

### Acts of Obeisance

"Whoever confesses that Jesus is Lord...shall be saved." That's what the Bible tells us. A lot of people take this to mean that simple belief in Christ will ensure us from destruction. This is especially the prevailing view in the "faith Only" camp. And let's face it, if salvation was a popularity contest, it would probably win. However, it seems unlikely that admission into heaven will be achieved through a democratic vote! And thank God! (we see what democracy procures!)

Jesus lived and taught during Roman times. To understand some of the things He said requires an understanding of the culture and customs of the day. The Romans were notorious for making entire peoples and provinces slaves. But they were also empire builders. There were a lot of kingdoms, such as the Armenians, and several throughout Asia Minor that retained a state of semi-autonomy under the Romans. This does not mean that they were entirely free. This meant that in exchange for submission to Rome, Rome would allow them to remain on their own land and pay tribute, and furnish troops for the legions. This allowed them to be governed by a ruler from among their own race and kindred as opposed to a prefect from Rome.

Rome could, of course, and did, often remove and institute kings it chose over such 'obedient' peoples. And their continued obeisance usually entailed the giving of royal hostages and the like.

But this was profitable to Rome. It spared them a war and the possible loss of troops. Sometimes they would enter into such an agreement in the middle of a war. And it would usually go something like this: when the besieged king was willing to strike an agreement that was approved by Rome, he would either bow down to a statue of the Roman Emperor, throw his crown down at the emperor's face (as on a shield), or in other manners acknowledge the supremacy of the Roman Emperor.

Sometimes kings besieged by non-Roman enemies would do the same. This would benefit Rome by gaining an additional source of tribute, and it would benefit the obedient king, because now, as an ally, Rome would come to his aid and protect him from being destroyed by the enemy, who probably would have stripped his kingdom.

] So with the Christian. When we confess Jesus as Lord, we also gain an ally who will aid us against destruction by the Enemy. This aid doesn't stop with a simple confession however. It's merely the begging of an expected service, a partnership, if you will. Confession is easy. With that confession comes the acknowledgment that Christ reigns in our lives. It entails a conscious submission of our wills to His will. It's obeying His superiority, orders, rules...etc...It's in all purposes, a sign of allegiance.

So we can't just go on living how we want, when we want. If we do we

should be considered renegade rebels who've reneged on our promise. And like renegades, should we be surprised when the Just Judgement of God falls upon us? He'll certainly be faithful to His end of thne agreement, we should be expected to do the same...