

What If I Am Lost Eternally?

“**Lost**” is a terrifying word! Synonyms for “lost” include such words as “sorrowful,” “dejected,” “mournful,” “heartbroken,” and “downcast.” “Lost” is especially terrifying if it is used with reference to one’s relationship with God.

Luke, chapter 15, is a chapter which mentions the lost sheep, verses 4-7, the lost coin, verses 8-10, and the lost boy, verses 11-24. The sheep was lost simply because it wandered away from the fold. The coin was lost due to the carelessness of someone else, its owner. The boy was lost due to his own selfishness, wastefulness, and waywardness.

Regardless of the reasons for being lost, most people (spiritually speaking) are lost! This is why Jesus came into the world, it being “*to seek and to save that which was lost,*” Luke 19:10. This is why Jesus died on the cross; by “*the grace of God*” He tasted “*death for everyone,*” Heb. 2:9. He paid the price for human redemption to make it possible for lost souls to be saved, Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:23-25.

As already stated, “lost” is a most disturbing and terrifying word. Think of the feelings aroused when we hear of a lost child, or a lost plane. But to be lost in sin and lost for all eternity is much, much more terrifying! Jesus Christ, addressing some self-righteous, lost Pharisees, said “*I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come,*” John 8:21. Of course, Jesus, following His death, burial, resurrection, and glorious ascension, would return to heaven, and where He was going, they could not “*come,*” for they would “*die*” in their sin. The tragedy of those addressed in John 8:21 is multiplied manifold when we come to the realization that **most** people are lost! Regarding “*the way that leads to destruction,*” Jesus said “*there are many who go in by it.*” But regarding the “*way which leads to life,*” Jesus said “*there are few who find it,*” Matt. 7:13-14. Compounding the tragedy of being “lost” is the fact that most people, ignorant of the sinfulness of their own sins, are lost and don’t even know it! This is why a study of the Bible is so imperative.

But Whose Fault Is It If I Am Lost?

1. It is not God’s fault. “*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life,*” John 3:16. “*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance,*” 2 Peter 3:9. The apostle Paul wrote, saying, “*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us,*” Rom. 5:8. Indeed, if one is lost he cannot blame God!

2. It is not the fault of Jesus Christ. By the grace of God, He tasted “*death for everyone,*” Heb. 2:9. Jesus shed His blood “*for many for the remission of sins,*” Matt. 26:28. Through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ we have the “*gospel*” by which people are “*saved,*” I Cor. 15:1-4. And prior to ascending back to heaven, the resurrected Savior gave this commission to the apostles: “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned,*” Mark 16:15-16. Inasmuch as Jesus died for all, then no one who is lost can justifiably blame Jesus Christ for his lost condition.

3. It is not the fault of the Holy Spirit. “*The truth*” is what frees one from sin, John 8:32, and the Holy Spirit was sent in order to guide the apostles “*into all truth,*” John 16:13. The

Holy Spirit revealed God's word to the apostles; He also "*confirmed*" the message "*with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit,*" Heb. 2:3-4. Note Rev. 22:17: "*And the Spirit and the bride say 'Come!' And let him who hears say 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely,*" Rev. 22:17. Friend, if you are lost you cannot not rightly blame the Holy Spirit.

4. It is not the fault of the Bible! The Bible, God's word, "*is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path,*" Ps. 119:105. The Bible is that "*implanted word, which is able to save your souls,*" Jas. 1:21. The Bible, God's word, is "*the word of truth,*" 2 Tim. 2:15, and souls are "*purified...in obeying the truth,*" I Peter 1:22. But, sadly, many today have ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to understand, but their ears hear not, their eyes see not, and their hearts "*have grown dull,*" Matt. 13:14-15. Yes, multitudes today are lost, but they cannot rightly blame the Bible!

5. It will not be the fault of this congregation. Granted, though we have a perfect revelation from God, we are an imperfect people. However, this local church is "*the pillar and ground of the truth,*" I Tim. 3:15, and dares not to proclaim any message other than the soul-saving gospel of Jesus Christ. And like "*the bride*" of Revelation 22:17, we say "*come*" to lost sinners, and are eager to sow the seed of the kingdom both far and wide. Friend, if you are lost, you cannot blame this congregation.

6. "The bottom line" is this: friend, if you are lost it will be your fault! Every person will be held accountable for the "*things done*" in his own body, 2 Cor. 5:10. So-called "friends," family members, or others, may have tempted you, but you will be held accountable for your own actions. Indeed "*all have sinned,*" Rom. 3:23; hence, God "*now commands all men everywhere to repent,*" Acts 17:30, and has provided the gospel which is His "*power*" to save all who respond in obedience thereunto, Rom. 1:16.

But What If I Am Lost?

1. You Probably will not be lost by yourself! Regardless of how you may consider yourself, it is a fact; you **do** influence others by your life, example, and conduct. If you refuse to obey the gospel, and thus to take the necessary steps in order to be saved, it is entirely probable that others will follow your example!

2. You will be eternally lost! Please note Matt. 26:46: "*And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*" Yes, there is a place called "*hell,*" Matt. 10:28, a place "*prepared for the devil and his angels,*" Matt. 26:41, a place where "*there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,*" Matt. 25:30, and which will be inhabited by those who choose to obey Satan instead of God. The length of the agony in hell will be co-equal to the length of abundant joy in heaven. From the judgment day forward, the misery of those in hell will last as long as will God Himself, and He is "*the eternal God,*" Deut. 33:27!

Conclusion: Regarding the sad state of the lost in eternity, we have only touched "the hem of the garment," but we have said enough to convince sober-minded people that they surely don't want to be lost! But, friend, if you are lost you will have no one to blame but yourself!

But why remain lost, when God wants you to be saved, and has provided a plan whereby you can be saved! Hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, Rom. 10:17. Believe in God, Heb. 11:6; believe in Jesus Christ, John 8:24, believe the gospel, Mark 16:16. Repent of your sins, Acts 17:30; Luke 13:51 Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37, and be baptized "*into Jesus Christ,*" Gal. 3:27, "*for the remission of sins,*" Acts 2:38, and arise from the watery grave of baptism to "*walk in newness of life,*" Rom. 6:4. And then "*be faithful*

unto death,” Rev. 2:10, seeking to “live soberly, righteously, and godly,” Tit. 2:11, endeavoring to worship and serve God, Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:25, until the day you die. In so doing, you can live “in hope of eternal life,” Titus 1:2, and one day be granted an abundant entrance “into that everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” 2 Peter 1:11. God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and all faithful Christians want you to be saved. “...now is the day of salvation,” 2 Cor. 6:2. Don’t wait! Tomorrow may be too late!

Editor’s Note: The preceding article was written by Bobby Witherington, but the thoughts it contains were presented in an excellent message Everett Hardin presented before the congregation on Wednesday night, March 8. Thanks, Everett!