



The Voice Of Truth

A weekly publication of the

Hillcrest church of Christ

1621 Hillcrest Drive
Green Bay, WI 54313
(920) 499-5677

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com

December 24th, 2006

"Can 'Faith Alone' Save Him?"

By Jimmy Pettigrew

Yes, we are well aware of the fact that many believe and teach that, "man is saved by faith alone" is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort. "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" (**Jas. 2:14**). Of course, a man is saved by faith! Without it, it would be impossible to please God (**Heb. 11:6**). We are saved by faith (**Jno. 3:16**). Faith is necessary to get one to God's power (**Rom. 1:16**). Faith is a must to live the Christian life (**Gal. 2:20**). Faith is not a leap into a religious darkness (**2 Cor. 5:7**). "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (**Rom. 10:17**). So the New Testament teaches consistently we are saved by faith.

But, we also know that it is not faith alone. Take a moment to look at what James is saying in **Jas. 2:14**. He was asking if I do nothing, inactive, all talk and no work faith could save. Can that faith save him? NO, it cannot! "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (**Jas. 2:24**). Could we find a passage that would state this more clearly? This is as clear as it can be. There are other passages that will prove beyond a doubt that one is not saved by faith alone. "Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not

confess (it), lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory (that is) of men more than the glory (that is) of God" (**Jno. 12:42-43**). Now this passage says they believed. John said they believed; but that is all they did. Would they be saved? Was it enough? If one is saved by faith alone, these would surely be saved. Faith only, in their case stopped short of confessing Christ. The enormity of that situation is seen in the following teaching of Jesus: "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven" (**Matt. 10:32-33**). No, according to Jesus, faith alone is not enough. Thus, their belief did not avail because it did not lead them on to confess Jesus. Here in John 12 is an example of some who only believe, and they are lost.

There is another passage that will prove beyond a doubt that one is not saved by faith alone. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor un-circumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (**Gal. 5:6**). Salvation is not by faith alone. True faith expresses itself, it works. Faith working through love. "Love" (agape) occurs here for the first

time in this letter. Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (**Jno. 14:15**). The works included in salvation are the commandments of the Lord, obedience to which is absolutely essential to salvation. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (**1 Jno. 2:4**). Faith blesses only when it leads its possessor to obedience. Chapter 11 of Hebrews is Inspiration's Hall of Fame. Numerous examples of great faith are offered by the inspired penman and in each instance the mention of the faith of its immortal heroes is followed by a verb of action. "By faith Abel offered ...," "By faith Noah... prepared an ark. ...," "By faith Abraham... obeyed ..." Faith will save us only when we allow it to lead us on to the full acceptance of the will of God as expressed through His commandments (**Matt. 7:21**). "Shew me thy faith without thy works" (**Jas. 2:18**). Such is impossible, faith cannot be seen; its existence is evidenced only through the works which it produces. "I will shew thee my faith by my works" (**Jas. 2:18**). "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (**Jas. 2:21**). How was he justified? Not merely by a profession, but by works of his faith. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect"? (**Jas. 2:22**). "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (**Jas. 2:24**). In other words, his faith itself was counted as an act of obedience.

Notice another passage. **John 1:12** says, "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, (even) to them that believe on his name." Can words be clearer? If you believe in Christ you have the right or power **TO BECOME** a child of God. You are not a child of God by faith alone; you have the **right to become one**.

The Bible says one must believe Jesus is the Christ to be saved (**Jno. 8:24**). But that is not all. It also says he must repent of his sins (**Lk. 13:3-5; Acts 3:19**). Repentance is a change of mind

regarding sin with a view to amend one's life. But that is not all. The Bible teaches that one must confess his faith that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God (**Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Tim. 6:12**). Having done that, one more thing follows. One must be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins to be saved (**Mk. 16:16; Gal. 3:27; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16**).

To the one who claims to have faith, but will not do the work of the Lord, it is a dead faith! (**Jas. 2:17**). This is the way James would describe such a faith. "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (**Jas. 2:20**). Look again, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (**Jas. 2:26**). James speaks of faith without works as faith alone. But of that faith he will say that it is a dead faith. Now, is man saved by a dead faith? Absolutely not! From this we can conclude that faith alone will not save. The notion that faith alone saved was spawned by the Protestant Reformation. It was an extreme reaction against the meritorious "work salvation" of the Catholic faith. It is a false doctrine!

Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark...

1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Remember that we are all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
4. Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
5. Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
6. Build your future on high ground.
7. For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
8. Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
9. When you're stressed, float a while.
10. Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
11. No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.