

Why Will Few Be Saved?

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Jesus plainly teaches that most people will be eternally separated from Him, while few will be saved (Mat. 7:13–14). Some reasons (from both observation and Scripture) for His statement are apparent.

Not because they have no choice. The old Calvinistic doctrine of foreordination/predestination teaches that before creation God chose individuals by name who would be saved (Calvin's "elect") and that those not so chosen can't be saved regardless of their desire. Such is utterly repugnant to those who understand that God has left the choice of being saved or lost completely up to the individual. He has made salvation available to all through Christ (Heb. 5:9; 10:10), and He invites all men to accept it through obedient faith (Mat. 7:21; 11:28–30; Heb. 10:10; Rev. 22:17).

Not because God hid salvation. If salvation is available, but the way of salvation remains hidden, God is responsible for the damnation of the majority. The Gospel is a **revelation** of the mystery of salvation through Christ that was not formerly revealed (1 Cor. 2:7–13). It was/is an understandable plan Jesus told His followers to preach to the whole creation (Mark 16:16) and to all the nations (Mat. 28:18–20). The salvation Truth must be knowable, or it can't set us free (John 8:32). Paul urged the Ephesians to "be not foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). The confusion of doctrines and churches is not the Lord's doing, but that of men. God's plan of salvation, pattern for His church, and His will for our daily lives are all simply stated and understandable. Neither God the Father nor His sinless Son can be blamed for the eternal loss of even one soul.

Because of human prejudice. Many form an opinion about things before careful examination, especially in matters of religion. Some have heard the simple Gospel many times but are so blinded by prejudice against it that they refuse to accept and obey it—and will be eternally lost.

Because they followed the doctrines of men instead of the doctrine of Christ. Religious leaders are as susceptible to fallibility as are all other men, and they should never be followed just because they are preachers. Jesus warned of false teachers whom he compared to wolves dressed in the clothing of sheep (Mat. 7:15). Such men (and women) are the major cause of religious division. Preachers must be "proved" (ASV) to see whether they are of God (1 John 4:1a; 2 John 9–11) because "false prophets" still abound (1 Pet. 2:1–3; 1 John 4b). The Berean Jews admirably searched the Scriptures daily to see if Paul was preaching God's Truth (Acts 17:11), and so ought all men to do concerning their preachers. The Lord warned: "If the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit" (Mat. 15:14).

Because of worldliness and materialism. Many will be lost because they are attached to this world and the things in it. The "narrow gate" that opens to life eternal is simply not wide enough for fornication, idolatry, hateful attitudes, drunkenness, "and such like" (Gal. 5:19–21). The straitened (difficult) road that leads to Heaven is one of self-denial

and self-discipline (Luke 9:23; 1 Cor. 9:27) — a changed life that refuses to be fashioned after the world's demands and pressures (Rom. 12:1-2).

Jesus urges all men to enter the narrow gate by their orally confessed faith, repentance for their sins, and baptism for the forgiveness of those sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:10), followed by their daily walk in the straitened way that leads to eternal life (1 Cor. 15:58; Jam. 2:20).

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