

Prospects for Salvation

by Bill Crews

When we speak of "prospects," we are usually referring to accountable people, boys and girls, men and women, who can be reached with the gospel, who can be taught and converted, who can be saved (some know they are lost, some do not and some think they have been saved when they have not).

In the sense that God loves all men (John 3:16), in the sense that Christ died for all men (1 John 2:2; Hebrews 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:6), in the sense that the grace of God offers salvation to all men (Titus 2:11-12), in the sense that God would have all men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4), in the sense that the Lord wishes none to perish (2 Peter 3 :9), in the sense that anyone who is lost can be saved **if he wants to be** (John 3: 16; Revelation 22: 17), **every lost person is a prospect for salvation.**

But any person can be stubborn and unwilling. The mind can be closed; the eyes can be blinded; the heart can be hardened. One can go by his own feelings, or by his own experiences, or by his own opinions, or by the wisdom of men, or by the assurances of others, **rather than by the word of God as revealed in his book, the Bible.**

Please read Matthew 13:10-17 and 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. According to the book of Acts, when the apostles and others went forth preaching the gospel in Jewish synagogues, in public places, from house to house, to a handful or a multitude, only a few, usually, were receptive. The majority rejected their efforts and their message. Many resisted them, spoke against them, contradicted their words and even persecuted them. According to Hebrews 6:4-6 some fell away from the truth and so hardened themselves that it was impossible for anyone to get them to repent. Such are not prospects. When Jesus warned against giving that which is holy to "dogs" and casting pearls before "the swine," he certainly indicated that all people are not prospects.

But surely some are prospects. Indeed they are. The parable of the sower with the Lord's explanation surely shows that those whose hearts are good and honest are always excellent prospects. When exposed to or confronted with the truth, they will receive it. The parable of the sower is found in Matthew 13; Mark 4 and Luke 8. Luke 8:15 says: *"And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast and bring forth fruit with patience."*

Those who will to do the will of God are those who are devoted to God, that is, they have a Godward attitude which desires to be pleasing to God in all things. And these are certainly prospects. Jesus said, *"If any man wills to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself"* (John 7: 17).

Anyone who is *"more noble"* as were the Bereans who heard the gospel from Paul and Silas and then *"received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so"* (Acts 17:11) is certainly a prospect. Read verse 12 for the results.

In my life time I have heard of many who, through their own private study of the Scriptures, learned enough of the truth to know what to do to be saved and how to live as a Christian. And I have heard of many others who, having already been taught many things from the religious creeds of men and having established a religious affiliation with some denominational church, began to study the Scriptures for themselves. By their own reading of the Bible they could see that they had been misled on many things and became excellent prospects. A young mother in Sri Lanka started reading her Bible to learn from it and could not find the Methodist church of her parents. An elderly man in Baton Rouge began to read the New Testament for himself and learned that his sprinkling was not baptism.

So, anyone who is reading the Bible with an open and receptive mind, who is measuring all religious teaching and practice by it, who is looking for people of God like those described therein and a church like that depicted therein **is an excellent prospect.** But people who are not even interested enough to read the Bible for themselves, who do not think that what the Bible teaches or doesn't teach is that important, who are convinced that it doesn't really matter what anyone believes and practices in religion as long as he is sincere are not prospects at all. Reader friend, what about you? Are you a prospect for salvation and the truth?

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