

Check It Out Tracts

RICH RULER

CHECK IT OUT

by John W. White

The purpose of this tract is to show that the Rich Ruler was not asking how to be saved, but how he could have a better inheritance in the Kingdom of heaven. The counsel the Lord gave to this man is similar to the counsel that Paul gave Timothy to give to the rich. **1 Timothy 6:17-19** "Charge them that are **rich in this world**, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; **18**. That they **do good**, that they be **rich in good works**, ready to **distribute**, willing to **communicate**; **19**. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the **time to come**, **that they may lay hold on eternal life.**"

THE QUESTION

Matthew 19:16 "...said unto him, Good Master, **what good thing shall I do**, that I may have **eternal life?**" **Mark 10:17** "...and asked him, Good Master, **what shall I do** that I may **inherit eternal life?**" **Luke 18:18** "...asked him, saying, Good Master, **what shall I do** to **inherit eternal life?**"

"WHAT SHALL I DO?"

The first occurrence of the word *poiēw* is found in **Matthew 1:24** "Then Joseph ... **did** as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:" **Matthew 8:9** "For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say ... to my servant, **Do** this, and he **doeth it.**" The word *poiēw* has to do with **works** and the Lord told him what he must **do** to have an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven. The Lord did not tell him to believe, but gave him a list of things to **do** to have an inheritance. Our **inheritance** will be on the basis of **works**. **Colossians 3:23-24** "And whatsoever ye **do** [*poiēw*], **do** [*ejgazomai*, labor, work] *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; **24**. Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the **reward of the inheritance**: for ye **serve** the Lord Christ."

"INHERIT"

This man was assured of an earthly inheritance because he was a Jew. God had promised the land to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and to their saved descendants. In the Law, given by Moses, provision was made that every family would have an inheritance. **Genesis 28:4** "And give thee [Jacob] the blessing of Abraham, **to thee**, and to **thy seed** with thee; that thou mayest **inherit the land** wherein thou art a stranger, which **God gave** unto **Abraham.**" The phrase *thy seed* and the word *inherit* indicate that this is a family matter.

"ETERNAL"

What is the meaning of the words *aijw̄n* and *aijw̄niov*? According to *Lexical Aids For Students of New Testament Greek*, by Bruce M. Metzger, page 11, the root meaning of the word *aijw̄n* is "an age (aeon)". This is not eternity as understood by the English language, but an undefined period of time. The word *aijw̄n* is used in **Matthew 28:20** "... lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the **end** [*suntel eiav*] of the **world** [*aijw̄n*] Amen." The use of *aijw̄n* in this context indicates that **there is an end to this age**. In **Hebrews 9:26** "... since the foundation of the **world** [*kosmov*]: but now once in the **end** of the **world** [*aijw̄n*] which is plural, **ages**] hath he appeared to put away

Check It Out Tracts

sin by the sacrifice of himself.” From **Genesis 1:1** until **John 19:30** there has been more than one age. From the Greek mind the concept of *eternity* or *eternal* is found in **Galatians 1:5** “To whom be glory **for ever and ever**.” The phrase “**for ever and ever**” is: “ειj touj αιjwvav twv αιjwvwn.” Both words **ever**, αιjwvav, are **plural** and should be translated **ages**. Translation of this phrase should be *for the ages of the ages*. The phrase eternal life is a reference to the coming millennial age when Jesus Christ will rule and reign for 1,000 years. This is not salvation, because eternal life is gained by good works and salvation is not. **Romans 2:7** “**To them** who by patient continuance **in well doing seek for** glory and honour and immortality [incorruption], **eternal life**.” **Galatians 6:8-9** “For he that **soweth** to his flesh shall of the flesh **reap corruption**; but he that **soweth** to the Spirit shall of the Spirit **reap life everlasting** [the opposite of corruption, **incorruption**]. 9. And let us not be weary in **well doing**: for in due season we shall **reap** [eternal life, incorruption], if we faint not.” When we are born from above, John 3:3, we are saved now but will not enter into eternal life until the age to come. **Mark 10:30** “...and in the **world** [age, αιjwvav] to **come** [the one coming, a present participle] **eternal** [agelasting, αιjwvwnios] life.” Eternal life, Biblically speaking, is not something that you have now but will enter into in the coming millennial age.

“LIFE”

Ephesians 2:1 “And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins:” This verse lets us know that we are dead because of sin. **John 3:3** “Jesus answered and said unto him, ..., Except a man be **born again**, he cannot **see** the **kingdom of God**.” Being born from above provides us with life. Until we are born from above we are dead in trespasses and sins. If we have life then we will **see** the kingdom of God. Jesus is telling this man how to **enter into life** and not how to have life or be born again. Notice in **Matthew 19:17** “... if thou wilt **enter into life**, keep the commandments.” The word *enter* is the Greek word ειjσεjcomai, a compound word including: ειj meaning **into**, plus ejcomai meaning to **come**. Enter into life in context is the same as entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. Again entering into the kingdom and seeing the kingdom are not the same thing. **Matthew 19:23-24** “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly **enter** [ειjσεjcomai] into the kingdom of heaven. 24. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel **to go** [ειjσεjcomai] through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to **enter** [ειjσεjcomai] into the kingdom of God.” Who “...shall **enter into** the **kingdom of heaven**; but he that **doeth** [poi ew] **the will of my Father** ...” **Matthew 7:21** The concept of entering is revealed in **Matthew 26:41** “Watch and pray, that ye **enter** [ειjσεjcomai] not into temptation...” This does not mean if we watch and pray that we will not be tempted. This verse is telling us if we watch and pray we will not participate or actively take part in what we are tempted to do. To enter into life or the kingdom of the heavens is to become active participants in the life of the kingdom as will the apostles, as shown in **Matthew 19:28** “And Jesus said unto them... That ye which have **followed** me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the **throne** of his glory, **ye also** shall sit upon twelve **thrones**, **judging** the twelve tribes of Israel.” This will not take place until the **age** [αιjwvav] to come.

“KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS”

The first thing one must do to have a better inheritance or enter into life is **Matthew 19:17** “...if thou wilt enter into life, **keep the commandments**.” The rich ruler replied “... **All these things have I kept** from my youth up...” **Matthew 19:20** There is no contest to this statement. By keeping the commandments this man was just, as in the case of Zackarias and Elisabeth in

Check It Out Tracts

Luke 1:6 “And they were both **righteous** [*dikaiou*, **just**] before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” Being just is not enough if one wants to **enter** into life or the kingdom of heaven.

“IF THOU WILT BE PERFECT”

Matthew 19:21 “...If thou wilt be **perfect**, go *and* sell that thou hast, and **give to the poor..**” The word perfect, *teleiōv*, is also translated **of full age**. This was the prayer of Epaphras in **Colossians 4:12** “Epaphras, who is *one* of you, ... always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand **perfect** and **complete** in all the **will of God.**” **Hebrews 5:14** “But **strong meat** belongeth to them that are **of full age...**” For someone to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven he must be faithful and spiritually mature. **Matthew 25:21** “Well done, ... good and **faithful** servant....I will make thee **ruler....**”

“SELL THAT THOU HAST”

Matthew 19:21 “...If thou wilt be **perfect**, go *and* **sell that thou hast**, and give to the poor..” In **Matthew 19:22** “...he had great possessions.” Having great possessions seem to indicate he owned many parcels of land as in **Acts 2:45** “And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.” and **Acts 5:1** “...Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,” **Acts 5:3** “...Satan filled thine heart ... to keep back *part* of the price of the **land?**” Owning land brings in revenue and security. Selling your possessions is to lose your security, and self sufficiency. If he had done this then he would be one of the poor. **James 2:5** “...the **poor** of this world **rich in faith**, and **heirs** of the **kingdom** which he hath promised to them that **love** him?” When you have nothing you learn to trust Him for everything.

“GIVE TO THE POOR”

You need cash in hand to be “... **rich in good works, ready to distribute, ...**” **1 Timothy 6:18** Those who have money must be “...willing to **communicate**; 19. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they **may lay hold on eternal life.**” **1 Timothy 6:18-19**

“HAVE TREASURE IN HEAVEN”

Matthew 19:21 “...and thou shalt have treasure in heaven...” **Matthew 6:1** “Take heed that ye do not your **alms** before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no **reward** of your Father which is in **heaven.**” Then in the regeneration when “...the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and **then he shall reward every man according to his works.**” **Matthew 16:27**

“COME FOLLOW ME”

This phrase in Matthew 19:21 and with the variation in **Mark 10:21** “...come, take up the cross, and follow me.” helps us to see what it takes to follow the Lord. **Matthew 4:19** “**Follow me**, and I will make you **fishers** of men.” This is what he told his disciples to do and become. **Matthew 16:24-25** “Then said Jesus unto his **disciples**, If any *man* will **come after** me, let him **deny himself**, and take up his **cross**, and **follow me**. 25. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will **lose his life** for my sake shall find it.” The Lord was asking the Rich Ruler to lose his life for His sake then when “..Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” **Matthew 16:27**

Check It Out Tracts

“HE WENT AWAY SORROWFUL”

Matthew 19:22 “But when the young man heard that saying, **he went away sorrowful**: for he had great possessions.” This is a good example of how riches can choke the Word. **Mark 4:19** “...the deceitfulness of **riches**, and the lusts of other **things** entering in, **choke the word**, and it becometh unfruitful.” **Revelation 3:17** “Because thou sayest, I am **rich**, and increased with goods, and have **need of nothing**; and knowest not that thou art **wretched**, and **miserable**, and **poor**, and **blind**, and **naked**.” **Luke 12:21** “So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not **rich** toward God.” **1 Timothy 6:9** “But they that will be **rich** fall into temptation and a **snare**, and *into* many **foolish** and **hurtful** lusts, which **drown** men in destruction and perdition.”

“ONE THING THOU LACKEST”

Mark 10:21 “Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, **One thing thou lackest...**” This phrase confirms to us that **he was just** because he had kept the Law. The one thing that he could not bring himself to do was to live by faith. **Hebrews 10:38** “Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” When you sell all that you have you learn to become “...**rich in faith**, and **heirs of the kingdom** which he hath **promised** to them that **love** (obey) him?” **James 2:5**. Abraham’s nephew Lot is a picture or type of this Rich Ruler. **2 Peter 2:7** “And delivered **just Lot**, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:” Lot was just but he did not live by faith. **2 Corinthians 5:7** “(For we walk by **faith**, not by **sight**:)” Lot lived by sight. **Genesis 13:10** “And Lot lifted up his **eyes**, and **beheld** all the plain of Jordan, **that** it was well watered every where...” In the end Lot and his family did not have an inheritance in the land flowing with milk and honey but as shown in **Deuteronomy 2:8-9** “And when we passed by from our **brethren** the children of Esau ...and passed by the way of the wilderness of **Moab**. 9. And the LORD said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, ...for I will not give thee of their land... because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot *for* a possession.” There is not a single testimony that Lot live by faith. Lot is not mentioned in Hebrews 11 yet Abraham is mentioned more than once.

CONCLUSION

There are those who **want** a better inheritance but are not willing to do what is required. Those who lived by faith in **Hebrews 11:13** “These all died **in faith**, not having received the promises, but **having seen** them afar off, and were **persuaded** of *them*, and **embraced** *them*, and **confessed** that they were **strangers** and **pilgrims** on the earth.” **Hebrews 11:16** “...they desire a better *country*, that is, an **heavenly**: wherefore **God is not ashamed to be called their God**: for he hath prepared for them a **city**.” **Revelation 21:7** “He that **overcometh** shall **inherit** all things; and **I will be his God**, and he shall be **my son**.” The Rich Ruler was not willing to pay the price here on earth to be an overcomer and release his earthly possessions and become a pilgrim and a stranger here on the earth that he might enter into that heavenly city. **Hebrews 11:6** “But without **faith** *it is impossible* to **please** *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” You have to be just before you can live by faith. The Rich Ruler was just in that keeping the Law was not one of the things that he lacked. What he lacked was a lifestyle of faith.

CHECK IT OUT TRACTS

2210 Lincoln St. NE; Minneapolis, MN 55418

jwwhite@winternet.com

<http://winternet.com/~jwwhite/>