

# The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,*

*holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



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## All of This and Still Lost

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If it was not so tragic, it would actually be amusing to hear what many people believe will suffice for one to be acceptable to God Almighty. Have you noticed, as I have, that when one dies and a Protestant, a Roman Catholic, or a Jewish Rabbi, gives the funeral oration, he is affirmed to be heaven-bound, as the speaker attempts to comfort the bereaved? None seemingly are lost, regardless of their moral or spiritual beliefs, activities, or failures in life! Yet Jesus said, in Matthew 7:13-14, few will enter the strait gate and walk the narrow way leading to life!

I have actually had people say to me: "I know he is alright, for just before he died, he had such a pleasant look on his face." Others will grasp for straws if they can remember that sometime in the distant past, the deceased claimed belief in Jesus Christ. Regardless of one's life style prior to his death, and regardless of his spiritual relationship with Christ, he is, as we usually say, preached right into heaven. (See Ephesians 2:13-17.) Other speakers will extol the virtues of the deceased, tell all of the good things they can muster about them as proof that surely heaven has claimed another saint!

These same folks will condemn my brethren and me who teach the need to obey the gospel and walk in the light of divinely revealed truth in order to be, and to remain in fellowship with the God-head, falsely accuse us of teaching salvation by works of human merit! However, the Bible reads differently in passages like 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 1 Peter 1:22-25; Titus 3:3-5; Hebrews 5:8-9; 1 John 1:1-9; Mark 16:15-16; Galatians 3:26-29.

### A List Of Things That One May Do And Still Be Lost

*One may hear the gospel and yet remain lost!*

The folks at Antioch of Pisidia heard Paul and Barnabas preach the gospel of Christ, yet they contradicted and blasphemed this wonderful story of love, and according to Paul, judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life... (Acts 13:44-46).

Felix falls into the same category as those of Antioch of Pisidia, but he too, declined the invitation to obey Christ. Paul preached to Felix about righteousness, temperance (self control), and judgement to come, causing him to tremble at those words, yet he did not submit to the Lord. He said he would call for Paul at a more convenient time (Acts 24:24-25). As far as we know, that convenient time never arrived. Don't be like Felix!

Paul said it was not the hearers of the law who would be justified before God, but the doers (Romans 2:13). So did Jesus, the Christ (Matthew 7:21). James said much the same thing in James 1:21-25.

The parable of the sower teaches this same lesson: Matthew 13:13-15. Jesus then explains the parable of the sower and the soils in Matthew 13:18-23. Where do you fall in these categories of hearers of the word of the Lord?

*Men may believe and still remain lost: John 1:11-12*

Many of the chief rulers of the Jews believed on Jesus, we are told in John 12:42-43, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praises of men more than the praise of God. James, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote James 2:14-26. Here he shows that faith apart from works (obedience) is like a body without the spirit; it is a dead. A dead faith never saved anyone. It takes a living and active faith. Galatians 5:6 says it is a faith working by love. (See also John 14:15, 21.)

There are probably no classical unbelievers in this audience of readers, but there may well be some unsaved believers. What about you, my friend or even my unfaithful brother?

*One may be almost persuaded and still be lost!*

Paul gives his own story of his conversion to Christ, in Acts 26:1-29, before king Agrippa. In the body of this chapter, Luke records Paul as saying to Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe. To which Agrippa replied, "Paul, almost you persuade me to be a Christian." Paul said that he wished to God that not only you, but also all those who hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am except for these chains (Acts 26:26-29). Even though he believed the prophecies concerning the Christ, and was almost persuaded to become a Christian by Paul's sermon, he didn't and he wasn't! How sad!

*Many who are very religious are, and will remain, lost: Matthew 15:1-9; 23:1-15*

Following is what Paul said of many of his kinsmen in the flesh: Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness (that is, how God makes men righteous through forgiveness on the terms of the gospel), and going about to establish their own righteousness (by works of the law of Moses), have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (Romans 10:1-4). I suggest that this characterizes many religious folks of our day as well, and what a sad day when they will stand before Christ and hear Him say, I never knew you, depart from me you who work lawlessness (Matthew 7:21-23).

Cornelius was a good, moral, religious, praying, benevolent, man with a great reputation, who had to send to Joppa for one whose name was Simon, who would tell thee words whereby you and your house may be saved (Acts 10:1-6; Acts 11:14; Acts 10:47-48). To get the whole story one must read both chapters ten and eleven in their entirety.

Saul of Tarsus, whom we mentioned earlier, was a believer who repented, confessed Jesus as Lord, fasted and prayed, and was yet lost until he was told in the city what he must do. There in Damascus he was told what is recorded in Acts 22:16. He later wrote the books of Romans and Galatians, in which the following may be found: Romans 6:3-6; Galatians 3:26-20. Here, in two places, he indicated that one isn't in Christ, where all spiritual

blessings reside (Ephesians 1:3), until one has been baptized into Christ and there one is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). There one is born again into the kingdom of Christ (John 3:3-5; 1 Peter 1:22-23).

*One had even been an apostle and was lost!*

Judas was once unusually close to the Lord and yet ended up in torment, according to the scriptures. He is called the son of perdition who went to his own place. Once he served as the treasurer for the apostles and was numbered with the eleven, having a part in this ministry (Acts 1:16-20). The once saved always saved doctrine was invented by Satan in the Garden of Eden, when he told mother Eve, you will not surely die.

He has been deceiving folks with this idea ever since. (See 1 Corinthians 10:12, 13; Galatians 5:4; 2 Peter 2:20-22; Matthew 26:24.) Many other passages could be cited but these should suffice. We must deny self and take up our cross and follow him (Matthew 16:24).

Initial obedience isn't sufficient: we must remain prepared for the Lord's return. The five foolish virgins is a case in point (Matthew 25:1-13; Revelation 2:10; Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 3:14-19).

The prodigal son is yet another case: Luke 25:11-14. See the case of Simon as well (Acts 8:13-14, 22). Yes, one may have done many wonderful things and still be lost (Matthew 7:13-28).

Where do you stand with the Lord? Enter that strait gate and walk that narrow way which leads to life eternal.