



OUR FAITH OUR SALVATION

**Focusing On A Faith
That Responds
To The Grace Of God**

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Our Faith – Our Salvation

God calls all men to faith in His incarnate Son on the cross. Throughout the centuries after the fall of man in the garden of Eden, God worked to bring reconciliation between Himself and man. He worked to fulfill the original purpose for which He created man, that is, that people of faith come into His eternal fellowship forever. In order that this plan be accomplished, God did His part in providing the road map into His presence through the cross. He has now handed everything over to man to respond to the map. It is now the responsibility of man to respond by obedient faith to the faithful work of God on the cross.

When studying any Bible subject there is a preliminary principle of biblical interpretation that must never be violated: **What the majority believes, or what the religious culture dictates, must never become the foundation upon which the biblical interpreter establishes his understanding of the Scriptures in reference to his religious beliefs and behavior.** If this principle is not observed, then the people are on their way to apostasy from God, if not already there.

The entire apostasy of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament is a testimony to the truth of the preceding important principle. This principle was alluded to in Paul's reference to the first apostasy of Israel when the Israelites came out of Egyptian captivity (1 Co 10:1-13). After over 400 years in Egyptian captivity, the generation of Israelites that first came out of captivity had been influenced by the religious beliefs of the Egyptian culture. This first generation had been freed from political bondage, but not from the bondage of Egyptian religiosity that had affected many Israelites. The evidence of this religious influence was revealed at the foot of Mount Sinai upon which the glory of God was revealed in their eyesight. They complained. They rebelled.

They made a golden calf idol. And then, they were struck down by the Destroyer for their lack of focus on the one true and living God. Paul wrote of them, "*Nor let us complain as some of them complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer*" (1 Co 10:10). Paul admonishes us by saying, "*Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were **written for our admonition ...***" (1 Co 10:11). Therefore, "*let him who thinks he stands*" against the influence of the religious culture in which he lives "*take heed lest he fall*" (1 Co 10:12). What everyone is believing, therefore, can never be the foundation upon which we approach our God through His word.

Bible study must always be founded upon the principle, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." And when anyone would speak for the Lord, "*let him speak as the oracles of God*" (1 Pt 4:11). This principle of faithfulness to the oracles of God cannot be overemphasized more than when one is studying what God would require of man for his own salvation. In order to be saved before God, we can never allow the religious world to dictate the conditions for our salvation. We can never allow traditional theology to determine our thinking on these mat-

ters. Our thinking must be guided solely by the word of the One before whom we will be judged (See Jn 12:48).

Since people of all religions seek to devise their own systems of salvation, it is imperative that the faithful disciple make every effort to approach the word of God with an objective humility that is not encumbered with the influences of either culture or the favorite banners of the misguided religious world in which he lives. Lest one be led astray as Israel, he must approach the subject of this discussion with great caution.

We have been mandated by the Spirit to *“test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world”* (1 Jn 4:1). Since it is not inherent within ourselves to test the truthfulness of what another person teaches, our **only option to avoid apostasy is to resort to the word of God**. We can test the “spirits of religion” only with our obsession with a “thus saith the Lord.” If we fail to do this, we are doomed to fall away by creating a religion after the traditions of our fathers or after our own misguided desires (See Mk 7:1-9). If we would be disciples of the Lord, therefore, we have no other option but to focus specifically on what God says to us through His word.

Many years ago we made a decision not to be disciples of the religious world. Our decision was not to be disciples of the church. We would be disciples of Jesus alone. We thus refused to be disciples of a patterned structure of religiosity or theology that became the fashionable doctrine promoted by our fathers that had been passed down to us through our religious heritage. We staunchly opposed the religious heritages of any particular religious group that was not founded upon the word of God. Imbedded within many religious groups are an assortment of tra-

ditional teachings that have no biblical foundation, and yet, are bound on the consciences of men for the sake of preserving the group, not for the exaltation of the Son of God. But specifically, all teachings in the context of the salvation of men should be held suspect until we can find a “book, chapter and verse” that would support correct salvational conclusions. So today we seek to make no uncertain proclamation that our faith must never be imbedded with the doctrines and commandments of men (See Mk 7:1-9). We would be disciples solely of Jesus whom we follow through His word. Jesus said, ***“If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples”*** (Jn 8:31). Jesus could not have made it more clear that we must continue in His word in order to be His disciples. Religious heritages and traditions have no part in this discussion.

Chapter 1 RESCUING OUR FAITH OUT OF THEOLOGICAL JARGON

We never cease to be amazed at the ability of clerical religionists to create popular phrases and terminologies that manifest twisted ideas. Because we live in a world of biblical ignorance, it is absolutely imperative that anyone who would seek to restore themselves to God must be a diligent Bible student. If we would restore our nobility before God, then we must, as the Bereans, *“receive the word with all readiness of mind”* and search *“the Scriptures daily to see whether these things”* are so (At 17:11). If there is no desire to study the Bible, then there is no hope for the religionist who would seek to please God. One can be religious without the word of God. But one cannot be a child of God and disciple of Jesus while being ignorant of the word of God.

This affirmation does not assume that we know everything in the Bible. But it does assume that we know every fundamental teaching that refers to the salvation of men. God did not make salvational teachings ambiguous and difficult to understand. From a simple reading of the text of God's word one can clearly understand what is necessary to be saved.

But because we are surrounded with so many charismatic religious leaders who hold spellbound thousands of biblically ignorant adherents, there seems to be no hope for a modern-day revival of the word of God to the centrality of faith. This situation has reached its pinnacle in reference to what is necessary for one's salvation. In a religious culture wherein there is a dearth of knowledge of the word of God, we have been inundated with biblical ignorance through the smooth and fair speech of those who have little knowledge of the Bible, but assert themselves to be spokesmen for God.

Nevertheless, we must for a moment excuse ourselves from our fatalistic views of the misguided religious world in order to make every attempt to investigate the word of God. The religious masses may be destroyed because of their lack of knowledge of the word of God (Hs 4:6), but we would "with all readiness of mind search the Scriptures" in order to discover what is necessary for our own salvation (At 17:11). If we can for a moment lay aside our religious prejudices and open the pages of the Bible, let's take another look at the subject of faith and obedience in reference to one's relationship with God.

As we study through the subject of faith and obedience, we must be sure to note that there are two groups of people of faith in the New Testament who will be held accountable for their faith. The first group are the alien sinners. Those of this

group are outside Christ and lost in a state of condemnation in sin. These were the Ephesians **before** their obedience to the gospel. Paul wrote that in their former life outside Christ they "**were dead in trespasses and sins**" (Ep 2:1). It was to alien sinners as these that statements as the following were made: "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you ... will be saved*" (At 16:31). This is the group of alien sinners outside Christ who must act on their faith in Jesus in order to do all that God commands of them to be saved. To these unbelievers, therefore, the message is to believe on Jesus as the Son of God. Once belief is established, then the one who believes must do everything that is required by God in order to come into Christ.

The second group who will be held accountable for their faith are those who act on their faith in Jesus, and thus obeyed the gospel. These are those to whom it was written, "*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead*" (Js 2:26). This is the group of those who have already acted on their faith to obey the gospel. Now they must continue to walk obediently in thanksgiving to the grace of God. They do this by working out their "*salvation with fear and trembling*" (Ph 2:12), for they will give account of their works before the Lord (2 Co 5:10).

It is imperative that when studying the subject of faith and salvation in the Bible that the context in which a particular statement is made must first be understood. It must be understood if statements concerning faith are made in reference to alien sinners or to Christians. Determining whether a statement concerning faith was made in the context of unbelievers or believers solves almost all problems in reference to discovering what is required of one to be saved.

A. What some men say.

The statements of warning in the Bible concerning apostasy cannot be overemphasized in the area of teachings concerning salvation. We must assume that in reference to this subject Satan will do his most excellent work. For this reason, we must be very cautious when studying what God would require of all men in order to be delivered from the bondage of sin. We must not doubt and rebel at the “foot of Mount Sinai” because of our present religious culture or past heritage. When studying matters that pertain to our salvation, it is a time to allow the Bible to “mean what it says, and say what it means.” No interpretation is needed.

1. A foundational principle: When discussing salvation, we are discussing a relationship between mortal man and the One in whose presence we must dwell in order to enjoy the blessing of eternal existence (2 Th 1:9). This relationship depends on the responsible actions of ourselves, and the commands of God in whose presence we will maintain our eternity. It is at this point that some theologians become nervous. This nervousness is generated by how we understand certain words that are used in the Bible in reference to the salvation of the alien sinner. Some theologians almost cringe when words as “performance,” “work,” or “obedience” are used. They have no difficulty in applying these words to God in His “performance” or “work” to make available the opportunity of the cross after thousands of years of labor in order to preserve the seedline promise made to Adam and Eve. But when the same words are used in reference to man’s responsibility to respond to the crucified Son, then there is almost a total abhorrence of any performance, work or obe-

dience on the part of man to respond to God’s Suffering Servant on the cross. It seems that we feel comfortable with allowing God to struggle to bring His Son to the cross, but somehow we excuse ourselves of all responsibility to respond obediently. We find this most amusing, especially in view of what the Scriptures say in reference to our responsibility to respond to the love offering of God at Calvary. In fact, it seems quite ridiculous to believe that God had to do all the work and we need do nothing, except the work of a simple “sinner’s prayer.” Sometimes erroneous teachings can be revealed through the application of common sense.

2. A biblical principle: James spoke of a fundamental behavioral relationship of the Christian in reference to his continued salvation in Christ. It is a principle of faith and works that permeates the Scriptures. It involves our relationship with God from the very beginning of our realization of the crucified Savior and will continue to the time of our rest in death as a faithful servant (Rv 14:13). This principle was introduced by James with the Spirit-inspired words, “*What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?*” (Js 2:14).

The first thing to notice concerning James’ statement in James 2:14 is that it is a question. When the Holy Spirit asks a question as this, He knew that we would know the answer. And our answer would be, “Of course not.” It is obvious that faith alone cannot typify the behavior of the Spirit-driven disciple of Christ. The Christian cannot be saved without works. The Spirit helps with our answer to James’ question by teaching, “*Even so faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead*” (Js 2:17). And herein is revealed

the foundational principle upon which our relationship with God must be established from the very beginning. This principle must be maintained from the very beginning of our relationship with God to the time when our body is made dead by the departure of our spirit (Jas 2:26).

After elaborating on the inseparable union of faith and works in the life of the Christian, as illustrated by the faith of Abraham, James summarized, *“You see that faith was working with his works, and by works was faith made perfect”* (Jas 2:22). This is a defining principle. **Acceptable faith before God is always made perfect by response.** James’ conclusion is obvious. *“You see then that a man is justified by works and not by faith only”* (Jas 1:24). We must be careful not to reverse the word order of this statement. It **does not** say, “You see then that a man is justified by **faith** and not by **works** only.” The sentence begins with “you see.” The meaning here is certainly more than “you understand.” One cannot “understand” justification apart from an empirical demonstration of faith. **We can see the demonstration of works, but we cannot see faith.** Therefore, when we see the works, we can understand that one is justified by a working faith. Justification is manifested to all to see because everyone can see the demonstration of our works. They cannot see faith if it is not demonstrated. We must keep this fundamental truth in mind when we approach any teaching concerning faith in reference to the salvation of the alien sinner. In order to witness that the alien sinner has been justified, something must be seen. One can proclaim his own faith in Christ, but until his faith is manifested through action it is not an acceptable faith. It is a dead faith until it comes alive through obedience.

It is amazing that most of the religious

world today cannot see (understand) this point. When faith is discussed in reference to the initial encounter of the alien sinner with God, obedience is totally repudiated by many religionists who believe that there is no demonstration of faith necessary on the part of man in reference to his salvation. But James reminds us that we cannot violate or ignore the connectivity of faith and works/obedience in any context of our relationship with God, starting from the very moment that we believe that Jesus is the Christ and Son of God. He concludes, *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead”* (Jas 2:26). This same principle begins when one first encounters Jesus. It continues to the time when one eventually experiences the separation of body and spirit. If “faith-without-works-is-dead” is a truth in reference to the Christian life, then the same principle holds true in reference to the beginning of the Christian life. A faith that is not demonstrated by the alien sinner is dead until it is demonstrated by obedience.

The principle that permeates the Scriptures in reference to man’s relationship with God is always faith and action. Whether we use the words “performance,” “works,” “obedience,” or any action word, the fact is that acceptable faith before God must always involve some outward response on the part of man. Our personal inward feelings and commitment must always be demonstrated before man and God.

Now the novice student of the Bible often becomes confused here when he reads passages as Galatians 2:16. *“... knowing that a man is **not justified by works** of law, but by the faith of Christ Jesus ... **for by works of law no flesh will be justified.**”* Those who do not rightly divide the word of God, trip over

this statement by applying it to the faith of the alien sinner. The “works” in Galatians 2:16 are in a completely different context than the faith/obedience required of the alien sinner for his salvation. **Paul is discussing the life of the Christian, not the initial response of the alien sinner to the gospel.** He is discussing legal meritorious obedience to law that a Christian might seek to perform in order to earn his justification before God. Paul’s argument is that it is impossible for the Christian to keep law perfectly in order to be saved, for all have sinned (Rm 3:9,10,23). For this reason, the Christian can never be justified by works of law simply because no one can keep law perfectly.

Here is a point not to be misunderstood. There is a vast difference between **meritorious works of law on the part of the believer** and **obedience to law on the part of the unbeliever.** If one confuses the two, then he will fail to understand the alien sinner’s responsibility to be obedient to that which God requires of one to be saved. Meritorious works of law are the efforts of the Christian who would supposedly justify himself before God. But obedience to law refers to God’s requirements on the part of the alien sinner in order to come into a saving covenant relationship with God.

The alien sinner cannot be justified before God without obedience to God’s law. But the Christian does not maintain his justification before God by meritorious works of law. Therefore, we must be careful not to twist the Scriptures to the destruction of the alien sinner by misapplying the Scriptures. Doing such would be doing what some did about whom Peter wrote. These are those who twist scriptures that apply to the Christian. They are those who are untaught and unstable, and thus the word of God they

“distort to their own destruction, as they do also the other Scriptures” (2 Pt 3:16).

3. “Only” strips faith. We must keep in mind that when one uses the word “only” with faith, then he has reduced faith to a simple inactive mental assent of the mind. He has said that no response on the part of the individual is necessary to the word of God. “Only” reduces faith to only a mental awareness of God and Christ. Whether used in reference to the alien sinner or the Christian, “only” means that one’s life can remain totally inert as long as one mentally believes in the right things. We are certain that no one really wants to maintain this belief, for it would infer that we could live wickedly as long as we mentally believe in Jesus. It would infer that the alien sinner could continue in a behavioral pattern of sin as long as he mentally confesses that Jesus is the Son of God.

B. What some are saying.

In the present religious environment there is probably no teaching that permeates all “Christian” groups more than the belief that “salvation is by faith only.” More Scriptures are distorted and twisted concerning this teaching than most teachings of the Bible. “Faith only salvation” is a teaching of such commonality among religious groups that it many times unites the religious world. And herein is the danger. If any teaching in reference to the salvation of the alien sinner is accepted by almost all religious groups, **then this is what we would expect from Satan who seeks to deceive the masses.** We certainly would not assume that Satan would work to unite the religious world around a common doctrine in reference to the salvation of man. If a religious world commonly accepts a doctrine that refers to the salvation of the alien

sinner, then obviously we should step back for a moment and take a closer look at the doctrine. We should do this simply because Satan does not work to unite Christendom over a doctrine by which lost men are saved. It is his work to lead men away from doing that which is necessary to be saved, not to unite the religious world around a doctrine in reference to the salvation of all men. For this reason, commonly accepted teachings in reference to the salvation of the alien sinner should always be suspect until there is a “book, chapter and verse” in the word of God to prove such to be correct.

“Faith only salvation” is a belief that is so imbedded within the ranks of religious theology that disagreement with such brings on one harsh condemnation of being a legalist. But we must keep in mind the foundational principle with which we began this discussion. **What the majority believes, or what the religious culture dictates, must never become the foundation upon which the biblical interpreter establishes his understanding of the Scriptures, or his religious beliefs and behavior.**

The intensity by which the “faith only salvation” doctrine is accepted is revealed by the “authorities” of almost all religious groups that would seek to fall under the umbrella of Christendom. In the Episcopal “Articles of Religion” in the *Book of Common Prayer*, it is stated that man is “accounted righteous before God, **only** for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ **by faith.**” In Hiscox’s *A New Directory of the Baptist Church*, Hiscox wrote that justification and pardon from sins is “**solely through faith**” (pp. 551,552; see also *Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*, p 62). Some have stated that “**no effort however commendable ... can in any way justify the sinner**” (*Seventh-Day Adventists Answer*

Questions on Doctrine, 1957). In the Methodist’s *Articles of Religion* it is stated that “**justification by faith only** is a most wholesome doctrine” (Art. IX; see also the Presbyterian Westminster Confession, Ch. XI, 11; the Lutheran “Augsburg Confession,” Art. IV). In order to establish a salvational relationship with God, it is thus commonly believed among most religious groups that salvation is “**solely through faith** in the Redeemer’s blood” (See J. M. Pendleton, *Baptist Church Manual*, 1966).

Chapter 2

FALSE STARTS AND ERRONEOUS CONCLUSIONS

In discussions concerning faith and salvation, it is always good to review the existing inconsistencies of thinking concerning these subjects, as well as the apostasy that led to what we experience in Christendom today. Christendom today is burdened with some distortions of the Scriptures concerning faith and salvation that confuse people. Because we are in the midst of so much confusion in this critical area of theology, we are forced to be critical in reference to existing beliefs that we feel are sustained by a twisting of several key scriptures. We must also point out some inconsistencies in the “faith only” theology that are often overlooked by those who sustain the belief that the alien sinner need do absolutely nothing in reference to his salvation. He can simply sit in a chair and mentally perceive that he is saved without any expression or obedience of faith whatsoever.

A. Imbedded “works”:

In order to promote the “faith only” teaching, various “formula statements” and salvational terminologies have been invented by all sorts of religionists. For example, the “sinner’s prayer” has been

promoted by some in order for the alien sinner to announce Jesus as a “personal Savior,” or to make a verbal declaration of one’s own salvation. But the concept of a “sinner’s prayer” and the terminology “personal Savior,” are found nowhere in the entire Bible. These theological linguistic terminologies often reflect the “faith only” doctrine that has so captivated the religious world. But when a term or phrase that is not in the Bible is used to reflect a particular belief, then we caution ourselves. It is not that the using of such terminologies is unbiblical. The problem is that they can often reflect unbiblical concepts. Our task as Bible students is to always “search the Scriptures” in order to determine if these terminologies reflect correct biblical truths (See At 17:11).

The irony of the “faith only” theology is that there is a contradiction within the theology itself in reference to works of faith. Adherents to the theology affirm that some confession of faith must be made by the alien sinner, whether it is a “sinner’s prayer,” a statement to “receive Jesus” as one’s personal Savior, or simply an expression or declaration from the individual who seeks to be saved that he believes in Jesus. **But are not such expressions or confessions works within themselves?** For example, if one must proclaim some form of a “sinner’s prayer,” then is not this prayer a work of faith? The same people who demand some outward work or confession of faith by the alien sinner in reference to the alien sinner’s salvation, even a tearful eye or outward cry, vehemently state that baptism should not be a condition for salvation since such is supposedly a “work.” Sometimes, when we do not sit down and seriously consider our thinking, we will carry on with such theological inconsistencies.

B. A reflection on history:

A reflection on church history might answer some of the problems in reference to the development of the “faith only” theology. Instead of baptism being the reflection of the faith of the alien sinner, and subsequently necessary in order to wash away sins, after the first century there was a gradual separation made between baptism and salvation. As men began to emphasize special instructions before baptism in order to guarantee that one was a true disciple of Jesus, the connection between baptism and salvation began to fade. By the third century, this trend became so extreme that some groups required almost three years of instruction before they would baptize anyone. The result of the separation of salvation and baptism was that baptism became a ritualized sacrament. It became a sacrament of “the church” that was surrounded with special statements, the anointing of oil, and an assortment of other ritualistic ceremonies. The fact that baptism had anything to do with salvation was totally lost.

Baptism eventually became a sacrament that was totally disconnected from salvation. It thus became a legal ordinance of “the church.” It was believed that as a legal ordinance, baptism had nothing to do with the forgiveness of sins. By the fourth century, the apostasy had progressed to the point that if one sinned after baptism, these sins were not forgiven. Because of this belief, many delayed their baptism until late in life, lest one sin after his baptism and be condemned for unforgiven sins. “Deathbed” baptism became common.

Throughout the centuries, corrupted theologies surrounding baptism lingered in religion. In the middle ages when there was a protest against the concept of baptism that was practiced by the Roman

Catholic Church, the Reformation Movement leaders had to do something with the teaching since baptism was mentioned so many times in the New Testament. As a result of the Reformation of the middle ages, different groups came up with different doctrines surrounding the subject of baptism. Since baptism had already been separated from salvation, the evolution of where to place baptism in the life of the one who sought to come to Christ varied from one protestant reformer to another. Some said that one is saved by faith alone, but is baptized into the church. Therefore, one is saved outside his membership of the church.

Those who followed after the teaching of individual predestination taught that one's confession of faith was a signal that he was individually predestined. Baptism was thus only an outward manifestation of God's predestination of the individual. The profession of one's faith was simply an announcement to others that he was one of the individually predestined. But if one is already saved by being individually predestined, then why would there be any need that one make some confession of faith? It would seem to be quite ridiculous to demand the obedient condition of a confession of faith when one is already individually predestined to eternal life.

In the digression from the original purpose of baptism in reference to the washing away of sins, religionists have come up with another theology that would supposedly place one in a saving relationship with God without being baptized. This was the theology of the truly "faith only" teaching that was developed by early Reformation leaders as Luther, Wesley and a host of others. Salvation was believed to be based **solely** on one's work of declaring his own salvation. This theology has followed the Pentecost

church movement that started in the latter part of the 1800s. Today it is particularly prevalent in the independent church movement that had its beginning roots in the last of the 1900s.

In modern times, the "sinner's prayer" was first introduced by D. L. Moody. In training the evangelists that he sent out, Moody taught his trainees a "model prayer" that could be easily repeated by respondents at crusades in order that they declare their own salvation. The concept of the "sinner's prayer" gained popularity in the 1950s when Billy Graham, and organizations as the Campus Crusades, incorporated its use in their evangelistic outreaches. The "sinner's prayer" became a common work of declaring one's salvation that was convenient, especially when used in radio and television evangelistic broadcasting. Listeners were often asked to simply place their hands on a radio or television, and then repeat a formulated prayer after the radio/television speaker. The listener was then proclaimed saved.

C. Obedience to the King:

The terminology "personal Savior" was introduced and popularized by Charles Fuller when he used the phrase repeatedly in his radio sermons between 1937 and 1968. Use of the "sinner's prayer" was meant to bring Jesus into one's life as a "personal Savior." But when one considers the concept of the "personal Savior" in Jesus, such thinking can sometimes be dethroning of who Jesus really is. Paul wrote, "*Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no more*" (2 Co 5:16). The epistles move our understanding of Jesus beyond our knowledge of Him through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We now know Jesus after His ascension to the right

hand of God to reign as King of kings. The thought of having Jesus as our “personal friend” must include our recognition of Jesus as *“the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords”* (1 Tm 6:15). *“We have such a high priest who is seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens”* (Hb 8:1). The apostles knew Jesus as a personal friend on earth, but after the ascension they knew Him as the reigning God over all things before whom all humanity will stand in judgment (At 17:30,31; 2 Co 5:10).

Jesus is our Mighty God and Everlasting Father who is now reigning over all things (See Is 9:6). **He is our King, Priest, Potentate, Mighty God and Everlasting Father of all.** He is now such *“that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ...”* (Ph 2:10). We cannot claim Him for ourselves alone. Can He be our “personal” Lord? Can He be our “personal” King? Our relationship with Him is a relationship with His kingship, headship and control over all things (Ep 1:21,22). If we would claim Him as our “personal Savior,” we must be careful in our thinking that we do not minimize His work as our King, Lord and High Priest.

We have a personal relationship with Jesus only as a part of His corporate body, the church. Because the church is the bride of Christ, all those who are “baptized into His body” have a joint covenant relationship with Jesus (1 Co 12:13). One can never have a relationship with Jesus unless he is a member of the body of Jesus. We may struggle with one another’s use of the word “personal,” but one thing is true in developing a biblical definition of the word. We must as Paul first turn away from recognizing Jesus “according to the flesh,” and start recognizing Him as the blessed and only Potentate, the Lord of lords and King of kings. If one continues to use the word

“personal” after throwing himself before the Lord of lords and King of kings, then we would assume that the word “personal” is appropriate. But we must keep in mind that our personal friend Jesus *“will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel These will be punished with everlasting destruction away from the presence of the Lord ...”* (2 Th 1:7-9). We can claim Jesus as our friend, but He is a friend who will eventually banish from the presence of God those who do not obey Him.

Individual members of the body are friends who have all things in common. **But kings as friends demand obedience.** The problem with some is that they want a friend who makes no demands. Add to this the fact that people often rebel against a King who has laid down the law, and subsequently, demands obedience in order to be saved from the wrath to come. If we would be a friend of Jesus, then we should start searching to see what this friend demands of us in order to reap the salvation that He provides. In this search, we must always keep in mind that our “personal” Savior said to all, *“He who rejects Me and does not receive My words, has one who judges him. The word that I have spoken, the same will judge him in the last day”* (Jn 12:48). Jesus is our friend who laid down His life for us. But He said, *“You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you”* (Jn 15:14). He is a sacrificial friend. He is now our reigning God before whom we throw ourselves down prostrate before His throne (Ph 2:8-11). Abraham was called the friend of God because he did what God commanded (Js 2:23). His faith moved Him to obey his Friend. If we would have Jesus as our friend, then we must do what He commands His friends to do.

Chapter 3
THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

In our zeal to encourage obedience to the will of God, we must not assume that our salvation is a matter of “obedience only.” The Bible teaches that the foundation upon which we base all obedience is faith. This makes faith absolutely necessary for one’s salvation, though Bible faith assumes obedience.

Faith does not make law obsolete, either for the alien sinner or the child of God. On the contrary, it is faith that motivates obedience to law. This is the meaning of what Paul wrote. *“Do we then make void law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, **we establish law**”* (Rm 3:31). Therefore, the law of God is not established in one’s life without faith. But at the same time, faith is not evident in one’s life without obedience to law. We are saved by faith, therefore, as long as the faith of the sinner moves him to obey the law of God in reference to what is required for his salvation.

When discussing the matter of “Bible faith,” we must understand that there is an inseparable link between faith and obedience that permeates the Holy Scriptures. When the word “faith” is used in any context wherein one is acceptable to God, we must always assume that obedience is in the action of the word “faith.” **There is no acceptable faith that is void of obedience, for through faith obedience to the will of God is established in our lives.** When we read those passages that emphasize faith, we must always understand that there is a response on the part of the one who has faith. Faith alone as a simple mental recognition of Jesus as the Son of God never stands alone as “faith only” when used in any salvational context of the Scriptures. This is true both in the faith of the dis-

cipline of Jesus, as well as the faith of the alien sinner.

A. Faith is necessary to please God.

Is faith necessary in order to be a child of God? The Hebrew writer answered this question two thousand years ago. ***“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is ...”*** (Hb 11:6). Jesus added that *“he who believes has everlasting life”* (Jn 6:47), but *“he who does not believe will be condemned”* (Mk 16:16). So the conclusion would be, *“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life. And he who does not believe the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him”* (Jn 3:36). The believer *“will not come into condemnation, but has passed from death into life”* (Jn 5:24). Once one has come into the life that Jesus offers, He will walk by faith (2 Co 5:7; see Jn 3:14-16; 20:30,31; At 15:9; Rm 1:16,17; 3:28; Gl 3:23,24, Ep 3:8).

The preceding thought is brought out clearly in what Jesus said in Mark 16:16. ***“He who **believes** and is **baptized** will be **saved**. But he who **does not believe** will be **condemned**.”*** At least two conditions are here given for salvation: belief and baptism. These two conditions are inseparably connected in reference to the salvation of the alien sinner. In the last phrase of what Jesus said, this point is emphasized. *“But he who does not believe will be condemned.”* There is no need to discuss the response of baptism without belief. Since belief is manifested through baptism, then condemnation is manifested through a lack of belief that leads one to be baptized for remission of sins (See At 2:38; 22:16). There is no need to discuss baptism when one does not have the faith that would move him to be obedient to the law of baptism. Baptism is not established in one’s life if he

does not believe. The result of the “faith alone” theology is that people continue in a state of condemnation because their “faith” does not move them to do that which God says one must do in order to wash away one’s sins.

Look at it from the view of how Paul states that true faith establishes God’s law in our lives (Rm 3:31). We can take the liberty of inserting the word “baptism” in the text of Romans 3:31 in order to understand what Jesus said in Mark 16:16. In reference to any law of God, Paul meant, *“Do we make void baptism through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish baptism.”* Paul’s statement of Romans 3:31 was directed to Christians, but the same principle would apply to the alien sinner who would come to the law of God. Faith establishes the law of God in one’s life. It does not lead one to ignore what God would have one do in order to be saved according to the law of God.

When one goes on a journey through the Scriptures, there is no question that faith is demanded in order to be pleasing to God, for it is through faith that God’s will is established in our lives. We can better understand Paul and Silas’ statement to the Philippian jailor if we keep faith in the context of what is necessary to validate it as a faith that is pleasing to God. The jailor asked, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* (At 16:30). Paul and Silas responded, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you and your household will be saved”* (At 16:31). In reference to the salvation of his entire household, the jailor was instructed to lead in his belief in the Lord Jesus. Paul and Silas knew that his belief would move him and his household to do all that was required to comply with the law of God. As a result of his belief, the jailor would be moved to do all that was necessary to

lead his family to be saved. As all those who walk by faith, the jailor had to act on his belief on the Lord Jesus Christ. He had to act in order to be delivered from a state of condemnation.

This thought was emphasized by what John wrote in John 1:12,13. *“But as many as **received Him**, to them He gave **the right** to become the children of God, even to those who **believe** in His name”* (vs 12). Those who received Jesus, believed in Him. **But this only gave them the right to become the children of God.** Believing and receiving did not make one a child of God. It only gives one the right to become a child. Keep in mind that John was writing the book of John as **an historical document** concerning the ministry of Jesus and the reception of Jesus by those **who after His ascension were born of the water and the Spirit** (Jn 3:3-5). Those who believed and received Him *“were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but **of God**”* (Jn 1:13). When one believes, receives Jesus, and is born of the water and Spirit, then this salvational work is not of man, but of God, for it is God who determines what one must do in order to become one of His children. Being born of the water and Spirit is from God, not man. And thus, when one is born again, His birth is not the invention of man, but the result of a revelation from God that one must be born again.

B. Faith moves us into action.

The principle that James set forth in James 2:14-26 is critical in understanding the definition of the faith that is necessary to please God. It is a faith that responds in obedience to the will of God. The principle applies to both the alien sinner and the Christian. In his letter to the Roman disciples, Paul referred to an “obedience of faith” (See Rm 1:5; 16:26).

This is the faith that is “*working through love*” (Gl 5:6). It is the faith that moves one to “*obedience from the heart*” to do the will of God (Rm 6:17,18). And thus, it is the faith that is “*made perfect by works*” (Js 2:22). Our response to the will of God becomes a “*work of faith*” (2 Th 1:3; see 2 Th 1:11). In this way, the law of God is established in our lives (Rm 3:31).

Before the Israelites attacked the city of Jericho, God promised that He had already given them the city (Ja 6:2,3). Before they made one step in obedience to take the city, it had been given into their hands. God made the promise, but they had to act on the promise. Hebrews 11:30 says of the occasion, “***By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.***” Though the Israelites knew that the city had been given into their hands before they started their obedient march around the city, they still had to make the march. If they had disobeyed God by not marching around the city, then the city would not have been given into their hands. Their faith in the promise of God, moved them to march.

We have the promise of salvation in Christ. However, we must “march through the waters of baptism” in order to receive the promise. If we do not “march,” then our belief in the promise of God is unproductive in reference to our desire to receive the promise.

We are now beginning to understand the nature of the “saving faith” about which we read so much in the Bible. **We can be told the result of our faith before our obedience, but without our obedience, the promised result can never be realized.** This was exactly what Paul and Silas were saying to the Philippian jailor. The result of the jailor’s faith would be his salvation. However, between his faith and his salvation there had to be obedience to something that would

bring about the desired end. Israel was promised their conquest of Jericho, but that promise could be realized only through obedient faith. It was by their faith, therefore, that they responded to march around the city according to the will of God.

That faith which is pleasing to God is inseparably connected to obedience. It is defined by obedience. Salvational faith is never separated from a response on the part of man to obey the will of God. The principle of obedient faith is defined by James. “*But someone may say, ‘You have faith and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works*” (Js 2:18). God wants to see our faith. The only way He can see our faith is by our works. This definition of faith is maintained throughout the Bible. It is a principle of faith that is so defined that any who would question it are not seeing the whole picture of biblically-defined faith. It is for this reason that we seriously consider this definition of faith that is clearly illustrated in some key scriptures.

1. Hebrews 3:18,19: In reference to the disobedient Israelites who came out of Egyptian captivity, the Hebrew writer wrote of them, “*And to whom did He swear that they would not enter into His rest, but to those who were **disobedient?**”* (Hb 3:18). This verse states that some Israelites were not able to enter into the rest of the promised land because of their “disobedience.” The Hebrew writer repeated the same thought in Hebrews 4:6, but in different words. In Hebrews 3:18 he stated that the disobedient Israelites could not enter “*because of **disobedience.***” But in verse 19 of Hebrews 3 it states, “*So we see that they could not enter in because of **unbelief.***” There can be only one defining conclusion to the

parallel use of the words “disobedience” and “unbelief.” The Israelites’ unbelief was manifested in their disobedience. They had received the promise of the land. However, because of their lack of faith in God they did not obey. When we seek to define belief in the Bible that is pleasing to God, we must understand that belief and obedience have parallel meanings, as disobedience and unbelief.

2. Hebrew 11: Hebrews 11 is the dictionary of Bible faith. Reading through this chapter is thrilling in the sense that great men and women of God acted on their faith in order to “*please Him*” (Hb 11:6). In their lives they gave testimony to the fact that “*faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (Hb 11:1). It is evidence of things not seen because we can see the obedient behavior of those who believed in the things that cannot be seen. In using Hebrews 11 as our dictionary to define that faith which is pleasing to God, notice below the obedience of God’s people that resulted from their faith:

“By faith Abel **offered** . . . (vs 4).

“By faith Enoch . . . **had this testimony, that he pleased God**” (vs 5).

“By faith Noah . . . **prepared an ark** . . .” (vs 7).

“By faith Abraham . . . **obeyed** . . .” (vs 8).

“Through faith even Sarah . . . **bore a child** . . .” (vs 11).

“By faith Abraham . . . **offered up Isaac**” (vs 17).

“By faith Moses . . . **refused** to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter” (vs 24).

These great people of God acted on their faith in the promises of God. We can see their faith through their obedience. They all, as Sarah, acted on their faith because they “*judged Him faithful who had promised*” (Hb 11:11). **When**

God makes promises, He expects those who have faith in Him to obey that which is necessary in order to receive the promises. This definition of faith must be understood throughout the Bible when discussing faith that is pleasing to God.

There is no such thing as an inactive faith that is pleasing to God. James called inactive faith a dead faith (Js 2:26). One may have faith that God exists, but this does not mean that such a faith is pleasing to God. James commended some for at least their faith in God, “*You believe that there is one God. You do well*” (Js 2:19). But James wanted to remind these unresponsive readers, “*The demons also believe and tremble*” (Js 2:19). At least the demons respond by trembling. Any lack of response of one’s faith is a mockery of the word of God. Those with an unresponsive faith must answer the question that James asked, “*But are you willing to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?*” (Js 2:20). Those who would arrogantly declare their own salvation without responding to the will of God to fulfill all righteousness must answer this question. Would one be so presumptuous as to declare his or her own salvation without responding in obedience to the gospel of Jesus through baptism? We must not forget the principle that both the Hebrew writer and James have established, that unresponsive faith is dead, and thus, not pleasing to God.

3. John 6:47: John 6:47 furthers our definition of responsive faith that is acceptable to God. Jesus said, “*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has everlasting life.*” Paul made a similar statement to the Philippian jailor. “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you and your household will be saved*” (At 16:31).

It is here where one of the most common failures of correct Bible interpretation occurs. In reference to our discussion of the inseparable connection between baptism and salvation, this error of interpretation has led to a misunderstanding of more key scriptures on faith than any other misapplication of biblical interpretation. The misinterpretation here is over a very common grammatical structure of communication that we use every day.

What both Jesus and Paul used in the grammatical structure of John 6:47 and Acts 16:31 was a **synecdoche**. **A part was used for the whole**. In their statements they used the word “believe” as the part that stood for the whole of what was necessary to receive eternal life. When Jesus said that one must believe in order to have eternal life, he was including in the word “believe” **all that God required of the alien sinner in order to have eternal life**. However, He said nothing about repentance in His statement. But in Luke 13:3 He said, *“But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”* Even in this statement He used the word “repent” as a synecdoche. He did not mention belief, as He did in John 6:47. Does repentance exclude belief, or does belief exclude repentance?

Some Bible interpreters have difficulty here because they fail to see the whole context of Scripture concerning what God would have one do in response to the gospel. Use of a word as a synecdoche means that the word “believe” in reference to eternal life includes repentance. Likewise, the word “repent” includes belief. The part, “believe” or “repent,” is used for the whole, or everything that is necessary to bring about the desired end, that is, our salvation and eternal life.

When Peter stood up before the Jews in Acts 3 he said, *“Repent and be converted so that your sins may be blotted*

out ...” (At 3:19). But in this statement he never said anything about belief ... or baptism. One might respond by arguing that we would assume that in the word “repent” he meant that they should believe on Jesus. Right! Now we get the point. When a grammatical synecdoche is used, **one must always assume that all that is required to obtain the final stated objective is included in the use of only one word in a particular text**. In every text where either eternal life, remission of sins, or salvation is mentioned, the New Testament writer did not have to mention every required act of obedience that was necessary to obtain the desired result of that which was promised by God. One word is sufficient when we understand that we must discover in the Bible all that God requires of us to be saved.

Understanding the principle of the synecdoche is vital to our understanding of what God requires of us as a result of our faith. If our faith does not move us to do all that is necessary to be saved, then either one of two things is true. Either we have an “ignorant” faith, that is, our lack of knowledge of all that God would require of us to obey Him leads us to be disobedient. Or second, we do have a knowledge of all that God requires of us to obey Him, but because of our rebellious spirit we seek to trust alone in our inactive faith. In either case we must remind ourselves of what James reminded his readers, *“The demons also believe and tremble.”* Would we seek a faith that is greater than the faith of demons?

4. John 3:36: Jesus’ statement in this verse summarizes the focus of this chapter. *“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life. And he who does not believe the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”* Now connect this statement to a review of He-

brews 3:18,19. Those Israelites who were not allowed to enter into the land of promise were not allowed to enter because they were **disobedient**. They were disobedient because of their **unbelief**. When Jesus said that the one who believes has everlasting life, He meant that the one who is obedient has everlasting life. If one does not truly believe, then he will not obey. **It would be correct to state that Bible belief is obedience, and obedience is the expression of acceptable faith.** This is exactly what Jesus said in John 6:29. *“This is the **work** of God, that you **believe** in Him whom He has sent.”* This is the connection that Paul made in Romans 10:16 in his quotation of Isaiah 53:1. *“However, they have not all **obeyed** the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has **believed** our report?’”*

Millions today claim to believe in Jesus, but they have not obeyed the gospel. This is a most frightening thought. There are countless preachers standing up throughout the land proclaiming to those who are ignorant of the Bible that they should only believe in Jesus and they will be saved. But they leave out everything that God would require of one to wash away sins (See At 2:38; 22:16). We live in a world where a “demon’s faith” is preached that only brings on the trembling of a “sinner’s prayer,” but nothing else. Eloquent and powerful preachers move people to tremble in sin, but they say nothing of what God requires of the alien sinner to take care of his problem of sin. Proclaimers are preaching the promises of God, but they are failing to tell the people how to march to victory over sin. Such misleading prognosticators are merchants of theological mischief. They take people to the cross of repentance and leave them there without assisting them to fulfill all righteous-

ness for the remission of their sins. They ignore the cleansing waters of being buried with Jesus in order to be raised to walk in newness of life (See Rm 6:3-6). These are not the *“feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things”* (Rm 10:15). They are those who leave the city of Satan unconquered because they fail to tell the people to march. They preach a part of what is required to receive eternal life and leave out the whole. They have preached a percentage of the righteousness of God, and thus failed to preach all His righteousness.

Chapter 4

A THEOLOGY OF ELIMINATION

Any theology that is developed by emphasizing one requirement for salvation to the exclusion or minimization of other requirements becomes a theology of elimination. Those who would promote the teaching that baptism is the sole requirement for salvation have often minimized other requirements as faith and repentance. Those who would emphasize a repentant experience at a moment of emotional outpouring over a command to “repent and be baptized” have also marginalized, if not rejected what is necessary to wash away one’s sins. We have also found that those who overemphasize baptism fail to emphasize that one’s faith should first move one to be a disciple, and then, as Jesus said, disciples must obey the gospel in baptism (Mt 28:19,20). If there is no commitment to discipleship, then baptism often becomes a simple legal action of works. If one assumes his salvation only by faith, then baptism again becomes a legal ceremony. Sometimes the action of baptism is emphasized so much that its purpose in obedience to the death, burial and

resurrection of Jesus has long been forgotten. When discovering what God would have the alien sinner do in order to be saved, we must never emphasize a part of what is required by God to the exclusion of all other essential requirements for salvation. For this reason, the word “only” can never be used in reference to any part that is required for salvation. In reference to salvation, we either take all of the requirements, or we take our chances with only one part.

The religious world does not lack in the number of voices who proclaim a “faith only” condition for the salvation of the alien sinner. However, the common acceptance of a salvational teaching among most religionists makes us suspicious. It makes us suspicious because it is Satan’s work to deceive as many people as possible in reference to the salvation of the alien sinner. He seeks to deceive as many people as possible not to do that which is necessary for salvation. He simply does not want the lost to obey the gospel. Therefore, he seeks to hold the alien sinner up short of being buried with Jesus in obedience to the gospel for the remission of sins (At 2:38). This is the work of Satan. And looking at his scheme from a purely logical point of view, he has performed a brilliant deed. His greatest deception is to encourage the multitudes to follow the multitudes.

For all the preceding reasons, therefore, everyone must take a fresh look at all that is necessary to bring one into a covenant relationship with God. We must come to the word of God with the attitude that whatever is stated in Scripture concerning what is necessary for our salvation we must believe and obey. No requirement for our salvation must be minimized or rejected. We would seek to do all that God asks of us in order that we become and remain His children. And in

order to remain His children, we would not minimize or eliminate any command that must be obeyed in order to be pleasing to our Father.

A. Accepting the whole:

As soon as one says that salvation is by “faith only,” he has eliminated any other necessity, or obedience connected with one’s salvation. This poses a problem since in the New Testament many different conditions are mentioned in reference to the salvation of the alien sinner. As illustrated in the preceding statements, Jesus said, “*But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish*” (Lk 13:3; see At 3:19; 17:30; 2 Co 7:10; 2 Pt 3:9). But if salvation is by “faith only,” then we have eliminated the necessity of repentance about which Jesus made a requirement for salvation. Paul wrote that “*with the mouth confession is made to salvation*” (Rm 10:10; compare Mt 10:32; At 8:37). But if salvation is by “faith only,” then there is no need to confess that Jesus is the Son of God. Peter wrote, “*The like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us ...*” (1 Pt 3:21; see Mk 16:16; At 22:16). But if salvation is by “faith only,” then there is no need for immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (See Rm 6:3-6). Again, as soon as one uses the word “only” in connection to any requirement for the salvation of the alien sinner, he has eliminated every other requirement. He has made the Bible contradict itself in reference to what God would require of one in order to be saved. Because the word “only” is connected to faith in reference to one’s salvation, many people are confused concerning what God would require for a saved relationship with Him.

Add to the preceding the concept of the faithful Christian life. John wrote, “*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light,*

we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 Jn 1:7). In reference to the life of the disciple, there is no such thing as "faith only." In his address to Christians, James made this perfectly clear when he wrote, "... *faith without works is dead*" (Js 2:26). For this reason the early evangelists exhorted the first disciples "to continue in the faith" (At 14:22). Their exhortation was not to simply keep believing in Jesus, but to continue obediently to follow the word of Jesus. Jesus is the author of the salvation of all those who obey Him (Hb 5:9). Therefore, we must "*continue in His goodness*" by being obedient to His word (Rm 11:22; see Cl 1:23; Hb 1:11; 3:12,13; 13:1). The point is that if the beginning of our salvation is by "faith only," and we continue to claim a relationship with Jesus by "faith only," then we have eliminated faithful obedience to the word of God.

Faithful Bible students discover all that God would require of them to have a faithful Christian walk with Jesus. They do not stop at one passage of scripture, and then claim that all that is required for salvation is found in that one favorite passage. We must challenge ourselves with the following question:

WHICH DOCTRINE IS CORRECT?

Salvation by faith only (Jn 6:47).

Salvation by repentance only (Lk 13:3).

Salvation by confession only (Rm 10:10).

Salvation by baptism only (1 Pt 3:21).

The conclusion is that salvation is not by any one particular requirement, but by a collective response of the whole. In any particular scripture a part may be mentioned for the whole. (Remember the synecdoche?) Since all the above listed scriptures teach something that refers to the alien sinner's salvation, then **it is im-**

perative to conclude that everything that is mentioned in reference to our salvation is necessary for one's salvation. This is what is called "rightly dividing the word of God" in order to apply everything the Bible says in reference to one's relationship with God (2 Tm 2:15). We do not want to divide out of the context of the Scriptures any one Bible requirement for salvation that we may feel is the only thing that is necessary for salvation. We seek to accept all that God stated in the entirety of His word. Therefore, faith, repentance, confession and baptism are all necessary for the salvation of the alien sinner.

If any one of the preceding points constitutes salvation in and of itself, then one can be saved without the others. If one is saved by "repentance only," then he can be saved without faith, confession and baptism. If one is saved by "baptism only," then he can be saved without faith, repentance and confession. The one who would seek to follow the direction of God will study the entirety of the word of God in order to discover everything that God would require of one in order to be saved and live a faithful Christian life.

B. Response to all that God has given:

A very important point is made in 2 Corinthians 4:15. "*For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace that is reaching many people may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.*" This is an evangelistic passage that refers to the response of the alien sinner to the preaching of the gospel of grace.

It is the desire of the obedient to respond with thanksgiving to all that God requires for one's salvation by His grace. As the manifestation of the grace of God on the cross, Jesus calls on all men to obey the good news of the cross in order

to walk in newness of life. It is appreciation for God's gift of grace on the cross that causes obedient thanksgiving on the part of the alien sinner.

Now consider this thought in view of the impact that Hebrews 5:8,9 should have on us. The message of this statement is overwhelming. It should shock those who think that they can bring the grace of God into their lives with a cheap faith.

Though He was a Son, He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him.

Think about this statement and reason from the Son of God to yourself. If we are somewhat arrogant with our faith, it would be difficult to understand the impact of this verse. Though Jesus was the Son of God, He "learned obedience." He learned obedience through the necessity to manifest His faith through suffering on the cross (Gl 2:16). He was thus made perfect through His obedience by going to the cross for us. Therefore, He was given the right to be the "author" of eternal salvation. But this eternal salvation is reserved for those who follow after His example of obedience. Now would we deceive ourselves into thinking that we can have eternal life without the obedience of which the Son of God is the author? We need to think about this for a moment. In order to be saved, would we entertain a belief that the alien sinner can get by with a cheap inactive faith in the One who paid such an incredible price of obedience on the cross? We need to keep in mind that we will all give account of our obedience before the Son who learned obedience through the suffering of the cross (2 Co 5:10).

Paul wrote, "*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men*" (Ti 2:11). If the loving grace of God on the cross does not cause an obedient response in the life of the alien sinner, then one is ungrateful. And no one can be saved with an ungrateful faith. The fallacy that is imbedded in the "faith only" doctrine is that it allows an individual to believe that he or she is saved **without any thankful response to the grace of God on the cross**. True thanksgiving means that God calls for more than water from tears. He calls for the tearful to be born of the Spirit and the water with the One who went to the cross for our sins. God requires more than believing in what one must do. God requires a faith response to the One who through faith took Himself to the cross. One does not believe himself into salvation, but believes unto obedience of the gospel that brings salvation. We must remember that the faith of the alien sinner only gives him the right to become a son of God (Jn 1:12). It is the gospel that saves, not our faith. Therefore, one must connect with the gospel that saves through faith. This connection is made by being immersed with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection (See Rm 6:3-6). A "saving faith" is thus defined by a faith that moves one to do that which one must do in order to be saved.

Chapter 5 THE FEAR OF THE LORD

Any theology that discourages an obedient respond to the grace of God that was manifested on the cross, must immediately be suspect. An obedient response to God is a matter of respect. It is a matter of respecting the word of God. Our respect for God is manifested in our obedience to what He tells us to do. And

unless we do what He says, then there is no respect for God or His word. The fear of the Lord that is mentioned in the Bible is defined as an obedient respect to what God tells us to do.

A. The fear of the Lord:

The phrase “fear of the Lord” saturates the Old Testament. Some unfortunately misunderstand the meaning of this phrase by minimizing its meaning to an emotional “terror” of the Lord. The meaning of “terror” is certainly within the meaning of the phrase, but the context in which the phrase is used refers to the obedience of the people out of their respect for God and His commands. In the context of its use, this respect means that the people obeyed the Lord. 1 Samuel 11:7 states, *“And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came”* The Israelites obediently *“struck all the cities around Gerar, for the fear of the Lord came on them”* (2 Ch 14:14). *“Now let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Take heed and do it ...”* (2 Ch 19:7). *“Thus you will do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully and wholeheartedly”* (2 Ch 19:9).

The fear of the Lord is respect and obedience for what the Lord instructs. If one does not respect the word of the Lord, then he will devise some other system of salvation than that which is given by the Lord. He will declare his own salvation in order to escape his responsibility to do all the will of the Lord. **If one would declare his own salvation with little or no regard for what the word of God teaches concerning salvation, then there is no fear of the Lord in him.** There is no fear of the Lord in him because he has so little respect for what the Lord says in His word concerning all that one should do for his own salvation. Those who are ignorant of the word of God, therefore, validate their salvation on

the foundation of their own emotional experience rather than what God declares in His word. Those who do not fear the Lord have little regard for the word of the Lord, and thus, they will devise other systems of salvation than what is taught in the word of God. One manifests his fear of the Lord by studying and obeying the word of the Lord. **There is absolutely no other way to validate one’s fear of the Lord.**

It is for the above reason that salvation can never be based solely on the emotional experiences of man. Experiential religion is validated by the emotions of the adherents. The experientialist contends that if he has emotionally experienced something, then it must be right. The validation of his faith thus stands on himself, not on a pronouncement from the word of God. But if his reasoning is correct, then there need be no reference to what the Bible says concerning the salvation of the alien sinner. The experientialist has deceived himself into believing that he can declare his own salvation apart from the fear of the Lord, which fear refers to one’s emotional response to what the Bible says one must do in order to be saved. This is the danger of the charismatic preacher who can bring people to tears and fear, declare the salvation of the people, and then go on his way without ever reading a passage from the word of God as to when God says one is saved. He thinks he has brought people to the “fear of the Lord.” But no one can bring one to the fear of the Lord without proclaiming what the Lord says in His word.

B. The fear of the Lord is manifested in obedience.

As Bible believers, there should be no need for a discussion over any system of salvation that requires **no** obedi-

ence to the commandments of God. If someone devises a doctrine concerning salvation that is void of obedience to the commandments of God, then we can be assured that such a doctrine is a doctrine of demons. But this is exactly what the doctrine of “self-declared salvation” by faith only is all about. This teaching has removed obedience by the direction of the word of God. It is an experiential doctrine that has led its adherents to scoff at any obedient response to the word of God for salvation on the part of the alien sinner. It has thus removed the fear of the Lord from the hearts of men.

Nevertheless, the fact is that **one must obey God in order to be saved**. If this statement is erroneous, then there need be no respect for anything the Bible says one must do in order to be saved. The alien sinner can experientially declare his own salvation, and then go on his way without being washed of sins. He can ignore God’s declaration that one must obey the gospel by being baptized into Christ (Gl 3:26,27). But we would reject such a theology. We reject such because of our respect for the word of God, which word requires that the alien sinner must do something to manifest his fear of the Lord.

The following words of Jesus are strikingly appropriate in this discussion: *“Not every one who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven”* (Mt 7:21). The inconsistency of some is revealed by their quotation of this statement of Jesus. They will proclaim faith only in Jesus in order to be saved, and yet, they will quote this passage that says one must **obey** the “will of My Father” in order to be saved. If salvation is experiential by faith only, then one does not have to obey the will of the Father in reference to anything

He might require to wash away the sins of the sinner.

Jesus said in another context, *“And why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things that I say?”* (Lk 6:46). Would one dare come to Jesus and say, “I believe on You and accept You as my personal Savior, **but I will not do the things You say.**” This is what many are telling alien sinners who are trying to come to Jesus in order to be saved from their sins.

In the first century, those who feared the Lord, obeyed the word of God in reference to their salvation. Peter spoke of disciples who had purified their souls *“in obeying the truth”* (1 Pt 1:22). These are those of whom Jesus is the author of their salvation. Jesus *“became the author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him”* (Hb 5:9). If one has not obeyed Jesus, then Jesus is not his “author.” If one has obeyed the good news of His death, burial and resurrection, then this person seeks Jesus as his guide throughout his life (See 2 Th 1:7,8). In view of all the statements made in Scripture concerning what one must do in obedience to the will of God, any teaching that would negate or neglect obedience in reference to receiving Jesus as one’s Savior must be questioned.

C. Works of obedience versus works of merit.

Many confuse obedience to the **commands of God** and **meritorious law keeping** in order to merit salvation. Several passages are used out of context that reveal that some do not understand the difference between these two concepts. For example, Paul wrote, *“For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest anyone should boast”* (Ep 2:8,9). Some have used the concept of

this passage to refute the teaching that the alien sinner must be obedient to the will of God in order to be saved. Those who promote such a teaching forget the context in which Paul made this statement. **This statement was made to Christians**, not to alien sinners.

In the context of Ephesians 2 Paul was explaining that Christians are not saved by meritorious works of law, nor by good works by which one might supposedly atone for his sins. Since the Christian cannot keep law perfectly in order to save himself, then he cannot be saved by perfect law keeping or meritorious good works to atone for sins (See Rm 3:9,10,23). Therefore, the Christian is not saved by works lest he have an occasion to boast, not only before other Christians, but also before God. Paul added that if we are saved by grace, *“then it is no more by works, otherwise grace is no more grace”* (Rm 11:6).

There is an inconsistent theology taught here by some of those who teach that there is no obedience to law in reference to the salvation of the alien sinner. Some will use passages as Ephesians 2:8,9 and Galatians 2:16 in order to teach that the sinner is “saved by faith alone,” and not by any works of law. But at the same time, they will teach that the Christian is saved by his good works that supposedly atone for one’s sins. They eagerly argue that there is no meritorious work in reference to the salvation of the lost, but at the same time believe that the Christian’s sins find atonement in good works. Interesting inconsistency, isn’t it?

As in the context of Ephesians 2:8,9, Galatians 2:16 is also a statement by Paul that is made in reference to the Christian walk, not the salvation of the alien sinner. To Christians, Paul wrote **“that a man is not justified by works of law, but by the faith of Christ Jesus ... for by**

works of law no flesh will be justified.”

In this statement to the Galatians Paul stated the same principle that he revealed in Ephesians 2:8,9. No Christian can be saved by perfect keeping of law, nor can a Christian atone for his sins with meritorious works. But keep in mind that in the statements to the Ephesians and the Galatians Paul was addressing his thoughts on meritorious law-keeping and meritorious works to Christians, not to alien sinners who are outside Christ. These are not scriptures that should be quoted before the alien sinner in reference to his salvation. If we do use these scriptures in reference to what God would require of alien sinners, then we will “shut out of the kingdom” those who would be baptized into Christ in order to become sons of God (See Gl 3:26-29).

We must keep in mind that Christians must work in response to the grace of God. Immediately following the statements in Ephesians concerning the impossibility of the Christian to work for his salvation, Paul makes the following statement in Ephesians 2:10: **“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we should walk in them.”** Now did Paul contradict himself by what he said in verses 8 & 9 and verse 10? We think not. In the context of Ephesians 2 Paul is writing to Christians, to those who had already obeyed the gospel in order to be saved. Though one is not saved by meritorious works of law or good works, he is saved in Christ Jesus for the purpose of doing *“good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of the faith”* (Gl 6:10).

The commentary of the statements of Ephesians 2:10 is Philippians 2:12. **“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence,**

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." These people to whom Paul was writing were Christians ("be-loved"). As Christians they were always doing good works in obedience to the will of God. We must remember that they were already saved. As the saved, they were to work out the salvation they already had. This is the meaning of the Ephesians 2:10 passage. We are created in Christ Jesus **for** good works. We are not created in Christ Jesus **by** good works.

Christians do not meritoriously work in order to guarantee their salvation. However, they work out their salvation because they are thankful for their salvation that they have in Christ. In his instructions to the Corinthians, Paul used his own life as an example. *"But by the grace of God I am what I am. And His grace toward me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me"* (1 Co 15:10). Paul's abundant work as a disciple was his work of obedience, not works to merit salvation. He, as all disciples of Jesus, work in appreciation for what they have received through the grace of God. They work in thanksgiving of the cross (2 Co 4:15). Such is the "obedience of faith" that characterizes the children of God (Rm 1:15; 16:26).

The alien sinner becomes a new creature when he works in obedience to the law of Christ to be baptized into Christ (Gl 3:26,27). *"In Christ he is a new creature"* (2 Co 5:17). As a new creation in Christ, he seeks to work in thanksgiving of his salvation (2 Co 4:15). His faith goes to work in response to grace. It is as Paul wrote to the Galatians, *"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love"* (Gl 5:6). Again, this

statement was written to those who had already been created in Christ Jesus through their obedience to the gospel. They were disciples who were obedient by being *"baptized into Christ"* (Gl 3:27). Our salvation in Christ is by faith in the grace of God, but it is a faith that is working through love. It is as James wrote, *"You see then that a man is justified by works and not by faith only"* (Js 2:24). It is an obedient faith that brings one into Christ. Once in Christ, it is an obedient response to the grace by which we have been saved that makes our faith profitable unto salvation (See Rv 14:13).

Chapter 6 LOST IN BELIEF

The fact that obedience through perfect keeping of law does not save the Christian does not excuse the alien sinner from his responsibility to obey the commandments of God concerning what is necessary for him to do in order to be saved. In rightly dividing the word of God we must not confuse ourselves by using passages of scripture that deal with the salvation of Christians to refer to the lost state of the alien sinner. Doing such has brought great confusion into the world of theology in reference to the salvation of those outside Christ. Too many theologians have committed this error of interpretation, and thus, they have failed to recognize that there are responsibilities on the part of the sinner for him to manifest his "fear of the Lord" in obedience to the gospel. The faith that one has in the Lord that begins before being baptized into Christ must move him to obey the gospel by immersion into Christ. The baptized believer must then continue in a labor of love, working out his salvation that he has in Christ. In order to begin one's lifetime of obedience, there must

be an initial manifestation of obedience.

In the first century, there were many who “believed,” but their belief was not manifested by obedience to what Jesus said. Many maintained an unresponsive faith in the presence of the One in whom they were to believe. If such happened during the personal ministry of Jesus, then we would expect the same today. We would expect people to believe in Jesus, but at the same time be rebellious to the word of God. If you believe that this unfortunate situation cannot exist today, then take a closer look at the following examples:

A. Jews lost in belief.

In John 8, John recorded an interesting event during the ministry of Jesus. Jesus was at the time in the presence of some who to some extent believed in Him. In verse 31 He challenged these “believers.” *“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed in Him, ‘If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples.’”* The mark of true discipleship is obedience to the word of Jesus (See Jn 12:48). Obedience to the word of Jesus is the signal to everyone that one is a disciple of Jesus. Therefore, in order to begin one’s discipleship of Jesus **he must obey the word of Jesus**. If there is no obedience, then there is no discipleship.

Now in the context of Jesus’ exchange with some Jews in John 8, there were those in His presence who believed, but they did not want to obey the word of Jesus. So in verse 44 Jesus said to them, *“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.”* These Jews whom Jesus addressed “believed in Him” (Jn 8:31). However, their belief did not move them to obey the word of Jesus. They were thus of the faith of their father the devil, and it was his will

that they desired to obey.

If one believes, but his belief does not move him to obey Jesus, **then he is still under the influence of the devil**. Jesus stated, *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved”* (Mk 16:16). By the Holy Spirit Peter said, *“Repent and be baptized ...”* (At 2:38). The Spirit through Ananias said, *“Arise and be baptized ...”* (At 22:16). Would we dare believe, but refuse to obey the simple command to be baptized? If we do not obey, can we declare our own salvation without obedience to the command to be baptized? Obeying God to be baptized is not a work of merit. It is a work of obedience whereby we are manifesting that we seek to be an obedient disciple of Jesus.

B. Rulers lost in belief.

During the ministry of Jesus there were also many rulers who believed on Jesus. However, they remained in their state of condemnation because they would not confess who He claimed to be. John wrote to them, *“Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed in 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”* (Jn 12:42,43).

These rulers had faith. However, their faith was not strong enough to move them to confess that Jesus was the Son of God. Their love for the glory of man was stronger than their faith in Jesus. Would we consider these men saved by faith only? Did they have a saving faith? In answer to these questions, Matthew 10:32,33 gives the answer. *“Therefore, whoever will confess Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever will deny Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”* The

rulers were guilty of being condemned in their faith. Their faith without obedience left them spiritually dead in their faith. It is for this reason that we would question any teaching that assumes one's salvation is by faith alone. Faith alone does not manifest one's willingness to obey God. Faith alone can leave us in a state of condemnation.

C. Kings lost in belief.

In conjunction with the unresponsive faith of the Jewish rulers, there is also the case of King Agrippa who remained "lost in belief." Paul asked Agrippa, "*King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets?*" (At 26:27). Agrippa did not have to answer this question because Paul knew that he believed the prophets concerning the coming of the Messiah. So Paul gave Agrippa's answer for him. "*I know that you believe*" (At 26:27). Agrippa knew that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. Acts 26:28 is an interesting statement of Agrippa that was recorded by Luke. "*Then Agrippa said to Paul, 'In a short time you almost persuade me to become a Christian.'*" Agrippa remained spiritually dead in his faith because it did not move him to do that which would make him a Christian. He remained spiritually dead in his faith because he was not moved to obedience.

D. Demons lost in belief.

We would be correct in believing that all demons are lost. But consider the fact that demons have faith. Of their faith, James wrote, "*You believe that there is one God. You do well. The demons also believe and tremble*" (Js 2:19). At least these demons had enough faith to tremble. They were not completely dead in their faith. They had more faith than most people who claim to be Christians.

The demons tremble, but many people have so little faith that they do not tremble at the possibility of losing their souls. They trust in their inactive faith, which faith will be pronounced dead upon the coming of our Lord.

So again we ask the question, "Can one be lost in belief?" The answer is that some Jewish rulers were lost in belief. Agrippa was lost in belief. Demons are lost in belief. **The fact that one can be lost in belief should caution us about teaching any doctrine that faith only will save the alien sinner.** In every case where one was lost in belief, the belief did not spark obedience to confess Jesus as the Christ. This "confessing of Jesus" was not simply a verbal proclamation, but a living sacrifice on the part of the one who believed. Bible faith is manifested by obedience to become a child of God, as well as to remain His child in His care.

Chapter 7

FAILURE TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS

This will not be a comfortable chapter for many evangelists to read. The following discussion will stir a great deal of guilt in the hearts of those who are sincerely trying to do their best to please God. To these we would say that you have done the best you could with what you knew. God's grace will cover our past erroneous teaching as we all study together and learn more of His will. We believe in a God of mercy, a God who knows that we continually grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus (2 Pt 3:18). What is important is to continue to grow in this knowledge, trusting that God has a lot of mercy and grace for our incomplete knowledge of His word that we have taught in the past.

Regardless of the past, however, we

must take another look at the responsibility of the evangelist who seeks to preach the good news of Jesus. We have studied the responsibility of the audience that they must move beyond a simple belief in Jesus. As previously proved, the biblical definition of faith is obedience to the will of God. In reference to the alien sinner, saving faith moves one to respond to the will of God in obedience to the gospel. In reference to the Christian, saving faith moves one to work in thanksgiving for the grace of God. In both situations faith must always be understood to manifest obedience to the will of God.

The responsibility to fulfill all righteousness in reference to the will of God begins at the point of baptism. At the beginning of His ministry, *“Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him”* (Mt 3:13). But because John knew who Jesus was, he initially had some objections. As a direct revelation from God, John was already baptizing people in the wilderness (Mt 3:6). He was baptizing in Aenon because there was much water there (Jn 3:23). So when Jesus came to him, John did not try to prevent Him from being baptized. He just thought that he was not spiritually suitable to baptize the Messiah. But notice carefully what Jesus said to John. *“Permit it at this time, for thus it is appropriate for us to fulfill all righteousness”* (Mt 3:15). Notice Jesus’ use of the plural pronoun “us.” In the “fulfilling of all righteousness,” **baptism is not just about the one being baptized.** In this case, the baptism was not just about Jesus being baptized. **The “us” included John.** God had commissioned John to baptize for the remission of sins (Mk 1:4). Baptism was part of the righteousness of God that was revealed to John. Therefore, in obedience to God, it was necessary for Jesus to be baptized. But as part of the work of be-

ing an evangelist of the good news of Jesus, John too had to participate in the “righteousness” of God by baptizing Jesus. **When one is baptized, both the one who is baptized and the one baptizing are together fulfilling all righteousness.** Evangelists who are not baptizing those to whom they preach the gospel, therefore, **are not fulfilling all righteousness.** Their message is falling short of **all** righteousness.

We must keep in mind that Jesus used the word “all” in reference to fulfilling the righteousness of God. The use of this word means that no one part of the “all” can be emphasized to the exclusion of any other part that completes all the righteousness of God. The “all” would include faith, but it would not exclude other requirements to complete the righteousness of God. Faith is not exclusive. Faith would not exclude baptism, **for it was baptism that resulted in the fulfillment of all righteousness in the baptism of Jesus.** Therefore, unless one is baptized, all the righteousness of God has not been fulfilled in his coming to Christ.

An example of this truth is seen in the case of the eunuch from Ethiopia. In Acts 8 Philip was instructed by an angel to go to a desert and connect with an Ethiopian who was returning to his homeland in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian was a eunuch under Candace, the queen. As a religious person, he was reading from Isaiah 53 concerning a prophecy of the Messiah. Now notice what is stated in Acts 8:35. *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this scripture he preached Jesus to him.”* All that is stated in this context is that Philip preached Jesus to him. In the following verses we discover at least one very important subject that is included in the “preaching of Jesus.”

We have no idea how long Philip

preached Jesus to the eunuch. But as they went on their way they came to some water. Now consider what the eunuch initiated. *“Now as they went along the road they came to some water. And the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water! What hinders me from being baptized?’”* (At 8:36). Nothing was said in the text about Philip teaching the eunuch about baptism. The initiative to be baptized came from the eunuch. Therefore, **we would correctly conclude that in preaching Jesus, one as an evangelist, must speak of baptism.** Philip fulfilled all righteousness by carrying out his responsibility to speak of baptism when he preached Jesus. When the two came to some water, both Philip and the eunuch worked together to fulfill all righteousness by the baptism of the eunuch.

How many preachers today think they are preaching Jesus but actually are not fulfilling all righteousness by failing to teach the people that they must be baptized into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus? If one does not teach on baptism, **then he is not preaching the full message of Jesus.** If one does not assist people in being baptized, **then he is not an evangelist who is fulfilling all righteousness.**

How many preachers are there who have finally realized that they left out of their message any reference to baptism? They have preached for years, but never mentioned baptism to the point that their audiences would respond as the eunuch, *“See, here is water! What hinders me from being baptized?”* We have found a host of preachers who have actually been the ones who have hindered the people from being baptized. When the members of their churches have studied the Bible to the point of realizing that one must be baptized, some preachers have said to the people that they are already saved

by faith only. They then often refuse to baptize the people. These preachers have shut out of the kingdom the members of their churches. It is truly a sad situation when those who are supposed to increase the borders of the kingdom are those who supposedly preach Jesus.

We are sure there are many preachers out there who are filled with regret because they forgot to fulfill all the righteousness of God by telling the people that they needed to obey Jesus in baptism for the remission of their sins in order to fulfill all righteousness.

We can know that the kingdom of darkness hangs heavy over the people when those who supposedly preach Jesus among the people are actually not fulfilling all righteousness by failing to preach all the word of God about Jesus. These are truly dark days in Christendom. They are dark because of those whom we trust to show us the way are stopping short of preaching the complete message of the gospel. Many of the preachers among the people can never say what Paul said to the Ephesians. *“... I kept nothing back that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house”* (At 20:20). He reminded the Ephesians of something that most preachers today cannot say. *“Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God”* (Ep 20:26,27). How many preachers can confidently say this to those to whom they have preached the word of God?

There are few repentant evangelists among the people as Peter who had previously denied Jesus during the final hours before the cross. But after the resurrection he boldly stood up before those to whom he had previously denied Jesus, and said, *“Whether it is right in the sight*

of God to give heed to you more than to God, you judge. **For we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard**" (At 4:19,20).

On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, Peter boldly preached Jesus to the people. "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this same Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (At 2:36). Now notice the believing response of the people. "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart. And they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, **what will we do?**'" (At 2:37). How would you answer this question if you believed in a "faith only" doctrine? Would you hinder the people from entering the kingdom by failing to preach the whole counsel of God? If you do not respond to this question of the people as Peter did, then you have shut up the kingdom of God to people who believe on Jesus. You have not truly preached Jesus to them. You have not fulfilled all the righteousness of God.

Peter's preaching of Jesus moved the people on the day of Pentecost to be cut to the heart because of their sins. Now the people wanted to know what to do. They were certainly mournful over crucifying Jesus. Some mourned and possibly others cried. They believed because they responded by knowing they had to do something to rectify their rebellion against Jesus. Some preachers today would have simply cried out to the people, "Accept Jesus as your personal Savior. Repeat the 'sinner's prayer' after me." But in this case, Peter did not tell the people to "believe on Jesus." **They already believed.** However, their belief did not relieve them of their sin against the Christ they had crucified and was now reigning as Lord (At 2:36). Their belief did not save them from their sin. Peter

did not tell them to say some "sinner's prayer" in response to their grief. He did not shut them out of the kingdom by refusing to tell them to be baptized for the remission of their sins.

In verse 38 Peter assumed his responsibility to fulfill all righteousness as an evangelist by responding to the people, "**Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**" If Peter had never told them to be baptized, he and the other apostles on that day would not have fulfilled all righteousness by baptizing about 3,000 people (At 2:41). The people would never have received the gift of the Holy Spirit upon their baptism.

Another example might help. Remember Paul and Silas praying and singing the gospel in prison in Philippi (At 16:25)? After the earthquake the jailor rushed before the presence of the two evangelists "*trembling with fear*" (At 16:29). He believed! He believed to the point of trembling with fear. But did trembling with fear save him? It did not according to what he asked of the two evangelists. "*Sirs, **what must I do to be saved?***" (At 16:30). It was as if he were saying, "I believe, but what must I do to be saved?" The two evangelists simply responded, "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you and your household will be saved*" (At 16:31). Now did trembling, fear **and belief** save him? Take another look at the text. Verse 32 states, "*And they **spoke to him the word of the Lord, and to all who were in his house.***" What does speaking "*to him **the word of the Lord***" include? The two evangelists certainly spoke to him about the Lord Jesus. At least this is all that is stated in the text. But when something started to happen in the jailors' life in answer to his plea,

“what must I do to be saved?”, verse 33 states, “**And immediately he was baptized, he and all his household.**” Speaking the “word of the Lord,” therefore, includes speaking about baptism, **for where did the jailor get the idea that he had to be baptized?** As in the “preaching of Jesus” by Philip, and in “speaking the word of the Lord” by Paul and Silas, **speaking about baptism is included.** So the obvious conclusion is that if an evangelist does not speak to the people about baptism for the remissions of sins, **then he has not preached Jesus, neither has he spoken the word of the Lord to the people.** He has been negligent in carrying out his responsibilities as an evangelist for Jesus.

And now we have a problem of guilt. When a preacher realizes that he has spent a lifetime preaching faith only salvation without fulfilling his responsibility of informing his audiences about baptism in obedience to the gospel, he often realizes that he has actually not preached Jesus to the people. He failed in his preaching to mention baptism in water for remission of sins in order that he join with people in fulfilling all righteousness. He has failed to fulfill his part as an evangelist to baptize those to whom he has preached. He has failed to preach Jesus and the whole counsel of the Lord. Guilt often sets in when one realizes that he

has left many of his past audiences just short of being washed of sins in the waters of baptism. Because of this guilt, most preachers will not turn from their “faith only” message simply because they remember the masses of people to whom they preached, but never mentioned how he could join with them in fulfilling all the righteousness of God in baptism. The result is that their failure leads them to often vehemently argue against any teaching that would infer baptism as important for the remission of sins in order that one come into a covenant relationship with God. Their preaching of a “faith only” salvation has long separated salvation from the washing of sins in the waters of baptism. They thus continue to preach an “incomplete” righteousness by subtracting from the word of God (Please read Rv 22:18,19 with emphasis on the phrase “take away.”)

It is our goal to call for a restoration in preaching. This restoration includes first the preaching of the whole counsel of God in order that representatives of Jesus throughout the world fulfill all righteousness by preaching a complete message of Jesus. It is our prayer that disciples of Jesus will lead alien sinners to believe in Jesus, and then participate with them in fulfilling all righteousness by assisting them to wash away their sins in the cleansing waters of baptism.

Our Faith – Our Salvation

Focusing On A Faith That Responds To The Grace Of God

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