

# Salvation By "Faith Only"

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In spite of the plainest teachings of the New Testament, men persist in teaching the doctrine of salvation by "faith only." History reveals that the doctrine was first given great emphasis, (if not invented) by Martin Luther in the 16th century. Luther over-reacted to the *works of merit* salvation taught by Roman Catholicism (also clearly opposed by New Testament teaching) and ran all the way to the opposite extreme, teaching salvation by faith alone. This led him to downgrade the epistle of James because it says man is **not saved by faith only** (Jam. 2:24). It further led him to "doctor" Rom. 3:28 ("man is justified by faith") by adding *alone* after *faith* in his German translation.

Most assuredly, the Scriptures consistently and frequently teach that we are saved by faith/belief in Christ (John 3:16; 6:47; 8:24; Rom. 3:22; 27-28, et al.). But no man on earth has the right to add *only* or *alone* in any such passage (Rev. 22:18-19).

A text sometimes chosen as a proof text for the *faith only* position is Rom. 10:9-13. For lack of space only verse nine will be quoted: "Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus, as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Consider the following reasons why *faith only* salvation is not taught here:

1. The word *only* or *alone* does not appear in the entire context.
2. Confessing Christ with the mouth is required in this verse, yet it is distinct from faith itself. Many Jewish rulers **believed** in Christ but refused to **confess** him (John 12: 42-43). *Faith only* was insufficient in their case (Mat. 10:32-33).
3. This is not the only passage on the conditions of salvation. If it were, then "faith only" might be credible. Several other passages must be considered on the subject: Mark 16:16 mentions belief **and** baptism before salvation; Acts 2:38 mentions repentance **and** baptism before sins are forgiven. There are many others, but the point is illustrated – faith is required, but more than faith.
4. One could teach "confession only" (Mat.10:32-33), "repentance only" (Luke 13:3) or "baptism only" (1 Pet. 3:21) by following the reasoning of those who teach "faith only" in Rom. 10:9.

The truth is, the Scriptures require all of these things before forgiving grace is bestowed.

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