

Why Are There Few Saved 07-12-20

In Luke 13:23-30 Jesus was asked by His disciples "*Lord, are there few who are saved?*" Jesus' reply indicates that indeed, there are VERY few who are saved. In fact, this idea is found throughout the New Testament. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus stated this terrible truth in Matthew 7:13-22. Paul states it by pointing to the story of Israel in the wilderness in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11. Peter points to the eight people saved of millions in the days of Noah to reflect on this idea, and he reminds us in 2 Peter 2:6 that in the city of Sodom, only Lot and his daughters were saved. It is a clear truth revealed both in foreshadow and statement: Only a few people will be going to heaven.

Is this fair? Are the odds stacked against us to begin with? There are two important truths to understand that underlie the terrible idea that very few are saved. First, this is NOT what God wants. We are told repeatedly that God desires that ALL people be saved (1 Timothy 2:4, John 3:16, Titus 2:11, 2 Peter 3:9). Second, the plan is not hard, and there is nothing else that God can do to save us; God has done EVERYTHING to save all (Luke 16:29-31, Romans 8:28). He has paid the price for salvation, perfectly revealed what we must do to be saved, and prepared a vehicle by which we can arrive at this destination (the church - Acts 20:28).

So why are so few saved? First, there is the matter of ignorance. In this case, ignorance is not the absence of knowledge, but the matter of ignoring what we know. Hell is real. The reality of hell is so common place people use the word in every day lingo to describe things that are harmful or difficult. Everyone dies. Not even the most ardent atheist denies that truth. But most men blatantly ignore that if hell is real and all people die, someone must be going there, and we can know who. They choose to ignore what God has commanded men must do. This rebellion leads to ruin, and yet most people choose to ignore the warnings. The Bible tells us that this is because of a love of the world (1 John 2:15-16). Most people love the world to the degree that they will not consider leaving it.

But the most disturbing fact about the few saved: there are few SAVED who are saved too. When Jesus healed (think cleansed of sin too) the ten lepers in Luke 17:12-18, only one of the ten returned to Him. In the parable of the soils, only one of the three who received the seed (the Word of God) remained alive to bear fruit. The messages in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 are about people who were saved (Israel from Egypt) but were then lost; that is Paul's main point. The hard truth is that many of those who are saved will not remain faithful. The prophecies of the apostasy say that "many" will depart from the truth (2 Peter 2:2, 1 Timothy 4:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:1-3; 1 John 2:18-19).

Why are only a few "saved" saved? The Hebrew writer states in Hebrews 2:1-3 it is in part because of a neglect of salvation; this is why we are told to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). Paul declares that many depart from the faith because they do not have a love of the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). Ultimately, many just do not want to go to heaven bad enough to do everything they can.

It is bad enough many will not choose the way of Christ, but it is worse that many who choose the Way of Christ will leave it. Scriptures reveal a terrible truth about that: "*if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment*

delivered to them" (2 Peter 2:20-21). Those who depart from the faith have a worse penalty than those who never accepted it (Hebrews 6:8, 10:26-29; Luke 11:24-26, 12:47-48).

We need to be fearful of losing our salvation. We need to take heed that we can fall (1 Corinthians 10:12). We need to avoid even the temptation of sin (Romans 13:14). We need to be determined to get to heaven, because that determination and effort are the guarantee of salvation (2 Peter 1:10-11). No one will get to heaven by accident or without effort; the people going to heaven are the ones who have made it their life-purpose.