

THE SIN OF EMBRACING DENOMINATIONALISM

Paul summarized the twofold plan of salvation in Ephesians 2:8-9: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”* Notice that “grace” sums up God’s redemptive activity in making ways for people to be saved. “Faith” in this passage refers to the response we human beings are to make without thinking we are earning our salvation or in some way making God’s contribution to the salvation process. “Grace” includes all God has done on our behalf and “faith” includes all man is to do in response to God’s grace so that man can receive the offer of salvation in Christ. At Romans 5:1-2 says, *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”*

Anytime the New Testament speaks of being saved “by faith,” it is referring to a faith that includes whatever action God specifies as necessary. This is made clear in James 2:22: *“Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?”* Notice his concluding remarks in James 2: 24, 26: *You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”*

These statements harmonize with many other passages, which place the responsibility of human beings to appropriate God’s grace and spiritual blessings by obedience to prerequisites stipulated by God.