

## SALVATION THROUGH “FAITH ONLY” (1)

BY KEITH GREER

Salvation by faith only is a hotly debated subject in the modern religious world. This is not a new controversy, and its discussion continues. If we examine it closely, we see what a straw-man argument is truly. Each side of the debate believes that FAITH is important and should not be taken lightly. Our Lord stated it so plainly, it cannot be misunderstood, *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”* {John 8:24} Could He have made it clearer? A person who lacks faith in Christ can never be saved. The Hebrew writer said it a little differently, but the conclusion remains the same, *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”* {Hebrews 11:6} Absolute faith is essential to our salvation but is it the **ONLY** thing needed?

**Faith’s Relation to Works of Obedience.** Unlike what the denominational world believes and teaches about the Lord’s church, it does not now, and never has, de-emphasized faith and exalted the importance of works in the quest to obtain salvation. For years, we’ve been charged with trusting in our works to save us, while they trust in the Lord to save them through their faith. Some seem to think that such reasoning places Christians at a great disadvantage and strikes a mortal blow. It all boils down to the critic’s failure to properly understand the relationship between faith and works. There are just too many passages showing the fallacy of the reasoning that supports denominational faith in this religious error. Let’s try to arrive at a proper understanding of how faith and works together bring about salvation.

**Salvation Wholly by Faith.** We gain faith by listening to reliable testimony, examining evidence, and researching eye-witness accounts. We believe the words of the One we trust, and we are supremely confident that He gave us the truth in all spiritual matters. *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* {Romans 10:17} What God says regarding a subject is the truth on that subject. Where God has not spoken, what we think resides in the realm of human opinion and wisdom. Human opinion and wisdom cannot save sinners. In other words, to obtain salvation, we must know God’s word. Observe that Cornelius was told to send for Peter. *“And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’”* {Acts 11:13,14} Think about it—if Cornelius and his household were to be saved, they had to hear and obey Peter’s words. We must conclude that their faith resulted from having Peter’s “thus saith the Lord” for whatever they were

to do in order to obtain salvation. The ONLY faith that saves is a faith that acts on and obeys God's instructions.

**Gentile Justification Through Faith.** *“And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’” {Galatians 3:8}* Through faith, the heathen Gentiles would be justified (acquitted); God provided justification for all people—Jew and Gentile. *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; for by the works of the Law no flesh shall be justified.” {Galatians 2:16}* Moses' Law was given to be a “tutor” to lead the Jews to Christ. *{Galatians 3:24,25}* After Christ came, both nations were justified if they believed in and obeyed Him. It is this saving, BIBLE FAITH that we are commanded to preach to all men.

One needs to go no further than Hebrews 11 to understand that saving faith, by the Bible's definition, is OBEDIENT FAITH! *“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.” {Hebrews 11:4}* What about the great patriarch of faith— Abraham? *“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.” {Hebrews 11:8}* Over and over you see these words “BY FAITH” was demonstrated adhering to God's instructions! \*\*\*