

not a faith of works

"whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."  
rom 3:25

generally speaking, there are only two methods of salvation in all the religions of the world: grace or works. christianity is a religion of salvation by grace alone: "for by grace through faith you have been saved, not of works..." eph 2:8-9

all other systems rely totally or in part on the works of the believer to merit salvation. mormons, for example, say that you are saved by grace through faith after all you can do. they have their two year stint where they are required to go out and evangelize as much as possible.

in english, the noun usually comes first, but in hebrew the verb comes first. in genesis 22:3, the english reads, "abraham rose early in the morning," but in hebrew, "early rose abraham." in english, "he took two of his youths and isaac his son," in hebrew, "took he two of his youths;" the action first, then the noun. why? because the old covenant was interpreted as being about works. the new covenant is people before works. it's about a relationship and not deeds done. they were bound to the law that grace only has covered. that's why our Lord witnessed to the dead as was stated

in 1 peter 3:19.

some divisions of christianity still maintain a faith of works. in roman catholicism, God's grace is infused into a believer that enables him to do good works by which he is judged for salvation. martin luther's treaty "by grace alone" has failed to dissuade many.

in islam, forgiveness is based on a combination of allah's grace and the muslim's works. on the day of judgment, if a muslim's good works outweigh his bad ones and if allah so wills it, he may be forgiven of all his sins and then enter into paradise. therefore, islam is a religion of salvation by works because it combines man's works with allah's grace.

"not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." titus 3:5 this verse clearly shows us there is NOTHING we can do to earn our salvation.

how true was our Lord's last utterance from the cross: "it is finished." john 19:30 that's means there are no "works" left to be done. the only "work" we have to do is believe and receive. grace has done what no man can do. proof of that is when our Lord told the thief on the adjacent cross that he would be with Him in paradise. the only good work the thief had time to do was confess Jesus as Lord.

how then can one explain the book of james? "but do you want to know, o foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" james 2:20 our "works" are merely an

indicator of our salvation - not a requirement. the genuineness of our faith causes a conversion of heart that compels us to please our Lord, and sorrows us when we fall short. and when we fall short (as all of us will) grace brings forgiveness with a simple repentance.

"for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." eph 2:10 these "works" are of God and for God; accomplished only through God. they are the beautiful wedding garments that He has prepared for our wedding gown. "and to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." rev 19:8

yes, He shall remove the filthy garments of sin from us and dress us in robes of righteousness. will it be a robe of many colors as joseph's was? i believe it will have spectrums of color we cannot even imagine.