

## Saved by Grace

The Bible teaches that salvation is by God's grace. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ( Eph 2:8)." Does salvation exclude any effort, activity, or obedience on our part? Has God made salvation conditional or unconditional? The Bible answers these questions.

The Bible teaches that salvation is a gift, but it is a conditional gift. Our faith must express itself in our obedience before we receive God's blessings (Rom. 1:5; 16:26; 6:16-18; 6:1-5; Mk 16:15-16). A number of Bible examples illustrate this point.

**Naaman** (2 Kings 5). Naaman had leprosy, an incurable disease. There was no way that he could cure himself. He visited the prophet Elisha who told him to go and dip seven times in the Jordan river. This infuriated Naamen, but he eventually obeyed and was cleansed. God promised to bestow this blessing when Naamen met certain conditions. Did Naamen earn this blessing? Certainly not. But he had to dip seven times in the Jordan River to receive it.

**Jericho** (Joshua 6). God told Joshua in Josh. 6:2: "And the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the valiant warriors (Josh 6:2-3)." However, Joshua and the Israelites had to meet certain conditions before they could receive this gift. The men of war had to march around the walls of Jericho one time each day for six days and seven times on the seventh day. The story shows that at least 16 acts of obedience were required before God gave them the city.

**Today.** Christ offers the people of today salvation. Yet, there are specific conditions which we must meet before we can receive this gift. Salvation is a gift of God that no man can earn. Yes, it is a gift of God, "Not as a result of works, that no one should boast (Eph. 2:9)." However, just as Naamen and just as Joshua, we must do what God tells us to receive his gift: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Eph 2: 10)."

What has God told us to do to receive this gift of grace? He told us that we must believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God (Acts 16:31). He told us to repent of our sins (Luke 13:3). He told us to confess our faith in the Lord (Rom.10:10). He told us to be baptized unto the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). Finally, he told us, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life (Rev. 2:10)."