

# ***THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST***

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **SOUL-SAVING LESSONS** **“Do You Want to Go to Heaven?”**

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.* Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

Do you **really** want to go to Heaven? More than anything in the world, is your main goal and desire to go to Heaven? As we think about this question and place emphasis on different words, we can understand the importance of it. For example, we could ask, “Do **you** really want to go to Heaven?” We are not talking about whether you want your children to go to Heaven, whether you want your wife to go to Heaven, or whether you want your family members to go to Heaven. Do **you** as an individual really want to go to Heaven? Or, we might ask, “Do you **really** want to go to Heaven?” Is this your sincere desire? Is it the one goal in life that you really have? Is it the most important thing to you? We also might ask, “Do you really want to go to **Heaven**?” Do you really want to spend eternity with God? Sometimes we tend to get attached to this old world of ours. Or we get attached to the things in the world—which then makes it difficult for us to go to Heaven.

It is evident that some people do **not** want to go to Heaven, because if they did they would live their lives much differently than they do. Why are some people going to miss out on Heaven? Some definitely **will** miss out on Heaven. But why? Some are going to miss out on Heaven because they have underestimated the power of Satan. Satan is wily and crafty. Ephesians 6:11 teaches us that we must beware “the wiles of the devil.” The text of 2 Corinthians 2:11 warns us not to underestimate Satan because he uses many different tools in his arsenal against us. We learn from 1 Timothy 3:7 that he is very crafty in trying to tempt us to do wrong. Luke 22:31-32 teaches us that sometimes we can underestimate the power of Satan. Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” As we think about the principle of Satan trying to cause Peter to be lost, we need to remember that some people will be lost because they underestimate just how powerful Satan really is.

Satan is not someone with whom you want to flirt. And sin is not something with which you want to play around. Sin is something with which we must be careful not to get involved. We must make certain that we do not give Satan a foothold in our lives. Ephesians 4:27 says that we must not “give place to the devil.” We can give the devil a place in our lives in several ways. We can do that by not being as dedicated to Christ as we ought to be. We can do that through sin and its pleasures. We can do that through the lust of our eyes. We must make sure that we do not give the devil a foothold. And we must make sure that we do not allow him to gain access to our lives. Revelation 12:9 teaches us that Satan is the “old serpent” who wants each one of us to be lost. In 1 Peter 5:8, he is described as “a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” In the very next verse we are told to “resist him steadfast in the faith.” Satan is a diabolical demon. He is like an untamed stallion. He cannot be controlled. We cannot have “just a little Satan and a little bit of sin” in our lives and expect everything to be all right. That is not the way it works—even though we sometimes think that way. Sometimes we seem to think that sin will be all right “in a

small amount.” We get the idea that it will be acceptable to have 1% sin in our lives—just as long as we live 99% of the time for the Lord. But that is not the way it works. Satan is like a subtle serpent. Do you remember how Satan is described in 2 Corinthians 11:2-4? He is described there as “a serpent who deceived Eve.” In Genesis 3, he comes to Eve as a serpent to tempt her. We may rest assured that Satan will not show up in our lives, dragging the ball and chain with which he hopes to shackle us. That is not the way he works. Rather, Satan will come to us in a very subtle way—a way in which we are open to his temptations. Thus, some people are going to be lost because they have underestimated the power of Satan in their lives.

We need to realize today that Satan truly is an active adversary. Matthew 16:23 reminds us of just how active an adversary he is. Jesus said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.” In this instance, Peter had become like Satan because he had taken on an adversarial role. Today, if we are not careful, we can allow Satan to work in our lives in the same manner. Think about how Satan used Judas. In John 12, we learn that Judas had a greed problem. We then learn from John 13:2 that Satan entered into the heart of Judas. In verse 27 we learn that it was Satan who was orchestrating the events behind Judas betraying the Lord and turning Him over to the Jewish leaders. Satan had worked in Judas’ life, and had become an active adversary. We need to know today that Satan will work in our lives if we will allow him to do so. Satan is like a crafty chameleon. A chameleon is a lizard-like animal that can change colors in order to fit into its environment and surroundings. Satan is just like that. He can adapt to whatever weakness we may have. If we have a weakness for alcohol, Satan can use that against us. We need to recognize that Satan can use certain sins in our lives to cause us to be lost.

Some are going to miss out on Heaven because of the separation that sin brings. How sad it is that some in this world are going to be lost because sin separates man from God. The text of Isaiah 59:1-2 teaches us this very principle. Isaiah wrote:

“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear.”

The problem is not that God cannot hear us or reach out His arm and save us. What, then, is the problem? It is that our sins, our iniquities, separate us from God. The text of 1 John 5:16-17 teaches us that there is a sin that leads to death. What is that sin? It is any sin of which we will not repent. The text of 1 John 3:4 teaches us that all unrighteousness is sin. When we know what to do and we do the opposite so that we transgress God’s law, then that is sin. But James also teaches us that “to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:17). This is something with which all of us must deal because sin is a universal problem. Romans 3:23 says that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Here is what we learn from that passage: if “all,” then “I.” I have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Romans 6:23 teaches us that “the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” We need to realize that sin is not something to take lightly. If we live in it and remain in it, then we **will** be lost! In the great long ago, the writer of the Book of Numbers said, “Be sure that your sins will find you out” (Num. 32:23). Our sins will cause us to be lost. We cannot run from them or hide from them. We cannot act like sin does not exist. If we do, then we will be separated from God. Hebrews 3:12 offers this warning: “Beware, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” We can remain in sin and be lost. Unfortunately, some are going to miss Heaven because of the separation that sin brings.

Some people will miss Heaven because of the foolish excuses that they offer in this life. There are so many excuses that people offer when they are asked, "Why haven't you put the Lord first in your life?" They might say, "I have this event in my life," or "My family is doing this," or "We have to go and do this." When they are asked, "Why can't you serve the Lord more faithfully," they might say, "I have too many other things to do." There may be legitimate reasons why, on occasion, people cannot serve the Lord to the best of their ability. But there are many times when they simply dream up excuses for not doing the will of God. There is a good example of this in Luke 14:18 where we are told, "But they all with one accord began to make excuses." The context of this statement is the cry, "Come to the feast." Invitations were sent, but some people responded by saying, "We cannot come because of this reason," or "We cannot come because of that reason." In that context there are some of the worst excuses you could ever begin to imagine. One man said, "I cannot come to the feast because I just bought a piece of land and I have to go see it." Another said, "I have just bought a mule and I have to go test him." Ask yourself this. Here we have a man saying that he bought a piece of land and he needs to go look at it. How many people buy property without first looking at it? Also, this feast is a supper. How many people are out in the field at suppertime plowing with a new mule? The last excuse was the most foolish of all. The fellow said, "I have just married and my wife and I have to go do something else." Let me ask you this: How many newlyweds can afford to miss a free meal? This was a very poor excuse. But a lot of people make the same types of excuses to God today. We need to realize that our excuses will cause us to be lost. In Acts 24:25, Paul preaches the Gospel. He preaches "righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come." We are told that the man to whom Paul preached (Felix) was fearful. He said, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you." Acts 26:28 provides another example of a horrible excuse. Paul once again preached the Gospel—this time to King Agrippa. But the king said, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian," and he sent Paul away. The attitude of these men was, "When we have a more convenient time, we will call you back and hear what you have to say." Think about how sad it is to hear someone say, "You **almost** persuade me to become a Christian." What might have kept King Agrippa from obeying the Gospel? What excuse might he have offered? Perhaps he might have lost his status as king. Perhaps he would have lost his position in the government. Or, people might not have thought quite as much of him as they once did. We need to realize, however, that all excuses are lies. There are, of course, good **reasons** why someone might be hindered. Perhaps they are ill or have health problems. Thus, they cannot serve God as they might have otherwise. But **excuses** are simply lies that keep us from doing God's will. Those excuses are not going to save us on the Day of Judgment.

Some people (children, especially) will be lost because they did not have someone (like parents) who cared enough for them to teach them the Gospel. The Bible says in Proverbs 22:15 and other passages that parents are to train up a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The Bible says that if you train up a child in the way he should go, he will not depart from that. We see powerful examples in the Bible of how we, like children, ought to learn God's will. In 3 John 4, John referred to Christians as "my little children." He then went on to teach them the truth of God's will. Children are a gift from God (Ps. 127:1). Oh, how we need more parents like the parents of John the Immerser. In Luke 1:6 we see that they "both were righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." Parents today need to realize that they if they do not teach their children properly and give them a good background in the Bible, that could keep them from going to Heaven. Some people are going to miss out on Heaven because they did not have parents who taught them about the Lord. Now, of course, each individual has a personal responsibility to seek the Lord. But parents have children at a time in their lives when the parents can guide them, train them, and instill in them principles of right and wrong.

Some people are going to miss out on Heaven because they had an external “church-house” type of religion. I am reminded of the people in Mark 7:6ff. who had this type of religion. These were people who refused to take care of their parents because they said, “Corban,” meaning that they were dedicating all their money to the temple. These were people who would wash their hands up to their elbows. They washed their couches and their pitchers. Jesus said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.’ In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Mk, 7:6-7). In Jeremiah 7:4, the people cried out three times, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.” What were they trying to say? “Save us, oh our temple!” Too many people allow their **sanctuary** to become their **cemetery**. They think that because they have gone to a “place of God,” or to worship God, that they are right with God. Too many people seem to have the attitude, “I went and ‘got my ticket punched,’ so I am fine for another week.” That is one of the reasons that people miss out on Heaven. There are people who are not committed to the cause of Christ on a daily basis. Christianity is not a “once-a-week” type of religion. It is something that we do every day of our lives. It is something we do because we are right with God and because we are faithful to Him. Jesus said in Luke 9:23, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” Are you really living for God every day? Or do you have an external, “church-house” type of religion?

To help us want to go to Heaven, we first must come to realize the beauty and splendor of Heaven. In Job 14:14 the question is asked, “If a man dies, shall he live again?” The answer provided by the New Testament is a resounding “Yes!” In John 11:25-26 at the death of Lazarus Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” We today must realize that we **are** going to live beyond this life. I am reminded of the words of Psalm 23:4 where the psalmist said, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” Hebrews 6 paints a picture of Jesus going before us as a forerunner to Heaven itself. Think of all the things that Jesus did during His life on Earth. Think about all that He gave up. Why did He do that? He did it so that we could experience the joy of going to Heaven to be with God (Heb. 12:1-2). We need to have that as our motivation today as well. Think of the beautiful words of John 14:1-4, which encourage us to go to Heaven. Jesus said to His disciples:

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

Jesus said, “Yes, I am going to leave you. And yes, you will be left alone. But I am going to come back one day to receive you, at which time you can come to live with the Father and Me in the place that is being prepared for you.” The text of 2 Corinthians 5:1 says, “For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” If we want to go to Heaven, then we need to realize just how beautiful Heaven is going to be. In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, we are taught that the Lord is going to come back with a shout of the voice of the archangel, that the dead in Christ will rise first, and that we will always be “with the Lord.” Yes, according to 2 Thessalonians 1, it will be a day of vengeance for God. But it will be a great day for those who have lived faithfully in Christ.

We learn in 2 Timothy 2:10-11 that salvation is found only “in Christ.” Where is Christ? He has gone to be with the Father. Thus, if we want to be with God, we must put our trust in Christ to be sure that we are right. Think of the beautiful words of Revelation 21:4—“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” All of the horrible things that we experience in this life—things like sorrow, sadness, and sickness—will not exist in Heaven. That is part of what makes it Heaven. It is such a beautiful place, and we should want to go there more than anything in the world! We should want to live with God for eternity.

What will make Heaven beautiful? It is the fact that God (Who is love—1 John 4:8) will be there. Jesus will be there. The saints of old will be there. The loves ones who were faithful Christians and who have gone on before us will be there. Imagine someone who is close to you. Maybe you have lost a son, a daughter, a spouse, a father, or a mother who died as a faithful child of God. We need to know that if they died after having been faithful to the Lord, and if we die after having been faithful to the Lord, then we are going to be reunited in Heaven—a place that is far greater and far more beautiful than we could ever imagine. In view of the beauty of Heaven, why would anyone not want to go there? We should not want to miss out on Heaven.

But in order for us to go to Heaven, we need to recognize some warning signs in this life. If we are going to make it to Heaven, we must look out for warning signs along the way. In 2 Peter 1:10, we are told to make our calling and election sure. We are to beware and be watchful. We are told in Philippians 3:20 that our true citizenship is not here on this Earth, but it is in Heaven. Thus, there are signs along the road we travel that we must recognize. The first warning sign is the one that says, “Do Not Enter!” As you are driving along the road at times, you may see a sign that says, “Do Not Enter!,” or a sign that says, “Wrong Way!” Along the road to Heaven, there are signs just like those. In 1 Corinthians 15:33, we are warned not to allow evil companions to corrupt good morals. Proverbs 13:15 says, “The way of the transgressor is hard.” We should not enter into the crowd of people who are determined to do that which is wrong. We should not allow peer pressure to cause us to do things that we know are not right. If we see people who do drugs, drink alcohol, or smoke, we need to realize that there is a warning sign there for the Christian that says, “Do Not Enter!” We must not go down that pathway. There is a sign there that says, “Danger!” or “Warning!” Such signs are there to teach us that we must watch out for certain things in this life. Colossians 2:8 teaches us to beware of the sins of our former past life. In 1 Corinthians 10:12, we find an admonition or warning, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” This warning was given to those who lived in the time of the wilderness warning. In bringing this up in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul’s point is, “Remember these people. They were not faithful. They fell in the wilderness. Therefore you need to take heed, lest you also fall.” We need to be sure that we do not give in to temptation and fall by the wayside.

There is another warning sign that says, “Slow Down!” Sometimes you may come to a patch of road under construction, and there will be a sign that says, “Slow Down” or “Reduce Speed!” Psalm 46:10 teaches us this same principle. There, God said, “Be still, and know that I am God.” We need to realize that God—Who is the Creator of all things—loves us. Sometimes the events of this life cause us to move so fast that we forget to slow down and give God the glory. Hebrews 3:12 says, “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 13:5, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.” Sometimes we

need to slow down, stop, and look at our lives so that we can compare them with God's Word, the Bible, in order to make sure that we are right with God. We must set aside the things of the world so that we can stop and think about our souls—the most important things that we possess.

Then there is a sign that says, "Crossroad!" This is a sign which teaches us that we are coming to a point in our lives when must make a pivotal decision that is of paramount importance. Jesus illustrated this in Matthew 7:13-14. In this context, He taught the people around Him that there was a crossroads. He said, "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." Oftentimes we come to a crossroads in our lives—where we have to make tough, difficult decisions. That is why God gave us His Word in the Bible—so that we can know what the right decision is. Joshua said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). Joshua told the Israelites that they could serve the gods of the lands around them—the Baals and the Ashteroths—if they wanted to. But he and his family had made a decision to serve the Lord God. When we reach a crossroads, we need to remember that we made a previous decision to serve God. If you are at a crossroads in your life right now and you are trying to make a decision about what you should do to serve God, the Bible makes it abundantly clear. This is not something on which God has not spoken.

What does a person have to do go to Heaven? If we want to be sure that we are ready to go to Heaven, what must we do? First, we must believe in God's Word. The Bible says in Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Hearing the Word of God means that we must be willing to hear what God has to say. We are not to hear what others have to say, but what the Bible as God's Word teaches us. Once we have heard what the Bible has to say, then we must be willing to believe on Jesus as the Son of God. Jesus said in John 8:24, "Unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." In Acts 8:36 as Philip and the Ethiopian nobleman came to water, the nobleman said, "Here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Philip said to the nobleman, "If you believe with all your heart, you may" (vs. 37). The nobleman responded by saying, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." That brings us to the third step in the plan of salvation, which is the good confession that the Ethiopian nobleman made. That confession must be made by every person who is going to be saved. We learn this from Romans 10:10 where the Bible says, "With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Jesus made it clear that confession is essential. He said in Matthew 10:32-33, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven." Then a person must be willing to repent and change his life. Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "Unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish." A person must change his way of thinking as well as other incorrect things in his life. Then, that person must be baptized for the remission of sins. Saul (who would later become the apostle Paul) was told in Acts 22:16, "Why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Then, a person must live faithfully to Christ each and every day.

Are you really ready to go to Heaven? We want you to know today that we love your soul and that God loves you. We want nothing more than for you to spend eternity with God. I hope and pray that you will consider the things I have said here today. If you could like to have a copy of this lesson on a DVD or a CD, you may request one from our Website at [www.thegospelofchrist.com](http://www.thegospelofchrist.com). It is our prayer for you that you will strive to follow the Gospel of Christ and go to Heaven.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “DO YOU WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN?”

1. This lesson teaches that some people will miss out on Heaven because they underestimated someone. Who is that “someone”?
2. What does Ephesians 6:11 teach us?
3. Ephesians 4:27 says that we must not “give place to the devil.” What does that mean?
4. What, according to Isaiah 59:1-2, is another reason why many people will miss out on Heaven?
5. According to 1 John 3:4, what is “all unrighteousness”?
6. What does the text of Numbers 32:23 teach us will happen if we sin?
7. What was Jesus teaching in the story He told in Luke 14:18ff.?
8. What mistake did Felix make in Acts 24:25?
9. What mistake did King Agrippa make in Acts 26:28?
10. According to Luke 1:6, what specific quality did the parents of John the Immerser possess that qualified them to be good parents to their son?
11. When, in Jeremiah 7:4, the people cried out three times, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,” what was their point?
12. What is wrong with the type of thinking expressed by the people in Jeremiah 7?
13. In John 11:25-26 there is an answer to the question asked in Job 14:14. What is the question, and what is the answer?
14. What information is found in John 14:1-4 that teaches us about the reality of Heaven?
15. According to 2 Timothy 2:10-11, where is salvation found?
16. What are three things that will make Heaven so beautiful?
17. According to Philippians 3:20, where is the Christian’s true citizenship to be found?
18. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, what did the apostle Paul urge Christians to do?
19. In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus discussed a crossroads that will confront us as we try to make it to Heaven. What is that crossroads?
20. What are some of the warning signs we need to observe in order to go to Heaven?
21. What steps must a person take to become a Christian and go to Heaven?