

Sunday February 17<sup>th</sup> 2019  
The Word of God  
A Survey of the Bible – Lesson 15  
'I Know Your Works'

1). Rev 3:7 *“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, “These things says He who is holy, He who is true, ‘He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”:* 8 **“I know your works.** *See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.*

To each of the 7 churches in the Revelation as they stand before His Judgment Seat, the Lord makes the declaration, ‘I know your works’. And the works of the Philadelphian church are seen in relation to an open door that no one can shut, because they have kept the Lord’s word and not denied His name.

a). And we know from our previous studies that ‘works’ are the only basis upon which decisions and determinations will be made when we find ourselves before the Lord at His Judgment Seat - 2 Cor 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

Matt 16:26 *For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

And as we go to these familiar verses in Matthew Chapter 16, we can see the connection between the salvation of the soul and works. With these verses from Matthew again taking us to the decisions and determinations that will be made at the Lord’s Judgment Seat where we will be rewarded according to our works.

b). Then if we go to the Book of James – Jas 2:21 *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?*

We can see in James the connection between faith and works through the example of Abraham, whose faith was brought to its goal by his works.

1 Pe 1:9 *receiving the end [goal] of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

So, what might we conclude then? Simply, by putting that which we have looked at thus far together, our faith will be brought to its goal and the salvation of our soul will be realized by our works. This is the clear teaching of the Scripture.

c). The salvation we presently possess though is completely apart from works on our part – Eph 2:8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

But nevertheless, work has taken place with respect to the salvation of our spirit, just not our work. God though did work. He breathed into us the breath of life, based on the finished work of Christ on the cross.

d). And in conjunction with God's work we see our faith, as we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. And in response to our faith God's grace, that which God does completely apart from any input from us, was extended to us and we were saved.

e). And so, to add this into what we have previously seen, we will realize that salvation, past present and future must always be by God's grace through faith, because of works.

f). When we move on from the salvation of our spirit to the salvation of our soul, we are no longer passive when it comes to works, but active.

g). We will keep all this in mind as we continue.

2). Now, we have seen in our past weeks of study that we are in a process to bring us to spiritual maturity – a process that we had seen laid out in foundation from the beginning through God's continued work to restore His ruined creation in days 2-6 in the Genesis account.

a). And this process to spiritual maturity is pictured this way in – Rom 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

Here in these verses we see the progression ‘from faith to faith’ accompanied by the assertion taken from Habakkuk 2:4, that ‘the just shall live by faith’ – those who are justified, those who are already eternally saved are to live by faith so moving to spiritual maturity as the righteousness of God is progressively revealed through ‘the gospel of Christ’.

b). And the gospel of Christ is the power of God, the grace of God, to salvation for everyone who believes, for everyone who has faith to the saving of the soul.

c). It is then God’s power working in us, His grace, as we believe, as we have faith, in the good news of the Christ, that will bring us to maturity. Moving us from faith to faith so that we might live by faith now and find life, because of our faith, in the age to come.

d). The quotation from Habakkuk used by Paul in Romans [and Galatians] is also used by the writer of Hebrews – Heb 10:36 *For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 “For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*

And in the verses from Hebrews, as well as those from Romans [and Galatians], living by faith is an issue surrounding the salvation of the soul, not the salvation we presently possess.

e). And to stay with that clearly seen in Hebrews, the faith we are to live by is faith to the saving of the soul.

f). The words ‘faith’ and ‘believe’ are the same word in the Greek language with ‘faith’ being the noun form of the word and ‘believe’ being the verb form – the action of believing has been given a name, and the name given to that action is faith.

g). Now, if we go back for a moment to the gospel, the good news, of the Christ, let’s not be tempted to see this in a NT context only. And let’s not be tempted to limit this to the salvation we already possess. But rather, let’s remember that the good news concerning the Christ begins in Genesis Chapter 1, with a focus on marriage and rulership in the 7<sup>th</sup> Day, a subject that subsequently fills the whole of Scripture and is inextricably connected to the salvation of the soul.

h). And so, to summarize again for a moment, our faith to the saving of our soul, believing that which God has set out in the gospel of Christ, will be brought to its goal, by works.

3). And it is works connected to the Scripture that we have seen in Paul's second letter to Timothy – 2 Tim 3:14 *But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

It is the Holy Scriptures alone that can make us wise for salvation, the salvation of the soul, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. It is the Holy Scriptures alone that can make us a profitable servant in the Lord's House. And the Holy Scriptures alone that can bring us to completion, to the goal of our faith, having thoroughly equipped us for every good work – Eph 2:10 *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

a). And James deals with the subject of faith, works and the salvation of the soul by asking 2 self-answering questions – Jas 2:14 *What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?*

The way these questions are written in the original language only allows for a negative response – can a man who says he has faith and does not have works be profitable? No.

Can faith alone save his soul? No.

And the verses that follow on from this, 2 of which we have already seen today, set this out clearly – Jas 2:15 *If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith*

*without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. 25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

Let's make sure we highlight several verses - *24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.* – We are justified, saved, the salvation of our soul, by works and not faith only.

*20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?  
26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

Faith without works is dead. Not that faith ceases to exist, because we all have faith – Rom 12:3 *For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.*

But if our faith is apart from works then it is dead with respect to its goal. We will be devoid of life in the age to come.

b). Now, let's add to this – 1 Pe 1:13 *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

“The revelation of Jesus Christ’ speaks of the Judgment Seat once again. And if our hope is realized in that day it will be because of the grace of God brought to us, that which God does completely apart from us.

c). So, the Scriptures establish the necessity of grace, faith and works in the realization of the salvation of the soul.

d). But here is something we need to consider – what work could we ever have done that would have secured our eternal salvation? The answer of course is nothing. This being the case, why would we think that there is any

work we can do that would secure the salvation of our soul? We can't. And yet it is by our works that we are to be judged with regards to the salvation of our soul.

e). It appears we have a problem. But do we?

4). In order to see the resolution of this we need to go back to the OT to look at a Divine principle established there – Gen 19:13 *For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it.*”

This is one verse from the account of Lot in Sodom and in the verse, we see that the 2 angels sent into the city make clear to Lot that God had sent them to destroy the city.

a). Now, if we go down a few verses in the same chapter we find this – Gen 19:23 *The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. 24 Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens.*

There are 2 interrelated questions then, ‘Did the angels destroy the city? Or, ‘Did God destroy the city?’ And the answer to both is, ‘Yes’.

b). God had told the angels to destroy the city and in doing that which God had told them, that which God had already determined, it was God Himself who destroyed it. Through the angels God destroyed the city.

c). The principle we are wanting to establish here is that doing that which God has said, that which He has already prepared beforehand, is the same as God doing it Himself.

d). Let's follow this through with another example. This time looking at both generations of Israel to come out of Egypt – Deu 7:21 *You shall not be terrified of them; for the Lord your God, the great and awesome God, is among you. 22 And the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. 23 But the Lord your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed. 24 And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.*

Both generations were given instructions as to what they were to do with respect to entering the land. They were to believe that which God had said and

enter the land entirely within the realm of faith, knowing what God had predetermined as they did so. And if they did this their actions would be God's actions, and would have been irresistible, just as we saw with the angels in Sodom. It would be Israel who would physically go into the land to slay the inhabitants with the sword, but it would have been God's hand wielding the sword. This would be a work accomplished in the realm of the Spirit, not in the realm of the flesh. This is not of course what happened with the first generation.

e). Rather, that which Israel did at Kadesh Barnea, is described this way in – Num 15:30 *'But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the Lord, and he shall be cut off from among his people. 31 Because he has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him.'* ”

And these verses from Numbers find their parallel in – Heb 10:26 *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.*

This is something God holds to be extremely serious and something He does not change His mind about.

f). The Lord told the first generation what the consequences for their unbelief would be, that the whole generation, except Joshua and Caleb, would perish in the wilderness. This is what He had said, and it could not change. But this is what the nation did the next day – Num 14:40 *And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the Lord has promised, for we have sinned!" 41 And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the Lord? For this will not succeed. 42 Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the Lord is not among you. 43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the Lord, the Lord will not be with you." 44 But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the Lord nor Moses departed from the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.*

Here, the first generation again chose to act apart from that which God had said. Their actions were their own and not God's, even though they thought they were doing what God wanted. They were not acting by faith and therefore defeat could be the only outcome. And in this we see the stark contrast that is drawn between acting in accordance with that which God has said, acting by faith and acting apart from that which God has said, apart from faith. One will produce victory, or we could say the salvation of our soul, and the other only defeat, the loss of our soul. For the second generation under Joshua though things were entirely different – Heb 11:30 *By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. 31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.*

Jericho was overthrown as the second generation of Israel entered the land doing exactly that which God had said, believing He would accomplish what He had promised, as we saw in Deuteronomy Chapter 7. And in Hebrews Chapter 11 we see that victory was theirs because the second generation had faith to the saving of the soul.

g). Perhaps this concept of works emanating out of faith that we are looking at, is most spectacularly pictured through David's encounter with Goliath – 1 Sam 17:4 *And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. 5 He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. 6 And he had bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. 7 Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him.....33 And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."*

The contrast between David and Goliath couldn't be any greater. Goliath in the natural was invincible and David the youth would have been destroyed by him easily. But God had spoken – 1 Sam 17:45 *Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth,*

*that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; **for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands.***

Goliath's power, stature and strength were of no moment whatsoever, even if they had been multiplied another 100 times, because David went out against Goliath by faith, he believed that which God had said and God must be true to His word – Num 23:19 *“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”*

Consequently, David's actions were God's actions, that which God had already determined to take place. David threw the stone, but it was God who killed Goliath through David's hand.

h). Hopefully we are beginning to see from this that acting by faith is acting in accordance with the that which God has preordained, that which God has said, that which He has prepared beforehand – Heb 11:32 *And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again.*

And in doing so, it is God who works through the individual exercising faith to bring to pass that which He wants to accomplish. The individual may do the work, but in reality, it is God's work through him.

5). So then, faith is simply believing that which God has to say about a matter. And within the realm of faith and works, acting by faith is not going out to do a work for God of our own volition. Acting by faith can only be in response to that which God has said and necessitates us standing completely away from our self, denying our self, and allowing the Lord to do a work through us as we exercise faith. In this way it becomes the Lord's work and not our work. And the Lord's work is the only work acceptable with respect to salvation past, present and future, whereas our work coming apart from faith never can be. And since grace is also a continuing aspect of the salvation of the soul, it must be God's work and not ours which is to be seen, as God needs no help from us.

a). This work by faith, which is in reality God's work, is the work of gold, silver and precious stones of 1 Corinthians Chapter 3, the work that will receive a reward. These are works of faithful obedience.

b). But the work described as wood, hay, straw are the works we do apart from faith, in our own effort, probably in an attempt to be pleasing to God, without remembering what the Scripture says – Heb 11:6 ***But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.***

And this type of work, no matter how noble and altruistic it may appear in the eyes of Man, will be burned up. These are works done apart from faith. And if this has been the realm in which our work has been done, then we will suffer loss. The loss of our soul.

*Heb 11:8 By faith [to the saving of the soul] Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

So, when the day comes when we stand before the Lord and He says to us, 'I know your works', what will those works be?

More next time. If the Lord is willing.