

## Faith And Works

One of the oldest and greatest (in terms of importance) debates in religion concerns the “conflict” of faith and works. Most members of Protestant denominations say that baptism cannot be essential to salvation because baptism is a “work,” and we are saved by God’s grace and not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9). A verse given for proof is Romans 4:3: “For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” They conclude that faith alone is needed to make someone righteous.

The problem with this assumption is that it neglects other verses in the Bible. For instance, Jesus said in John 6:29, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” If Jesus called faith a “work,” will the denominationalist say that faith cannot save? Absolutely not! Yet they are caught in a hopeless contradiction. They say works cannot save, but Jesus said faith (which they say is the only thing that can save) is a work!

James 2:24 says, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” What does the Bible refer to as a “work”? A “work” is an action or deed which man believes will save him. The Bible says this will not save. But the “works” ordained by God will save! Baptism is a “work” of God because it is commanded by God through the teaching of Holy Spirit-inspired men such as Peter (Acts 2:38), Ananias (Acts 22:16), and Paul (Colossians 2:11-12).

So what will you believe: denominational teaching or the Bible? I wish this were just a hypothetical discussion, but people’s chances of going to Heaven are involved in this doctrine, making careful discernment an absolute necessity.

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