

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

SOUL-SAVING LESSONS

“What Is Your Life?”

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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

What is your life? What is life all about? What is the basic purpose and meaning of life? Why are we here on this Earth? What goals do we have? What accomplishments do we plan on making? James asked this question in James 4:14 when he said, “What is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” James’ point was that life is very brief and that it passes quickly. But notice especially the first part of James’ question. “What is your life?” Today we want to study the purpose and meaning of life. We want to know what the Bible says our lives are all about. In doing so, we are going to learn some things that are **not** the purpose of life. For some who view or hear this lesson, it may be the very time that they have ever thought about the meaning or purpose of life. Perhaps you have never considered why you are here or what life is all about. I therefore would like to challenge you to seriously think about the meaning of life. We have only one life to live, and the way we live it will determine where we spend eternity.

Some would say that life is merely an accident—an evolutionary accident. Over billions of years we evolved as the result of a cosmic explosion that resulted in our being here. Our lives represent nothing more than, like the lives of animals, an existence that is going to be here for only a little while. Others would say that life is a “pleasure ride.” Their idea is to “live it up,” in order to fulfill as many lusts and passions as possible. Thus, while they are alive, they are intent upon having a good time. Others think that life is a game—a game of “beating the odds” in order to make the most out of this life. This is the philosophy of “the one who has the most toys in the end wins.”

But is life really a game? Is this what life is all about—to see how many material possessions we can accumulate during this life? To some, life is really meaningless and worthless. Such people see no real value in life. For them, life is dull and boring and has no real meaning. They simply move through their lives without purpose. They have no real value in their lives, and as a result they often end up taking their own lives.

But there is a group of people—Christians—who have a higher calling. They realize that life is worth living, and they also realize that life is not just about them. One of the devil’s most effective ploys is to cause us to think that life is meaningless, and that it is an unimportant accident. If Satan can cause us to think about life as little more than the end result of a “big bang,” then all of religion and godliness wane. So today I want us to look at the purpose of life. I would like to examine some purposes that people have that are not right, and that are a detriment to humans and to their existence in eternity with God.

First, I want to note that life is not “an adventure in humanism.” Many people on this planet think that life is all about humans. It’s “all about us,” and everything we do should somehow promote the human race. This is the idea that “whatever the majority says” is the way it should be. In the *Humanist Manifestos I & II*, we find the following statement concerning religion: “We believe, however, that traditional or dogmatic or authoritarian religions that

place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species.” Think about this statement. The portion of that comment that mentions “revelation” and “creed” is referring in the humanists’ language to the Bible. So “traditional religions” that depend upon the Bible “do a disservice to the human species”? Such statements deny three of Christianity’s most fundamental principles. They deny the inspiration of the Scriptures. How can it be the case that “any religion that places revelation about human needs...does a disservice to the human species”? It is inspiration that tells us who we are, how we got here, and what the real meaning of life is. It calls us to a higher level by reminding us that we are not the pinnacle of this life. Rather, God is! As I think about the concept of inspiration, I am reminded of what the psalmist said in Psalm 119:160—“The entirety of Your word is truth.” Paul said to Timothy, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Jesus said in John 17:17, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” The Bible is the standard of right and wrong today, and we can know that it contains the will of God. God has not created us and then abandoned us to leave us here all alone without any guidelines or without a roadmap to get to Heaven. Jesus promised His disciples in John 16:13 that when the Holy Spirit came, He would guide them “into all truth.” Today we have all truth. The text of 2 Peter 1:3 teaches us that “His divine power has given to us **all things** that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us.” The idea of humanism denies the inspiration of the Scriptures. The inspiration of God’s Word is not just a mere idea. Rather, it is something that is provable. For example, we can examine such things as prophecy. Consider the Book of Isaiah, which has been proved to date to around 750 B.C. We find prophecies within that book that clearly show us that the Word of God is true. It was Isaiah who prophesied that a virgin would bring forth a son whose name would be Immanuel (which is translated “God with us”). If we open the Bible to Matthew 1:19-21, we find the exactly fulfillment of that prophecy. Or, think about Psalm 22. A thousand years before Christ came to the Earth, the psalmist graphically depicted in great detail what was going to happen to the Lord. Everything Psalm 22 said was fulfilled in history by Jesus Christ. Matthew 27, Luke 23, and the works of the Roman historian Josephus all bear this out as being true. Prophecy proves that the Bible is inspired of God. There also is scientific foreknowledge within the Bible that shows it to be inspired. In Isaiah 40:22, Isaiah spoke of the Earth being round. In times past, some people thought that the Earth was flat. Now, however, we have proven that Isaiah was correct and that the Earth is round. Thus, documents such as the *Humanist Manifestos* deny the inspiration of the Bible.

Humanism also denies the existence of God. Recall the statement I quoted earlier, which stated: “We believe, however, that traditional or dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to the human species.” It does not do a “disservice” to humanity to teach that there is a God and that He created us. The psalmist said in Psalm 14:1, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” This is the heart and core of humanism. It is an effort intended to remove God and to place man, with his wants and his needs, at the center of attention. This is what humanism is all about. But there is a real problem in trying to do that. When we place ourselves as the center of attention, and when we focus solely on our own needs and desires, it becomes an unending cycle. Every time we find some need and we try to fulfill that need, then we end up trying to find a greater need that we must likewise fulfill. This, then, becomes a vicious cycle that never ends. As long as we are trying to please ourselves and make life “all about us,” we will never have a lasting, meaningful purpose to your life. But when we turn our lives over to God and decide to live for Him, that is when life takes on meaning and purpose.

The *Humanist Manifestos* also make a very disturbing comment about religion when they say, "We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race.... As nontheists, we begin with humans, not God, nature, not deity." This is unbelievable—for humanists to suggest that there is "insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural," and that it is "irrelevant to the question of the survival and fulfillment of the human race." Let's begin where the humanists begin. They say, "We believe in nature, not deity." But does the humanist realize that there is evidence in nature that proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that God exists? The psalmist said in Psalm 19:1-2, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge." Go out at night and look at the stars in the sky. As you look at the vast Universe, can you really believe that such order and complexity is the result of some "cosmic explosion"? Can you really believe that somehow—by some "evolutionary accident"—such things came into being? The Sun, Moon, stars, and planets all work intricately together, yet we are asked to believe that "somehow," such things just "accidentally happened"? Romans 1:18-20 teaches us that the invisible attributes of God are clearly seen through the things that He created. We can look at nature—the creation around us—and see that there is a God. Look at the seasons and the changes of life that occur within them. Look at how plants and animals are so closely dependent upon one another. How is that they evolved, yet are so dependent upon one another? We can see from nature that God does exist. Nature shouts out to us that there is a God. The Word of God—with its prophecy, with its scientific foreknowledge, with its accurate historical facts—teaches us that God does exist. If we look at nature and the world around us, the evidence shows us that there is a God and that He does care deeply for each one of us.

Humanism is also a disturbing principle because of such statements as this. "Promises of salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful.... No deity will save us; we must save ourselves." Here is how humanism does great damage to the world in which we live. Humanism says that what we have heard about Heaven and Hell is merely an illusion. It is someone trying to trick you into thinking that there will be eternal damnation or eternal blessings. Humanism says that this life is all there is. If you want to talk about a discouraging and depressing belief, this is it. Believing that all we have to look forward to is tomorrow, and the next day, and the rest of this life, and then we are "dead all over, just like Rover," is both discouraging and depressing because at times the life that we are living right now is not the most enjoyable. Humanism teaches that Heaven and Hell are merely illusions. The implication is, therefore, that God has lied to us. But that is not true. Malachi 3:6 indicates that God does not change. Hebrews 6:18 says that God cannot lie. The implication of the humanists' teaching is that God and the Bible are not true. But John 8:32 says that we can know the truth, and that the truth will set us free. If there is no hope for future immortality for the soul, what does it matter at all? Think about that for just a moment. If there is no hope for future immortality, and if we are not going to live in either Heaven or Hell, what are the implications? Here they are. In this life, we can do whatever we want, and the only consequences that we will have to endure are in the here and now. We can live by our own rules, and do to others whatever we want. We can commit criminal acts. We can murder. We can commit rape and genocide. And yet the only consequences will be in the here and now. Consider also that if society as a whole decides that such actions are acceptable, then they would be—because humans are the decision makers, not God.

Another false concept is that life is an evolutionary accident. Some people live under the premise that billions of years ago there was a cosmic "big bang," and that out of that humans ultimately arose. We can clearly show, however, from the creation around us that God does exist and that His Word is true. Humans are not accidents. We did not spring

from some type of ape-like ancestor. Design demands a designer. Remember Psalm 19:1? “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork.” The psalmist was saying that if the Earth, the planets, and the galaxies were “off just a little,” life as we know it would be impossible. Consider the Moon, for example. If it were to be moved just a little farther toward the Earth, giant tidal waves would flood the Earth. If the Moon were to be moved just a little farther away from the Earth, the Earth would be a complete desert. Yet the Moon is at exactly the right point for life to exist. Are we to believe that such “accidents” have just happened and happened and happened? Is it not more sensible to believe that God created all things? Paul said in Acts 14:17 that we can look around us at the fruitful seasons and the changing times, and know that God has created us. Hebrews 3:4 says, “For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.” Take, for example, the watch that I am wearing today. If you found this watch lying on the side of the road, would you say, “This is a nice watch. I find it interesting that, through evolutionary processes, it ‘just came about’”? No, you would say that a watch demands a watchmaker. The design that is exhibited in our bodies, and the way that the various processes within our bodies work together, teach us that where there is design, there must of necessity be a designer. Someone put it this way. Imagine a tornado going through a junk yard, and the end result being an airplane. Would that ever happen? Could a tornado actually go through a junk yard and the result be a fully equipped, fully functioning airplane? There is no way that we would ever think that way. It is just as absurd (or more absurd!) to suggest that we evolved and that although things “look like” a designer was behind them, they were, in reality, mere accidents. Design does demand a designer. We are not an evolutionary accident, and we should not live as if we were.

Another false purpose to life is the idea that we are simply pleasure seekers. Life is not a pleasure-seeker’s paradise. That is not what life is all about. We are not here to fulfill pleasures. We are not here to fulfill our own lusts or the lusts of others. Life is not all about pleasures. When you fulfill one pleasure, then you simply have to seek out another. Look at some of the wealthiest people in the world, and you will find that although they have immense wealth (which can lead to all kinds of pleasure), they usually are not the happiest people in the world. On the other hand, you may find some people who do not have many material possessions, yet they possess real happiness. How can that be? It has to do with the fact that life is not just about pleasures. It is not about us having all the “toys” that we can in this life. It is not about how much wealth we can amass. I am reminded of a man who tried to do just that. Luke 12:15-21 teaches us about a man who had great wealth. So, he said to himself, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” But God said to that man, “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you.” That man had the riches that this life could offer. He was going to take it easy and just enjoy life. But God taught him a lesson. And it’s a great lesson for us today as well. Life is not all about wealth. Think about the text of 1 John 2:15-17. John said, “

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life will never help you to find real meaning in life. But when you decide to turn your life over to God, that is when you will find real meaning. What is life all about? What can we know about life for sure? Here is one thing that we can know for sure: life is very brief and fleeting. James 4:14 asks, “What is your life?” And then James answers the question when he says, “It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” If there is one thing about which we can be sure, it is that life is brief. In Psalm 90:10, the psalmist said that if we get 70 or 80

years upon this Earth, then we have been blessed. With anything beyond that, we are living "on borrowed time," so to speak. In Job 7:6, life is likened unto a weaver's shuttle and a runner who is swiftly running a race. I am reminded of what Job said in Job 14:1 where he taught us that "man born of woman is of few days." Think about your own life when you went to kindergarten, or when you had your first date. Do you remember your high school graduation or the first job that you ever had? Do you remember when you got married, or when your children were born? All of those things seem like they "just happened yesterday," do they not? In reality, of course, they probably were many years ago. Since life is so brief and fleeting, we need to live it for God. That is what life is all about. We have one chance to get to Heaven. Life is short, and we must make sure that we live it for God. In Romans 12:1, Paul said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Ecclesiastes 12:13 says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter...." Solomon has sought purpose and meaning in life throughout the Book of Ecclesiastes. He then says, "Here is what life is all about: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all." Isaiah said in Isaiah 43:7, "Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him." We have been created by the hand of God to glorify Him in this life. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." The real meaning of life, then, is this: this life is your one and only chance to get to Heaven. If we miss this point, then we will have missed the whole purpose of life. Life is not about pleasure. It is not about lust. In reality, life is not about us. It is, by God's grace and mercy, our one chance to get to Heaven.

Think about the questions that Jesus asked in Mark 8:36-37. Jesus asked, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" How is it going to help you, or how will it profit you, if you gain everything in the whole world and have the wealth of some of the richest people today, yet you go to Hell? What would you give in exchange for your soul on the Day of Judgment? That is what is so sad about the case of the rich young ruler in Mark 10. Here was a man who came to Jesus to ask, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Because both the ruler and Jesus were living under the Old Testament, Jesus told him to keep the commandments. The ruler said, "This have I done from my childhood." Then Jesus said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." Do you remember what happened to that man? The Bible says that the rich young ruler went away sorrowful. Why? Because he had great possessions. We must not allow material possessions to keep us from going to Heaven. This life is our one and only chance to get to Heaven.

I am pleading with you today to realize that life is not about us. It is not about our pleasures. We are not the result of some cosmic accident. This life is like a probationary period, and we have one chance to get it right so that we can live with God and so that we do not have to spend eternity with the devil. Today, if you are not a child of God, please consider becoming a Christian. There is no greater life to be lived than the Christian life. You can have peace and joy, and you can base what you do off of knowledge that is correct and true. You can live every day for God rather than for yourself.

If you are not a child of God, we want to encourage you to become one by believing that Jesus is God's Son. Believe in Christ so much that you are willing to repent of your past sins. Turn from sin to God. Give up the old life that you once lived, and then begin living for Jesus. Confess Christ as your Savior. In Acts 8, this is what the Ethiopian nobleman

did when he said, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Then, be baptized in water so that you can have the forgiveness of sins and become a child of God. We are praying that through the Gospel of Christ you will become a Christian and begin living the joyous life that God wants you to live.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “WHAT IS YOUR LIFE?”

1. This lesson mentions a group of people who “have a higher calling.” Who composes that group?
2. What is humanism all about?
3. According to Psalm 119:160, what do we find within the pages of the Bible?
4. According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17, why did God give us His Word?
5. According to 2 Peter 1:3, what do we find within God’s Word?
6. What is the point of Psalm 14:1?
7. What, according to Psalm 19:1-2, do the heavens teach us?
8. What, according to Romans 1:18-20, does nature teach us?
9. What characteristic of God is found in Hebrews 6:18 and Titus 1:2?
10. What characteristic of God is found in Malachi 3:6?
11. Explain the point of Hebrews 3:4.
12. What lesson is taught in Luke 12:15-21?
13. What message for us today can be found in 1 John 2:15-17?
14. According to Psalm 90:10, we will be fortunate if we live how long on this Earth?
15. What is the message of Job 7:6, Job 14:1, and James 4:14?
16. According to Isaiah 43:7, why were we created?
17. According to Ecclesiastes 12:13, what is our purpose while we are here on Earth?
18. In 1 Corinthians 10:31, Paul spoke of how we should act during our pilgrimage here. What was his point?
19. In Romans 12:1, what did Paul urge all Christians to do?
20. The text of Acts 14:17 contains a message related to God’s existence. What is that message?
21. What was Jesus’ point in Mark 8:36-37?
22. What two broad areas of evidence are discussed in this lesson that provide proof for the Bible’s inspiration?