

## "Saying No to God"

You can say yes to God or you can say no to God; but if you say no, you must realize there's a price to pay and much to lose. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're going to explore the Scriptures about saying no to God.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. The Bible teaches the love and the grace of God; it gives us an unchangeable standard of truth and righteousness. The Scriptures provide both an anchor for the soul and a north star to guide us in the right path. It not only helps us to know more about God, the Bible provides a mirror for our souls. The more we study God's word, the more we understand about ourselves. We need to be able to see ourselves as God sees us, so that we may make the changes necessary to please Him. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

I can think of few things more precious than a newborn baby. I love the thought of something so fresh from heaven. Sweet Jackie and I have twelve grandchildren. We had four daughters of our own, and now we enjoy the love and the blessing of our grandchildren. They're such a joy! When a little one gets to be about 18 months to 2 years, however, they learn a word that starts a challenge that lasts for a lifetime. They learn to say the word "no!" And they've heard it from their parents and now they're telling their parents "no."

Many think challenging authority is the way to freedom! Some never imagine that "doing your own thing" could be more costly than it's worth. Saying no to God, challenging His authority doesn't go unnoticed by God. You know, He sees and knows what we do and why we do it. We can't expect to live by our own rules, to act outside the morals of the Scriptures, to ignore the Word of God, and to escape the judgment of Jesus Christ on the last day.

If you want to study more, we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 2 Peter 2 verses 4 to 9, and then we'll explore the folly of saying no to God.

Our reading today is from the second epistle of Peter, chapter 2, verses 4 through 9. "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment." That's a reading from God's Holy Word. Let's pray together. Oh Father may we never take Your word for granted, or take you for granted. But may we love You and serve You always in our lives. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

The battle of a lifetime is one inside our hearts. Ultimately it's the battle for our souls. Will you do your own will or will you follow authority? Now the first authority is our parents. And in time we learn

that God is the supreme authority in our lives. The Bible urges us to be careful how we deal with our inner person. Our hearts are important. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it *flow* the springs of life." If we let our hearts grow selfish and indulgent, we can ruin our lives by a moment's foolish choice.

Rebellion is an act of the heart and will; it's an act of defiance or resistance to one in authority. God gives us all freewill, and we can say yes or no to God. We can do God's will or we can follow our own desires; God won't stop us. My friend, you can choose to do what you wish. You can say no to God, but saying no to God comes at a great price. God is gracious to the penitent and the willing; but when people rebel against him, there's a price to pay. That price is always higher than you think.

In the days of Isaiah hundreds of years before Christ, the people of Israel had drifted away from God and began living immoral lives that pleased themselves. The Bible says in Isaiah chapter 1 verses 18 to 20, "'Come now, and let us reason together,' Says the LORD, 'Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool. If you consent and obey, You will eat the best of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You'll be devoured by the sword.' Truly, the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Bible history shows that when people said "no" to God, they shut Him out of their lives and they did it to their own destruction. God gave Adam and Eve only one boundary in the Garden of Eden. They could not eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." And God said, "in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." But they listened to the lies of the devil, and they chose to say no to God and then to sin. They were cast out of the garden, where they could have enjoyed eternal life and the fellowship of God. The woman bore children with pain, and the man would eat his bread by the sweat of his brow "till you return to the ground, for out of the ground you were taken; and you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3 and verse 19).

In Noah's day people also rebelled against God. The Bible says in Genesis 6:5 to 7: "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.'" You'll remember that God sent a great flood and destroyed every person except those on the ark—eight souls in all.

Then, Bible students will remember what happened to Israel as the people came into Palestine. In Joshua and Caleb's day, the people refused to do God's will. In Numbers 13 verses 1 and 2 the Bible says: "Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I'm going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, everyone a leader among them.'"

Well the ten spies came back, of course twelve went out, the ten who came back brought a bad report. The Bible says in Numbers 13 verses 27 to 28, they said "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit (and they showed them). Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there." Oh they were afraid and they counseled the people not to go into Canaan. Numbers 13 verses 32 to 33 says: So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we've gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men

of *great* size. There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); (and they said) we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

Numbers 14:1 to 4 says: “Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, ‘Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?’ So they said to one another, ‘Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt.’” Oh, the people showed a lack of faith, they grumbled, and they rebelled against God.

Numbers 14 verses 5 to 9 says: Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, they tore their clothes; and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, “The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.”

Verse 10 says, “But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Well then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.” The Lord was angry with Israel and thought about smiting them all with pestilence. But Moses interceded for the people, asking for their pardon. The Lord pardoned the people, but they had a price to pay.

In Numbers 14 verses 21 to 23 the Lord God says, “Indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD. Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, shall by no means (no means) see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it.” Well every rebellious person in that generation twenty years old and upward perished in the wilderness. Only Joshua and Caleb entered the Promised Land.

In Jesus’ day there disciples who had seen many miracles. When they heard Jesus teach something they didn’t understand or like, these disciples turned away from the Lord. And the Bible says in John 6:66 to 69: “As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, they weren’t walking with Him anymore. And so Jesus said to the twelve, ‘You don’t want to go away also, do you?’ And Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have believed and we’ve come to know that You are the Holy One of God.’”

When people say no to God, they lose more than they imagine. They may think they have gained their freedom to do as they please, but they often find themselves slaves to sin. Adam and Eve did as they pleased and were cast out of the Garden of Eden. The people in Noah’s day lost their lives. The people in Caleb’s day died young and lost their inheritance. The people in Jesus’ day lost “eternal life.”

Let’s say “yes” to God. Let’s be obedient to God’s will. We need to be like Moses. You remember Hebrews 11:24 to 26 says, “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.”

We need an attitude like the generation who entered the Promised Land after forty years in the wilderness. God’s Word says in Joshua 1 and verse 16: “That they (that is that younger generation

under twenty at the time of the bad report) answered Joshua, saying, 'All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. And just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may the LORD your God be with you as He was with Moses. (My friend) anyone who rebels against the command (they were saying) and doesn't obey the words in all that you (speaking of Joshua) command him, shall be put to death (that was their attitude); (and then they said to Joshua) only be strong and courageous.'

At a later time, Isaiah also showed a marvelous spirit when he said to God in Isaiah 6 and verse 8, "Here am I. Send me! I'll go, I'll do what you ask. Here am I send me." My friend, do you have that attitude. We need the faith and love for God that says, Tell me what to do and I'll do it. Tell me what it is that is true, and I'll believe it. We're not going to fight with God. We're not going to give any "ifs," "ands" or "buts." We're going to listen and do. We're simply going to trust God enough to obey whatever He instructs us. We aren't going to argue with Him or try to change His Word to suit ourselves.

The church began on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was fifty days after he had been crucified. Peter preached a compelling sermon to the people proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and how the Father in heaven had made him both Lord and Christ. And when the people heard it they were pierced to the heart, because they realized the crucified Jesus was indeed the Lord and Christ. And they were guilty and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" In Acts 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The Bible says in Acts 2 verses 41 to 42, "So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' doctrine (that is to their teaching) and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

Now these people said yes to God, yes to repentance, yes to baptism, and yes to the church! And God blessed them with forgiveness and with an abundant new life. He made them His children and heirs and citizens in His kingdom the church. They had hope and they had eternal life. You too, my friend, are making a choice. Will you have the blessing of God, or will you rebel against God? Will you say yes to God or will you say no to God? You can say no, but just think about what you've lost. Don't play around when the destiny of your soul, the destiny of your soul is at stake. Let's pray together. Father we are so grateful that You through Your love have given us a choice. And Father help us to choose to do right and to say no to what is wrong. To love You, and to follow You all the days of our lives. May Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. In Jesus name we pray, Amen!

I fear these days some folks are more sold on what they think about morals and about truth than what God teaches. For instance, they permit all kinds of sin and they endorse them, even though God condemns it. Sometimes when God teaches they will only say yes to God, when God agrees with them. Otherwise they pursue their own course and ignore the moral teaching and the truth that God gives us. My friend, it's unwise to say God will just permit us to choose our own ways, our own morals, and our own beliefs. Why, it's unreasonable to imagine that God will let us believe and practice whatever we wish and then never judge our morals, our beliefs, or our actions, oh yeah.

Rather than follow our own paths, we ought to say yes to God, yes to repentance, yes to baptism, and yes to the church! When we realize that we have sinned, and the burden of sin weighs on our souls, we ought to repent and be baptized. And no "ifs," or "ands," or "buts" about it. No substituting what we'd like to do for what God asks us to do. You know, obedience is doing God's will in God's way. It doesn't attempt to justify error or to suggest that we have something better than the ways of God.

Let's say with our hearts and with our lives, "yes, Lord! We will come to you and serve you by obeying what You've taught us. We will out of faith and love repent of our sins, confess Jesus Christ as Lord, and we'll be baptized. We love you and want to be obedient to your will." Now baptism is an immersion in water for the forgiveness of sin. Saying no to God or changing the instructions would be the worst thing that we could do; but saying yes and obeying is the best thing we can do. Let's say yes to God and make things right. Let's not permit one day, not even one day to go by in rebellion to God, but make up our minds today that we will follow the Lord!

We hope today's study about obeying God has stirred you to consider your soul. Think about what God says. And if you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you get a hold of us don't worry, we're not here to get your money. We're here to help you to get to heaven.

So please get involved with a church of Christ. And if you're looking for a healthy church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.