

SAVED
(Part 2 of 6)

Most people, certainly most people in the Western world who've had any exposure to Christianity whatsoever, think they're going to Heaven; and that is largely affirmed by most people that you talk with. It is true, that I do not know, nor can I see, the condition of one's heart (soul). Yet, Scripture teaches that the life of a person will match the condition of the heart.

Perhaps you are already a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet that, of itself, is no proof that you have been born again and on your way to Heaven. John in his gospel tells us something of great interest when it comes to this issue of believing. John tells us that Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover, and "many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did". Then John adds an interesting twist in the text concerning those who believed, by saying, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:23-25).

Again, John tells us in chapter 8 and verse 30 that as Jesus "spake these words, many believed on him." Yet, 29 verses later in the same chapter (John 8), John records that the same "many" that "believed on him" in verse 30, "Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by" (John 8:59).

Finally, John reveals unto us something even greater in depth concerning those who believed on Jesus. John writes, "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43).

John in his writings makes it abundantly clear that there is a faith which is saving, and there is a faith in Christ which is not saving. Anyone who claims to be a Christian can find many willing to accept his profession of faith, whether or not his behavior shows any evidence of commitment to Christ. Many sincerely believe they are saved but are utterly fruitless. They are barren of any verifying fruit in their lives. Yet, many will accept them whole heartily.

Dear reader, the importance is not that you are accepted by man. But the importance is in the fact that you are accepted by God, and that your life lines up with Scriptural teachings.

If you have never read Matthew chapter 7 and verses 13-20, you should read it; and if you have read it, read it again. Some years ago I was studying Matthew 7:13-29, I was studying this passage because I had heard so many different things said about the text that

didn't seem to fit the context. One night after reading the text many times and still not satisfied, I closed my Bible and went to bed. While in bed and thinking about the text in Matthew 7, it came to me what I had not heard explained before, nor had I saw for myself while reading.

The text is Matthew 7:13-29: The setting of this text is religious; the principles of the text are religious; the cross-references of the text are religious; and finally, the conclusion of the text is religious. Jesus in this text was not speaking unto the hardened sinner, but unto the religious man. The man, who thought he was good enough, or as good as anyone else. The man, who had prayed a prayer, or signed a card; the man, who had depended upon his baptism to confirm his faith; the man, who spoke in tongues, or had been slain in the spirit; the man, who had some religious experience. This is the man to whom Jesus speaks – the man who has been misguided in his thinking. Jesus puts this man in the class of the “many” in verse 13.

The Bible teaches clearly that the evidence of God's work in a life is the inevitable fruit of transformed behavior: “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother” (1 John 3:10). Professing Christians utterly lacking the fruit of true righteousness can find no biblical basis for salvation. Faith that does not result in righteous living is dead and cannot save (James 2:14-17).

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