

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About... Saved by Faith Alone?

The false doctrine of salvation by faith alone is a popular means by which the religious world has deceived people into believing that they have obeyed the will of God and that they have become disciples of Christ. This false doctrine has been around for many years and has been preached from many religious pulpits that all one has to do is receive Him into their heart. They say that this act will make you a Christian. Such teachers offer an invitation of false hope to honest people who are seeking the way of salvation. What they have been given is a doctrine of men that is not found in scripture.

The doctrine of faith alone began with Martin Luther and John Calvin. Luther, in opposition to the teaching of the Catholic Church that salvation is work related, went to the opposite spectrum and said that one must be saved by faith alone. According to scripture, neither salvation by works alone, nor salvation by faith alone, is correct (James 2:18-22). Remarkably, the only place in the Bible (in all 66 books) that "faith" and "alone" are found together is in James 2:24: "You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone."

There is not one example of a person becoming a New Testament disciple of Christ by "faith alone." There are many examples of conversions in the Acts of the Apostles but none of these are told to say "yes" to Christ and at that moment experience the new birth. Does eternal life begin the moment we accept Christ as Savior and Lord? Not according to the Bible. Why do so many people believe in such a doctrine when there is no scriptural evidence in the word of God? To the teachers who preach this false doctrine, Paul wrote, "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness whose end will be according to their deeds" (2 Cor. 11:14-15). Jesus said, "unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Jesus told His disciples before He ascended into heaven, "not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised"... (Acts 1:4). The apostles obeyed Jesus and on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, the Jews listening to Peter asked, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38).

Is faith necessary for salvation? The writer of Hebrews said, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Paul wrote to the Roman church, "you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed" and that he and the apostles had received grace and apostleship for bringing about "the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake" (Romans 1:5, 6:17).

In the Acts of the Apostles, what instructions were given to the Samaritans in Acts 8:5-13? How did the Ethiopian become a disciple of Christ in Acts 8:35-38? How did Paul explain his conversion in Acts 9:1-19, 22:1-21? How did Cornelius find the truth (Acts 10:47-48)? What was Lydia instructed to do in Acts 16:15-16? The jailer in Acts 16:25-34? And the Corinthians in Acts 18:8?

The great tragedy of salvation by faith alone is the deception it brings to those who are honestly seeking the truth of deliverance from their sins, and in the mind of God fail to achieve that blessing. The apostle Paul warned Timothy of the dangers taught by the doctrines of men, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths" (2 Timothy 4:3-4). The doctrine of salvation by faith alone is a false teaching.

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:

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