

# Baptism With The Holy Spirit And Fire

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, Charles Spurgeon is someone that you should know about. Let's see, I've got a picture of him coming up.
- My dooflicky's not working. There he is. Nice looking fellow. Anyway, he was probably like the Billy Graham of his century or generation.
- Some of you might be a little bit too young for Billy Graham. But Charles Spurgeon was world-renowned for the 19th century as a preacher.
- Unlike Billy Graham, he didn't travel around as an evangelist. He was a pastor who kind of stayed in one place in London, England, and was the pastor at Metropolitan Tabernacle there in London, where his congregation ran about 6,000 people, which today we think, well, in a big city like that, that wouldn't be a big deal.
- But back then it was pretty huge to have that many people come to one church at that time. They had a two-month period where they were doing some renovations at the tabernacle, and so they rented out a space at the Agricultural Hall there in London, which was a massive place.
- [ 1 : 3 0 ] Think like a big civic center in a big city. It was a massive place. And for those two months that they were there, their attendance doubled to about 12,000, simply because there were so many people who wouldn't go to a church to hear him speak because they were concerned about that.
- They were afraid of that, if you will. But they'd go to a secular place like an Agricultural Hall to hear him preach. But as they were making the renovations, the temporary renovations in the Agricultural Hall, they were building a platform that he would get on and then preach from that platform.
- And when that was finished, he went to this hall when it was empty, or at least he thought it was empty, and he climbed the steps up the platform and approached the pulpit area of this platform, and he wanted to test the acoustics of the room to see how it would carry, how his voice would carry.
- And basically, he spoke loudly and clearly these words, Behold the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sin of the world.
- Now again, he thought the room was empty, but there was one construction worker who was working at the time high up in the rafters. And when he saw Spurgeon come into the room, he stopped working to watch and see what he was going to do and if he would say anything.
- [ 3 : 0 6 ] And when he heard these words, he felt a huge load of conviction. And there in that moment, he placed his faith in Jesus Christ to save him.
- He got saved there high up in the rafters. And Spurgeon didn't know at the time, didn't find out until weeks later that this had happened, that this had happened.
- And so the impact of just a few words, no elaborate outline, no lengthy sermon.

Imagine if you came today and all I said was, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, you're dismissed. I don't know if that would be a good thing or a bad thing, I think.

But this is what happened. And these words were the words that were originally spoken by John the Baptist. And they were powerful words.

[ 4 : 09 ] And they came from a man who had a unique background. And you have on your notes the impact of John the Baptist. First of all, he was the last Old Testament prophet.

Now, we read about John the Baptist in the New Testament, so that's a little confusing. But because Jesus had not yet suffered and died and rose again from the dead, all of the way that the religious system operated up until that time was still the Old Testament system.

And so John, from that perspective, is the last of the Old Testament prophets. He came on the scene for just a few months. That was it. He didn't have a lengthy ministry.

It was all in preparation of the Messiah. He delivered the undiluted Word of God. He didn't compromise on the Word. He just preached it and proclaimed it and didn't hold back.

He let it go. And then, of course, his main reason for coming, he introduced the Lamb, the Son of God, to the world. And so, again, these words, the impact of his ministry, the impact of the things that he said that we have recorded to us in the Gospels, had a huge impact in Jerusalem and the surrounding area in Israel.

[ 5 : 40 ] The stirring that happened, the fuss. People would come just out of curiosity to see what was going on. And the people, the hardened sinners that were coming.

Last week we looked at tax collectors and soldiers and people who were coming and genuinely repenting of their sin in anticipation of the Messiah.

And so, people began to wonder. Maybe John was the Messiah. He'd be the one. Could he be the Old Testament, the one that the Old Testament told us was to come?

And so, Luke 3.15 tells us here, and this is where we begin our text for today. And by the way, we're only looking at a few verses today, again.

But we're going to dig in today in a way that we don't normally do. And we're going to study, we're going to have a word study on a two-letter word. Are you excited about that?

[ 6 : 48 ] Two-letter word. Let's have some fun. All right. So, as the people were in expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ.

Is this guy that is preaching here on the Jordan River the Christ, the Messiah? John answered them all, saying, I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

Now, there's a couple of things that we note here. First of all, John's humility is on display here, especially when you see this phrase, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.

This is a reference to the slaves in that time, the servants of the house, that one of their responsibilities is when the master would come home, because the streets were dirt streets, because they had no sewage system, because of the conditions of their feet as they came in, they wore sandals.

And so, you would imagine their feet and their sandals would get quite dirty. And so, when they came home, the responsibility of that servant was to take the sandals off his master's feet, and then to wash his feet.

[ 8 : 13 ] You might be familiar with this from John chapter 13, the night that he was betrayed by Judas. The disciples came into the upper room, and Jesus washed their feet, taking the form of a servant.

And then they would also be in charge of taking care of the sandals, making sure that whatever mud or whatever dirt was there, they would clean and wipe off and take care of.

And John is saying, I'm not even worthy to be that servant, to be that lowly servant. And that's who is coming.

And so, when we talk about the things that he stood for, the first thing that we'll talk about is his humility. John was not inflated by all the crowds, and he could have been.

I mean, let's face it, throngs of people came to see him. And this would have been unusual to have these large crowds gather in this way, other than to go to the temple for the sacrificial system there in Jerusalem.

[ 9 : 20 ] People weren't going out to the Jordan River in the wilderness to gather like this. And so, he could have cashed in on some sort of branding opportunity, you know, like some sort of honey and locusts thing, or, I don't know, created a logo.

He could have done all kinds of stuff to kind of take advantage of the people that were coming his way. But that, of course, wasn't John. He was about pointing to the one who was to come.

So, he wasn't inflated by all the crowds, by all the attention, by all the flattery. People coming up and asking, hey, are you the one who is to come?

Back over in the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verse 19. This is the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who are you?

We want to know who you are. He confessed and did not deny, but he confessed, I am not the Christ. And I want you to notice how each of his answers here, he's going to be asked three questions.

[ 10 : 25 ] Each of his answers gets more short. It gets shorter and more bang to the point. I am not the Christ. He did not want that kind of confusion.

They asked him, what then? Are you Elijah? And he said, I am not. Are you the prophet? That's kind of an open-ended thing? And he answered, no.

And so, John made it very clear who he was not. What he did declare, what he represented would be kind of represented in these quotes.

What I am doing is external. He preached repentance and people bowing down and being baptized and things that would reform the outside of a person.

But what Jesus was coming to do would be something that was internal, in the heart, on the inside of a person. What John was doing was temporary. What Jesus would do, what the Lamb would do is eternal, would last forever.

[ 11 : 31 ] And then finally, John would say, I am just a messenger. Wait until you meet the Messiah. The Messiah to come. And then, of course, he would introduce, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And then we look at John's prophecy. John pointed to one who was to come. It wouldn't be long, but it was still forward-looking.

And he did proclaim something about this one who was to come that was different, that was unique about him. John referred to baptisms that were different from his own form of baptism.

Okay? So, back to Luke chapter 3, verse 16. I baptize you with water, he said. And his baptism is not the same as New Testament baptism.

The baptism that you and I received when we trusted Christ as Savior. We were baptized with water, but our baptism was meant to be a picture of his death, burial, and resurrection.

[ 12 : 46 ] John's baptism was simply a baptism of repentance. It's unique. It's not something that was celebrated in the Old Testament. The Old Testament had a form of baptism for Gentiles converting to Judaism.

But his baptism was unique. And then he's talking about then the baptism of Jesus, the coming Messiah. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

And so there's some, in Christianity today, there's some confusion about what he's talking about here. What is this baptism? Or is it baptisms of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of fire?

What is he talking about here? So there's two distinct baptisms that he's talking about. First is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And again, in Christianity and in Christian circles, there's some confusion about what the baptism of the Holy Spirit is. And we're going to discover through the study of a preposition, that two-letter word that I'm talking about.

[ 14 : 02 ] We're going to get some help in discovering what this baptism of the Holy Spirit is. It's something that happens at conversion. In other words, when you are converted to Christ, when you make the decision to trust Christ as your Savior, that's when the baptism of the Holy Spirit happens.

It is not something that we're told to or commanded to seek. And I can't show you a Bible verse that says that, because there isn't a Bible verse that says we are to seek or to search for or to anticipate in any way the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Except for the initial 12 disciples in that exchange period between the Old and the New Testament that we see happening in the beginning of the book of Acts.

We see that transition from Old Testament to New Testament. And so Jesus, and we'll see this, where Jesus tells his disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait for that day when the Holy Spirit would come.

So this happens at conversion. And by the way, there's a whole lot of things that happen. This is just one of multiple things that happen at salvation, the moment that we trust Christ as Savior.

[ 15 : 17 ] There's a whole host of things that happen. But I want to start with this baptism of the Holy Spirit and what this is in our little word study that we're going to do.

So, and to make this fit, I made the text a little bit smaller. Hopefully you can still see it. This is a part of Luke chapter 3, 16. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit according to the English Standard Version.

And you'll notice here that every other version that I'm referring to, until you get to some of the paraphrases, it says exactly the same wording. That he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, whether it's the NIV, the New American Standard, the Christian Standard Bible, or the NET, or the NKJV.

The King James Version is very much the same, except two words are different. The word will is shall, and then the word spirit is ghost. And so one of the issues that King James Version has is it refers to the Holy Spirit as a ghost.

He's not a ghost. He's a spirit. And there's a difference between the two. Okay? So these are all very good translations. But the word with that I've got highlighted there is our little two-letter Greek word, epsilon, new, E-N in English, that can be translated as I-N, in, with, as we see here, or the word by.

[ 16 : 50 ] It could be translated by any one of those three English words. And the context helps us to discover how to define the word, how to translate the word.

And so the word with here makes sense. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. Now, where we get into a little bit of confusion here is when we come over to 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 13.

Again, this is just the first part of the verse. And this is where, in the English Standard Version, it says, for in, there's our little two-letter word, Greek word, epsilon, new.

For in, one spirit, we were all baptized into one body. Now, the English Standard Version, from my perspective, gets this right by using the word in.

But almost every other translation, and I'll show you this, uses the word by. For the NIV, the King James, the New King James, all the same exact wording here.

[ 17 : 51 ] For we were all baptized by one spirit into one body. Changes the meaning of it. Are we baptized in the Holy Spirit, or are we baptized by the Holy Spirit?

And different denominations teach different things, and some don't really cover this issue or address the issue. New American Standard, Christian Standard, Bible, for by one spirit, we were all baptized into one body.

They switched the phrasing a little bit, but they're still saying it's by one spirit. It's interesting that the net translation, the New English translation, does correctly say, for in one spirit, we were all baptized into one body.

Now, I think part of the reason why some of these translations have used the word by is because it sounds, it flows better. Because are we baptized in one spirit into the body of Christ?

Or are we baptized by one spirit into the body of Christ? Sounds a little freer or better, or better to the ear.

[ 19 : 07 ] I don't know. I think it causes confusion. Because we're not baptized by the Holy Spirit. We are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Well, Rich, why do you say that? How do you know that? And the reason we can say that... Oh, and by the way, I want you to notice the word all here.

I'll have it. All of us. What Paul was saying in 1 Corinthians 12 is, if you've trusted Christ as your Savior, you have received this baptism in the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.

Because, again, it's not something that you have to seek. It's something that happens automatically. You may not realize it. You probably didn't. When you trusted Christ as your Savior, you didn't realize all these things that happened to you in that moment.

In the very moment that you trusted Him. But I want you to notice back in Luke 3.16 what it says. I baptize you with water. But He...

[ 20 : 11 ] Who is He? Who is the He he's referring to here? It's talking about Jesus. It's Jesus who does the baptizing with the Holy Spirit.

Or in the Holy Spirit. It's not the Holy Spirit who performs the baptizing, which is kind of how they suggest it by translating our word into the word by.

By the Holy Spirit. No, it's in the Holy Spirit and then into the body of Christ. That's the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That's what He is referring to.

So, again, it's Jesus who does the baptizing. Baptizes us in the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ.

Now, real quick on your notes. I just want to provide the list. We're not even going to look at the verses there. But you have the verses if you want to look them up. I've listed the verses there if you want to look them up.

[ 21 : 12 ] So the Holy Spirit does all of these things at salvation. And you can add the little phrase at the end, By the Spirit. You're brought to life by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit does this.

When we trust Christ as Savior. He brings you to life. You are born again. Brought to a new life. You are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. He takes up residence within you.

Hebrews 3. You become the house of God. 1 Corinthians 6. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit. He seals you. Ephesians chapter 1.

This is the wax. That's the hot wax that's poured on the seal of an envelope. And then it's stamped with, a lot of times the kings in the olden days would wear a ring that had a symbol on it that would represent their kingdom.

And they would put that seal into the hot wax to say, hey, if this seal is broken before the receiver of this letter gets it, you know someone's up to something.

[ 22 : 15 ] And so you are sealed with the Holy Spirit when you trust Christ as Savior. It is literally a down payment. Ephesians 1 talks about this.

It is an earnest payment. The Holy Spirit, an earnest payment is what you pay when you are wanting to buy a house and you put an earnest deposit down on that house that says, I'm coming back for this house and if I don't come back I'm losing the deposit.

Well, Jesus is coming back. So what he has sealed, what he has put on deposit within you, which is himself, the Holy Spirit, he's coming for when he comes again.

And that's his promise. That's his guarantee. The word Ephesians chapter 1 uses that. You are enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

When you open up the text of Scripture, as an unbeliever, the only thing the Holy Spirit there is doing is convicting you of the word to help you to see that you are a sinner, that you need the gospel, that you need Christ as Savior.

[ 23 : 27 ] But once you're a Christian, he now opens up the rest of the word of God so that you can read, so that you can understand, so that you can apply the word of God. You are reconstructed by the Holy Spirit.

Philippians 1.6. And he will complete this work until the day of Christ. And again, he will pray for you.

The Holy Spirit prays for you. Romans chapter 8. When you don't understand what to pray, how to pray, what words to use, he prays for us in groanings that we don't even understand, we don't get.

So all of this is happening. Now there's a big one here in the ministry of the Holy Spirit that we haven't talked about, and that is the filling of the Holy Spirit. And the reason why we leave that out, even though it's possible for us at salvation to be filled with the Holy Spirit, it is also a command given to us in Ephesians 5 to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

That's something that we're told to seek, that we're told to actually just obey, just to be filled with the Holy Spirit, which means to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, just as when someone is drunk, they're controlled by the alcohol.

[ 24 : 46 ] When someone is filled with the Holy Spirit, they're controlled by the Holy Spirit. So he leads the way. He helps us to the words that we're going to say, the decisions that we make.

We follow his lead. We obey his command. We are filled with the Spirit when we do those things. So that's the one that we can think of. And there are more that we haven't talked about.

But just to give you an idea of the ministry of the Holy Spirit with this. And so we go from baptism of the Holy Spirit to baptism with fire.

And I wanted to pause at this point and have you write this word down. Baptism, the meaning of the word baptism, literally means to immerse or immersion.

Baptism is immersion. If the translators of the King James text way back in 1611 had translated the Greek word instead of transliterating it, in other words, they didn't translate the word.

[ 25 : 52 ] They just gave the Greek word an English pronunciation. That's all they did. And the reason was is because it was controversial. You had these splinter groups that were teaching, no, you can't just be sprinkled.

You have to be immersed because that's the meaning of the word. But the church at the time, the Church of England, as well as the Catholic Church, they were sprinkling babies. And so they couldn't translate the word.

Otherwise, they'd have to start dunking babies. And they didn't want to do that. So they said, let's translate, let's just transliterate the word. And let's call it immersion.

Why are we talking about that now? Because when we talk about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and baptism with fire, you have to understand the translation of the word.

So immersion, we're not baptized by immersion or by the Holy Spirit. We're baptized by Christ, immersed in the Holy Spirit.

[ 26 : 52 ] He envelops us. He invades us. He indwells us. However you want to say that. We're covered up completely, immersed, completely immersed by the Holy Spirit. And when it comes to baptism with fire, understand it the same way.

When we're baptized or immersed in fire, we are completely enveloped in fire. But the question becomes, okay, just what is this baptism with fire?

Because there's confusion about this as well. There are commentators, there are denominations that would put these two together. Baptism with the Holy Spirit, baptism with fire as being kind of one event.

That when you're baptized by the Holy Spirit, you're also baptized with fire. And it could mean a couple of different things. And so we'll talk about the couple of things that it could mean.

And then we'll talk about what I think John says it is. All right. So here's the first possibility. Is this a reference? Is baptism with fire or baptism by fire?

[ 28 : 01 ] Is this a reference to a refining fire? The fire of the refiner? And take a look at a couple of passages where it talks about a refining fire.

And look at what this means. Okay. First from the Old Testament. So this is actually, and I would say no, it's not a designation of refining fire.

From Malachi chapter 3, verse 3. Understand the context of this. This is given to describe Jews during the tribulation who come to faith in Christ.

What he's doing, what God is doing during the tribulation is to restore Israel. He's going to complete his promise to Israel. He's going to restore the nation of Israel. Those who get saved during the tribulation will be brought into the kingdom and God will fulfill all of his promises to them.

But one of the things that they will go through is this. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver. He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver.

[ 29 : 14 ] So he's talking about that time at the end of the tribulation when they will be refined, when Israel would be refined by fire, tested by fire.

You and I as New Testament saints, we also will face something similar, but it will be at a different time. So 1 Corinthians 3, verse 13.

Paul here is talking about a judgment, the judgment seat of Christ that New Testament believers, the church, you and I, will face at the end of this age, at the end of the church age, after he calls the church home in the rapture.

There will be this judgment seat of Christ where you and I will stand before the Lord and be judged not for salvation, not to answer for your sins.

They were all answered for at the cross. But instead, it is a judgment to see if your service to the Lord is worthy of reward.

[ 30 : 23 ] And so all of your service to the Lord, all those opportunities that you have had in your lifetime, did you serve the Lord with sincerity, with gladness? Did you serve the Lord instead out of a sense of duty, out of a sense of obligation, out of a sense of people are watching me, that kind of thing.

And so each one's work will become manifest or made clear for the day. That phrase, the day, is a reference to all the end times events, beginning with the end of the church age, the beginning of the tribulation, all the way through the kingdom of Christ.

For that day, that's why it's capitalized there, will disclose it because it will be revealed by fire. And the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss.

And so is your work, is it gold, silver, and precious stone that would survive fire? Or is it wood, hay, or straw, or stubble that would be burned up?

[ 31 : 39 ] Is it worthless? So if anyone's work is burned up, it's not talking about salvation. It's just talking about reward. He will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

In other words, on this judgment seat day, if your work does not pass the test of the fire, you'll be strolling, you know, into heaven, smelling like smoke.

You know, you're in, but there's no reward for you. And so that's what he is describing here in this refiner's fire.

And then some people would say, well, is it possibly this fire God's empowerment or anointing? And again, I would say, no, it's not.

In this sense, that is the role that the Holy Spirit plays in our lives. The Holy Spirit is the one who empowers us. The Holy Spirit is the one who anoints us.

[ 32 : 52 ] And again, that's a part of this baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's different. It operated differently in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, Old Testament saints were not indwelt by or filled by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was given to individuals for specific tasks. So David was anointed to be king. Moses was anointed to lead the people out of Israel.

Specific tasks or specific things that God commanded them to do, the Holy Spirit would come upon them to give them the power, the anointing to do whatever that task was.

It's different for us believers. When David sinned with Bathsheba and he began to pray in repentance after he was confronted by Nathan, he prayed and he said to the Lord, take not your Holy Spirit from me.

That was a real possibility for David. It is not for us. That is not a prayer that we ever have to pray. Because he promised to us that he would never leave us or forsake us.

[ 34 : 03 ] So we never have to pray, Lord, please don't take your Holy Spirit from us. So while we can use David's prayers of repentance in Psalm 32 and Psalm 51, there's parts of those prayers that don't apply to us.

And specifically, Lord, take, do not take your Holy Spirit from me. It's not something that we have to be concerned with. Now, we talk about this.



Acts chapter 1, verse 5. This is Jesus telling his disciples to go to Jerusalem and wait, wait for the first coming of the Holy Spirit, the coming of the Holy Spirit, where they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit in that moment.

For John baptized with water, Jesus said to them, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit, not many days from now. Well, where's the fire? Why doesn't he say you'll be baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire?

Because they're two different baptisms. There's a baptism of the Holy Spirit. And there's a baptism of fire. They would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

[ 35 : 17 ] Thank God. Thank God. That's the baptism that you and I receive. We don't receive the baptism of fire. And I'll show you who that is for in just a moment.

But you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. All right. Where did my stuff go? There it is.

Okay. I missed. I'm skipping. I'm skipping around. So he tells them to go to Jerusalem.

Oh, wait a minute. I missed this verse originally. This is verse four. And while they were staying and while staying with them, Jesus ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the father, which he said, you heard from me for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Not many days from now. And then in Acts chapter two, we see an instance of fire. And this is where people who talk about the baptism with fire might say, this is where this comes in.

[ 36 : 33 ] I'm going to show you why it's not. And divided tongues as of fire, not fire, not immersion.

It's something that is not fire. It's something that is as of fire. It's a simile as a fire, like a fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

So if you look at their heads, it looks like something like fire is kind of dancing over their heads as the Holy Spirit descends on them. And as they begin to speak with other tongues, this is not baptism with fire.

It's not immersion with fire. So it's, it's two different things that are happening here. This is a representation of the presence of God.

You see this in the Old Testament, a representation of fire representing God. Fire represents the presence of God in the midst of Israel, in the midst of the people.

[ 37 : 34 ] And so you see something similar happening here. Or, here's, here's, here's the, here's, here's where I think where we're going. Or is John referring to the health of judgment?

And, uh, this is what I think it is. This is what I think baptism with fire is. Uh, you don't hear too many preachers today talking about this.

Hellfire and brimstone and I got to get my three piece suit out and pound on the pulpit and scream. Right? Now, you don't have to say it that way.

You don't have to dress up in a three piece suit and use a King James Bible and, uh, but this is what the scripture teaches. And you might ask me, well, Rich, why are you so confident that this is what John is talking about?

When he talks about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire, how do you know that's what John is talking about? The reason I know that is I know, I know what comes next in the text.

[ 38 : 42 ] You haven't seen it yet. Okay. Verse 17 follows verse 16. So again, when we're Bible students, we want to read passages like this in the context that they were given, which helps us to understand the theology of how they work, the doctrinal statement of how they work.

So when John says, the guy who's coming after me, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. He goes right into verse 18.

His winnowing fork is in his hand. To clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn. But the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

This is what it means to be immersed in fire. This is what hell and eventually the lake of fire will be. To be immersed completely by a fire that will not consume you, will not be quenched, and you will exist in eternity in that fire.

That's hard to say. It's hard to hear. But that is, that is the gospel.

[ 40 : 06 ] This is what the gospel teaches. This is what the gospel teaches. And then John goes on.

Last verse, verse 18. John's preaching, what he stood for, is the gospel itself. So with many other exhortations, he preached good news, or the gospel, to the people.

And so his preaching, John declared the simple gospel, and that gospel also contains bad news. Matter of fact, the gospel starts with bad news.

You have to start with bad news. You have to start with people being dead in their trespasses and sins. You have to start with people understanding their own wickedness and their own sinfulness for them to understand their need to be saved.

If I'm not wicked and sinful and condemned to hell already, what do I need to be saved from? What's the saving for?

[ 41 : 17 ] But the truth is, we are already condemned. We don't stand in a neutral position with God.

When he sees us, he sees us as already dead in our trespasses and sins, because that is what we are. And then, when the Holy Spirit awakens us, and we respond to the gospel, then we cross over.

John 5, 24, we cross over from death into life. From hell to heaven. And we're given new life, and brought into the family, and promise of eternity with him in heaven.

But you have to know that this language of hell is a part of the picture. Daniel chapter 7, verse 9. This is from the Old Testament.

I want to give you a picture of Old and New Testament. As I looked, thrones were placed. The Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was white, white as snow, the hair of his head like pure wool.

[ 42 : 27 ] His throne was fiery flames. Its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came out from before him. A thousand thousands served him.

That's 10,000. In the ancient world, 10,000 was their biggest number. I don't know what our biggest number is. It goes way too high for my mind to comprehend.

I think I can understand trillion, sort of. Maybe billion. Probably not even million. But these are numbers that get tossed around, like in Washington, D.C.

and, you know, budget deficits and, you know, all of that kind of stuff. And, man, that's... Too many to count.

Too much to count. Too much to even comprehend. In their idea, their minds, 10,000 was that number. Too much. He said a thousand thousands served him and 10,000 times 10,000 stood before him.

[ 43 : 31 ] Huh. How many? A lot. I don't even know what 10,000 times 10,000 is. Anybody got a calculator?

The court sat in judgment and the books were open. This is a scene talking about the great white throne judgment that is finished all the way at the end of the book.

Revelation chapter 20 where we see the same kind of language. Daniel, the prophet, speaks of it. Daniel chapter 7 here. The apostle John writes of it.

Revelation 20. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence, earth and sky fled away and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne and the books were opened.

Then another book was opened which was the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done. There's two books.

[ 44 : 31 ] There's a book of all your deeds, all your works, all that you've done that you would have considered positive, good, righteous. The other book is the book of life and whether your name was found in the book of life.

And anyone who stands at this great white throne, your name is not in this book. This is not the judgment that you want to stand before the Lord for. You want to stand before the Lord at the judgment seat of Christ.

It's a different judgment. You will never, as a believer in Jesus Christ, you will not ever have the books opened and you have to answer for your sin.

But they will. The books were opened and they will be judged according to their works. And their name will not be found in the book of life.

And every last one will fail. And every last one, verse 15, if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

[ 45 : 45 ] Oh, I don't, Rich, I don't like that language. I think church ought to be all positive. We ought to be like Jesus and just preach positive messages.

Let me show you what Jesus preached. Matthew 25. This is prophecy now. Jesus speaking this prophecy. And in this prophecy, this is the parable of the sheep and the goats.

The end of Matthew 25. Three parables there. This is talking about judgment that happens at the end of the tribulation over the nation of Israel. And he will say to those on his left, religious people, religious people who thought they were doing good things, but they never trusted Christ.

Depart from me, you cursed. And to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Did you know that the lake of fire, hell, the lake of fire was not meant for us?

Was prepared for the devil and his demons. we sinned. We sinned. We sinned. We sinned. We sinned.

[ 47 : 15 ] And so now that's the eternal place for all those who are without Christ. And Jesus spoke of hell more than he spoke of heaven.

again, oh, oh, oh, oh. Again, we don't, we don't like, I don't like to hear this.

I don't like to talk about this. But that's one of the, the blessings of preaching through the Bible is that you can't avoid subjects like this. Right? Not that I would because how terrible, how, how much of a travesty would it be for me as a preacher to never talk about what the scriptures do talk about.

So Jesus talked about it and it's in a sense a command for us to also talk about it. You and I, this is from Acts chapter 10. Luke is, is recording what's, what's spoken here.

And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.

[ 48 : 30 ] Jesus. You know, we, we, we, well, a lot of folks in the world, like, like the Jesus in the manger, the baby Jesus.

And, and that's kind of how they think of him kind of in a permanent state of baby Jesus in the manger because he's not threatening. But when Jesus comes again, he's coming as king, he's coming as judge.

And if you don't belong to him, it is not good.

And so we preach Jesus. Again, Luke, there is salvation in no one else. He's talking about Jesus.

There's salvation in no one else. For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

[ 49 : 33 ] The whole idea that, oh, as long as you're sincere, I mean, if you're a sincere Buddhist or a sincere Muslim or a sincere Hindu Hindu or a sincere Mormon or a sincere Catholic or a sincere Baptist or pick a denomination.

It's not about that. Have you trusted your life to Jesus Christ and him alone? Not your works, not any other name.

It is Jesus alone. And that is the message we must declare. We must declare the bad news.

And when you understand the bad news, the good news, awfully good news. It's incredible news.

There's a part of me that wants to ask you, so I will. Are any of you scared by that message of hellfire and damnation and eternity?

[ 50 : 52 ] There's a sense where it ought to terrify us because that's reality. And maybe you, sitting here today, have trusted Christ as your Savior.

So for you personally, not an issue. You don't have to be worried about that. You don't have to be scared about that for you. Do you have any loved ones who don't know Christ?

Do you have any friends, kids, grandchildren, parents, co-workers, neighbors?

Are there people that this is what's awaiting them? Or maybe you just don't know? So it's not just about yourself.

It's about this commission that we have also been given to share this good news with those who need to hear it. And so maybe today as you're sitting here or as you're watching, you would say, well, yes, Rich, I'm saved.

[ 52 : 09 ] I know where I'm going when I die. I'll be in heaven. I don't have to worry about that hellfire damnation stuff.

And that's great. Praise the Lord for that. But are all of your friends, are all of your family also? Do you want to see them die, enter eternity without Christ?

My prayer is that not only would you have it settled in your own heart, but it would also be settled in your heart that you and I, we have a responsibility to share this good news.

It's really good news. But people, in order to grasp the good news, they first need to hear the bad.

Ten Commandments starts that simply. How are you doing with the Ten Commandments? Not so good. Well then, you need a Savior.

[ 53 : 33 ] You need a Savior. Christ Jesus, the Lord. Let's pray. Lord, we say thank you for the good news that you have come to take away our sin.

and you've done that by paying the ultimate penalty that you did not deserve. You did not earn this death, this suffering.

You lived a perfect and sinless life in every way. Something that we can't even understand. but we know that you lived a perfect and sinless life and then you willingly chose to go to the cross and to suffer all of the torment and the pain, the torture.

Willingly allowed these soldiers to nail you to a cross. where you paid the penalty.

You shed your blood to pay the penalty for all of our sin, past, present, and future, all paid for at the cross.

- [ 55 : 02 ] And all that we must do is to recognize our sin, recognize our hopelessness, our helplessness without you.
- And then to simply trust. To trust you as Lord and Savior. To trust you with my life. all of my past sin paid for. All of my sin of today paid for.
- All of my sin of my future paid for. And I trust you with my life, my eternity. I trust you. There is no other plan.
- There is no other hope. There is no other name. It is only through your name, the name of our beloved Savior, Jesus Christ.
- [ 56 : 11 ] Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Messiah, who rose again from the dead to prove he is the Lord and Savior of all.
- so if you're here today and you've not made that decision to trust him as Savior, just make that your own declaration here today right where you're sitting.
- Just in your heart, Lord, I trust you. You are mine. You are my Savior. Thank you, Lord, for saving me from my sin, for saving me from hell.
- all that awaits those who are without Christ. Thank you for making me a part of your family. Thank you for the promise of heaven with you.
- And I pray that all those of us who have made that decision, whether that's today or whether it's a few months ago, a few years, decades ago, whenever that was, that today we would recognize the need that all of us have to share the good news with those who need to hear it.
- [ 57 : 36 ] So many people are entering eternity without Christ. And what a tragedy. So Lord, we love you and we praise you.
- We ask it all in Jesus' name because he is our savior. He is our mediator. and we love you. Amen.
- All right. heard