

# The Biblical View of Works

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by Mark Mayberry

**C**learly, God's grace is the foundation upon which man's salvation rests. We are saved by grace, or God's "unmerited favor." Yet, **Ephesians 2:8** informs us that salvation is also "through faith." Grace is God's part; faith is ours. The text goes on to reveal that "we are his workmen, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (v. 10). What does the Bible say about "works?" What role do works play in our salvation? Let's consider the various types of works discussed in the Bible.

## The Works Of The Law Of Moses

The Law could not justify man (**Acts 13:38-41; Galatians 2:16, 21**). It was never designed for that purpose. "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin" (**Hebrews 10:4 NASV**). The Law looked forward to the coming Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom. After it served its purpose, it was done away with (**Galatians 3:24-25**).

## The Works Of Satan, Darkness, Flesh

The works of Satan, of darkness, and of the flesh. Obviously, these works don't bring about salvation (**Romans 13:12; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 John 3:8**).

## The Works Of Human Origin

The works of human origin (**Romans 10:1-3; Colossians 2:20-23**). Men think they can lay aside God's pattern and devise their own way, but this will only bring condemnation (**Matthew 15:9**).

## The Works Of Merit

The works of merit or perfect obedience. Ephesians 2:9 says that man's salvation is "not of works lest any man should boast." What does this mean? Paul said, "If Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory" (cf. **Romans 4:2-5**). In **verse 4**, he said, "Now to him that *worketh*, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt." These passages speak of flawless works. If a man perfectly kept God's will, he would deserve heaven. But all have sinned (**Romans 3:23**), and none can claim salvation as a debt owed (**Titus 3:5**). Man's search for grace is an admission of sin, a confession that his works have not been perfect.

## The Works Of God, Faith And Righteousness

The works of God, faith, and righteousness (**Matthew 7:21; John 6:29; Acts 10:34-35; Galatians 5:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**). These passages discuss man's response to the gospel. Our faith leads us to obey. Jesus became "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (**Hebrews 5:9**). Faith is "dead" if it is not accompanied by works of obedience (cf. **James 2:14-26**). This does not mean that we have EARNED or MERITED anything. We are forever in God's debt, and our salvation is still by the grace and mercy of God. We must simply comply with His conditions of salvation.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The mistake our denominational friends make on the subject of "works" is that they think **all works** are the same. A careful reading of this article with its attending Scriptures will show you that works are not all the same. The **kind** of works that God rules out in our salvation does not preclude works of obedience.

**Hebrews 5:8-9** shows that Jesus saves those who "obey" Him — thus requiring **acts (works?)** of obedience. We must be careful not to over simplify the subject of our salvation to the point of missing the truth on any subject. The **SUM TOTAL** of the New Testament on salvation is what we should believe and accept. That includes faith, repentance, confession, baptism, faithfulness until death, and trust in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the work they have done on our behalf which we could not do for ourselves. We thank brother Mayberry for his good article on the subject.