

SALVATION IS “NOT OF WORKS...”

Eph.2:8,9

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Contrary to the charge often leveled against us, we do not believe salvation is “of works” as men so often think of that term or of that doctrine.
2. Story of the lady in Pine Bluff, Ark. when Bob and I arrived at her home for a Home Bible Study with her: “I want you gentlemen to know in the beginning that I do not believe in salvation by works, but by grace!” Then her surprised reaction when we responded by saying: “We agree that salvation is not by works, but by grace.”
3. Yes, we agree whole heartedly that salvation is not by works. We believe the Bible on the subject of salvation by grace. We believe all the Bible says on the subject of salvation from past sins.
4. Therefore, we begin our study by offering:--

II. DISCUSSION

A. SCRIPTURAL PROOF THAT SALVATION IS NOT OF WORKS.

1. Eph.2:8,9 says salvation is “not of works, lest any man should boast.”
2. Rom.3:27,28 says:
 - a. That a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, V.28. Cf. Rom.3:20.
 - b. That boasting of our justification is excluded because it is not “of works,” “but by the law of faith,” V.27.
3. Rom.4:1-5 cites Abraham’s case as an example of justification being by grace through faith, not of works or of debt.
 - a. Then adds in Vv.6-8 that what he has said about Abraham’s case of justification is even as that described by David in Psa.32:1,2.
 - b. See Rom.4:13-16. Cf. Gal.3:6-14; Ac.13:38,39.
4. Rom.11:4-6.
 - a. This says: “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace,” V.5.
 - b. Then adds, “And if by grace, then it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace,” V.6a.

- c. “But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work,” V.6b.
- 5. Gal.2:16 says:
 - a. “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ...” V.16a.
 - b. “...even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law...” V.16b.
 - c. “...for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified,” V.16c.
- 6. Tit.3:4-7 – Analyze the passage.

B. FURTHER SCRIPTURAL INFORMATION REVEALING AND DESCRIBING SEVERAL KINDS OF “WORKS” WHICH ARE EXCLUDED, WORKS BY WHICH WE CANNOT BE SAVED OR JUSTIFIED.

- 1. Works of the law of Moses, Ac.13:38,39; Rom.3:19,20; Gal.2:16; 3:10; 5:1-4.
- 2. Works of merit or of debt by which one may boast, Eph.2:8,9; Rom.4:4.
- 3. Works of man’s wisdom and righteousness, Tit.3:4-7; Rom.10:1-3.
- 4. Works of disobedience, Eph.2:1-3; 5:6; Tit.1:16; 1Pet.2:7,8.
- 5. Works of darkness, of the flesh and of wickedness, Eph.5:11,12; 2Cor.6:14-7:1; 1Jno.1:5,6; Col.1:21; 3:5-7.

C. HOWEVER, THERE IS ALSO SCRIPTURAL PROOF THAT NOT ALL WORKS OF EVERY KIND ARE EXCLUDED AND/OR UNNECESSARY WHEN THE SCRIPTURES AFFIRM THAT SALVATION IS “NOT OF WORKS.”

- 1. One of the vital principles of hermeneutics (the branch of theology governing the interpretation of the Scriptures) is that one must consider all the Scriptures say on the subject under consideration, not just part thereof. (This is a mistake “faith only” advocates make.)
- 2. The Scriptures reveal that salvation from past sins and/or justification is conditional and that these conditions are identified as “works”, and/or “the obedience of faith,” necessary to salvation!
- 3. Examples:
 - a. Jas.2:24 (Study in context, Vv.14-26); -- “by works...not by faith only.”
 - b. Rom.1:5; 16:25,26; 6:16-18.

- c. Even “faith”, by which we believe on Jesus to salvation, is described as a “work,” Jno.6:28,29. Cf. Jno.20:30,31.
- d. Ac.10:34,35. Cf. Ac.10:5,6; 11:14; 10:44-48; 15:9; See Gal.5:6
- e. Heb.5:8,9; Lk.6:46; 2Th.1:6-10.
- f. Mt.7:21-27.
- g. Jas.1:21-25.
- h. 1Pet.1:18-25; Mk.16:15,16; Ac.2:36-41; 9:6-16; 22:6-16.
- i. Gal.5:6; Phil.2:12,13; Rev.22:14.

III. CONCLUSION

1. When we affirm salvation is “not of works,” we are correct; we have “book, chapter and verse” for such a statement.
2. However, we must understand what kind of works are being considered when the Scriptures say salvation is “not of works.”
3. We emphasize this because the same inspired Scriptures, which do not contradict themselves, also say salvation is “by works...and not by faith only.”
4. The Scriptural evidence is overwhelming that “works” of faith which are “actions” of obedience, or “the obedience of faith,” **ARE** essential to justification before God.
5. Salvation by the “works” of faith or by “the obedience of faith” is salvation by grace through faith – by God’s grace and by man’s faith.