

Salvation **Not** By Faith Alone

by Bill Crews

The preacher on the radio was contending for the same old worn-out, but prevailing and popular, theory that has been disproven thousands of times. He was arguing for “salvation by faith alone.” He was scoffing at the idea that man is required to do anything. He kept emphasizing how few really read the Bible for themselves (which by itself is certainly true). He kept saying that if they would only read the book for themselves, they would see clearly the point he was making (which is not at all true).

He also said that he was in the habit of asking people how they would answer a simple, yet vital, question. That question: “What must I do to be saved?” Then he said that that question is asked and answered in the Bible. He went, of course, to Acts 16:30 where the jailor at Philippi is found asking that very question of Paul and Silas: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” He gave their immediate response: “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved” (16:31). Then he left it at that, as if that’s all the account says, and as if the Bible furnishes no more information on the subject anywhere else. He showed either that he didn’t read the Bible for himself (as he calls upon others to do) and thus doesn’t know any better, or he showed that even though he had read the Bible for himself, he would not be honest with its information.

Does the Bible really teach that all that one must do to be saved is to believe? Is salvation then, by implication, by “faith alone”? Over and over the New Testament teaches that one is saved, or justified, or cleansed by faith (Acts 15:9; Rom. 5:1; Gal. 3:24; Eph. 2:8; etc.), but it nowhere teaches that one is saved by “faith alone” -- except in those few English translations where men took the liberty to add the word “only” or “alone” (e.g., Martin Luther’s German translation in Rom. 3:28, and the Today’s English Version in Rom. 1:17; 3:28; Gal. 2:16; etc.). The Greek New Testament nowhere teaches salvation by faith alone, and this is borne out in such translations as the KJV, the NKJV, the ASV, the NASB, the RSV, the NIV, and many others. Only one time is faith only specifically mentioned in the New Testament, James 2:24, which teaches that man is not justified by faith only. Please read it.

The New Testament also teaches the necessity of repentance (“Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out,” Acts 3:19. “The times of ignorance God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent,” Acts 17:30), of confession (“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,” Rom. 10:10), of baptism (“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned,” Mark. 16:16. “Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, 1Pet. 3:21), of obedience (“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven,” Matt. 7:21. “Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation,” Heb. 5:8-9), and other things.

Let us now go back to the question of Acts 16:30. Paul and Silas had been publicly identified as “servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation” (vv. 16-18). The Philippian jailer who asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be

continued on page 3 or 260903

260902