

I want to be a Christian because I don't want to suffer eternal punishment!

➤ Intro:

→ **illus.:** man goes to the doctor, doctor finds out he's got cancer and is going to die in a few weeks

! **Doctor:** "Do you want me to tell you the truth, or tell you a lie?"

! **Man:** "Tell me the truth. If I'm going to die, I want to know it, so I can prepare."

! **This morning:** I'm going to tell you the truth

! **you might want to know, so you can prepare for eternity**

→ There are a lot of reasons people want to be a Christian. In this series, we explore a few of the most common reasons, people want to be Christians.

! **first lesson:** love God

! **last lesson** talked about one reason for wanting to be a Christian - go to **heaven**

! **this lesson** talk about the opposite reason for wanting to be a Christian - not be **punished eternally, go to hell**

! **purpose / convince:** think about hell (eternal punishment), foster an increased desire to faithfully serve God as a Christian so that you will not live with the devil for eternity in hell

➤ #1 Who will live with the devil for eternity - be punished in hell forever?

→ **The people who have not washed their robes will be punished for eternity.** - started using same passage in last lesson — cf. lesson last week

! **Rev. 22:13-15** lesson last week, Jesus' conclusion and invitation - wash robe in the blood of the lamb (Rev. 7:14; baptized, Acts 22:16), outside is hell

→ **Summary:** Who will live with the devil for eternity - be punished in hell forever?

! The people who have **not been washed in the blood of the Lamb, not obeyed** Jesus in baptism, departed from this life as faithful servants of Jesus Christ.

! Question (end of lesson): Are you one of the people who will live with the devil forever in hell - or will you live forever in heaven with God?

➤ #2 Most people will not go to heaven, they'll be punished with the devil for eternity! - sad, can be easily avoided

→ **Last lesson:** There's a cost associated with being a Christian.

! **Summarize - Matt. 16:24-25** take up cross - not always going to be easy

! **Summarize - Matt. 10:34-38** take up cross - Jesus never intended it to be easy

➤ → **Jesus tells us most people will not be willing to pay to cost of being a Christian - most will take the easy road to hell.**

! **Matt. 7:13-14** not easy, few willing to pay cost, few saved but many lost

! **the road** to heaven is narrow, the road to hell is broad

! do what Jesus commands to go to heaven (Heb. 5:9)

! do whatever you want to go to hell

! **saying:** "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

! many people in hell wanted to do the right thing (obey Jesus), but never did

! **Matt. 7:21-23** determining factor - do will of Father, talks the talk, even miracle workers

! **one difference between** one who goes to heaven vs. one who goes to hell — do will of Father

! **stat: surprise at judgment**

! **Gallop Poll** (U.S. News & World Report, Mar. 25, 1991)

- ! **People** who say they have **no religion**:
- ! **61%** say they have an excellent to good chance of going to heaven
- ! **9%** say they are headed to hell

→ **Questions:**

- ! **Are you** going to be different from most people and obey God?
- ! **Are you** going to take the easy way out and follow the crowd — disobey God.
- ! **If you died today**, would you open your eyes in eternity — a place of tortuous punishment, or a place of eternal rest?
- ! **Are you** going to be one of the many people who are surprised at judgment? — think going to heaven, but find out you're going to hell

➤ **#3 If you are not a Christian (or not a faithful Christian) when you die, what will happen after your death?**

→ **The minute you die, you'll be tortured in Hades.** - not get to wait - know your fate immediately (eternal punishment, torment - illus.: if died today)

! **Teaching prior to Jesus' story about the rich man and Lazarus**

! **Story - Lk. 16:1-15** prior to the story of the rich man and Lazarus

! **story of a rich man and his shrewd manager**

! **one lesson:** serve God with your money, if you don't, you won't be saved

! **Pharisees' reaction:**

! **Quote - Lk. 16:14-15**

! **Jesus proceeds to tell them the story of Lazarus and the rich man**, which exemplifies His teaching (vs. 1-15)

! **Jesus tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus**

! **Read - Lk. 16:19-31**

! **vs. 19** rich man, like Pharisees who scoffed at Jesus, spent money on personal luxuries and did not help the poor

! **vs. 20-21** Lazarus, a poor man whom the rich man did not help — did not use his \$ in service to God

! **vs. 22** both men die — **immediately in a place of comfort or torment**

! Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, place of comfort and rest

! **vs. 23-26** rich man tortured, no relief

! **vs. 27-31** to escape torment we must hear God's word and obey

➤ → **When Jesus comes to earth to take the saved to heaven, you won't get to come with Him — miss the reunion of loved ones with the Lord.**

! **Last lesson: 1 Th. 4:16-18** be caught up together with Jesus in the clouds, always be with the Lord

! **2 Th. 1:5-8** if on earth when Jesus returns, you will be punished by His angels with flaming fire

➤ → **Then you will be judged.**

! **2 Cor. 5:10** judged by Christ, after you reject His salvation and refused to obey Him)

! **Ec. 12:13-14** most important thing in life, fear God and keep His commandments, judgment

! **Rev. 20:11-13** pretend there, not a Christian — emotions

➤ → **After the judgement, you will be cast into the lake of fire (hell), to spend eternity with the devil.**

! **Rev. 20:10** Satan cast into hell - after 1,000 years, after Satan released a second time, before the judgment

! **Rev. 20:14-15** people not faithful Christians, cast into hell with devil

! feelings, thought process, if cast into lake of fire against your will

→ **Summary:** If you are not a Christian when you die —

- ! The minute you die, you'll be tortured in Hades.
- ! When Jesus comes to earth to take the saved to heaven, you won't get to come with Him — miss the reunion of loved ones with the Lord.
- ! Then you will be judged.
- ! After the judgement, you will be cast into the lake of fire (hell), to spend eternity with the devil.

➤ #4 What's it going to be like in hell?

→ **stat: most people don't believe hell is a real place** ("Hell Hath No Fury," U.S. News & World Report, 1-31-00)

- ! 64% of Americans believe there is a hell
- ! 25% say there isn't a hell
- ! most respondents think of **hell as "an anguished state of existence" or "an unpleasant solitary confinement" rather than as a real place**

→ **Life in hell will be filled with emotional torture!**

- ! **Matt. 25:30** Jesus, parable talents, sentence of wicked slave to eternal punishment
- ! **outer darkness** (place put for mental torture — isolation — no one like to be alone)
- ! **weeping and gnashing of teeth** (mental anguish)."
- ! anyone who is thrown into hell will be very sorry they did not obey God while living on earth

➤ → **Life in hell will be filled with bodily pain!** — what ever type of body those people will have

- ! **Matt. 13:41-42** Jesus, parable of tares, burnt up
- ! **send forth His angels** (rf. 2 Th. 1:7 flaming fire)
- ! **furnace of fire** (bodily pain)
- ! **there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth** (same place of darkness, mental anguish).
- ! **rf. Rev. 20:10, 14** lake of fire and brimstone
- ! **illus.: punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah** - painful torment in hell: worn not die - emotions, feelings, no relief from suffering
- ! **Mk. 9:43-48** Jesus, teaching to get sin out of our lives of spend eternity in hell, painfully tormented) — **place where the worn does not die**
- ! **illus. - Acts 12:20-26:** Herod eaten alive (from the inside out) by worms
- ! Herod did not give God the glory when the people of Tyre and Sidon cried out, "The voice of a god and not of a man!"
- ! an angel of the Lord struck him, and he was eaten by worms and died
- ! some ancient literature tells us that being eaten alive by worms (inside out) is one of the most painful natural deaths
- ! **illus. painful torment in hell:** worn not die - emotions, feelings, no relief from suffering
- ! e.g., cancer

➤ → **Life in hell will be eternal separation from God!** - most heart wenching thought of punishment

- ! **2 Th. 1:6-10** painful punishment, not be with God, even as we are today, no goodness there
- ! **Will you be punished with flaming fire?**
- ! **Or, will you glorify Jesus and marvel at Him, as His disciple, when you see Him again?**

➤ **Conclusion / inv.:**

→ **Hell is going to be very bad (emotional torture, bodily pain). But each of us have a choice!** - summarize lesson

- ! **We can wash our robes** in the blood of the Lamb, and faithfully serve Jesus (Rev. 7:14; Acts 22:16).
- ! **We can faithful serve Jesus**, taking up our cross and following Him (Rev. 2:10-11).

- ! **If we choose to serve God (last lesson):**
 - ! We will reign with Christ after we die upon this earth.
 - ! We will come back with Christ when He returns to earth. And we'll meet all the saints in the air (reunited with family and friends in the Lord).
 - ! We will be judged faithful to Christ. And the Lord will take us home to heaven.
- ! **If we choose to serve ourselves / Satan (this lesson):**
 - ! We will be tormented in Hades the minute we die. The Lord will never relieve the pain and suffering we'll experience for our sins.
 - ! We will not come back with Christ at the end of time. We will not be united with family and friends who died in the Lord.
 - ! We will be judged unfaithful to the Lord. And we will be cast into the lake of fire to live with Satan forever - eternally separated from God - eternally punished for our sins.

→ **Inv.:**

- ! **Question (end of lesson): Are you one of the people who will live with the devil forever in hell - or will you live forever in heaven with God?**
 - ! not wanting to suffer for eternity is a good reason to obey God — e.g., corporal discipline of children
- ! **What has Jesus commanded us to do, to be saved.**
 - ! **rf. Heb. 5:9** obey
 - ! What has He commanded?
- ! **If we choose not to obey Jesus, we know what's going to happen.**
 - ! **Obey today, or pay tomorrow. Which is it going to be?**
- ! **Jesus invites you to come:**
 - ! **Rev. 22:13-14, 17** Jesus' invitation

Audio sermon notes:

- ! ➤ denotes the place to proceed to the next PowerPoint slide.
- ! All Scriptures are NASB unless otherwise noted.
- ! Sermons recorded 10-16-05, Church of Christ, South Livingston congregation in Lutz, FL.