

Arlington Church of Christ

Wednesday Bible Study

Will All Good People Be Saved?

Following the Scriptural Trail



The question often comes up about 'good people' in other 'churches'. Many people cannot conceive of God not saving a person who does good things and calls him 'Lord'. In fact this has caused some Christians to join in 'fellowship' with denominations in doing 'good works' and in the process has lead many away from the true teachings of the Bible – seeing the church as 'just another denomination.'

There is no question that there are morally good people in various denominations, and there is no question that they do many good works, even giving Jesus credit for them. But this is not the issue. **The Bible teaches that being 'good' and doing 'wonderful works' will not save us. It is only by obeying the gospel, the teachings of God, the 'will of God' – doing things according to the way he said they are to be done – that will save them.**

John 12:47-50 “If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁴⁸ There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. ⁴⁹ For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. ⁵⁰ I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

What we will be ‘judged’ by is not what good works we have done to ‘earn’ heaven – but rather by whether we followed the words of the scriptures !

Matthew 7:21-23

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

Doing ‘good deeds’, even miracles in the name of Jesus will not get us into heaven – what is needed is doing the will of God – obeying what He says !

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

We are are separated from God by sin:

Isaiah 59:1-2 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

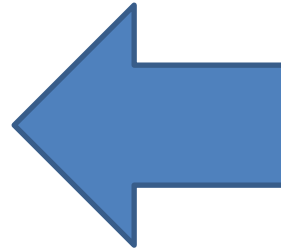
And we all deserve death (separation from God)

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death,

No one can say they have not sinned :

Proverbs 20:9

Who can say, “I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin”?



**Let him that
is without
sin cast the
first
stone.....**

Doing 'good deeds' and trying to be righteous by following a set of religious laws, like the 'Law of Moses', the ten commandments, will not save us, because if we violate any of the expected 'laws' in any way – then we have condemned ourselves. Only perfect obedience has the potential to keep us right in God's sight.

Galatians 3:10-12

For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” ¹¹ **Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God,** because “the righteous will live by faith.” ¹² **The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.”**

The ‘Law’ was the Law given through Moses and was a list of commands to keep, sacrifices to make, and things to do. It was basically a way to gain right standing with God by ‘works’ –it was all about outward things - but the problem was that no one could keep the law perfectly (except Jesus, the Son of God)

Ezekiel 18:24

“But if a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked person does, will they live? None of the righteous things that person has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness they are guilty of and because of the sins they have committed, they will die.

It only takes one sin to ‘undo’ all the righteous things a person may have done !

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Isaiah 64:6

**All of us have become like one who is unclean
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;
we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind
our sins sweep us away.**



Acts 10:1-2

*At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ² He and all his family were **devout and God-fearing**; he **gave generously** to those in need and **prayed to God regularly**.*

By the standards of many 'religious' folks today he was definitely 'saved' – he acted religious, he did all kinds of good deeds, and he prayed on a regular basis – (more 'religious' than many who call themselves Christians today)

Peter is explaining later what he found out when he went to Cornelius' house:

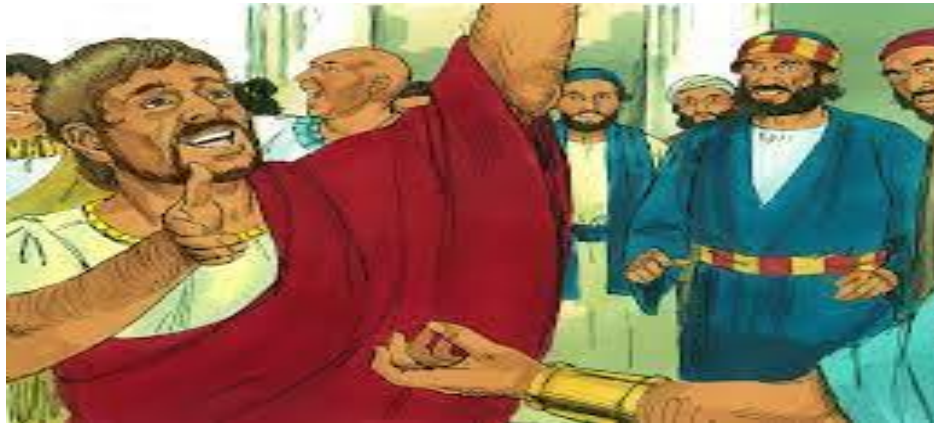


Acts 11:13-14

He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. ¹⁴ He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

Acts 10:43-48 *(While Peter was preaching to Cornelius)*

All the prophets testify about him (Jesus) that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles.⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.....



Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ **“Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.”** ⁴⁸ **So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.** Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.



Remember – **Cornelius was told that Peter would give him a message through which he and his household would be saved** - and **that message was that they needed to be baptized in the name of Jesus.**

Now when Peter got back to Jerusalem, he faced a lot of criticism from the Jewish Christians who held to the old traditions and that they were the only 'chosen people'. They accused Peter for even going to the house of an 'unclean Gentile' and then preaching to them.

They demanded that if a 'Gentile' wanted to become a Christian, that they must first accept and obey the Law of Moses with all its 'works' – and only then could they possibly become acceptable to God.

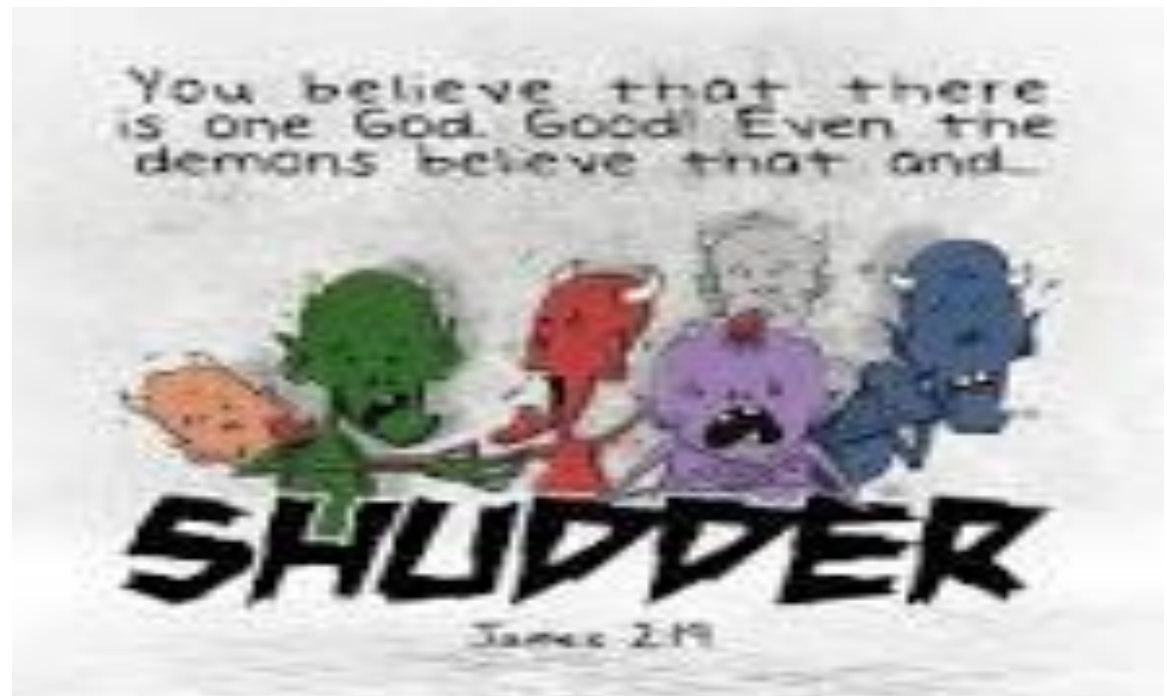
Acts 15:7-11

After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸ God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹ He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? (*The Law of Moses*) ¹¹ No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

This is why they were given the miraculous gift of speaking in tongues - NOT TO SAVE THEM before baptism

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Just 'believing' in God is not enough to save a person.



2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

8 He will punish those who do not know God

They may even call Him Lord , preach and do great works in His name – but Jesus said they did not ‘know Him’ – Matt 7:21-23 - they didn’t do things according to His word.

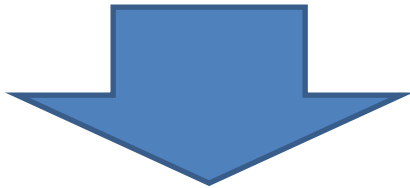
and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

They have not obeyed the gospel plan of salvation either through ignorance or willful neglect of the truth.

9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might

Mark 16:16

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.



‘Belief’ must cause action – obedience in baptism + living faithfully to the scriptures or it is worthless

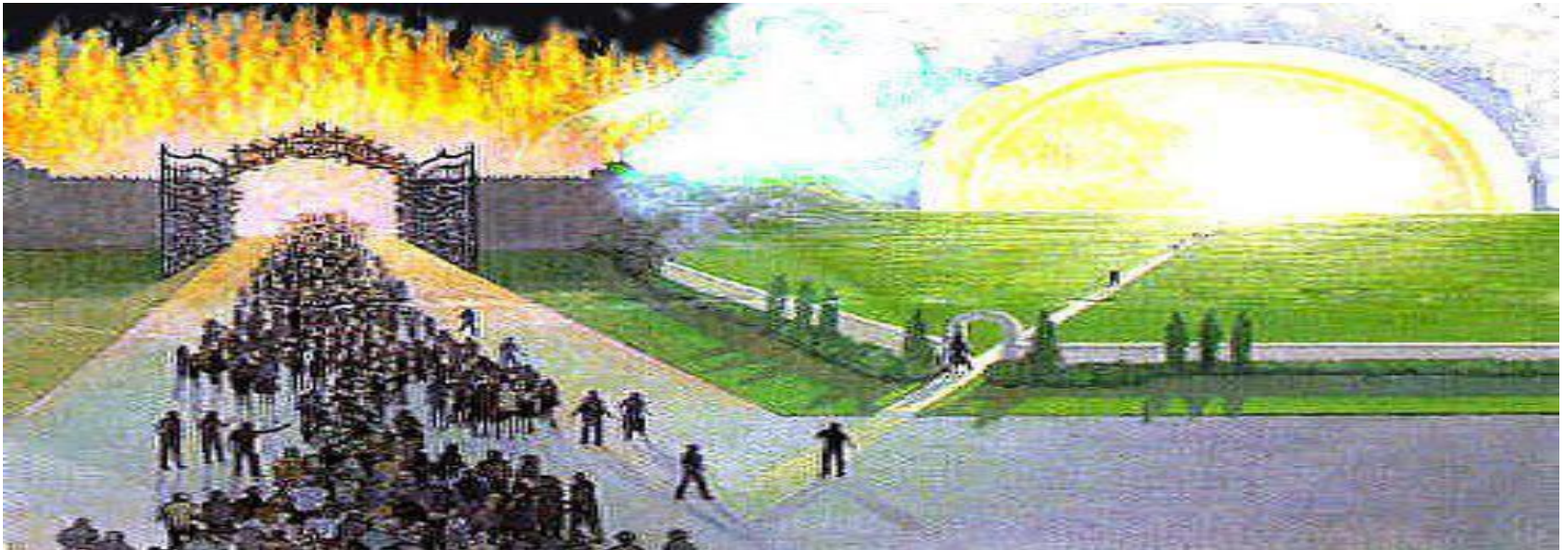
Just saying one ‘believes’ will not save them unless they act on it in obedience !

Isaiah 55:8-9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. ⁹ “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Just because a person ‘thinks’ or ‘feels’ that something is right (or some preacher or leader says something is acceptable to God) does not make it right or acceptable- **we must seek His will in the scriptures.**

Matthew 7:13-14

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.



Jesus said that most people will be lost because they chose the wrong path – the choice is up to us !

Consider this:

On Pentecost, in Acts 2- there were by most estimates between 1½ to 2 million people in Jerusalem for the festival and yet when the gospel was preached , we find that only 3000 responded and were baptized – even with the miracle of the gospel being preached in their native language by Galilean fishermen! This is less than 2/10 of one percent of those in Jerusalem. And yet that small group was able to ‘turn the world upside down’.

Matthew 22:14

“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”