

Romans 1:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Analysis

By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:

Di' hou elabomen charin kai apostolēn (δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολήν, 'through whom we received grace and apostleship') shows that Paul's apostolic authority and salvation are both unmerited gifts from the risen Christ. Charis (χάρις, grace) is undeserved favor, God's enabling power for salvation and service. The coupling of grace and apostleship indicates that ministry flows from grace, not human ambition or qualification.

The purpose clause eis hupakoēn pisteōs en pasin tois ethnesin (εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, 'for obedience of faith among all the nations') is crucial. The genitive pisteōs is debated: Is it obedience that consists in faith, obedience that flows from faith, or obedience to the faith (the gospel message)? Likely all three nuances apply—saving faith is inherently obedient trust, not mere intellectual assent (James 2:19). Pasin tois ethnesin (all nations/Gentiles) reflects the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) and God's universal salvific intent. Huper tou onomatos autou (ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὄνόματος αὐτοῦ, 'for His name's sake') shows that missions exist ultimately for God's glory, not human benefit.

Historical Context

Paul's Gentile mission was controversial in early Christianity. Acts 15 records the Jerusalem Council's debate over whether Gentiles must become Jews (through circumcision) to be Christians. Paul's theology of grace, articulated in Romans and Galatians, insisted that faith alone justifies, collapsing ethnic and cultural barriers. His apostleship to the Gentiles was God's instrument for fulfilling the Abrahamic promise that 'all nations' would be blessed (Genesis 12:3).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does understanding faith as 'obedience' (ὑπακοή) rather than mere agreement challenge your own discipleship?
2. What does it mean that gospel missions exist 'for His name's sake' rather than human flourishing as the ultimate goal?
3. How might ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic pride hinder 'all nations' from hearing the gospel today?

Interlinear Text

δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολὴν εἰς ὑπακοὴν
By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience
G1223 G3739 G2983 G5485 G2532 G651 G1519 G5218

πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὄνόματος
to the faith among all nations for name
G4102 G1722 G3956 G3588 G1484 G5228 G3588 G3686

αὐτοῦ
his
G846

Additional Cross-References

Acts 9:15 (Parallel theme): But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

Acts 6:7 (Faith): And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Romans 16:26 (Faith): But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

Malachi 1:11 (Parallel theme): For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

Hebrews 5:9 (Parallel theme): And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Romans 12:3 (Faith): For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

1 Corinthians 15:10 (Grace): But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Acts 1:25 (Parallel theme): That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

Romans 3:29 (Parallel theme): Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

1 Corinthians 9:2 (Parallel theme): If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.

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