

## HAVE YOU HEARD? GRACE INCLUDES FAITH & OBEDIENCE

by David R. Kenney

Utilizing cross-references in Bible study can help avoid misapplication. For example, perhaps you have heard stated we are saved by grace but not by the gospel? We are saved by grace—*“even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),”* (Ephesians 2:5, NKJV). But also notice we saved by the gospel—*“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain”* (1 Corinthians 15:1-2, NKJV). Contradiction? Only if you hold the mistaken view that we are saved by grace *independent* of the gospel. The contradiction, however, would be with one’s interpretation, not the Scriptures.

The same is true with grace, faith and obedience. People have been erroneously taught there is nothing one can do for salvation. For example, Ben Bogard, who was debating N. B. Hardeman, President of Freed-Hardeman College, made a statement some would agree with: “I am going to maintain that there is no act at all that any man in the Old Testament time or the New ever had to perform in order to be saved.” (*Hardeman-Bogard Debate*, p. 93). Consider that for a moment—**“no act at all”**. How does this compare with the audience that was so pierced with sorrow for crucifying their Messiah? Men who interrupted Peter’s sermon with these words—*“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”* (Acts 2:37, NKJV). Did Peter tell the people there was nothing to do, **“no act at all”**? He did not! Notice what Peter told them to do: *“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”* (Acts 2:37-38, NKJV) Peter listed not one but two acts that they had to complete—repentance and immersion for the forgiveness of their sins. Is faith important? Absolutely; however, we must possess more than faith. Notice what James wrote—*“You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”* (James 2:24, NKJV). By examining these and other texts, we can see that more is involved in man’s salvation than some are teaching. God did His part in developing the plan for man’s salvation. Jesus did His part by executing that plan, and the Holy Spirit did His part by revealing this plan to man through the Bible. Now, we must do our part by following that plan which includes obedient works—*“And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,”* (Hebrews 5:9, NKJV). Why not accept God’s grace through faith by obeying the gospel?

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This article appeared in the Wadsworth edition of *House to House*, Apr/May 2013.