

What About ... *salvation by Faith and judgment by works?*

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Just before the last pope came to America, I was thumbing through the TV channels, with the hope of finding some news, and happened upon a discussion where a moderator was asking if the Catholics and the Protestants would ever get back together. On the panel was a Roman Catholic priest, the president of a Baptist seminary, an evangelical pastor, and a Catholic monk. I know this sounds like the intro line of a bad joke, and no, they didn't just walk into a bar (after all, one of them was a Baptist). Where was I? Oh yeah, anyway, this was an actual discussion.

After the moderator asked the question, the evangelical pastor did a good job of giving the Gospel. Then the priest babbled on with some liberal nonsense about us all being God's children. I don't think he even understood the question. Next, the president of the Baptist Seminary got to the most basic issue, and said (quoted to the best of my recollection), "I don't see how it is possible for the Catholics and Protestants to get back together because we have a fundamental disagreement about the nature of salvation. Protestants believe a person is saved by grace through faith alone without any works. The Catholics believe salvation is based upon faith plus works. I don't think there is any way to reconcile those two fundamentals."

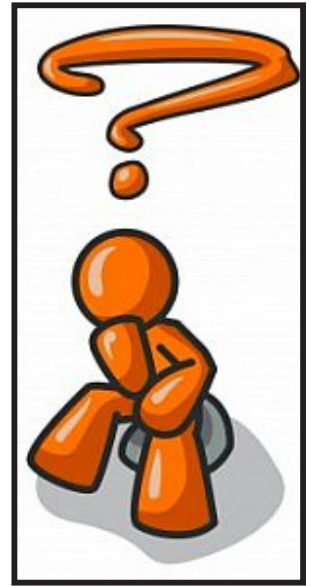
The moderator then asked the Catholic monk what he thought about that. Now, the monk was a right sharp guy. He understood the question, he understood the Baptist president's response, and he went to the Scripture, rather than church tradition, for his answer. He said (again, to my best recollection), "In Matthew 25, Jesus tells us about the separation of the sheep from the goats. And that separation is based on works. Those who went into God's kingdom were the ones who did good works. So we believe salvation is based upon faith plus works."

It was an excellent answer. The moderator went on to other questions, and no one returned to respond to the monk. So I'd like to respond. The monk was absolutely right about Matthew 25. The separation of the sheep from the goats is all about works. There is no faith mentioned in Matthew 25. What he missed is the context. Matthew 25 is about judgment, not salvation.

**Whenever the Bible talks about salvation,
it is always about faith, not works.
Whenever the Bible talks about judgment,
it is always about works, not faith.**

Here are a few passages where the Bible talks about salvation. Notice—all faith, no works.

- John 1:12, *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.*
- John 3:16, *For God so loved the world, that He gave*



His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

- John 5:24, *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life.*
- Acts 16:31, *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.*
- Ephesians 2:8-9, *For by grace you have been saved through faith...not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Here are a few passages where the Bible talks about judgment. Notice—all works, no faith.

- Matthew 7:2, *In the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.*
- Matthew 25:46, *These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*
- 2 Corinthians 5:10, *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*
- 1 Corinthians 3: 14-15, *If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss.*
- Revelation 20:12, *the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.*

Conclusion: Salvation is always by grace through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, not works. Judgment is always based upon works done in the flesh, not faith.

[I really wish I could have talked to that monk.]