

"So then faith cometh by hearing . . ."

Since "**the just shall live by faith**" (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:38), faith is one of the most important things that we need to understand. And how faith is imparted to the human spirit is what we want to share now.

To understand this, we must look at the context of the scripture, and learn the words used by the Holy Spirit through Paul in the original, and then we can understand what God wants us to know.

In Romans, Paul was writing to the people about believing "into" the Lord Jesus by confessing with their mouths and believing in their hearts, but before that could happen, someone needed to tell them what to believe. (Rom. 10:8-14)

And then Paul writes "**How beautiful are the feet of those announcing the glad tidings of peace, announcing the glad tidings of good things.**" (v. 15 lit.) That means all of us, for that is the ministry of every Christian. (Acts 8:4; 2 Cor. 5:18)

But Paul says that all have "**not obeyed the gospel.**" This literally says "**not complied with the good news they've heard,**" "**not hearkened to the glad tidings.**" (v.16)

Next Paul quotes Isaiah, "**Lord, who hath believed our report?**" (v.16) And answers this with the profound statement so many have heard and yet so few understand correctly,

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." (vv. 17-18)

Here the Greek word translated "**report**" in verse 16 is ἀκουσθησάντων, *akoe*, and means literally, "the things that are heard." And it is the very same word translated "**hearing**" twice in verse 17, Strong's number 189. And the word "**word**" in verse 8, 17, and 18 is a form of the word ῥημα, *rhema*, and means literally, "that which has been spoken by a living voice, thing spoken, word" in contrast to the word λογος, *logos*, which can mean a written word or one within the mind.

Therefore, verse 17 does not say that faith "comes by the word of God" as so many teach and preach, but it says that faith comes ἐκ, *ek*, out of, the things that we hear, which is a testimony, a word of witness of something, a report of what God has done, and that testimony has come out of a spoken word of God! Now, a written testimony from God's word can be that faith producing word, but this does not nullify the fact that this scripture is saying that faith comes from what we hear of that which has been produced by a spoken word from the Lord. And the word "believed" is the past tense of the verb πιστευομαι, *pisteuo*, to believe, the noun form of πιστις, *pistis*, belief, consistently translated *faith*. Therefore, to translate these verses literally, we read: "**Lord, who has faith concerning [believed] our report? So then faith [belief] comes out of the report, and the report through the spoken word of God.**" Let me illustrate further by example.

God speaks to someone about something, say He tells someone that Jesus is the savior of the world, and that person believes it and gets saved. Then that person tells someone else, possibly in his own words how Jesus saved him and this second person then has faith imparted to them, and they accept Jesus into their lives and are saved. And this goes on and on, and possibly without any "scripture" as a direct quote being spoken. But the truth of God's scripture is being repeated over and over again in the language of that particular race of people, and living faith is reproducing itself by the work of the Holy Spirit of God, even without the written word! This is not to negate the precious scripture which any Christian loves and cherishes. But it is to report the reality of how faith is produced, spread, and to explain for instance how millions are being saved in countries like China, where multitudes do not have any scripture, and yet God is

moving by His Spirit and saving many millions of people! Praise His wonderful name! We need to send bibles to our brothers and sisters who do not have them, so they can grow and understand the ways of God more correctly in many areas, but we must also come to understand how faith is given by the Holy Spirit! When the Holy Spirit has spoken through a "word of knowledge" and people received it in faith, they were healed; and as this testimony is given it imparts faith to those hearing, and then they too can receive in faith when the Holy Spirit speaks through a "word of knowledge" for them, and then they are healed. The Lord Jesus today is even appearing personally to Muslims and unbelievers around the world, and revealing Himself as the lamb of God who died for their sins, and when He does, faith is given as He speaks, and people are being born of the Spirit.

But I want to bring this back to countries like ours which are loaded with the Word of God, and yet have been erroneously taught the interpretation of Romans 10:17 and therefore do not understand the importance of spoken testimonies! And this means also that it may be a testimony of faith, or a testimony of unbelief. Because negative faith, that God does not do this or that, or that He has not done this or that, or that the devil has really done what really God has done, imparts unbelief, and negates the true faith of God. That is why the Lord Jesus said, "**Take heed what you hear!**" (Mk. 4:24; Mt. 16:6-12) What you listen to! A lying spirit of unbelief, a demonic teaching of unbelief, will destroy the faith of God placed in the heart of anyone who is not discerning, or mature enough to discern the spirits which are speaking. Beloved, faith comes from what we listen to! Unbelief comes the same way! Stay away from those who preach unbelief! And believe the testimonies of what God is doing, and so have faith for yourself and for others who are in need and to whom God wants you to minister.

May God grant us the grace to understand His word, and to take heed what we hear, and to share the good news of Jesus Christ, the good news of the good things that He is doing in the earth today. Amen!

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