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# BIBLE TALK

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This week the question is: **Is heaven on sale 50% off?**

What I mean by this is: ***Have the requirements to go to heaven been lowered to the point that men and women really don't have to do anything to go to heaven?***

In the days of Jesus and the apostles, going to heaven was expensive. Listen to the following story:

## **Matthew 19:16-25**

<sup>16</sup> Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

<sup>17</sup> So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

<sup>18</sup> He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,'

<sup>19</sup> 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

<sup>20</sup> The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

<sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

<sup>23</sup> Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>24</sup> And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

<sup>25</sup> When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

Jesus was not teaching the "health and wealth" gospel which television evangelists preach.

Jesus did not teach the "come as you are" gospel which modern mega-churches preach.

Jesus preached something rather amazing. He preached that going to heaven was not so easy. He preached that going to heaven required sacrifice. It required putting God first.

### **Matthew 6:33**

<sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Jesus taught that not many people would make it to heaven:

### **Matthew 7:13-14**

<sup>13</sup> "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

<sup>14</sup> Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Many churches try to convince people that heaven is on sale for a great discount. Much like department stores which put on sales, lowering the prices of goods up to 50% off or even more.

In the early 1500's John Tetzel, a Dominican friar in the Catholic Church, became the chief advocator of indulgences. Here is a portion of the sermon he would preach when he came into a town:

"Indulgences are the most precious and most noble of God's gifts. ... Come and I will give you letters, all properly sealed, by which even the sins you intend to commit may be pardoned. I would not change my privileges for those of Saint Peter in heaven; for I have saved more souls by my indulgences than the apostle by his sermons. There is no sin so great that an indulgence can not remit; and even if one ... had offered violence to the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, let him pay – only let him pay well, and all will be forgiven him. ...

"But more than this, indulgences avail not only for the living, but for the dead. ... Now you can ransom so many souls! Stiff-necked and thoughtless man! With twelve groats you can deliver your father from purgatory, and you are ungrateful enough not to save him! I shall be justified in the day of judgment; but – you will be punished so much the more severely for having neglected so great salvation. I declare to you, though you should have but a single coat, you should strip it off and sell it, in order to obtain this grace. The Lord our God no longer reigns. He has resigned all power to the pope."

(J. W. Shepherd *The Church, The Falling Away, And The Restoration*, pp. 69-70)

Indulgences were simply licenses to commit sin. If you wanted to commit adultery, just purchase an indulgence and you are already forgiven before you even commit the sin. If you want to kill someone, same thing. Just purchase an indulgence and you are forgiven before you even murder someone.

In much the same way, churches across America are putting heaven on sale at 50% off. According to the modern-gospel of indulgence, no one really has to give up anything to go to heaven. Heaven is on sale – supposedly.

- If you want to be homosexual – no problem.
- If you want to live out-of-wedlock with your boyfriend or girlfriend, no problem.
- If someone wants to break their marriage vows, no problem.
- If a store owner wants to traffic in pornography or alcohol, no problem.

Morals and morality are unimportant in the preaching of many denominations today – for if the old-fashioned preaching of self-control and moral responsibility were preached and required ... whoa ... members would leave the flock and find pasture elsewhere.

Furthermore, heaven is on sale when it comes to doctrine.

- If a woman wishes to be a preacher in spite of 1 Cor 14:35 – no problem, she can preach.
- If a church wants to have rock music in spite of Rev 22:18 – no problem, they can have rock music.
- If a church wants to offer coffee and donuts in spite of 1 Cor 11:34 – no problem, they serve coffee and donuts.

After all, heaven is on sale 50% off. God's word supposedly doesn't mean what it says. If anyone suggests that men really ought to go by scripture, we will simply scream "legalism" and that will entitle us to ignore the law of God and continue on doing what we wanted all along. Rather than man being subject to God's law, God's law is subject to man.

This is the thinking of so many today.

But friend, we in the church of Christ are here to encourage people to reconsider all this non-sense which is being offered in the name of religion. Heaven is not "*on sale 50% off.*" Heaven requires just as much sacrifice today as it did in the days of Jesus and the apostles.

### **Galatians 6:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.  
<sup>8</sup> For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

### **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,  
<sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

The standards to go to heaven have not been lowered. God is the One who determines who will go to heaven – not preachers and churches who lower standards.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website [www.WillOfTheLord.com](http://www.WillOfTheLord.com). There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

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