

New You

One of the leading evangelists of our day has been quoted as saying that he believes **only fifteen percent of professing Christians are truly born again**. That's a startling statement! I'm not sure that's accurate, but I certainly believe that many, if not a majority, of those who call themselves Christians are not truly saved.

You can tell that by the values they hold and the lives they live. This means that millions of people who profess to be saved aren't. The following certainly confirms it.

BARNA RESEARCH SURVEY

MOST "CHRISTIANS" CONFUSED ABOUT SALVATION

The results of a recent survey indicated that most protestant Christians don't understand—or believe—their own theology about salvation. The Barna Research Group asked 6,242 adults nationwide, "Can a good person earn their way to heaven?" The percentage of those responding "yes" were as follows:

Assembly of God 22%

Baptist 38%

Presbyterian 52%

Lutheran 54%

Episcopalian 58%

Methodist 59%

Roman Catholic 82%

How can this be?

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

If there isn't a clear presentation of true salvation, then there won't be faith to receive it. Unfortunately, many "Christian" churches today are presenting church membership and holy living as the way to salvation.

They preach that there is a God but that **the way to have a relationship with Him is through being a good person**. In that respect, they are not much different than any other religion. **But that's not what the Bible teaches**. It doesn't matter how good you may be. Who wants to be the best sinner that ever went to hell? The Bible teaches:

"ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23, emphasis mine).

The glory of God that this verse is speaking of is Jesus. You may be good compared to me or some other person. But compared to Jesus,

“There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10).

The Bible teaches that no one can have a relationship with God by just being good. We are all doomed under sin so that we can all have salvation through Jesus (Gal. 3:22).

True Christianity differs from all other religions on the face of the earth in one very specific way: We are the only religion with a Savior. Others teach there is a God and that we are accountable to Him, but they believe we save ourselves by good works. Even the Jews and Muslims believe God is the God of Abraham, but reject Jesus as their Savior.

All other religions place the burden of salvation on the back of the individual. They teach that through acts of self-denial and holiness, you earn your place in heaven. But true Christianity puts the burden of salvation on Jesus. Our only part is to believe and receive, or doubt and do without.

If a Buddhist, a Muslim, and a Christian all stood before the Lord, how would they respond to this question, “What makes you worthy to enter heaven”? The Buddhist and Muslim would certainly try to convince the Lord of their holiness by their worthy accomplishments. That’s precisely the logic behind terrorist’s suicide bombers. They are told that if they kill the infidels, they will be granted entrance to heaven and given a harem of women for eternity.

But a true Christian wouldn’t point to any good deed they have done, and they certainly wouldn’t expect that killing others would earn them favor with God. Instead, they would point to Jesus and say, “I have no virtue of my own to make me worthy. All my faith is in Jesus, my Savior, and what He did for me.”

It’s always about how we view Jesus. Every religion of the world recognizes Jesus. They have to. There is more physical evidence that Jesus lived than that any of the Caesars lived. And Jesus’ example of love and turning the other cheek has never been equaled by any other religious leader.

The Muslims and the Jews say Jesus was a prophet, a good man. They commend His teachings, but they reject Him as God and Savior. Amazingly, many who call themselves “Christians” have a similar view of Jesus. They admit He’s a wonderful example, but they don’t believe He is God, and they don’t believe He is the only way to the Father.

But that is totally illogical. **Either Jesus is who He said He was, or He was a deceiver.** There can be no middle. You can’t admire His teachings and actions and then reject His claim to be the Son of God sent to save the world.

Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14:6).

Jesus didn’t claim to be “a” truth, “a” way, and “a” life; He left no other options for having a relationship with God the Father than through Him. He also said,

“All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him” (John 5:23).

Jesus made Himself equal with God and said that if we didn't honor Him as such, then we weren't honoring God the Father. No one can receive God's salvation who doesn't recognize Jesus as God and the only way to the Father. His own claims leave no room to accept Him as good and then not as God.

There was an instance in Scripture where a rich young man came running and threw himself down at Jesus' feet. He certainly respected Jesus and recognized Him as being a religious leader. But despite his outward pretense, Jesus could tell he wasn't ready to make a real commitment to Him. The young man said,

“Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God” (Mark 10:17-18).

Jesus was saying that the only one who is truly good is God. So this person either needed to accept Jesus as God or quit calling Him good. What was the young man's response? In verse 20 he said,

“Master...”

The rich young ruler dropped the word “good” when addressing Jesus. He was not willing to make Jesus God. He was willing to identify with Jesus and proclaim His goodness, but he was not willing to make Him God.

This young man went on to proclaim his own goodness as the basis of his relationship with the Lord. He said he had kept all the commandments from the time of his youth. The truth is that no one has kept all the Law and lived a sinless life.

We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). This man was deceived because he compared himself with others (2 Cor. 10:12). Compared to others, he may have been holy, but he was a sinner in need of a Savior, and he didn't know it.

The story continues,

“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me” (Mark 10:21).

Notice that this verse says Jesus loved this young man. Jesus didn't tell this man to sell all he had and give to the poor because He didn't want him to be a disciple. He loved him. And **because Jesus loved him, He had to break the deception that he could earn his salvation.**

He needed a Savior but didn't know it. He had lived such a good life that he thought he would be accepted by God for all his goodness. He said he had kept all the commandments of God, but he hadn't. He had deceived himself into believing it, but Jesus knew better.

Jesus told this young man to sell whatever he had and give it to the poor. He had never told this to anyone else who wanted to follow Him, so why did he do this? He did it because He knew what his god was.

The very first commandment says,

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3).

Jesus was showing this young man that he had broken the very first commandment. He trusted his money and what it could do for him more than he trusted God. Jesus loved him and wanted to bring him to salvation, but He would not lower the bar, and the young man went away sorrowful (Mark 10:22). **There is no other way to the Father but through Jesus.**

In my complete teaching *The New You*, I have much more to say about what really happens when you're born again. I share foundational truths that every believer needs to know and many other scriptures that clarify the meaning of true salvation. I deal with issues like the forgiveness of past, present, and future sins; eternal security; and the many benefits of our new born-again spirits that have been made perfect forever. I also talk about the importance of a good church, how to find one, and many other basics.

One of the comments I often hear is, “I've been a Christian for years, but I've never heard the things you're saying.” Well, it's time to make sure your foundation isn't cracked. Order this message today, and gain a clear and simple understanding of what true Christianity really means. It leaves no room for the devil to deceive or bring confusion.

Great news: *The New You* is now available in book form. You can take it with you wherever you go, and it makes a great tool for sharing the Gospel with others.