

Can you know you're saved...but be wrong?

By David Lasseter

When was the last time you heard anyone say they were spiritually lost? If you've talked with enough people you may have heard someone make such a claim, but you've almost certainly had more people confidently declare their spiritual salvation. It's a very uncommon thing to hear someone say they are lost. In December 2005, ABC News polled a random group of 1,023 adult Americans. In this poll, 85% of the respondents believe they will go to heaven. 72% of those who claim to not be religious believe in heaven, and 77% of this group believe they will go to heaven when they die. So among adult Americans, the majority believe they will go to heaven when they die. However, Jesus said that the majority will be lost. In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus says "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Why do the majority of Americans disagree with the Son of God? In this study we will examine that question and determine if it is possible for you to know you are saved. Thank you for taking your time to study God's word with me.

Invalid Information

Recently my wife had an experience that all of us have had at one time or another. She's an outstanding cook, and one evening decided to apply her talent in the preparation of a particular meal for supper. As the time came for her to put the ingredients together she confidently pulled each one from the cupboard or refrigerator. Finally the time came for her to add the ingredient that she must have in order to fix this particular dish. Before long her confidence turned into doubt. She knew where she kept this particular ingredient and was equally certain that she had it. But no matter how hard she looked she couldn't find it. Eventually she admitted to herself that she didn't have this necessary item, and began searching for something else to fix instead. This experience of hers made me think about a study I've been wanting to write for some time. Can I know I'm saved, but be wrong?

It's very common for us to know something is true, but be wrong. It's late in the evening and there's something you need from the store. "I know the store is open until 10 p.m." you tell your wife. "It's a 5-minute drive. I'll be back soon." You leave home at 9:30, confident that before long you'll be home again with the needed item in hand. However, your confidence turns to doubt as you pull into the parking lot and see the darkened windows. You walk up to the door and realize you were wrong about that which you knew: the store closed at 9 p.m., not 10. You're on your way to a city that's well-known to you. "I know this road will get me there" you say to yourself. You confidently drive along, expecting to shortly see the landmarks of your destination. But the drive gets longer and longer. Confidence turns to confusion. Eventually you pull out your map, find the road you're on and realize you were wrong about that which you knew: this road doesn't lead to your intended destination. There are many other examples I could use, but they all make the same point: we are frequently wrong about that which we know to be true.

But why are we wrong? We are wrong when our knowledge of something is based on invalid information. What we know is only as good as how we know it. Imagine I was in our kitchen when my wife asked me if we had the ingredient she needed to fix her intended meal. I answer, "Yes, sweetheart, we have it." Does she now truly know that she has this necessary item? No, she doesn't. I may have misunderstood her and looked for the wrong thing. I may not have looked at all and based my knowledge upon an earlier search through the cupboard when I saw the item sitting on the shelf. Each of the above examples demonstrate reliance on invalid information and the false knowledge that results from it. But when did they realize their information was invalid? When it was too late! My wife had already made the commitment to a chicken dinner when she took it out of the freezer an hour or two earlier. If she'd realized she didn't have this ingredient she would have chosen something else. But, by the time she learned this fact it was too late. The husband in the second example learned too late that his knowledge about the closing time of the store was invalid. He made a wasted trip as a result. The driver in the third example also made a wasted trip because he based his knowledge

of the route to his destination on invalid information. By checking for the ingredients before she started, confirming the store hours before he left, and consulting a map before he began driving is the only way these three could truly be confident that their knowledge was valid. But none of the three realized their knowledge was false! They began their tasks with the confident assurance that comes from knowing something. This is a very important point we must keep in mind: confident assurance is an invalid source of information! Confident assurance must come after knowledge has been verified. We cannot verify knowledge by confident assurance.

But is any of this valid in the spiritual realm? To answer this question we must first ask and answer a few basic questions:

1. Is it possible for one to know he's saved? It's pointless to begin a search for the knowledge of salvation if one cannot know he's saved.
2. If you can know you're saved, how do you know that fact? This is simply a confirmation of the validity of your knowledge. We've already seen how people frequently base their knowledge of something on invalid information. If you're going to know you're truly saved you must know your information is true. But, that may not be as straightforward as it sounds. What if my wife used me as her source of information? What if the husband used the hours of another store in the same chain as his source of information? What if the driver used a 10-year old map to decide which way to go? This demonstrates another important point we must keep in mind: The source you're using to verify your knowledge must be valid. You may think you've verified your knowledge, but if the source you're using is invalid then you really haven't. As a result you may proceed with confident assurance, thinking to yourself that you've verified your knowledge and really know what you're doing, when in fact you don't know at all.

Before we go any farther there's an important issue I wish to address. This is a real problem that influences much of what we do in our everyday lives. The issue is bias. Merriam-Webster defines *bias* as "an inclination of temperament or outlook; especially : a personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment". It uses *prejudice* as a synonym for bias, and defines prejudice as a "preconceived judgment or opinion" or "an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge". Before we begin I ask you to lay aside any bias or prejudice you may have regarding this topic. Prejudice by definition is an opinion formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge has been gathered. Because of prejudice people are frequently unwilling to examine evidence. Please lay aside your preconceived ideas about this topic. If your preconceived ideas are confirmed, you'll have great confidence in their validity. However, if your preconceived ideas are wrong and you allow them to keep you from examining the evidence, you may live the rest of your life believing a lie. Now, on with the study!

Valid Information

If our goal at the end of this study is to know that we truly know the answers to our questions we need to begin at the beginning and validate the source of information we'll be using. Since we'll be using the Bible as our source, is it a valid source?

The Bible is full of evidence proving God is the author of this library of 66 books. Job speaks of springs in the bottom of the sea (Job 38:16). In 1977 we sent a deep sea submersible to the bottom of the sea and saw these springs. How could Job have known about them? Someone who knew must have told him, and the only one who could have known was God. Job speaks of the earth having an empty space in the north and hanging upon nothing (Job 26:7). We've been in space and have seen that this is true. Solomon spoke of the water cycle centuries before we knew about it (Ecclesiastes 1:5-7). Isaiah tells us that the earth is round (Isaiah 40:21,22). Job said that the the wind (air) has weight (Job 28:25) and David speaks of the paths in the sea that animals use to move from one place to another (the currents, Psalm 8:8). The abundance of scientific evidence that has been independently confirmed by human beings over the centuries since the Bible was written prove that the Bible truly is the word of God. (There are many other proofs we could use to validate the Bible as the word of God. I've written an article entitled "Why must we use the Bible only?" that goes through these proofs. Please visit www.noeo.net if you'd like to read it.)

Let's take this a step farther. There is an untold number of religious writings from which we could choose. Since we know the Bible is a valid source of information, is it the only valid source of information? If it is, then every religious writing we encounter must be based on the Bible and be true to its teachings before it could be given any consideration by those seeking to know the will of God. In "Why must we use the Bible only" I've covered this topic in detail. However, it's of such great importance that I'd like to go through it again

here. Is the Bible the only valid source of information regarding the will of God? If it is, how do we know?

From the revealed scientific foreknowledge, fulfilled prophecies, historical accuracy and unity of the writers we know the Bible is inspired by God and therefore is His word. In Titus 1:2 Paul tells us that God cannot lie, and in John 17:17 Jesus says that the word of God is truth. Therefore, everything recorded within the Bible must be true. So what, if anything, does the Bible tell us about other religious writings? Are they inspired by God, too?

Let's begin by looking to the New Testament and see if it tells us anything about those who wrote these 66 books. Peter, in his second epistle, chapter 1 verses 21 and 22 tells us that prophecy did not come by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But to whom did the Holy Ghost reveal the word of God? We know they were holy men, but is that all we know? The answer is found in Ephesians 3:5. The Holy Ghost revealed the word of God to apostles and prophets. Therefore, if the Holy Ghost is still revealing God's word today then there must be apostles and prophets to receive it. Do we have these holy men of God today?

Do we have apostles of Jesus Christ today?

The apostle Paul warned the Corinthian brethren that there were false apostles living in their day, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). In 2 Corinthians 12:12 he tells the Corinthians how to identify a true apostle from a false one: the true apostle worked signs, wonders and mighty deeds. We must apply the same standard today. Anyone claiming to be an apostle of Christ must perform the miracles required of a true apostle in the first century. In this study I'd like to take a slightly different approach to this question. Rather than examining miracles in detail I'd like to look to the New Testament and see if it tells us whether apostles do or do not exist today. (Search for Truth lesson 3 addresses miracles and is published to my site. I strongly recommend you begin with lessons 1 and 2 before going to lesson 3, since some background material is covered in those two lessons.)

Judas Iscariot was an apostle of Jesus Christ (Matthew 10:1-4). In verse 4 of this passage Matthew tells us that Judas betrayed Jesus. In Matthew 26:14-16 we learn that he betrayed the Savior for 30 pieces of silver. When Judas realized that Jesus had been condemned to death he sought to return the 30 pieces of silver, telling the chief priests and elders that he'd betrayed an innocent man (Matthew 27:1-4). Their reply: "What is that to us?" Upon hearing this he cast the money down and went and hanged himself (Matthew 27:5). The chief priests discussed among themselves what to do with the 30 pieces of silver. They decided it wasn't lawful for them to return it to the treasury and used it to buy a field in which strangers would be buried. That field became known as the "field of blood". (Matthew 27:6-8)

A few weeks later (after Jesus' death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven) Peter and the other apostles were gathered together in Jerusalem with some 110 of Jesus' disciples (Acts 1:15). Peter stood in the midst of them and said that it was necessary for the scripture to be fulfilled that David spoke concerning Judas (Acts 1:16). He was numbered with the apostles (see Matthew 10:1-4 above) and the money he received to betray Jesus was used to buy a field, known as the "field of blood" (Acts 1:17-19). It was prophesied in the book of Psalms that his habitation would be desolate and that another would take his office (Acts 1:20; Psalm 69:25; Psalm 109:8) Peter then establishes three qualifications that one must meet in order to be considered to take Judas' apostleship: they must be a man, they must have been with Peter and the other disciples from the time Jesus was baptized by John, and they must have remained with them until the day Jesus returned to heaven (Acts 1:21-22). Two men who met these qualifications were identified, and after prayer the apostles cast lots. The lot fell upon Matthias. He then assumed Judas' ministry and apostleship. (Acts 1:23-26)

There cannot be true apostles of Jesus Christ today. Nobody can fulfill the qualifications that one must meet in order to be considered for this office. There is nobody alive today who was with Jesus and His disciples when he was baptized by John and remained with them until He ascended into heaven. No matter how badly one may want to fill this office or sincerely believe they do, they cannot. In other aspects of everyday life we understand that some cannot run for an elected office. For example, there are specific requirements one must meet in order to run for the office of President of the United States: they must be a natural born citizen of the United States, be at least 35 years of age, and have resided in the United States for at least 14 years. No matter how badly a 30 year-old person wants to run for this office, they cannot.

The office of apostle of Jesus Christ is one that is no longer filled by men today. Since there are no apostles today the Holy Spirit cannot be revealing the word of God through apostles. If the Holy Spirit is still

revealing His word, it must be through prophets.

Do we have true prophets today?

Next, we must determine whether true prophets exist. If they do, then the Holy Spirit may well continue to reveal the word of God through them. However, if they don't, then God has ceased revealing His word.

Just as the New Testament warns of false apostles, it warns of false prophets. Jesus tells us that we can't identify these false prophets by their outward appearance: they look like sheep, but are ravening wolves on the inside (Matthew 7:15). Our Lord warned those of His day that false prophets would arise, working signs and wonders, to seduce, if possible, even the elect (Mark 13:21-23). Jesus told the multitude woe unto them when people speak well of them, for such did their fathers of the false prophets (Luke 6:26). We are warned that false teachers will come unto us, bringing damnable heresies (2 Peter 2:1), and that we are to test every spirit whether they be of God, because many false prophets have gone into the world (1 John 4:1). In the New Testament there is an abundance of warning about the reality of false prophets and what they do. With all of these warnings the Bible must have told us how to identify a true prophet from a false one.

In the Old Testament the children of Israel were given specific means whereby they could recognize a false prophet. If a prophet came to them claiming to speak a word from God which He hadn't commanded them to speak, the thing which they spoke would not come to pass (Deuteronomy 18:20-22). But for us, there is no such warning in the New Testament. We're warned that false prophets would come, that they'd look innocent on the outside and that people would say good things about them. We are not to be drawn away, however. We are to compare what they say to what God has already said ("try the spirits whether they are of God"). In the Old Testament the Israelites were warned to look for something to happen to prove that the prophet was speaking God's word. However, in the New Testament we are warned to compare what God has already said to something the false prophet is saying. Could this mean that God is no longer revealing anything new?

Paul said plainly that prophecies would fail (1 Corinthians 13:8). In verses 9 and 10 he tells us when this would happen: when that which is "perfect" (or "complete") has come. Miraculous measures of knowledge and prophecy are "in part" and would be done away when that which is perfect has come. But what is that which is perfect of which Paul speaks? In the Christian religious world today you'll commonly hear that this is Jesus, and that prophecy remains until He comes again. Let's see if we can confirm this doctrine.

When Jesus comes again, every eye will see Him (Revelation 1:7). In verse 13 of 1 Corinthians 13 Paul tells us that three things are going to abide (or remain) after that which is perfect has come: faith, hope and love. If that which is perfect in 1 Corinthians 13:10 is Jesus, faith, hope and love will remain after He comes again. Let's see if these three things will remain after our Lord has come again.

First, let's look up the New Testament definition of faith. It's found in Hebrews 11:1. Here the writer tells us that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Please think carefully about this definition. The writer tells us that faith is the evidence of things not seen. When Jesus comes again every eye will see Him. Since faith remains after that which is perfect has come, and faith is the evidence of things not seen, that which is perfect cannot be Jesus because every eye will see Him when He comes. Faith as we know it will end when Jesus returns.

Next, let's look up the definition of hope. It's found in Romans 8:24-25. Here Paul tells us that "hope that is seen is not hope" and that a man doesn't hope for something he's seen. Again, we know that every eye will see Jesus when He comes again. Since hope that is seen is not hope and every eye will see Jesus when He returns the second time, hope will end when He comes again. Hope as we know it will end when Jesus returns. Therefore, that which is perfect in 1 Corinthians 13:10 cannot be Jesus.

We now know that which is perfect in 1 Corinthians 13:10 is not Jesus, but what is it? It must be something that was incomplete at the time Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, but which would be finished sometime before Jesus returned. Let's consider the context of 1 Corinthians 13:10 to determine what is this perfect thing. Here are verses 9 and 10: "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Paul links the coming of that which is complete to the ending of those things that are in part. Prophecy is listed as one of the "in part" things that would end when that which is complete has come. What was the purpose of prophecy? To reveal the word of God (Deuteronomy 18:20). Since prophecy was to end sometime before Jesus comes again, God was going to stop revealing His word to men sometime before the second coming of His Son.

Prophecy is but one of the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Paul gives us a complete list

of these gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. The book of Acts shows us how one received these miraculous manifestations. In Acts 19:1-7 we read of 12 disciples in Ephesus who hadn't yet heard of the Holy Spirit. Paul asked them for some details regarding their teaching. When they realized they'd been mistaught they were baptized again, this time in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterwards, Paul laid his hands upon them and they received the Holy Ghost and spake with tongues and prophesied. In Acts 8:5-24 we read of Philip preaching to the Samaritans, performing miracles and baptizing those who believed. The apostles in Jerusalem heard that the Samaritans had received the word of God and sent Peter and John to them. They came for a specific reason: the people in Samaria had heard the word, believed it, been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ but had not yet received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. Peter and John came to Samaria to lay their hands upon them and grant unto them these gifts. A man named Simon had heard Philip preaching and had been baptized, too. He realized something once Peter and John came to Samaria: it was only through the laying on of the hands of an apostle that one could receive these miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit (verse 18). He wanted to be able to give these gifts to others, too, and offered Peter money in return for this ability. He was soundly rebuked by Peter and told to repent, praying that perhaps this thought of his heart might be forgiven him (verse 22).

Let's put together what we've learned in these passages. Prophecy is a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit and was imparted to another by the laying on of an apostle's hands. Since there are no apostles of Christ to lay his hands upon another there can be no true prophets alive today. Anyone who claims to be a prophet today must be a false one. Since neither apostles nor prophets can exist and the Holy Spirit revealed the word of God only to apostles and prophets, He must no longer be revealing God's word. Therefore, God's word must be complete. We now know what is that which is perfect (or complete) in 1 Corinthians 13:10: it's the word of God. Several New Testament passages confirm this. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16-17) Something that is incomplete cannot make you complete. Since scripture is capable of making you perfect (or complete), it must also be complete. Paul warned the Galatians that if anyone (a man or an angel from heaven) preach any gospel to them other than the one Paul had already preached, that one is to be accursed (eternally condemned, Galatians 1:8-9). The Bible closes with the following warning: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18-19) Not only is the word of God complete, it is eternal. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:35)

Summary

The Bible is the only valid record of God's will available to us today. However, many have claimed to have received a new revelation from God since the deaths of the last true apostle and prophet. Such claims are false. Many have claimed to be apostles and prophets. Such claims are false. Some have claimed that the Bible is corrupted and God gave them a new revelation that cannot be altered. Such claims are false. The Holy Spirit has made it easy for us to know what God has and has not said. You must be on guard against being deceived by the false prophets that come into the world today. Never forgetting that God's word is complete and eternal will make it a simple task to understand the source of any "new revelation" today.

Now that we've validated the Bible as the only source of information we need, let's proceed to answer our original question.

Can you know you're saved...but be wrong?

Is it possible for you to know you're saved?

The first part of the question we must answer is this: Is it possible for you to know you're saved? Now that we have proven the Bible to be the only valid record of God's will available to us, what does it tell us about salvation? Let's begin in the book of 1 John: "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God." (1 John 5:13, ASV) Here John answers our question: it is possible for you to know you're saved. He also tells you the only way to know

the answer to this question: it must be found within the written pages of the Bible. What do the scriptures say about salvation? What must you do to be saved?

What must you do to be saved?

I'd like to answer this question by asking a series of questions, then looking to the scriptures for their answers.

Question 1: Can you be pleasing to God without faith?

Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Answer: No.

Question 2: Where does faith come from?

Romans 10:17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Answer: By hearing the word of God. Faith does not come by hearing the words of men. Men may (and actually must) teach you what God's word says, but you must confirm the truth of their teaching by studying the Bible yourself. (Reference Acts 17:10-11: "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.")

Question 3: Can you be saved if you don't believe in Jesus?

John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

Acts 4:10-12: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

Answer: No. You must believe that Jesus is who He claimed to be before your sins can be forgiven. There is no salvation in any other name given among men (Mohammed, etc).

Question 4: Can you be with Jesus if you die in your sin?

John 8:21: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come."

Answer: No.

Question 5: Where is Jesus?

John 20:17: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Matthew 7:21: "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."

Answer: In heaven, with His Father. Since you cannot be with Jesus if you die in your sins, and Jesus is in heaven with His Father, you cannot go to heaven if you die in your sins.

Question 6: What must you do to have your sins forgiven?

Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

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

Romans 10:10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Matthew 10:32-33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Fa-

ther which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.”

Answer: You must believe the gospel that’s been preached to you, repent of your sins, confess before men your belief in Jesus as the Son of God, and be baptized to have your sins forgiven. "And" is a very important word. "And" is used in two ways: to connect words or phrases of equal value, and to show logical progression. When Jesus says “he that believeth and is baptized” He makes believing the gospel and baptism of equal value. When Peter says “repent and be baptized” he makes repentance and baptism of equal value. You are saved when you’ve heard the word of God, believed it, repented of your sins, confessed before men your belief in Jesus as the Son of God and have been baptized for the remission of your sins.

Question 7: How many gospels are there?

Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

Answer: One. When we speak of “the President of the United States”, we are speaking of one person. “The” limits the scope of that which we are discussing to one definite thing. Paul said “the” gospel is “the” power of God unto salvation. There is only one gospel that will save.

Question 8: Are perverted gospels being preached today?

Galatians 1:6-9: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

Answer: Yes. Paul warns the Galatians (and us as well) to be on guard for those who preach perverted gospels. The fate of one who preaches something other than the gospel of Christ is eternal condemnation (translated “accursed” in the King James version).

Question 9: What should you do if you now believe the truth, but earlier believed a perverted gospel and was baptized after believing it?

Acts 19:1-7: “And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.”

Answer: You must be baptized again. Your first baptism was a response to a perverted gospel. Jesus said you must believe “the” gospel and be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:15-16). Your baptism after believing the perverted gospel did you no good.

Question 10: How are you saved?

Ephesians 2:8: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”

Answer: By the grace of God.

Question 11: Where is grace found?

2 Timothy 2:1: “Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”

Answer: In Jesus Christ.

Question 12: Where is salvation found?

2 Timothy 2:10: “Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

Answer: In Jesus Christ.

Question 13: Since grace and salvation are found in Jesus Christ, how do you enter into Jesus?

Romans 6:3: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Answer: You are baptized into Jesus Christ. There is no other way to get into Jesus. Since salvation is found "in" Jesus, until you're "in" Him you are not saved. You get "into" Him by baptism. Therefore, you are not saved until after baptism. Praying the "sinner's prayer" will not result in your salvation.

Question 14: How are you baptized?

Romans 6:1-7: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin."

Answer: By immersion. Baptism is a burial, as Paul notes in the passage above. When Jesus died His body was placed in a tomb. A large stone covered the opening of the tomb. Therefore, when He was buried He was completely surrounded by rock and earth. When you are buried with Him you, too, are completely surrounded by water (the material into which you are buried). Jesus changed while He was in the tomb. His body was dead when it went into the tomb and alive when He left it. You, too, change when you are buried with Him. You are spiritually dead when you enter the water, change while you are within the tomb of water, and are spiritually alive when you leave the water (to walk in newness of life, as Paul states in the above scripture). If you have been "baptized" by any method other than immersion you were not buried with Jesus and are not walking in newness of life. Pouring and sprinkling are two methods of "baptism" commonly used today. Neither of these methods is a burial. (For more details regarding baptism, please review the article I've published to www.noee.net.)

Question 15: Can you fall from grace after you've been saved?

Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Answer: Yes. The letter to the Galatians was written to the churches of Galatia ("And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:", Galatians 1:2), and only saved people are added by Jesus to the church ("Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.", Acts 2:47) Paul tells the Christians at Galatia who felt they were justified by the law of Moses that they had fallen from grace. Just as it is possible for those Christians in that day to fall from grace, it is possible for Christians today. Jesus says that He will give you a crown of life if you have been faithful until death. If you become unfaithful, Jesus will not give you a crown of life should you die in that unfaithful condition. (For more details regarding one's possibility of falling from grace, please review the article I've published to the website.)

Question 16: Is there a scriptural example of someone who thought he was saved but was actually lost?

Matthew 7:21-23: "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. 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? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Answer: Yes. At the day of judgment there will be people who professed the name of Jesus but were never known by Him. These people thought they were saved, but were actually lost. To put it in the present tense, these people think they are saved but are actually lost. The truth regarding these people is that they are workers of iniquity and will not spend eternity in heaven with Jesus.

Question 17: Do you have a responsibility for your own salvation?

2 Peter 1:10-11, ASV: "Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Answer: Yes. However, "work out your own salvation" does not give you the freedom to establish the rules whereby you will be saved. John tells you that you know you are saved by the things that are written. To work out your salvation means that, with fear and trembling, you look to the things that are written and make sure you've obeyed them.

Why might a person know they are saved, but be wrong?

From Jesus' statement in Matthew 7:21-23 we know it must be possible for one to be wrong about their salvation. Let's take a moment to consider a few reasons why someone might think they are saved but actually be lost.

Some depend on their good works

The following is a paragraph I found at Life Application Ministries (I have a link to the URL on www.noeo.net, if you wish to read it for yourself):

The unforgivable sin is rejecting Christ and His gift of salvation. That is also the only SIN that will cause you not to be saved. So for those of you who have prayed for Jesus to forgive you and you have received Him as Savior, get it clear right now - YOU ARE SAVED. This is how you can tell. Do you have a desire to love God? Do you have a desire to do things right? Do you have a desire to help other people? Do you want to have a closer relationship with God? Do you want to change? Do you want to read your bible and pray more? If you have answered YES to any of these questions, YOU ARE SAVED. I'll tell you why. Only the Holy Spirit puts in us the desire to seek God. If the Holy Spirit weren't there, you would be seeking everything BUT God. So, if you have a desire, even a tiny drop, to seek God and follow Jesus, you are saved. But, if you don't then you need to stop right now and get that right with God. Click [HERE](#) to receive Christ as Savior.

The author of this article is clearly depending upon good works to save him (and encouraging those who read his article to depend upon their good works to save them). There is no New Testament scripture that teaches one to simply pray a prayer and receive Jesus as their savior. Take a moment to read Matthew 7:21-23 again. These people used their good works during their lives on earth as proof of their salvation. But Jesus said He never knew them and called them workers of iniquity. Does this mean that good works are not required? Absolutely not! I've published an article on works and salvation to this site. Feel free to take a moment to read it. So one reason people will be mistaken about their salvation is because they are depending upon their good works to save them.

Some take no responsibility for their own salvation

The following paragraph was found in an article entitled How I Know I'm Going to Heaven:

I know that I'm going to Heaven because GOD is preserving me. I'm not preserving my own Salvation. I wasn't saved by my good works (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 4:5), so I do not STAY saved by my good works. I am KEPT by the POWER OF GOD, not by my own power! God is able to keep me from falling (Jude 24), because I'm HIS child and I'm in the palm of HIS hand (Jn. 10:28-29). Ephesians 4:30 says that I have been SEALED by the Holy Spirit of God until the day of redemption! I'm not worried about losing my Salvation. I KNOW I'm going to Heaven because I'm being preserved by God's power.

This person is preaching a doctrine devoid of personal responsibility for one's own salvation. This is contrary to everything we've seen in the scriptures. As we've seen, you must hear the word of God, you must believe the gospel that's been preached to you, you must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, you must repent of your sins,

you must confess before men your belief in Jesus as the Son of God, you must be baptized for the remission of your sins, and you must remain faithful until death in order to receive the crown of life from Jesus. Paul tells you to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, and Peter tells you to make your calling and election sure. You have a great responsibility for your own salvation. If you're lost, it won't be God's fault.

Some depend on emotion

I found the following at InTouch Ministries:

As I have said, I was saved at the age of twelve. I remember where I was sitting in the church. A woman was preaching, and I went forward and accepted Christ. So much emphasis was subsequently placed on performance, I wondered if I was still saved. But as I would get down beside my bed to pray, I would say, "God, I know I'm not doing everything right. But something inside me says I'm not lost."

This is a common doctrine in Christianity today. This person is basing the knowledge of his salvation on how he feels, not on what the word of God says.

Summary

This is a small sampling of the reasons people use to declare their salvation. I'm certain a more extensive review of the teachings found on the internet would reveal many more reasons. Just as people use invalid sources of information to know that they have what they need to fix a meal or to purchase something at a store, they use invalid sources of information to know they are saved. But there is only one valid way to know you're saved: you must, with fear and trembling, carefully consider the teachings found in God's word and make sure you've obeyed them. Do you believe you are saved? Upon what are you basing your belief? Is it on the word of God or on the teachings of men?

Conclusion

We began this study by considering the opinions among Americans regarding heaven. From the very religious to the non-religious, the majority believe they will spend eternity there. We used three everyday examples to show how people are commonly wrong about things they know and the importance of basing knowledge on valid sources of information. Next, we examined the Bible and proved it to be the only valid source of information regarding God's will for mankind. By proving that apostles of Christ and true prophets cannot exist today we know the Bible must be complete. Not only is it complete, it is eternal and therefore will never change. With the understanding that people frequently base what they know on invalid information we considered three reasons why people believe they are saved. Some trust their good works, others bear no responsibility for their own salvation, and many others trust their emotions as proof of salvation. We undoubtedly could find many more reasons, but regardless of the evidence men use as proof of salvation there is only one way you can truly know you're saved: you have to, with fear and trembling, carefully study the word of God and obey what you are commanded to do.

Before I close I'd like to make a few comments about confident assurance. As we determined earlier, confident assurance is an invalid source of information. Confident assurance must come after knowledge has been verified. We cannot verify knowledge by confident assurance. Just as dangerous is relying upon an invalid source to verify knowledge. If I do so I may think I've verified what I know, but since the source I'm using to verify my knowledge is itself invalid I may proceed with confident assurance, thinking I really know what I'm doing when in fact I don't know at all. The Holy Spirit commended the Bereans for their determination to verify information they'd heard. Acts 17:10-12 records this commendation: "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few." The Bereans were hearing the apostle Paul! Acts 19:11-12 tells us about the extraordinary miracles God was performing through Paul: "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." But the source of the information wasn't sufficient for the Bereans. They believed, not because of whom they were hearing, but because they

could verify in the scriptures the truth of what he said. We must be just like them! With fear and trembling we must work out our own salvation, confirming that what we're hearing from another is true and obeying if it is. It's truly concerning to see the number of people who willingly follow a man while largely ignoring what he says. In November 1978, 913 people committed mass suicide (with women feeding poison to their children) on the orders of religious leader Jim Jones. In April 1993, 80 followers of religious leader David Koresh (including 23 under age 17, 14 of whom had been fathered by Koresh) were killed in a firestorm at their compound in Waco, Texas. These are just a couple of prominent examples. I could mention many more. Less dramatic but just as dangerous are the false teachers who may not lead their followers to physical death but whose teachings lead them to spiritual death. There is nobody alive today with the spiritual stature of the apostle Paul. Therefore, in my opinion, we must be more determined than the Bereans to be diligent in our study of the scriptures after hearing our preachers today. Paul warns us of those who, with good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple. We are to mark them and avoid them (Romans 16:17-18). Paul also warns us about ministers of Satan who transform themselves so as to appear to be ministers of righteousness: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." (2 Corinthians 11:13-15) Jesus tells us that false prophets look like sheep on the outside but on the inside are actually ravening wolves (Matthew 7:15). Please don't base your eternal destiny on the words of a man: confirm in the word of God that you really do have eternal life.

I pray this study has been helpful to you. I wrote it because, in my discussions with others, I've been struck by how many people believe they are saved but have no valid scriptural reason for this belief. God, in His infinite mercy and love for you, has told you exactly where to find the knowledge of your salvation: in His word. If you are lost it will not be God's fault. Unfortunately, many today are confident in the knowledge of their salvation but are wrong. If I may be of any help to you, please write to me. Feel free to send me an e-mail any time. Thank you for the time you've taken to consider this vital topic.