



WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?

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This question was asked when Jesus said " How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (Luke. 18:24,25) The people wondered how the rich ruler who had been keeping all the commandments since his boyhood, could not inherit eternal life. He kept all the commandments but 'still lacked one thing.' A person might claim that he has obeyed all the commandments yet may not enjoy a perfect relationship with God which alone can make him eligible to enjoy eternal life.

In this context, we can not help recalling the parable of the Prodigal son. The elder brother was of course obeying all the commandments of the father but did not wish to enjoy the banquet which his father had prepared. He chose to stand out because he also "lacked one thing." He did not have love which should have made it possible for him to accept his repented brother. May be, his mind was on the money and property that he might have to share with his brother who had already squandered his share. The mind of the rich ruler too was focused on his wealth. He was asked to sell everything and give to the poor. His heart was in his wealth. Jesus wanted full surrender.

On another occasion Jesus told Martha "only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken from her." (Luke 10: 42) That 'one thing' is her strong relationship with God which made her sit at His feet and listen to His words. Even if a person seems to obey all the commandments overtly, if he had not surrendered himself inwardly, he will not be able to establish a perfect relationship with God. Martha was trying to prepare food for Jesus, an open expression of concern indeed. Yet, she lacked that one thing which would have made all her efforts acceptable.

Jesus' reply to this question 'who can be saved?' was, "What is impossible with men is possible with God." God's help is available for him who is genuinely interested in establishing a relationship with Him.