

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

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WHEN GOD SAYS "NO"

Deut.. 3:25-27

Our lesson opens on one of the saddest scenes described in the bible. Moses had led the people of God for 40 years in hope of reaching the promise land. The way had not been easy. The people often rebelled, complained, and were difficult to get along with. During the journey, when they needed water, God told Moses to speak to the rock. In the process of so doing Moses failed to sanctify God before the people he said "...hear now ye rebels, must we bring water for you out of this rock?" God then told him "because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." It may be that Moses thought God would reverse his decision. But our text forever negates that idea. When God says "no" he means it.

I. God Says "No" To Anyone Who Goes Against His Will.

He could not be just if He said "yes" to those who fail to surrender to Him. A strong wind can help only if we walk in the direction it is blowing. The same is true with God. Regarding Uzzah it is said: "As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper...God helped him against the Philistines and the Arabians 2Chron.26:5,7. In 2Chron. 18:4 we read "Inquire I pray thee, at the word of the Lord today." We cannot expect the sanction of the almighty unless we walk in the direction he is going. He never says "yes" or "no" by mistake. (parents often say "no" but by actions prove they really did not mean it.) Not so with God. The Bible is filled with examples of God saying "No" to man, thus clarifying matters of right and wrong. Explaining the difference between what is acceptable and what is not.

A. The tower of Babel---Gen. 11.

We learn that the whole of mankind was of one language and speech. They proposed to build a tower "whose head or top was in the heavens or skies." The idea was to build a tower that was very tall. The "why" of the tower has been the object of much speculation. One important issue that must not be overlooked was that the tower would tend to hold them together. The very nature of his height would bring them back to it as they wandered about. Hence the Lord came down (figurative) and confounded their language. The result was with the diversity of language they began to separate, each tribe holding with those who spoke their own dialect. Thus the divine purpose of occupying the world was carried into effect, while the project of this ambitious knot of men to hold mankind together was frustrated, and the building of their tower ceased. God said "no".

B. Pharaoh and the Egyptians---Ex. 14:27.

After a number of plagues the king of Egypt was finally brought to his knees and he agreed for the Children of Israel to leave. The Egyptian army at his command, however, followed in hot pursuit. The idea was to follow and capture.

When they came to the Red Sea, Moses stretched forth his rod and the waters parted. The Israelites marched through on dry ground. The Egyptians proceeded to follow. God said "No," and the wall of water collapsed, drowning them all.

C. The Apostle Paul---2Cor.12:7-10.

Paul's "thorn in the flesh" has been the subject of much speculation. The "ideas" of man include: headache, epilepsy, malarial fever, fleshly temptation, infirmities of the mind, eye problems etc. What the thorn was, is really not important. What is, is the fact that Paul "three times" asked the Lord to remove it, and each time God said "No." Each time assuring Paul "my grace is sufficient for thee." Here is the real test. This is what determines whether we can take "No" for an answer.

II. Can You Take "No" For An Answer?

Are you willing to know that God knows best? Jere. 10:23 "Oh Lord I know the way of man is not in himself..." "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man..." Prov. 16:25 Are you willing to accept the fact that God may say "no"?

III. Do You Recognize When God Says "No"?

A. God says "no" to some prayers.

James 4:3 "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your own lusts." Prov. 28:9 "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law of the Lord..." James 5:16 "The effectual fervent prayer of a..." 1Jno. 5:14 "This is the confidence that we have in him that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." From the above it is evident that before God will say "yes" to our prayers, we must say "yes" to His will. But what about when we pray for a sick person and they fail to recover? What about personal desires that we feel are good? What about our prayers for our lost relatives or children? Does God say "No" to these prayers, and if so why? We as humans see only half the picture. God knows best. What we want or feel may be best, may not always be, hence, we must accept the decree of God in the matter.

B. God says "no" to those who try to serve two masters.

Such a practice can never work. The very nature of such a course runs counter to intelligent thinking. Since the "masters" think differently, then their followers will also. Mt.6:24 "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." (riches) Mt. 12:30 "He that is not with me is against me..." We either serve God or someone or something else. We cannot faithfully serve God and at the same time try and give our allegiance to another. Who is on the Lord's side? For whom do you work and fight? We cannot serve the devil six days a week and the Lord on Sunday.

C. God says "no" to those who try to be saved outside the church.

Some seek salvation based on morality, honesty, sincerity, good deeds etc. The Lord saves the church according to Eph. 5:27 "For as the husband is the head of the wife, even so Christ is the head of the church and the..." Christ saves the body but the body is the church Eph. 1:22-23 and Col. 1:18, hence He saves the church. The saved are added to the church Acts 2:47. Being "saved" and being "added to the church" take place in the same action: Acts 2:37-47. One is not saved at one time and then joins a church at some other time. When you are saved the Lord will add you to His church. To be in Christ is to be in His church 2Cor. 5:17. Salvation cannot take place outside of Christ--must be in Christ--2Cor. 5:17 Salvation cannot take place outside the family of God--1Tim. 3:15 Hence salvation cannot take place outside the church. God says "no" to those who try to find it there.

D. God says "no" to those who seek salvation based upon "faith only."

Faith without works is dead being alone James 2:14-20. If you have a bible faith, an obedient faith, you will have works. This does not mean that you "earn" your salvation, but that you are willing to perform "works of obedience" in order to be saved

Only faith can move a person to believe the truth about Jesus

Only faith can empower a person to repent of his sins

Only faith can prompt a person to make a public confession of Jesus Christ

Only faith can lead a person into waters of baptism to be baptized into Christ

Only faith can spur a person to live a life of holiness, faithfulness, and fruitfulness.

All these are an extension of faith. The faith that saves is the faith that obeys.

The act of only believing keeps one from completing his obedience to the gospel.

Acts 2:38, Rom. 6:3-4, Gal.3:36-27, Rom. 6:17-18. Today if you believe but have not "obeyed the gospel" your faith by itself will not save you.

E. God says "no" to those who preach the Eternal Security of the believer.

1Cor.10:12 "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed..." Gal.5:4 "...you who attempt to be justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace..." John 15:6 "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned." These passages all prove that it is possible for one who has been saved to turn again and be lost. When we came to Christ, we exercised our "free will" in coming to Him. We did not lose the power of choice at that time, we retained it. If we could choose to be saved upon the terms of the gospel, we can also choose to cease walking with the Lord and thus be lost. This doctrine of "eternal security" or "once saved, always saved" is not new. It was taught by the devil in the garden of Eden. Remember he told Eve that she "would not surely die." God had told her that if she ate of the forbidden fruit, she would. She believed the devil, she ate, and she paid the penalty. So will all who buy the idea that they can never be lost after once being saved. It is the teaching of Satan, not God