

Rom. 14:19

So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

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WHY BELIEVE FAITH ONLY = SALVATION?

Jim Stauffer

As we try to answer the question above, let us first see if we can understand what it is proponents of this doctrinal position actually believe. It seems there are two major differences in the *faith only doctrine*. First, there are those who believe faith is imparted directly on the individual by the Holy Spirit as God chooses that person for salvation. This is done without any complicit action on the part of the receiver.

Common passages such as **Acts 13:48** and **Eph. 1:4** are used to support this belief. The claim is that the first passage teaches only a selected few will receive this faith. The second passage is used to suggest this selection of specific individuals was made before the Creation itself. It is asserted that both passages therefore teach we do nothing on our part to bring about our own faith or selection when it comes to redemption.

The passage in **Acts** does *not* teach faith comes directly from the Holy Spirit and only comes on those selected by God. **Acts 13:38,39**, just a few verses earlier teach everyone can believe and receive the justification that leads to eternal life as a result of faith in Christ (**Rom. 3:24-26**).

Eph. 1:4 does teach salvation was planned before the foundations of the world, but it was the plan that was eternal and not the individual selection. **Verse 7** says the redemption is in the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is the cleansing agent (**Heb. 9:14**) shed for all sinners to allow them salvation from the wrath of God (**Rom. 5:8,9; 2 Cor. 5:14,15**). We contact the cleansing blood of Christ in baptism (**Rom. 6:3,4; Acts 22:16**) which culminates our obedience in the salvation Christ authors to all who obey him (**Heb. 5:8,9**).

It is not uncommon for men to pluck individual verses from the Bible to prove a point, but while not

uncommon, it is unsuccessful in learning the true meaning of the Scriptures. We must take the total picture painted to have a proper understanding.

The second position simply argues if man does anything other than believe, it is a work and therefore his salvation is earned and not by the grace of God as **Eph. 2:8,9** suggests. What is interesting is **Verse 10** then says we are, *his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them*. Further, Jesus, when speaking to the multitude explained in answer to their question, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him who he hath sent*. (**Joh. 6:29**)

This concept is contrary to all God has taught mankind from the beginning. Any law and especially every law or covenant God has had with man demands actions of obedience to be compliant with the covenant. Adam had to dress the garden (**Gen. 2:15**). Noah was commanded to build an ark and preach righteousness to the people while it was being built (**Gen. 6:14ff; 2 Pet. 2:5**). The children of Israel were given a law they agreed to obey (**Ex. 24:7**). The Bible is replete with those whose actions were required in order to be among the faithful.

Look with me at **James chapter 2**. Beginning in **verse 14**, the writer raises the very question of such actions as are required as a part of faith. He says if someone has material needs action is required to supply them. We just cannot say, *be ye warmed and filled* and still be people of faith. **James 2:17** *Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself*. His conclusion is instead of being able to see faith apart from works one actually can only see faith when it is accompanied by works. He finishes his point with the example of Abraham. He states Abraham was justified by works when he took Isaac to the altar in compliance with God's command. He then concludes

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once more that *faith apart from works is dead*. (Jas. 2:26)

Now let us be clear. James is not at all in disagreement with the principle of salvation by grace through faith. He simply explains faith is alive when it includes the works of obedience. That is why the Hebrew writer tells us Jesus, *became unto all that obey him, the author of eternal salvation*. (Heb. 5:9)

The Omniscience of God

I accept with a great deal of humility, the offer to write an article on this great subject. I have contemplated for many hours how I will try to explain my understanding of this subject. The best that I can do is to fail miserably in even coming close to explaining the full impact of such a subject.

It is absolutely beyond human comprehension to fathom all of the intricacies of this subject. My first thoughts on this subject brought me to the harsh reality that there is not much to say. In the simplest of terms, **"GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING - AND WE BETTER REMEMBER IT"**.

"The secret things belong to the Lord our God..."

Deut 29:29. God has chosen to reveal just a small portion of His infinite knowledge. What He has revealed has been done so for the purpose of teaching us (humanity) lessons to be learned. As we read from the pen of Paul; *"The things written aforetime were written for our learning..."* **Romans 15:4**. In fact, every word of God recorded in Scripture is written to instruct us to remember our God, and our subjection to Him (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**).

Just try to imagine this. Every word ever written on paper, wood, papyrus, bathroom walls, chalkboards, computers, typewriters, or wherever is known by God. Every word ever spoken, and for that matter, every word that will ever be spoken by anyone in any language is already known by God. Add to this fact the knowledge that God knows the number of hairs on your head, as well as the number of cells within each strand of hair and the number of atoms and molecules of each. As we continue, God also knows every thought that has ever come out of the mind of any and every man (human) (**Jeremiah 17:10**). And, He is aware of every emotion that has ever effected your actions.

There is implication that God knows our every thought and would even know what our thoughts and actions would be if our circumstances were different. Many of the readers who read this article will consider themselves in good standing with the Lord. Many of them have their hearts purified with a clear conscience, and are interested in the things of God

in order to learn how to be pleasing to Him. We can all be thankful for our present condition; also realizing there is room for improvement.

It also appears to us that God chooses NOT to know certain things. We may appeal to scripture in **Genesis 22:1-12** where Abram attempted to offer Isaac and God made the statement *"Now I know..."* appears. I might suggest that God DID know already the actions that would take place, and God DID know this before He laid the foundations of the world. We read in several places where God deals with the children of Israel, and does something for them as a test "to see if they would be faithful" (i.e. the instructions pertaining to the collection of manna). Well, God already knows everything, and it would be foolish to suggest otherwise. A word of caution though. We must never confuse foreknowledge with foreordination. The false doctrine of Calvinism is based upon that misconception.

We must remember though, that the Bible was written for OUR instruction, and not God's. God already knew what Abram would do, but Abram was not sure if he could make such a sacrifice. We learn many lessons from that story about making the ultimate sacrifice for God if necessary. (And then we thank God because it is not necessary).

The placing of tests upon God's chosen ones was not to see if they would obey Him. God already knows the answer to those questions. The test was for the benefit of those being tested. When students in school take their tests, they are not trying to teach the teacher. The teacher is trying to show the students that they actually learned something in the class, or in preparation for the test. No test benefits the teacher (unless they are measured by how well their students perform).

The greatest lesson for us to learn from this study is the fact that God (being 'omnipresent') is everywhere and sees all things. In our hustle and bustle world, we sometimes forget that God is there wherever we are. God is there in the Movie Theater watching what sort of stuff you are filling your mind with. God watches what you watch on your cable TV programs. God hears your conversations, and knows your thoughts about others. God knows what you are reading and thinking.

When we think we are alone and nobody is watching, we might tend to get naughty. But if we will remember that God is present, we should behave ourselves much more excellently. With the knowledge that God KNOWS everything, it should serve as a deterrent to keep us on the straight and narrow.

We allow Satan to fill our minds with the

absence of God. Because we do not see Him and do not hear Him in a physical sense, we allow our minds to think that He does not know what we are doing.

Does anyone really think that God was unaware of what Adam and Eve were doing after they ate the fruit? Do the questions in **Genesis 3** make sense from God's viewpoint? No! You will notice that the questions were offered to Adam so that Adam would realize the sin that he had committed. The questions were also for our benefit as well.

Our *"whole duty"* is to fear God and keep His commandments. Let us remind ourselves daily, hourly, and by the minute if necessary, that we are in the presence of God and we must behave with respect and awe for His majesty.

James 4:8-10 *"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded...Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up".*

Remember: **"GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING - AND WE BETTER REMEMBER IT"**

By Carey Scott

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS NOT A SECT

Jesus, the Son of God, said, *"I will build My church..."* (**Mt. 16:13-19**). This church, which He built and which you read about in the New Testament, was never designed to be a sect. It was not planned to be a part of Judaism, nor of Islam, nor of Catholicism, nor a part of anything else.

Jesus said, *"Behold, I make all things new"* (**Rev. 21:5**). He did not come into this world to *"Put a new patch on an old garment"* (**Mk. 2:21**), but to be the Mediator of the New Testament which is based on a better sacrifice and better promises than those of the Old Testament: *"He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises"* (**Heb. 8:6**). Jesus died on the cross of Calvary to establish the New Testament (**Heb. 9:15,16**), and thereby paid the purchase price for His church: *"Which He purchased with His own blood"* (**Acts 20:28**). The Jews thought of the church as just another sect, but Paul showed that the church is not a sect: *"After the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers"* (**Acts 24:14**).

There are many today who consider that same church to be a sect or "denomination." But Jesus never built a sect, a denomination, nor has He ever authorized one to be built. There is not a name nor description of any sect, or denomination in the New Testament. Jesus prayed for the unity of all believers, (**Jno. 17:20,21**), and all of these believers are to be in one body, one church (**Eph. 1:22,23; 2:14-16; Col. 1:18,24**). The Holy Spirit-guided apostle Paul

commanded, *"Let there be no division among you"* (**1 Cor. 1:10**).

That church of the New Testament was not a sect then, and it is not a sect now. The allegation in the first century that it was a sect did not make it one, and the same allegation today does not make it one.

By Bill Cavender in Centerview Tidings, Vol. 20, No. 44, Nov. 27, 2005.

Did You Know? . . .

That the apostles never used food, games or social activities to draw a crowd so they could preach to them?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves "Church of Christ," the social programs are so extensive that a social director or a "youth minister" must be hired to oversee the social planning.

Although schools existed in the first century, and the apostle Paul even taught in one for 2 years (**Acts 19:9,10**), no churches ever supported them financially?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves "Church of Christ," the financial supporting of "Christian schools" or "Colleges" is a regular part of the budget.

That the apostle Paul illustrated many of his epistles with analogies from sporting events (**1 Cor. 9:24,25**). Yet no church sponsored or had sporting teams?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves "Church of Christ," the sporting activities are so much a part of the work that full scale gyms have been built.

If these things mentioned above were not a part of the early church and we do not find them in the Bible, WHY are churches doing them today? And who gave them the RIGHT to do it? These things ought not to be! *"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus"* (**Col. 3:17**).

by Roger Shouse

2 John 9 *Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: 11 for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.*

The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.

Albert Schweitzer

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

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SUNDAY MORNING SERMON: REPRESENTING CHRIST TO THE WORLD



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10