

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

# *The Significance of Three!*

- 1 – Three Levels of Living**
- 2 – The Devil's Three Desires**
- 3 – A Three-Fold Evaluation**
- 4 – Three Rules by Which Men Live**
- 5 – Three Things a Lost Person Discovers  
After Death**
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**Lesson One**

**"Three Levels of Living"**

(1 Corinthians 2:14-3:4)

When my family moved from Denton, Texas, to New Jersey, we noticed one thing that was definitely different about housing—instead of single story houses, we saw two and three story houses. When some of these houses would be rented out, they could have tenets on each floor level. A person may often have a choice on which level he would like to live. The same thing is true spiritually! The Scripture reference above talks about three levels of living—(1) The Natural; (2) The Spiritual; and (3) The Carnal. Every human that has come to an age of accountability is living on one of these levels by his own choice. We want to study about each of these levels and see where each of us are in our travels in life.

**THE NATURAL LEVEL**

In the following passages, could you write down what you consider to be a description or descriptive terms to identify this level of living.

- 1 Cor. 2:14 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Cor. 1:21 \_\_\_\_\_
- Rom. 1:21 \_\_\_\_\_
- Eph. 4:17-18 \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Eph. 2:2-3 \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

The "Natural man" needs to be redeemed—to be turned to God. Without a spiritual rebirth, he will remain a natural man. Jesus' death on the cross made this redemption possible—that is, if men will turn to Him. If the natural man continues in his sinful ways and does not turn to God for forgiveness, he will suffer the penalty of his sins—eternal death!

- Rom. 2:6-9 \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Matt. 25:41 \_\_\_\_\_
- Matt. 25:46 \_\_\_\_\_

God, the Creator, evidently holds men accountable to live righteous and godly lives upon this earth. If men reject God and choose to go their own way and live the kind of life they want to live, they will give an account of this decision in the Day of Judgment (Heb. 9:27).

**THE SPIRITUAL LEVEL**

In the following Passages, could you write down what you consider to be a description or descriptive terms to identify this level of living.

1 Cor. 2:15 \_\_\_\_\_

Rom. 6:1-6 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Col. 3:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2 Pet. 1:5-10 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Rom. 8:5-6 \_\_\_\_\_

The basic contrast in how we live is referred to as either Natural or Spiritual. Once that a person has begun to live on the spiritual level of life it becomes his challenge to remain in and grow and mature in this level of living. Such will require a continual crucifying of the old man of sin—that is, to put to death sinful activities in our lives. But at the same time, it is to allow the teachings of the Spirit (the Word of God) to be a full and continual guide for our lives—to allow the Spirit full control over the decisions and activities of our lives. We are warned in the following Scriptures not to disappoint the Spirit of God:

1 Thess. 5:19 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Thess. 5:21 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Thess. 5:22 \_\_\_\_\_

Eph. 4:30 \_\_\_\_\_

Eph. 5:18 (Acts 6:3) \_\_\_\_\_

**THE CARNAL LEVEL**

In the following passages, could you write down what you consider to be a description or descriptive terms to identify this level of living.

1 Cor. 3:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Cor. 3:1 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Gal. 5:16-17 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Even though a person may become a Christian and desire to live on the

Spiritual level of life, he is faced with a constant conflict between the "Flesh" and "the Spirit." The spiritual man, however, can have a continual victory over the flesh because he is yielding to the Spirit of God; but the Christian who is "carnally-minded" will suffer continued defeat and failure because he is unwilling to fully yield to the Spirit of God. Carnality seems to be identifying back with the "natural" man more so than the "spiritual" man.

Jesus seems to be identifying the carnal Christian in the "Parable of the Sower." Look at the description that He gives of such in the following verses:

Matt. 13:22 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mark 4:18-19 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The Laodicean Church seems to fit the description of a carnal Christian as described in the following verses:

Rev. 3:15-17 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Carnality is also shown by: Contentiousness, Quarrelsomeness, Jealousy, Self-Willed, Impatient, Impure, Rebellious, etc. The Carnal Christian will see very little (if any) spiritual growth or maturity. He is content with the "milk of the word," and cannot bear the "meat" of the word:

1 Pet. 2:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 5:12-14 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

The Christian is challenged to live on a high spiritual level—always learning and growing in Christ. He aspires to the highest and greatest level for humans to live on because it is this kind of life that has the promise of everlasting life. Our words are to be constantly renewed day by day!

Rom. 12:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 Cor. 4:16 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What are some descriptive terms that identifies the "Natural" level of living?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are some descriptive terms that identifies the "Spiritual" level of living?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What are some descriptive terms that identifies the "Carnal" level of living?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What makes the difference between the natural level and the spiritual level of living?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What makes the difference between the spiritual level and the carnal level of living?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How does Jesus describe the "carnal Christian" in the Parable of the Sower?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. How does the church at Laodicea illustrates the "carnal Christian?"
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. What level of living has the promise of eternal life?

**Lesson Two**

**"The Devil's Three Desires"**

(2 Corinthians 11:1-15)

The Scriptures have terms that are used to apply to the Devil—will you please list them.

John 14:30 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matt. 12:24 \_\_\_\_\_  
Luke 10:17-18 \_\_\_\_\_

The Devil is characterized in the following ways—will you please list them.

1 Tim. 3:6 \_\_\_\_\_  
1 Jn. 2:13 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 Cor. 11:3 \_\_\_\_\_

Mankind is warned about his deceptive ways and we are called upon to resist him:

1 Pet. 5:8-9 \_\_\_\_\_  
Eph. 6:11 \_\_\_\_\_

The Devil will do much harm, but his doom is assured!

Rev. 20:10 \_\_\_\_\_

All of the above is trying to emphasize that Satan is not idle and he has things he wants to accomplish. In this lesson, we want to see three specific desires that he has in regards to mankind.

**HE WANTS TO KEEP ALL OUT OF THE CHURCH**

The following reasons can show you why!

Eph. 5:23 \_\_\_\_\_  
Acts 20:28 \_\_\_\_\_  
1 John 1:7 \_\_\_\_\_  
Col. 1:18 \_\_\_\_\_

The Devil obviously wants to keep men lost, but he also wants the first position, the pre-eminence, and not to let Jesus have such a position in men's lives.

How does the Devil accomplish his mission?

Heb. 3:7-8 \_\_\_\_\_  
Rome. 12:9 \_\_\_\_\_  
1 Tim. 4:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_

The devil will encourage people to procrastinate, to see those ungodly people in the church, or just tell outright untruths in order to keep people out of the church. He will lead people to believe that the church is not important, or just any kind of a church will do, etc. He has been most effective in keeping people out of the Lord's church.

**LURE GOD'S PEOPLE BACK INTO THE WORLD**

Yes, it is possible that even Christians can still be lost, and the Devil will make every effort possible to cause people to turn their back on God again.

1 John 2:15-17 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_   
2 Pet. 2:20-22 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does the Devil get us back into the world?

1 Pet. 1:5 \_\_\_\_\_  
1 Cor. 15:33 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matt. 13:22 \_\_\_\_\_  
Mark 4:16-17 \_\_\_\_\_

It is not enough to just get into the church, but we must remain in the church until the end comes. We cannot afford to give in and give up, but we must be diligent and persevere all the way to the end.

2 Pet. 1:10-11 \_\_\_\_\_

**RENDER US WORTHLESS TO THE LORD**

The Devil knows that the Christian must bear fruit or be lost! Thus, he is trying to keep us fruitless as Christians.

Mark 4:18-19 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_   
John 15:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



The Devil's delight is to hear a lot of "talk" but not a lot of "work!" He wants us to be satisfied with ourselves. He would like to cause us to be indifferent to the church and its mission. He wants us to argue, fuss, and fight among ourselves. He will try to satisfy our pride or ego to the detriment of the church. He will help us make all kinds of excuses for not doing what we are suppose to be doing. He wants us to be hypocritical—pretending to be what we are not! He encourages covetousness and stinginess on our part....etc.

James 1:22 \_\_\_\_\_  
Titus 3:8, 14 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Matt. 25:34-36 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Matt. 25:41-43 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
James 1:27 \_\_\_\_\_  
Phil. 2:12 \_\_\_\_\_

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

To be fore-warned is to be fore-armed! God has let us know who the real enemy is that we are to do battle with. We need to prepare ourselves fully in order to win this great battle. We have special armor to put on in order to fight this battle:

Eph. 6:11-17 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Without this armor, we would surely be defeated! He has his own devises that we need to be aware of:

Col. 2:8 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In view of the above, the Christian is exhorted to:

Col. 2:6-7 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Has the Devil been successful in your life?

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. How is the Devil characterized in Scripture?
  
2. Why does he want to keep people out of the church?
  
3. How does he accomplish such?
  
4. How is he able to lure Christians back into the world?
  
5. Why is fruitfulness important for the Christian?
  
6. How does the Devil keep us from being fruitful?
  
7. What has God provided for His people in order to successfully defeat the wiles of the Devil?
  
8. In what is the Christian to be rooted?
  
9. By what means can the Devil "cheat" us out of our promises from God?

**Lesson Three**

**"A Three-Fold Evaluation"**

(Matt. 23:25-28)

Jesus was evidently speaking to the kind of people in the above verses that were not concerned about being right with God. Their religion seems to have been no more than a show—a sham! It was vain, empty, shallow, and inadequate. Jesus compared them to dishes that were clean on one side, but filthy on the other side. They were compared also to whitewashed tombs that hide dead men's bones. They appeared righteous to men outwardly, but inside they were full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

If Jesus were to stand before us as an individual or as a congregation of people, could he say the same things about us? Do we really care what He thinks of us? Are we honestly willing to look within ourselves and see if we really are living right?

2 Cor. 13:5 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We believe that the following three things can serve as a real test of our religion.

**ARE MY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES  
FROM GOD?**

Jesus placed the question squarely before the people of His day! It is a basic and vital question for one to ask.

Matt. 21:25 \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this question so important for us today?

Matt. 7:21-23 \_\_\_\_\_

Gal. 1:6-9 \_\_\_\_\_

2 John 9 \_\_\_\_\_

Matt. 15:7-9 \_\_\_\_\_

If we are unwilling to do some real soul-searching in this matter, we may be foolishly jeopardizing our souls! Can we substantiate our religious beliefs

and practices from the Word of God? Let's be sure that it is not by:

- a) A perverted use of the Scriptures;
- b) A picking of verses we like and ignoring others;

Our examination needs to be a full and willing investigation of all the Scriptures—to let God 's Word fully speak on any given subject. Are we willing to search the Scriptures earnestly to see if we are being taught the truth of God?

Acts 17:11 \_\_\_\_\_

Jn. 8:31-32 \_\_\_\_\_

We need to be as cautious as Thomas, but as yielding as well!

John 20:21-29 \_\_\_\_\_

Can we find the high authority of heaven for my beliefs & practices?

- 1) What about the worship I engage in? (From God or men?)
- 2) What about the church I belong to? (Started by God or men?)
- 3) What about the name I wear religiously? (From God or Men?)
- 4) What about the way I was taught to be saved? (From God or Men?)

Maybe a more important question also needs to be asked: *"Am I willing to make some changes when God's Word calls for it?"*

**DO I STRIVE TO LIVE UP TO MY RELIGIOUS PROFESSION?**

It is easy to talk, but it is much harder to be a doer! The purpose of the Religion of Christ is to save a man from the penalty of His sins. But, it doesn't stop there; it is to change his life away from sin and self—it is to get him out of his self-centeredness and become Christ-centered and other-people centered. The Christian life has never been correctly understood as a life of convenience but one of Conviction, Courage, and Determination to live right—no matter what the cost!

James 1:26 \_\_\_\_\_

Phil. 1:27 \_\_\_\_\_

Tit. 2:10 \_\_\_\_\_

Are we willing to ask such question as:

- 1. Can my mate, children, brothers, sisters, neighbors or friends see the influence of Christ in my life?
- 2. Do they see an active, obedient faith being shown?

John 13:35 \_\_\_\_\_  
1 Thess. 1:8 \_\_\_\_\_  
Tit. 1:16 \_\_\_\_\_

Are we willing to honestly look within and ask:

1. Am I really trying to live up to my religious profession?
2. Am I a better husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter?
3. Am I a better worker on the job?
4. Am I a better neighbor, schoolmate, citizen, friend?

If not—whom am I deceiving? People are often much more impressed by how we live than by what we teach!

**AM I WILLING TO SUPPORT  
MY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS?**

Is my religion truly worth supporting? Someone has observed: *"I must be sold in order to sell others!"* Are we sufficiently sold so that we can sell others?

2 Cor. 4:13 \_\_\_\_\_

Questions that challenge us:

1. How much time do I give in supporting and promoting my beliefs?
2. How much ability and use of my talents are spent in supporting and promoting it?
3. How much concern do I show towards supporting it?
4. How much of my material possessions do I give to support it?

Tit. 2:14 \_\_\_\_\_  
1 Cor. 15:58 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 Cor. 8:8 \_\_\_\_\_

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

Christianity is worth supporting and worth recommending it to others. It is truly a refuge in time of trials and the sorrows of life. But most of all, it will sustain us in death and in the Judgment. But it is quite obvious that an insincere, hypocritical, ungodly life that a person may live shows that they place little or no value on their religion.

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What did Jesus say about the religiousness of the people in His day?
  
2. Why should a person need to examine his religious beliefs and practices?
  
3. Was Thomas wrong in wanting "evidences" for his belief in Jesus?
  
4. What does the control of my tongue say about my religion?
  
5. Should people be able to see sufficient differences in me to know that I am sincere?
  
6. If a person is unwilling to lend his support and promotion to his religious beliefs, is he sincere?
  
7. Is it wrong to make a judgment about other people's religious beliefs and practices?
  
8. Why is it important to abide in the doctrine (teaching) of Christ?
  
9. How can I prove the sincerity of my Love for God?
  
10. If my religion is not worth my support and promotion, what does this say about my religion?

Lesson Four

**"Three Rules by Which Men Live"**

(Luke 10:25-37)

We all need help and guidance in our lives. We need rules, insights, and understanding. God knows this and has given us the benefit of His wisdom. When Jesus came and spoke among men, He indicated that there were two great rules that summed up all that the Law says and that the Prophets taught—that was.....

**To love God with all of our heart, soul, and mind.**

**To love our neighbor as ourselves.**

But He didn't stop with these two, he went further and gave us insight to three different ways that men can treat others.

**#1 – "Might Makes Right!"**

Luke 10:30 \_\_\_\_\_

The thief illustrates one rule by which men live. The idea is: *"If I can beat you out of it, I have a right to it."* Or, *"If I am big enough to take it, I have a right to it."*

The thief's primary love in life is: **Money, Possessions, and Self!** He wants possessions anyway or any how he can get them. His money caters to his selfishness and unbridled lust for things. Such a life can never bring real happiness, but often leads to violence, murder, theft, etc.

Prov. 4:14-19 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Cor. 6:9-10 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Tim. 6:9-10 \_\_\_\_\_

**#2 – "What is Mine will Remain Mine!"**

Luke 10:31-32 \_\_\_\_\_

This rule is the negative approach to what we call the Golden Rule—*"Do no Harm to Others."* Such people look for the easy way out. They are part of the *"down-stream"* drifters. They travel the road of least resistance. It is usually the

popular road that the majority travel (Matt. 7:13-14). It is the way of uninvolvedness! They are either too busy or selfish to get involved!

Their outlook may be: *"I didn't hurt him" or "It is his own fault, he shouldn't have been by himself."* Such people probably would not steal, defraud, or beat someone up, but they are too obsessed with their own personal affairs to help others. Multitudes may appeal for help but the cry will go unheard!

Matt. 25:45-46 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 John 3:17 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**#3 – "DO GOOD TO OTHERS"**

Luke 10:33-35 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The "despised" Samaritan illustrates the 3rd rule men go by. The principle goes beyond the 2nd rule..... *"What is mine is yours, if you need it."* His love for his neighbor was shown by his actions. He not only sought to do no harm, but he sought to do good.

Matt. 7:12 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This is the way of involvement. It is often not the easy way, nor is it the "broad" way, nor is it the popular way. This way is not very crowded. It is the way of unselfishness—involvement with others. It is the way of God. It is the way that recognizes **Responsibility** and **Opportunity!**

Gal. 6:10 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1 Cor. 15:58 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This way is often referred to as the "extra-mile" way! Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount emphasized this concept.

Matt. 5:20 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Matt. 5:38-42 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Matt. 5:43-47 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

One of the significant facts about Jesus was that He not only "taught as no other man taught," but He lived what He taught! Jesus is the perfect example of the 3rd rule by which men **should** live! This is what makes a person a great teacher, as well as a great Christian!

Christians must spurn the first rule by which men live. We also must be bigger than the second rule. And....with God's help and motivation, we shall live by the third rule and be blessed by God. Be motivated by the following exhortations:

Rom.12:10 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Rom. 12:13 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Rom. 12:21 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phil.2:3 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phil. 2:4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

An unselfish life is generally considered a mature life!

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What two great commands sums up the law and the Prophets?
  
2. Do you have another way of stating the first rule by which some men live that was illustrated by the thief?
  
3. What is good about the second rule by which men live?
  
4. What is bad about the second rule by which men live?
  
5. What does the Apostle John say about those who will not help those in need?
  
6. How did the Samaritan illustrate the "Golden Rule?"
  
7. What is the "extra-mile" concept that Jesus taught?
  
8. Why was Jesus such a good teacher?
  
9. How do we consider others better than ourselves?
  
10. What is the connection between unselfishness and maturity?

## Lesson Five

## "Three Things a Lost Person Discovers After Death"

(Luke 16:19-31)

In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus is giving a brief case history of two people who lived on earth at one time. In spite of its brevity, the story is soul-stirring as it offers great hope for mankind, but also it brings great despair to others. In the Old Testament, it tells us what happens to man at death—his body goes back to dust and his spirit goes back to God who gave it (Eccl. 12:7). But the New Testament is more specific about the spirit of man. It goes into the place called "Hades"—the unseen abode of the dead. Mankind will either go into a place of comfort in Hades or a place of terrible torment in Hades—according to Jesus. Jesus is taking us into the realm of the unseen world and gives a glimpse of what lies beyond death's door. This is a great study all on its own. But our lesson will deal with three things that a **Lost** person will discover or learn immediately after his death.

### **1 - PUTTING OUR EMPHASIS ON THIS WORLD WILL END IN PUNISHMENT!**

Luke 16:19-21 gives a description of the Rich man's condition while he lived. He was clothed in purple and fine linen. He wanted the best and had them. He had the good things men seek for in this life. He fared sumptuously every day. He had no want of anything he desired to eat. The best for him each day was his motto. However, it does not describe him as a wicked person who killed people or robbed them. His great sin seems to have been selfishness (Matt. 25:41-46). He did not seem to be concerned about the needs of others about him. But there evidently was an underlying reason for his actions—it was a "this world" outlook! He was not concerned about whether there was another world after this one. He spent his time, energy, and interest on things of this world. He wanted all the enjoyments this world could bring.

Luke 16:22-23 gives a description of the Rich man's condition after death. As it is with all men, the Rich man died and left this world. He closed his eyes to the gorgeous surroundings of earth and opened his eyes in Hades to find himself in great torment. The Rich man learned quickly that a worldly outlook brings torment after death; and that all of his riches, prestige, and power on earth availed nothing in Hades. He learned quickly that a failure to prepare for the next world can bring terrible disaster. One thing that we need to note—the Rich man was not yet in Hell (Gehenna), but in Hades in torment—and without a

physical body!

**2 - ALL HOPE OF MERCY IS GONE  
AFTER DEATH!**

Luke 16:24-26 gives a description of the torment that the Rich man was experiencing. It was so terrible he cried for mercy. He just desired a little water to touch his tongue to ease the torment. This is describing a "spirit being" enduring excruciating torment, but has to be expressed in terms with which we can identify. He discovered very quickly that no mercy would be extended. When making his appeal, he was reminded of his former condition on earth. He had a lot of the good things, but saw no need of sharing it with those who had need. His interest was in getting all he could for himself and had no interest in "*laying up treasures in heaven.*" Now, his condition was reversed! You are being tormented and there is no hope of release from this torment. And he was further told that there was a great gulf fixed so that no one can help you.

Matt. 25:46

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**3 - THERE IS NO ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE  
FOR NOT PREPARING!**

Luke 16:27-31 gives a description of his supposed concern for his five brothers still living. With no hope for himself, he expressed a concern for his brothers—not wanting them to come to such a place. He requested that someone go back from the dead and warn them not to come to this terrible place of torment—surely they would listen! He was reminded that they had Moses and the Prophets that were giving warning to them; but if they would not listen to them, neither would they listen to one raised from the dead.

Shortly after this—this very event happened! Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. He was the brother of Mary and Martha. Did the Jewish people really believe? Many of them wanted to kill Lazarus because of the desirable effect that his resurrection had had on some of the people. But this mighty wonder only brought hardness of heart to the worldly-minded people (John 11:17-12:11).

And then, shortly after this, the greatest event of all history happened—Jesus was raised from the dead. How many listened and how many changed their ways?

**It may be possible** that the Rich man was trying to excuse himself in all of this supposed concern for his brothers. Is it possible that he was really saying: "*If*

*someone had come from the dead and warned me, I would have listened!"* So, his excuse could have been—**no one warned me!**

And so it is that the world goes on in its careless, selfish, thoughtless way paying no heed to the great warnings from one who rose from the dead. Men allow their worldly outlook to overshadow their concern for preparing for death and what comes afterwards.

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

What about us, are we listening to the warnings of God? Have we understood that there is an existence after death for all mankind and that this unseen place can be a place of comfort or a place of torment? Do we also understand that there will be no "second chance" after death.

When we close our eyes in death—the next thing we will see in Hades will be either very desirable or very undesirable. God gives us the opportunity to make our choice here and now as to the place we wish to go. We can either take heed and diligently prepare for such or ignore the warning and be lost forever.

Heb. 9:27 \_\_\_\_\_

John 5:28-29 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Cor. 5:10-11 \_\_\_\_\_

Rev. 20:11-15 \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What is the difference between "Hades" and "Gehenna?"
2. Was the Rich man in Hades or Gehenna?
3. How could the Rich man have a tongue when his body had gone back to dust?
4. Was the Rich man a wicked man?
5. How can a person be tormented when he has no physical body?
6. How does one lay up treasures in heaven?
7. Will there be any mercy extended to mankind after death?
8. Who was raised from the dead by Jesus shortly after he told this story of the Rich man and Lazarus?
9. How could the Rich man be aware that his brothers were still alive on earth?
10. What is the significance of the resurrection of Jesus?
11. Was the Rich Man feigning concern for his brothers in asking for someone to go back from the dead and warn them not to come to this place?
12. What will be the first thing we see after death?

Lesson Six

## "THREE GREAT TRUTHS FROM THE CROSS"

We sing a song in our assemblies entitled "**Years I Spent in Vanity and Pride**" To some this title and song would have little meaning; but to those who are saved, the song has much meaning. Its primary message is pointing out the great necessity of the Cross of Jesus! The preaching of the Cross is a needed message to sinful, dying mankind!

Rom. 1:16 \_\_\_\_\_  
1 Cor. 2:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This message was one of hope. This hope was not in the speaker's excellent speaking ability, nor was it in the speaker's great wisdom—but in the preaching of the Cross of Jesus! It should be obvious that what the Apostle Paul was not saying is that all he talked about was the death of Jesus on the cross. He talked and wrote about much, much more; but, the cross was the central point of his message. Without the cross—man has no redeemer!

The purpose of this study is to see at least three great truths that the Cross of Jesus shows to us!

### **1 - IT SHOWS THE REALITY OF MAN'S SINFULNESS**

The Law of God tells of man's sinfulness:

Rom. 3:20 \_\_\_\_\_  
1 John 3:4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Rom. 3:23 \_\_\_\_\_

But the Cross is a vivid reminder of this fact! If man was not a sinner, then why the cross?

Rom. 5:6-8 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

There is a paradox about the Cross of Jesus. It was the most tragic event in human history! But, at the same time, the most wonderful event that ever happened to mankind! It helps us realize our sinfulness before God!

Man's tendency is to reject the idea of sin or at least to minimize it. The Gnostics were one of the first major efforts to do this as a doctrine. They taught that the body "sins," but not the spirit. The body goes back to dust, but the spirit lives on. Thus, it is the spirit that is saved and it doesn't matter what the body does.

Some try to call sin a sickness and believe that all man needs is medical treatment and his sin problem is cured. In other words, man is really not responsible for what he does. Some even try to explain sin away by denial.

1 John 1:10 \_\_\_\_\_

So, it would seem that either man is a sinner or God is a liar—take your choice! Is sin our fault? Are we merely victims of circumstances? Surely, God will not punish men forever for their sins that they have no control over.

Rom. 6:23 \_\_\_\_\_

The Cross says to mankind: We are all sinners; Sin is not trivial, nor humorous; It is real and serious. Man's sin required the "human" death of the Son of God to pay sin's penalty. To make light of sin is to make light of God's plan of Redemption in Christ; to make light of Jesus' death on the cross; and to make light of God's Law that required His death! The Cross is living testimony to man's sinfulness; its seriousness; its destructiveness; and of the coming punishment—if not forgiven! We need to face up to these facts or be forced to admit that the Cross was a foolish mistake of God.

## **2 - IT SHOWS THE REAL REASON FOR SIN**

The essential principle of sin is man's selfishness and self-centeredness. Man was given a choice in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15-17). Man's choice was a selfish one—not a wise one. Instead of obeying and honoring his Creator, he wanted to eat of the one tree that was forbidden. Man chose to please himself, not God. He yielded to the three avenues of temptation and satisfied himself.

But the Cross is the greatest unselfish act in human history! Not only did Christ give up His place with the Father in heaven, but he emptied Himself and took on human form to be like us. He experienced all the temptations that we faced without sinning once; and then, willingly gave up His life that we might live. The Cross is living testimony to man's selfishness and God's great unselfishness—and herein is man's greatest condemnation!



**3 - IT SHOWS THAT MAN NEEDS MERCY**

If man could save himself from the penalty of sin (Rom. 6:23), he obviously would not need the mercy of God! It is the Cross of Christ that clearly tells man that he needs God's forgiveness. The Cross is God's intervention into human history to offer salvation for mankind. But the Cross is also telling man that **IT** is the **ONLY** remedy for sin! The Cross serves as a constant reminder of our need of God's mercy. And it will not let us sleep peacefully until we recognize this great truth. The Cross lets man know that mercy is available—that God wants to forgive us and He will forgive us, but on His terms! The Cross is God's drawing power to draw sinful man to the place of forgiveness.

John 12:32 \_\_\_\_\_

The preaching of the Cross lets man know what he **MUST DO** to be saved by God's mercy. Extending mercy was not without cost to God (the death of His Son). And our receiving mercy is also not without a cost!

Matt. 16:24 \_\_\_\_\_

Rom. 3:24-26 \_\_\_\_\_

James 2:20 \_\_\_\_\_

Selfishness needs to be rooted out so that we can become like God—unselfish! Our faith (trust) must be put in the death of Christ in order to be forgiven. But this faith must be put into action (be obedient) before it will cause us to receive the mercy of God.

Acts 2:36-41 \_\_\_\_\_

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

No wonder that the Apostle Paul was so set on proclaiming the Cross of Christ! It is truly man's hope of being made right with God. The Cross shows up man's weakness, but it also shows God's great strength in providing mercy for His creatures. May we never tire of hearing the story of the Cross!

**QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What part does the "Gospel" play in the saving of man's soul?
  
2. If man is not a sinner, then what is the purpose of the Cross?
  
3. What is a Paradox of the Cross?
  
4. What are some of men's efforts to minimize sin?
  
  
5. When men make light of the Cross, they also make light of what else?
  
  
6. What is the real reason for sin?
  
  
7. What is the relationship of the Cross and man's selfishness?
  
  
8. Why does the Cross show man that he needs God's mercy?
  
  
9. Why has God required something from man before He will save him?
  
  
10. What has God required of man before He will save him?



