

“Highway To Hell!”

1. Intro:

- 1.1. A **politician** awoke after an operation and found the curtains in his hospital room drawn. “Why are the curtains closed?” he asked the nurse. “Is it night time already?” - “No,” the nurse replied, “But there’s a **fire** across the street, and we didn’t want you to wake and think the operation was unsuccessful.” 😊
 - 1.1.1. This morning God gives us a glimpse beyond the veil of death.
- 1.2. **A global study reveals an overwhelming wealth gap!**
 - 1.2.1. I was sent this article (by *Todd Cernetic*) that was reported and written by *Thomas Kostigen* for *MarketWatch*.
- 1.3. The 3 richest people in the world: **Bill Gates** (53 bill); **Warren Buffett** (46 bill); & Mexican telecom mogul **Carlos Slim Helú** (37.6 bill) - **have more money than the poorest 48 nations combined.**
- 1.4. The **richest 2%** of the world's population owns **more than half** of the world's household wealth.
 - 1.4.1. **Assets** of just **\$2,200 per adult** place a household in the **top half** of the world's wealthiest.
 - 1.4.2. To be among the **richest 10%** of adults in the world, just **\$61,000** in assets is needed.
 - 1.4.3. If you have **more than \$500,000**, you're part of the **richest 1%**, the United Nations study says.
 - 1.4.3.1. **37 million** people now belong in that category.
- 1.5. Half the world (nearly 3 billion people) live on less than \$2 a day.
- 1.6. The **world's total wealth** is valued at **\$125 trillion.**
 - 1.6.1. Although North America has only **6%** of the world's adult population, it accounts for **34%** of household wealth.
- 1.7. The **gospel** came to the **Greeks** & they turned it into a **Philosophy**,
The **gospel** came to the **Romans** & they turned it into a **System**,
The **gospel** came to the **European's** & they turned it into a **Culture**,
The **gospel** came to **America** & we turned it into a **Business**. (Stewart McAlister)
 - 1.7.1. Shopping & consuming is our #1 past time.
- 1.8. A Bumper sticker read – “Money Talks: Mine Says Goodbye!”
 - 1.8.1. Money is much better at saying goodbye than it is at sticking around.
 - 1.8.2. Maybe you can relate with what the Lord told **Haggai in 1:6**, “**You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes**”.

2. **HIGHWAY TO HELL! (14-18)**

- 2.1. **CONTRASTING VIEWS ABOUT MONEY!** (14,15)
- 2.2. **Recap** – (16:1-13) Jesus was speaking to “**His disciples**” yet he was still dealing with the Pharisees & their greed. (see vs. 14 & 19)
- 2.2.1. **See** the vital connection of vs.13 & vs.14.
- 2.2.1.1. **Their passion...their love of material possessions.**
- 2.2.2. **This is a searching application of the callous Pharisees in their indifference to the poor & outcast!**
- 2.3. They learn the hard way that **life** is like a **green dot** & **eternity** is like a **purple line** extending to the right with an arrow at the end.
- 2.3.1. **Everything on the purple line is dependant on the green dot!**
- 2.4. (14) They **turned up their nose** at Jesus, why?
- 2.4.1. **Because they had a contrasting view of money.**
- 2.4.2. They saw money as **evidence of God’s favor**, not as a **false god threatening to take God’s place.**
- 2.5. **So was Jesus advocating communism & opposing capitalism? No way!** – He certainly opposed those who acquire wealth unjustly, but He didn’t imply that everyone should give everything to the poor & become destitute.
- 2.5.1. **That would simply create another evil...by making the poor rich, & the rich poor.** (The problem wouldn’t be solved)
- 2.5.2. **He simply didn’t want people relying on their wealth for salvation.**
- 2.5.3. Jesus didn’t compel those who followed Him to renounce all their wealth (Zaccheus gave only ½ away, yet was praised by Jesus)
- 2.6. (15) In **Jesus’ reply** he gave them **some statements(15-18) & 1 story(19-31)**
- 2.7. This verse becomes **the key** to the rest as He contrasts their motives in doing things in the sight of **man** or for **God**.
- 2.7.1. **There’s a life that constantly keeps God in view...& one that doesn’t!**
- 2.7.2. **Ps.49** is a great Psalm on this. - **Vs.18,19 sounds like this rich man.**
- 2.7.3. (18b)“**men will praise you**” to God it’s an **abomination** [a stench in His nostrils]
- 2.8. **THE DANGER OF SELF JUSTIFICATION!** (16-18)
- 2.9. The Pharisees prided themselves on their careful observation of **the Law** & often accused Jesus of **disregarding their laws & traditions.**
- 2.9.1. **In vs.17** Jesus affirmed the lasting importance of the **moral truth in the Law.** And, in **vs.18** he gave an example of that.
- 2.10. (16) **The verse does not mean that the authority of the Torah and the Prophets came to an end when John appeared. But since then, in addition to their witness, Good News of the Kingdom of God, has been proclaimed directly, first by John & now by Yeshua, with the result that everyone(every race & kind) is pushing to get in.**¹

¹Stern, D. H. (1992). *Jewish New Testament commentary : A companion volume to the Jewish New Testament.*

- 2.10.1. Parallel Passage Mt.11:12 “from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”
- 2.10.2. The “violent” decision one must make in order to enter the kingdom...
- 2.10.2.1. “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.” Lk.13:24
- 2.10.2.2. Or, “he must deny himself, & take up his cross, & follow me.”
- 2.10.3. If **any man** is coming to the Kingdom, he comes **that way!**
- 2.11. (17) **One tittle** – the smallest stroke of a Hebrew letter.
- 2.12. (18) Yet the moral law would stay unchanged.
- 2.12.1. **Not primarily a teaching on divorce. It is an example demonstrating that the Torah and the Prophets continue to have authoritative force.**²
- 2.12.2. **To divorce and remarry constituted adultery** (Jesus gave the exception to this in mt.5:32 “sexual immorality”; Paul’s/abandonment clause 1 Cor.7)
- 2.12.3. **The Pharisees who took a loose view of money also took a loose view of divorce**(i.e. Hillel, divorce for anything).
- 2.12.4. It was acknowledged that a man should not commit adultery. But if a man wanted another woman, many of the Pharisees condoned divorcing his present wife for no good reason and marrying the desired woman.
- 2.12.4.1. **In this way they thought adultery did not take place.**
- 2.12.4.2. However this was a **perfect example** of justifying themselves in the eyes of **men** but not being justified before **God**.³
- 2.12.5. **Challenge married couples here on the seriousness of divorce!**

3. **THE RICH MAN & LAZARUS! (19-31)**

- 3.1. The day after **James Brown** died I thought it interesting that a billboard which stands along our 15 Frwy in Elsinore, near Main St., reads “**James Brown Live Feb. 8 @ Harrah’s**”. (James 4:13,14)
- 3.2. This section isn’t necessarily to teach about **the future life**, but instead primarily to drive home the awful danger of **making wrong use of this life**, thus leading to eternal misery.⁴
- 3.3. **Outline: 2 Persons; 2 Places; 2 Prayers.**
- 3.4. **2 PERSONS!** (19-21)
- 3.5. Let’s meet the **2 main characters** of our story:
- 3.6. **THE RICH MAN!** (19)
- 3.7. **The Rich man** – or “*Dives*” from the Latin word for rich.
- 3.8. Rich man **fared sumptuously** – brilliance of display, living flamboyantly.

²ibid

³Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary*.

⁴Griffith Thomas; pg.259.

- 3.8.1. Interesting, we aren't told of some "vulgar" sin in his life.
- 3.8.2. He was simply a rich man, self-centered, displaying ostentatiously his wealth.⁵
- 3.8.3. Even the word for Gate(20) meant *a gate of beauty*.
- 3.8.3.1. Only a **thin gate** divided them (later a **great gulf** will).
- 3.9. **THE BEGGAR!** (20,21)
- 3.10. A certain Beggar/Lazarus – means "God has helped".
- 3.11. Listen to the Lord's pathos(*pAy-thaws*) here: beggar, full of sores, laid at the gate, crumbs, top it off with dogs licking sores
- 3.11.1. Note: **dog outside gate** showed more compassion than **man inside**.
- 3.12. **2 PLACES!** (22,23)
- 3.13. No one who is ever in **hell** will be able to say to God, "You put me here," And no one who is in **heaven** will ever be able to say, "I put myself here." - John Hannah
- 3.14. **PARADISE!**
- 3.15. (22) Carried by the angels – this is where that idea comes from.
- 3.15.1. Pearly gates from Rev.21:21.
- 3.16. Abraham's bosom - where there's no more **begging**, no more **sores**, no more **outside the gate**, no more **crumbs** to fend for, no more **hunger!**
- 3.16.1. Note my view! – Paradise, Abraham's bosom, heaven, God's throne are all synonymous terms.
- 3.16.1.1. Luke 23:43 "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in **Paradise**."
- 3.16.1.2. 2 Cor 12:4 Paul was "caught up into **Paradise**".
- 3.16.1.3. Rev 2:7 "To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the **Paradise** of God."
- 3.16.2. Also note, **lifted up his eyes**, **great gulf fixed**.
- 3.17. **PERDITION!**
- 3.18. The other place, the bad place, "*H. E. double toothpicks*", Hell, Hades, the underworld, place of punishment, place of perdition.
- 3.18.1. What hell is, we know not; only this we know, that there is such a **sure and certain place**. - Martin Luther
- 3.19. **The safest road to hell** is the gradual one - the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts. - C. S. Lewis
- 3.20. The beggar **died**, & the rich man **died** & was **buried!**
- 3.20.1. The beggar probably didn't have a decent burial.
- 3.20.2. On the other hand, **what did the rich man's burial cost?**

⁵ G. Campbell Morgan; pg.191

- 3.20.2.1. **Burial costs can get pretty extravagant!** – My dad’s comment when my mom died (Queen of Heaven’s cemetery, hefty cost to be buried under the Virgin Mary’s Statue, “what does she talk for that price?”) [staunch Catholic, but a frugal child of the depression]
- 3.20.3. **But the point...both die!** – The rich man couldn’t bribe the grim reaper!
- 3.20.4. **Ok, so both died...is that it???** – **No, that’s not all!**
- 3.20.4.1. **Death comes to all...but doesn’t end all!**
- 3.21. **2 PRAYERS!** (24-31)
- 3.22. **1st PRAYER – RELIEF FOR HIS BODY!** (24-26)
- 3.23. (24) **Tormented in this flame** – real flames?
- 3.23.1. Well, it seems it is a **real torment**, thus a **real thirst**, which desires **real water**, from a **real finger**, to touch his **real tongue**. So I believe **real flames**.
- 3.23.2. **Is the fire spoken of literal fire?** It is an accepted law of language that **a figure of speech is less intense than the reality**. If “fire” is merely a figurative expression, it must stand for some great reality, and if the reality is more intense than the figure, what an awful thing the punishment symbolized by fire must be. (William Evans)
- 3.24. (25) **The world** measures people by how much they **get**, but **God** measures them by how much they **give**.
- 3.25. The rich man **didn’t** go to Hades because he was **rich**; he went there because **riches were his god**.
- 3.25.1. Abraham was a wealthy man, yet **he** was in paradise.
- 3.25.2. Remember in most countries of the world there is **no middle class**.
- 3.26. **What was this man’s sin?** – It’s clear; he was selfish w/his wealth.
- 3.26.1. **Origen** said, “in fullness of bread & overflowing of abundance he had **not pity** for the man who lay at this gate wasted by sores.” “He never took account of either the suffering of his inferiors or the common rights of humanity.”
- 3.27. **Lessons:**
- 3.28. Money can help send people to **heaven**(9); or it can help send people to **hell**.
- 3.29. Money & possessions are **gifts & trusts** from God.
- 3.29.1. **God loans** us these w/the **expectation** that we’ll **use them to help others**.
- 3.30. **Again, Jesus teaches us about important principles on Stewardship**.
- 3.30.1. As Christians, we are **stewards, not owners** responsible to God for what we do w/His gifts put in our charge!
- 3.31. **2nd PRAYER – REDEMPTION FOR HIS BROTHERS!** (27-31)
- 3.32. They have **Moses & the prophets** – like vs.16.

- 3.33. Won't hear, **though one rise form the dead** – life which is not affected by moral considerations will not be affected by the miraculous.
- 3.33.1. A little later **another Lazarus** died, & Jesus raised him from the dead, & we are told specifically that **these same men tried to kill him.**
- 3.33.2. Then came the day when they **put Jesus to death, & He rose** from the dead, **but** His resurrection from the dead made no appeal to men who lacked moral sense which puts God 1st.
- 3.33.3. Acts 10:40,41 **“Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead”**
- 3.34. Jesus drew the **curtain back** where we were permitted to look behind the veil, past **“he died”** to see, some are **“*carried by angels*”**, others **“*awaking in anguish*”**. **Which? Which will be yours?**
- 3.34.1. A life that constantly keeps **God in view...or** one that doesn't?
- 3.34.2. Is your motive in doing things the sight of **man, or** for **God?**
- 3.35. One day, when Vice President **Calvin Coolidge** was presiding over the Senate, one Senator angrily told another to go “straight to hell.” The offended Senator complained to Coolidge as presiding officer, and **Coolidge** looked up from the book he had been leafing through while listening to the debate. **“I’ve been looking through the rule book,” he said. “you don’t have to go.”**
- 3.35.1. Good News...You don't either!