

MANY WHO THINK THEY ARE SAVED ARE NOT!

by Douglas W. Hill

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:21-23)

MOST THINK THEY ARE SAVED

In a survey conducted years ago, people were asked about their level of participation in worship services on Sundays and Wednesdays, the frequency that they prayed, how well they knew their Bible and how often they read it, and a number of other questions. In this survey, everyone was also asked whether they believed they were going to heaven. Regardless of how active or inactive they were in spiritual things, every single person (100%) answered that they were saved & going to heaven...

ALL CAN BE SAVED!

It is true that the love of God is sufficient to save all. God's grace is so great and powerful that He sent His Son be the sacrifice for everyone's sins (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2). The Lord has revealed that He desires all people to be saved: "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:4). It is not God's will that any should perish: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but

that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. 3:9) But does that mean all will be saved? Or that most will be saved?

FEW WILL BE SAVED

"Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and **many** are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and **few** are they that find it." (Matt. 7:13-14)

Friends, notice the words of Jesus, the Savior. He Himself said that "few" will find the way to eternal life. Since God wants all to be saved, why will only a "few" actually be saved? If you recall 1 Timothy 2:4, you will see that God's desire to save has a condition: "and come to the knowledge of the truth". This same condition is expressed in 2 Peter 3:9, "...That all should come to repentance". In other words, there are things we must understand that are true and there are things we must repent of in order to turn from our own way to the way of the Lord.

In light of this, why do you think that the Lord said that "many" in the Judgment Day will hear "Depart from Me, I never knew you"? They believed themselves to be serving God. They will fervently profess that they did many mighty works in His name... but Christ never knew them. Shouldn't that cause us to pause and examine more carefully whether we are saved or not? To make sure that what we believe and practice is actually what the Lord says is the true way of salvation?

WHAT IS THE TRUE WAY?

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) Jesus declared that there is only one way to the Father, and that is through Jesus. So what does it mean to follow Jesus? How do we

know if we are in the way that Jesus Himself established?

It is written, "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him: he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked." (1 John 2:3-6) In other words, the Spirit of God says we may have assurance of knowing the Lord when we obey His commandments. It is "faith in action" that gives us assurance, not "faith only". And, if we keep His word, then the love of God is perfected in us - i.e. we truly love God. And if we keep not His word, we may claim to follow Him, but we lie and the truth is not in us. Is your view of salvation in harmony with what the Spirit revealed here?

Sadly, many today deny that there is anything to "do" in connection with salvation. Certainly no man can earn his way to heaven, for all have sinned (Rom. 3:23). But does the fact that we can't earn our way, mean that God doesn't require us to obey Him? Does it mean that God has not established any requirements for being pardoned and partaking of His grace? The Lord has indeed established conditions for salvation. Remember Matt. 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." How hard is this to understand? Just stop and think for a moment, why will most not enter into heaven, though many think that they will? Could it be that people have found ways to feel saved without actually doing things the way the Lord requires? If the Lord says we must do His Father's will to enter, then who can say that "doing" is not

necessary? Or that even doing something different is alright?

HOW TO BE SAVED

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16:16) This verse is amazingly simple to understand. What is belief? It is faith that the Lord is who He says He is and trust that He will do what He says He will do for us. What does "and" mean? It joins faith with baptism. Therefore, we must include both items to follow Jesus. What is "baptism"? It literally means immersion. What are faith and baptism for? It says that in doing these two things we "shall be saved".

Even so, many seek to diminish and take away from the simple meaning of these words of Jesus. In doing so, many think they are showing "faith" in Christ, but they are actually denying His own words. "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48) In other words, Jesus says that we reject Him, His person, if we receive not His sayings.

Sadly, many today want Christ without His church, want a Savior without a system, a Lord without a law, and a King without commands. But such is utter folly. For Christ gave His life to establish His church, and it is sanctified by the "washing of water with the word" (Eph. 5:25-26), that is, by believer's baptism. And the Savior has spoken words (a "system" or "pattern" of salvation) which must be held to in faith and in love (2 Tim. 1:13). And the Lord has revealed a "law of faith" which must be submitted to in order to be justified (Rom. 3:27; 8:2). And as King, He has all authority and directed His apostles to make disciples by baptizing them & to teaching them all things that He commanded (Matt. 28:18-20). How then can we rightly reject the Lord's word and will? For

in doing that, we reject Him! Is this not the root and foundation of the problem? Is this not why most who think they are saved, are not actually saved?

AN INVITATION

Friend, perhaps this study has been disturbing to you. Perhaps you are angry or upset that someone would dare to question your faith and salvation. But it is written, "sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Is Christ really sanctified (set apart) as Lord in your heart? If so, then discussing this should not be a problem at all. For even if your faith and salvation are questioned, or even found to not be correctly in subjection to Christ's words (the "straight and narrow way"); you will rejoice in learning the truth (1 Cor. 13:6)! If we truly seek to enthrone Christ in our hearts, then we will gladly do whatever He says for the reasons that He says they should be done.

Friends, most are following the broad way that leads to destruction. Just as one asked, "Lord, are they few that are saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for **many**, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall **not** be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us; and he shall answer and say to you, **I know you not whence ye are**; then shall ye begin to say, We did eat and drink in thy presence, and thou didst teach in our streets; and he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; **depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity**. There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom

of God, and yourselves cast forth without." (Luke 13:23-28)

Few will enter, but **you can enter!** Friend, don't let anything hinder you from subjecting yourself to the will of the Lord. Nothing you can ever pursue in life matters more than this. You will spend eternity somewhere. You can obey the truth and be saved (1 Pet. 1:22), or you can obey the will of man and be lost (Mark 7:6-9).

~ ~ ~

Questions? Perhaps you wonder why there are so many different churches today - each having its own doctrine and name. Perhaps you are a member of a "church of Christ" but have never examined whether the church you attend is faithful to the Lord as it should be (Cp. Rev. 2:1-7). Ask for a free Home Bible Study and see for yourself what God says about these and other important topics.

North Sparta church of Christ

359 N. Spring St. • Sparta, TN 38583

[Http://NSCOC.Info](http://NSCOC.Info) • (931) 836-3321

Preacher@NSCOC.Info

"And that in the good ground, these are such as have an honest and good heart, having heard the word, they hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience." (Luke 8:15).