

Bible - General Questions

'Not Everyone Who Says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' ' – Do Romans 10:9 and Matthew 7:21 Conflict?

By Dr. Paul M. Elliott

To understand why there is no contradiction between these passages, we must understand exactly what it means to confess Christ.

Our Reader's Question

A reader asks, "Paul said that those who 'confess the Lord Jesus' are saved (Romans 10:9). But Jesus said, 'Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 7:21). Is this a contradiction? If not, why not?"

Many Call Him "Lord"

If you watch religious television programs with Biblical discernment, it won't take you long to encounter church "shows" that often have a large "Jesus is Lord" banner behind the pulpit, but proclaim a false Christ and a false gospel from the platform. The telecasts of Benny Hinn, Creflo Dollar, Joyce Meyer, Kenneth Copeland, T. D. Jakes, and many others fall into this category. They all proclaim, "Jesus is Lord." Prosperity-gospel preacher Kirbyjon Caldwell gave the benediction at the first inauguration of President George W. Bush by praying, in a booming voice, "in the name that is above every name, the Lord Jesus Christ."¹

You'll find the same phenomenon in the "mainline" church scene. The Nicene Creed, which is recited as part of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church and in many other apostate bodies, begins with the words, "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ."

You'll even find people saying, "Lord, Lord", in the world of rock music. According to biographer Geoffrey Giuliano, former Beatles lead guitarist George Harrison, who wrote the infamous song "My Sweet Lord", would engage his audiences in a blasphemous ritual of "chanting the holy names of the Lord" during live performances:

Breaking into the thundering rhythm guitar intro to "My Sweet Lord," Harrison would soon begin to invite the cheering, largely stoned crowd to "chant the holy name of the Lord." Few responded. Switching messiahs midstream, he would then rocket into the famous Krishna Hallelujah chorus and begin singing, "Om Christ, Om Christ, Om Christ" over and over, adding, "I know a lot of you out there think that's swearing, but it's not! If we all chant together purely for one minute, we'll blow the roof off this place!"²

Confessing Christ: Inclusive or Exclusive?

Yes, many people call Jesus, "Lord". And today, both liberal ecumenicists and postmodernist Evangelical inclusivists say that this formulation – whatever one means by it – is all that is necessary to enter the kingdom.

Is that what Paul means in Romans 10:9 when he declares, "If you confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved"? Certainly not. And this is the reason why there is no contradiction between Paul's declaration that the true way of salvation entails recognition of the Lordship of Christ, and Christ's own declaration that not all who call Him "Lord" are truly His.

How can it be that so many can say, "Lord, Lord", but still be in darkness outside the kingdom? In [upcoming articles](#) we're going to answer that question, and explain from Scripture exactly what it means to "confess Christ." We'll find that a genuine

profession of "Jesus is Lord" is by its very nature exclusive, not inclusive. And that is because it is a confession of who Jesus really is.

References:

1. Kirbyjon Caldwell is pastor of the 14,000-member Windsor Village United Methodist Church in Houston Texas, is the author of *The Gospel of Good Success: A Road Map to Spiritual, Emotional, and Financial Wholeness* (Simon & Schuster, 1999) and *Entrepreneurial Faith: Launching Bold Initiatives to Expand God's Kingdom* (Waterbrook Press, 2004). His church website presents what appears to be a solid salvation message, until the reader comes to this: "[God] wants you to be whole and complete or saved - spiritually, emotionally, physically, mentally, financially, and socially." The main "sin" of which people need to be forgiven is not feeling good about themselves. In 2008 Caldwell endorsed Barack Hussein Obama for President.
2. Geoffrey Giuliano, *Dark Horse: The Private Life of George Harrison* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990).

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