

Is Obedience Essential To Salvation? {concluded}

by Bill Crews

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faith, but it is **not** by faith *alone*. It is by faith that obeys; it is by obedience that comes from the heart. Faith alone cannot save (James 2:14-16); faith alone is dead (James 2:17); faith alone is barren or fruitless (James 2:20); faith alone cannot justify (James 2:24); faith alone is what the demons had (James 2:19). James 2:14-26 teaches that faith is shown by obedience (verse 18) and that faith is made perfect by obedience (verse 22). The faith that saves is the faith that obeys the commandments of Christ. *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love”* (Galatians 5:6).

Obedience And Salvation By Grace

To say that obedience is essential to salvation is not to say that salvation is not by grace. Salvation is by grace, but the spiritual blessings of grace are **conditional**, not *unconditional*. *“For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world”* (Titus 2:11-12). The *“not of works”* of Ephesians 2:8-9 refers to works of which man can boast (which would be the case if man could be justified by the works of the law of Moses, which demanded obedience, but which contained no sacrifice that could actually take away sin — Hebrews 10:1). Conditions of forgiveness under the new covenant or the gospel are not under consideration in Ephesians 2:8-9.

In Revelation 22:14 the King James Version reads: *“Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city.”*

What Ingersoll Proved

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When the infidel Robert G. Ingersoll was delivering his lectures against Christ and the Bible, his oratorical ability usually assured him of a large crowd. One night after an inflammatory speech in which he severely attacked man’s faith in the Savior, he dramatically took out his watch and said, “I’ll give God a chance to prove that He exists and is almighty. I challenge him to strike me dead within five minutes.”

Then there was a silence, then the people became uneasy. Some left the hall, unable to take the nervous strain of the occasion, and one woman fainted.

At the end of the allotted time, the atheist exclaimed derisively, “See! There is no God. I am still very much alive!”

After the lecture, a young fellow said to a religious lady, “Well, Mr. Ingersoll certainly proved one thing tonight!”

Her reply was memorable. “Yes, he did,” she said. “He demonstrated that even the most defiant sinner cannot exhaust the patience of the Lord in just five minutes.”

“What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,” (Romans 9:22 NKJV)

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