

***Churches of Christ --- Then and Now***  
***Lesson 1 - Who are the People of God?***  
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**Introduction:** This series is about following Christ and is not concerned with any human movement.

- A. The emphasis throughout this study will be on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. **(Jn 8:28-32)**
  - 1. This was a very difficult concept for men to grasp. They had become accustomed to human movements that existed as a perversion of God's way.
  - 2. In human movements there are positions of power that are created and men that desire power that seek to take those positions.
  - 3. One can see the "benefits" of knowing the human rules and the political games that lets one climb the latter. **(Jn 5:39-44)**
- B. The battle that Jesus fought was for the hearts of men. Would they be free or slaves of men and ultimately Satan?
  - 1. Most people found themselves unwilling to buck the social ties and human authority that they had become accustomed to.
  - 2. Rather than believe in Jesus they clung to empty words and were encouraged by the majority around them to resist Jesus. **(Jn 8:32-40)**
  - 3. These people gladly were led by their religious leaders to look at the battered and bleeding Jesus in that face and cry "crucify him!" **(Mk 15:9-14)**

***I. The people of God are a product of the grace of God.***

- A. The grace of God is very powerful and very costly. **(Heb 2:9; Titus 2:11-14)**
  - 1. It makes every man realize that his efforts, wisdom and wealth are nothing.
  - 2. When a man is emptied of himself by God's grace then everything about him becomes indebted to this great gift. **(Rom 1:14-17)**
- B. With the true grace –centered mindset one cares nothing for human movement and especially human denominations!
  - 1. It is in this kind of heart that the things that religious men glory in that are falsely attributed to God become nothing to the child of God. **(Phil 3:3-9)**
  - 2. It is in this very heart that the only glory that matters is the glory that is placed in the cross of Christ. **(Gal 6:14)**
  - 3. This stand will bring great conflict with the religions of the world.
- C. The empty traditions of men make no impact on a heart built on the grace of God.
  - 1. Why did much of the traditions of the Pharisees come about? **(Mt 23:5-13)**
  - 2. The heart of grace knows that the traditions of men are for men and have no impact on the kind of walk God desires. **(Col 2:8, 23)**
  - 3. There is a standard that the man moved by the grace of God will stand in. He will personally seek it and not let someone else do it for him!

***II. The people of God are saved by grace through faith***

- A. The focal point of the people of God is God. They want someday to be face to face with Jesus Christ. **(Eph 1:5-7)**

1. The blood of Christ and redemption that Jesus provides is the confidence Christians have that they have a relationship with God.
  2. The blood of Christ is the sacrifice that men could not make! It is a perfect propitiation for our sins. **(Rom 3:23-26)**
  3. We cannot earn our salvation it is a free gift through Jesus Christ's blood.
- B. God has made the reception of His grace conditional. It is through faith.
1. Here is where Christians break away from the popular theologians of history.
  2. Faith is a choice and men are called on to act in faith. **(Acts 2:37-40)**
  3. A living faith is never alone, it acts with the promises of God throughout our lives. **(James 2:24-26)**
  4. Here is a major historic battleground that the Christian must fight to see. The conditions of pardon to become a Christian are the point where faith saves a man.
- C. Is confession and baptism an addition to being saved "by grace through faith?"
1. Does **John 3:16** exclude baptism? No, because it would also by the same reasoning exclude repentance. **(Acts 3:19; Lk 24:47)**
  2. Did the jailer just believe? **(Acts 16:30-31)**
  3. He had to be taught what to believe! What did he do immediately? **(Acts 16:32-33)**
  4. When the jailer's actions were described, what had he done? **(Acts 16:34)**
- D. This stand has caused a necessary separation from the denominational world.

### ***III. The people of God are committed to follow Jesus alone***

- A. The same stand to find the grace of God continues with all of God's will. **(2 Thess 2:15-17)**
1. The grace of God causes a man to gladly walk a very narrow road!
  2. He takes the same attitude of Jesus to the Father by completely yielding to His thoughts. **(Jn 12:48-50)**
- B. By walking in "Christ Alone" we make sure our paths are found in Him.
1. The stand of having "Book, Chapter, and Verse" for our teaching a practice is a tribute to Christ's complete work and our desire to glorify Him. **(Col 3:17; 1 Pt 4:11)**
  2. Under this motivation in years past Christians were know as "walking Bibles."

#### **Questions to Consider:**

1. How do human movements fight the real path of discipleship to Christ?
2. How is real freedom in Christ found?
3. Why does the grace of God change and motivate us?
4. Why does the blood of Christ have anything to do with our salvation?
5. Does salvation by the grace of God exclude repentance? confession? Baptism?
6. Does salvation by faith exclude repentance? confession? Baptism? Explain!
7. How does salvation in Christ Alone cause us to carefully follow His Word?
8. Why would we insist for authority for our teaching and practice?