

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 10- Luke 10:25-28** 199- The Way to Heaven- Part 1

April 28, 2013

Luke 10:25-28

25 And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 And He said to him, "**What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?**"

27 And he answered, "**YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.**"

28 And He said to him, "**You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.**"

To the Glory of God

This is the single most important question that anybody could ever ask. There is not another question in all the universe that surpasses the question,

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

... nothing else even comes close. You can make as much money as you want to; you can buy as many things as you can; you can have the adoration of millions of fans; you can own vast tracks of land- but none of that makes any difference at all unless you know the answer to this question:

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

And this is the question that every false religion and every false human philosophy tries to answer. It is the paramount question of all life. Every man; every woman asks this question. Every wealthy man and every poor man asks this question. Every educated and every uneducated man asks this question. Every politically savvy and connected person asks this question. Every king and every President; every CEO and every ruler asks this question.

But why is that? Why is this question of where we will spend eternity the single most important question that anybody could ever ask? The reason that this single question is so important is that there are three things that every single person who has ever lived or who is alive right now has to do:

- ✓ They will taste death
- ✓ They will consciously enter into eternity
- ✓ They will live in eternity forever

These three things are the great equalizers of all of mankind because every human soul is immortal. And that doesn't just mean the souls of *saved* people. Every soul of every atheist and every soul of every agnostic is immortal. All souls are immortal and they will live forever- somewhere.

But while it is true that every soul of every human being is immortal- it is also true that every physical body of every single human being is *not* immortal. Our bodies are all mortal and so we will all taste of death. Some will die young while others die old. Some will die relatively slowly while others will die quickly. Some will die from disease while others will die from accidents. Some will die unexpectedly while others will expect their death.

Now it is true that we should do what we can to eat and to exercise responsibly in order to be as productive as we can for as long as we can. But as you are literally bombarded with gimmicks and diets and exercise routines that promise a whole host of things- we need to always keep things in perspective.

Part of what it means for God to be absolute Sovereign over everything all the time is that He has chosen you for Salvation from way before you were ever born ; way before you did anything good or evil; and way before God ever made the world. And God's Providence

assures us that 100% of those whom God chose will be saved and 100% of those whom God saved will be in Heaven with Him forever.

But what else Sovereignty means is that the time and place and circumstances of your birth have also been pre-ordained. And so while the mantra of the modern church seeks to magnify the false concept of “human free will” and “human choice”- there are a whole host of things- which are enormously important- of which you had absolutely no input and no choice over at all.

For example- you had no choice as to who your parents were or their financial condition or the city or country of your birth. You have no choice as to your race or ethnicity or the culture that you would be raised in. You had no input into your upbringing. You didn’t cooperate in how tall or short you are- whether you are left handed or right handed; how strong or weak your lungs would develop and how well your mind would learn math and science and history which would allow you to become a lawyer or doctor or accountant or whether you would migrate toward a trade and work with your hands.

No, all of those details including any physical handicap you may or may not have lie inside the mystery of something called, “The Providence of God”. And the good news is that the Providence of God is taught all through the Bible and brings great comfort and great joy to the believer and the really sad news is because so many churches don’t teach the Bible anymore and because so many of God’s people don’t read and study their Bibles anymore- the wonderful concept of God’s Providence is almost unknown to the modern Church.

But suffice it to say that you did not choose the day and time of your birth- God did- and likewise God has Sovereignly ordained that on a certain day and at a certain time of that day and in a certain way of His choosing- you will leave this life; your heart will stop beating; your lungs will exhale the breath of life that God breathed into you and your flesh will return to the dust of the earth and you will die.

So The Providence of God teaches that medicine and science and technology and diet and exercise will not alter that Divine Plan of either your birth or your death. And so the way we understand that is that the surgery that you had- worked- and you lived an additional 25 years- but only because God graciously *allowed* you to live- not merely because the tumor was removed. And your cholesterol level was lowered and therefore you enjoyed several more years of life- not simply because of

the power of the diet and exercise Plan you were on- but because God merciful granted that time to you.

So we should be responsible and eat right and do the right things- but ultimately the only reason why we live is because God has Sovereignly *allowed* us to live- not because we are somehow cheating death or extending our own lives by the sheer power of our actions. I would remind you that every vegetarian who was born in 1850 is dead today. Every person who exercised regularly back in the 13th Century no longer lives in that physically fit body.

At the time that God has appointed for us to die- we will die- regardless of anything that Science or technology or medicine has available to help.

Now there is nothing I am saying right now that should lead anyone into a fatalistic approach to life where we come to the really bad conclusion that because God is absolutely Sovereign and is never defeated and always gets His Way that it therefore doesn't matter what we do- because that is *not* what I am saying and that is *not* what I believe and that is *not* what the Bible teaches and that is *not* true.

What I *am* saying and what the Bible *does* teach is that God is absolutely Sovereign over everything all the time *and* Man is absolutely responsible for what we do and therefore we will be held accountable by God for what we do. And how you understand the dynamic of that mystery and how you cope with the tension of that mystery is helped and developed by your knowledge of God's Word and nothing else.

For example:

- ✓ 100% of the souls who have been elected to Salvation by God from before the foundation of the world will be saved AND the way or the means that God has chosen for all of those souls to be saved is through them hearing and believing the Gospel AND so we are to sow as many seeds to as many people as we can every day- using every available opportunity and technology and opening that we can AND we are to pray that God will Sovereignly open their eyes and their ears and their hearts and their minds to the Gospel that we preach.
- ✓ The children of saved parents must themselves hear the Gospel and repent and believe and trust in the finished Work of Jesus in

order to be saved AND we are to train up the child in the way they should go and teach them the Word of God and bring them to Church and read the Bible with them and conduct family devotions and teach them to pray and fast and walk before them in Biblical holiness so that the credibility of the Gospel will be high.

So what I am saying about this magnifies the majesty of God's Grace and puts us in wonder over God's Providence in *allowing* us to be born and to live with all of our particularities and it is also God's Grace working inside God's Providence that allows us to die at the time and in the manner of God's Own Personal Sovereign Choosing.

But regardless of how and when you die- you *will* die- and so trying not to think about it will not change that fact and trying to change the subject will not change that fact. And when you die- you will stand before Almighty God and you will give an account of everything you have done in your body- every thought; every deed; every action; every intent; and every word that you have ever spoken whether it is good or bad.

And at that moment- you will pass through God's Judgment or you will not. God will approve of your life or He will not. And how God reacts to your life; how God settles all accounts; how God views your life; how God thinks about your life- not what you think; not using your ideas or your criteria about how good you think you are - but using His Own Criteria- that is what will determine your eternity. And you will spend all of eternity in the glories and the joys of Heaven or you will spend all of eternity in the pain and the horrors of the lake of fire that burns with brimstone.

And whether you are in Heaven or hell- there will be no vacations; no time off; no holidays; no change; no reprieve; no alteration- you will spend all through the eons of time in eternal glory or eternal damnation.

No soul- no inner person in any human being ever goes out of existence. Every human being who has ever or who will ever be born- lives forever. Our physical bodies die- but our souls go on eternally. We are created immortal. As we have discovered in earlier sermons- the false teaching of instant "Annihilation" where the souls of the damned simply burn up with no recollection of pain is a lie. The Bible does not

teach that. The concept of “soul sleep” where the souls of man simply falls asleep is a lie. Reincarnation is a lie. Evolution is a lie. All of these man-made attempts at trying to address the issue of death and where we will spend eternity from these false religions and human philosophies are all a lie. Every person who has ever lived will be the person they are right now- forever.

So because all of that is true- the only question that matters is, where and under what condition will you spend your forever? That is obviously the most compelling question that can ever be asked. And compared to the brief time in which we live in this world- that question is compelling beyond any other consideration.

So every one of us is eternal. And we will go on- as the person we are- forever. We will have a new body- and it will immortal- but that will not change the person that we are. James said in **James 4:14**:

James 4:14

Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

... so our physical lives are like steam from a boiling kettle that is visible one moment and gone the next.

So life in this world is an infinitesimal amount of time compared with eternity. You will live forever somewhere after you die. You will never go out of existence. And you will spend that forever in one of two places- heaven or hell, and those are the only two places. There is no other place. There is no Purgatory. Purgatory is a fictional place invented by religious people who want another chance to earn eternal life after they are dead. But like all man-made religions- the notion of Purgatory fights against the Biblical Truth of Justification by Grace through Faith.

The Bible doesn't teach about a waiting place in eternity. The Holy Scriptures do not teach about limbo. The 66 Books of the Holy Bible teach about heaven and hell and that is all. And you will be in one of those two places through all eternity. And you will be conscious that you are there with the full heightening of all your rational faculties running at their maximum. There will be no dulling of your sensibilities and sensitivities and understanding and comprehension as

if to somehow mitigate the joys of heaven or lessen the pain and anguish of hell. That simply isn't true.

So where we will spend eternity and how we will pass through God's Judgment of our lives and enter into Heaven is the question of all questions and it is a very basic and fundamental question that all people want to know.

So it is essential to deal with this basic fundamental question. And so we are at the basics right now. This Passage deals with Jesus and the Gospel that He preached- which is the foundation of everything. It is the foundation of the rest of the New Testament and it is the foundation of all the work of the Christian Church that has gone on throughout the world since this was written by Dr. Luke. So I make no apology for embracing this question and then dealing with it in a Biblical way.

Now just to put you in the flow of what's going on in the life of Christ at this time, it's less than a year now- in fact it's just a matter of months before Jesus will be executed on a Cross and then gloriously rise from the dead and then 40 days later bodily and visibly and physically ascend into heaven and send back the Holy Spirit and "The Last Days" or "The Church Age" begins.

Jesus is moving now through the last year of His earthly life- the last months of His brief 3-1/2 year ministry. And He has already blanketed Galilee with the Gospel and now He's blanketing Judea's villages and towns with the twelve Apostles and the 70 all proclaiming this wonderful message of eternal life. So we are in the very heart of the teaching ministry of Jesus.

So Jesus is calling people to be true disciples- to go way beyond simply being curious- and to go all the way to surrendered and committed. He has already said in **Luke 9:23** that if you want to come after Him- you must deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Him. That is to say, deny yourself and your own ambitions and your own desires and your own will and submit everything to Jesus. Refuse to associate with the person that you have been up till now. Deny that there is anything good in you. Come after Jesus and declare that He is Lord and Master and Sovereign and Savior. Take up a cross- joyfully and gladly- even if Jesus requires you to die. Be willing to die for Jesus. And under all conditions- submit in obedience to God's Will and God's

Word. And that is the hard Call but it is the only true Call to true Salvation. Nothing less than that constitutes genuine Salvation.

Now in the midst of the teaching about being a true disciple, the Lord has pulled together seventy of His true disciples and dispatched them out two by two to spread this Message and the Gospel of Salvation through faith in the Messiah Who has come. And the 70 have gone out and they've had some success and so we're in the middle of a great evangelistic enterprise of Jesus and the twelve Apostles and the 70 who were also sent.

So right in the midst of this proclamation of the Gospel; this inviting people to become true followers of Christ; inviting them to a life of self-denial, cross bearing and obedience; inviting them to enter the Kingdom; inviting them to receive the forgiveness of sins; inviting them to eternal life- we come to this Passage about a very personal conversation- even though it happened in a very public environment- it was a personal conversation.

So this is real evangelism one-on-one. We have heard Jesus preach in synagogues and outdoors. And the Apostles have gone out two-by-two and preached in towns and villages of Galilee. And the 70 have gone into all the towns and villages where Jesus would come to visit, preparing the way by preaching the Gospel publicly there.

But here we come to a one-on-one encounter between Jesus and a lawyer who asked Him this very important question. And the question is

What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

So here we meet a man who was following in the crowd. And Dr. Luke identifies this man in verse 25 as a lawyer. And Lord willing- we'll find out more about him next week. Now remember, the literate, the elite, the religious leaders, the educated, the prominent, the powerful, and the influential have all categorically rejected Jesus. They are the wise and the intelligent of verse 21 from whom Jesus said that the Father had purposefully hidden the Gospel. And those that have believed and are following Jesus are the "babes" of verse 21. They are the nothings and the nobodies. They are the fishermen and those who worked with their hands, those who were the unknown. And you will notice that in the company of the Apostles and the 70- there was not a

single Pharisee, not a single Sadducee, not one scribe, no rabbi, not one priest- not even one with any position of prominence other than Matthew or Levi who was a tax collector and thus possessed a position which made him the most hated of all people by the Jews. No, the ones who followed Jesus were the riff-raff of that day. And the others who seemed to be tagging along after Jesus are the publicans and the sinners and the harlots. But they are the babes of verse 21- that is they considered themselves as nothing, as having no rank and no achievement. And in their desperation and a proper assessment of their condition, they denied that they possessed any internal goodness about themselves and they embraced the Gospel and cried for a Mercy they knew they didn't deserve which the self-righteous and the proud rejected.

But here we meet a man who *is* among the elite. Here we meet one who belongs to the religious establishment. And this encounter gives us insight into how you evangelize a person one on one.

Now this person, this lawyer- this unnamed man has a privilege that is beyond estimation. This man had a privilege that none of us have ever had. This man has the opportunity to have a conversation about eternal life with God Almighty in human flesh- Who is eternal life Himself. And this privilege cannot be overstated. And the result makes this story all the more tragic.

Here this man is face-to-face with eternal life Personified- asking the right question and going away to face eternal death. It's a horrific loss of opportunity. But in the process we learn what is necessary in doing effective personal evangelism the way that Jesus did it rather than the way that the modern Church teaches.

And in this Passage- we see that there are at least four things required to be genuinely saved and I'm going to work my way through these with you. So if you're going to have an impact on somebody in regard to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the matters of eternal life:

1. They must have a comprehension of eternal life
2. They must recognize their need for eternal life
3. They must have a motivation toward eternal life
4. They must receive eternal life

So let's look at these together.

1. They must have a comprehension of eternal life

Luke 10:25

And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Now if you're a Bible student at all, if you've read the Gospels and, of course, most of you have, this sounds like a very familiar question, doesn't it? Well it is a familiar question because that question appears a number of times throughout the Gospels. In fact, it appears in every one of the four Gospel Records. But I want you to know that this particular encounter with this man is not a parallel to any of those others. This is a unique event that Dr. Luke records for us here.

Over in **Matthew 19**- it wasn't a lawyer, it was a rich young ruler and the setting was very different though the question was the same. And as we'll note, the event in **John 6** was with a group of people and not an individual. So this stands alone and we can't really compare this with the other ones because they're different. But what it tells us is that the question about eternal life and immortality was on the minds of the people in different times, in different locations and different encounters from different people because this question keeps coming up. And it comes up because of the first point I want you to understand. This is what we have to understand.

In order for anyone to be truly saved- they must first believe that
eternal life exists

So they must have a comprehension that eternal life is true and it is real and that it is available. This man had a recognition of eternal life. He acknowledged eternal life. And by that I don't mean he only recognized that he could live forever, but he recognized that there was an eternal life, not in the *bios* sense of the word- not eternally living, but eternal life in the *zoe* sense of the word- that is eternal well-being, eternal blessed- eternal joy. This man recognized that God had promised an eternal Kingdom; that God had promised a Kingdom of blessing- a domain of bliss and joy and peace and fulfillment and satisfaction and hope.

And he believed in that. And what we need to know is that this belief was part of the very fabric of Judaistic philosophy and theology. So this very personal conversation between Jesus and this lawyer would have never occurred if the question had never been asked. And the question would have never been asked if this man didn't believe that eternal life existed. He wouldn't want to know how to *inherit* eternal life if he didn't already know it existed. So this man knew that he would live forever and he knew that it was possible in living forever to live with God in His Kingdom. And so this entire incident is predicated on his understanding of immortality.

Now in our day- evolution, materialism, humanism and atheism have cut many people off from that universal conviction that has always existed in humanity until the last 150 years or so. I don't care where you go in the world throughout history to any culture no matter how primitive they might be- you find belief in immortality. But now- living in this post-humanistic, post-materialistic, post-evolutionary world, many people no longer see a need to believe in immortality. They seemingly can live long and prosperous lives without God.

And so in our evangelism, we can't presume that people understand that they will live forever. But historically and I think even today in spite of all of the philosophies that have been pounded into the heads of our society- most people still believe and have believed in the immortality of the soul- even if they go about it completely wrong.

For example- people use mediums and pay a lot of money to try to talk to their dead relatives through hypnosis and séances. You hear people say all the time, "that somewhere up there" their family members who have died are looking down and watching them or they are talking to them. And so even though these examples are false and pagan and unbiblical- there is still a fundamental reality that exists in the human heart about eternity. God has placed the concept of eternity in the human heart.

And philosophically people try real hard to talk themselves out of it- but there's this nagging sense that it's there. Man feels the pull of eternity in his heart like a little blind boy flying a kite, feels the tug of the wind against his hand as it pulls the string and even though he can't see it- Man feels the pull of eternity. The Creator has put that longing in his heart.

That's why in Egyptian society, for example, when they buried the

Pharaohs in the pyramids they put a solar boat with them so that they would sail across the river into the next world. And when the Greeks buried somebody in the Greek culture, they put a silver coin in their mouth when they put them into the ground so they could pay their fare across the mystic river into eternity. And in American history when the American Indians buried their warriors and their braves on the plains of our own nation, they buried their ponies with them so they could have something to ride through the happy hunting ground.

So all across the face of the earth throughout history- we see that God has set eternity in the human heart. Now those pagan beliefs are not right and they will not afford a single one of those people the eternal life that they seek- but nevertheless- God has placed eternity in the human heart.

But even though that is true- that's not why this lawyer believed in eternity and that's not why I believe in immortality. I feel the pull of immortality, that's a normal, human sense that God has built into us. But the reason I believe in eternity and in the immortality of the soul and the reason this lawyer did is because the concept of immortality and eternity is on the pages of the revealed Word of God- the Holy Bible.

So this lawyer knew his Old Testament. And therefore he knew he would live forever. The Old Testament clearly and repeatedly taught that. And it taught that there was an eternal place of bliss and blessing in the Kingdom of God and there was another place of terror and fear and darkness and punishment. Eternal life is referred to many times in the Old Testament.

And allow me to show you a few because they're so important. Turn with me to **Psalms 16**- and listen to the confidence of the inspired David as he writes beginning in verse 8:

Psalms 16:8-11

8 I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

9 Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely.

10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

So David says here, *“I rejoice. I have joy.”* Okay, joy is good. But *why* was David joyful? Because he got a new chariot? Because he was healed from cancer? No. Here's why David had joy –verses 10&11:

10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.

11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

David said, *“I can take anything in life, I can go through anything that comes my way. I can bless the Lord. I have set the Lord before me. I will not be shaken. My heart is glad. My mouth rejoices. I live in security.”* Why? *“Because I'm not going to spend eternity in a grave, I'm not going down to corruption in that tomb or that grave, I'm going through that grave and out the other side, down the path of life into Your presence where there's fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore.”*

And this is the hope that was clearly given to the Old Testament believer- which, of course, was later was applied in fullness through Peter's great sermon to Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of that for all believers- Jew or Gentile in **The Acts 2**. But even though it was a shadow of what has been revealed in the New Covenant- David still had powerful joy because he understood- at least in part- the immortality of his soul. Now go with me to **Psalms 21**.

Psalms 21:4-6

4 He asked life of You, You gave it to him, Length of days forever and ever.

5 His glory is great through Your salvation, Splendor and majesty You place upon him.

6 For You make him most blessed forever; You make him joyful with gladness in Your presence.

So once again- the knowledge was there in the Old Covenant that through God's Salvation- life goes on forever. Now this concept is repeated in many, many places. Job knew that if he died, yet in his

flesh he would still see God whom he would see for himself and no one else. David knew that when he died he would awake in God's likeness and be fully satisfied. When David's little son died he said,

"He cannot come to me but I will go to him."

So David knew there would be a reunion with his little son that had died and had immediately entered the Presence of the Lord. In **Psalms 133:3** the psalmist wrote:

... the LORD commanded the blessing— life forever.

What was the *commanded* blessing from God? "Life forever"; Eternal Life; Immortality. And so the Jews had the anticipation of immortality- that they would live forever and that they could live forever in the bliss and the joy and the pleasure of the Presence of God. The prophets followed up on this same great truth. In Daniel, for example- **Daniel 2:44** Daniel writes,

Daniel 2:44

"In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

And Daniel was looking, as the other prophets were, to a coming Kingdom. And once that Kingdom started, once God inaugurated that Kingdom on earth- they knew it would never end. Its earthly component would end after a thousand years,- the Book of the Revelation tells us, but immediately it would transition into the new heaven and the new earth- which is the eternal Kingdom. So once God established His Kingdom- it was forever.

So the Divine Promise then was that one could live forever in that Kingdom with all its pleasures and all its joys and all its satisfactions in God's glorious Presence.

In **Daniel 7**- Daniel's great and mysterious vision- and in verse 13&14- Daniel wrote:

Daniel 7:13&14

13 “I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.

14 “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

So here we learn that this Kingdom is in the very Presence of God, where there's joy and pleasure forever and it's going to be for all peoples and all nations and every language. And it says His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away. His Kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. And then dropping down to verse 18 of **Daniel 7** it says:

Daniel 7:18

‘But the saints of the Highest One will receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, for all ages to come.’

And then at the end of Daniel, one more passage. This is a great text. **Daniel 12:2&3:**

Daniel 12:2-3

2 “ Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace *and* everlasting contempt.

3 “Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

So the Jews had the recognition that there were two worlds in which the immortal soul of every individual would live, either the world of the Presence of God, or the world apart from His Presence.

When Gabriel, the angel, came as we saw back in **Luke 1**, and announced to Mary the coming of Jesus Christ, he said in verses 32&33,

Luke 1:32&33

32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord

God will give Him the throne of His father David;

33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

Now even though this event is recorded in the New Testament- it happened while the Old Covenant was still in force because Jesus had not yet been raised from the dead. So the angel was reiterating what Mary knew, what she had been taught all her life, that God was going to send a Son, the Son of man, as **Daniel 7** pointed it out, and that He would come and establish an eternal Kingdom.

So this was a common conviction of the Jews- that they would live forever and they could live forever in God's Presence. And they knew that in God's Presence there would be great joy and satisfaction, and in God's Presence there would be unimaginable pleasures forever.

So this knowledge was ingrained in the minds and hearts of the Jews because it was in the Divine Revelation that God has given to them and had told them to read it and study it and teach it to their children. And that is why it is so important today that every father take the time to teach his children about God and the Ways of God- so that Divine Truth will be ingrained in their mind and hearts.

And that's why this question kept coming up to Jesus. The rich young ruler asked, *"What do I do to inherit eternal life?"* And this lawyer asks here, *"What do I do to inherit eternal life?"* And in John 6 a whole multitude of people that are in the Presence of Jesus are confronted with this same issue. In **John 6:27**- Jesus says,

John 6:27

"Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."

In other words- You are far too concerned with earthly things, far too concerned with temporal things and you need to be concerned about eternal life which the Son of Man shall give you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal.

So Jesus was offering them eternal life and yet all they're doing is chasing Him around for breakfast because He just miraculously fed them last night. And so they asked,

John 6:28b

... "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"

It seems like everybody was asking that question. Rabbi Ben Eleazar was one of the rabbis of Israel during that time whose writings we have recovered and in one of his writings he says that there was a conversation that started this way.

"Rabbi, teach us the ways of life so that by them we may attain to the life of the future world."

So they all believed in a future world. And they wanted that life in the Presence of God- not the alternative- not the everlasting disgrace and contempt and hatred. They wanted joy, not sadness. They wanted reward, not punishment. They knew about the next life. They knew.

This lawyer knew that Enoch had left this life and had walked right into the next life. He knew that Elijah had gone right into the next life in a chariot of fire. He knew that Moses had just disappeared into the next life and his body had never been found. He knew that Job anticipated the next life. He knew that David looked forward to it, and so on and so on.

Eternal life- not chronological life or some kind of biological life- but life in the fullest sense of the word- really living in the very Presence of God. The people knew it was available and it meant to go into God's eternal Kingdom of bliss and blessing and pleasure forever.

Now some may say, *"But Brother Blair- if they believed in eternal life- why did they ask this question? I mean, weren't they pretty confident that they were going to obtain this eternal life?"*

Well, on the surface- the system of Judaism seemed to get them there. So if you're a Jew- that meant that automatically you were the children of Abraham- so certainly we're going to be there. And if you were circumcised the eighth day and if you kept the ceremonies and you did the traditions and all of that, and were externally, at least, observant to the law.

I mean, weren't these people fairly convinced that everything was going to be okay because they were Jews and they belonged to the chosen people and they had gone through the circumcision and they made the sacrifices and the blood of the animal on the Day of

Atonement covered their sins and the other sacrifices did as well, and wasn't, after all, the Promise of God given to them? And weren't they the people of God? I mean, wasn't everything really okay?

Yeah on the surface- everything was rosy. But none of this dealt with their conscience. All of this was only superficial. And therefore it was all hypocritical. It was external. It didn't guarantee them the Kingdom of God- and they knew it. And Paul in **Philippians 3** said,

"I looked at it all and I reevaluated all the stuff I thought would get me in the Kingdom of God and realized it was all manure."

And that's a very dramatic statement. So this lawyer knew very well that he wasn't perfectly sinless and so he knew that all of these external ceremonies and sacrifices and rituals didn't get him into eternal life- that is simply wasn't enough. And even though most people back then as well as most people in our day would never admit in a thousand years that they know good and well that they are lost and a wicked sinner and therefore *not* in line to receive eternal life- but they do know that on the inside.

So even though this man was not ready to admit on the outside that he wasn't qualified to receive eternal life- I really believe he had 's a nagging question that kept coming up and bothering him which is why he asks this question to Jesus.

Now the way that Dr. Luke words this here in verse 25 shows us that the lawyer asked this question to "test" Jesus. And many are quick to assume that this guy was no more serious than the others who came to Jesus to see if they could trap Him into saying something that they could punish Him for. But the way that the Greek is worded here shows us that what this man really wanted was to hear the Truth. So it is quite possible that he had asked this question before- probably to some of the high priests or the Sadducees or the scribes and got answers that were based in man's wisdom and not in Truth. And so this man is now desperate to hear what Jesus has to say about this subject that is bothering him and so the test that Luke refers him to is not that this lawyer was trying to trap Jesus as much as it is that this man wants to test Jesus to see if He is going to tell him the Truth probably because he has been lied to by so many for so long about a subject that is infinitely important.

Paul said in **1Corinthians 2:11**:

For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.

The Jew of the 1st Century knew the reality of the condition of their hearts. They had painted themselves white on the surface- but that nagging question was there because they knew they weren't right with God and they knew they weren't in control of their lives. They knew they couldn't live righteously on the inside. So there was a great fear in them that they were going to miss that eternal life. And the fact that they kept coming to Jesus and asking the question points to just how much this really bothered them.

So they believed in eternal life and they wanted to inherit it. And when Jesus started preaching- what did He preach about?

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him might not perish but have everlasting life."

So Jesus' Message was all about eternal life and how to inherit it. I'm amazed how many, many times Jesus talked about eternal life. There are at least 50 records here Jesus referred to eternal life in the New Testament. For example- Jesus said in **Mark 10:29&30**,

Mark 10:29-30

29 ..."Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake,

30 but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

And I could go on and on throughout the Ministry of Jesus- He was constantly talking about eternal life:

John 4:36

John 5:39

John 6:54

John 12:25

John 17:2

And then you come to the book of The Acts and the Apostles and the preachers go out and their message is the same thing- it's the message of eternal life and how to inherit it.

And then it's all through the NT Epistles:

Romans 2:7

Romans 5:21

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death and the gift of God is eternal life."

That's why Christ came. That's why Paul preached the Gospel. Five, six times in 1John it talks about eternal life. **Jude 21** talks about everlasting life. It's everywhere. And there are other descriptives and phases, this in the Greek is *zoe aionios*, eternal life- or life that never ends.

And so, I go back to where I started. You're going to live forever. Everybody is. Bodies die but people don't, and you will live forever as you. Annihilation is a lie; soul sleep is a lie; reincarnation is a lie; evolution is a lie- you're not evolving into somebody else and you're not cycling back as somebody else, you're you and you'll be you forever somewhere and you have only two places as possibilities.

So all evangelism, begins here. It is not about this life. It is not about prosperity in this life. It is not about health in this life. It is not about happiness in this life. It is not about healing in this life. It is not about success. It is not about money. It is not about possessions. It is not about freedom from trouble, that's junk-bond evangelism. It's not about that.

That just bilks people out of their souls on false premises. Run from people who sell that, they're false teachers. And so if you're going to do some evangelism, you've got to move people from Jesus is going to fix me here, to Jesus is going to deliver me in the life to come. Until the sinner really understands that, evangelism can't even start.

So the enemy loves to propagate the lie that there is no eternal destiny. You die and you just become protoplasm that turns into

manure and that's it. You fertilize the soil you're in and that's the end. So live it up while you can. This is the dominant lie in our society propagated by evolutionists and humanists and materialists and atheists who refuse to believe in a Creator because if they did, He would be the supreme Judge, and if He was the supreme Judge they're in serious trouble.

So all of us will live forever- either in the Presence of God, or as **2 Thessalonians 1** says, "**Away from His Presence.**" And you will be conscious and all of your faculties heighten to their maximum capability so that you will feel all the pain of hell and all the joys of heaven. So the first step in somebody being saved is that they must first acknowledge the immortality of the soul and agree that eternal life is true. And I pray that you all will ponder what I have said today and may the Lord be good to give you understanding.

Let's pray.