

RESULTS OF OBEDIENCE BY FAITH (2)

By Keith Greer

Saul of Tarsus. Convert: Saul of Tarsus. His conversion is reiterated in Acts 9, 22, and 26.

Background: Chief of sinners. “Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” {1 Timothy 1:13-15} In Paul’s eyes, he was among the least likely candidates for salvation. Transition: When Ananias told Saul the words God wanted him to hear, Saul obeyed. “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” {Acts 22:16} He was baptized immediately! Became. Paul would live with faith and fervent zeal, just as he had during his persecution of the Lord’s church. “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.” {1 Timothy 1:12} With the same commitment Saul had as the Lord’s enemy, Paul became His strongest ally. God’s Warning: Paul understood the ever-present temptation to turn back. “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” {1 Corinthians 9:27} If he was eternally saved, no matter how he behaved following his obedience, Paul did not seem to be aware of it.

The Romans. Converts: The Book of Romans was addressed to those who made up the church in Rome – obedient Christians. Background: These men and women were at one time “slaves of sin.” “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} Transition: How did they change their conduct? “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” {Romans 6:4} Their lives were made NEW when they contacted Christ’s blood during baptism. {Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18,19}. Became. What had they become? “And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” {Romans 6:18} Obedient believers became Christ’s slaves for righteousness sake. God’s Warning: The inspired apostle warned against the danger of failing to maintain this new course and slipping back into the old way of life. “For it is written: ‘As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.’ So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.” {Romans 14:11,12} Each person will give account for his WHOLE record – before and after obedience to Christ.

“**Consistency thou art a jewel.**” We could study examples of other conversions in the sacred record – the Corinthians, the churches of Galatia, and the Ephesians. And we would find the same actions and the same results. What we need is an understanding of Bible faith and what it is – **OBEDIENT FAITH!** Bible faith, as defined in God’s book, is what results when an obedient and honest heart follows God’s instructions – to the letter. How can we read the same facts over and over and not see the pattern in God’s plan for our salvation? Only the prejudiced and dishonest could fail to see that without obedience, there is no faith.

Dear readers, despite popular sentiment among religious people, mere mental assent is not the faith we read about in God's word. If you want further proof, read Hebrews 11 and look at the pattern of the words "**BY FAITH**..." Each did the same thing—obeyed! ***