

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

THE TRUTH ABOUT HEAVEN AND HELL

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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

Where are you going to spend eternity? Have you lived your life in such a way that one day you can spend eternity with God in Heaven? Or, have you lived in such a sinful way that, were you to die right now, you would be lost forever in Hell? Welcome to our study on the truth about Heaven and Hell. We are going to look at what the Bible has to say about that horrible place called Hell, in the hope that it will make us want to do what is right. We also are going to look at the beautiful place called Heaven, in order to encourage us on the journey through this life so that we can be faithful to God and get ready in the “here and now.” It is true that there is a place called Heaven, and that there is a place called Hell. Jesus said in Matthew 25:46, “These [the evil] will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Those who live righteously will spend eternity with God in Heaven. But those who do not will one day be lost for all time.

We need to understand that this life is our one-and-only chance to get it right. Think about what the writer of the Book of Hebrews said in Hebrews 9:27—“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.” We have one shot. This life is our one chance to get it right because when we die we will stand before God and be judged. The Bible says that at judgment we will be judged for all the things we have done in this life. The judgment is when we will give an account for the way in which we have lived and for the things that we have done in this life. Notice what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:10—“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” We have one shot, and then comes the judgment. At that judgment, we will give an account of the things we have done in this life. We will give an account for the good, and we will give an account for the bad. Based on those things (what we have done in this life—like if we obeyed the Gospel and became Christians, or instead lived a life of sin), our eternity destiny will be determined.

I want to begin today by taking a journey with a man down the road to Hell. It is a sad, sad journey to Hell. The example is found in Luke 16:19ff. The story is that of the rich man and Lazarus. In this life, the rich man had it all. He “fared sumptuously,” the text informs us. Lazarus was not so blessed. He actually ate the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table, and the dogs came and licked his sores. In this life the rich man had it all, and Lazarus had nothing. Then they both died, and the tables were turned. Lazarus is seen as being blessed in eternal Paradise, and the rich man is in torment. So as we take this journey into Hell with the rich man, what do we learn along the way? What do we learn about Hell? We learn that Hell is a place of horrible torment in the eternal life. No person should **ever** want to go to Hell. It is a place where torment is going to be on every side. Listen to Luke 16:23, which teaches us about the torment of Hell. “And being in torment in Hades, he [the rich man] lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” Here we learn that Hell is a horrible place of torment. The word “torment” carries with it horrible mental and physical anguish. Think about a time when you were really sick. Perhaps you were in a car accident, or perhaps you had a disease. You just felt like you wanted to die. This is the

type of torment in which the rich man found himself. He just wanted to die—yet he was ever living. He was in the worst pain imaginable, and was doomed to continue in that state forever. That is how Hell is described. It is a horrible place of torment. We must realize that if we do not live our lives according to God's will, we will spend eternity in great torment.

Hell also is seen as a place of unquenchable fire. What is Hell going to be like? Hell is going to be a place where a fire is always burning. It is hot—which is the way it is described throughout the Bible. It is a place where fire will always be upon you. Look once more at the example of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:24—"Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'" This man was in so much torment in the unquenchable fire of Hell that he just wanted Lazarus to dip his finger in water and place a single drop on his tongue. Have you ever been **that** hot—so hot that all you wanted was a single drop of water? Jesus also described Hell as a place of unquenchable fire. In Mark 9:44 Jesus said that Hell is a place "where the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." This is a very graphic illustration. The word for "worm" is our word for "maggot." What is Hell like? Hell is a place where, as it were, there is always a maggot eating at your flesh—and where no one ever reaches over and turns down the fire. Hell is a horrible place—a place of unquenchable fire. Think of Hell as containing the hottest fire you can possibly imagine—like, for example, the fire mentioned in Daniel 3 that burned up the men who tossed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the flames. Compared to the fires of Hell, that will be like ice water. The fire of Hell is going to be so much hotter than we can ever begin to imagine. Hell is a place of torment and of unquenchable fire.

But I believe that one of the worst things about Hell is that it is a place of mental recognition. The saddest thing, especially for a child of God who ended up in Hell, would be the fact that he could remember all that he did in this life. He could remember that he was a Christian, but that he ended up lost. Look at what Luke 16:25 says about having mental recognition in Hell. "But Abraham said, 'Son, **remember** that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.'" The worst thing about Hell is going to be the fact that a person will have to be there for all eternity, thinking, "What if...?," or "I should have...," or "I could have..." A person will remember all the things in life that he should or should not have done. "I remember that I heard the Gospel one night, and I knew I was lost in sin. But I let my foolish pride get in the way." Wouldn't it be horrible to be in Hell and say, "I know that I had a chance to obey the Gospel, but because of foolishness I did not"? Wouldn't it be even worse for a child of God—who had obeyed the Gospel, who had his name written in the Book of Life, and who had the hope of Heaven, yet who gave up all of that for the passing pleasure of sin? Hell is a place of mental recognition. How horrible it would be to sit in the halls of Hell and remember for all eternity the evil that we had done, and the righteousness that we had spurned. Thus, we must be careful to live this life as we ought to, and to do the things that God wants us to so that we are faithful in His kingdom.

What else do we learn as we make the journey into Hell with the rich man? We learn that Hell is a place of eternal separation. What will be one of the worst things about Hell? It will be the fact that we are separated from God, from good, from everything that is holy and righteous, and from everything that represents happiness. Hell is a place of eternal separation. There are no second chances. This life is it! If we miss out, we will be separated for eternity from everything that is good and holy. How do we know that? Luke at Luke 16:26, "And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us." Wherever we end up for eternity is where we will be forever. If we make it to Heaven, it will be wonderful.

We will not have to worry about it any more. But if we end up in Hell, we will be there forever, too. Thus, we must be careful as we live our lives—in view of eternity. Eternal separation must surely be one of the most horrible things imaginable. Can you imagine being separated from God forever—“the God of all light” (Jn. 8:12), the God Who is Himself love (1 Jn. 4:8), the God Who is the giver of all good gifts (Jas. 1:17), and the God Who loves you so much that He gave His Son on your behalf (Jn. 3:16)? If we are lost, we will be separated from God forever. Thus, we must be careful how we live and how we walk in this life.

However, just as we can take a journey down the road to Hell with the rich man, we also want to consider the beauty of Heaven. The Bible teaches us that Heaven is a beautiful place. Just as God is a balanced God, so today we also want to see not only the horrors of Hell, but the beauties of going to Heaven. Heaven is a beautiful place. What makes it such a beautiful place? What is Heaven really going to be like? Why should I be encouraged in this life—in view of Heaven—to live faithfully? Here’s why. Heaven is going to be a beautiful place of rest. Oh, how we all desire rest. A hard day’s labor makes us want to come home, kick our feet back, and rest. Heaven is the rest from the life of sin and sorrow with which we so often are plagued. How do we know this? Hebrews 4:9 tells us so—“There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.” What is that rest? It is not the rest of going into Canaan. It is not the Sabbath Day’s rest. It is an eternal rest that Jesus has promised to those who have followed Him. “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.” I want that rest because I do not want to have to deal with the troubles and struggles of life any more! And I certainly do not want to have to deal with them throughout all eternity!

How else does the Bible describe Heaven? Heaven is a place where evil will be absent. Do you know what is going to make Heaven so great? All the horrible things in this life with which we have to deal will not be in Heaven. Notice what the writer of the Book of Revelation said in Revelation 21:4. Notice how evil will be absent in Heaven. “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.” God is going to wipe away all tears. Isn’t that a beautiful thought? Perhaps you can remember, as a child, riding your bicycle and scraping your knee. You cried, and you ran to your mother—who took the bottom of her apron, wiped the tears from your eyes, and comforted you. Heaven will be a place where God Himself is going to wipe away all tears. The things that hurt us the most in this life will not be there. There will be no more death. Can you imagine being in a place where you never have to hear the words, “So-and-so died”? It will be a place where we never have to attend a funeral where there are tears and sorrow. It will be a place where we never hurt any more, and where all the former evil things of this life have passed away. Who wouldn’t want to go to a place like that?! May we, in view of the fact that evil is absent from Heaven, desire each and every day of our lives to go there.

What else makes Heaven beautiful? Heaven will be beautiful because being in Heaven means that we will be with God throughout all eternity. God is where Heaven resides. In Hebrews 1:4 we find Jesus sitting in Heaven “at the right hand of God.” Heaven is God’s throne (Acts 7:48-50). Jesus taught in Matthew 6:9, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” We may pray that now, but when we get to Heaven we will be with God (“the God of all comfort”—2 Cor. 1:3-4) throughout all eternity. He is a God of love, of mercy, and of peace. He is the God Who, though we had sinned against Him, nevertheless made a way of salvation for us. Don’t you want to go to Heaven so that you can be with the God Who spoke the world into existence, and Whose Son is preparing a place for each one of us right now (Jn. 14:1-6)? Heaven will be wonderful because in Heaven we will be with God. Thus, I want to suggest that no matter what it costs you, Heaven will truly be worth

it all. No matter what it costs you, what you have to give up, what you have to deny, or what kind of life you have to live—Heaven **will** be worth it all! Paul said this in Romans 8:18. Beside that passage in my own Bible I have written the following: “Heaven will be worth it all!” See if you agree. Paul wrote: “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Paul was saying that Heaven will be worth it all! The sufferings, the struggles, and the trials of life do not even begin to compare with the glory and the beauty of Heaven. Regardless of what you may suffer, what you may give up, or what trials you may face, if you remain true to God, He has promised Heaven to you as a child of God.

So, yes, Hell is a place of horrible torment, of unquenchable fire, of mental recognition, and of eternal separation. But Heaven, on the other hand, is a beautiful place. It is a place where God is, a place of rest, and a place where sin is absent. I want you to go to Heaven. But in order to do that, you must be willing to live your life according to the will of God. This life is your one-and-only chance. We must all understand today the brevity of life, and the need to make good decisions in the here and now. The Bible has a lot to say about how brief life is. The psalmist said in Psalm 90:10-12 that if we are fortunate, we can hope to have 70 or 80 years in this life. In view of eternity that is a very short time. Job said in Job 14:1, “Man who is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.” The writer of Proverbs said, “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth” (Prov. 27:1). We do not have the promise of tomorrow. All we have is the here and now. James said, “What is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (Jas. 4:14). The psalmist said, “Remember how short my time is” (Ps. 89:47). Later he said in Psalm 144:4, “Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow.” David realized the brevity of life. In 1 Samuel 20:3 he said, “There is but a step between me and death.” That is true for all of us. There is just a step between us and death. We do not know when we are going to die. It may be today. It may be tomorrow. It may be fifty years from now. But we **are** all going to die. I believe that the most graphic illustration of life and death, and especially the brevity of life, is found in 2 Samuel 14:14 where it is said, “For we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.” This life is our one chance. We must not “blow it.” We must make sure that we live our lives according to the will of God.

As we think about the brevity of life, we also need to understand that not only is life brief, but that Jesus came to give Himself as a sacrifice for all men so that they could be saved. There is only one way to escape Hell and get to Heaven—and that is through Jesus Christ. Do you remember what Jesus said in John 14:6? “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus is the only way to get to Heaven. In Acts 4:12 we are told, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Jesus is the only name that saves. Yes, God does want all people to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). He wants it so much that He gave His Son to be a sacrifice for our sins. As John the Immerser say Jesus approaching (Jn. 1:29), he said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” Jesus is the sacrificial lamb. He died on the cross to remove our sins. Things of this world (like money) cannot save us. Peter said in 1 Peter 1:18-20,

“You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”

How are we redeemed today? It is only through the blood of Christ. In 1 Peter 2:24 we are told that He “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” Jesus tasted death for

every man (Heb. 2:9). His life was given as a sacrifice for sin. God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). As a result, if we are going to approach the Father, it will be only through Jesus. Hebrews 7:25 tells us that Jesus “is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him.” We must realize that Jesus is the sacrifice Who is the way to the Father.

We also must realize that the rich man was lost because of sin—which will cause the majority of people in the world to go to Hell. Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14, “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.” If you have sin in your life, you desperately need to make it right. In Romans 6:23 we are told that “the wages of sin is death.” The salary (or paycheck) for a life of sin is death—not necessarily physical death, but spiritual death. Ezekiel 18:4 states, “The soul that sins shall surely die.” Sin separates people from God. In Isaiah 59:1-2 Isaiah said, “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.” All of us have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory (Rom. 3:23). “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). Thus we need the sacrifice of the blood of Jesus to be applied to our spirits so that we can live faithfully before the Father.

As I mentioned earlier, after this life we are going to stand before the judgment seat of God. Hebrews 9:27 says, “It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.” We are going to be judged based on what we have done in this life. If we have lived a life of sin, then we will be lost for all eternity. But if we have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, then we have the hope of going to Heaven. It is my hope today that you will become a Christian. If you are not on the road to Heaven, why not get on that road today? If you are going down the path that leads to eternal destruction, you can put a stop to that by obeying the Gospel. By becoming a Christian, you can live a life of faithfulness to God.

What must a person do to become a Christian? That is the greatest question that has ever been asked. In Acts 16:30 we find the question, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” What must **you** do to be saved today? First, a person must hear the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” This means that an individual must accept the Bible as the only standard for salvation, and as the only standard in all matters relating to Christianity. In Matthew 17:5, God’s voice boomed down from Heaven and said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” Today, we need to hear the voice of Jesus, and then live our lives according to His teachings. We must hear the Word of God and accept it as the only authority. After hearing the Word of God, then a person must believe in Christ as the Son of God. In Acts 8, we see the example of the Ethiopian nobleman. He had been traveling down the road with Philip the evangelist who had been teaching him the Gospel. They came to a body of water, and the nobleman asked, “Here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Philip then said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” If a person is going to be saved, he must be convicted of the fact that Jesus is God’s Son. That person must believe with all his heart that Jesus died for him, and that Jesus is his only hope. Then a person must be willing to change his life. Repentance is the transition in salvation. It is where a person amends his ways, stops doing wrong, and starts doing right. We learn in Romans 12:2, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” The Bible gives us a good example of repentance in Acts 3:19, where Peter preached, “Repent therefore and be con-

verted, that your sins may be blotted out.” Repentance is a 180-degree turn—a turn from sin to God. A person must change his life and stop living a life of sin. Then a person also must be willing to confess before men that Jesus is God’s Son. Romans 10:10 says, “With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” A person must make the good confession, just like the Ethiopian nobleman did. He said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:37). But the process does not end there. A person also must be baptized for the remission of sins. How do we know that baptism is essential to salvation? In 1 Peter 3:21 we are told that “baptism does now also save us.” It is not baptism alone that saves, but baptism combined with hearing, believing, repenting, and confessing. This is what the Bible means when it says that “baptism does also now save us.” In John 3:5 Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” A person cannot get to Heaven unless he obeys God’s will. And part of that obedience is being baptized. In Acts 2:37, the Jews cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter responded, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” It is clear from Scripture that if a person wants to be saved, he must be baptized for the remission of sins. A lot of people are being led straight down the road to Hell by denominational error which suggests that all a person has to do to be saved is to “say the sinner’s prayer” or “just have faith.” A person must have faith, to be sure. But James 2:24 says, “You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.”

Are you on the road to Heaven? If not, why not get on the road to Heaven today? If you are on the road to Hell, put on the brakes. Stop, and obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “THE TRUTH ABOUT HEAVEN AND HELL”

1. If you were asked by a friend to go to the Bible to find a passage that presents a picture of what happens to people after they die, where could you go for such a description?
2. According to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25:46, where will those who are evil be in the hereafter?
3. According to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 25:46, where will those who are righteous be in the hereafter?
4. In Mark 9:48, Jesus described Hell as a place where the “worm does not die.” What was Christ's point in using such terminology?
5. Mark 9:48 also gives a second piece of information about Hell. What is it?
6. In 2 Thessalonians 1:9 Paul provided insight into what will happen to those who have refused to obey Christ in this life. What did he say would happen to such people?
7. When Jesus talked about Hell in Matthew 25:41, He mentioned one specific trait depicting Hell's nature. What was that trait?
8. In Luke 16:26, Abraham told the rich man that Lazarus could not come to him to offer him any comfort. Why not?
9. What does Luke 16:25 tell us that people in Hell will be able to do once they are there?
10. Matthew 25:46 provides an important characteristic about Hell. What is it?
11. The same wording used in Matthew 25:46 to describe Hell's nature also is used to describe God (Ps. 90:2), Jesus (Jn. 1:1), and the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9:14). What is that wording intended to depict about Hell, God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit?
12. According to Revelation 21:4, what three things will be missing in Heaven?
13. What, according to Jesus' statements in John 14:2, is He currently doing in Heaven?
14. If you were asked to summarize in a few words the message of Romans 8:18 (“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”), what would those few words be?
15. What does Hebrews 4:9 teach that relates to Heaven?
16. According to Hebrews 9:27, will anyone receive a “second chance” after death?
17. What does Hebrews 7:25 tell us about Jesus that implies an eventual relationship with Him in Heaven?
18. According to Revelation 21:4, what will God do for the faithful in Heaven?