

Salvation and Works

Are we saved, at least in part, on the merits of our good deeds? The biblical answer is an emphatic NO!

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10).

We cannot be saved by the merits of good works because:

- 1. Salvation is by grace.** “For by grace you have been saved.” Grace means “unmerited favour” - the very opposite of the recompense for one’s work. “To him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt” (Romans 4:4). Therefore to speak of “meriting grace” is a contradiction in terms.
- 2. Salvation is through faith.** “You have been saved through faith.” Faith looks away from myself and from my personal achievements to Another; relying, resting and trusting in Jesus and His sacrifice on the cross. Saving faith is “in Christ” – not “in myself.”
- 3. Salvation is not of ourselves.** “And that not of yourselves.” There is no shred of righteousness in our sinful nature. We are spiritual stillbirths. We cannot contribute anything good to our salvation; it is not on account of our cooperation that we are saved.
- 4. Salvation is a gift of God.** “It is the Gift of God.” God grants salvation as a gratuitous gift, without any payment on our part - a genuine gift, free, coming from God’s heart overflowing with kindness and goodness. How can you receive a free gift if you had worked for it? How can you praise and thank God for your salvation if you have earned it by your works?
- 5. Salvation is not our work.** “Not of works.” Who can ignore or twist the clear meaning of this short statement? Salvation is not of works. You can obey the commandments, pray, go to church, give alms, do penance and whatever else you want to do... for all these things cannot save you. We are saved “not of works.”
- 6. Salvation is the work of God.** “We are His workmanship.” The saved are God’s masterpiece; elected and predestined in eternity by the Father, redeemed by the blood of the Son, regenerated and sealed by the Holy Spirit. Salvation is not *our* work because it is the work of *Another*. All glory to Him.
- 7. Salvation results in good works.** “Created in Christ Jesus for good works.” Works are not the cause but the fruit of salvation: “not *of* works...*for* good works.” We are not saved because we do good works; the very opposite is true, we do good works because we are saved. For as long as a person is not saved, he is a rebel and an enemy of God, and nothing than an enemy does can be called “good.” Only when you are reconciled with God through faith in Christ, can your works be acceptable to God.

Friend, I appeal to you to meditate on this scripture. Open your heart to God. See if you have been relying on your “goodness” and your religious works for salvation; discard any such confidence. May God give you the grace to look upon Jesus and rest in Him by faith as your perfect Saviour.

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I hope and pray that you may be able to say, “I am saved by grace, God’s favour which I do not deserve or merit. I am saved through faith in Christ, I place no confidence in myself or any works that I do. My salvation is a free gift from God which He purchased for me with Christ’s blood. He freed me from sin to live for Him, to do those works of love that please Him.”