

**Soteriological meaning of obedience by Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI**

**Abstract**

In modern times, as a consequence of technological progress, transformations can be observed that have resulted in, among other things, a new concept of truth. Presently, only what can be measured and confirmed by experiments is considered to be true. Truth, as a product of a man, has been replaced by proof and pushed aside as unscientific. This has influenced the way of understanding the concept of human freedom. Since there is no objective truth, a man creates himself. Everything depends on the individual work of a human being and obedience to an external authority is considered to be a compulsion from which it is necessary for an individual to break free in the name of true freedom. This has led to autonomization of the individual. Its extreme form was presented by Jean-Paul Sartre in his philosophy who believed that a man, having no essence of his own, decides himself who he wants to become. Freedom, understood in this way, is an indeterminacy that is open to everything and, as such, it becomes "hell" for man.

What Sartre understood metaphorically, Joseph Ratzinger interprets literally, in a theological sense. Such a concept of freedom was considered by Ratzinger to be a threat to human salvation. Therefore, in his works, undertakes a dialogue with the intellectual currents of the modernity, especially since the redefinition of values such as truth, freedom, faith and relationship has had a negative impact on the very understanding of obedience, not only in relation to authority or tradition but, above all, in relation to God. That does not mean, however, that Ratzinger rejects the legacy of modernity. For instance he considered as righteous, modern fight for freedom, which was taken away from a man by the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century. Nevertheless, Ratzinger believes that that modern thought will never put it in order because it is superior to a man. Hence, it is important to combine modern reasoning with faith, which is an independent source of cognition and thanks to which one obtains an overview of everything, not only of what can be verified by means of experiments. While conducting his research on faith, Ratzinger discovered that obedience to the Father, which not only does not

threaten freedom but guarantees its full potential, played a major role in the event of Jesus Christ.

The basic thesis of the work was a statement that obedience to God, according to Joseph Ratzinger, has a salvific value thanks to Jesus Christ. For the author of this dissertation, the key to assess that thesis was primarily the works of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI - since the most important goal of the study was to analyse how Ratzinger perceives obedience in relation to Christ's work of salvation. Thanks to the *Opera Omnia* collection the texts are easily accessible. The author of the dissertation also refers to other elaborations on the works of Ratzinger/Benedict XVI. The study was created on the ground of dogmatic theology, due to the research problem and the number of works that had been analysed. Those were issues mainly related to soteriology and christology since an important part of the study was the topic of the relationship between Jesus and God. It was examined how Christ understood his obedience and what meaning he attributed to it. Moreover, the way of getting to know the Father's will by Jesus and how he fulfilled it was also analysed. In terms of salvific obedience, the paschal events of passion, death and resurrection were also analysed, which Joseph Ratzinger associated with, inter alia., substitutionary atonement. An important part of the work are also the issues in the field of ecclesiology, pneumatology and theological anthropology, resulting from the study of the impact of salvific obedience of Jesus on a man and the Church that was established by Him and which - with the assistance of the delegated Holy Spirit - continues the mission of the Savior in the world. Due to the importance that Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI placed on obedience, his soteriology can be described as a "soteriology of obedience", which was the goal that this dissertation also aimed to achieve.