No Christian Was Ever Saved By Faith Alone

(by Kent Heaton)

The doctrine of salvation by faith alone is a popular means by which many in the religious world have been deceived into believing that they have obeyed the will of God and live under the presumption that they are disciples of Christ. While the doctrine has been around for many years, Billy Graham did much to propagate the idea of salvation by faith alone. He writes, *“Those who surrender their lives to Him and receive Him into their hearts. It is this act which makes you a Christian”* *(My Answer, 9/15/55)*. Pulpits throughout the land offer an invitation of false hope when honest people are seeking the way of salvation. What they are given is a doctrine of men that is not found in Scripture.

Martin Luther said, *“We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.”* While he played with semantics, Luther suggested in opposition to the works salvation of the Roman Catholic Church that one had simply to have faith to be saved. Neither is true (salvation by works alone; salvation by faith alone) and yet many people are still being led to believe that accepting Christ as their Savior and Lord is all it takes to “make” a Christian.

Remarkably, the only place in the Bible (all sixty-six books) that “faith” and “alone” are found is written by James in **James 2:17** – ***“Even so faith, if it hath no works, is dead, being alone”*** (KJV). The ASV renders the passage, ***“Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself.”*** Martin Luther believed that James contradicted what Paul wrote but it never changed the truth of Paul’s writings nor James’ because ***“no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God”*** (**2 Peter 1:21**).

Not one example of a person becoming a New Testament disciple by “faith alone” is found in Scripture. There are many examples of conversion (**Acts** of the Apostles) but none are told to say “yes” to Christ and at that moment experience the new birth. Does eternal life begin the moment we accept Christ as Savior and Lord? Not according to the Bible. Why do so many people believe in such a doctrine when there is no evidence of teaching in the word of God?

The great tragedy of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone is the deception it brings to the hearts of those who honestly are seeking the truth of deliverance from sin and in the mind of God fail to achieve that blessing. Why? The apostle Paul warned Timothy of the dangers of the doctrines of men. ***“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables”*** (**2 Timothy 4:3-4**). The doctrine of salvation by faith alone is a falsehood.

Is faith necessary for salvation? ***“Without faith it is impossible to please Him…”*** (**Hebrews 11:6**). What did Peter tell those gathered on Pentecost (**Acts 2:36-41**)? What instructions were given the Samaritans in **Acts 8:5-13**? How did the Ethiopian become a disciple of Christ (**Acts 8:35-38**)? How did Paul explain his conversion (**Acts 9:1-19**; **22:1-21**)? Cornelius found the truth in **Acts 10** as did Lydia in **Acts 16:13-15**; the jailor in **Acts 16:25-34** and the Corinthians in **Acts 18:8**.

What must you do to be saved today? Follow the same pattern as found in the New Testament. That is the only way to be a Christian (**Luke 6:46-49**).

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

(by Kent Heaton)

As the jailor of Philippi came stumbling out of the rubble, he cried out to the two preachers the most important words man can ever say. ***“‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household”*** (**Acts 16:31-34**).

The story of the jailor’s conversion repeats the pattern of stories told throughout the Acts of the Apostles. Repeatedly the writer Luke described the hearts of those who came to know Jesus Christ and through obedience to the word of God were saved from their sins. The conversion of the jailor is no less powerful as he begs the questions. Paul and Silas immediately tell him that he must *“believe in the Lord Jesus.”* Jesus told the Jews, ***“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins”*** (**John 8:24**).

The jailor did not have the needed information to properly believe in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote, ***“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ”*** (**Romans 10:17**). Paul and Silas spoke unto the jailor the word of the Lord and to all that were in his house. Through the agency of the word, the jailor and those of his household could then come to believe in the Son of God. Without the word, he would not know what to believe. Upon his hearing the word of God, those of the jailor’s household including the jailor were baptized for the remission of sin (**Acts 16:34**; **Acts 2:38**).

As in the case of Cornelius, words were spoken whereby the knowledge of salvation came (**Acts 11:14**). The jailor gladly received the words spoken to him (as well as his household) and because of his faith in the word of God obeyed the command of Jesus to be baptized. In the act of baptism his sins were washed away (**Acts 22:16**). He was ***“buried with [Christ] through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so [he] too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become untied with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin”*** (**Romans 6:4-7**).

Today you have the same obligation. It may be that you have asked this question of what you must do to be saved. The Bible gives the answer; not men. Men claim that faith alone will save; it will not. To be a Christian one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God (**John 3:18**); be willing to change one’s life for Christ in repentance (**Luke 13:3**); confess His name before others (**Romans 10:8-10**); take up his cross to follow the Lord (**Luke 14:26-33**); have their sins washed away in baptism (**Acts 22:16**; **2:38**; **Galatians 3:27**; **1 Peter 3:20-21**); live faithfully for the Lord (**Revelation 2:10**); serve the will of God daily (**Matthew 7:21-23**).

If you have not obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine given by God (**Romans 6:17**) as described above – then you are not God’s child nor saved (**Romans 8:16**). To be a Christian one must follow the commandments of the Lord (**1 John 5:3**). Have you?