

THE

HARVESTER

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

July 1987

No. 019

"FAITH ONLY"?

"If a person believes in Jesus Christ and accepts Him as their personal Lord and Savior, then he will be saved." This is the answer I received the other day when I asked a man what was necessary for salvation. Actually this typifies the thinking of many religious people in our nation today. But is it accurate? Is it a reliable and valid statement? It has been incorporated into a very popular doctrine of man -- the doctrine of "justification of faith only" is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort". Although this is not worded as such in any verse of scripture, it does deserve a careful examination on our part. Let us therefore spend the next few minutes to compare how this doctrine of "faith only" stacks up against the Word of God.

THE HARVESTER

5367 Scanlan Way Dr W
Satsuma, AL 36572-2417

BULK RATE
U. S. POSTAGE
P A I D
SATSUMA, AL
PERMIT NO. 30

Proponents of the doctrine will immediately point to Romans 5:1, *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"*. Evidently this verse shows that by faith we can share in that eternal rest with God. But are we justified by "faith only"? A closer look in the New Testament shows that we are justified by: our words (Matt. 12:37), God's grace (Rom. 3:24; Titus 3:7), our works (Jas. 2:24), and in the name of Jesus (1 Cor. 6:11). Yes, we are *"justified by faith"* but not by *"faith only"*!

What about Hebrews 11:6 then? *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* Here it is stated that faith is required to please God. Does that not support the doctrine in question? No, for we also read of other things which we must do that are pleasing to God: acceptable sacrifices (Phil. 4:18; Heb. 13:16), obeying our parents (Col. 3:20) and speaking the Gospel (1 Thess. 2:4). By the same reasoning used above, we can agree that faith is necessary to please God but it is not *"faith alone"*!

In particular we point to John 8:29 where Jesus mentions, *"for I do always those things that please him"*. Notice the wording of this verse carefully: *"for I (Christ) do (action verb) always those things (plural) that please him (God the Father)"*. If the only thing that pleases God is "faith", as some want to contend, then the statement of Jesus does not make much sense to me. What did Christ do that pleased God? Was it "faith only" or did it also include all the good works that we read in the accounts of the Gospel?

The importance of faith in Christ has been cited by Jesus Himself in John 8:24, *"I said*

therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." This we cannot deny but some desire to place more importance on faith than even Jesus intended, to the point of saying it is by "faith only". The verse said that a person must believe or die in his sins. Of course, the death referred here is in a spiritual sense -- eternal damnation, the second death. Now, in Ezek. 3:19 the wicked man who is warned but will not repent will also die in his sin. Those who live after the flesh will likewise die (Rom. 8:13). Finally, Rev. 21:8 gives a list of those who will have their part in the lake of fire which is the second death. Along with the non-believers, we find murderers, idolaters, liars, etc. So once again it has been shown that having faith is vital to one's salvation but it is not just by "faith alone". There are other things we can do that will result in a second death and it is not just a lack of "faith only"!

Perhaps the greatest argument in defense of this "most wholesome doctrine" is to be seen in Acts 16:30,31. The Philippian jailer, who had never heard the word of the Lord before, asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Surely the "faith only" teachers have a good point here! And when they throw these other verses at us, how shall we answer: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16); "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24); "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another,

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, and all correspondence to:

Ray McManus
5367 Scanlan Way Dr W
Satsuma, AL 36572-2417
Ph. (205) 675-5258

as he gave us commandment."(1 John 3:23)? Can we be saved by "faith only"? NO! We must consider Rom. 8:24, Eph. 2:5-8, and Titus 3:5. These scriptures reveal that we are "*saved by hope*", "*by grace are ye saved*" and "*according to his mercy he saved us*". Thus, we cannot be saved by "faith only". It would be a contradiction of God's Holy Word!!

Invariably, Mark 16:16 will surface in a discussion such as this. "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" While we stress "*AND is baptized*", our religious friends emphasize "*he that believeth NOT shall be damned*". They say that if a non-believer "*shall be damned*", then it follows that only at the moment faith has been acquired can a man be saved since NOT having faith will condemn him. This is an erroneous assumption. If a man does not believe, then certainly he will not follow the succeeding steps in obeying the gospel plan of salvation. To hear the Word of God and not have faith in Christ is like hitting a homerun but stopping at first base! "*He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*"(John 3:18)

The Bible shows that it is possible to believe and yet not be in a saved condition. In John 8:31 Jesus told the Jews who believed on Him, "*If ye continue in my word, then are ye my*

disciples indeed." Obviously "faith only" was not enough in this instance nor in our next passage. *"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."*(John 12:42,43)

The classic example is found in the second chapter of James. *"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."* Will these devils be saved simply because they also believe? No, because *"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."*(Jas. 2:17) Faith alone characterizes devils but the child of God will combine his faith with works. *"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."*(Jas. 2:26)

In light of our study, the idea of "faith only" is NOT a "most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort". It has no scriptural basis and can not truly be supported by any verse in the Bible. In fact, the only place where we read the words "faith only" reveals that a man is NOT justified by faith alone! *"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."*(Jas. 2:24) Can it be any plainer than that?

We all agree that faith in Jesus Christ is very important and necessary to salvation. But we also contend that it is not by "faith only". A man is not saved as soon as he believes in Christ. It takes faith and works to obey the gospel! Do you agree? The Bereans *"received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."*(Acts 17:11) Will you do the same with the doctrine of "faith only"?

RAY McMANUS

FROM THE SCRIPTURES ...

ABOUT UNSELFISHNESS

He then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. (Rom. 15:1-3)

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. (1 Cor. 9:19-23)

Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth. (1 Cor. 10:24)

Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. (1 Cor. 10:33)

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; (1 Cor. 13:4,5)

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. (2 Cor. 8:9)

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every

man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. (Philp. 2:3,4)

If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well: (Jas. 2:8)

"JUST BELONG"?

Are you an active member,
the kind that would be missed?
Or are you just contented
that your name is on the list?
Do you attend the meetings
and mingle with the flock?
Or do you stay at home
and criticize and knock?
Do you take an active part
to help the work along?
Or are you satisfied to be
the kind that "Just Belongs"?
Do you ever go to visit
a member who is sick?
Or leave the work to just a few
and talk about the "Clique"?
There's quite a program scheduled
that I'm sure you've heard about,
And we'll appreciate it
if you will come and help us out;
So come to meetings often,
and help with hand and heart;
Don't be "Just a Member",
but take an active part,
Think this over, member --
you know right from wrong:
Are you an active member,
or do you "Just Belong"?

--Author Unknown

GOSPEL MEETINGS

| <u>Dates</u> | <u>Place & Time</u> | <u>Speaker</u> |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| July 5-9 | Cloud Nine Church Sierra Vista, AZ | Sam Dick & Gerald Carter |
| July 5-11 | North Warren McMinnville, TN | Lindeal Greer (Bogue Chitto, MS) |
| July 10-12 | West Gadsden Church Gadsden, AL | Bill Prince Jr. (Oxford, AL) |
| July 10-15 | Durango, Colorado | Various speakers |
| July 12-17 (Su-F) | Moffat Road Church Mobile, AL 7:30 evenings | James McDonald (Woodbury, TN) |
| July 12-17 | Lake Charles, Louisiana | Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL) |
| July 12-17 | Leitchfield, KY | Lindeal Greer (Bogue Chitto) |
| July 13-19 (M-Su) | Popular Grove Church Kettle, KY 7:30pm [10:00am Sun] | V.W. Boland (Gadsden, AL) |
| July 19-24 | Oak Grove Church Woodland, AL | Lindeal Greer (Bogue Chitto) |
| July 26-31 | Temple Hill Church Smithdale, MS | Harry Cobb (Conley, GA) |
| July 26 - Aug 1 (Su-Sa) | Napolean Church Woodland, AL 7:00 evenings | V.W. Boland (Gadsden, AL) |
| July 27 - Aug 1 | Marrowbone, KY | James McDonald (Woodbury, TN) |
| July 27 - Aug 2 | Antioch Church Livingston, TN | Sam Dick (Cave City, KY) |