Only through Christ's righteousness, in being a perfect sacrifice, could the ransom price for our sins be paid. Now we see the transition from unrighteousness to righteousness through Christ.

Man Dead in Sin to Spiritual Life in Christ. Natural State—"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience." {Ephesians 2:1,2} Being apart from Christ, mankind finds himself in a spiritually dead condition. Prescribed Action—"When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.'" {Acts 11:18} We must turn away from our sins and turn toward God—looking for a different course to pursue. New relationship—"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." {1 John 4:9} "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." {1 John 5:11} Sinful man's only hope of regaining fellowship with God is thru the Son. Through Christ, we become alive spiritually. Do you see the transition? **Obedience brings us from being dead in sin to being alive in Christ.**

Old Man of Sin to a New Creature. Natural State—"Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of

sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered." {Romans 6:17,18}
One who is not in Christ is in bondage to sin. He needs to be released. Understand this important point— every person is in need to such a release. Why? All men have sinned, Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8. Yet, when one determines to turn their back on sin it requires a different attitude about sin! Can one continue down the same paths that led him to be separated from God in the first place? Absolutely not!
