

Headline: But God ...

This article is about two little words. Two words that if understood will completely transform our lives.

It is no surprise that the human authors of Scripture use the phrase “But God” hundreds of times and at crucial junctures in God’s unfolding of His redemptive plan.

It’s the dividing line for everything. Before “But God” appears in Scripture we see hopelessness, darkness, and death, but what comes after it is hope, light, and eternal life. So “But God” changes everything.

It is the perfect phrase for describing God’s relentless interventions of grace in human history. Although there are hundreds of instances where it appears, we will look at three:

1. “But God” shows how He saves.

Most of us are familiar with the story of Noah and the flood. The earth had become incredibly corrupt, so much so that God regretted creating mankind. So He decided to destroy all humanity. However, He chose to remember one man (Noah). When God speaks of remembering someone it means that He is choosing to work on a person’s behalf.

Immediately following a report of all the death on earth we read these incredible words of grace.

Genesis 8:1 **BUT GOD** remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.

With the rest of the world lying dead under a sea of judgment Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. 6:7-8). This first use of “But God” preserved mankind from extinction.

2. “But God” provides salvation for His people.

Romans 5:6–8 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 **BUT GOD** demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Verse 8 is often cited as a stand-alone idea which effectively renders the first word irrelevant. Clearly, however, Paul intended to show that God's love is different than human love. His love is infinitely greater than ours because Jesus died for the ungodly which means that He died for those who hated, opposed, and fought against Him.

The same was true with His resurrection. Under the sovereign hand of God, humanity carried out its most reprehensible sin. Thereafter, the perfect Son of God lay buried in a tomb, punished for a crime He didn't commit. Of course that did not end the story. Another "But God" moment would come.

Acts 13:28–30 "And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. 29 "When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. 30 **"BUT GOD** raised Him from the dead;

3. "But God" applies salvation to His people.

The unsaved are in a desperately tragic situation which they cannot change. Paul sets God's bright character against the dark backdrop of humanities sinfulness to illustrate the incredible nature of His grace

Ephesians 2:1–3 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

God does not leave people entirely without hope. He acts in order to save them, and He does so because of His own nature. God saves for one reason, because He is merciful and loving. So man is hopeless apart from God's intervention.

4 **BUT GOD** , being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

The "But God" moments remind us that nothing is impossible with God (Matt 19:26. Without His intervening grace, we would have no hope of eternal life

