

"ARE THERE FEW WHO ARE SAVED?"

Lesson for 2/7/10

Luke 13:23 *"And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?""*

INTRODUCTION

1. In August 2005, **Newsweek** and **Beliefnet** asked 1,004 Americans what they believe and how they practice their faith

2. Among the questions was this one: **"Can a good person who isn't of your religious faith go to heaven or attain salvation, or not?"**

3. Here are their responses...

	Yes	No	Don't know
Evangelical Protestants	68%	22%	10%
Non-Evangelical Protestants	83%	10%	7%
Catholics	91%	3%	6%
Non-Christians	73%	3%	24%
Total	79%	12%	9%

4. The responses are interesting...

a. Most people believe those of different faiths will be saved

b. Among Catholics and more liberal Protestants, that view is overwhelming

c. Even the majority of those who view themselves as "evangelical" agree

This would suggest that most believe many will be saved. Is that true? Jesus was asked a similar question:

Luke 13:23 *"And someone said to Him, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?""*

...and spoke often on the subject of who will be saved. Note that He taught:

I. FEW WILL BE SAVED

A. MANY THINK MOST WILL BE SAVED...

1. Or to put it another way, that most people will go to heaven
2. Yet Jesus taught that few would be saved:

Luke 13:23-24 *23 “And someone said to Him, “Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?” And He said to them, 24 “Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.””*

Matthew 7:13-14 *13 “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. 14 For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.”*

B. WE DO WELL TO REMEMBER...

1. Only eight souls were saved during The Flood:

Genesis 7:21-23 *21 “And all flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; 22 of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. 23 Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.”*

1 Peter 3:20 *“who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.”*

2 Peter 2:5 *“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;”*

2. Only three souls escaped the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah:

Genesis 19:24-30 24 *“Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven, 25 and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. 26 But his wife, from behind him, looked back; and she became a pillar of salt. 27 Now Abraham arose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the LORD; 28 and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the valley, and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace. 29 Thus it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived. 30 And Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; and he stayed in a cave, he and his two daughters.”*

3. Only two men out of 603,550 over the age of 20 were permitted to enter the land of Canaan:

Numbers 14:26-32 26 *“And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27 “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. 28 Say to them, ‘As I live,’ says the LORD, ‘just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; 29 your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. 30 Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. 31 Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey--I will bring them in, and they shall know the land which you have rejected. 32 But as for you, your corpses shall fall in this wilderness.”*

Numbers 1:45-46 45 *“So all the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers’ households, from twenty years old and upward, whoever was able to go out to war in Israel, 46 even all the numbered men were 603,550.”*

Sadly, there will be few who find the way that leads to life:

Matthew 7:14 *“For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.”*

And what is the way that leads to life? Again, we find Jesus taught that...

II. JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY

A. MANY THINK ALL RELIGIOUS PEOPLE WILL BE SAVED...

1. As some put it, "It doesn't really matter what you believe..."
2. Yet Jesus taught that no one comes to the Father but through Him:

John 14:6 *“” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.””*

B. WE DO WELL TO REMEMBER...

1. The example of Cornelius, a religious person who needed salvation:

Acts 10:1-6 *1 “Now there was a certain man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, 2 a devout man, and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people, and prayed to God continually. 3 About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in to him, and said to him, “Cornelius!” 4 And fixing his gaze upon him and being much alarmed, he said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God. 5 “And now dispatch some men to Joppa, and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; 6 he is staying with a certain tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea.””*

Acts 11:14 *14 “and he shall speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.”*

2. The example of many other religious people who needed salvation

a. The devout Jews on the Day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:5 “Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven.”

Acts 2:36-38 36 *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified.”* 37 *Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?”* 38 *And Peter said to them, “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

b. The devout Ethiopian returning from worship at Jerusalem:

Acts 8:27-28 27 *“And he arose and went; and behold, there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship. 28 And he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.”*

Acts 8:35-38 35 *“And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. 36 And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” 37 And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” 38 And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch; and he baptized him.”*

c. The devout Lydia, a worshipper of God who kept the Sabbath:

Acts 16:13-15 13 *“And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshipper of God, was*

listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us."

d. The devout Saul, doing what he thought was the Lord's will:

Acts 26:9 *"So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."*

Galatians 1:14 *"and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions."*

Being religious is not enough, and one cannot truly be a Christian who believes that salvation can be found outside of Christ. Peter said:

Acts 4:12 *"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."*

But note that Jesus also taught salvation is...

III. FOR THOSE WHO OBEY

A. MANY THINK THAT ALL WHO BELIEVE IN JESUS WILL BE SAVED...

1. That we are saved by faith only, with no need for obedience
2. Yet Jesus warned of those who believed in Him but were lost:

Matthew 7:21-23 *21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'"*

3. Note from this passage that:

- a. They believed Him to be their Lord
- b. They spent their lives in service to the Lord
- c. But they had not done the Father's will!

B. WE DO WELL TO REMEMBER...

1. That Jesus is the author of salvation to all who obey Him:

Hebrews 5:9 *“And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation”*

2. The end of those who do not obey His gospel:

2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 *7 “and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed--for our testimony to you was believed.”*

3. Not all believers will be saved

a. The demons believe, yet tremble!

James 2:19 *19 “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.”*

b. Some believed, but were unwilling to confess Him:

John 12:42-43 *42 “Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest*

they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”

CONCLUSION

1. Believing that many (if not all) will be saved is...
 - a. A comforting doctrine
 - b. A view praised as tolerant and loving
2. But if one really desires to follow Jesus, they must abide in His teaching:

John 8:30-32 *30 “As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. 31 Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.””*

- a. That few will be saved
- b. That Jesus is the only way
- c. That salvation is for those who do His Father's will

Of course, God wants all men to be saved:

1 Timothy 2:3-6 *3 “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4* who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time.”*

2 Peter 3:9 *“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”*

He has provided His Son as the perfect Sacrifice and the perfect Mediator. But will we believe and obey His Son...?

INVITATION

This lesson has not been designed to instruct those who are not Christians to render obedience to God. But we never close a service without providing the opportunity for those who have already come to a knowledge of God's word to submit to his will. In addition, we also provide this opportunity for any Christians who may have fallen away to come back to God or who have any other need or request they wish to share with the congregation.

If you have learned what you must do to make yourself right with God and have made a decision, we encourage you to take action now. If there is anything we can do to assist you with this or any other need, please come forward to the front row as together we stand and sing the song that has been selected.