

A Study on

SALVATION

13 Lessons

**Prepared by:
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2004

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Lesson One

"UNBELIEF AND ITS CONSEQUENCES"

INTRODUCTION

1. Shakespeare's quote: *"To be or not to be—that is the question."*
2. But man has a greater question than this!
 - a) Whether to believe in God or not to believe!
 - b) There are two roads to travel in this life—Belief or Unbelief!
 - c) Both ways have their natural, lawful, logical outcomes!
 - d) Belief brings its fruits.
 - e) Unbelief brings its fruits.
 - f) Gal. 6:7-8—***"Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."***
3. 1 Corinthians 15:12-19 shows the logical conclusions if Christ has not been raised:
 - a) People are dishonest who preach that He was raised.
 - b) Such preaching is vain, useless, and worthless.
 - c) Any belief in a resurrection from the dead is killed.
 - d) All mankind are still in their sinful state with no forgiveness.
 - e) Upon death, we will perish—no hope beyond.
 - f) We return to the way of bitterness & Despair.
4. And so—unbelief has its natural results, conclusions, and consequences.
5. Let's look at four obvious outcomes of unbelief!

DISCUSSION

I. UNBELIEF OFFERS NO REAL PURPOSE FOR LIFE.

A. Questions that unbelief cannot answer:

- 1) Why are we here?
- 2) Why are we different from the animal world?
- 3) Does it matter that we are different?
- 4) What is the real meaning of existence?

B. But belief has answers!

- 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13—***"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."***
- 2) 1 Corinthians 10:31—***"Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God."***

C. The despair of unbelief is illustrated in a quote from Mark Twain:

"A myriad of men are born; they labor and sweat and struggle for bread; they squabble and scold and fight; they scramble for little mean advantages over each other. Age creeps upon them; infirmities follow; shame and humiliations bring down their pride and their vanities. Those they love are taken from them and the joy of life is turned to aching grief. The burden of pain, care, misery, grows heavier year by year. At length ambition is dead; pride is dead; vanity is dead; longing for relief is in their place. It comes at last—the only unpoisoned gift life ever had for them—and they vanish from a world where they were of no consequence; where they achieved nothing;

where they were a mistake and a failure and a foolishness; where they have left no sign that they have existed—a world will lament them for a day and forget them forever. Then another myriad takes their place and copies all they did and goes along the same profitless road and vanishes as they vanished—to make room for another and another and a million other myriads to follow the same arid path through the same desert and accomplish what the first myriad and all the myriads that came after it accomplished—nothing!"

D. Unbelief has a consequence!

- 1) A pessimistic swamp of despair.
- 2) The history of man without God is empty & meaningless.

II. UNBELIEF FORCES ONE TO BELIEVE ONLY IN SELF.

A. *It is replacing the Perfect with the inferior.*

- 1) Rom. 1:18-21
- 2) Mankind can come to know God, but chooses unbelief instead.
- 3) How is God known?
 - a) He is manifest in man himself—the way man has been designed.
 - b) The creation all about man declares the existence of God.
 - c) Ps. 19:1-3
 - d) Grecian poets made this observation: *"...as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."*(Acts 17:28)
 - e) Man can know things about the Nature of God from His creation.
 - He has the intelligence and reasoning powers to know God exists.
 - God's power and Authority is obvious.
 - f) But God has also given an inspired record to tell of His existence, works, and plans for the redemption of man.

B. *But the inferiority of unbelief is obvious!*

- 1) Man's objects of worship have always been inferior to the Creator.
 - a) The Sun, Moon, Stars are created things man has worshipped.
 - b) Idols made of wood, stone, and metals—all inferior.
 - c) Rom. 1:22-25
- 2) Even in our modern age:
 - a) **Science** is worshipped as the ability of man to save himself.
 - b) But in reality the products of SCIENCE can be transformed into a hideous serpent whose bite can destroy all.
 - c) And—without a basis for a Righteous Moral Standard—man's technology becomes a constant threat for wholesale human destruction.
- 3) Unbelief replaces the idea of God with a deified view of man and his work.
 - a) Communism or Nazism are examples carried to their logical conclusions.
 - b) Their inferiority is obvious.

III. UNBELIEF DESTROYS ALL DESIRABLE HOPE AFTER THIS LIFE

A. *Man without God is a man without hope.*

- 1) Ephesians 2:12—*"...having no hope, and without God in the world."*
- 2) 1 Corinthians 15:19—*"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."*

- 3) Without God:
 - a) Man has no possible answer for coping with evil or suffering!
 - b) He loses his main & only real basis for the dignity of man.
 - Genesis 1:27—*"So God created man in his own image..."*
 - c) Evil continually bombards his heart with deep despair & gloom.
 - d) Then comes death—what then? **NO HOPE!**

B. Quotes from well-known unbelievers expressing their hopelessness:

- 1) Voltaire—*"Strike out a few sages, and the crowd of human beings is nothing but a horrible assemblage of unfortunate criminals, and the globe contains nothing but corpses. I tremble to have to complain once more of the Being of beings casting an attentive eye over this terrible picture. I wish I had never been born."*
- 2) Goethe—*"I have ever been esteemed one of Fortune's chiefest favorites; nor will I complain or find fault with the course my life has taken. Yet, truly, there has been nothing but toil and care; and I may say that, in all my seventy-five years, I have never had a month of genuine comfort. It has been the perpetual rolling of a stone, which I have always had to raise anew....Men will become more clever and more acute, but not better, happier, and stronger in action, or at least only at epochs."*
- 3) Surely life must have more to offer than these outlooks of unbelievers.

IV. UNBELIEF DOES AWAY WITH A SURE MORAL STANDARD.

A. The basis for a moral standard is gone with unbelief.

- 1) If there is no God to whom man must give an accounting, then there is no basis for moral actions.
- 2) If no moral standard from God—then man becomes his own moral standard.
- 3) Such standards are designed to satisfy man's own personal sensual desires.
- 4) Rom. 1:26-31
- 5) Our society today is reflecting this concept.

B. Without God, without purpose, without hope, and without a moral standard---What is the outcome?

- 1) An alarming increase in immorality, divorce, broken families, etc.
- 2) We will see greater & more open political corruption.
- 3) Will see greater unrest among youth who are groping for meaning for their lives.
- 4) With more immorality—more disease & suffering.
- 5) And an increasing of suicides.

C. Unbelief leads to:

- 1) A dishonoring of the Creator;
- 2) A dishonoring of our own nature;
- 3) A perversion of all social relations;
- 4) The loss of the dignity & integrity of human-kind;
- 5) The debasing of man that leads to disgusting practices.
- 6) And verse 32—*"Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them."*
- 7) And---history is plentiful in illustrating this fact.

CONCLUSION

1. Man can know God!
 - a) The revelation of nature. (natural revelation)
 - b) The revelation of the Bible (Supernatural revelation)
2. Thus—man is without excuse for not worshipping & serving the God of Creation.
3. And—the wrath of God will be poured out upon the unrighteous & ungodly. (v. 18)
4. How grateful we ought to be:
 - a) That God revealed himself to us;
 - b) That He has given us meaning & purpose for living;
 - c) That he has given us hope for life eternal;
 - d) That He has given us a Moral Standard by which to live for our own good.
5. We can show our gratitude by:
 - a) Putting our faith & trust in Him;
 - b) Being reconciled to Him;
 - c) By obeying the gospel to be saved;
 - d) By living a life that glorifies Him among men.

Lesson Two

“FOUR STEPS INTO DARKNESS”

INTRODUCTION

1. The Bible uses terms to identify the conditions of men’s hearts or lives.
 - a) Such as A Truthful person or a Liar.
 - b) Those who have Enlightened minds or Darkened minds.
 - c) Those who walk in Light or in Darkness.
2. Rom. 1:18 pronounces God’s Wrath upon those who go the way of Darkness.
 - a) This wrath is justly due.
 - b) It is poured out upon the ungodly and the unrighteous.
 - 1) *Ungodly—irreverence, disrespect for God and sacred things.*
 - 2) *Unrighteous—wrong attitudes & actions towards fellow-man.*
 - c) The verses following demonstrate these two concepts.
3. We have entitled this lesson—“Four Steps into Darkness!”

DISCUSSION

I. STEP ONE—REJECT THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

A. Romans 1:19-21, 28.

- 1) They knew God—His eternal power and Godhead.
- 2) How?
 - a) By the things He has made....His creation.
 - b) Psalms 19:1-3
 - c) Psalms 14:1—*“The fool has said in his heart, there is no God.”*

B. V. 21—They knew him, but would not glorify Him.

- 1) They were capable of knowing Him—therefore were responsible.
- 2) Not in the sense we know Him by Revelation.
- 3) But they could know God—but chose not to give Him glory.

C. V. 28—They did not want to retain their knowledge of God.

- 1) It was an obvious choice that they made.
- 2) They chose to put the true knowledge of God out of their minds!

D. The Results was two-fold:

- 1) They were without excuse and deserved God’s wrath.
- 2) Their foolish hearts were darkened.
 - a) If man rejects the light—they will walk in darkness.
 - b) If they walk in darkness, they walk without God.
 - c) 1 John 1:5-6
 - d) Their reasoning becomes foolish & vain.
 - e) Their hearts become senseless.

E. We, today, have additional light!

- 1) Jesus is the Light of the world who fully reveals God.
- 2) How much greater is our responsibility to walk in Light.
- 3) If they were without excuse—what about us today?
- 4) How thankful we ought to be for the great light shown to us.
- 5) And yet—many choose to walk in darkness.

II. STEP TWO—THEY ACCEPTED A DEGRADING VIEW OF GOD.

A. Romans 1:22-23

- 1) Commonsense is an accumulation of experiences & observations about life.
 - a) A person is burn with fire—he learns to avoid fire.
 - b) He would be foolish to put his hand into the fire.
- 2) Commonsense tells us also:
 - a) That a watch didn't just happen, it was made by someone.
 - b) So does our universe indicate a creator.

B. But men become wise in their own eyes!

- 1) They dethrone God.
- 2) They make their own gods.
- 3) Idolatry is the most obvious man-made gods of mankind.
- 4) It is an obvious rejection of God for something inferior.
- 5) It is an insult to the true and living God.

C. When men accept a degrading view of God they walk in Darkness, not in Light.

III. STEP THREE—THEY PREFER A LIE TO THE TRUTH.

A. Romans 1:25

- 1) The Bible places much emphasis upon truth.
 - a) Proverbs 23:23—“***Buy the truth and sell it not.***”
 - b) John 8:32—“***...the truth shall make you free.***”
 - c) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12
- 2) John 3:19—“***And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.***”

B. Why do men prefer a lie to the truth?

- 1) He wants to walk in ungodliness and unrighteousness.
- 2) He enjoys the pleasures of sin.
- 3) He prefers the Darkness.

IV. STEP FOUR—GIVE IN TO THE LOWER PASSIONS.

A. Romans 1:24, 26-27

- 1) When men are determined to go their own way—God let's them.
- 2) When men are not held in restraint by belief in God:
 - a) They give in to their lower nature.
 - b) Their passions become the controlling factor.
 - c) They plunge into all kinds of immorality.
 - d) They defile their bodies.
 - e) They turn to crimes against one another.

B. Romans 1:29

- 1) Their lives are filled with all kinds of unrighteousness.
- 2) The heathen nations had sunk to a very low moral level when this was written.
- 3) Man can see the degradation and shame of turning from God.
- 4) The end result is utter wickedness.

CONCLUSION

1. The way out of darkness is obvious:
 - a) Desire and seek for Truth.
 - b) Be determined to walk in Light.
 - c) Seek to know the true & living God.
2. John 17:3—***“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”***
3. God offers mankind a way out of Darkness through Jesus, the Light of the World.
4. In which are you walking—Light or Darkness?
5. If we reject the light—we will deserve the consequence!

Lesson Three

**"CAN A DEVOUTLY RELIGIOUS PERSON
BE LOST?"**

INTRODUCTION

1. Can a devoutly religious person be lost?
 - a) Very few people are ready to believe that such will be lost.
 - b) They might say, "*Such is unreasonable.*"
 - c) Or, "*If they won't be saved, who can?*"
2. To most people—if you want to be saved:
 - a) You must be a good person.
 - b) You must be sincere in what you believe.
 - c) You must be respected by others.
 - d) You must show a good religious interest.
3. It is also obvious to most people:
 - a) That there are a lot of people who profess to be religious, but are not.
 - b) So, they may have some doubts about such being saved.
 - c) They are even wary & uncertain about those whom they term religious fanatics.
4. But to suggest that a devoutly religious can be lost is:
 - a) As some would say, "*The height of folly.*"
 - b) To even ask such a question is to answer it—in their minds.
 - c) It is absurd to even infer that such could be lost.
5. However:
 - a) Even though I don't like to be counted among the minority on issues;
 - b) And I certainly don't want to be looked upon as an arrogant smart-alek;
 - c) And I certainly do not want to be labeled as Judgmental;
 - d) Yet—from a Biblical standpoint—the answer has to be "Yes."
 - A devoutly religious person can be lost.
 - It is illustrated many times in Scripture.
 - The conclusion cannot be missed by an open mind.
6. Let's look at some of these Scriptures.

DISCUSSION

I. THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS AMONG THE JEWS. (Matt. 23:23-33)

A. They were known for their:

- 1) Tithing—even mint, anise, and cummin.
- 2) They fasted one or more times a week.
- 3) They were strict keepers of the Law of Moses in many areas.
- 4) They were strict keepers of the traditions of the Fathers.
- 5) They were religious—devoutly religion in their own eyes & before most of the people.

B. What Jesus had to say about them:

- 1) They rejected Jesus' claims of being the Messiah.
- 2) They wanted to stop Him from teaching the people.
- 3) Look what Jesus had to say about them:
 - a) Matthew 23:14-15
 - b) Matthew 23:28
 - c) Matthew 23:33
- 4) By most people's definition—these were devoutly religious people.
- 5) But Jesus pointed out they were not right with God—LOST!

II. THE JEWISH NATION IN GENERAL.

A. Romans 10:1-3

- 1) Paul said they *"have a zeal for God."*
- 2) Don't we think of such people as being devoutly religious?

B. But Paul said he wanted them to be saved—They were lost!

- 1) He gives the reason why they were lost:
 - a) It was not because they were devoutly religious—but in spite of it.
 - b) But because of their rejection of Christ & God's way of making me Righteous or saved!

III. LOOK AT SAUL OF TARSUS (Later, the apostle Paul):

A. Acts 23:1

- 1) He could honestly state that his conscience was clear even when he was persecuting Christians.
- 2) No one was more devoutly religious than he.
- 3) He describes his own devotion to God:
 - a) Acts 22:3
 - b) Acts 26:4-5
 - c) Galatians 1:13-14
 - d) Philippians 3:5-6

B. Yet, in Paul's own words—He was lost!

- 1) In spite of his Sincerity!
- 2) In spite of his Devoutness!
- 3) In spite of his Zeal!
- 4) In spite of his Righteousness according to the Law!
- 5) 1 Timothy 1:15-16
- 6) He was commanded to be baptized to wash away his sins after he came to a belief in Jesus. (Acts 22:16)

IV. LOOK AT CORNELIUS, THE CENTURIAN.

A. Acts 10:1-2

- 1) This man was a Gentile, but a devoutly religious man.
- 2) Described:
 - a) Sincere & Humble.
 - b) Believed in the one true God.

- c) Prayed constantly—gave alms to the poor.
- d) First class man!

B. But the Bible states that he was lost!

- 1) Acts 11:14
 - a) He needed to hear words in order to be saved.
 - b) He needed to hear about Christ & his obedience to Him.
- 2) Cornelius immediately sent for Peter. (Acts 10:33)
- 3) Peter came and preached Christ to him, his family, relatives, and friends.
 - a) He stressed the necessity of faith in Christ.
 - b) Acts 10:42-43
 - c) And commanded all of them to be baptized in water. (Acts 10:48)
- 4) How could such a man like this be lost?
 - a) Because he had not believed & obeyed Christ—His gospel!
 - b) But when preached to—He believed and obeyed to be saved.

V. SALVATION HAS A 3-FOLD NATURE THAT NEEDS TO BE UNDERSTOOD:

A. Man needs salvation from past sins!

- 1) Paul & Cornelius both needed this.
- 2) Upon believing Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God—they were baptized into Christ. (Galatians 3:27)
- 3) All past sins were then forgiven.
 - a) They could not take away their sins by a devoutly religious life.
 - b) They needed the cleansing blood of Jesus to wash them away.

B. 2nd—Man needs the continual cleansing as a Christian!

- 1) Even though saved from past sins—I still sin as a Christian, at times.
 - a) I need these sins forgiven.
 - b) This is a continuing process in my life to be right with God—to remain in a saved state.
- 2) 1 John 1:7-9
 - a) He was writing to Christians.
 - b) We need to live the best life we can.
 - c) But even at our best—we sin.
 - d) We need to be saved from these sins.
 - e) We get it by:
 - Continuing to walk in the light.
 - By continuing to confess our sins, day by day.
 - By praying for God's continued forgiveness.
 - Dangers are real. (Heb. 6:4-6)

C. 3rd—Man needs eternal salvation—after this life is over.

- 1) This depends upon two things:
 - a) I must have obeyed the gospel—to have all past sins forgiven.
 - b) I must continue to live the Christian life & have my sins continually forgiven.
- 2) If I die in this state of grace—I will be saved eternally.
 - a) Rev. 2:10; Rev. 14:13

CONCLUSION

1. Now—back to our question—"*Can a devoutly religious person be lost?*"
2. Such can be lost for one or both of the following reasons:
 - a) He hasn't obeyed the gospel to have past sins forgiven. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)
 - b) And/or—because his devoutly religious activities are not those things that God has commanded for us today.
 - Romans 10:1-3
 - Matthew 7:21-23
3. It should behoove us all to examine our lives:
 - a) To be sure we have obeyed the gospel of Christ;
 - b) And then to be sure we maintain our relationship with God by continued obedience to God's Will.

Lesson Four

“GOD’S DELIGHT IN SAVING SINNERS”

INTRODUCTION

1. Luke 15:7—*“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine persons who need no repentance.”*
2. Who cares if a sinner is lost & goes into everlasting punishment?
 - a) Do we?
 - b) Does a husband care if his wife is lost?
 - c) Does a wife care if her husband is lost?
 - d) Do your parents care?
 - e) Do your friends care?
3. If no one else cares—It is evident that God cares!
 - a) Of the many descriptions about God’s character....
 - b) The one that we should all be grateful for is....GOD CARES!

DISCUSSION

I. GOD HAS SHOWN HIS DETERMINATION TO SAVE MANKIND.

- A. *2 Peter 3:9—“...God is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”*
- B. *Romans 5:8—“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”*
- C. *Luke 15:1-7, 8-10--The Parable of the lost Sheep & Coin shows God’s determination to reach us.*
- D. *Luke 15:11-32--The Parable of the Lost Son shows His willingness to forgive us.)*

II. SAVING US IS GOD’S DELIGHT!

- A. *Ezek. 33:11—“Say to them : As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, Turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?”*
- B. *Mic. 7:18—“Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?”*
- C. *The Parable of the Lost Son shows:*
 - The Father was looking for him.
 - When He saw him, he ran to meet him.
 - Fell upon his neck and embraced him.
 - Called for all to rejoice.

CONCLUSION

1. Knowing this about God, Why wait to respond?
2. **Song:**
*"Why do you wait, dear brother, O why do you tarry so long?
Your Savior is waiting to give you a place in His sanctified throng.*

"What do you hope, dear brother, to gain by a further delay?"

There's no one to save you but Jesus, there's no other way but His way.

"Why do you wait, dear brother, the harvest is passing away;

Your Savior is waiting to bless you: there's danger and death in delay.

"Why not? Why not? Why not come to Him now?"

3. Can you imagine:

a) God showing His determination & delight in saving us.

b) He goes to great humility to make this possible.

c) He then pleads with men to accept His offer.

d) And then, Man says:

- "I'm just not interested."

- "I don't have time to be concerned."

- "Oh, maybe someday I'll get around to doing something."

4. The Lord waits, will you respond?

Lesson Five

“GREAT WONDERS OF GOD’S MERCY”INTRODUCTION

1. The Creation of God is overwhelming. (Psalms 8:1-9)
 - a) As we learn more of the vastness of our universe, we are overwhelmed.
 - b) And then, we are truly made to wonder, as the Psalmists says, *“What is man in the midst of such vastness?”*
2. And God’s answer is:
 - a) *“Man is the crowning of all my creation.”*
 - b) *“I have crowned him with glory & honor.”*
 - c) *“I have given him dominion over all the earth.”*
 - d) *“Man is the ‘Apple of mine eye.’”*
3. Even though this is great and to be greatly appreciated.....
 - a) Yet, there is something even greater to cause wonder & amazement.
 - b) And that is, the great wonders of God’s mercy.

DISCUSSION**I. 1ST WONDER---THAT GOD IS THE FRIEND OF SINNERS.****A. Man was greatly blessed in the Garden of Eden—but he rebelled.**

- 1) God provided for his every need.
- 2) Yet, man was not satisfied.
- 3) He wanted to do his own thing, not what God had said!
- 4) Isaiah 1:2---*“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.”*
- 5) As a result, man became an enemy to God.

B. But, in spite of man’s rebellion, God extended mercy!

- 1) He continued to bless all mankind with physical blessings.
 - a) Matthew 5:45---*“...for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”*
- 2) But he also devised a plan for man’s redemption from sin:
 - a) Genesis 3:15---*“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*
 - b) The plan gradually unfolded through the centuries.
 - c) The Plan found its completeness in the coming of Christ.
 - d) Matthew 1:21---*“And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.”*
- 3) God showed true friendship to His rebellious creatures.

C. Just envision it---The Great God of Heaven condescending to His creatures.

- 1) It was slanderously said of Jesus: *“Behold, a friend of publicans and sinners.”* (Luke 7:34)
 - a) It was said by those who were antagonistic to Jesus.
 - b) It was said to slur him.

- c) But they didn't realize just how right they were.
- d) God was being a true friend to rebellious man!
- 2) Illustration:
 - a) During the French "Reign of Terror" (revolution).
 - b) Many Frenchmen were herded into a common dungeon to await the guillotine.
 - c) An older man was wandering thru the vast crowd one night & discovered that his son was there too.
 - d) He was asleep and was about to awaken him, but he paused.....
 - e) He didn't want his son to die...had to think of something.
 - f) He thought up a scheme.
 - g) Shortly afterwards he heard his son's name called.
 - h) He quickly arose and answered the call.
 - i) They took him by the place where names were checked & stricken off.
 - 1—Called out his name.... "Yes".
 - 2—Age 37----"No, my age is 73".
 - 3—"Foolish mistake"...struck thru the name.
 - j) The heavy knife did its job swift & quick.
 - k) When the son awoke afterwards, a friend told him what had happened.
 - l) Song...."**There was one who was willing, to die in my stead; That a soul so unworthy might live. And the path to the cross, He was willing to tread; All the sins of my life to forgive.**"

D. What a great wonder--- that God's great mercy is extended to undeserving mankind!

II. 2ND WONDER---THAT GOD SHOULD CONDESCEND TO REASON WITH SINNERS.

A. Isaiah 1:18---"Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

- 1) Some suggest....God should do this!
 - a) We are His creatures.
 - b) He loves us.
 - c) It is natural that God should want to reason with us.
- 2) But what makes it so significant is:
 - a) That He is willing to reason with stubborn, stiff-necked people like us.
 - b) People who are determined to go our own way.
 - c) People who richly deserve the punishment of God.
 - d) But God patiently waits & calls for us to return.

B. Illustration:

- 1) A man conceived of the idea of putting in a store that sells CORK.
- 2) He put up a big sign....ads in paper & on radio.
- 3) He had plenty of parking area.
- 4) Had the place Air Conditioned.
- 5) But his CORK would not sell....
- 6) Why....no one felt a need for CORK.
- 7) But if he were aboard an ocean liner:
 - a) And it was sinking.....

- b) How much CORK would he sell??? GET RICH QUICK!
- 8) The reason why God reasons with mankind:
 - a) To help us see our terrible predicament.
 - b) We won't appreciate the great wonder of God's mercy until we see our hopeless condition.

C. But there is something else that makes this so amazing!!

- 1) That God was willing to send His Son to further reason with us.
 - a) Revelation 3:20---"***Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.***"
- 2) But even more amazing is God's willingness to reason with us patiently after our refusal time after time.
 - a) God was long-suffering with His creatures from the start of our rebellion in Adam.
 - 1—Sin deserved punishment, but God bore patiently.
 - 2—But man became so sinful, He had to destroy them.
 - 3—Even then, it grieved the heart of God.
 - b) With the Jewish nation:
 - 1—They rejected His Son—He was still merciful.
 - 2—He patiently bore with them for 40 more years in order to give them time to repent.
 - 3—But His punishment came upon them.
 - 4—Matthew 23:34-39
 - c) And God patiently bears with us today...VESSELS FIT FOR DESTRUCTION.
 - 1—II Peter 3:9---"***The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward not willing that any should perish, but that all should come repentance.***"
 - 2—But the day of punishment will come for those who will not repent.
 - 3—God is not pampering us, but patiently reasoning with us to turn from our sinful ways.
- 3) Illustration:
 - a) Preacher visited home of a very sick man.
 - b) Talked to him about his soul, his need for obedience to God.
 - c) The man made a promise, "*If I live, I will become a Christian.*"
 - d) He did get better & the preacher reminded him of his promise.
 - e) "*Oh, I'll be there this Sunday.*"
 - f) But he never showed up, even after promising time and again.
 - g) Preacher later remarked to a friend, "*I am afraid that we will soon have a sudden death to deal with.*"
 - h) "*Why do you say that? Who is going to die?*"
 - i) Told about the man and his un-kept promises.
 - j) Proverbs 29:1---"***He that being often reprov'd hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.***"

- k) Within a week, the man died of a heart attack.
- 4) It is truly amazing that God will patiently reason with man...even after many refusals.

III. 3RD **WONDER---THAT GOD SHOULD FORGIVE ALL OUR SINS.**

A. *He has promised it:*

- 1) Isaiah 1:18---***“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.”***
- 2) We have sinned against God without cause.
- 3) We did what we did out of our own selfish desire.
- 4) God could have dealt justly with us, but he didn't.
- 5) He has shown a willingness to forgive every sin!!

B. *Man has much to be thankful for in this regard.*

- 1) For Angels who sinned are not forgiven.
 - a) There is no indication of redemption offered.
 - b) II Peter 2:4---***“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (tartarus), and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment...”***
- 2) But with man...we do have a chance for forgiveness.
 - a) In spite of our great sinfulness, he is willing to forgive.
 - b) In fact...to forgive it all!
- 3) Illustration:
 - a) Man was in dire need of a blood transfusion direct.
 - b) Had a rare blood.
 - c) When looked up in computer--only 3 persons' names came up.
 - d) For some reason the first two contacted could not give at that time.
 - e) A 3rd person was contacted....agreed....flown in with the life-saving blood.
- 4) Jesus' blood is the rarest of all blood.
 - a) Can save man from all his sins.
 - b) It is not limited in its application.
 - c) It will never run out...plentiful.
 - d) How grateful we ought to be for God's great mercy.

C. *But what is perhaps the greatest wonder of the world.....that God will forgive us on such simple terms.*

- 1) Acts 2:37-38, 41
 - a) Peter accused them of crucifying the Son of God.
 - b) Could you do any worse????
 - c) Yet, God said, ***“Repent, be baptized, and I will forgive you.”***
 - d) Can you believe that????
- 2) Neither of these things have any merit in themselves to save.
 - a) No way to earn or merit forgiveness by doing them.
 - b) But God said, if you will do them, I will forgive you.
 - c) It is God's wonderful grace & mercy that forgives us.
- 3) And...God did not require the impossible, nor the outstanding, but the simple!!!

- 4) Illustration:
 - a) “Do you mean to tell me that all I have to do is to believe in Jesus, repent, and be baptized, and God will save me?”
 - b) “Yes”.....that is what He says!! (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38)
- 5) Can you believe that God will forgive us on such simple terms?
- 6) It is made possible because:
 - a) Jesus paid the debt for us.
 - b) He paid it all.
 - c) Sin had left its crimson stain on my soul.
 - d) His blood washed it white as snow.

CONCLUSION

1. God’s mercy is AMAZING, WONDERFUL, & INEXHAUSTIBLE.
2. Illustration:
 - a) A soldier called his mother from San Francisco Bay.
 - b) He said, “*Mother, I’ll be coming home, but hear me what I have to say.*”
 - c) “*I want to bring a buddy, please, Mom, if you don’t mind,*”
 - d) “*He has one leg, one arm, one eye, And he needs your love so kind.*”
 - f) The mother told her soldier son with a harsh and bitter tone,
 - g) “*No, don’t bring your buddy here; find him another home.*”
 - h) “*We just don’t have a place for him, and if its how you say,*”
 - i) “*We sure don’t need a **handicap** to be here in the way.*”
 - j) Then later came a telegram; the soldier boy was dead.
 - k) He took his life; they found a note, and this is what it said,
 - l) “*No, don’t bring your buddy here,*” *his mother’s words were they,*
 - m) “*We sure don’t need a **handicap** to be here in the way.*”
 - n) At last the wheels stopped turning, as the mother met the train.
 - o) She came to get her only son with tears that fell like rain.
 - p) She stared into the cold steel box to kiss her boy goodbye,
 - q) And there he was, a **handicap**---one leg, one arm, one eye.
3. God has not said “NO” to sinful man’s coming home....marred by sin.
4. Instead, we are over-awe at his great & wonderful heart of love for us.
5. Are you enjoying the salvation that God so wondrously offers to all???

Lesson Six

"THE COMBINATION THAT UNLOCKS SALVATION"

INTRODUCTION

1. Man's salvation is a most important subject.
 - a) To exaggerate its importance would not be possible.
 - b) To give a wrong answer can be eternally fatal.
 - c) It ought & must be the greatest concern of our life.
2. Salvation for man is a two-fold process.
 - a) God had to make it possible to justly save man.
 - This deals with His grace, Love, Mercy, Longsuffering, etc.
 - But primarily with the death of Jesus on the cross to make it possible.
 - Thus, God has done His part.
 - Our lesson today will not deal with God's part.
 - b) But man also has a part to play in his own salvation.
 - This is the thrust of our study—"What must I do to be saved?"
3. Unfortunately—men have confused the issue!
 - a) They give the wrong answer.
 - b) Or, give only part of the answer.
 - c) Like the apostle Paul warned in Gal. 1:6-9.
 - d) This makes the matter critical for all.
4. The only solution to the confusion:
 - a) Turn to the Word of God—To all of what is taught.
 - b) Let His Word be the final and absolute answer.
5. Illustration:
 - a) After graduating from High School, I went to College in Nashville, TN.
 - b) While there—I had a mail box in the student center.
 - Getting mail meant a lot to me while away from home.
 - I would check it every day—hoping for some mail.
 - The box had a combination lock on it.
 - To get it to open, I had to:
 - Know the right combination;
 - Turn to each number correctly & fully;
 - Turn to each number in the proper sequence;
 - Forgetting the combination—I could not get my mail.
 - c) Years later, I had nightmares (bad dreams) about that Mailbox.
 - Dreamed that I lost or forget the combination—could not get my mail!
6. This combination lock can easily illustrate the simplicity of man's part in his own salvation.
 - a) Illustrations do not prove something—they merely illustrate what is true.
 - b) We hope this simple illustration will help each see clearly our duty before God.

DISCUSSIONI. MEN ARE COMMANDED TO BELIEVE TO BE SAVED.**A. Scriptures:**

- 1) John 8:21—*"I go my way, and you shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go you cannot come."*
- 2) John 8:24—*"I said therefore unto you, that you shall die in your sins: for if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins."*

B. In whom, and in what are we to believe?

- 1) Must believe in God.
 - a) Heb. 11:6—*"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is..."*
- 2) Must believe in Jesus.
 - a) John 20:30-31—*"...these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name."*
- 3) Must believe that God cannot lie and will do what He says.
 - a) Heb. 11:6—*"...and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*
 - b) Heb. 6:18—*"That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."*

C. This faith must be active on our part.

- 1) Heb. 11:6—*"...he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*
- 2) Jas. 2:17—*"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."*
- 3) Dead faith, inactive faith, cannot save.
 - a) Jas. 2:19—*"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and tremble."*
 - b) Jas. 2:24—*"You see then now that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."*
- 4) Man must have an active, obedient faith to be saved!

II. MEN ARE COMMANDED TO REPENT TO BE SAVED.**A. Scriptures:**

- 1) Luke 13:3—*"I tell you, nay; but, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish."*
- 2) Acts 17:30—*"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commands all men every where to repent..."*

B. Repentance is not:

- 1) Praying or asking for forgiveness.
- 2) Or, Sorrow that I got caught in my evil deed.
- 3) Or, some small change in my life.

C. Repentance is presented as a 3-fold concept:

- 1) It is 1st of all—having a godly sorrow over my sinfulness.
 - a) 2 Cor. 7:10—*"For Godly sorrow works repentance to salvation."*
 - b) Godly sorrow for sin causes one to repent!
- 2) 2nd, it is a changing of one's mind about continuing in disobedience to God.
 - a) Matt. 21:29—*"He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented and went."*

- b) A decision is called for—A commitment to obedience to God.
- 3) 3rd, it results in an actual turning from disobedience to obedience.
 - a) Matt. 3:8—"**Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.**
 - b) Show by your life that your repentance is sincere.

III. MEN ARE COMMANDED TO CONFESS CHRIST TO BE SAVED.

A. Scriptures:

- 1) Rom. 10:10—"**With the heart believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**"
- 2) Matt. 10:32-33—"**Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.**"

B. Men must not be ashamed to confess Jesus before men.

- 1) We are to confess Him as Lord. (Rom. 10:9)
- 2) We are to confess Him as the Christ, the Son of God. (Acts 8:37)
- 3) It is confessing openly our discipleship to Jesus!

IV. MEN ARE COMMANDED TO BE BAPTIZED TO BE SAVED.

A. Scriptures:

- 1) Matt. 28:19—"**Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**"
- 2) Mark 16:15-16
- 3) Acts 2:38
- 4) Acts 22:16
- 5) I Peter 3:21

B. What is God commanding concerning baptism?

- 1) Unfortunately, the Greek word, Baptizo, has not been translated.
- 2) Greek scholars all agree that the word means: To submerge, immerse, to put under.
- 3) Rom. 6:4—"**Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**"
- 4) To have a little water sprinkled or poured over my head is not baptism!

C. Baptism becomes a test for man.

- 1) It is a test of our faith in this promise.
 - a) Mark 16:16
 - b) Illustrate:
 - 1) "I have a \$100 bill."
 - 2) "I will give it to the first person who comes to the podium."
 - 3) Now suppose _____ got up here first—wanting \$100.
 - 4) But I didn't have \$100.
 - 5) He put his trust in a man's word—who mislead him.
 - c) Is your faith in Jesus' promises or man's?
- 2) It is a test of one's love for the Lord.
 - a) 1 John 2:4—"**He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**"
 - b) John 14:15—"**If you love me, keep my commandments.**"
 - c) True love for God is expressed by obedience to His commands.

- 3) It is a test of one's sincerity.
 - a) Lk. 7:29-30—"*And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.*"
 - b) The contrast is obvious!
- 4) It is a test of true obedience.
 - a) The Lord is commanding immersion (a burial) in order to be saved.
 - b) True obedience does what God says!
 - c) Not a substitute!
 - d) A person may ask: "*Can't a person be saved even though he hasn't been immersed into Christ?*"
 - There is one way to find out.
 - Die un-immersed and see what God says at the judgment.
 - It is your soul and your choice—to obey or not to obey!
 - e) We know what God commands us to do.
 - f) Why not believe & do what He says!

CONCLUSION

1. Illustration:
 - a) A man is employed to sell clothing.
 - b) The price is clearly marked by the owner on each item.
 - c) A customer comes in—found a suit he liked—asked the clerk to cut the price.
 - d) He granted it.
 - e) After the sale the owner called the clerk into his office.
 - "*Whose goods are these?*" "**Yours**"
 - "*Was the price clearly marked on the suit?*" "**Yes**"
 - "*Then, your part is to sell goods at my price, not what you like.*"
2. Salvation is what Christ offers to mankind.
 - a) The Requirements to be saved are clearly given.
 - b) Preachers are merely clerks in God's store.
 - c) We have no right to change the conditions—nor the cost.
 - d) Jesus has plainly spelled it out
3. Combination locks are unusual:
 - a) You must turn to each number correctly.
 - b) You must turn to each number in correct sequence.
 - c) You must turn to all numbers before it will unlock.
 - d) And...ignorance of the combination will not automatically open the lock.
4. Salvation is pictured the same way.
 - a) We must do each of the things God commands: Faith, Repentance, Confession, and Baptism.
 - b) We must do them in their proper sequence—not reversal.
 - c) We must do all in order to have salvation.
 - d) Ignorance of these things does not automatically give us salvation.
5. Jesus' terms are clear—why not be obedient to Him as Lord?

Lesson Seven

"MY RESPONSE TO GOD'S OFFER"INTRODUCTION

1. This story is about a king preparing a marriage feast for his son. (**Matt. 22:1-14**)
 - a) He was delighted that his son was getting married.
 - b) He sent out servants to call his friends to the wedding feast.
 - c) But they would not come.
 - d) Needless to say, he was disappointed!
 - e) So, he sent his servants to urge them to come...all is in readiness.
 - f) But they made light of it.
 - g) They even mistreated his servants & then slew them.
 - h) The king sent his army to destroy those murderers & burned their cities.
2. Jesus helps us to see a **Great Truth** in this parable.
 - a) Men often treat with **indifference** things that are important.
 - b) They treat things of **significance** very lightly.
 - c) But they can do so to their own hurt or ruin!
3. There are many things men make light of:
 - a) Some things **Do Not** really matter!
 - b) Some things are of **Great Importance!**
 - c) We must learn to make the proper **distinction** between them.
4. Purpose of this lesson is to emphasize things that are important!

DISCUSSION**I. MEN MUST NOT TREAT LIGHTLY THE WORD OF GOD!****A. For it is God's Good News to man!**

- 1) It is Good News about the salvation of man's soul.
- 2) This Good News has been revealed to us through His Son.
"In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son" (Heb. 1:2)
- 3) It is also God's final message to mankind. (Jude 3)
- 4) To treat this Good News lightly leaves us with **No Other** to which to turn.
- 5) Peter—**"Lord, to whom shall can we go, thou hast the words of eternal life."** (John 6:68)

B. For His Word will serve as the Divine Standard of Judgment some day.

- 1) John 12:48—**"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."**
- 2) Thus,
 - a) To go by our **own ideas & thinking** will not avail at Judgment.
 - b) To follow the **doctrines & commands of men** will not avail either.
 - c) Only following the Word of God will avail. (Matt. 7:21)
- 3) To treat God's Word lightly can be to our own eternal ruin!
- 4) We can treat It lightly by:
 - a) Total rejection;

- b) Being indifferent to it's message;
- c) Doing only what I want to do & ignoring the rest!
- 5) We can treat it with great respect by:
 - a) Seeking to know His Word.
 - b) Making the sacrifice necessary to obey His Word.
- 6) Illustration:
 - a) 65 Year old lady in France illustrates this.
 - b) She had studied her Bible and knew that she needed to be immersed for the remission of sins.
 - c) Upon hearing a preacher over the radio that taught this, she inquired if she could be baptized.
 - d) When learning that they would baptized her:
 - 1) She had to get up at 3:00 AM the next day.
 - 2) She road her bicycle 9 miles to the train station.
 - 3) Rode the train to where the preacher & other members of the church were waiting to witness her baptism.
 - 4) Afterwards, she retrace her travel to her home.
 - e) She did not treat lightly what God commanded of her.

II. MAN MUST NOT TREAT LIGHTLY THE SALVATION OF HIS SOUL.

A. Because man is more than flesh & blood....He is spirit also!

- 1) His body comes from the earth.
- 2) But His spirit came from God.

B. Because of the value of man's soul:

- 1) Its value is seen in that man is made in the image of God. (Gen. 1:26)
- 2) It is seen in the willingness of God to Redeem man's soul through the sacrifice of Christ. (Jn. 3:16)
- 3) It is seen by the value Christ placed on it. (Matt. 16:26)
- 4) It is seen by its unending existence....in heaven or hell.(Matt. 25:46)

C. To treat lightly the salvation of our soul is folly on man's part.

III. MEN MUST NOT TREAT LIGHTLY JESUS, THE SON OF GOD.

A. Because He offered Himself for our Redemption.

- 1) Man is not capable of saving himself by his own works. (Tit. 3:5)
- 2) Man is a sinner, lost, and without hope outside of Christ. (Eph. 2:12)
- 3) Christ gave Himself up to save sinful man. (Jn. 3:16)

B. Because Jesus humbled Himself to die in our place.

- 1) He did not die for His own sin, but our sin.
- 2) ***"He was wounded for our transgressions."***
- 3) ***"He was bruised for our iniquities."***
- 4) ***"By his stripes we are healed."***
- 5) ***"His soul was made an offering for sin."***
- 6) ***"He shall bear their iniquities."*** (Isaiah 53)

C. Because the Blood of Christ is man's only hope of salvation.

- 1) Our only hope of escape from the penalty of our sins.
- 2) Jesus shed his blood in our place, so we could be set free.

- 3) Rom. 5:9—***"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."***
- 4) Our sins hinder our approach to God.
- 5) But by His blood, we can approach God acceptably.

D. We must not treat lightly Jesus' death for us!

- 1) A little boy once accompanied his mother to worship service.
- 2) The sermon was on the death of Jesus for sinful man.
- 3) As the preacher described the death of Jesus for mankind, the boy began to cry, to sob aloud.
- 4) The mother was embarrassed by it all.
- 5) She turned to her son & whispered... ***"Don't take it so seriously."***
- 6) How serious do we take Jesus' death for us?

IV. MEN MUST NOT TREAT LIGHTLY THE INVITATION OF JESUS.

A. It is not an idle invitation.

- 1) Matt. 11:28-30
- 2) He is able to fulfill all his promises.
- 3) He has the power & authority to do what He promises. (Matt. 28:18)

B. He has willingly humbled Himself to invite us to come.

- 1) Rev. 3:20—***"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."***
- 2) He was not forced or coerced, but willingly humbled Himself to invite us.

C. He is longsuffering in His invitation.

- 1) Thank God, He continues to give us opportunity to come to Him.
- 2) Many have kept God waiting at the door for a long time.
- 3) How long would you knock, if the person would not answer?
- 4) 2 Peter 3:9—***"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."***
- 5) Christ knocks again & again...because he wants us to be saved.
- 6) But some day, unfortunately, the knocking will cease!

CONCLUSION

1. Illustration:

- a) It was 1:00 AM in the morning when Dr. Winters phone rang.
- b) ***"Dr. Winters, a young boy is tragically mangled from a car accident—your surgical skills are all that can save him—come quickly!"***
- c) He took the quickest route...thru bad section of town.
 - 1) He stopped at a red light.
 - 2) Someone in a grey hat & dirty flannel shirt jerked him out of his car and sped away.
 - 3) It took the Dr. 45 minutes to get a cab & get to hospital.
- d) He hurried through the doors to the nurses station.
- e) She shook her head & said: ***"The boy died 15 minutes ago. The boy's father got here before he died & is in the chapel. He is all torn up, not understanding why you did not get there in time."***

- f) As Dr. Winters approached the man:
 - 1) He saw a huddled form of a weeping father;
 - 2) He was in a grey hat & dirty flannel shirt.
- g) Tragically, the father had pushed aside the only one who could have saved his son.
- 2. Are we pushing from our lives the only Physician that can save our soul?
- 3. To make light of God's offer of salvation is:
 - a) To forfeit all blessings to be received thru Christ.
 - b) To shut the door of mercy to our souls.
 - c) To despise his mercy.
 - d) To despise His Son whom he has sent.
 - e) To provoke the wrath of God upon our souls.
- 4. If you have not accepted God's offer of Salvation:
 - a) Why delay?
 - b) Why reject His offer any longer?
 - c) No longer make light of what is so vitally important!

Lesson Eight

“THE CANTS, THE CANS, AND THE WONTS”

(Matt. 21:33-41)

INTRODUCTION

1. Have you noticed—we have a tendency to categorize people!
 - a) By color, size, gender, weight.....
 - b) By good or bad, moral or immoral, loving or unloving, etc.
2. This is not necessarily bad—For God does this also!
 - a) He places people into categories such as:
 - b) Saved or Lost, Jew or Gentile.....
 - c) Believer or unbeliever, or child of God or child of the devil.
3. When we do it, we need to be sure we adhere to:
 - a) God’s standard of categorizing people;
 - b) With the right attitude;
 - c) And with the right and proper motive.
4. We trust that we will do this in this lesson entitled: **Cants, Cans, and Wonts.**
5. Jesus came and died for all men.
 - a) He gave conditions for obtaining Salvation through His blood.
 - b) Then, he sent men out to preach this message to lost mankind.
 - c) And to extend His invitation to them:

“Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matt. 11:29-30)
6. In this lesson, we want to see the 3 responses to this invitation.

DISCUSSION**I. THOSE WHO CAN’T COME.*****A. Infants & young children can’t come.***

- 1) That is—come to Jesus to be freed from sin.
- 2) However, Jesus did bid them to come to Him.
 - a) Matt. 19:14—***“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”***
- 3) When they came, He blessed them.
- 4) Jesus wants them to be taught about Him.
 - a) Eph. 6:4—***“And you fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”***
- 5) But not because they were lost & needed to be saved!

B. Why can’t they come to Jesus for salvation?

- 1) They are not lost!
- 2) Jesus said that such-like make up the kingdom. (Matt. 19:14)
- 3) The New Covenant does not make the same provisions for them as the Old Covenant did.

- a) Upon birth—they were automatically a part of God’s people.
- b) A male child was to be circumcised the 8th day.
- c) They had to be taught of God as they grew up.
- d) But nothing like this under the New Covenant.
- 4) And besides—they cannot meet conditions of Salvation.
 - a) Jn. 6:44-45
 - b) Jn. 8:24
 - c) Acts 17:30
 - d) Rom. 10:10
 - e) Mark 16:16
 - f) Rom. 6:4, 17-18
- 5) Common sense tells us:
 - a) A young child cannot meet these conditions.
 - b) Therefore, he is not responsible until he can.
 - c) All religious groups recognize this concept.

C. Also, those who never develop mentally to a responsible age cannot come to Jesus for salvation.

II. THOSE WHO CAN COME, AND DO COME.

A. They are those:

- 1) Who have come of age.
- 2) Who can and do understand and are accountable to God.
- 3) They recognize their sinfulness and need of forgiveness.
- 4) They know the penalty of sin is death—eternally. (Rom. 6:23)
- 5) Unless forgiven—they will suffer that penalty.

B. Those who understand should respond to Jesus’ invitation.

- 1) When we meet these conditions:
 - a) We are saved, redeemed, forgiven. (Acts 2:38)
 - b) We become a blood-bought people. (Acts 20:28)
 - c) We become willing servants of Righteousness. (Rom. 6:17-18)
- 2) And if we remain faithful to the end...we will enjoy eternal life with God. (Rev. 2:10)

III. THOSE WHO CAN, BUT WON’T COME.

A. These are responsible persons before God.

- 1) Jesus told a parable (Matt. 21:33-41):
 - a) A man let out his vineyard to some men.
 - b) But when he sent to receive the fruits—they refused.
 - c) They rejected the servants sent.
 - d) And then, rejected the son.
- 2) When men can know & understand, but won’t respond, they are rejecting:
 - a) Not only God’s servants who teach the message;
 - b) But they reject the Son of God.

B. When people won’t come, what do they turn down?

- 1) They turn down God’s forgiveness.

- 2) They turn down being delivered from the bondage of sin.
- 3) They turn down the privilege of being called a son of God.
- 4) They miss having continued access to God's mercy.
- 5) They turn down the privilege of prayer to God.
- 6) They turn down the spiritual blessings found in Christ.
- 7) They have to continue to bear the burden of sin and its results.
- 8) They turn down having a calm peace and security in their life.
- 9) They give up having hope of eternal life.

C. To die in this condition is sure punishment.

- 1) Heb. 10:26-31
- 2) Matt. 25:41—***“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...”***

CONCLUSION

1. Why will men reject Christ's gracious offer?
 - a) They don't believe!
 - b) They don't understand & not interested enough to find out!
 - c) Too wrapped up in the things of this world.
 - d) Enjoy sin too much to give it up.
 - e) They want to, but allow false teachers to mislead them.
 - f) They are afraid to confess Jesus and meet His conditions.
 - g) Some wait for a more convenient time.
 - h) Some are searching—and have not found truth yet.
2. The Cants, the Cans, and the Wonts.
3. Into which category do you fit?

Lesson Nine

“WHO CARES IF I AM LOST?”INTRODUCTION

1. Most pitiable sight....To see a child left by itself:
 - a) Lonely, dejected, unloved, crying for someone;
 - b) But no one seems to care whether it lives or dies;
 - c) People all around, but no one interested.
 - d) Would that touch your heart?
2. David seems to have been in this position at one time. (Ps. 142:1-7)
 - a) He had been forced to flee for his life....KING SAUL was trying to kill him.
 - b) He eventually had to leave his own country to escape Saul's efforts.
 - c) David must have felt alone, unloved, unwanted, rejected, persecuted.
 - d) He cried out: ***“I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.”***
 - e) But, there was still one to whom he could turn for help....GOD CARED!
3. I believed the most pitiable sight that I can envision is the millions of lost souls on their way to eternal destruction.
 - a) Millions and millions....and no one seems to be able to help.
 - b) They rejected God and His Word, bringing upon themselves utter destruction.
 - c) No hope....How terribly pitiable!
4. Jesus tells us of two ways to travel in this life: Broad Way & Narrow Way!
 - a) Narrow way leads to Eternal Joy.
 - b) Broad way leads to Eternal Misery. (Matt. 7:13-14)
 - c) ALL are traveling one of these two roads right now.
5. When you take a closer look at the Broad Way:
 - a) Can see vast throngs of people....all kinds of people.
 - b) Some are malicious, wicked, unrighteous, vile, etc.
 - c) Others are good people, good fathers & Mothers, good citizens, good morals, religious people.....both young & Old.....but who have not obeyed the gospel.
6. People on the Broad Way need to turn around & go the other way!
 - a) Is there no one who is willing to put forth the effort to help them?
 - b) Is there no one who cares for their soul?
7. I believe in many instances, there have been & still are those who CARE!

DISCUSSION**I. THERE ARE PARENTS WHO CARE!*****A. They are concerned for the Spiritual Welfare of their children.***

- 1) Who care for the physical, mental, social....and their souls!
- 2) Who have made an effort to teach their children God's Word. (Eph. 6:4)
- 3) Who have tried to set an example before them of devotion to God.
- 4) Who have tried to show them what it means to be a Christian.
- 5) Who have exposed them to Bible Classes & Worship Services.
- 6) Who have tried to encourage them to run with good companions.
- 7) Who have offered prayers, shed tears, and expressed great concern for them.

B. Yes, they have cared, cared enough to do what they could!

- 1) Many of us here today are Christians because of Godly, Caring Parents.
- 2) God placed across our paths...Parents who cared about our soul.
- 3) How grateful we ought to be that they cared enough to help.
- 4) Some parents don't care!

II. THERE ARE SOME HUSBANDS & WIVES WHO CARE!

A. It is a great blessing to have a Christian mate.

- 1) They are not only concerned about their own soul, but ours as well.
- 2) Their actions, words, encouragement show their concern.
- 3) Their lives help to show the way of righteousness for an example.
- 4) Their love for us causes them to make sacrifices on our behalf.
- 5) One who wants to go to heaven some day, but also wants me to go too.
- 6) I Pet. 3:1-4

B. If we have such a godly mate:

- 1) We ought to be extremely grateful.
- 2) Some of us are Christians today because they cared enough.
- 3) We will probably be in heaven someday because a MATE cared enough.

III. SOME FRIENDS WHO CARE!

A. It is shown by what they say & do, as well as their lives.

- 1) Some of us are saved today, because of a friend who cared.
- 2) They let their light shine. (Matt. 5:16)
- 3) The impact of their godly life helped me to see the need of turning to God.

B. A great host will be in heaven some day because of godly friends who cared.

- 1) Are we one of those godly friends who cares?
- 2) Have we reached out a helping, caring hand?

IV. THERE ARE ALSO SOME PREACHERS & TEACHERS WHO CARE!

A. It is shown by their dedicated lives to learn & teach God's Word.

- 1) They are like Timothy... *"Who naturally care for your state."* (Phil. 2:20)
- 2) They are like Titus... *"Thanks be to God which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you."* (2 Cor. 8:16)
- 3) Every sermon & lesson is hopefully a REMINDER:
 - a) That someone does care;
 - b) That there is concern for your soul.
- 4) *"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."* (Rom. 10:15)

B. So many will be in heaven some day because preachers & teachers cared!

V. BUT MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL....NEED TO REALIZE GOD CARES!

A. Shown it by giving us His Word for Guidance!

- 1) The Bible is a Messenger of God's love for man.
- 2) It is saying to those who will listen to it:
 - a) God deeply cares;

- b) He wants us to know the terrible consequences of sin;
 - c) But, of His willingness to forgive our sinfulness;
 - d) That he does not want us to go to a place of punishment!
- 3) Illustrate:
- a) Statement printed over prison doors: **“All who enter here leave hope behind.”**
 - b) These are the words deeply inscribed over gates of Hell: **“All who enter here leave hope behind.”**
- 4) The Bible gives hope for sinful mankind. (Rom. 1:16)
- 5) Thankfully, a person doesn't have to go very far until he comes into contact with the Bible in some way.

B. God's greatest act of caring shown by the giving of His Son.

- 1) Isa. 53:5—***“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”***
- 2) Jesus cared enough to:
- a) Give up heaven & its glories;
 - b) To take upon himself the form of man & become a servant;
 - c) To endure the insults of those He came to help;
 - d) To patiently work with men while here!
- 3) He cared enough to:
- a) Endure the mock trials & insults of mere men;
 - b) To have his feet & hands nailed to a cross, and his head crowned with a crown of thorns;
 - c) And could still look upon those about him with love & pity, and say: ***“Father, forgive them! For they know not what they do.”***
- 4) Here is One who pleads for our soul.
- a) Who wants us to escape Eternal Death;
 - b) Who wants us to escape the terrible, but just penalty for our sins;
 - c) And, who has revealed to us:
 - 1—Not only the Father in all His glory;
 - 2—But heaven as well!
- 5) ALL Others we may pass by, and there is still hope!
- 6) But when we pass by this ONE, we have passed God's greatest ONE who cares!

CONCLUSION

1. There are many who may care for our souls.
2. Be thankful for such.
3. But there is a most important question we need to ask:

Do we care enough about our soul to do something about saving it???

Lesson Ten

“SELLING ONE’S SOUL CHEAP”INTRODUCTION

1. Esau sold his birthright! (Gen. 25:19-34)
 - a) He was the first born—He received the greater portion.
 - b) Jacob wanted it—and bargained for it.
 - c) Esau gave it up for a mess of pottage (Cooked cereal soup).
2. Illustration:
 - a) Suppose you returned home one evening to find a visitor in your house.
 - b) He was dressed in red with a forked tail...horns...cloven hoofs...pitchfork.
 - c) He confronts you with an offer: *“I’ve come to buy your soul. I’ll give you \$100.00 for it.”*
 - d) No doubt your answer would be “NO!”
 - e) But He doesn’t stop--\$1,000---\$100,000---“**Not for sale!**”
3. We all know very well that Satan doesn’t work this way!
 - a) Oh, he is present—bargaining for our soul.
 - b) And many sell-out to him for less than \$100.00.
 - c) A few moments of pleasure—retaining pride—holding on to prejudice—social prestige, etc.
 - d) In most instances—selling their souls for a mess of pottage—cheap!
4. Jesus speaks to this challenge: *“For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*
5. This lesson—look at 4 things indicated by this verse.

DISCUSSION**I. THAT MAN’S SOUL IS PRICELESS!****A. Its value is obviously seen by the question.**

- 1) To ask is but to have your answer.
- 2) There is nothing more valuable than man’s soul!

B. Its value is seen in its immortal nature.

- 1) Its origin is divine.
 - a) Gen. 1:26—*“Let us make man after our image...”*
 - b) Heb. 12:9—*“Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?”*
 - c) God is a Spirit—man was made in His likeness!
 - d) Indications are that this spirit, once created, is capable of existing on and on.
- 2) The soul’s destiny is eternity!
 - a) Matt. 25:46—*“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”*

- C. Its value is also seen in God’s willingness to redeem us through the death of His Son. (Jn. 3:16)

II. THAT MAN CAN SELL OR EXCHANGE HIS SOUL FOR A PRICE.**A. It can be for money or wealth.**

- 1) The Rich Young Ruler did this! (Luke 18:18-23)

- a) He was a fine young man—but money was his downfall.
- b) He preferred his riches to the salvation of his soul.
- 2) Today—it is no different.
 - a) Men prefer money over their soul’s salvation.
 - b) They are so busy getting gain—no time for their soul.
- B. For the Pleasures of this life.
 - 1) 2 Tim. 4:10—***“Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.”***
 - 2) 2 Tim. 3:4—***“In the last days, men....shall be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”***
 - 3) Luke 8:14—***“...when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”***
 - 4) We can sell our right to everlasting life for pleasures of this life.
 - 5) Moses faced a similar choice. (Heb. 11:24-26)
 - 6) We all face the choice today—Pleasures or be a devoted disciple?
 - 7) When we disobey God—we have made our choice to sell our soul.
- C. For Popularity, Prestige, or Social Acceptance.
 - 1) Mark 15:15—***“And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.”***
 - 2) John 12:42-43
 - 3) The honors of men are fleeting.
 - a) One moment—we are at the height of acceptance.
 - b) The next—the people are ready to crucify us.
 - c) Example of Christ.
 - 4) Many will not obey Christ because:
 - a) They don’t want the reproach of friends & relatives;
 - b) They want acceptance by their peers;
 - c) Thus, selling their soul for a mess of pottage.
- D. For Pride & Prejudice.
 - 1) Matt. 21:23-27
 - a) They didn’t want to admit they were wrong!
 - b) They wanted to keep their pride.
 - c) And sold their souls for a mess of pottage.
 - 2) Matt. 13:13-16
 - a) Prejudice—minds made up—won’t change—won’t listen.
 - b) Refused to be taught the Will of God.
 - c) To satisfy a little pride or prejudice—sell their soul for eternity.

III. THAT THE EXCHANGE IS A FOOLISH ONE TO MAKE.

- A. ***Luke 12:20—“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided.”***
 - 1) This farmer was able to accumulate a lot of goods!
 - 2) But he did it as the expense of losing his soul.
 - 3) Jesus called him a fool—He had made a poor bargain!
 - 4) Illustrate:
 - a) We can expect a child to trade his new \$50.00 bike for a 25 cent knife.

- b) He hasn't learned the values yet.
- c) But, for an adult to trade his soul for a mess of pottage indicates a great lack of wisdom.
- B. Reasons why it is foolish:
 - 1) Nothing in this world can truly satisfy—why trade our soul for it then?
 - 2) The rewards of this world are only temporary—we can lose them overnight.
 - 3) Even if we gain the whole world—it will not buy back our soul.
 - a) We can't take it with us to help us in judgment.
 - b) Job. 1:21—“*Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.*”
 - c) 1 Tim. 6:7—“*For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*”
 - d) Alexander the Great—had his hands placed on the outside of his coffin—“**So they can see a man that conquered the world, but when he left it, he left it empty-handed.**”

IV. THAT IT IS A TRAGIC & ETERNAL LOSS.

- A. We lose the promises, blessings, and fellowship with God here.***
- B. In addition—we lose the privilege of living with God and the Redeemed of all ages throughout eternity.***
- C. If this were not enough—our loss of eternal life also means eternal punishment.***
 - 1) Punishment, torment, pain, agony that has no end.
 - 2) Eternal separation from God and the righteous.
 - 3) To be with the Devil & His angels—all the wicked, abominable, corrupt, unrighteous—all undesirable people who have ever lived.
- D. 2 Thess. 1:7-10***

CONCLUSION

- 1. We plead with you not to bargain away your soul—it is too priceless.
- 2. Obey God—turn to Him in faith, repentance, & baptism—serve Him faithfully.

Lesson Eleven

"EXCUSES FOR NOT OBEYING GOD"INTRODUCTION

1. Politeness is a needed thing in society!
 - a) To be kind, courteous, understanding, and polite are characteristics of one who cares.
 - b) The expression, "**Would you please excuse me,**" is one of importance.
 - c) It is trying to express courtesy to others.
 - d) However, this expression can be used in a bad way.
2. Jesus used it in a bad way in this parable he told. (Luke 14:15-20)
 - a) A GREAT SUPPER was prepared by a certain well-known man in his community.
 - b) He sent his servants at supper time to bid the guest to come.
 - c) Many had been invited.
 - d) But they had not planned to come & begin to make excuses:
 - **"I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it."**
 - **"I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them."**
 - **"I have married a wife, and therefore cannot come."**
3. The obvious application of the parable is:
 - a) God has prepared a great supper, the greatest to which men can be invited.
 - Preparations took centuries & were elaborate.
 - Greatness of the feast is seen in that it is for the feeding of the soul.
 - b) Many have been & still are being freely invited to come!
 - Not just pen & ink invitations.....
 - But personal invitations by his servants...**"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."**
 - c) The triviality of the excuses offered for not accepting God's gracious invitation are obvious also.
 - Almost any kind of excuse is given for not answering the invitation.
 - Such are committing spiritual suicide.
4. We want to look at some in this lesson.

DISCUSSION**I. "I HAVE NEVER BEEN PERSONALLY CALLED BY GOD."****A. No, and you never will be!**

- 1) God's call does not come that way.
- 2) It comes through his servants....just like in the parable.
- 3) 2 Thess. 2:14—**"Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."**

B. This should be an obvious fact—God does not call anyone direct.

- 1) His call has been extended by his servants.
- 2) What have you done with this invitation?

II. "THERE IS TOO MUCH RELIGIOUS CONFUSION—HOW CAN I KNOW WHAT IS RIGHT?"

A. Yes....there is much religious confusion.

- 1) No more accurate statement than that.
- 2) And such is a sin before God.
- 3) And the causes of such will be punished severely. (Gal. 1:6-9)

B. And yet—this too can be just an excuse for not answering Jesus' invitation.

- 1) For many have found their way out of all of this confusion to God's truth.
- 2) They have become just Christians—members of the Lord's church.
- 3) If they can, why can't anyone that really wants to?
- 4) Are we saying that we are not smart enough to find the answer?
- 5) Or, is this just an excuse not to try to find the right way?

III. "I AM AS GOOD AS MANY OF YOU CHRISTIANS."

A. Morally speaking, that may be true in some instances.

- 1) In fact, you may even be better in your life than some Christians.
- 2) Because some new Christians have just begun to change their lives to righteousness.
- 3) And there may be some who are older Christians, but have made little effort to change their lives.
- 4) Your life may be an example for them, rather than they for you.

B. But there is one big difference—Christians have been forgiven of past sins.

- 1) Rom. 6:23
- 2) There is no one who hasn't sinned. (Rom. 3:23)
- 3) 1 Jn. 1:10—***"If we say that we have no sin, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."***
- 4) "So, I have sinned, so what?"
 - a) Sinful man must either be forgiven or be punished for his sins.
 - b) And the only way to have forgiveness is through answering Jesus' invitation to come to Him. (Acts 2:38)
 - c) To turn down His invitation is to be lost eternally!

C. Such a statement, "I am as good as many of you Christians":

- 1) Really has no validity before God.
- 2) It is really only an excuse for not answering Jesus' invitation.

IV. "I AM AFRAID THAT I CAN'T STAY WITH IT."

A. That might be true! (Many have fallen away)

- 1) But that really has nothing to do with answering Jesus' invitation.
- 2) How would you ever know—if you never try!

B. But is it only an excuse for not answering the invitation?

- 1) I believe it is because:
 - a) It is saying God calls me to do something I can't do.
 - b) That God's Word is not sufficient to help me live right.
- 2) But if many couldn't live for God as he should:
 - a) Why send Jesus to die for us in the first place?
 - b) Why admonish us to be faithful unto death, if we can't do it? (Rev. 2:10)
- 3) Aren't we really saying:

- a) I am afraid of what people will think of me. (Jn. 12:42-43)
- b) I am afraid of what they will say of me if I become a Christian.
- c) Or, I am really not concerned enough to give myself to follow Jesus.

V. "I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO."

A. Oh, how much so many of us long to find people who want to know!

- 1) I am ready 7 days a week—any hour of the day or night to sit down and show anyone what to do.
- 2) I have a lot of brothers & sisters that are willing to do the same.

B. Jesus encourages man to find out what to do.

- 1) Matt. 5:6—"***Blessed is the man that hungers and thirst after righteousness, for he shall be filled.***"
- 2) Matt. 7:7—"***Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.***"

C. If a person really wants to know—the opportunities are unlimited.

CONCLUSION

1. Here is God:
 - a) The door is thrown wide open to His great banquet hall;
 - b) The tables are prepared at great expense & effort;
 - c) Eternal life is being freely offered to all;
 - d) And the grand and ever-urgent message goes forth thru his servants:
 - ***"Come to the feast"***
 - ***"Everyone that is athirst, come"***
 - ***"Whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely."***
2. And MANY begin to make excuses!
3. Have you made excuses for not answering the invitation of Jesus?
4. Most of us have answered—thankfully.
5. We continue to faithfully follow.
6. Don't lapse into excuse making.

Lesson Twelve

“THREE THINGS A LOST PERSON DISCOVERS AFTER DEATH”

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus tells the story of two people who lived on earth. (Luke 16:19-31)
2. In spite of its being brief:
 - a) The story is soul-stirring;
 - b) It offers hope for mankind, but also great despair for others.
 - c) It gives a promise of great blessings or terrible punishment.
3. When man dies:
 - a) The wise man states in Eccl. 12:7:
 - That his body goes back to dust,
 - But his spirit goes back to God who gave it.
 - b) The N.T. is more specific about the spirit of man.
 - It goes into the place called Hades—the unseen abode of the dead.
 - To either a place of comfort in Hades;
 - Or, a place of terrible torment in Hades.
4. Jesus takes us into the realm of the unseen and gives a glimpse of what lies beyond death’s door.
5. But, he indicates three things that the lost person will discover after death.

DISCUSSION

I. THAT PUTTING OUR EMPHASIS ON THIS WORLD, RATHER THAN THE WORLD TO COME, ENDS IN ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

A. Luke 16:19-21—Describes the Rich man’s condition while he lived.

- 1) He was clothed in purple & fine linen.
 - a) He wanted the best and had them.
 - b) He had the good things men seek for in this life.
- 2) He fared sumptuously every day.
 - a) He had no want of anything he desired to eat.
 - b) The best every day.
- 3) It does not describe him as a wicked person who:
 - a) Had killed people
 - b) Or, Robbed them.
 - c) But, his great sin was—selfish inhumanity. (Matt. 25:41-46)
 - d) He was not really concerned about the needs of others about him.
- 4) But there was an underlying reason for his actions.
 - a) It was a worldly outlook.
 - b) He was not concerned about whether there was another world after this one.
 - c) He spent his time, energy & interest on things of this world.
 - d) He wanted all the enjoyments this world could bring.

B. Luke 16:22-23—Describes the Rich man’s condition after death.

- 1) As with all men—the Rich man died & left this world.

- a) He closed his eyes to the gorgeous surroundings of earth.
- b) And opened his eyes in Hades—finding himself in great torment.
- 2) The Rich man learned quickly:
 - a) That a worldly outlook brings torment after death.
 - b) That all of his riches, prestige, power on earth were of no help after death.
 - c) That failure to prepare for the next world brings severity of torment.

II. THE SECOND THING HE LEARNED—ALL HOPE OF MERCY IS GONE AFTER DEATH.

A. Luke 16:24-26—Describes the terribleness of his torment.

- 1) It was so terrible—he cried for mercy.
- 2) He just desired a little water to touch his tongue to ease the torment.
- 3) This is describing a “spirit being” enduring excruciating torment.

B. The Rich man discovered quickly that no mercy would be extended.

- 1) Abraham reminded him of his former condition on earth.
 - a) You had a lot of the good things.
 - b) But you saw no need of sharing it with those who had need.
 - c) Your interest was in getting all you could out of this world for yourself.
 - d) You had no interest in “laying up riches in heaven.”
- 2) Now, your condition is reversed!
 - a) You are tormented.
 - b) And there is no hope of release from this torment.
 - c) A great gulf is fixed so that no one can help you.
 - d) Matt. 25:46—“*And these will go away into everlasting punishment.....*”

III. THERE IS NO ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE FOR NOT PREPARING!

A. Luke 16:27-31—Describes his supposed concern for his 5 brothers still living.

- 1) With no hope for himself—he expresses concern for his 5 brethren.
 - a) Abraham, would you please send someone back to warn them not to come to this terrible place of torment.
 - b) If someone would go back from the dead—surely they would listen.
- 2) But Abraham reminded him:
 - a) They have Moses and the Prophets that are warning them.
 - b) If will not listen to them, neither would they to one raised from the dead.
- 3) Shortly after this—this very event happened!
 - a) Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, who was the brother of Mary and Martha.
 - b) Did the Jewish people really believe?
 - c) Many of them wanted to kill Lazarus—because of the desirable effect upon some of the people.
 - d) This wonder brought no change in these hard-hearted, worldly-minded people.
- 4) And then, shortly after this—the greatest event of all history happened.
 - a) Jesus was raised from the dead.
 - b) How many listened—How many changed their ways?

B. It is very possible that the Rich man was trying to excuse himself.

- 1) But Lord, if someone had come from this place and warned me—I would have listened!
- 2) His excuse—no one warned me!

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

CONCLUSION

1. What about us—are we listening to the warnings of God?
 - a) Have we understood that there is an existence after death for all mankind.
 - b) That in this unseen place—
 - There is a separation between the worldly-minded....
 - And the ones who listens to God.
 - And once we have died—there is no opportunity to repent & be saved.
 - That there is just endless punishment for those who will not listen.
2. When you and I close our eyes in death:
 - a) What will be the next thing we will see in Hades:
 - b) A place of comfort and bliss;
 - c) Or, a place of continual torment.
3. God gives us the choice of which place we want to go to.
 - a) To take heed & diligently prepare
 - b) Or, to ignore the warning.
4. Which have we chosen?

Lesson Thirteen

"BEHOLD, THE GOODNESS AND THE SEVERITY OF GOD"

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul is showing:
 - a) That the Jews were cut off as God's people because of unbelief.
 - b) That Gentiles were grafted in as God's people because of belief. (Romans 11:17-24)
2. But, he also warns: "***Behold the goodness and severity of God.***"
 - a) Severity towards the Jews in cutting them off.
 - b) Goodness towards the Gentiles for grafting them in.
 - c) But if the Jews turn & believe, God will extend His goodness to them again.
 - d) And if the Gentiles do not continue faithful to God, He will be severe to them.
3. It should be obvious from these verses that:
 - a) God is good and reward people for doing good.
 - b) But He is also a God who will punish the unbelieving..
 - c) He is a JUST God—rewarding & punishing those who deserve such.

DISCUSSION

I. IT IS CRITICAL THAT WE DO NOT HAVE A ONE-SIDED VIEW OF GOD.

A. If we only see His goodness:

- 1) Danger of our hearts being lulled into indifference & disobedience.
- 2) 2 Pet. 1:10—"***Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.***"

B. If we only see His severity:

- 1) Our hearts will despair of finding favor with God.
- 2) Isa. 55:6-7—"***Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.***"

3) **Illustration**

- a) Bible class teacher wrote on blackboard: "***The Lord is good to all.***"
- b) She asked the children to repeat it.
- c) One little fellow refused.
- d) When the teacher asked "Why?":
- e) "***Because it is not true, God is not good to all. He is not good to me & my father & mother. He has taken my little brother away; and father & mother are home crying about it.***"
- f) The teacher explained that God has taken his little brother to a better home in heaven & would take all of them there to if they would have an obedient faith in God.
- g) "***Oh, I'll go and tell my parents the good news.***"

- C. *The Severity of God helps us to see our need of fearing God & keeping His commandments.*
- 1) Eccl. 12:13—"*Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.*"
 - 2) Heb. 10:26-31
- D. *The Goodness of God helps us to be assured of His love, forgiveness, and promised rewards.*
- 1) 2 Pet. 3:9—"*...God is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*"
 - 2) 1 John 3:1-3
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:2-4

II. GOD HAS GIVEN US SUFFICIENT EXAMPLES OF HIS GOODNESS & SEVERITY

- A. *This is one of the prime reasons for studying the Old Testament.*
- 1) 1 Cor. 10:11—"*Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*"
 - 2) We should profit by their examples & God's actions.
 - 3) We should not doubt the goodness nor the severity of God.
- B. *Examples to illustrate:*
- 1) Adam & Eve:
 - a) Made them in His own image.
 - b) Provided everything man needed.
 - c) Gave him dominion over all the earth.
 - d) Walked & talked with them.
 - e) But they disobeyed Him.
 - f) And God punished them—drove them out of the garden.
 - 2) Noah & family:
 - a) Because of Noah's right living:
 - God appeared to him
 - Warned him of the coming destruction of the world.
 - Show him how to escape it.
 - b) Upon his obedience, God saved Noah & His family.
 - c) His severity was shown by the total destruction of every human on the earth.
 - d) Because of their sin & wickedness.
 - 3) Lot & family:
 - a) Lot's righteous soul was vexed with wickedness of Sodom.
 - b) God sent angels to warn him of the coming destruction.
 - c) Lot and his two daughters were saved from destruction by God's goodness.
 - d) But his wife was turned into a pillar of salt because of her disobedience.
 - e) And the people of these cities were consumed with fire from heaven.
 - f) Behold, the goodness & severity of God.
- C. *Even the New Testament has such examples.*
- 1) Ananias & Sapphira received the forgiveness of God upon their obedience to the gospel.
 - 2) But, when they both conspired to lie to the Holy Spirit, God struck them both dead, one after the other.

D. God has reminded us of His longsuffering to the disobedient.

- 1) Rom. 2:4—"**Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?**"
- 2) But then He adds: "**But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.**"
- 3) He is warning us not to try to take advantage of His goodness by continuing in disobedience—For the day of Wrath will come!

E. God's goodness to mankind has been shown in multitude of ways:

- 1) He makes the sun and rain to fall upon the just & unjust alike.
- 2) To the disobedient, He has:
 - a) Provided a Savior & Redeemer in the giving of His own Son;
 - b) He pleads with man to turn from his evil ways so He can save them.
 - c) Ezek. 33:11—"**I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die...**"
 - d) He has even sent out His Ambassadors to plead for our souls.
 - e) 2 Cor. 5:18-21

F. But the day of His longsuffering & goodness will come to an end.

- 1) 2 Pet. 3:9-12
- 2) 2 Thess. 1:7-9
- 3) He has warned us that a day of judgment is coming. (Acts 17:30-31)
- 4) He has given examples of His wrath to impress us.
- 5) He has given a Law not to be ignored or trampled on.
- 6) He has sent a Law-giver not to be insulted & rejected.
- 7) Such will not be done without justified punishment.
- 8) In the words of inspiration: "**knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...**"

CONCLUSION

1. If we are not prepared for death to overtake us:
 - a) We need not expect mercy....for there will be none in that great day.
 - b) We need not think we shall escape His severity.....for it will come in full force.
2. Why wait—Turn now and accept God's goodness while you can.
 - a) Deliver your soul from the threat of God's severity.
 - b) Turn now while His goodness & mercy lingers...

