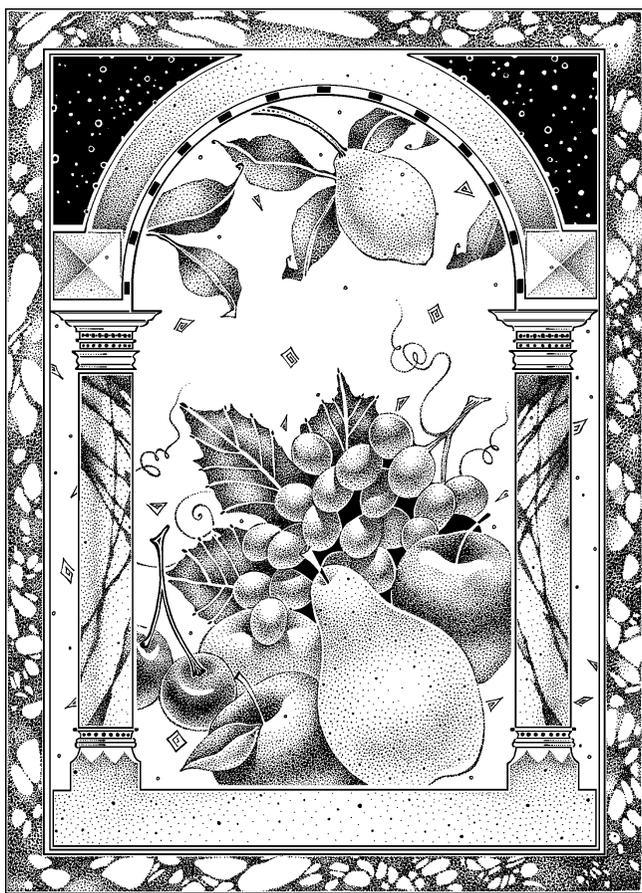


Lordship Salvation



What Must a True Believer Believe?

GIL RUGH

Lordship Salvation: What Must a True Believer Believe?

Copyright 1998

First Printing: 1998 (3,000 copies)

Published by Indian Hills Community Church

Systematically Teaching the Word

1000 South 84th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68510-4499

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Based on tapes: GRM 279, GRM 422, GRM 436 and GRM 493

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C O N T E N T S

Introduction	7
Chapter 1	11
<i>Straw-man Arguments</i>	
Chapter 2	15
<i>The Lordship of Christ</i>	
Chapter 3	25
<i>Repentance and the Gospel</i>	
Chapter 4	29
<i>The Relationship of Faith and Works</i>	
Conclusion	41
Appendix	43
<i>Dispensationalism and Lordship Salvation</i>	
Notes	45

INTRODUCTION

The issue of “Lordship salvation” has resurfaced as a controversial topic in the Church in recent years. We can see this with the many books and articles that have been put forth from both the “lordship” and “non-lordship” sides of the debate. But what is this debate all about and what issues are involved?

In short, the "lordship salvation" debate centers on the issue of saving faith. Or, put another way, what must a person believe to be saved? Those who hold to lordship salvation believe that genuine saving faith includes a willingness to repent from one's sins and submit to the lordship of Christ. Those who hold to the non-lordship view do not see repentance from sin and a willingness to submit to Jesus' lordship as essential for salvation. In fact, they believe telling someone they need to repent of their sins and submit to the lordship of Christ is adding works to the Gospel.

Leaders of the Non-lordship View

Two men have come to the fore as leaders of the non-lordship position—Zane Hodges and Charles Ryrie. With his 1982 book, *The Gospel Under Siege*, Hodges set forth his non-lordship views and claimed that those holding to the lordship position were attacking the Gospel. In 1989, he wrote another book, *Absolutely Free*, in which he further clarified the non-lordship view and criticized those who defended the lordship position. Charles Ryrie, also a non-lordship advocate, though not as extreme in some of his arguments as Hodges, also wrote a book, *So Great Salvation (1989)*, to further represent the non-lordship view. Other books have been written from the non-lordship side, but these two men are the most visible proponents of this position.

Is This a New Controversy?

Contrary to what many believe, the lordship controversy did not begin in the 1980s. In reality, this debate over the lordship of Christ has been contested at various times throughout church history. Charles Spurgeon, for instance, preached a sermon in 1872 entitled, *The Royal Savior*, in which he addressed the same basic issues argued in today's lordship debate. He said:

There are some who seem willing to accept Christ as Saviour who will not receive Him as Lord. . . . How sad it is that some talk about their faith in Christ yet their faith is not proved by their works! . . . I cannot conceive it possible for anyone truly to receive Christ as Saviour and yet not to receive Him as Lord.¹

We see from this quotation of Spurgeon that the debate concerning the lordship of Christ did not begin in the 1980s. In fact, none of the issues involved in the lordship debate are entirely new. When looking at church history, it seems this controversy comes and goes in cycles. We happen to live in a time when the issue has resurfaced to an intensified degree.

As we begin this study, I would like to state up front that I am in full agreement with the position known as lordship salvation. I say this, not because I seek to be identified with any particular group, but because I believe it is the biblical position. It is the position I held when I first became a pastor more than 25 years ago. It is the position I have consistently taught, though I have not always used the title "Lordship salvation." In my 25 plus years of preaching this view, not once have I ever been accused of teaching that salvation is by works. I strongly believe that salvation is solely by God's grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. Yet, I also hold that when God grants a person saving faith, that faith will include a sense of personal sin and a desire to turn from sin and embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

I also believe Christ's person and work cannot be separated. He is both Lord and Savior. We cannot choose to have Him as our Savior but not as our Lord. I also hold that when saving faith has occurred, the result will include a transformed life evidenced by good works. All these beliefs characterize the view that has come to be known as lordship salvation.

As we begin this examination of the lordship controversy, we will look at the following: Chapter one discusses the straw-man arguments that are often hurled against lordship advocates. Chapter two looks at what it means to believe in Jesus as "Lord." Chapter three addresses whether repentance is part of the Gospel, and chapter four examines the relationship between faith and works. The issues covered in chapters 2-4 are at the heart of the lordship controversy.

CHAPTER ONE

Straw-man Arguments

As I stated in the introduction, I believe the Bible teaches what is known as lordship salvation. I must add, however, that I do not believe in the way lordship salvation is sometimes presented by those who are non-lordship. Many arguments hurled against lordship salvation do not accurately represent what leading lordship proponents are saying. These are called "straw-man" arguments. A straw-man argument is an argument that misrepresents another person's view to make it easier to discredit. We call this a "straw-man" argument because it is easier to knock down a straw-man than a real man. We will now look at some of these faulty arguments.

Straw-man #1: The lordship view adds works to the Gospel

Those who disagree with lordship salvation often claim that lordship advocates are corrupting the Gospel by making works a part of salvation. Hodges even goes so far as to say that lordship advocates present "a kind of faith/works synthesis which differs only insignificantly from official Roman Catholic dogma."² He also says that the lordship view is "one of the worst distortions of the Bible in our day,"³ and involves "a radical rewriting of the gospel."⁴

I do not believe, however, that this representation of the lordship view by Hodges and other non-lordship advocates is accurate. In fact, I am disturbed by the constant insistence by non-lordship advocates that people who hold to lordship salvation are adding works to the Gospel. In my readings I have not found anything that

suggests to me that those who believe in lordship salvation have added works to the Gospel. Unfortunately, though, no matter how often lordship advocates clearly state that works are not a part of salvation, the non-lordship side continues to misrepresent the lordship position.

It is important that we understand how works relate to salvation. There is a difference between works *contributing* to salvation and works being the *result* of salvation. When lordship advocates state that works *follow* conversion that is different from saying works *cause* salvation. Let us use an example from the natural realm. A baby born into the human race will do certain things because he is human. But we would not turn that around and say that the actions of a baby cause him to be a human. In a similar way, lordship proponents are simply saying that when a person has been saved and given a new nature, he will act like a child of God by doing works consistent with God's character. This is not a difficult point to understand. That is why I am surprised by all the material written by men with advanced theological degrees who refuse to acknowledge this and still say lordship advocates are teaching works as necessary for salvation.

One lordship advocate, aware that his view on lordship salvation would be distorted, has clearly stated:

I expect, for example, that someone will accuse me of teaching salvation by works. Let me say as clearly as possible right now that salvation is by God's sovereign grace and grace alone. Nothing a lost, degenerate, spiritually dead sinner can do will in any way contribute to salvation. Saving faith, repentance, commitment, and obedience are all divine works, wrought by the Holy Spirit in the heart of everyone who is saved. I have never taught that some pre-salvation works of righteousness are necessary to or part of salvation. But I do believe without apology that real salvation cannot and will not fail to produce works of righteousness in the life of a true believer. There are no human works in the saving act, but God's work of salvation includes a change of intent, will, desire, and attitude that inevitably produces the fruit of the Spirit. The very essence of God's saving work is the transformation of the will that results in a love for God. Salvation thus establishes the *root* that will surely produce the *fruit*.⁵

Those who hold the lordship view believe that salvation is by God's grace alone and not by works. When Hodges and other non-lordship advocates say that lordship proponents teach salvation is by works, they have created a straw-man argument and have painted lordship advocates as believing something they do not. Non-lordship proponents are setting up and knocking down an argument that does not even exist.

Straw-man #2: The lordship view teaches that a person must clean his life up before he can become saved

Lordship proponents have also been accused of teaching that people must get their lives straightened out and give up sinful activities before they can become Christians. That also is a straw-man argument. Lordship advocates do not believe that there are pre-salvation works a person must do before he can come to Christ. Any claim that lordship proponents teach pre-salvation works as necessary for salvation is simply not true.

Straw-man #3: Lordship salvation implies perfect obedience

One question sometimes posed by those who are non-lordship goes something like this: "What happens when true Christians sin? At that moment, aren't they rebelling against the lordship of Christ? Therefore, lordship salvation cannot be true since, when a Christian sins, he is rebelling against Christ's lordship." This straw-man argument, however, is a misrepresentation of the lordship view. Those who hold to lordship are not saying that lordship salvation entails perfect obedience all the time. Nor are they saying that believing in Christ as Lord means that a person will never sin. Lordship proponents hold that true Christians do sin (see 1 John 2:1). But they also teach that sin will not characterize the life of the child of God (see 1 John 3:6-9).

Second, this question is not a fair one since it also applies to many on the non-lordship side of the debate. Although non-lordship advocates do not see submission to Christ's lordship as part of saving faith, many of them do believe that a Christian can eventually come to a point where he makes Jesus the Lord of his life. If that is true, the same question posed to lordship advocates could also be posed to non-lordship advocates. What about those Christians who made Jesus Lord at some point in time after they became saved?

When they sin, are they no longer under the lordship of Christ? The answer, of course, is No. Occasional sin does not mean one has rejected following Jesus as Lord. It is not fair, then, for those who are non-lordship to define the lordship view in a way that those who hold to lordship would not agree with. This argument, then, is not a valid one to be used against lordship salvation.

As we begin chapter two, we will now begin looking at the first major issue of the lordship controversy, the lordship of Christ. It is here we will examine what it means to believe on Jesus as “Lord.”

CHAPTER TWO

The Lordship of Christ

The lordship controversy is primarily a debate about the nature of saving faith. In particular, How does saving faith relate to the person of Christ? Both sides are agreed about the work of Christ—that a person must believe in Christ’s death on the cross to be saved. But they do not agree on what a person must believe about Christ Himself to be saved. It is to this issue that we will give most of our attention. As we do this, I would like to begin by summarizing what the Bible says about salvation and what a person must believe in order to be saved.

What Must a Person Believe to be Saved?

The Bible does not give us an exact Gospel formula that must be used every time. In fact, neither Jesus nor the apostles presented the Gospel in the same way in every case. An examination of the New Testament does show, though, that in order for the Gospel to be accurately given certain truths must be presented. First, the issue of *sin* must be addressed. Second, the *person of Christ* must be presented. And third, the *work of Christ* must be shared. All three of these areas are inseparably tied to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If any of these elements are not expressed properly, the Gospel has not been truly presented.

For example, it would do no good for a person to understand that he is a sinner but not place his faith in the person of Jesus Christ, who as the God-man was able to pay for the sins of the world. Jesus’

person is what gives significance to His work. Nor would it be enough to talk about sin and that Jesus is God and not talk about His work on the cross. For it was at the cross that redemption was provided. It also would not be enough to acknowledge that Jesus is God and that He died on the cross if there were no understanding of personal sin. If a person does not see himself as a sinner, he will see no need to trust in Christ. So these elements—awareness of sin, the person of Christ and the work of Christ must be understood to some degree for a person to be saved.

I must add, though, that by “understood” I do not mean complete and exhaustive understanding. I do not believe that any person understands these three areas fully or exhaustively. No person can fully grasp the depths of his own sinfulness, the details of the God-man union, nor the full implications of Christ’s death on the cross. All these areas are too great for our sinful, finite minds to grasp completely. However, there must be some understanding and agreement with God about these areas for salvation to occur. And certainly, no one who denies these truths can be saved.

How does all of this relate to the Lordship debate? The Lordship debate directly touches on two of these three areas—the issues of sin and the person of Christ. Both sides agree on the work of Christ—that a person must believe in Christ’s substitutionary work on the cross on his behalf in order to be saved. But agreement does not exist on the issues of sin and what a person must believe about the person of Christ in order to become a Christian. It is to these issues that we now turn.

The Person of Christ

We will start with the issue of the person of Christ. How does the Bible present Jesus Christ, and what must we believe about Him to be saved? We will also look at whether a person must be willing to come under the lordship of Christ in order to become a Christian.

The full title given to Jesus in the New Testament is the *Lord Jesus Christ*. In fact, this title is found 63 times. Since saving faith involves a proper understanding of who Jesus is, a person who would be saved must believe on Jesus as Lord and Christ. Again, a person may not understand fully and exhaustively the Lordship and Messiahship (Christ is Greek for Messiah) of Jesus, but a person

cannot deny these aspects of His person and become a Christian. For example, someone cannot be a Christian and say, "I believe Jesus is Lord, but I do not believe He is the Christ." That would be rejecting part of who Jesus is. Likewise, a person cannot say, "I will accept Jesus as the Christ but not as Lord." We do not have the right to decide which aspects of Christ's person we will believe in and which ones we won't.

Charles Ryrie, however, in his book, *So Great Salvation*, disagrees with the idea that a person must believe in *all* of who Jesus is in order to be saved. In his criticism of lordship salvation he says:

Incidentally, why is it that those who teach that you cannot receive Jesus without receiving His personal mastery over the years of one's life do not also insist that we must receive Him as Messiah (the meaning of Christ) with all that the concept of Messiah entails?⁶

Ryrie is trying to make the point that if lordship proponents are going to stress the necessity of Jesus being Lord in order to be saved, why don't they stress that believing in Jesus as Messiah is also necessary to be saved. *The answer is that we should.* Not only must one believe that Jesus is Lord, one must also believe that Jesus is the Messiah to be saved. Since the Bible presents Jesus as "Messiah" one cannot deny that He is the Messiah and be a Christian. The following verses verify this fact:

1 John 2:22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah]?

1 John 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.

1 Corinthians 15:3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins.

John 20:31 also states, "but these things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." The Apostle John clearly links believing in Jesus as the "Christ" with saving faith. It is important, then, that a person recognize Jesus as Messiah for salvation to occur.

It must also be pointed out that Ryrie misrepresents the lordship position when he asks why lordship advocates do not also

preach Jesus' Messiahship "with all that the concept of Messiah entails?" As we said earlier, lordship advocates are not claiming that people must understand "all that the concept of Messiah entails" or understand all that the concept of "Lord" means. What lordship advocates are saying is that there must be a general understanding of those areas and certainly there cannot be a denial of those essential truths. Someone who denies these truths cannot be a Christian.

Along this line of who Jesus is, the Bible also presents Jesus as the "God-man." Jesus is one hundred percent God and one hundred percent man. No person can be saved who does not believe that Jesus is God in human flesh (see 1 John 4:2-3). Does this mean that we understand fully how Jesus can be both God and man? The answer fortunately is no. For no person fully understands this. At the same time, though, no one can be a Christian and deny that Jesus is both God and man.

Presenting the Person of Christ

What does all this mean when it comes to sharing the Gospel with someone? When presenting the Gospel, how do we properly present the person of Christ? In our Gospel presentations we may not always give equal emphasis to the different aspects of Christ's person. For example, when I worked in a business in Philadelphia, I had a boss who was Jewish. I spent much of my time presenting Jesus as the Messiah because it was in this particular area that he was stumbling. In order for this man to become saved, he needed to believe that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel, the One prophesied in the Old Testament. With cultists I have stressed that Jesus is both God and man. With others I have stressed the lordship of Christ. Based on where a person is in his understanding, I may emphasize certain aspects of Christ's person more than others.

When I look back on my salvation, I do not remember the preacher giving a great discourse on the specifics of how Christ could be both God and man. I just understood that I was a sinner and that Jesus Christ paid the penalty for my sin. If someone had grabbed me that night and said, "Explain fully the person of Christ, how He could be both God and man at the same time," I would not have been able to give a very detailed answer. Yet I would have known enough about the person of Christ to be saved. Though my

understanding was very limited then (and still is), I knew enough to be saved. And I certainly knew enough not to deny those truths.

What Does "Lord" Mean?

Debate exists in this controversy over what the Bible means by "Lord" in reference to Jesus. When we believe on Jesus as Lord, what does that mean? Some non-lordship advocates, including Ryrie, say "Lord" simply refers to Jesus' deity—that He is God. They would say that "Lord," in the New Testament, is a translation of "Jehovah" in the Old Testament, the name for God. So then, when the New Testament writers used "Lord" concerning Jesus, they were referring to His deity. Believing in Jesus as "Lord" according to this view, means simply believing that Jesus is God. Now, I do agree with Ryrie that "Lord" means deity. However, his limited understanding of "Lord" that excludes the implications of His lordship in a person's life does not hold up under biblical examination. As will be shown, the fact that Jesus is Lord certainly includes that He is God. But His being Lord also means that he is Master and that those who come to Him must be willing to turn from sin and obey Him.

Part of understanding what "Lord" means involves knowing why the New Testament writers used this term to refer to Christ. The term for Lord, *Kurios*, was used often in Greek literature. In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), *Kurios* was used over nine thousand times. Over six thousand times it replaced the Hebrew proper name for God which is *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*. In the New Testament, *Kurios* is mentioned over six hundred times. As we will see, *Kurios*—or Lord—carries with it the meaning of power and authority. When used of God or Christ it conveys the idea of absolute authority and power. Of course, "Lord," includes the idea of deity, but there is *more* to the term than just deity. The fact that Jesus is Lord involves the ideas that He is God *and* has sovereignty and mastery over those who belong to Him—not just deity with no claims on those He is God over.

Gerhard Kittel's, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, shows that "Lord" (*Kurios*) carries the idea of authority:

Kurios first occurs as a noun with a precise sense in the first half of the 4th cent. B.C., and it begins to have two fixed meanings. The first is the "lord" as the lawful owner of a slave. . . . The

second more fixed sense of *kurios* is that of the legal guardian of a wife or girl. . . . Both uses of the noun are connected with the adj. in the sense of “one who has full authority.”⁷

We see here that “Lord” means one who is “lawful owner of a slave” and “one who has full authority.” As the following quote shows, this authority certainly applies to God:

In all religions the concept of God must contain the element of legitimate power, i.e., the power to which man must concede authority and before whose sovereignty he knows that he must bow. . . . If the element of power is lacking, the deity is no more than an idea.⁸

As this quotation clearly shows, power and authority are inherent in the concept of God. We cannot say, “Lord means God” and then stop there. What does “Lord” convey about God? It conveys that He is the sovereign Master who has power over all. The *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* also states that *kurios* (Lord) “always contains the idea of legality and authority.”⁹

So, in summary, what does “Lord” mean? When it is used of God and Christ, it certainly conveys the idea of deity. But what specifically about His deity is being stressed? That Jesus, as Lord, is the sovereign God who has authority and legitimate power over all. All those who would be saved must realize this and bow before Him in humble submission. Believing in the sovereign Christ is part of true saving faith. A person cannot be saved and say, “I believe Jesus is God but I will not submit to His authority over my life.” That thinking removes all the meaning out of “Lord.” As James says, the demons believe in one God (see James 2:19). They believe it so much that they tremble. But that is not saving faith. Though demons believe in the deity of Jesus they rebel against His authority.

What some non-lordship proponents have done is present God as someone we do not have to submit to or obey. They may not put it in those terms, but that is the necessary conclusion to their reasoning. What is really being said is that a person can come to God for salvation while still being god to himself. Submitting to God is now something that is optional. We have created a God that does not need to be obeyed. What, however, separates this God from the god of the unbeliever?

Authority cannot be separated from deity. If one truly believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, he realizes that Jesus, as God, is sovereign over his life. It disturbs me that people today are saying that saving faith includes recognition that Jesus is God, but it does not necessarily mean that a person must bow before this God as master of his life. That is a distortion of what the Bible teaches.

Passages Stressing the Lordship of Christ

That “Lord” involves rightful power and authority is clearly seen in multiple passages of the New Testament. In Matthew 6:24 Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other.” The term “masters” is the same word that is often translated “Lord” (*kurios*). “Lord” and “master” are synonymous. Jesus’ point is that a person cannot serve two lords or two masters. No one can have two lords because “lord” carries the idea of a person to whom submission and obedience is owed. A person cannot give full submission and service to more than one master at a time. This statement would be ridiculous if “master” (“lord”) did not carry the notion of authority.

In Luke 6:46 Jesus also stated, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” Jesus shows how inconsistent it is to call Him “Lord” and yet not submit to what He says. To claim that Jesus is Lord, while not submitting to His demands, empties the concept of Lord of any meaning. Matthew 7:21 says “not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.” Those who cry “Lord, Lord” but “practice lawlessness” will someday be told, “I never knew you” by Jesus who does not accept their claim (Matthew 7:23). Yet we have Bible teachers today who are telling people they can believe in Jesus Christ but they are under no obligation to submit to Him.

Ephesians 5:23-24 says that “Christ also is the head of the church” and that “the church is subject to Christ.” Being subject to Christ means that we obey Him.

Hebrews 5:9 states, “He [Jesus] became to all those who *obey Him* the source of eternal salvation” (emphases mine). Saving faith includes the desire to obey Christ. In fact, obedience is so linked to

being a Christian that Christ is seen as providing salvation for those who obey Him. On the flip side, He is not the source of salvation for those who remain in a state of rebellion against Him. A similar statement is given in John 3:36: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him." Those who do not obey the Son are not seen as non-obeying Christians; they are seen as unbelievers on whom the wrath of God abides.

Romans 6:17-18 says, "Though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness." A slave is one who is under the authority of his master. All human beings are slaves according to this text. Either people are slaves of sin or they are slaves of righteousness. For the Christian, there has been a transition in masters. The former master, sin, has been replaced at salvation by the new master, righteousness. Paul goes on to refer to believers as those "having been freed from sin and enslaved to God" (Romans 6:22). At salvation, the believer is set free from the power of sin and is now "enslaved to God." Being enslaved to God certainly includes obedience and submission.

Paul, when referring to those who were causing dissensions and hindrances contrary to sound teaching said, "For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites" (Romans 16:18). Two categories of people are described here—those who are slaves of Christ and those who are not. Today, though, we want to create a third category—those who are believers but who do not yet want to submit to Christ as Lord. That, however, is a description of an unbeliever. Unbelievers are those who do not live under the authority of Jesus Christ. Can a person come to salvation and say, "I want forgiveness and salvation, but I am not willing to follow Jesus as Lord"? What kind of salvation is that? What kind of God do we have that will save those who are not willing to submit to Him?

In Ephesians 2:2 unbelievers are described as "sons of disobedience." Disobedience is the realm in which the unbeliever lives. It seems, then, that a person who is unwilling to obey Jesus Christ cannot be saved. It is incredible to think that a person can be truly a child of God and also live in continual disobedience to God.

We must also remember that godly living is inseparably linked to our salvation. Put another way, there is a direct connection between justification and sanctification. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we become identified with Him in His death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5). As a result, we are identified with Him and have been raised to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6: 4). Newness of life naturally follows salvation. The Bible does not teach that a person can become justified before God but still live like an unbeliever.

These texts clearly show that it is impossible for a person to be saved who is unwilling to submit himself to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Jesus is Lord. He is God. He is Messiah. No one can deny these essential truths about Jesus and be saved. The idea that "Lord" does not include the idea of "master" would have been totally foreign to the people of New Testament times.

CHAPTER THREE

Repentance and the Gospel

Repentance is another highly debated topic in the lordship controversy. At issue is the question, Is repentance part of true saving faith? Or put another way, Must a person repent of his sins to be saved?

Different answers to this question have been given by those involved in the lordship debate. Hodges, for example, does not believe repentance is an essential part of saving faith. In fact, he believes that preaching repentance to an unbeliever is adding works to the Gospel.

Ryrie differs somewhat from Hodges in that he believes repentance is a necessary part of saving faith. Ryrie defines repentance as a change of mind about Christ. To Ryrie, though, this change of mind is only in reference to Christ and does not necessarily include a change of mind about sin.¹⁰

Lordship proponents are agreed that repentance is a change of mind about Christ, but they also believe that a change of mind about Christ necessarily involves a change of mind about sin. In other words, a change of mind about Christ *must* also mean a change of mind about sin. The two go together. Which of these views lines up with the Bible?

Hodges' view that repentance is not a part of saving faith is unbiblical for the Bible clearly presents repentance as a part of saving faith. Jesus called on the people to "repent and believe in the

Gospel” (Mark 1:15). He also said, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32). Paul said that “God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent” (Acts 17:30). Acts 11:18 speaks of “repentance that leads to life.” As these verses show, saving faith involves repentance. In fact, repentance is so linked to belief that repentance is a synonym for belief as the above verses show. Thus, I absolutely reject Hodges’ view that repentance is not a part of the Gospel message.

I agree with Ryrie that repentance is “a change of mind.” The Greek word *metanoia* means “to change one’s mind.” I also agree with him that repentance is a change of mind about Christ for no person can be saved who does not have a change of mind concerning Jesus Christ. I disagree, however, with Ryrie in that I believe repentance also involves a change of mind about *sin*. It is not correct to limit repentance strictly to Jesus Christ and exclude it from referring to sin as well. The Bible does not make this distinction. For example, in the Luke 5:32 passage we looked at, Jesus said, “I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” Repentance is clearly related to the sin issue. Jesus is calling sinners to change their minds about their sin as well as their thoughts about Him. If people do not change their minds about sin there is no need to change their minds about Christ. Until a person realizes he is a sinner and that his sin condemns him, he has no reason to trust in Christ.

The relationship between repentance and sin is seen in other passages as well. In Matthew 3:7-8, John the Baptist addressed the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to him to be baptized: “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance.” John the Baptist told these religious leaders that he would not baptize them since he did not see anything in their lives to prove that they had turned from their sinful behavior. John in effect was saying, “I want to see that you have turned from sin before I baptize you.”

Revelation 9:20 is another example that shows the direct relationship between repentance and sin:

And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of

stone and of wood . . . and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

This passage discusses the rebellious attitude of unbelievers during the coming Tribulation period. It is clear in this text that these people did not “repent,” or “change their mind” about their sin. What was the evidence that they did not really repent or change their mind about sin? They worshiped demons, idols and did not turn from their evil deeds. Their evil actions showed that a change of mind about sin had never taken place. Revelation 16:11 also says, “and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.”

These passages show that one’s attitude toward sin is inseparably linked to one’s attitude toward God. A person cannot say, “I change my mind about Christ, but I do not change my mind about sin.” Repentance involves a change of mind about Christ *and* sin. Both elements are part of biblical repentance. A living example of repentance were the Thessalonians who “turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9). Repentance for the Thessalonians included a turning to God from sin with the intent to serve God.

Repentance is not a pre-salvation work that precedes faith. It is a gift from God (see Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25) that is part of saving faith. When a person truly turns to Christ he also turns from sin at the same time. The view, then, that repentance is not a part of the Gospel or that it is simply a change of mind about Christ but not of sin cannot be supported from the Bible.

Are There Carnal Christians?

Most who hold to non-lordship theology believe in the concept of the “carnal Christian.” With this belief is the idea that there are three classes of humanity: unsaved people, spiritual Christians and carnal Christians. Unsaved people, obviously, are those who have not trusted in Christ for salvation. Spiritual Christians are those who have given their lives to Jesus Christ and follow Him as the pattern of their lives. Carnal Christians, on the other hand, are people who are saved but are characterized by carnality or fleshly behavior. Though saved, they live for themselves and not for Christ. According to non-lordship theology, then, there are two types of

Christians—spiritual and carnal. Much is made of 1 Corinthians 3:3 where Paul told the Corinthians: “for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?”

Though it is true that Paul accused the Corinthians of behaving in a fleshly manner, it is too much to conclude that carnality characterized their lives. Though sometimes misguided in their actions, they had a zeal for spiritual things, were not lacking in any of the spiritual gifts and were awaiting eagerly the coming of Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians 1:7).

First Corinthians 3:3 does tell us that Christians are capable of carnal behavior, but that is not the same as stating that Christians may be characterized by carnality. Paul never in his writings teaches that there are two categories of Christians. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 2:14-15, he makes a contrast between the “natural man” (unbeliever) and “he who is spiritual” (believer). He does not include a third category of Christians who act like unbelievers.

The concept of the carnal Christian is not a biblical one. Lordship proponents freely admit that Christians do sin (see 1 John 2:1), but based on the weighty evidence of the New Testament, they also conclude that no Christian can live in a state of carnality. As 1 John 3:9 states, “No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

CHAPTER FOUR

The Relationship of Faith and Works (James 2:14-26)

Another important issue in the lordship debate is the relationship of faith and works. Put simply, does true saving faith result in a life characterized by good works, or can a person be saved and not produce good works? James 2:14-26 is the key passage that addresses this issue. Because of its significance we will break down this passage verse by verse. We will also look at how non-lordship advocates, such as Zane Hodges, attempt to interpret this passage.

Can a Faith Without Works Save? (James 2:14)

James begins his section on faith and works by asking two rhetorical questions: “What use is it my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?” (James 2:14). In this verse, James is dealing hypothetically with a person who makes a claim to salvation but has no good works in his life. Is the type of faith that this man has true saving faith? The expected answer to this question is no. A faith that does not produce good works is not a faith that brings about spiritual salvation. This person says he has faith. He regards himself as a Christian. He claims to believe certain facts about Jesus Christ. But at the same time there are no works in his life that give evidence to his claim of being a Christian.

Notice that James does not deny that this man has a “faith.” In verse 19 he addresses this hypothetical person by saying, “You

believe that God is one, You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.’” That this man has a faith, James accepts. James’ point, though, is that there is a saving faith and there is a nonsaving faith. How do we tell the difference? A saving faith results in works; a nonsaving faith does not result in works. Likewise, in verse 19 he shows that demons have a “faith.” They believe Jesus is the Son of God. They declared that when Jesus was on the earth. One demon told Jesus, “‘I know who you are—the Holy One of God!’” (Mark 1:24). Demon faith, as James shows, even has the sense to “shudder” before God. But, obviously, this demon faith is not saving faith. Thus there is a faith that does not result in salvation.

When James talks about the faith this man has that produces no works he asks the question, “Can that faith save him?” In the original Greek there is a definite article before “faith.” The emphasis is on *that* faith. To paraphrase, James is asking, “Can the faith we are talking about here—the faith that does not produce works—save this man?” The implied answer is, no.

Hodges' view of James 2

At this point it is necessary to mention that the “salvation” James is referring to in verse 14 is salvation in the spiritual or eternal sense. This is the natural reading of this passage and the one Christian interpreters have consistently held throughout church history. In an attempt to harmonize his non-lordship views with James 2, Zane Hodges, in recent years, has created and promoted the view that the salvation in verse 14 is referring only to physical salvation. According to Hodges, the person with a faith that does not produce works is a true Christian in danger of being disciplined by God and losing his physical life.

That view, though, is distorted and is not what this verse is saying. It is also not what the average person would find in his own study of James 2. Most references to “save” or “saved” in the New Testament, and especially the epistles, refer to spiritual salvation. This spiritual sense is also clearly the meaning in James 1:21 and 4:12. There are places in the New Testament, though, where “save” is used in the context of physical deliverance, such as in James 5:15¹¹ and 5:20, but most of the time it involves the idea of spiritual salvation. Unless there are good contextual reasons to take “save” only in the physical sense, the term usually includes spiritual salvation. We

should also note that Hodges' view has no historical precedent in the church. Though coming up with a new interpretation of a passage does not necessarily make one wrong, we have every right to be suspicious of interpretations that no one has ever found before.

An Example of Dead Faith (James 2:15-17)

James goes on to illustrate his point that a faith that does not produce works is not true saving faith: "If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?" (James 2:15-16). If a person claims to be a Christian but does not help a brother in need, his claim to having saving faith is worthless. The Apostle John makes this same point in 1 John 3:17 when he says, "But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

Love, like faith, is intangible. It cannot be handled. The only way we know love is present is by its results. For example, those who know me cannot see the actual love I have for my wife. They can, however, see the loving acts I do for her. The acts I do for her show that I love her. The same is true with faith. We cannot see faith. The only way we can know that someone has faith is by his actions. James shows us that if a person says he has faith in Christ, but he does not show it by his actions, his claim is spurious and does not have to be accepted. That is why James goes on to say, "Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself" (James 2:17). The faith that does not produce works is not saving faith; it is a "dead" faith.

Can Christians have a dead faith?

In order to support his non-lordship theology, Hodges attempts to show that Christians can have a dead faith. He points out that the reference to dead faith means that the faith now dead must once have been alive. He argues that for something to be dead it must have at one point been alive before it was dead. According to his reasoning, since a true believer cannot lose his salvation, the dead faith must belong to a believer.

On the surface, this argument may seem logical—until one begins to examine it. It is not true, as Hodges claims, that for something to be dead it must once have been alive. For example, Paul, in Ephesians 2:1 states, “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.” Before salvation, God describes our condition as being dead spiritually. Now does this mean that we were once alive spiritually as well? Of course not. We were not spiritually alive before we were spiritually dead. That is why we need to be careful with Hodges' kind of logic. Hodges reads more into James' statement about dead faith than what James actually meant. When James refers to “dead” faith he is simply referring to a faith that is not alive—a faith that is in contrast with true saving faith. He does not imply that the dead faith was once alive. Hodges pushes James' analogy too far.

Supporting passages

James 2 is not the only passage that teaches that works are a necessary result of faith. When the religious leaders came to John the Baptist to be baptized, John told them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:7-8). John would not baptize these religious leaders because there was no “fruit” or evidence that they had truly repented. To John, salvation and a changed life were inseparable. John would then say, “And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matthew 3:10). Good fruit is so much an evidence of salvation that those who do not produce good fruit are said to be thrown into the fire of judgment.

In Matthew 7:16-20, Jesus said:

“You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:17-20).

The immediate context of this passage is false prophets, but the point is applicable here. The fruit of a tree reveals what kind of a tree it is.

In the same way, a person's fruit, or works, reveal his character. Good trees do not bear bad fruit. Likewise, children of God do not bear the fruit of unrighteousness.

Ephesians 2:8-10 is one of the clearest passages in Scripture that shows the relationship between faith and works:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Here we see that salvation is "by grace" and "through faith" but is not a "result of works." Works do not contribute one bit to salvation. If they did, salvation would not be by grace. As Paul says in Romans 11:6 when referring to God's electing purposes, "if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace." The principle is clear—grace and works are mutually exclusive when it comes to being saved. If works contribute to salvation, then grace is no longer grace.

Does this mean works have no place in the life of the believer? The Bible says they do. *Though good works do not contribute to salvation, they will be the result of salvation.* As Ephesians 2:10 states: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." This passage gives us the proper balance. God saves us by His grace, but when He saves us, it is for the purpose of producing "good works." That is the correct relationship between faith and works. It is wrong to say that works contribute to salvation. But it is also incorrect to say that works will not follow salvation.

These passages support what James is saying in chapter two. Salvation is always by faith and not by works. But salvation by faith *always* produces works. So then, a faith that does not produce works is not saving faith—it is a dead faith.

Do we always know who is saved?

If it is true that a believer will always produce good works, does that mean we will always know who is a believer? After all, Judas was not a believer, and he was able to fool the apostles for three years. Jesus also told us in Matthew 13:29-30 that some tares

(unbelievers) will look like wheat (believers). Is it always possible, then, to know who is saved and who is not?

To answer the question, we are not always be able to tell who is saved and who is not. We may think some people are saved when in reality they are not. On the other hand, we may think some people are not saved when they really are. We do not always know. But the general point James is making still holds. Works reveal character. Just because there are individual exceptions that are hard to read does not mean that the general point James is making is untrue.

The Book of Proverbs, for instance, has many general truths that occasionally have exceptions. Proverbs 10:3 says, "The Lord will not allow the righteous to hunger." History shows, though, that there have been cases where believers have gone hungry. Yet the general truth of Proverbs 10:3 is still true.

Some people may look like believers because they outwardly conform to Christian standards but in reality they are not. There may also be people who genuinely are children of God but, like Peter, deny the Lord in a certain setting. The general truth, though, is still valid. We may not be able to tell who is a Christian in every case, but the Bible does tell us that works reveal who is a Christian and who is not. As John said, "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious; any one who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother" (1 John 3:10).

Faith Shows by Works (James 2:18)

Verse 18 says, "But someone may well say, 'You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.'" James' point is that the only evidence of a person's salvation is the works he does. If a person does not show his faith by his works, by what else can he show it? Let's face it, many people make professions of faith in Christ, but they have no interest in the Word of God, and their lives do not evidence the work of God. There is no fruit to back up their claim. Let us look again at an example from the realm of nature. If a person has an orange tree growing in his backyard, that person cannot rightly say that it is an apple tree. No matter how insistent he is that it is an apple tree, if the tree is producing oranges, it is an orange

tree. Likewise, the person who continually acts like an unbeliever is an unbeliever no matter what claim he may make (see Matt. 7:16-20).

Demon Faith (James 2:19)

Many people have a head knowledge about Christ and the Gospel. In fact, there are probably many people who know the Gospel who are headed for an eternity in hell. As James shows in verse 19, just having correct head knowledge about God is not enough to be saved: “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.” James may be taking us back to Deuteronomy 6:4 which says, “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” This verse affirms that there is only one true God. All good Jews believed this orthodox statement. James shows that although believing that truth is important, it is not enough to be saved. Why? Because even demons believe that and they are not saved. The demons have correct doctrine. They do not believe in many gods as some people do. They believe in one God. They even have the sense to “shudder.” But demons are not saved! The faith they have does not result in a changed life. They believe that God is one, and they still continue in their evil ways. This verse shows that a person can have correct views about God and still not be a true Christian.

With the example of demons, James demonstrates that it is possible to have a faith that is not true saving faith. Notice that he does not say that demons do not have a faith—they do! They believe in God and tremble. That is faith. But that faith is not the faith that saves. So then, a faith that believes correct doctrine but does not result in a changed life may be a faith, but it is not *saving* faith.

I once read a survey by the Princeton Center that looked into the beliefs of people who are classified as “unchurched.” That is, they do not go to church. According to this survey, 64% of people who do not go to church said they believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Now I know that there are people who currently are not part of a church who are saved. But when I read that 64% of people who do not go to church believe that Jesus is the Son of God, I realize that there are many people who believe correctly about Jesus Christ but are not truly saved. This statistic reminds me of the kind of demon faith to which James is referring.

Faith Without Works is Useless (James 2:20)

In verse 20 James says, “But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?” James uses strong language here. He addresses this man without works as a “foolish fellow.” In doing so, He wants his readers to understand the seriousness of his point. The faith that does not produce works is a worthless faith. It is “useless.” It is barren, sterile, ineffective. It is not saving faith.

In John 8, Jesus was addressing the Jewish religious leaders of His day who thought they were saved because they were physical descendants of Abraham (8:33). Jesus, however, tells them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.” Jesus takes them to their deeds, not to what they claim. The Jewish religious leaders claimed to be saved, but their deeds showed they were enslaved to sin. Jesus tells them in 8:39, “If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham.” They claimed to be Abraham’s children and to have the faith of Abraham, but they did not do the deeds that Abraham did that would have shown they truly had saving faith. Jesus told them that they could not claim to be Abraham’s children when their deeds denied their claim. In fact, Jesus would tell them in verse 44 that their real father was the devil because they did the deeds of the devil.

Luther and Calvin

Some people like to point out that Martin Luther had problems with the book of James because he believed some of James’ statements were not consistent with what Paul had said about salvation by faith alone. But, while it is true that Luther had his troubles with James, Luther himself was not confused over the relationship of faith and works. Luther said:

Faith is a living restless thing. It cannot be inoperative. We are not saved by works, but if there be no works, there must be something amiss with faith. It is quite impossible to separate works from faith as to separate heat and light from fire.

The Faith of Abraham (James 2:21-23)

In his discussion on the relationship of faith and works, James uses two examples of people who were saved by faith yet showed it

by their works—Abraham and Rahab. He begins with Abraham in verse 21 he says, “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?” Many Christians cringe when they hear this verse, especially if they have had to deal with people in the cults who believe salvation is by works. Christians have been taught, and rightfully so, that we are justified by faith alone apart from works (see Romans 3:28). So then, when we read that Abraham was “justified by works” it makes us uncomfortable. We may say, “God, why didn’t you say this in a clearer way?”

I believe God puts passages like this in the Bible to confuse the unregenerate heart and mind. Passages like these are similar to the parables of Jesus in the sense that those who are receptive to God can understand the truths being made, but those with unbelieving hearts will remain confused. Some will quote this verse as teaching salvation by works, but they have missed the point altogether.

So what is James saying here? When we look at the biblical evidence, it becomes clear that the works of Abraham were *evidence* of his salvation, not the *means* of his salvation. As we will see, God declared Abraham righteous because of his faith, but the evidence of his faith was made known (or justified) when he offered his son Isaac in obedience to God’s command. To see this we must trace some of the course of Abraham’s life.

Abraham saved before he offered Isaac

The biblical evidence shows that Abraham was saved before Genesis 22, the chapter in which he offered his son, Isaac. Genesis 11:31 tells us that Abraham (then Abram) left the land of Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. Abraham and his family stopped in Haran until God told him to move to the country He had designated for him in chapter 12. In Genesis 12:1 God told Abraham to “Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you.” Abraham did so and built an altar to the Lord east of Bethel. Clearly, Abraham was acting on faith—taking God at His Word. Hebrews 11:8 says, “By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.” At this point it seems that Abraham was a man of faith—a true believer in God.

In Genesis 13:14-17 God expanded the details of the covenant He had made with Abraham. He told Abraham that He would give the land of Canaan to him and his descendants forever. Again, Abraham was probably saved by this point.

In Genesis 14:18-24, Abraham had a friendly encounter with Melchizedek, the priest of God. In Genesis 15:1-2, God appeared to Abraham and told him, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great." All these passages show us that Abraham was saved before his offering of Isaac in Genesis 22.

Genesis 15:6 is especially significant in that it tells us that Abraham, "believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." Genesis 15:6 was probably not the specific time when Abraham became saved, because he was probably saved in Genesis 12, but Genesis 15:6 is the first clear verse that explicitly says Abraham believed God and that God reckoned it to him as righteousness. But even if we take Genesis 15:6 as the exact time Abraham became saved, it is clear that Abraham was saved well before Genesis 22—the chapter where Abraham was willing to offer up his son. In fact, when Abraham was declared righteous in Genesis 15:6, Isaac was not even born yet. The point is this: *Abraham was already saved before he offered up Isaac. So, then, James cannot be telling us that Abraham's salvation came about by offering Isaac.* This is a problem for those who say that Abraham's offering of Isaac in James 2:21 is when Abraham became saved.

This history helps us when we read James 2:21-23:

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God.

James' point is this—the faith Abraham already had in Genesis 15:6 was evidenced when he was willing to offer his son Isaac in Genesis 22. Because true saving faith is an obedient faith, Abraham obeyed God. His faith was "perfected" in the sense that his faith arrived at the perfect goal and reached its intended purpose. His faith ushered in good works. That is what saving faith does and that is the point James is trying to make. Abraham is also called the "friend of God."

As one Bible teacher has stated, “A friend of God is not one who talks about God but one who walks with God.”

Faith Evidenced by works (James 2:24)

Verse 24 states, “You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.” The proof, or “justification” for a person’s claim to salvation, is his works. As John Calvin said: “Faith alone justifies, but the faith which justifies is not alone.” Abraham was a man saved by faith, but since his faith was true saving faith it produced good works. Calvin, again, summarizes the issue well when he says:

For we dream neither of a faith devoid of good works nor of a justification that stands without them. This alone is of importance: having admitted that faith and good works must cleave together, we still lodge justification in faith, not in works.¹²

The Faith of Rahab (James 2:25-26)

The second illustration James uses involves Rahab the harlot. “And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?” James takes us back to Joshua 2 and the account of the two spies who entered Jericho and were hidden by Rahab the harlot. Rahab showed her faith by protecting the spies. Hebrews 11:31 states, “By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.” In a similar manner as Abraham, Rahab demonstrated her faith by her works. When she protected the two spies of Israel, she showed she was a believer in the one true God.

James concludes this section by stating: “For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead” (v. 26). Just as a body that does not have a spirit is a dead body, a faith that does not produce good works is a dead faith.

Summary of James 2:14-26

In summary, let us look at the clear statements James makes on this issue of faith and works:

—“What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him?” (James 2:14).

—“Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself” (James 2:17).

—“But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?” (James 2:20).

—“You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone” (James 2:24).

—“. . . faith without works is dead” (James 2:26).

James’ point is simple—true faith results in works. If a person has a faith that does not produce works, it is not saving faith no matter what they may claim.

C O N C L U S I O N

The Lordship salvation controversy is a serious matter. Though some have stated that the debate is simply an arguing over words and that both sides really believe the same thing with different emphases—this simply is not so. This issue is very serious and involves the most essential of all questions—What must a person believe to be saved?

As I examine the biblical issues at hand, I am convinced that the view known as lordship salvation is most in line with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Lordship salvation holds:

- 1) Salvation is by God's grace alone through faith alone; works do not contribute to salvation in any way.
- 2) Saving faith includes a willingness to submit to Jesus as Lord. This means not only believing that Jesus is God but also being willing to submit to Him as the sovereign Master.
- 3) Saving faith includes repentance from sin.
- 4) When a person is truly saved they will evidence it by a transformed life.

I appreciate those on the non-lordship side who are concerned for the purity of the Gospel, but we better make sure we keep the Gospel as pure as God gave it—not like we wished He had given it. I realize some people have confused the Gospel by adding works to faith, but that does not justify our trying to narrow what God has said. The same God who tells us that salvation is by faith alone also tells us that true saving faith includes a willingness to submit to His lordship. That is not adding works to faith. That is simply the kind of faith God requires for salvation. It is my prayer that Christians be faithful in presenting the glorious Gospel of God's grace.

APPENDIX

Dispensationalism and Lordship Salvation

Since key leaders of the non-lordship view, including Zane Hodges and Charles Ryrie, are dispensationalists, many have concluded that dispensationalism must lead to a non-lordship position. Though it is true that many who hold to a non-lordship view are dispensational, it is not true that dispensationalism necessarily leads to a non-lordship position.

The lordship debate deals primarily with salvation and sanctification issues. Dispensationalism, on the other hand, deals mostly with Church and end-times issues. The key distinctives of dispensationalism are simply 1) a literal-normal reading of all portions of Scripture, and 2) the biblical distinction between Israel and the Church. Neither of these two distinctives must lead a person to the non-lordship view. In fact, many dispensationalists, myself included, do not hold the non-lordship side. Thus, the claim that dispensationalism leads to a non-lordship position is simply not true.

NOTES

1. Charles H. Spurgeon, "The Royal Saviour," *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, 1910, p. 617.
2. Zane Hodges, *Absolutely Free!* (Dallas: Redencion Viva, 1989), p. 20.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
5. John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Panorama City: Word of Grace, 1988), Preface, p. xiii.
6. Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation* (Chicago: Moody, reprint 1997), p. 96.
7. Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1965), vol. 3, p. 1045.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 1046-1047.
9. Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), vol. 2, p. 510.
10. See Ryrie, *So Great Salvation*, pp. 81-90.
11. The term "restore" in the NASB is the same word translated "save" in James 1:21; 2:14; 4:12; and 5:20.
12. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press) Book III, v. XX, p. 798.

Other Books by Gil Rugh

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