

THREE CLASSES OF THE LOST

Introduction:

1. The Word of God makes it clear that all mankind, apart from Christ, are lost (**Romans 3:23**).
2. However, within this vast multitude, there are different classes of the lost.
3. Today, we will examine three distinct classes. The aim is to encourage self-reflection and prompt a turning to God before it is too late.

1. The Neglecters (**Hebrews 2:3**).

The Bible highlights various groups of people who are lost without Christ, one of which are the neglecters. These are individuals who know the truth yet fail to act on it, thereby endangering their eternal salvation. Hebrews 2:3 warns us about the peril of neglecting such a great salvation. This section will explore examples of neglecters in the Bible and emphasize the serious consequences of their inaction.

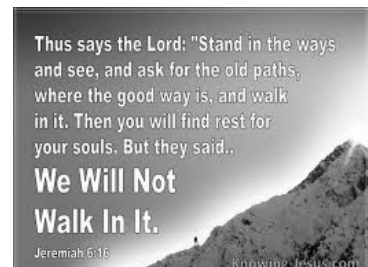
- a. Many are aware of the truth but neglect to obey it.
 - 1) Felix trembled at Paul's preaching but did not act: "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (**Acts 24:24-25**).
 - 2) Agrippa believed but did not commit to the gospel: "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (**Acts 26:28**).
 - 3) The rich young ruler knew what he needed to do but went away sorrowful: "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (**Matthew 19:21-22**).
- b. To be eternally lost, one only needs to do nothing (**Acts 2:40; Matthew 7:21; 25:1-13**).
- c. Are you among those that neglect salvation?

Neglecting salvation is a perilous state, as exemplified by Felix, Agrippa, and the rich young ruler, who all knew the truth but did not act upon it. Scripture makes it clear that to be lost eternally, one simply needs to do nothing. As we reflect on these examples, it is crucial to examine ourselves and ensure we are not among those who neglect the salvation offered through Jesus Christ.

2. The Rejecters (**Luke 7: 30; Isaiah 53:3; John 12:48**).

The rejecters represent a significant group among the lost, who consider themselves morally upright and in no need of a Savior. This section delves into their mindset and the consequences of rejecting Jesus Christ. Luke 7:30 and Isaiah 53:3 highlight the rejection of Jesus during His earthly ministry, illustrating how some, like the Pharisee in Jesus' parable, believe their own righteousness is sufficient. Despite the opportunity for salvation through Christ, many then and now choose to reject Him, preferring their own way over God's plan for redemption.

- a. A rejecter considers themselves morally good and sees no need for a Savior; they are complacent. The Pharisee in Jesus' parable saw himself as righteous and despised others: "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican" (**Luke 18:11-12**).
- b. While some Jews received Christ as the Messiah, the majority rejected Him (**John 1:11-12**).
- c. Many today continue to reject Jesus as the Messiah (**Matthew 7:13-14; 22:14**).
Peter declared, "Neither is there salvation in any other [Jesus]: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (**Acts 4:12**).
- d. Are you among those that reject salvation?



Rejecting salvation is a sobering choice, echoing the attitudes of those in biblical times who rejected Jesus despite His clear message and miracles. The Pharisees' pride and self-righteousness blinded them to their need for a Savior, leading them to reject the very One who could offer eternal life. Today, as we examine these examples, it is essential to evaluate our own hearts and ensure we are not among those who reject the salvation found only in Jesus Christ. Let us embrace His offer of grace and forgiveness, recognizing Him as the sole source of salvation for all humanity.

3. The Despisers (Acts 17:32).

Among those lost without Christ are the despisers, who not only reject Jesus Himself but also scorn His teachings and mock the gospel. Acts 17:32 captures this disdain towards Jesus, reflecting a deeper rejection that encompasses His person and His message. This section explores the attitudes and actions of these individuals, highlighting the grave implications of despising the Son of God and His teachings.

- a. They despise Jesus (Isaiah 53:3; Luke 9:23; cp. Luke 16:14; John 8:48; Matthew 13:54-57).
- b. They mock the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:23; Acts 17:32).
- c. They reject Jesus' teachings (Mark 6:1-6; Matthew 19:16-22; John 6:25-71; 8:12-59).
- d. Are you among those that reject and despise Jesus' teachings?

Despising Jesus and His teachings is a perilous stance, demonstrated through the mocking and rejection seen in Scripture. From Isaiah's prophetic depiction of the suffering servant to the outright defiance recorded in Acts and the Gospels, the despisers illustrate a profound rejection of divine truth and grace. As we reflect on these examples, it's essential to examine our own hearts and ensure we do not harbor any contempt towards Christ and His gospel. Instead, may we embrace His teachings and receive the salvation He freely offers to all who believe.

Conclusion:

1. Recognition Of The Lost: All humanity is lost without Christ, and the Scriptures make this clear (Romans 3:23). Among the lost, there are distinct groups, each with their own responses to the gospel.
2. Identification Of The Classes:
 - ☞ The Neglecters: Those who know the truth but fail to act on it, such as Felix, Agrippa, and the rich young ruler.
 - ☞ The Rejecters: Those who believe they are morally sufficient and see no need for a Savior, exemplified by the Pharisee in Jesus' parable.
 - ☞ The Despisers: Those who actively despise and mock Jesus and His teachings, as seen in the reactions to Paul's preaching and Jesus' ministry.
3. Hope For All: Despite their differences, all these groups have one thing in common: they can be saved through Jesus Christ if they turn to Him in simple obedience. The invitation to salvation is open to anyone who hears the gospel, believes the gospel, repents of their sins, confesses Jesus as the Son of God, and is immersed for the remission of sins.

Applications:

1. **Personal Reflection And Repentance:** Take time to honestly evaluate your own life in light of the three classes discussed: the neglecters, the rejecters, and the despisers. Ask yourself if you are neglecting, rejecting, or despising any aspect of Jesus' teachings. If you find areas where you fall short, repent and seek God's forgiveness and guidance to fully embrace His truth and live according to His will (Psalms 139:23-24).
2. **Active Engagement In Faith:** Move beyond mere acknowledgment of the truth to active obedience. Avoid the pitfalls of neglecting or postponing your commitment to Christ. Engage in regular prayer, Bible study, and participation in a faith community to strengthen your walk with God. Prioritize making concrete steps in your spiritual journey, such as serving others, sharing your faith, and living out the gospel in your daily life (James 1:22-25).

There are some brethren, no doubt, who need to move beyond mere acknowledgment of the truth to active obedience of the truth.
3. **Compassionate Outreach:** Recognize that many around you may fall into these classes of the lost. Approach them with compassion, understanding, and a heart to share the love and truth of Christ. Whether they are neglecters, rejecters, or despisers, remember that God's grace is available to all. Pray for opportunities to witness, offer support, and guide others toward the transformative power of Jesus' salvation (1 Peter 3:15-16).

Questions:

1. What does Hebrews 2:3 warn us about, and how does it relate to the class of neglecters?
2. Can you give an example of a biblical figure that trembled at the truth but did not act on it, and explain the significance?
3. How does the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector illustrate the mindset of the rejecters?
4. What is a common attitude of the despisers towards Jesus and His teachings, as seen in the New Testament?
5. Why is it crucial for believers to reflect on whether they are neglecting, rejecting, or despising Jesus' teachings?

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Questions & Answers:

1. What does Hebrews 2:3 warn us about, and how does it relate to the class of neglecters?

Answer: Hebrews 2:3 warns us about the danger of neglecting so great a salvation. It relates to the class of neglecters by highlighting that knowing the truth but failing to act on it can lead to eternal loss.

2. Can you give an example of a biblical figure who trembled at the truth but did not act on it, and explain the significance?

Answer: Felix is an example of a biblical figure who trembled at Paul's preaching but did not act on it (**Acts 24:24-25**). His reaction signifies that fear or emotional response to the truth is insufficient without corresponding action and obedience.

3. How does the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector illustrate the mindset of the rejecters?

Answer: The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector illustrates the mindset of the rejecters by showing the Pharisee who considered himself morally superior and in no need of a Savior, thus rejecting the need for repentance and humility (**Luke 18:11-12**).

4. What is a common attitude of the despisers towards Jesus and His teachings, as seen in the New Testament?

Answer: A common attitude of the despisers towards Jesus and His teachings is one of scorn and mockery. They often rejected His authority, mocked His claims, and ridiculed the gospel message (**Acts 17:32; 1 Corinthians 1:23**).

5. Why is it crucial for believers to reflect on whether they are neglecting, rejecting, or despising Jesus' teachings?

Answer: It is crucial for believers to reflect on whether they are neglecting, rejecting, or despising Jesus' teachings because these attitudes can lead to eternal separation from God. Self-examination helps believers to identify areas of disobedience and encourages them to fully embrace and follow Christ's teachings, ensuring their salvation (**2 Corinthians 13:5**).