

Searching His Word

God's Word Reveals His Plan- "Believe"

By Russell Earl

"Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John 12:42-43) The Bible clearly teaches from the verse above that belief alone or faith alone is not enough. God desires that we have more than a simple belief or faith in Him. What does it mean to believe or have faith in Christ and is faith alone enough?

There are many who believe and teach that in order to be saved all one has to do is believe that God, through Christ, saved us from our sins. However the Bible teaches us that faith is more than believing. It's an obedient faith in God. "...*The author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him*" (Heb 5:9). To believe in God means to obey His commands as found in His Word, to live our lives in such a way to be pleasing to God, to do good works and to remain faithful unto death. Thus our faith is an obedient working faith. To have faith in God means to obey His commands including His commands regarding salvation. God's plan is simple. Obey His commands and you will be with Him in Heaven. I submit to you that it is only when man's ideas get involved that God's Word gets complicated.

Is faith alone (a faith that says works of faith are not needed) enough to get to heaven? Is the person who holds on to their faith and does nothing else regarding their salvation saved? Many of us know such individuals who "obeyed" the gospel but then disappeared. They tell you they still believe in God and believe themselves to be saved yet you never see them. They are examples of those who cling to the idea that faith alone is all you need. However the Bible says otherwise. Let's find our answers together from God's word: "*But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?*" (James 2:20-22) What kind of faith did Abraham have? He had a faith that moved him to action and his faith was more than just simply **believing** in God. You could see the faith of Abraham. Can you see faith by only believing in God?

Notice what else the Bible says: "*You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*" (James 2:24-26). If the Bible says faith alone is not enough then faith alone is not enough! To believe in God and to put your faith in Him means you must obey His commands. Some will argue that baptism is a work! Baptism is and should be understood as a work of obedience to God. God says to be baptized as part of His plan, thus you should be baptized (Acts 2:37-38, Mark 16:16, Gal 3:26-27). A Christian is not like everyone else and should be the example God wants us to be. Clearly faith or belief in God alone is not enough. Do we do these works to earn our way to heaven? That is not at all what I'm saying. What I'm saying is that to say all you need is a faith alone or belief alone in God is not scriptural. Faith alone says, by its name, that you can do whatever sinful things you'd like because you have faith in God

and are still saved. We must remember the Bible recognizes those who have faith only and it didn't save them. "*You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble!*" (James 2:19)

I leave you with one last verse to consider "*But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?*" (Luke 6:46)