

## SALVATION IS NOT BY WORKS

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As the Apostle Paul addresses the Christians at Rome it appears as if he anticipates a point of contention, by the Jewish Christians, who might have still remained members of the church. That "contention" appears to be over the relationship of the works of the law and faith. Actually, it seems that Paul felt there were those who were about to argue that righteousness was a result of works, instead of faith. In order to fully see the problem at hand one needs to carefully read Romans chapters three and four to start with. What I want us to do, in this brief paper, is to draw attention to a few key passages that will assist us in seeing that salvation is not by works alone. It seems, at least to me, important to add the word "alone" to this study, for one cannot help but to see the correlation of Grace, Faith, and Works of obedience taught in the Scriptures, unless they simply do not want to see it.

Actually, what we have here is somewhat similar to the problem that we face today with the denominationalist who teaches salvation by "faith only", or the member of the church who has been duped into teaching that salvation is by "grace only". What must be seen is that salvation is not the result of any one thing such as Grace, Faith, or Obedience only.

In Romans chapter four Paul introduces Abraham as an example of the necessity of faith. Note that in verse two Paul very succinctly gets to the point at hand, "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God." Paul's point is, if Abraham was "justified" by his works, then faith in God really wasn't necessary. Then, in verse three, Paul shows that the "scriptures" (i.e. Old Testament Scriptures - see Genesis 15:6), clearly indicate that Abraham "believed God, and it (i.e. his faith, R.W.S.) was counted unto him for righteousness." Now, one must go on to see the correlation of Grace, Faith, and Obedience to get the true Biblical perspective on this matter of Abraham,

Our Baptist friends would have us to believe that Abraham was "justified" by "faith only". But, that is untrue! In verse four Paul introduces "grace" to the discussion by saying, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." In other words, if "justification" resulted from works only, then the grace of God would play no part at all in the process. Now, one needs only to read on into chapter four, five, and six to see where grace fits into all of this. Please note the following passages: Romans 4:16; 5:2,15,16,17,20,21; 6:1,15. Likewise, such passages as Titus 2:11 and 12 help us to understand the point that "...the grace of God...hath appeared to all men..."

As to how "works" fit into the picture one would need only to consider Hebrews 11:17 to get the point, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac..." (emphasis mine, R.W.S.). Now, let us suppose, for just a moment, that Abraham "believed God" relative to the promise made to him concerning his seed, but when he was told by God to "offer" Isaac as "a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:1,2), he refused. What do you think Hebrews 11:17 would say about Abraham today? What do you think Romans 4:3 would say about him today? What has to be seen, then, is that salvation (justification in the case of Abraham), is not/was not solely dependant upon works, as this would result in "bragging rights" to those who could comply. The whole point is, salvation is "not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9). But, on the other hand, "...faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17).