



# Works And Salvation

the same manner as they were. The Lord has placed conditions on our receiving His free gift of salvation. He says we must believe (Jn. 8:24), repent (Lk. 13:3), confess (Mt. 10:32), and be baptized (Mk. 16:16) in order to be saved. These are all deeds that we must do ourselves as individuals. No one can do them for us. However, never does one by meeting these conditions, earn his salvation.

Once we become children of God by faithful obedience we are commanded to continue working. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." This work we do is not meritorious work by which we earn anything. This is simply works of obedience which gives glory to God as we serve Him. As Jesus stated, "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Lk. 17:10).

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The Scriptures teach that salvation is a free gift that cannot be earned by our works. Yet, there are passages that demand our work concerning our salvation. Is this a contradiction or do the Scriptures speak of more than one kind of works?

The Scriptures make a distinction between the works of merit and works of obedience. Works of merit are works by which one is owed something. Paul explained that we cannot be saved on the basis of such works (Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8-9). God never owes anyone salvation due to their work of law keeping because we all fall short (Rom. 3:23). Yet, the Scriptures also teach that there is work involved on the part of every individual who would be saved. This work is obedience that one performs not as works of merit, but as an unprofitable servant.

Paul did not say that we are saved by grace only, but that we are saved by grace "through faith" and our faith must be coupled with works. We see this in every illustration of faith in Hebrews chapter 11 (e.g. "By faith Able offered...By faith Noah...in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household...By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out," etc.). James declared, "You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone...For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (Jas. 2:24-26). The works James speaks of are not works of merit but works of obedience that always accompanies saving faith. Paul stated, that we are to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling" (Philip. 2:12). Fulfilling responsibility on our part does not in any way nullify the free gift of God. One can

receive a gold mine as a free gift, but that doesn't mean that he does not have to do anything to mine the gold, nor does it mean that when one works the mine that he has earned the gift. God has provided the greatest gift of all through His Son and has set forth certain requirements for us to obtain it. When we comply with God's demands we will receive salvation. However, no one can ever say that they have earned it. There would be no salvation nor opportunity to comply to its requirements if not for God's grace and mercy.

Jesus coupled faith and obedience together as a requirement for salvation stating, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:16). God expects those who would be His people to do certain things in order to enter His kingdom. Jesus declared, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 7:21). When the people on Pentecost asked the inspired apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter did not tell them there was nothing they could do, but told them to "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost...Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Ac. 2:37-41). Did any of these who were saved that day earn their salvation? No. Was there any works of obedience required of them in order for them to receive forgiveness? Yes, just as it is for any who would be forgiven today, for we are saved in

