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SALVATION

If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, or aren't sure and would like to become one, then you need to believe that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God, that he was God who became a man, that he lived a sinless and perfect life, keeping the Law of God perfect in every way, that he kept faith perfectly, and that he was crucified on that cruel cross for your sins, mine and the entire world - he died for our sins! His death on the cross paid the penalty fully, one time for all sins that we have ever committed and that we will ever commit. He died; he went down into the bowels of the earth, even into Hell, and was raised from the dead on the third day in a resurrected, eternal body. He ascended back into heaven, was seated at the right hand of God, and is now Lord over heaven and earth. He is coming again to judge the world, to raise the dead, where he will give an eternal, resurrected, glorified body to everyone that has believed on him as their Lord and Savior, and to establish his kingdom on earth.

You come become a Christian right now as you read this by personally placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior; believing that he is God's only begotten Son, that he died on the cross for you and that he was raised from the dead and is now seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. *"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.."* [Acts 16:31a](#) And when you do trust Christ, and Christ alone, as your Lord and Savior, then go to God the Father in heaven in prayer and tell him so. Tell him that you have believed on his Son, thank him for his Son, and thank him for forgiving your sins and saving you! *"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."* [Romans 10:9,10](#) *"For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* [Romans 10:13](#) *"Therefore, being justified by faith (declared righteous), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* [Romans 5:1](#)

Hell's Still Waiting!

Hell's still waiting!
Is it waiting for you?
It won't be if you believe on
Jesus Christ as your Savior.

For many years now I've been bothered and burdened about the downward trend of Christianity into apostasy to the place that we are truly living in the time of the Laodicean Church phase of the Church Age. If any of the present day churches and their leaders were confronted on the matter they would be sure to reply that they are in the right as to what's taking place in their ministries. But the Word of God and the doctrines that it teaches is always the standard by which we measure these things.

Replacing grace with human good; self righteous legalism instead of Spirit filled living; programs, entertainment and emotionalism replacing the teaching of God's Word; appealing to the pride and flesh nature of people; catering to certain groups in the church; holding more to one's religious association rather than the Word of God; and in some churches just down and outright bizarre and goofy behavior going on.

It's bad enough that there isn't the much needed teaching of Bible Doctrine in much of today's Christianity, but their presentation of the gospel is completely flawed. Yes, when they talk about Christ's death on the cross, they speak fairly accurately about what took place at his crucifixion. But when they explain the gospel as to how we are truly saved, many of them are in grave error.

Some of them have faith plus something else, faith plus tongues, faith plus baptism, faith plus lordship, faith plus some kind of work or activity. It's never just faith alone in Christ alone, while many others have the unbeliever inviting Christ into their hearts. First of all, the unbeliever never invites Christ anywhere; it's Christ who invites him. Second, inviting Christ into the garbage dump of the heart is a work. Third, that passage in Revelations 3 deals with Christ being outside of the **churches** because his Word is not being taught in them! And four, throughout the OT and NT the way to salvation has always been **faith alone in Christ alone!**

But there has been something else that has bothered me for years, and that is the leaving out of the doctrine of Hell when presenting the gospel message! **It is Christ saving us from this awful place that makes him our Savior!** For centuries Hell was centrally placed in the gospel about Christ because all mankind is on the road to Hell as soon as they enter this life! Only by believing on Christ can we get off this road.

So this evangelism series is reminding Christians once again that Hell is the ultimate reality for all mankind, if they do not believe on Christ as their Savior

To facilitate getting the message out I have formatted the notes so that one can copy them and teach: home Bible classes from them, sermons, put them in a tract, or print the two bolder titles on each side of a business card to hand out. The important thing is to get the message out and warn the unbeliever to believe on Christ and avoid Hell!

People today don't talk about hell any more, not even in many churches. But just because we don't talk about Hell **doesn't mean that it went away!** It's still there and it's still waiting. The question is, is it waiting for **you**? If you have not believed on Jesus Christ as your Savior, then it is waiting for you.

Are you frightened of these words? You should be. How much more frightened do you think you will be when you die and are brought down into the bowels of the earth to this terrible place and there is no escape? When you are brought down into this place of darkness and gloom, this place of heat and suffering, into this place of absolute despair and the not knowing what terrifying thing is going to happen to you next.

Are you frightened? You should be for this is a place that you should not want to go. But the good news is that **you don't have to go there!** It can be avoided, and has been avoided by countless millions of people, by placing your total faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior!

Hell is real whether you believe it or not. You may laugh or snicker at the idea, but you won't be laughing there. You may scoff at the idea now, but you won't be scoffing then. You may think that because you are good and do good things in this life that you won't end up there, only to find yourself surrounded in Hell by people who were good in this life. People don't go to heaven because they are good, and they don't go to Hell because they were bad! People go to heaven because they have believed on Jesus Christ in this life as their Savior, and people go to Hell because they have rejected Christ as their Savior.

You ask how could this be? It goes back to understanding what took place many years ago in the garden of Eden. When God created the man, and later on the woman, he placed the man as the ruler over the earth. Man was perfect and sinless and enjoyed fellowship with God there in the garden. But one day the man and the woman ate the fruit from the tree that had been forbidden by God. On that day, and in that moment, both the man and the woman acquired a sinful nature and came under the condemnation of God. And on that day something else happened, **Satan became the new ruler of this planet and they became legally aligned with Satan.** They and all their descendant's now were slaves of Satan and would **share Satan's fate in the Lake of Fire.**

Haven't you ever looked around and wondered why people do wrong things? Why there is suffering in this world? And why, sooner or later, everyone dies? It's because Adam's sin brought the curse of death into the world. *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"* Romans 5:12

Even though people like to look at society as made up of those who are good and bad, but in the eyes of a holy God **all** are bad! *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."* Isaiah 64:6

In the eyes of God there is none righteous and none that seek after God. *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."* Romans 3:10,11 And it say that he will send the wicked to hell, *"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."* Psalm 9:17

But the good news is that God sent his Son to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins so that through faith in Christ we can have total forgiveness of sins and the guarantee of eternal life! *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* Romans 5:8

But you ask why then does Hell and the lake of fire exist? **It exists because God created it for the devil and his angels.** When the man and the woman sided with Satan in rebellion against God, they and all humans, would share Satan's destiny in the lake of fire. *“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, **Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:**”* Matthew 25:41

In the story of the rich man in Hell, or *Hades*, we see that he was in a place of torment. *“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”* Luke 16:23 The word for **being** is *huparcho*, which tells us that he was now existing in a place of torment called *Hades*. Now he was not there because he was rich. He was there because he had not believed on Jesus Christ as his Savior. Being in the **bosom** of Abraham meant that he was identified with Abraham before his death. That is to say, he was a true child of Abraham because he also had believed on the God of Abraham, *Yeshua Meshiah*, or as we say in English, Jesus Christ.

Hell is real, but the subject is either made light of, or avoided altogether. Even when many churches present the gospel they leave the subject of the reality of Hell out. But without the doctrine of Hell, then Christ has only become a friend to you in life, or an helper, someone who enhances their lives. To be our Savior he has to save us from something, and the thing that he saves us from is this terrible place and God's wrath.

At the final judgment man is going to be judged by his works, *“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”* Revelation 20:12 Our sins are not going to be brought up at the judgment because they were already judged by God on the cross when Christ paid the penalty for them in his atoning death. But men's works will be judged and no one will be righteous enough to get into God's kingdom. Only those who have believed on Jesus Christ whose names are found in the Lamb's Book of Life. *“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”* Revelation 20:15

Hell is real and it is a terrible place of suffering. But it can be avoided by believing on Jesus Christ as your Savior. **When we believe on Jesus Christ God views that faith in Christ as righteousness** thereby guaranteeing us the resurrection from the dead and spending an eternity in God's kingdom with him. *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”* Romans 4:5

You ask then what can I do to be saved and avoid this terrible place? A good question and one that many have asked over the years. The jailer of Paul and Silas also asked the same thing in Acts 16:30, *“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”*

He had been listening to the men singing and praying and also giving out the gospel about Christ. But when God opened up the doors of their cells by a large earthquake he instantly knew that this demonstration of power brought home the point that there is a God and he was not right with him. So he asked what did he have to do to be saved.

And this is so typical of all people. Everybody thinks that they have to do something to get right with God. But they replied back to him to just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and he would be saved. *“And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**”* Acts 16:31

The words *“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”*, are in the original Greek, πιστευσον επι τον κυριον

ἠσθουν χριστον, *pisteuson epi ton kurion iesoun christon*. Now when you have the verb *pisteuo*, to **believe**, combined with the preposition *epi* with the accusative of direct object, then **the idea of to believe becomes the idea of trust**.

The difference is this. You are standing before a narrow, old suspension bridge that connects two sides of a great chasm with rocks down below. You may believe that this old bridge will safely carry you through to the other side, but **you aren't trusting it do so until you walk on it**.

Trusting means that you have thrown your entire self on a matter. So when we say believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, what we are saying is that you, personally, must trust him to save you from your sins and from this terrible place called Hell. That you are depending on him and him alone to do this. Not your works, not your morality, not your church, not your friends or family, not anything that you can do to save you. You are trusting in him and in him alone to do this.

What must you believe? You must believe in the true Jesus Christ, that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God; that he was sinless in his person and his actions in life; that he is God manifest in the flesh; that he is the Messiah of Israel; that he died on the cross fully paying the penalty for our sins thereby satisfying the righteousness of God the Father; that he died; that he was buried; and that he rose from the dead on the third day. *“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:”* 1 Corinthians 15:3,4

When you believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins, and that he rose from the dead, what you are doing is making **your personal connection with him as your Savior**. *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, **thou** shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* Romans 10:9,10

And the natural expression of that faith in Christ is stating that faith in words to God. *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord **shall** be saved.”* Romans 10:13 Not that they might be saved, but with **absolute certainty** that they will be saved! The person who calls out to Christ to save him has already believed in him in their heart.

Once we have believed on Christ as our Savior **we are declared righteous by God** at his judgment seat in heaven. *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:”* Romans 5:1 The word to **justify** meant to be declared righteous, or in a right standing before the law in court.

And once we have believed on Christ as our Savior **we have eternal life**. It's not that we **might** live forever, but that we possess eternal life right now. *“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”* 1 John 5:13

Hell is a terrible place to end up, but can be avoided by having the righteousness of Christ through faith in him. Today Americans have become obsessed with self improvement. They work feverishly to have the best physical bodies; they study self help books; they go to specialists of all kinds; they have surgical procedures to enhance their beauty; and we have ended up with many people being the epitome of beauty, education, social graces and well adjusted personalities.

Yet the tragic reality is that without Christ all of that is for nothing. They will end up in the fires of Hell, in this dark and formidable place from which there is no escape. I think of all the beautiful girls out there, who without Christ, end up in Hell at their death; all the strong, handsome young men, the sweet little old ladies, the distinguished older men, all those who worked so hard to accomplish so much in their lives, and when their hearts stop beating they will be taken down to this horrible place. That's the true reality!

Are you frightened? Good! You should be. **If you were born on this planet**, and have not believed on Jesus Christ as your Savior, this is where you are going when you die! But it doesn't have to end up this way. You can change this by placing your faith in the Lord. And there is no better time to make your peace with God than right now. *“(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, **now** is the accepted time; behold, **now** is the day of salvation.)”* 2 Corinthians 6:2 All you have to do is believe that the Lord died on the cross for you and that God raised him from the dead. Then express that faith to the Father by telling him that you have believed on his Son and thanking him for saving you.

The frightening reality is that without Christ as your Savior you will plunge down into hell at death. Frightening? Think of this, you're living in a beautiful home that you've worked so hard to get, sitting around a nice fire in the fireplace, enjoying a beverage and listening to beautiful music. Then tragedy strikes, a heart attack or something else, then the very next thing you're experiencing is the heat, smoke, fire and darkness of this horrible place the Bible calls hell and there is no escape!

The people in Hell want to get out, but they can't. They want to send people back up to the surface of the earth, to the land of the living, as the rich man did to warn them about this horrible place, but they **can't**. *“For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.”* Luke 16:28

Abraham told the man that they had Moses and the prophets, let his family members listen to them. The rich man replied that if someone came back from the dead and warned them, then his family members would repent and believe on Jesus Christ. To which Abraham replied, that if they wouldn't listen to the communicators of God's Word, then they wouldn't listen to someone else. *“And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”* Luke 16:31

We might add in here that Hell is not the final destination of those who are below the age of accountability and have not believed on Christ as their Savior. It is like a holding cell where the unbelievers are kept until the day of the resurrection when they will stand before God at the great white throne judgment and be judged for their works. There they will find that none of their works compare to the righteousness of Jesus Christ and then they will be thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:11-15

And there in the lake of fire they will join the devil, the beast and the false prophet. *“And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”* Revelation 20:10

This is a matter of the utmost gravity and importance. How can someone apply themselves so diligently to getting an education, making a living, having a good financial portfolio, going after health, finding the right mate for life, but not prepare for their own death? People don't want to think about their death, but we all are going to die! **Remember this, death is certain – life isn't!**

You say, I don't believe all this. I'm a good person; God would never send me to Hell, if it even exists at all! You will then. You'll believe it; you'll see it, but it'll be too late. You must have a standing of righteousness, which only comes through faith in Christ, **before you die!** And you will die; we will all die. *“And as it is appointed unto men **once to die**, but after this the judgment:”* Hebrews 9:27

The ultimate reality for all of us is that each day of our existence here on earth we are being brought closer to standing before this holy God and being judged. No friends, no family, just you alone. Are you ready for that day!

Picture this if you will, a man or woman going about their daily business making a living, enjoying life with their family and friends, then a car wreck, or heart attack, or something else and their life is over. As with the man who had accumulated many things in life, like so many today in retirement. *“And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night **thy soul shall be required of thee**: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”* Luke 12:19, 20

Now what happens to these people who had not prepared to meet their Maker? The believer in Christ will be taken by the angels into heaven and the presence of God, while the unbeliever will be dragged down into Hell. And there we see the procession of millions of people entering through the gates of this dark domain.

Statistics show, as best they can calculate, that **155,000 people die each day** and most of them have not believed on Christ to be saved! That's approximately 6,000 per hour and over 100 per minute going through the gates of hell into this terrible place. If they were single file, and approximately three feet between each one, **the procession for just the one day would be 100 miles long!** Can you imagine this terrible spectacle and it's going on one per second as we speak!

This is where the devil's highway ends. It began at our physical birth and ends in Hell's dark domain. And on the devil's highway is a parade of millions and millions of lost souls going to this terrible place. Do you want to be one of them? **You already are if you have not believed on Christ as your Savior.** But you can get off this highway by believing on Jesus Christ as your Savior.

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” 1 John 2:17 The word for **passeth away** is *parago* and was the word used for a parade, or the procession of the mother goddess cult that the Apostle John was able to observe in his town. But you notice, where was John? He was standing on the sideline watching the parade go by! He observed it; he was not a part of it.

We have all seen parades in our lives with their floats, bands and what not, as we stand on the side watching it all go by. The devil's world is like that. It's a procession of people going by laughing and talking and doing their things, full of life and what they have done in life. But has anyone asked **where does this procession end up?** They're born, they grow up, they become of age and they join in the parade. That's the beginning. But they are not able to see the head of the parade; they don't see where it's going to end. And the **parade of this world ends up in hell!**

And along the sidelines of this world's procession into hell are those yelling to those in the “parade” to get out of it by coming to Christ. They're warning them that this parade doesn't have a happy ending, that it ends up in Hell and then the lake of fire. It reminds me of going down a certain river for the first

time on inner tubes. Everybody's having fun and enjoying the day, but along the banks are those yelling at them to get out because there is a major waterfall ahead that will kill them.

The treacherous river, although it seems OK at the time, is like the world system that belongs to the devil. Now there will be some who laugh at those sounding the warning, there will be those who are having too much fun to pay attention to them, and there will be those who heed the warning to come out of the world and place your faith in Christ. **Which one are you?** There is no middle ground here; there is no debate. You are on the road to Hell right now and you must believe on Christ to avoid it.

Christians are called “narrow-minded” by many because we insist that Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation. Many believe that they don't even need to be saved! But Christ made this very clear when he talked about the narrow gate. “*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*” Matthew 7:13,14

The image of the **narrow gate** was familiar in the ancient world. It indicated that because this one particular gate was so narrow that it was difficult to find, hence it was ignored by so many, choosing rather to go through the wide gate due to it being larger, easier to find and used by so many people.

The gate is narrow and so is the road. The road isn't narrow, it has been **narrowed**, the perfect passive participle of thlibo, shows the restriction of the divine condition of solely believing on Christ to go down this road. It also has the idea of two steep mountains so close to each other that they create a very narrow gorge that one can only enter into by a very narrow gate. **The one narrow gate and narrow path leads upward into the section called Paradise, while the broad gate and broad path lead downward into the area called Torments.**

Satan's wants to drag as many people as he can with him down into the lake of fire. Christ wants to take all who will trust him as their Savior in his train up to heaven to be with him. Who do you want to follow? Who do you want to be with? **Where do you want to end up?** You will end up in only one of two places at the end of your life. You will end up in heaven if you have believed on Christ, or you will end up in Hell if you reject him.

Throughout the entire Bible there is a major theme that stands out and that is God is a holy God, that he judges, that he judges righteously, that no one can escape his judgment, man nor angel, “*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*” Hebrews 9:27, and that when he judges, he judges with fire, “*For our God is a consuming fire.*” Hebrews 12:29

God's judgment had already passed on the entire human race when Adam sinned against God in the garden. That is why when anyone is born they are already on the path down to the fires of Hell. Hell is the precursor, a holding cell if you will, where unsaved man is kept until the final resurrection and judgment. The only way to avoid that, the only escape from this path is through faith in Christ. God is a just God, but he is also gracious and loving as demonstrated in him giving us his Son as the sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins so that we might be saved through faith in him.

Fire plays a dominant theme in this matter of God's righteousness's, holiness, justice and judgment. In the book of Daniel we see the justice of God in action and that his throne is ablaze with flames; we see a river of fire flows from the throne, and as all rivers end up in a lake, sea, or ocean; we see the final judgment of the lake of fire.

*"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his **throne** was like the **fiery flame**, and his wheels as **burning fire**. A **fiery stream** issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."* Daniel 7:9-11

And the final judgment in the lake of fire is where the devil, and those angels who sided with him in the rebellion against God, and all those who have not believed on Christ as their Savior will be thrown into this lake of fire and brimstone. Yes, my friend, the very expression that millions have laughed at for so many years is there and it's real and it's where you are heading without Christ as your Savior. *"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.**"* Revelation 20:13-15

But there is found something else flowing from the throne of God afterward and that is the river of the water of life. *"And he shewed me **a pure river of water of life**, clear as crystal, **proceeding out of the throne of God** and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."* Revelation 22:1,2

Where the **river of fire** proceeding from God's throne speaks of the righteousness, justice and wrath of God on all those who reject his Son; the **river of the water of life coming from the throne of God** speaks of his love, his grace, mercy and forgiveness for all who believe on his Son. **So the question is which one do you want?**

Even believers in Christ and their works will be judged by the fire of God! I don't think many believers think about these things any more or live their lives with these things in mind. They have become like the unsaved pursuing after money and their own things and have not considered where all this is going to end.

Believers in Christ are going to be judged by fire also and so are their works. They will survive the fiery judgment of God, but their works of the flesh won't. *"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by **fire**; and the **fire** shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by **fire**."* 1 Corinthians 3:13-15

If you are not a believer in Christ, you might be asking yourself the question what do people do to go to Hell? The answer is **nothing!** We are all on the path to Hell from our birth! Because we were born into Adam's race we were born into sin and under the curse of God. When Adam sinned against God and aligned himself with Satan, Adam then, and everyone born from Adam, was doomed to share Satan's destiny in the lake of fire.

But the love and grace of God intervened on man's behalf and sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. All we have to do is believe on Jesus Christ as our Savior and thereby accept God's gift of forgiveness. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* John 3:16

The Bible says that in Adam all will die, but in Christ all will be made alive. *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”* 1 Corinthians 15:22 The term **in Adam**, *en Adam*, and **in Christ**, *en Christo*, are legal terms meaning that one is legally identified with someone. When we were born, we were legally identified with Adam meaning that we would share Adam's legal punishment in the lake of fire. But when we are born again, through faith in Jesus Christ, we now share Christ's position in heaven throughout eternity! **So which one do you want?**

Remember this, that if you are not a believer in Christ you are already on the devil's highway that ends up at the gates of Hell! It's not what do I have to do to end up on this highway – you are already on it! We all were! The question is what do I have to do to get off it? And there is only one way to get off this path and that is by believing on Christ as your Savior!

We live our lives on earth doing this and that, busying ourselves with so many pleasures and pursuits, that is our present reality, sort of like the movie, “The Matrix”. But we have ever **asked ourselves, what is the reality after I die?** Do I automatically go to heaven? Do I just cease to exist? (What was all that about?) Do I go to another dimension? Is our thinking along the lines of that old Rock song, “Sure there ain't no heaven, but pray there ain't no Hell”? People need to ask themselves what happens to me after I die? What will happen to me when my soul leaves my body? **Where will my soul go?**

Your soul is the most precious thing that you have. It is **you**. And it is going to live on past your physical death. **The question is where do you want it to go?** Do you want to go to Hell? Do you want to wake up one moment after your death in this line of people going through the portals of the gates of Hell knowing that there is no escape and that nothing but torment and suffering await you there? Or would you like to wake up face to face with Jesus Christ in heaven surrounded by his love and peace?

If the answer to that question is Jesus Christ, then you must simply place your faith and trust in him as your Savior. Tell God that you are believing on his Son as your Savior right now and thank him for saving you. *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord **shall be saved.**”* Romans 10:13

Life In Hell

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” Luke 16:19-31

Intro:

The reality of this place called **Hell**, or *Hades* as it is called in the Greek, is found repeatedly throughout both the old and new testaments of the Bible. Moses talked about it, the prophets talked about, and so did Jesus Christ and the apostles. And because it is the ultimate reality and destiny of all those who have not believed on Jesus Christ as their Savior we need to address this topic with all solemnity.

We find in the old testament that *Sheol*, as it was called in the Hebrew language, was the destiny of everyone that died, both the righteous and the unrighteous. Except that when the righteous, the saved, and the unrighteous, the unsaved, died, they went to different areas in Hell. The unrighteous went to an area called “Torments” and the righteous went to an area referred to as “Abraham's Bosom”, or sometimes, “Paradise”.

These two areas, all in the one place called Hell, are separated by a great chasm, it is both wide and deep, and the quality of life for souls in these two places is as far apart as can be. The environment in the place called *Paradise* is Edenic, while the environment in the place called *Torments* is fiery, hot and miserable; a place where every moment of the soul's existence is tormented.

A. The Rich Man and the Poor Man

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:” - ανθρωπος δε τις ην πλουσιος και ενεδιδυσκετο πορφυραν και βυσσον ευφραινομενος καθ ημεραν λαμπρως [Luke 16:19](#)

“And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,” - πτωχος δε τις ην ονοματι λαζαρος ος εβεβλητο προς τον πυλωνα αυτου ηλκωμενος [Luke 16:20](#)

“And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.” - και επιθυμων χορτασθηναι απο των ψιχιων των πιπτοντων απο της τραπεζης του πλουσιου αλλα και οι κυνες ερχομενοι απειλειχον τα ελκη αυτου [Luke 16:21](#)

To begin with, we know that we're not dealing with a figure of speech, or a parable in this passage, but with two real men who lived on this earth because of the two phrases, “*There was a certain rich man*”, and, “*And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus.*” The use of the word **certain** tells us that the Lord was talking about two real men, and in the one passage he gives us the actual name of the beggar, Lazarus.

The rich man did not go to Hell because he was rich, nor did the poor man end up in Paradise because he was poor. The reason why the two ended up in different places after death is because the poor man had believed on Christ as his Savior, while the rich man had rejected him.

The rich man had a beautiful gated home, wore the finest clothes and had lavish banquets and feasts, while the poor man hoped just to eat the leftovers that were thrown away. His sores came from having an inadequate diet. This is parallel situation to so many people today with their big, beautiful homes in their gated communities, fine cars, SUV's, jewelry and furniture, and the homeless who live on the street.

These widely differing aspects of the two men's prior existences in temporal life are brought out to show the contrast of what happens after death when one is saved and another isn't. We must remember that Abraham himself was extremely wealthy before his death, far more than this rich man's wealth. Wealth isn't the issue here. What it does bring out is what happens to those after death, for those who have either believed on Jesus Christ, or have rejected him as their Savior, as to whether they are comforted in this paradise of a place, or are being tormented in the flames!

The subject of Hell is denied by many, and avoided by most, but Hell still exists and is the ultimate reality of what awaits those who have not believed on Christ as their Savior. It awaits all who have been born on this planet and have descended from Adam and Eve. But can be avoided because God has sent his Son to die on the cross for our sins, so that through faith in Christ we can receive God's forgiveness and avoid this terrible place. If you are alive, then know that one day you will die. The question is, where will your soul go at death?

B. Death Strikes Both Men

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;” - εγενετο δε αποθανειν τον πτωχον και απενεχθηναι αυτον υπο των αγγελων εις τον κολπον του αβρααμ απεθανεν δε και ο πλουσιος και εταφη Luke 16:22

In time both men died, as all men do. The word for **death** is *apothnesko*, which actually looks at the separation of the soul from the body. Death is not just “dead like a dog” who has no soul, but is that point in time where the soul leaves the body. **The important issue is where does the soul go after it leaves the body?** The soul goes to another place at death where it will there exist.

When the rich man died, he was buried in the proper manner, which entailed the prescribed preparation of his body, the proper rites that went with it all, and then placed in a tomb. It's very possible that the beggar's body was thrown out into the valley of Hinnom, along with common criminals and others, where the vultures and the fires, much like the old garbage dumps, would take care of the body. Two men, two lives on earth, two different funeral preparations, but two different afterlife experiences.

There were two events in the beggar's life where he was carried. The first one was where somebody came and dumped him off at the rich man's gate. **Laid** was the pluperfect of *ballo* and it meant to throw or cast something. Apparently somebody didn't want to fool with him any more, so they took him and left him at the gate of the rich guy where he might be able to get something to eat.

The second time the beggar was carried by an angel at his death. But the word changes from *ballo* - to cast or throw, to *apophero* – to carry someone from one place to another with the idea of special care involved in doing so. You see, nobody cared for the beggar in his life on earth, as evidenced in the way he was treated and lived, but God cared for him all along. And when the poor man died, he was carefully carried by the angels down into the paradise section of *Hades* where he was comforted.

But not so with the unsaved rich man. He had a great life and he had a great burial, but when his soul left his body he was now existing in *Hades* in another place, a place of fire and heat and great suffering.

But there was one thing that separated the two men before they died, other than their financial positions, and that is the poor man had his faith and trust in Jesus Christ, while the rich man didn't. The rich man thought that, because he was a racial descendant of Abraham, he would be right with God. The issue is not race! Just because he was of Abraham's bloodline did not make him right with God. **He**

had to be of Abraham's faith! Abraham had believed on Christ as his Savior when he was alive and that's what made him right with God. And to be a true child of Abraham you have to be of Abraham's faith. Even saved Gentiles can claim Abraham as their father spiritually speaking.

C. Being In Torments

“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” - και εν τω αδη επαρας τους οφθαλμους αυτου υπαρχων εν βασανοις ορα τον αβρααμ απο μακροθεν και λαζαρον εν τοις κολποις αυτου Luke 16:23

We notice that the dead still have a human body, eyes, ears, mouth, arms, legs, hands, a brain, able to see, able to think, able to remember, etc., just like they had in this life! It's just not a body of flesh. The word **seeth**, *horaō*, had the idea of seeing something from a distance and looking at it. The rich man was staring, or looking intently afar off, and from a distance he recognized that it was Abraham and Lazarus.

The word for **being** is the present active participle of *huparcho* and it has the idea that one had existed in another time and another place, but now they are existing in this place. The rich man had existed in the physical life on the surface of the earth, but now he was existing in *Hades*, in the bowels of the earth. **Death doesn't stop one's existence! It's just the door through which one goes to exist in another place!**

The verb form of **torment** is *basanizo* and it was originally used of putting metal to extreme tests to see if it was what it was claimed to be. Then it was used for the torturing of men, (an evil and barbaric practice that our nation rejected in its beginning), to extract the truth from them. Then it was used of just the idea of being in pain, tormented.

In the bosom of was a phrase used commonly in those days that denoted: motherly love, as with a child, the place of the guest of honor at a meal, to express an inward relationship, or membership in a community and that one belonged to someone. The poor man wasn't loved in this life, but he was loved by Abraham after his death. He was never a guest of honor at a meal; he wasn't even invited, but now he is a guest of honor with Abraham. He had no relationships in his physical life, as evidenced by no family to take care of him, but now he had a face to face relationship with Abraham. He was an outcast in this life, but now he was a member of the family of God. No one wanted him in this life, but now he belonged to someone.

We know the name of the poor man, Lazarus, but not so the rich man. We don't know his name because it's not important; he's not important. He may have been important in this life, but now he's just one of countless millions languishing and suffering in the flames.

Lazarus would be what we call an invisible hero of the faith. One of the many “no names, no faces” we see in life; people that we walk right by and don't give a thought to, maybe we even look down on them. Yet if they have believed on Christ as their Savior they are known to God and deeply loved by him and that's all that matters.

It's not important what we do in life, who we are, how much we have, what our titles or our positions are; the only thing that's important is if we have believed on Christ. If we haven't, then nothing else matters. And if we have, then we know that we have eternity and our future life in Christ's kingdom guaranteed.

D. Cool, Cool Water

“And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.” Luke 16:24

The rich man refers to Abraham as his father, and Abraham refers to him as his son, but the term father, or son, was used of racial ancestry and other things. The rich man was a son in the sense that he had descended from Abraham's bloodline, but he was not a **true son** of Abraham because he had not trusted Christ as his Savior as Abraham did.

It's interesting that he still thinks of Lazarus as a servant, for he wanted Abraham to send Lazarus, like one would a servant, and fetch him some water. You notice that the attitude, as well as the memory of an individual, continues on past death. How he viewed Lazarus prior to death was how he viewed Lazarus after death.

We notice that the dead are able to see, think, feel, remember; they have the same, apparently, facial resemblances so that they can be recognized; they have emotions; they have sadness; they have will; they are able to be concerned; they are able to feel pain or pleasure. Everything stays the same except they are now existing in another place but not in the body of flesh that they had on earth.

We notice also there is water on the Paradise side of the chasm, a precious commodity that the Torments side doesn't have. And he wanted just a little bit to alleviate his suffering, for he said that he was being **tormented** by the flame, *phlox*, and Hell is a place of fire and burning.

Make no mistake about it, Hell and all its suffering awaits all those who have not believed on Christ as their Savior. It's a horrible place, a place of great suffering and torment. But it can be avoided by putting your entire faith and trust in Jesus Christ. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” Acts 16:31*

The word for **torment** here is the present passive indicative of *odunomai*. In v.23 the word used for **torment** is *basanos*, where it says that he was now existing in a place of torments. We saw that the verb form had the idea of **being tortured** and the noun form, with the locative of sphere, would tell us that Hades is the **place or location** where this torturing is taking place. In v.28 he refers to it again as a **place of torment**.

We also want to notice that in v.23 the word for **torment**, *βασανους*, is in the plural, which tells us that many forms of tormenting are going on there. Sadness, fear, despair, regret, pain, suffering, languishing, just to name a few.

In the flames should be better translated as *“by the flames”*. Make no mistake about it Hell is a place of deep darkness, suffering and misery that not only affects the soul, but the form of body that the dead have after they die. **And it is a place of fire and of being in close enough proximity to the fire that they can feel the flames!**

The word for torment, *odunomai*, in v.24 meant to feel pain, to have distress, to have severe pain due to a wound or fracture, to suffer, to have deep anxiety, deep agitation of the soul, to have deep sorrow.

So what we have is, *“For I am being tormented by this flame”*. The fires of Hell have sapped his

strength where he can only languish. And as he languishes in Hell; he is constantly tormented by the flames, and on top of that suffering, he now thinks about the days gone by, what lies ahead, and that he has absolutely no hope. **This is the suffering that awaits the entire human race that has not believed on Jesus Christ as their Savior!**

E. The Great Gulf

“But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.” Luke 16:25,26

The word lifetime is *zoe* which refers to the physical life that one has in the body. So Abraham is referring back to the rich man's prior existence, which was lavish as the result of the decisions that he had made in life.

All of us have decisions that we make in life. Sometimes we make decisions that result in us being poor, and sometimes we make decisions along the way to go for money and the good life. The rich man was like so many millions who have lived on earth, who have gone after money, education, success and the good life. And there are many who reach their goal! **But just because you finally hit the good life in this life does not mean that you will have it in the next!**

The rich man failed to make the most important decision of all; he failed to believe on Jesus Christ, as Abraham had done, and because of that he ended up in Hell. While Lazarus, as poor as he was, at least had made the most important decision of all and had believed on the Lord.

An interesting insight in this is the passage that talks about those in Paradise wanting to go over to the Torments side, and those in the Torments side wanting to go over to the Paradise side. There are those in Paradise who wanted, who desired, to help those on the other side, but weren't able to because of the chasm. This goes back to the changed nature of the Redeemed, who have a love in their heart to help others in distress, while the unsaved only care about themselves. They only cared about themselves in their previous life on earth, and they only care about themselves after they're dead. While those in Torments simply lacked the ability to go over to the Paradise side. Two groups of people, two differing motivations. The one group wanted to go over to the other side to be comforted; the other group wanted to go over to the other side to help those who were suffering, but neither group could do anything about the situation.

The sides of the chasm were far apart enough so that one could not step over it, or even jump across it, but close enough where one could have facial recognition. There is also the aspect that natural air currents would keep the blistering heat on one side of the chasm and not penetrate into the Paradise side.

One can only speculate on the actual configuration of the topical layout for the two sections of *Hades*. We know that at the bottom of the chasm is the place referred to as Tartarus where the fallen angels, who sinned against God pre flood, are chained in caverns of absolute darkness. *“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;” 2 Peter 2:4 ει γαρ ο θεος αγγελων αμαρτησαντων ουκ εφεισατο αλλα σειραις ζοφου ταρταρωσας παρεδωκεν εις κρισιν τετηρημενους*

There could be the concept that one could travel in Paradise over to a section that has an outlook over the Torments side. And the Torments side could actually have rocky outcroppings around its perimeter that are in one area close to the Paradise section. Anyway you look at it this is not a place to go and can be avoided by believing on Christ as your Savior!

F. Warning Unbelievers

“Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”
Luke 16:27-31

It's interesting that Abraham knew about Moses and the Prophets, even though he lived over a thousand years before them. Some tend to think that life after death is a mental nothingness, where one exists and knows nothing of what transpired before, but here we see just the opposite.

The rich man recognized Lazarus when he saw him; he knew who Abraham was because he called him by name, even though Abraham had lived 2,000 years before him and he had never seen him. And Abraham knew about Moses and the prophets.

The rich man also remembered his family back in the land of the living and he was deeply concerned that they would now come to this place where he was! This is why he asked that Abraham send Lazarus back to the land of the living to warn them. But there were two flaws with his logic. One, Abraham did not have the power or authority to do that, only Jesus Christ does. Two, even if he could they would not believe him.

Moses wrote about *Sheol* in Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29-31, and in Numbers 16:30,33 with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. The **Prophets** in 1 Samuel 2:6; Psalms 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; Isaiah 5:14; 14:9, 11, 15; 38:10; Ezekiel 32:21; Hos. 13:14; Amos 9:2; to name a few.

The body only houses the soul in this life and when we die the soul goes to exist in another place. Whatever we were before, whatever thoughts and memories that we have in this life, go with us beyond that experience of physical death. And it is these memories for the unsaved that compound their sorrow in *Hades*. The rich man still cared for his brothers, but there was nothing he could do for them.

The rich man wanted Lazarus to testify, *diamarturomai*, to his brothers about what Hell is like and not to come here. *Diamarturomai* is the word that one would use in a court of law to establish a fact, but with the added idea of intensity and solemnity. This is a very serious matter and needed to be treated as such.

Abraham said that his brothers have the writings of Moses and the Prophets and they can listen to them! This takes us back to the crucial matter of the Word of God and the men that God has ordained to communicate it. Today we have the Evangelists and the Pastor-Teachers whom God has ordained to teach the doctrines on this matter of Heaven, Hell and salvation in Christ, which they do regularly. If someone is positive to biblical truth, then they will hearken to their message. But if they aren't, then they will have to live with the consequences.

The rich man didn't believe the message of Moses and the Prophets when he was alive, so he ended up in Torments after his death. He didn't believe them about Hell when he was alive, but now he does. Well, actually, he doesn't have to believe it; he's living in it. So he reasons that if someone went back from the dead, someone they knew, Lazarus, and Lazarus could tell them the whole story and they would repent. In fact, he was arguing in a sense with Abraham about all this.

The rich man used a conditional clause in this passage when he said, "*but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent*". Ean plus the subjunctive mood translates out as if someone could come back from the dead, now maybe they can and maybe they can't, but if someone could, **then** my brothers would repent!

They will repent is the future active indicative of *metanoeo*, which means to change one's mind. The future indicative stresses the absolute certainty of something happening. The rich man was certain that if someone did come back from the dead his brothers would be so impressed by that act and that person's testimony his brothers would change their minds and believe on Christ as their Savior.

What he was saying in effect is that the Word of God is not sufficient in itself to convict people's hearts about these matters. He's saying that something more bold, something more dramatic is needed to get through to people. What he's saying is that the testimony of people is more valid than the testimony of God.

But Abraham corrected him with a doctrinal principle that, if they don't believe the teaching of the Word of God in this life, then they won't believe someone who has returned from the dead. Man needs to realize how important the Word of God is to us, for the Lord himself said that, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*" Matthew 4:4

*"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; **How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation**; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;" Hebrews 2:1-3*

The word **repent** has been mistranslated and misapplied by the Church for years. People incorrectly think it means to feel sorry for one's sins, to regret, to have certain remorseful feelings on the subject. This is why so many churches try to get the unsaved to feel sorry for their sins, to weep tears of repentance when believing on Christ.

But the word for **repent** in the Greek is *metanoeo*, and means to simply **change one's mind**. There is a word for feeling sorry, but that's *metamelomai*, which isn't used here. When the King James translators came to this word, *metanoeo*, they took the word repent, which came out of Romanism, and used it. Repent comes from the Latin and it does mean to feel pain, or to be grieved in the soul. **But they took the wrong word to convey the Greek idea!** In the Greek it simply meant to change one's mind! Sorrow, or emotions have nothing to do with it at all!

It looks at the idea that **one is not believing** that he is a sinner, that he is going to Hell, that he needs a Savior, that Christ died for his sins and was raised from the dead, and that without Christ as his Savior he is still on the path to Hell, and that he needs to be saved and can't save himself. But now he's changed his mind, (**repented**), about the entire subject and believes on Christ as his Savior!

And once you have believed on Christ as your Savior God takes that faith and **counts it as righteousness**. “*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*” Romans 4:5

The next thing that God does for you is **declare you righteous** before his court in heaven. “*Therefore being justified by faith, δικαιωθεντες, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*” Romans 5:1 Justification is a one time act that is never repeated, nor needs to be repeated. Christians become righteous at salvation by the grace of God, through faith in Christ, and remain that way forever.

And there is something else God wants us to know, if we have believed on his Son, our sins are not only forgiven, but we have been given eternal life at the moment of salvation and it can never be taken away from us. “*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may **know that ye have eternal life**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*” 1 John 5:11-13

Pastor Mike