



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved
WORLD!

(#78)

Good News – God's actions give meaning to ours.


The GOOD NEWS COMMANDS

(Directly stated or implied.)

Here, we focus on the question:
⇒ "What must I do to be saved?"
as well as any related issues.

Our attention is on the **ACTIONS** that are built on the **FACT FOUNDATION**.

Also the causes and results of those actions.



These things fall into 3 categories...



#1 Conviction
#2 Change
#3 Consequences

PLUS an awareness of:
God's actions...

... so that no one can boast.
Ephesians 2:9b (CSB)

These things are interrelated.
In salvation, they all occur.

YES! SCRIPTURE SAYS THAT OUR ACTIONS HAVE A DIRECT CONNECTION TO SALVATION.

☀️ But without an awareness of what GOD does, we could easily reach false conclusions. ☀️

EVEN THE "SAVE YOURSELF" SCRIPTURE PASSAGES point to our responsibility without denying God's role in salvation.

Peter said ... "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."
Acts 2:40 (GW)

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EXAMPLES: Two "save yourself" Scripture passages:

Example #1

Peter said ... "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."
Acts 2:40 (GW)

The immediate context focuses on human responsibility:
The people asked a question: "What should **we** do?" (v. 37)
Peter's answer: "Repent and be baptized." (vs. 38)

But previous verses also include sovereignty.

This man [Jesus] was handed over to you by **God's** set purpose and foreknowledge; and **you**, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.
Acts 2:23 (NIV)

Example #2

... if you do [these things], you will **save both yourself and your hearers.**
1 Tim. 4:16b (NIV)

Context: Instructions to Timothy, regarding his ministry.
"Be careful about how you live and what you teach" – verse 16a.

Sovereignty verses? No significant "sovereignty" statements are in the immediate context of this verse.

At other times, Paul did mention sovereignty to Timothy – as we see in this passage from 2 Timothy:

[God] has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.
2 Tim. 1:9 (NIV)

"Save yourself" passages aren't a denial of sovereignty!
 They have the same significance as any other passage that focuses on responsibility.

RESPONSIBILITY EXAMPLES:

The need for OBEDIENCE – Related to "the faith" (the Bible's teaching) and "faith" (the act of "believing" the Good News).

- ... a large number of priests became **obedient** to the faith. Acts 6:7b (NIV)
- ... the **obedience** of faith ... Romans 1:5b (CSB)

The need for DEEDS / WORKS – Certain types of conduct will be present, if genuine repentance is present.

- [They should] prove their repentance by their deeds. Acts 26:20b (NIV)

SCRIPTURE doesn't have to mention both concepts, every time it mentions one of them!

BACK THEN... They recognized these as two separate issues that in no way contradicted.
 So, it didn't matter if they mentioned one or both of them within a context!

WE may need to mention both!

TODAY... We are normally taught that the two concepts contradict each other.
 Placing them side-by-side can be a reminder that they don't contradict.

An awareness of: **God's actions** (The "sovereignty" issue.)

This will help us maintain the right attitude when we ask the question: ⇒ "What must I do to be saved?"

- It doesn't cancel our RESPONSIBILITY.
- But it reinforces the right ATTITUDE we should have toward our actions and toward what God does.

... so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:9b (CSB)


Our knowledge about how God works is limited.

- ✓ We are **created** beings and cannot fully comprehend what is uncreated.
- ✓ We are **sinners** – and that distorts our perception of what we can know.

★ **We can accept what God has revealed to us.**
 The **secret things** belong to the Lord our God, but the **things revealed** belong to us and to our children forever... Deut. 29:29a (NIV)

★ **With humble hearts, we can leave the rest to him!**

My heart is not proud, O Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. Psalm 131:1 (NIV)



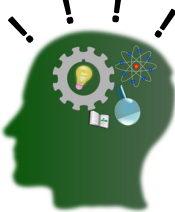
➤ **We KNOW from Scripture that we must act.**
 ➤ **We also KNOW that God is at work in us!**

For **God is working in you**, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him. Philip. 2:13 (NLT)

He even had plans for us before time and space came into existence!

Before the creation of the world, he chose us through Christ to be holy and perfect in his presence. Ephes. 1:4 (GW)

WHAT GOD DOES ⇒ gives significance, meaning and value to ⇒ WHAT WE DO!



SOME OF THE "GOD-AT-WORK" CONCEPTS WE FIND IN SCRIPTURE ARE:


- ✓ Grace.
- ✓ Being "called" or "chosen."
- ✓ Eyes/ears opened.
- ✓ [And more.]

"Logically" – These matters occur before our actions.
 But they occur in the mind of God, "outside" the realm of time.

"Time-wise" (or "Chronologically") – We CAN'T "merge" them into the time sequence of our actions.

At 12:47 pm, God opened my eyes...
 At 12:48 pm, I repented of my sin...
 At 12:49 pm, I trusted Jesus [ETC.]

NO!



WHAT GOD DOES:

GRACE God's **UNDESERVED KINDNESS (or FAVOR)**

- ✓ We are rebels against the King of Kings. We deserve *nothing* except condemnation.
- ✓ Judgment *must* come... but God offers to provide a substitute to take the punishment we deserve... JESUS!

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus, ...
Romans 8:1 (CSB)

Because of God's grace (kindness), we can be saved, and once we are saved, we can do his will.
> And it's all because of God!

Verses in Acts about God's GRACE:

The Good News (gospel) is about grace.

- the message of his **grace** ... Acts 14:3b (CSB)
- ... the gospel of God's **grace**. Acts 20:24b (CSB)
- ... the word [message] of his **grace**. Acts 20:32b (CSB)

Grace is the reason we can be saved.

- ... those who by **grace** had believed. Acts 18:27b (NIV)
- ... we are saved through the **grace** of the Lord Jesus... Acts 15:11(CSB)

Grace is the context or "environment" in which a saved person lives.

- ... urging [the converts] to continue in the **grace** of God. Acts 13:43b (CSB)

Grace, if present, will result in evidence of a changed life.

[He] saw the evidence of the **grace** of God, ...
Acts 11:23b (NIV)

Grace is the reason we have **power** to do God's will.

... great **grace** was on all of them.
Acts 4:33 (CSB)

Stephen, a man full of God's **grace** and power, ...
Acts 6:8a (NLT)

Grace provides the **circumstances** for doing God's will.

... the believers ... entrusting [Paul and Silas] to the Lord's **grace**.
Acts 15:40b (NLT)

... Antioch... where they had been committed to the **grace** of God for the work they had now completed.
Acts 14:26b (NLT)

WHAT GOD DOES:

CALLING or CHOOSING **Before we had any intention to follow Jesus, God already had plans for us!**

The context will determine how the words are used. For instance, "calling" may refer to the "opportunity" to be saved (whether or not we accept it), or it could refer to the "accomplished" salvation (for those who do accept it).

- ✓ Just as Jesus told his disciples... ... I have **chosen** you out of the world.
John 15:19b (NIV)

If you are saved, God planned everything that would lead up to your salvation!
> It wasn't because you were better than other people!

[God] has saved us and **called** us to a holy life--*not because of anything we have done* but because of his own purpose and grace.
2 Tim. 1:9a (NIV)

Verses in Acts about God's CALLING/CHOOSING:

God calls people to salvation – both Jew and Gentile.

"The promise [of salvation] is for ... all whom the Lord our God will **call**."
Acts 2:39 (NIV)

Same concept, though using a different word:

... all who were **appointed** to eternal life became believers.
Acts 13:48b (NLT)

God called the apostles to testify about him.

... the apostles, whom he had **chosen**.
Acts 1:2b (GW)

[Ananias to Paul:] "The God of our fathers has **chosen** you ..."
Acts 22:14b (NIV); see also 9:15.

... us whom God had **chosen** beforehand to be his witnesses.
Acts 10:41b (NLT)

God called specific people to do specific things and to go to specific places.

- ... the Holy Spirit said, ... "I want [Barnabas and Saul] to do the work for which I **called** them."
Acts 13:2b (GW)
- [Peter said] "... God **chose** me ... to preach to the Gentiles..."
Acts 15:7b (NLT)
- ... God had **called** us to tell the people of Macedonia about the Good News.
Acts 16:10b (GW)

Ultimately, down through the years, all these "God-guided events" led up to YOUR salvation!

NOTE: Scripture also uses the "calling" concept to describe the response that **people** must make.

"And everyone who **calls** on the name of the Lord will be saved."
Acts 2:21 (NIV)

WHAT GOD DOES:

OPENED EYES/EARS; ENLIGHTENED; ETC.

Concepts that contrast seeing and blindness, light and darkness, hearing and deafness – all describing how God enabled us to **recognize the Good News and respond to it!**

The concepts may be used figuratively, to describe "spiritual" hearing and seeing. Or, actual physical handicaps may illustrate these spiritual issues.

The god of this world has **blinded** the minds of those who don't believe. As a result, they **don't see the light** of the Good News about Christ's glory.
2 Cor. 4:4a (GW)

*All these concepts describe our inability and helplessness.
> ... until **God changes the situation!***

Verses in Acts about God ENABLING PEOPLE TO RECOGNIZE the Good News:

God accomplishes this through people who share the Good News.

"I am sending you to them to **open** their eyes and turn them from **darkness to light**, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me."
Acts 26:17b-18 (NIV)

An example of people who were "closed" to the truth.

"For this people's **heart** has become **calloused**; they **hardly hear** with their ears, and they have **closed** their eyes. Otherwise they might **see** with their eyes, **hear** with their ears, **understand** with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them."
Acts 28:27 (NIV)

[By their actions, they were fulfilling prophecy.]

A heart "opened" to the truth.

... the Lord **opened** [Lydia's] **heart**, and she accepted what Paul was saying.
Acts 16:14b (NLT)

Similar concepts are found throughout the New Testament.

Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, in order that those who **do not see** will **see** and those who **do see** will become **blind**."
John 9:39 (CSB)

For you were once **darkness**, but now you are **light** in the Lord. Live as children of **light**...
Ephes. 5:8 (NIV)

"He who belongs to God **hears** what God says. The reason you **do not hear** is that you do not belong to God."
John 8:47 (NIV)

OTHER CONCEPTS ALSO EXIST (NOT FOUND IN ACTS):

EXAMPLE: BORN AGAIN, NEW BIRTH, etc. God gives life to someone who is spiritually dead.

Of the Spirit.

"You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be **born again**.' ... **born of the Spirit**."
John 3:7, 8b (NIV)

By means of God's Word.

By his own choice, he gave us **birth** by the word of truth ...
James 1:18a (CSB); see also 1 Peter 1:23.

EXAMPLE: MERCY God's compassion for the helpless.

Our "good deeds" weren't good enough.

He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his **mercy**.
Titus 3:5a (NLT)

This week's MISSION!

When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.
Romans 5:6 (NLT)

REJOICE (AND BOAST) IN GOD, who gives meaning to our efforts!

LET'S TAKE SERIOUSLY: OUR responsibility... but also GOD's sovereignty.
So we will have the right attitude.

For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need.
Philip. 4:13 (NLT)

Where, then, is **boasting**? It is **excluded**.
Romans 3:27a (CSB)

He did not have to do ANYTHING.
He could have left us in our hopeless situation.

Credits

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