

No Manner of Work

(Lev. 23:23-32)

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Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

A. Introduction ó Announce text and title

B. Text and Associated Scripture Review w/ commentary:

1. Read Lev. 23:23-32
 - a. Annual day of atonement
 - b. Refer to Lev. 16 ó scapegoat, high priest
2. To reinforce how this typifies Christ ó
Read Heb. 9:7-15

C. No manner of works:

1. Discussion of Grace vs. Works ó repentance from dead works. This is perhaps the most encompassing distinction between the true and the false, the broad and the narrow ways ó for it allows nothing to rival Christ's righteousness ó his finished work. Scripture is abundant and clear that salvation is not by works. To just quote one of the many scriptures, 2 Tim 1:9 reads: "**<God>, *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began...***"
 - a. Read Rom 11:5-6
 - b. I appeal to you to not take this distinction lightly ó consider seriously
 - (1) Consider those who seem to suggest that they ðalways believed grace.ö
 - (2) We all start out on the road that leads to destruction, presuming to believe grace ó but repentance is necessary and it is this erroneous, God dishonoring presumption of which we are called to repent. So ó answer this: Can you distinguish or identify a time when your body of doctrine opposed grace?
 - (3) Grace (which sets forth how all of salvation is conditioned on Christ alone) is mutually exclusive with any manner of works (i.e. ó to the notion that salvation is conditioned on the sinner in any way or to any degree). Anything done by, in, through, (or based upon any distinction found within) you is indeed a manner of works ó and God will not have it!

D. 4 Characterizations of Religious thought: ó all falling in within 2 Subsets of religion ó (1) the religion of grace or (2) the religion of works. As some of you may recognize, these categories were related to us many years ago by our former pastor, Bill Parker, but I think it bears reviewing today. Perhaps it will be helpful again to see a few of the many ways sinners are blinded to their own participation in the religion of works. Remember, as we read in Romans 11, if there is any element of works ó then it is not the religion of grace but rather the religion of works and so it is worth our examination to insure that is not the case with us.

1. Work of Man for God ó (Scales example)

- a. Blatant example of the religion of works ó Many believe God is gracious to allow them to work, but make no pretense that their salvation is a product of the work of their hand. Consider how judgment involves weighing or measuring something against a standard. The problem (to use the scriptural reference) is that man at his best is weighed in the balance and found wanting. Many picture that they will be judged much like the picture of lady justice with a scale weighing the good and the bad. The problem lies in our natural ignorance of the standard on the other side of the scale.
- b. In Acts 17:31 we are given that standard (quote verse). There we see that all are judged by the perfect righteousness of Christ. This why (as Acts 17:30 tells us) God calls on men everywhere to repent. That, (His righteousness ó the merit of His finished work) alone demands liberty and life.
- c. As alluded to earlier, in Danl. 5, Belshazzar saw the handwriting from God on the wall as Daniel related to him how he had not humbled (or ðafflicted his soul) in denying himself). The scripture interprets this writing for us as reading: ***“Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.”*** So it is with any who dare to approach God based upon their own merit.

2. Work of Man With God: - (Universal notions)

- a. Remember, there is no mixing of grace with works. Remember again Rom 11:5-6 where we are taught that if an element of works can be found, then it is no more grace. No manner of work shall rival the blood offering of Christ, our high priest.
- b. Some whose thoughts are depicted by this category imagine that God merely makes us savable. This is often exemplified by those who cling to universal notions of Christ's work. Make no mistake, if Christ died for everyone, then the deciding factor / determining factor then lies with the sinner ó not Christ ó and that is the religion of works.

3. Work of God with Man (The more subtle)

- a. Tunnel of Time ó Here men might imagine that man meets a prerequisite ó that is that God does all the work of establishing and even imputing righteousness to the sinner so that He might be justified, but God chose to so bless those because of some qualification or goodness God foresaw ó i.e., God's foreknowledge of some merit seen in the man.

(1) Well, our all-knowing God does look down and here's what He sees: Read Psa. 53:2-3.

(2) You see, God doesn't choose sinners unto salvation because He knows they will choose Him. The only ones who will ever choose to rest in Christ alone were those whom He chose and brings to Himself. Read Psa. 65:4.

- b. 2ndly ó God, through Christ, met the prerequisite ó and men call their way of salvation to be one of ðgraceö even though their remains work to be done according to their doctrine ó a completion of what Christ made possible. For those who fall under this category, they typically make much ado of claiming to credit God / Jesus Christ with all of salvation. Yet they conclude His work on the cross did not accomplish redemption fully ó it did not get the job done.

(Be turning to Colossians 1)

They twist passages dealing with the marvelous work of the Holy Spirit in the sinner that would cause us to forsake all manner of work and look to Christ alone as the author and finisher of our faith. And instead they point sinners to look for a righteousness within themselves (but they'll claim it is His, not their own ó but His, but still this perfect nature or righteousness within is unable to overcome their remaining sin nature so as to produce any perfect work.

No ó Don't profane the perfect righteousness by which I stand holy before God by suggesting that His very divine nature cannot overcome my sin. Read Col 1:19-22.

- c. 3rdly ó They credit themselves merely with the procurement of it:
There is still another way (among many ways) that men manage to cling to the notion that there remains some work to be done by the sinner in order to be saved, in addition to that righteousness.

They can conclude that ðrighteousnessö (as they define it) was indeed established by Christ alone (and so conclude that makes it ðgraceö), but yet still imagine that some other condition is left for you to acquire or procure it. I know some have been misled that way by statements such as, ðGod can't do the believing for you.ö

If we imagine that the procurement of that which Christ alone established for sinners is by the hand, or work of man, then we sadly misunderstand the extent of the accomplishment. Righteousness demands life so all of salvation (all grace here and all glory hereafter) was purchased for the elect at the cross of Calvary. So look there and no where else ó to the High Priest who offered the perfect sacrifice of Himself to put away all of the sins of His people!

d. Summary of 3 categories describing works religion:

Each of these characterize those who imagine that salvation, at some stage is still conditioned on that which takes place in, by or through the sinner. And that makes it a manner of work. And if so, it's not grace ó and it's not God's way of salvation. No matter how subtle the injection of our hand into salvation may seem, know that God will not share His glory. Christ will have no rival!

4. Work of God for Man ó Grace! (Salvation's conditions being met by Christ alone):

As our souls are ðafflictedö under the sound of the Gospel, we see that not only was perfect satisfaction (righteousness) accomplished by Christ alone, but we must see that this, His finished work, is the only causal element in a sinner's salvation.

There are other elements: Our regeneration, our conversion, our belief, our final glory ó but they are all the fruit and effect of what Christ accomplished. And in the true religion of grace, we're brought to repent of ever having assumed that any of these things possessed some merit or play any causal role in our being eternally blessed and accepted by God. No manner of work!

E. Conclusion:

Just as God commanded national Israel, may your ðsouls be afflicted.ö Or as Jesus told His disciples, may you deny yourself and take up the cross and follow Him. And to do that is not a work of merit but rather it's a forsaking of salvation by work. It is to celebrate our Sabbath of rest ó the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even today, I pray God might through His word bring someone to repentance ó that they might forego and forsake all manner of work by looking to Christ and His shed blood alone for all of their salvation. No manner of work!

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself ó the Bible.