

THE MYSTERIES OF GOD
Week 3: Apostles Opposed
(Faith vs. Works)

*Can it really be true that two Biblical authors DISAGREE?
Paul vs. James. “Faith-based” theology vs. “works-based” theology.
Martin Luther vs. the Pope. For centuries, these two rival ideas about the
means of salvation have been argued and contested, leaving us with a cloudy
and inconsistent practical theology about salvation.*

What do you think?

*Do my actions impact my salvation at all?
If I’m saved “by faith,” what difference does it make what I “do?”
After I’m “saved,” is there anything else I really have to do?*

Are We Hypocrites?

What we say:

- * “You can’t earn salvation.”
- * “Just believe and receive.”
- * “We’re saved by faith.”

The setting:

> altar call at church

What we say:

- * “He needs to be saved.”
- * “She really needs Jesus.”
- * “What a backslider!”

> outside of church



*If works have nothing
to do with salvation,
how do we know these
people aren’t already
saved and have Jesus?
Does our concern belie
our belief?*

The Conundrum & Contradiction:

Salvation by Faith

VS

Works Necessary for Salvation

- > Romans 3: 24,28
- > Romans 10: 9-11,13
- > Gal 2: 15-16

- > James 2: 14-24
- > Matthew 7: 16-21
- > Matthew 25: 14-46
- Q: What’s the result of doing nothing with your faith?

SO WHICH IS IT???

What is “FAITH?”

- > It is more than ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
 - * WORDS don’t save us. (ex: Sinner’s Prayer) Why?
 - * Romans 10:9 – Why does confession, then, lead to salvation?
Q: What is being confessed? Jesus is LORD
 - > It is more than BELIEF IN GOD
 - * James 2:19 – Even DEMONS believe that God exists.
 - > It is more than ACCEPTING Christ’s work on Calvary ... it is INVESTING in the cross!
 - * The “tight wire” illustration.
- KEY: The best way to understand Biblical faith is entering into a relationship with the unseen – Not just a relationship, but a LORD – SERVANT relationship.
- Q: Can a person be “saved” without making Jesus the Lord of his or her life??

What are “WORKS?”

- > For Paul ...
 - Requirements of THE LAW for entering God’s kingdom
 - Ex: circumcision, Sabbath rest, 10 commandments
- > For James ...
 - Results of a CHANGED LIFE
 - Ex: 2 Cor. 5:17 – Works are not “what we do,” but “who we are.”

Food For Thought:

Can what we believe be separated from what we do?
In other words, don’t our actions *always* give away our beliefs???

So ... what if after I’m saved, I don’t have many / any good works?

- (1) You can’t LOSE YOUR SALVATION because works didn’t EARN your salvation.
- (2) It means you have FAULTY FAITH!
 - > You need to CRUCIFY your FLESH (living sacrifices sometimes crawl off of the altar)
- (3) You miss the BENEFITS of a “Faith-filled” life
 - > How is it that we can be sure someone who dies “made it to heaven” if we know the departed really struggled with a sin?
 - * Salvation isn’t gained by our power over sin.
 - * What is the penalty for that person? Sin causes pain. The person made it to heaven, but had to live with the pain caused by sin.
- (4) You may have only displayed FALSE FAITH – i.e., you may actually not have been SAVED.
 - > Mt. 7: 16-21

So ... let's revisit the questions:

1) *Do my actions impact my salvation at all?*

A: My SALVATION impacts all of my ACTIONS.

2) *If I'm saved "by faith," what difference does it make what I "do?"*

A: My salvation drives everything I do. (The story Bailey's Greek Final Exam)

3) *After I'm "saved," is there anything else I really have to do?*

A: When I'm saved, I'll BEGIN to do what I've been CREATED to do.