

Faith and Works—Grace and Works

Religious people often discuss the subjects, *Faith and Works* and *Grace and Works*. It is important to understand what God's word says about these subjects. We need to note a number of Biblical principles.

First, the Bible speaks of different kinds of works and different kinds of faith. Rom. 4:1-6 discusses works that God excludes from His plan for our salvation. James 2:14-26 deals with works that God includes in His plan. Paul, in Romans 4, speaks of seeking salvation through works of the Law of Moses and works of human merit. James, on the other hand, discusses works that perfect faith. This faith, so perfected, is a faith that is obedient to God's commands (1 John 2:4; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). We cannot devise the works that will save us. God has a plan of salvation; we all must be obedient (Rom. 6:16-19).

Second, the Bible teaches that salvation is by the grace of God, but it does not teach that it is by grace alone (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 2:11-12). If salvation is by grace alone, then God will save all, because Paul shows in Titus 2 that God's grace has appeared to all. The Bible teaches that we do not deserve salvation, that we cannot earn it, and that it comes only from God when we do the works that he has prepared for us (Eph. 2:10; Rom. 6:23; James 1:17).

Third, the Bible teaches clearly that faith must be obedient and that God's grace is conditional. A faith that refuses to obey God is a dead faith and cannot save us (John 12:42-43). Faith that is acceptable to God must express itself in action (James 2:14-17). Unexpressed faith is dead faith (James 2:24-26). Saving faith leads us to acts of obedience. We find examples of this obedient faith in Heb. 11. One example is in Heb. 11:30: "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days." Did the walls of Jericho fall down the moment the Israelites believed? No, the walls fell down after they had obeyed God's command to compass about the walls of the city for seven days. When does faith save us? Faith saves us after it expresses itself in obedience to God's commands.

God extends His grace to us on the condition that we obey His word. God's word teaches us that God saves by grace all those who believe (Heb. 11:6), repent (Luke 13:3), confess (Rom. 10:9-10), and receive baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). God will meet and pardon sinners by grace through faith upon these conditions.

"We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God afore prepared . (Eph 2:10)."