

Faith Only Gospel - The Bible Teaches the Protestant Doctrine that Good Works have nothing to do with salvation

Recommended Book, By Faith Alone, RC Sproul, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1995

It proves that acceptance of salvation by faith without good works is an essential for being a Christian so the Catholic Church cannot qualify as a real Christian Church at all. The book says that Jesus died to atone for our sins. Atonement means making up for injustice. Jesus supposedly made up for our sins in our place so that we could be freed from sin and live a better life with our past sin out of the way. Not only does Jesus just take away sin he also justifies - you become more than just sin-free but you become good in the eyes of God though you are not.

PREFACE

If salvation were merely the result of human efforts, then no one could attain it. Why? Because it makes no sense that God would make all things and leave it to your efforts. All your efforts would be his work anyway so if they do nothing to bring you to him then it is because he won't let them. He does not personally work to bring you to himself. And it would be arrogant to think that your works are so good that they make God owe you heaven or anything. That is why many religions consider it reasonable to imagine that salvation is a gift and is not a result of doing good works.

Idols are a sin for it is you trying to use the works of your hands for spiritual benefits and rewards and salvation and good works can be idols too. To demand that God give you salvation

The apostle Paul, the first Christian writer taught justification by faith alone without good works but it does not follow that he was eliminating good works. For him, only the one who obeys is the one who believes. Paul also stated that we cannot be saved by obeying God's law for God's law was never given to save us but merely to inform us what sin was. The argument is that the law is not for making us right with God but for showing us that we are not right with God.

He declared that the Church believed in salvation by faith in the power of the death and resurrection of Jesus to atone and correct sin alone. This salvation is obtained without obedience and without keeping the Jewish Law given by God. Indeed Paul says that obedience done to deserve Heaven was a sin itself. The obedience will necessarily be sincere but it is still not good.

The Roman Catholic Church claims that Paul meant law as in being forced to obey God. This claims that the Jews felt forced. They did not.

Galatians 2:16, 19-21 has Paul teaching that obedience to the Law does not make a man righteous and it cannot do it either and only faith in Jesus Christ does. He said that "in other words, through the Law I am dead to the Law so that I can now live for God." He means that the Law has left us dead before God and cut off from him because we can't obey it. If faith in Jesus puts us right with God then it must be because Jesus keeps the Law for us and he credits his obedience to our account if we believe.

Romans 8:10: And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. In this verse, Paul declares that the living are dead because of sin and their bodies are dead to God because of sin. We still say an enemy is dead to us so the body is in opposition to God for sin. But the mind or spirit is alive and is righteous. So how can a person be both sinful and righteous and reconciled to God and not reconciled? The answer is that Paul means that God imputes the righteousness of Jesus to the sinner. The sinner is bad and dead in sin but the merits of Jesus are reckoned to be the sinner's. God pretends that the sinner is good because Jesus has done the good works for the sinner that the sinner has failed to do. The Reformation doctrine of imputed but not real righteousness that is activated by faith alone without good works is clearly vindicated in this verse.

Galatians 5: "You were called to liberty but be careful that it does not become an opening to self-indulgence. Serve one another by doing loving works because love your neighbour as yourself is the summary of the Law of Moses. If you are guided by the Spirit you will be in no danger of giving in to your selfish instincts because doing that is totally opposed to the Spirit. The Spirit is totally against self-indulgence. And it is because the Spirit is so opposed to self-indulgence that you fail to carry out your good intentions. If the Spirit is your leader, no law will ever touch you".

Here we read that any act however good that is inspired even a little bit by self-indulgence is not pleasing to God.

What is this liberty?

Some say it is the freedom that comes from the power given by God to keep the law so that we want to keep it now. The Roman Catholic view. If we are free to keep the law because God helps us to, then how could that liberty be in danger of becoming self-indulgence? It would be impossible.

Some say it is freedom not from the obligation to obey the law but freedom from the penalty of the law no matter what sins we commit. The Protestant view. This is the correct view. The Bible then teaches salvation without the necessity of good works. The sentence, "If the Spirit is your leader, no law will ever touch you" tells us not that we will be perfect in God's eyes when the Spirit leads us. Paul warns that we always carry some sin in us which is the reason why obedience to the law cannot save. What it tells us is that no law will be able to punish us – no law has such authority. So when our sins are overlooked it shows that the Protestant idea that God overlooks our sins when we get saved and blames and punishes Jesus for them as if they were his is the biblical one.

Some say it is freedom from the obligation to obey the law. The Antinomian view. Paul cautions against this view in the context.

Imputation is the idea that when you turn to Jesus for forgiveness, God credits the good works he has done to your account. So he regards you as good. There are two ways to understand this. It could be a legal fiction where God regards you as good though you are rotten. Or it could be a case of where God changes your heart so that you become a better person and he imputes Jesus merits to you to cover for your past sins. In the legal fiction scenario, there is no change to the person. In the second scenario, there is a change.

Which doctrine of imputation is the Bible one? We will see.

OTHER STATEMENTS OF FAITH-ONLY DOCTRINE

The First Epistle of John tells us that all Christians are sinners now (1:8) and have eternal life now (5:13) even though all sin means you do not belong to God (3:10) – is mortal. He is talking about all sin not just some. If he meant a specific kind of sin, mortal sin, like Roman Catholicism does he would have said so. (By mortal sin in 5:17, John does not mean what Catholics mean but refusing to get saved while dying. He says we should not pray for the person who commits it inferring that salvation is impossible for that person. Catholicism rightly commands prayer for mortal sinners so the difference should be clear.) Catholicism says that John did not draw attention to the distinction between mortal and venial sin for his readers knew of it already so there was no need. John calls his readers little children and tells them to root out their Gnosticism and the influence of heretics, so he is instructing people who were not very familiar with orthodox Christianity. When he was so unsure of their knowledge he would not have omitted mention of a difference in mortal and venial sin. Even if Rome's objection were possibly valid nobody would write that unholy acts divorce you from God if he meant only some acts just in case somebody got the wrong idea. God who wrote the letter cannot make mistakes.

John is telling us that Christians are all mortal sinners and are still going to heaven for they are forgiven because of Christ.

Hebrews 10:17-19 says that God said that one day he will remember sins no more and it argues from this that there will be no sacrifices for sin one day for there will be no need and then it says that Christians are living in that time for they have the right to enter the most holy place in Heaven. This obviously says that God imputes no sin to the true Christian for Jesus has died for them in their place as the sin offering that removes sins.

Hebrews 10:12-14 says that Jesus has perfected forever those who are sanctified. Present tense. Christians believe that we are all imperfect in sin. This tells us that justification need not be real. It is just a declaration from God that we are not sinners though we are. We are perfect before God though we are not.

Catholics want an example of somebody that was justified by faith alone in the Bible.

Jesus called Judas his friend (Matthew 26:50). Nowhere does scripture say that Judas was eternally damned. Because Judas had accepted Jesus as his saviour Heaven was his not matter what. Jesus meant it when he called him friend for sarcasm would have been a sin. The only way Judas could be a friend of his was by spiritual relationship through imputation. Judas was saved despite his sins. God saw him as a good person though he wasn't really for Jesus had paid for his sins.