



Question of the Week

Biblical Answers to your Questions!

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If Salvation Is “All of Grace”, How Are We to Understand the Many “Works” Verses in the Bible?

The Bible is clear. Salvation and eternal life in the presence of God is not by works nor is it partially of grace and partially of works. It really is all of grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

(Romans 11:6)

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. (Titus 3:5)

But the Bible is just as clear that those who have received the freely bestowed gift of eternal life will, through a transformed life, demonstrate that they are now in fact spiritually alive.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. (1 Peter 1:15-16)

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. (Titus 3:8)

Prior to salvation totally by God's grace (unmerited favor), we are Biblically described as being in a state of spiritual death. Salvation is actually deliverance from spiritual death into spiritual life (Ephesians 2:5). Consider the analogy of the radical difference between a physically dead body and a physically alive body applied to the radical difference between a spiritually dead person and a spiritual alive person. A vibrant life of good works is the vital sign of genuine salvation. The absence of such convincing evidence demonstrates the absence of salvation. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26).

While this may at first sound similar to the viewpoint that salvation is the result of combined divine and human effort, that we must at least to a degree prove ourselves worthy, and that salvation is after all the reward of commandment keeping, the Bible teaches precisely the opposite. Good works do not produce salvation. Instead salvation produces good works. Just as Nature is the magnificent product of the Creator's mighty handiwork, those who are genuinely saved totally by grace demonstrate a new nature and are just as surely the product of a new creation again all of God's doing. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).