

“WE THE PEOPLE” OF GOD, #4

INTRODUCTION

For the past few weeks, we have emphasized certain things that characterize those who are “people of God.” We have considered (1) The ONE church Jesus built, and (2) WORSHIP in that one church. This lesson will bring the series to a close by looking at God's **plan of salvation**, or the way to get **into** the body or church of the Lord.

Now let's study the plan of salvation, or the way to get into the Lord's church. We shall divide the study into 2 parts: (1) **NOT BY** (discussing the things that will **not** save, and (2) **BUT BY—contrasting NOT BY** with **BUT BY** (what **does** save). A passage that illustrates this is found in Tit. 3:5.

Tit. 3:5. “**Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.**”

DISCUSSION

I. FIRST, SOME THINGS THAT DO NOT SAVE.

A. We are NOT saved by “FAITH ONLY.”

James 2:24. “**Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.**” (Explain context and principle)

1. Faith only is fruitless. Jas. 2:14-16
2. Faith only is dead. vs. 17, 20, 26
3. Faith only characterizes demons. v. 19
4. Examples of Abraham and Rahab. vs. 21-25

B. We are NOT saved by OUR OWN WORKS.

1. Tit. 3:5 shows this to be the case (Read and point out “not by” and “but by”).
2. The term “our own” indicates **anything** that originates in our own minds as uninspired human beings, that **we** choose to do, rather than what God has revealed.
 1. The Scribes and Pharisees taught “their own” way to God and did not even conform to the Law of Moses. Matt. 23:1-2; 5:20
 2. Many in Israel sought “their own” righteousness instead of God's. Rom. 10:1-2

C. We are NOT saved by the LAW OF MOSES.

Gal. 2:16. “**Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh shall no flesh be justified.**”

1. Note the “not by” language of this passage.
2. The law was a “good” law from God. Rom. 7:12
3. As a law, it had no power to save from sin. vs. 8, 11; Gal. 3:21
4. The Law was added **to** God's promise to keep the Jews in bound until Christ was to come. Gal. 3:19

D. We are not saved by ANIMAL BLOOD.

Heb. 10:4. “**For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.**”

1. The law with its sacrifices merely **foreshadowed** Jesus' sacrifice. vs. 1-3
2. Each year their offerings merely reminded them of their guilt.

E. We are not saved by BOASTFUL WORKS.

Eph. 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 boast."

1. The Pharisee "boasted" of his good life, but in vain. Luke 18:9-15
2. No one could ever truthfully boast that he could keep the law perfectly.
3. Some will "boast" (in vain) of their good works in the day of judgment.
Matt. 7:21-23

II. SECOND, IN CONTRAST, SOME THINGS THAT DO SAVE.

A. We are not saved by "faith only", but by an OBEDIENT FAITH.

1. The book of Romans opens and closes with the importance of an obedient faith. See Rom. 1:5 and Rom. 16:26.
2. In the middle of the book, "obedience" is described. 6:17,18

B. We are not saved by our own righteousness, but by GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1. Israel was lost because they were ignorant of God's plan for making man righteous.
2. God's plan is revealed through the **gospel**.

Rom. 1:16-17. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

1. The gospel is the "good news" of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. 1 Cor. 15:1-4
2. The gospel is obeyed when believers die to sin, are buried in baptism and raised to a new life. Rom. 6:3-5
3. This state of "righteousness" is "revealed" in the gospel.

C. We are not saved by the old covenant, but by the NEW COVENANT.

Heb. 10:16-17. "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them. And their sins and iniquities will remember no more."

1. The new law redeems from the curse of the old law. Gal. 3:13
2. The new covenant (the law of faith) replaces the old covenant. Gal. 3:22-27 (Read and explain).

D. We are not saved by animal blood, but by the BLOOD OF CHRIST.

Matt. 26:28. “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

1. Explain the occasion and context and significance of this passage.
2. Animal blood was to the purifying of the flesh, while Jesus' blood is to purify the soul. Heb. 9:13-14
3. Jesus' blood redeems the faithful in both dispensations. Heb. 9:15-17

E. We are not saved by boastful works, but by the WORKS OF GOD.

Eph. 2:8-10. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of your-selves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

1. Salvation is **not** by any boastful work of man, but we are of **His** “workmanship.”
2. Believing itself is the work of God, for He commands it. John 6:28-29
3. Repentance is done by man, but it is the working of God, for He commands it. Acts 17:30
4. Baptism is done by man's consent, but it is the working of God, for He commands it through Jesus Christ. Acts 2:38; 10:48
5. Paul calls it the “operation of God” in Col. 2:12, KJV

The *New International Version*, though known for it's liberal tendencies, makes this working of God very clear. Here is a quote from the NIV on Col. 2:11-13.

“**11** In union with him you were circumcised, not with the circumcision that is made by men, but with Christ's own circumcision, which consists of being freed from the power of this sinful body. **12** For **when** you were **baptized**, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ through your faith in the **active power of God**, who raised him from death. **13** You were at one time spiritually dead because of your sins, and because you were Gentiles outside the law. But God has now brought you to life with Christ! God **forgave** us all our sins.”

CONCLUSION

- I. In Review, we find that salvation is **NOT BY** faith only, our own works, the law of Moses, animal blood or boastful works, **BUT BY** an obedient faith, the righteousness of God, the new covenant, the blood of Christ and the working of God.
- II. God's working is still available today to wash away our sins in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - A. The “what” that washes away our sins is the **blood**. Rev. 1:5
 - B. The “when” this is done is in **baptism** in water. Acts 22:16
 - C. “When” one is “baptized”, he enters the church in a state of salvation. 1 Cor.12:13; Acts 2:40, 41, 47
 - D. Won't you let it work in your life today?