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THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

ARE WORKS NECESSARY TO SALVATION? Part 2

The Bible tells us in Ephesians 2:8-9 that salvation is by grace through faith but it is not of works. In the previous article on this subject we saw from the Bible that there are different kinds of works. However, no one can be justified by the works of the law of Moses (Galatians 5:4), nor by the works that man may originate in an attempt to be saved about which he could then boast (Ephesians 2:9), and certainly one is not justified by the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). Yet the Bible does speak of a certain kind of works which are associated with salvation. These are the works that the book of James speaks of when it says. "You see then that a man is justified by **works**, and not by faith only." What are these works? I submit for your consideration that the works by which one may be justified are works of obedience to what God commands for salvation. Inspiration uses Abraham as an example of being justified by works and not by faith only. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?" (James 2:21-22). The "works" that made Abraham's faith perfect or complete was his obedience to what God commanded him. And through his faith coupled with obedience to God's command, he was justified. Suppose Abraham has refused to "work" (obey)? Would he have been justified by "faith alone"? In the same context the Bible reads, "for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26). Since a faith without works is a dead faith, then it follows that a faith with works is a living faith. Abraham's example shows that a living faith is one who takes God at his Word and obeys what He commands.

What has God commanded for salvation? He has commanded faith in Christ (John 6:29; 8:24). He has commanded repentance from sin (Acts 17:30). He has commanded confession of faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10). He has commanded baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 10:48). He has commanded faithfulness as of Christians (Rev. 2:10). Confronted with these necessary responses what will make one's faith complete? What will make one's faith a "living faith" as opposed to a "dead faith"? The answer - OBEEDIENCE! The Bible tells us that Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation to all who OBEY Him" (Hebrews 5:9).

Yes, salvation is by "grace through faith." Grace is God's part in salvation, but a living active faith is man's part. And the "works" which constitute that living faith are works of obedience to what God has commanded. Without these "works" salvation is impossible. Humble, loving submission to God's will is the expression of genuine faith.