

# Is Salvation by Faith Only?

(by Bob Pulliam)

You either believe that it is, or it isn't. Few have no opinion on the matter. Many times, however, the opinions held are not based upon the Bible's clear revelation, but instead on outside factors. Such factors as what our parents or grandparents believed; what seems reasonable to us; what the preacher says; etc...

If you are inclined to believe that salvation is by faith only, then answer the following questions:

Must one believe to be saved? (Mk 16:16) \_\_\_\_\_

Can one be saved by works? (Eph 2:8f) \_\_\_\_\_

Is believing a work? (Jn 6:28f) \_\_\_\_\_

Do Paul and Jesus seem to be at variance? \_\_\_\_\_

All works are not the same. Name the various kinds below:

Galatians 2:16 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 2:10 \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrews 6:1 \_\_\_\_\_

I John 3:8 \_\_\_\_\_

John 6:28f \_\_\_\_\_

II Thess. 3:10 \_\_\_\_\_

Is it reasonable, based on what Jesus said in John 6, and the fact that there are many kinds of works, to assume that Paul meant any and all kinds of works in Ephesians 2:9? No, it is obvious that we assume too much when we draw such a conclusion. Think about it this way. Paul said that salvation is by grace. "Grace" is the favor of God. The word grace simply refers to an attitude of mind; but here includes all that God did for our salvation. We know that He sent His Son to die, raised Him from the dead, seated Him at His right hand, etc... But all that is said is grace... We are not saved by "grace only" in the sense that God's attitude was all He exerted. The same is true of "faith". "Faith" is man's trust in God. The word faith simply refers to

an attitude of mind; but here includes all that man does in obedience to God. Just as God did not save us by attitude alone, we are not saved by a mere mental outlook.

This would confine the word works in Ephesians 2:9 to a particular kind of works. What works might Paul refer to in which one might boast? It was common for the keepers of Moses' law to indulge in boasting. They tried to earn their salvation by perfect law-keeping. Paul wrote of this attitude in Galatians 2:16, calling them the "works of the law". The law under consideration is the law of Moses, or Old Testament law. Now note the observation of Paul in Ephesians 2:11. In that verse he refers to the work of the law of Moses called circumcision.

Now, please answer the follow:

- Can one truly obey God without faith? (Heb 11:6) \_\_\_\_\_
- Can one please God by faith only? (Jms 2:24) \_\_\_\_\_
- What did Paul tell the jailor to do? (Acts 16:31) \_\_\_\_\_
- What did the jailor do? (Acts 16:33) \_\_\_\_\_
- What did Peter tell the multitude to do? (Acts 2:38) \_\_\_\_\_
- What did the Eunuch do? (Acts 8:38) \_\_\_\_\_
- What was Paul told to do to remove sins? (Acts 22:16) \_\_\_\_\_

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (II Corinthians 5:17)

How did you get into Christ?... Do you have a passage or two that instructed you in this?... If you prayed for the Lord Jesus to come into your heart and save you, do you have a passage for that? You won't find anyone in the New Testament ever doing that. You'll also never find anyone offering personal testimonies and the church voting on admission to fellowship.

There is only one way to get into Christ, and that is God's way. All spiritual blessings reside in the glorious relationship between Jesus and His saints (Eph 1:3). If one is not in Christ, then he is outside, and subject to condemnation. This would make the question of how you got into Christ an important one. Take it lightly at your own peril. Now, please answer the following:

- How did the Romans get into Christ? (Rom 6:3)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How did the Galatians get into Christ? (Gal 3:27)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What role does the blood of Jesus play in salvation? (Rom 5:9)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- When was Jesus' blood shed? (His life or death)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How did God ordain that we reach that blood? (Rom 6:4f)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- How do we die with Christ? (Rom 6:3f & 8)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Shall we live with Him if we did not die with Him? (Rom 6:8)  
\_\_\_\_\_

It is easy to take passages that speak of faith's necessity without mention of other factors, and reason them to mean "faith only". But these do not deny the necessity of other factors (e.g. obedience). They merely emphasize the need for the proper attitude behind one's service. Without that attitude, any obedience would be useless. But with the proper faith, obedience will come without hesitation.

### ***Conclusion...***

Jesus became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Heb 5:9). What God demands of us before salvation is granted is His business. Our only proper course is to obey Him. Even if it does not make sense to us, we must serve our God.

The scriptures do not teach that we are saved by "faith only". The one and only time that such a phrase is used, we find it denying such a doctrine (Jms 2:24). Are you denying the scriptures with your own doctrine of salvation? God's way is the only acceptable way. He revealed it for our understanding. "So then, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." (Eph 5:17)