

WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR SALVATION?

The only Biblical condition for salvation is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. To "have faith" in the Lord is much more than a simple mental assent to the facts of His existence and ministry. To believe in Christ is to receive Him. He must be recognized and embraced as the only means of eternal life, the forgiveness of sins, and an assured place in the presence of God. To believe is to trust Him. His work (particularly His death through the shedding of His blood, burial, and resurrection) in our behalf, NOT our own deeds, totally satisfies God's requirements for our eternal life. When an individual exercises this kind of personal faith in the Christ of the Bible, he is saved by God's grace. Far from being an isolated teaching of the Bible, this glorious truth is taught in over 150 passages of the New Testament alone. To demonstrate the validity of this claim, we invite you to examine the following verses which teach the "faith alone" doctrine.

Luke 7:48-50; 8:12; 18:42; John 1:7,12; 2:23; 3:15,16,18,36; 4:39,41,42; 5:24, 45-47; 6:29,35,40,47; 7:38,39; 8:24,29,30; 9:35-38; 10:24-26; 11:15,25,26,41,42; 12:36,46; 13:19; 14:1-6; 17:20,21; 19:35; 20:29,31; Acts 3:16; 4:4,32; 8:12,37; 9:42; 10:43,45; 11:17, 21; 13:12,39; 14:1,23,27; 15:7,9; 16:31; 17:4,5,11,12; 18:8,27; 19:4; 20:21; 21:25; 26:18; Romans 1:16,17; 3:22, 25-28, 30; 4:3,5,9,11,13,16,23,24; 5:1,2; 9:30,32,33; 10:4,6,9,10,13; 11:20,30-32; 15:13; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Galatians 2:16,20; 3:2,5-9,11,14, 22,24,26; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13,19; 2:8,9; 3:17; Philippians 1:29; 3:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 2:10; 4:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2:12,13; 3:2; 1 Timothy 1:16; 3:16; 4:3,10; 2 Timothy 1:12; 3:15; Hebrews 4:2,3; 6:12; 10:39; 11:6,7,31; James 2:23; 1 Peter 1:5,9,21; 2:6, 7; 1 John 5:1,5, 10,13; Jude 5.

While the Bible is also replete with references urging believers to faithfully perform their duties, there is no conflict between such "works" passages and the "faith" passages listed above. Those who BELIEVE become spiritually alive (receive eternal life) at that point and are thereby enabled to perform works acceptable to God as labors of love, not in payment for salvation. Making this distinction is essential. It is literally a matter of spiritual life or death. Salvation must be seen as the result of either faith or works, and the Biblical teaching is clear. "For by grace are ye saved through FAITH. . . NOT of works. . ." (Ephesians 2:8,9).

Lloyd A. Larkin
Baptist Mid-Missions, Emeritus