

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 originated) by Martin Luther in the 16th century. Luther, himself a Catholic priest, 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 justified **not** only by faith (Jam. 2:24, emph. DM). Luther's aversion to the RC error of meritorious works 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 as the only begotten of the Father (John 3:16; 6:47; 8:24; Rom. 3:22; 27–28, et al.). But no man or group of men have the right to add *only* or *alone* in Romans 3:28 or any other passage (Rev. 22:18–19).

A text sometimes chosen as a proof text for the *faith only* heresy is Romans 10:9–13. Consider the following reasons that demonstrate why *faith only* salvation is not taught here:
...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: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek: for the same *Lord* is Lord of all and is rich unto all that call upon him: for, Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

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.
3. 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; cf. Rom. 10:9–10).
4. This is not the only passage on the conditions of salvation. If it were, then *faith only* salvation might have some credibility. Several other passages must be considered on the subject: Mark 16:16 mentions belief **and** baptism required for salvation, and Acts 2:38 mentions repentance **and** baptism before prior to the remission of sins. Several other such passages negate the *faith only* contention, but the point is demonstrated: **God requires faith, but more than faith.**
5. 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 these things before forgiving grace is bestowed upon alien sinners.

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