

Lost Believers

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You may be reading the title of this article and begin to think that I have lost all of my marbles. I will not quarrel over whether that is true because I am willing to admit that there might be a small hole in the bag. It is my hope and prayer that this article will be able to help you all in your efforts of being disciples of Christ.

There are many who accept this idea that anyone who believes that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, and that they openly profess this kind of faith is saved. There is no doubt in my mind that confessing Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God is necessary in order to be saved. The ultimate question is whether or not that is all one has to do or must do in order to be saved. Another question that we ought to ask ourselves is, can we find lost believers in the Bible?

Our first example will come from John 12:42-43.

John 12:42-43 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: (43) For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

There are some who are willing to strike this example out. How often have we heard from those who accept Calvinism or any form of Calvinism say "That person did not truly believe."? Now if they want to make that assumption, nobody can force them to accept the absolute truth of the scriptures. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and here is what we do know about who believed and what it was that they believed in. What we see is the **WHO** of this text are Jewish chief rulers. Now consider the **WHAT** in this text. We know without any hesitation that these rulers believed that Jesus was the Christ. How do we know this? Because John, being inspired by the Holy Spirit says that they believed on him.

Even though they believed on him, they would not confess him as the Christ. It would be wrong for anyone to attribute something to the passage that is not given. Again, many will try to argue (for their doctrines sake) that these rulers did not really believe. Two things come to mind when having to deal with this kind of reasoning.

1. John, led by the Holy Spirit lied. In other words, God lied.
or
2. Those who profess that these Jewish leaders did not truly believe are wrong.

The question remains, why would these leaders not confess him even though they believed on him? The first reason is because they were more worried about themselves being put out of the synagogue than they were about following Christ. The second reason is because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. We either follow God completely or we don't.

Mark 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

The second example I would like to examine comes from James 2:14-26.

James 2:14-26 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? (15) If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, (16) And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? (17) Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. (18) Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. (19) Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. (20) But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? (21) Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? (22) Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? (23) And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. (24) Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. (25) Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? (26) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

The believer who has faith without works is a lost believer. This context is one that many wish would have never been included. I have heard it said "If you did not have James, you would have no basis for your position!" and there are many different ways of destroying that kind of logic. I am confident enough in the truths that are given in all of the New Testament that I could camp out in Romans, Ephesians, or any other book other than the book of James and still teach the same principles that are taught in James. Yet again the point is, just like we made above in John 12, we do have the book of James. To exclude it is to exclude part of God's divine will on the matter of faith. We do not get to pick and choose what we like and what we do not like from the scriptures. That is one of the main points in Jeremiah 36 about Jehoiakim when he cut up and burned the scroll which was telling him about the coming calamity if they did not repent.

Another point to take from this passage is what is said in verse 19. Just like the passage in John 12, it says here that the devils believe and tremble. We either accept what the Holy Spirit says or we reject it. Nobody in their right mind would argue or make the case that demons were saved. Not only did they believe in Jesus Christ but they also confessed him! See Mt.8:28,29; Mk.1:23,24; Lk.4:33,34; Ac.16:16-18.

In short, the argument of James here is that the believers who had faith without works were in the same spiritual condition as the demons who believed. All of them are lost believers!

My final example for this article comes from Matthew 7:21-27, Hebrews 2:1-3, and 2 John 9-11.

Matthew 7:21-27 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 which is in heaven. (22) Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? (23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (24) Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: (25) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. (26) And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: (27) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Hebrews 2:1-3 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. (2) For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; (3) How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

2 John 1:9-11 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. (10) If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: (11) For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

If one were to be honest about what these passages are referring to, you would have to say that all three are talking about disobedience. I could dig up many more but just for the sake of keeping things simple, I wanted to provide you with three contexts.

The first point we made were lost believers who were ashamed of Jesus and his words. The second point were lost believers who were demons and did nothing to show their faith. They claimed that they are saved by faith alone and that is it. Our final point here shows us that these are lost believers because they are disobedient believers.

Mark 16:15-16 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. (16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

“I believe you Lord, but I do not believe one must be baptized in water in your name in order to be saved.” Either we follow Jesus or we do not. Ac.2:38; 1Pet.3:21; Ac.22:16.

This idea that only those who are the most “wicked” in our own eyes will be lost is a dangerous concept. We are not basing our belief on truth. Those who may be classified in the category of believers we have described in this article are presently lost and will be eternally lost unless they repent and turn to the Lord.

Examine yourselves today as you strive to fear God and keep His commandments.