

Who Will Be Saved?



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What did Jesus say about it?

Should the Words of Jesus Matter?

Exploring Biblical Heritages & Most Bible Studies Are Two Very Different Things.

Bible studies are usually “echo-chambers” that reinforce and confirm what participants believe.

Exploring Biblical Heritages often exposes problems in beliefs that participants hold.

Unexamined Belief Systems are major factors in many of the conflicts in societies today

This is a problem only individuals can resolve, but it requires the help of others -- start exploring today!

Exploring Biblical Heritages and most *Bible studies* are two different things. Bible studies are usually “echo-chambers,” like we find on social media, which are opportunities to reinforce and confirm what participants believe. *Exploring Biblical Heritages*, on the other hand, often exposes problems in what participants believe.

- We ask all participants to agree to follow the **BHC Primary Guideline** – “*My belief system will be large enough for all facts, open enough to be examined and questioned, and flexible enough to change if errors or new facts are discovered.*”

Our first task is to identify the **Primary Source** (*speaker or writer*) of the words we are exploring using **BHC Linguistic Guidelines**.

- **A word consists of symbols/sounds with attached bundles of associations** that include the Source’s culture and personal experiences.
- **Words must be examined in the complete context in which they appear.** Context plays a major role in determining the Source’s meanings.

- ***The more we know about the Source’s culture, the more accurate our understanding of the Source’s words. Culture is a group’s collective memories.***

In my last email, I discussed the parable of Jesus about the *Great Day of Judgment* (Matthew 25:31-46). Jesus spoke those words around 30 CE and he lived in the Jewish culture of the *Late Second Temple Period*. He made key two points in the parable.

- *Nations that did acts of justice were rewarded with eternal life.*
- *Nations that did not do acts of justice were sentenced to eternal punishment.*

Jesus repeated those ideas in other parables and teachings. That’s how important “acts of justice” were to Jesus. That indicates his followers learned a lot about “acts of justice.” So what did “acts of justice” mean to Jesus? They were acts members of nations did for the least members of their nation:

*Food was given to the hungry, drinks were given to the thirsty,
shelter was given to strangers, clothes were given to the naked,
the sick were visited, and those in prison were visited.*

Each nation was judged by how its members made sure the basic requirements for life were met, down to the least members of the nation.

*Being a follower of Jesus meant being actively engaged in ensuring
basic requirements for life are being met in people you encounter.*

- In **America**, most people – including Christians -- view those problems as “social problems” that the government is supposed to resolve.
- For “**followers of or believers in Jesus**,” those are your problems; you are to be actively engaged in resolving them.
- For **Explorers of Biblical Heritages** with Christian Biblical Heritages, this raises a very important question – how does information affect our beliefs about salvation?

I had a **Protestant Christian Biblical Heritage** with this salvation belief –

*“Individuals are saved by grace through **faith alone**
without need of any good works.”*

My belief was created by Martin Luther, a German Catholic in the 16th century after he had been **excommunicated** and “**lost his salvation**.” **It had never existed before**. It was created **1,500 years after Jesus** taught the parable above. When I compared Luther’s doctrine to what Jesus taught, I discovered the following differences.

- **Individual salvation** replaced **collective salvation**.
- **Faith**, meaning **believing**, replaced **doing acts of justice**.

- **Good works** (acts of justice) became irrelevant.
- The way “believers” **treat other people** is unrelated to their eternal destinies.

Luther’s doctrine is called “*justificatio sola fide*,” meaning “*justification by faith alone*.”

- It is a Christian theological doctrine commonly held **to distinguish many Protestant denominations from the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches**.
- It asserts that it is on “**the basis of individual faith**” that **believers are forgiven** their **transgressions (past, present, and future)** of the law of God rather than on the basis of good works which they have done.

For Explorers of Biblical Heritages, the above information brings them back to the **Primary Guideline** above. In my case, *flaws in an important belief model of mine had been exposed*. I had to resist the urge “*to simply change the belief*.” Knowing that parables often **use extreme example to make key points** helped. In another parable, Jesus taught that “*people who become angry should be tried in courts like murders*.” He did not mean for his words to be taken literally – *he said it to highlight a key point*.

- *I was now aware that I needed more facts to upgrade my Belief System.*
- *I was also more aware of whether people I encountered in the normal course of life had their basic requirements met.*

Thank you for Exploring Our Biblical Heritages. Please share and discuss it with others.

Shalom,
Jim Myers

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