

Hey – It's Not My Fault!

John 3:16-21

Over the course of a years' time I speak with quite a few people about spiritual matters. In a superficial discussion everyone is amicable and friendly. When you begin to peel away the façade you begin to have some resistance. My impression with most people I talk with is that they want to “pass the buck” and blame everyone – anyone but self. We see this behavior all over our culture. Finger pointing abounds and scapegoats are numerous. But this morning I want to look at the question, “who can I blame if I am lost eternally? This lesson comes from several lessons preached by Harry Pickup, Sr. in 1978.

The first thing I want us to see that there are two and only two groups of people on earth – saved and lost. Jesus describes it this way, *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”* Matthew 7:13-14

Two roads to choose from – choose well as eternity is in the balance. When you consider the Billions of people who have not known God or obeyed the gospel. When you look at our own nation the percentage of those who know God and who obey his word without adding or taking away from it are very few. This means the Billions of people are going to be lost - who are they going to blame for that?

They cannot blame God

From the very beginning of time before God even made man He was interested in making it possible for us to be saved. We can get this idea from what Paul wrote to the Ephesians 1:3-6 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.”

As you can see it has always been in God’s plan that we would be able to be saved. For instance, when Adam and Eve were in the garden, He loved them and set up the perfect paradise for them to live. He let them have access to everything in the garden except one tree. God gave these two a choice. Obey and enjoy My blessings or disobey and suffer the consequences. Eve got some encouragement from the serpent and disobeyed God then made an offer to Adam that he did not refuse. They made a choice – they gave up paradise, living forever in the garden and a relationship with God that no other human would ever enjoy.

If God had not cared about our salvation, He would have simply destroyed Adam and Eve and you and I would not be here today. If God did not care about us, He would not have loved us enough to create us with a free will and send His Son to die for us.

Now as humans began to multiply, unfortunately most of them decided to turn their back on God and they turned to sin. Mankind had become so corrupt that God says this in, Genesis 6:6-7 *“And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So, the LORD said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.’”*

So, God caused a flood that destroyed everything except the 8 righteous souls and the animals he preserved on the Ark. Again, you can see God’s desire to save his creation because during the 100+ years Noah was building the ark he was also preaching and warning people to turn away from their sin, but no one listened or cared except Noah’s family. From Noah’s son Shem, God began a special race, the Hebrew race, which of course included Abraham. God made the following promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3 *“I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.”*

I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

God had chosen this special nation to be his people and he did everything he could to make sure his new nation would honor the covenant they had made with him. He gave them a great leader, Moses, and he divided the children of Israel up into tribes and he made the Levite's tribe to oversee the people to maintain spiritual faithfulness. He gave them everything they needed to know to be pleasing to him. He gave them an exact pattern to follow so they knew how to build a tabernacle so that they could offer up all kinds of offerings and sacrifices for their sins. He gave them a special law to follow that would guide them to the pathway of righteousness, but they continually turned their backs on God, and sought sin and idolatry. However, this did not stop God from showing His love for His people. He sent many prophets to teach and warn them, but most of them continued in their sinful ways. Even when God punished his people, He gave them opportunity to repent. Even though Israel constantly rebelled, God sent prophets to foretell the coming of the Messiah that would save those that would obey Him. Ten tribes became so evil that God gave them up to the world, He was still able to preserve the tribe of Judah from which the Savior would come.

As you can see God is very concerned about us finding salvation and Jesus tells us why. John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

God's love is it what motivates Him to save the lost. Paul lets us know just how much God wants us to be saved and not lost. 1 Timothy 2:3-4 *“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*

They cannot blame Jesus.

Jesus cannot be blamed because He did not leave one stone unturned to make salvation possible for all. Jesus left His heavenly home and became flesh. He went from riches to poverty!

2 Corinthians 8:9 *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”*

Why did Jesus give up all these riches to become poor? His whole purpose was to provide salvation for all. Hebrews 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.*

Knowing that this was Jesus’ mission, how can anyone point their finger at Jesus and blame Him for being lost? Every step He took and every pain He suffered was motivated by love for a lost humanity. John said it this way: 1 John 3:16 *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* Jesus loved us and wants everyone to be saved and find rest for our souls.

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. Matthew 11:28-30

Does this sound like someone who doesn’t care whether we are lost or saved? **Of course not!** Jesus loves every one of us and he wants us all to obey His word and be saved. That is why endured the cross for us and was raised from the dead. Therefore, His apostles went around proclaiming his death burial and resurrection and teaching everyone all that Jesus had told them so that both Jew and Gentile could be saved and become part of the church that Jesus built.

One Cannot Blame the Holy Spirit

We may spend several hours studying the Holy Spirit and then declare that there are many things that we do not understand about Him, but there is one thing that is crystal clear. The Holy Spirit is one of the persons in the Godhead and He is concerned about the salvation of lost humanity. As Jesus made preparations to die and return to His Father, He promised

His apostles that He would send the Comforter. This signaled the coming of the Holy Spirit. John 14:26 *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

One of the last things that Jesus said to His apostles before ascending, was about the promise of the Holy Spirit: Acts 1:5 *for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.* Acts 1:8 *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

Just as Jesus promised, on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came. This brought a large crowd where Peter and the other apostles preached the gospel for the very first time. All the nations represented could understand them in their own language because of the power of the Holy Spirit. It was because of the help of the Holy Spirit that 3000 souls that received the message that day with gladness were baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins. That day would have never come, and the church would have never begun if the Holy Spirit and not come as promised. So, no can blame the Holy spirit for being lost.

Of course, the Holy Spirit's work does not end on Pentecost. His work continues as the gospel is preached to the whole world. When Jesus sent his apostles out to make disciples, he commanded them to baptize people in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This command shows us that the Holy Spirit is interested in our salvation.

So, the conclusion is this, the only person I can blame for being lost today is me. We have received God's full instructions on how to be saved in his word and so we are without excuse and we cannot plead ignorance.

Acts 17:30-31 *Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.*