

The Bible Does NOT say, “Faith Only”

Our New Testament was written in Greek. The Greek word for “work” is “*ergan*.” “*Ergan*” is translated: “**work**” (as in the King James Version), “**deed**” (as in the New International Version), or “**task**”. The following New Testament Scriptures explain how “**works**” cannot be separated from “**faith**,” and has **everything** to do with your salvation.

1. James 2:14-26:

“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds (ergan, works)? Can such a faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action (ergan, works), is dead.

But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds (ergan, works).’

Show me your faith without deeds (ergan, works), and I will show you my faith by what I do (ergan, works). You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that — and shudder.

*You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds (ergan, works) is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did (ergan, works) when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions (ergan, works) were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did (ergan, works). And the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God’s friend. (24) **You see that a person is justified by what he does (ergan, works) and NOT BY FAITH ALONE.***

*In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did (ergan, works) when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so **FAITH WITHOUT DEEDS (ERGAN, WORKS) IS DEAD.**”*

A. After reading this Scripture, you now know that according to **verse 24**: “a person is justified by what he does (ergan, works), and **not by faith alone.**” (New International Version) Or, perhaps if you read only the King James Version: “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, **and not by faith only.**”

(1) Now, you have a decision to make: Do I believe what I read in my Bible with my own eyes, or do I believe what people tell me it says? If you believe what your Bible says...then read on.

2. But, Paul seems to contradict James in Romans 4:1-6:

“What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works (ergan), he had something to boast about — but not before God. What does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.’ (Genesis 15:6).

Now when a man works (ergan), his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his

faith is credited as righteousness. (6) David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom **God credits righteousness apart from works (ergan)**” (Psalm 32:1,2).

A. Is Paul contradicting James? In **verse 6** he says: “*God credits righteousness apart from works.*”

(1) If you back up just four more verses, you would have read that Paul is talking to Jews, and referring to Old Testament “works,” according to Romans 3:28: “*For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing (or the ergan, works of) the Law (or Old Testament).*” In other words, God credited Abraham righteous apart from the works of the Old Testament, because he lived long before the Old Testament Law was ever given to Moses.

(2) However, if you backed up James’ version of faith and works just two verses, you would find that James is talking to Christians (not Old Testament Jews), and referring to New Testament “works,” according to James 2:12: “*Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the Law that gives freedom (New Testament).*”

(3) Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, and lived before the Old and New Testament Laws were written. Paul was just making a point to the Jews that the “*works of the Law*” (Old Testament) had nothing to do with their father Abraham’s salvation, nor ours (Christians).

B. Paul was not contradicting James. He made that very clear in Romans 2:4-6 (In the same letter just two chapters before he wrote chapter 4): “*Or do you show contempt for the riches of His kindness (grace), tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness (grace) leads you toward repentance?*

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the Day of God’s wrath, when His righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done (ergan, works).”

(1) Paul made it very clear that he agreed with James in that God will judge us according to our ergan (works, deeds, or tasks). We must repent (stop sinning) and actually do (works) what God tells us to do.

3. But, didn’t Paul say “not by works” in Ephesians 2:8,9: “*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*”

A. Yes. But what “works” was he referring to? Old Testament or New Testament? **If you read the next verse (v.10), you’ll get your answer:** “*For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works (ergan), which God prepared in advance for us to do.*”

(1) Indeed, we were saved by grace through our faith in Christ Jesus, but there are still New Testament “works” which we must do.

B. But, how do you know Paul was talking about Old Testament “works” in verses 8,9?

(1) Continue reading **verses 11-15 in the same chapter 2**: “Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles (non-Jews) by birth and called ‘uncircumcised’ by those who call themselves ‘the circumcision’ (that done in the body by the hands of men) — remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants (Old and New Testaments) of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ (as Christians).

For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two (Jews and Gentiles) one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the Law (Old Testament) with its commandments and regulations (works of the Law).”

(2) Paul makes it clear that Jesus Christ abolished the Old Testament Law, commandments and regulations (works of the Old Law). So, when you read the entire thought from **Ephesians 2:8 all the way through verse 15**, you can see Paul was clearly making a distinction between the works of the Old Law (which have nothing to do with our salvation) and the works of the New Law (which has everything to do with our salvation).

4. In Galatians 2:16, Paul makes a clear distinction between the works of the Old and New Testaments: “Know that a man is not justified by observing the Law (Old Testament), but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the Law (Old Testament), because by observing the Law (Old Testament) no one will be justified.”

A. Paul made it clear, however, that he was under Christ’s Law, according to I Corinthians 9:21: “...though I am not free from God’s Law, but I am under Christ’s Law (New Testament, not Old Testament).”

5. Paul never preached “faith only.” Paul said in Acts 26:20: “...I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds (ergon, works — King James Version says “works” as well).”

A. Jesus taught this to Paul according to Matthew 21:28-32: “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

“I will not,” he answered, but later he changed his mind (repented) and went. Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I

will, sir,' but he did not go (did not obey).

Which of the two did what his father wanted?

'The first,' they answered.

Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the Kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him'.

(1) Jesus said that God expects you to back up your faith with works. Which boy are you in this parable?

B. Remember I John 2:3,4: *We know that we have come to know Him if we obey his commands. The man who says, 'I know Him,' but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*"

6. In Revelation 2:4,5 Jesus warned the Church in Ephesus to "repent and do the things (ergan, works) you did at first. If you do not repent (and do the works you did when you were first Christians) I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place (not going to Heaven)."

A. In Revelation 3:2,3, He also gave the same warning to the Church in Sardis: "I have not found your deeds (works) complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard (New Testament); obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you"

7. Revelation 20:11-14 is very clear about how we will be judged on the Judgment Day: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. **The dead were judged according to what they had done (ergan, works) as recorded in the books.** The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done (ergan, works) — or, according to the King James Version: "and they were judged every man according to their works (ergan)!" Then death and Hades were thrown into the Lake of Fire. The Lake of Fire is the second death (die once physically, and once spiritually). If anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire!"

A. Regardless if you are reading from the New International Version or the King James Version, or the original Greek manuscript: The "works" of the New Testament Law of Jesus Christ given to us through the Holy Spirit as the one and only Truth, says "WORKS" (ergan) HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH YOUR SALVATION!