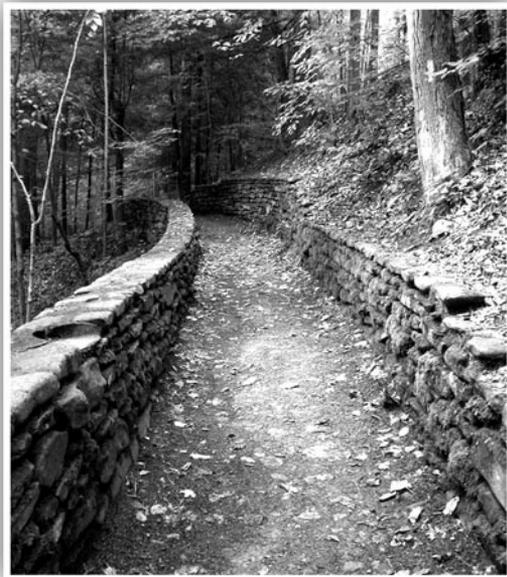


**A Topical Bible Study  
for Ages Ten & Older**

# *The Three Destinies of Man*



Have you ever wondered what will happen to all of the people who have ever died? We may even ask this question about family members or friends we have loved and lost to the great enemy—death. Many people ask this question, especially after tragic events in our day such as hurricanes, earthquakes and terrorist attacks. It is not until a tragedy happens that most people start to ask serious questions like these... *“Where are my loved ones who have died? Is death the end for them or is there really a heaven? What happens to the billions of people who have never heard of Christ? Is what some Christians say true that these will go to hell?”*

In answer to such questions, we will learn that God has illustrated in the Scriptures *three different paths* which lead to *three different destinies of mankind*. This study booklet will show that God is so merciful and loving that He has provided a plan which will bring all from their graves in due time.

## *The Broad Way that Leads to Destruction*

Mankind is born dying. There is no choice in the matter. The Bible says that we have all been “*born in sin and shapen in iniquity.*” (Psalm 51:5) And, so, unless something alters this path, the only *destiny* for mankind’s billions is to remain dead in their graves forever. “*Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.*” (Matthew 7:13) **Many?** Not just *many*, but **all** start out on this path, and **many** will never find their way off of it in this present evil age dominated by sin.

This *broad way* leading to destruction began just over 6,000 years ago when father Adam stood at a crossroads in his life: one path led to continued perfection and happiness—life sustained by God in the Garden of Eden; while the other path followed this slow downward course to the grave. Yes, the whole human race, Adam and all of his offspring, have been born dying because of Adam’s choice. He disobeyed a simple command given to him by his Creator in the Garden of Eden: “*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” Genesis 2:16, 17

Adam had been created perfect, and he was also created with the gift of *free-will*—the privilege to choose between right or wrong. The Heavenly Father foresaw that His perfect son Adam, given a choice, would fall prey to deception, lose trust in God’s commands and eventually disobey. But, before Adam disobeyed, God warned him of the penalty for sin—that he would “*surely die.*” (Genesis 2:17) Note that the penalty was *death* and *not eternal torment*.

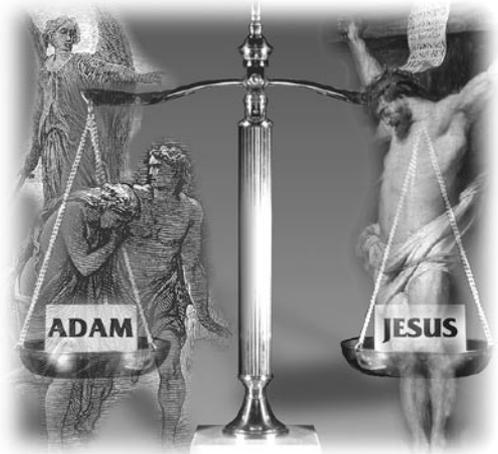
This penalty of death could not be offset by just making a renewed choice to be good. No, Adam had been corrupted by sin, and, because he was no longer perfect, his children and their

children would all be born imperfect. Therefore, the penalty must be paid by all. “*By one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men [all of Adam’s children].*” (Romans 5:12) And thus, unless someone would pay the price for Adam’s original sin and take his place, all would remain on the path to destruction—everlasting death.

In His great wisdom, God not only saw that mankind would start on this long journey toward destruction, but He also set in motion a plan that would work to man’s benefit by allowing the *hard lesson of experience*. Living with the consequence of disobedience has been a harsh, yet, everlasting teacher. “*This sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.*” Ecclesiastes 1:13

The offsetting price for Adam’s penalty required what the Scriptures call a *ransom* for Adam and his children—Greek: *anti-lutron, a corresponding price*. This *ransom* provided an opportunity for Adam and his corrupted seed to be brought back to life with a *fresh* opportunity to take a different path that would lead to life. Jesus Christ became that *ransom price* and exchanged his perfect life for the life of Adam.

This new path to life offered by Jesus’ death, however, also requires a *fresh choice*. First, a person must *choose* to accept the payment offered for Adam’s penalty by accepting Jesus’ sacrifice on his or her behalf. By doing this, that person is admitting that he or she is a sinner and in



need of a redeemer. Second, a person must *choose* to now live a life in obedience to the principles of truth and righteousness. As we will shortly see, in His mercy, God has provided two different time periods in His plan where this choice will be offered.

**Summary Questions on**  
***The Broad Road Leading to Destruction***  
**Choose One Answer**

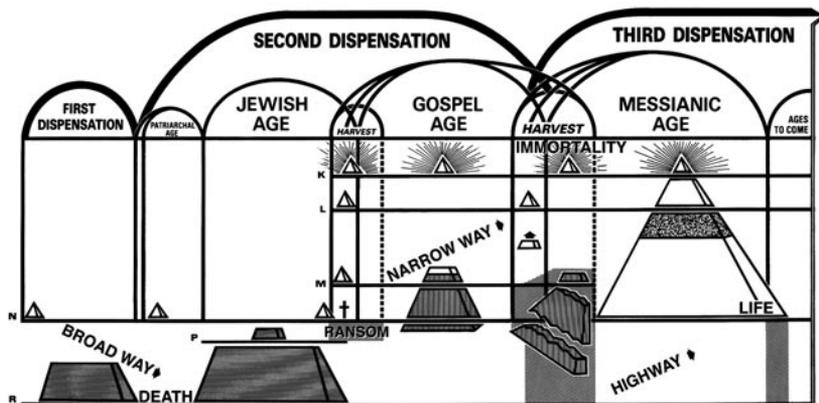
1. When a baby is born, it is
  - a. perfect because it hasn't learned to be bad yet.
  - b. already sinful, because it inherited Adam's sin.
  - c. ready to go to heaven.
2. How many have been on the *broad road leading to destruction*?
  - a. just the people who do not love God.
  - b. everyone except Adam.
  - c. everyone except Jesus.
3. The time in which we now live is
  - a. called *this present evil world*.
  - b. when Satan is called the *god of this world*. 2 Corinthians 4:4
  - c. a time when sin and death hold mankind in bondage.
  - d. all of the above.
4. God warned Adam
  - a. that if he disobeyed, he would have to work extra hard to be perfect again.
  - b. that if he disobeyed, he would begin to die.
  - c. in the day that he sinned, he would be punished with everlasting torment.
5. All of Adam's children
  - a. can choose to be perfect, because it wasn't their fault that Adam sinned.
  - b. have learned their lesson not to eat apples.
  - c. are learning the hard lesson of disobedience.
6. Jesus provided a *ransom* price for Adam's penalty by
  - a. living a perfect life.
  - b. remaining obedient.
  - c. dying for Adam's sin.
  - d. loving God's will.
  - e. loving the world of mankind.
  - f. all of the above.

## *The Path Leading to Life Now*

We have just talked about the first destiny of man—the destiny without a savior—the *broad road that leads to destruction*. We learned that Jesus gave a *ransom* to offer mankind a way off of this road. *Two more destinies* have now been opened up because of Jesus' sacrifice—both take someone off of the *broad road leading to destruction*. One *destiny* is in heaven, and one *destiny* is upon the earth. We will first discuss the path which leads to heaven.

Once a person admits that he or she is a sinner, accepts Jesus' sacrifice and chooses to live a righteous life, there is a very special path offered now. This path is very difficult, and Matthew 7:14 says it is "*the narrow way, which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it.*" The reason why *few find it* is because it is hard to get off of the *broad road that leads to destruction*. If you have ever tried to swim against a strong river current, it takes a great amount of strength to do so, and it also makes you very tired. It is much easier to just drift with the strong current, and let it take you wherever it is going. And so, not many choose this *narrow way* now which requires effort and courage to be different than the rest of the world. Those who do choose this path are usually adults who have thought about this choice very seriously first. Jesus calls this *counting the cost*. Luke 14:28





The age in which we now live is called the *Gospel Age*—it is the *Christian Age*. Those who choose this *narrow path* today, contrary to the ways of this *present evil world*, are dedicated or *consecrated* to “*the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*” (Philippians 3:14) The Apostle Paul speaks of this as a *new and living way*. (Hebrews 10:19, 20) The *destiny* of one who accepts this *new way* is to travel on a *narrow road* which leads to heaven. If found faithful, this *New Creature in Christ* will have a spiritual body—not like the body of flesh that we have today.

But keep in mind that what Adam lost was perfect *human life*, not life as a *spirit being*. How, then, did life in heaven become the *destiny* of one who accepts Christ now? The spirit nature is a *reward* for accepting the merit of Christ’s shed blood and then laying down one’s life in sacrifice with his—sharing in his death. “*For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection...*”—a resurrection on the *spirit plane* in heaven. Romans 6:5

This reward in heaven does not mean that anyone *born in sin* has merit of his own to deserve such a prize. No, what this means is that one who has accepted, by faith, Christ’s sacrifice receives the right to human life and is *reckoned perfect*—considered to be perfect by God. As such, that person is *justified* or *made righteous* by faith. “*...faith is counted for righteousness.*” (Romans 4:5) When a person is *justified*, he or she now has

something of value to offer to God in sacrifice. In giving one's life in sacrifice to serve God—to be dead to self will and alive to do God's will—that person is following in the footsteps of God's Son. Since Jesus' reward for faithfulness was to be resurrected to the spirit nature, then those who become his brethren will likewise receive this reward, if faithful. *"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."* Revelation 2:10

## *Called According to God's Purpose*

The Apostle Paul calls consecrated Christians *children of God*: *"...and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together..."* Here is the condition for receiving the heavenly destiny—*if we suffer with him*. But why should a Christian suffer? Paul goes on to say, *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God... For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."* Romans 8:17-23

In this Scripture, Paul is expressing that the whole creation—mankind, the animals and even the earth—are all imperfect now. They are all described as *groaning* in their imperfect condition. Again, this was brought upon us all because of father Adam's original sin. Paul goes on to explain that this *poor groaning creation* is *waiting* in its imperfect condition for the selection of the Church, *the Sons of God*, to be in heaven with Jesus. The resurrection of the remainder of the human race must wait until Christ and his Church are complete. *"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name... as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the*

*tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord...*" It is this *residue of men, the poor groaning creation* that is *waiting* for the completion of *the body of Christ*—the Church. Acts 15:14-17; 1 Corinthians 12:12

### **Summary Questions on *The Narrow Way Which Leads to Life***

1. The destiny which leads to heaven is
  - a. called the easy path to the goal.
  - b. a way that very few people choose now.
  - c. for everyone.
2. Not many people chose this path because
  - a. it is easier to sin than to be righteous now.
  - b. it is the way that Jesus took.
  - c. it is the way of sacrifice.
  - d. all of the above.
3. Those who chose the narrow way
  - a. are called the body of Christ—New Creatures—the Church.
  - b. are loved by everybody and live an easy life.
  - c. hope to live on earth and not in heaven.
4. Those who chose the life of sacrifice
  - a. give up their right to live as perfect humans upon earth.
  - b. receive a spiritual body if faithful.
  - c. devote their lives to doing God's will and not their own.
  - d. all of the above.
5. Jesus and his followers want to
  - a. ignore the sufferings of mankind.
  - b. help mankind, and that is why they sacrifice for them.
  - c. are sacrificing everything just to get a reward.
6. The poor groaning creation
  - a. includes all people on the road that leads to destruction.
  - b. all of the animals and even the earth itself.
  - c. both answers are right.

# *The Highway of Holiness*



Throughout mankind's history, billions of people have had no choice but to stay on the path leading to destruction. Even though we live in a time when there is great communication and much knowledge everywhere, most people of the world are still in ignorance of this narrow path to glory. Their destiny is determined by the circumstances into which they are born—there is no choice but to follow that path. Is there no hope for them?

God has always had compassion in His heart for the world still living in sin and ignorance. He desires that all men shall find a way of escape from the everlasting penalty of death. This Scripture assures us of this promise: God desires *"all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."* (1 Timothy 2:4) We can rest assured that whatever God desires will come to pass—maybe not immediately, but

in His time and His way. *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please.”* Isaiah 55:11

These Scriptures illustrate a hope for those who never knew Christ during this *present evil world*. Most people are good at heart, but have lived at a great disadvantage. When these people come up from their graves in the *general resurrection* on the earth, then they will believe in God and His Son. This resurrection was opened to all as a result of Christ’s death upon the cross—offsetting the penalty of Adamic death. (1 Corinthians 15:19-23) This is the third destiny of man called *the highway of holiness*.



The Book of Isaiah also brings to our attention a hope for the billions who have lived in darkness—those who have never had the opportunity to walk the narrow path that leads to life in heaven: *“And a highway shall be there, and a way. And it shall be called the way of holiness, the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those. The wayfaring men though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous*

*beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there but the redeemed shall walk there. The **ransomed** of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”* (Isaiah 35:8-10) This *highway* is going to be right here on the earth.

Unlike the path of the Christian today, this *highway* is far from narrow or difficult. It is wide enough and easy enough that even a *fool* would not stumble there upon. This *highway* is for the same *ransomed of the Lord* spoken of in 1 Timothy 2:3-6: Jesus Christ “*gave himself a ransom for **all** to be testified in due time.*” Again, there will be a *free-will choice* to accept this offer of life, and those who wish to follow the path of righteousness and obedience will have the opportunity to “*learn righteousness.*” (Isaiah 26:9) All who do not accept this path will be cut off from life everlastingly in the *second death*. (Acts 3:18-23; Revelation 20:14) Whoever chooses the path of righteousness on the *highway of holiness* will be taught how to live lovingly and unselfishly with all of God’s creation. There will be lions, but no lion-like characters there.



During this time Satan, the great adversary of God and man, will be bound in the thousand-year Millennium. (Revelation 20:1-4) He will not be allowed to deceive and tempt the world in God's Kingdom for he will be restricted. Therefore, it will be much easier in the Kingdom to live a righteous life, because the majority of people will have learned their lesson, and will never want to sin again. Plus, sin will no longer be allowed.

Again, where will this *highway of holiness* be? Will it be in heaven with Christ and his Church? No, remember that heaven is the destiny of those who sacrificed their justified humanity to become *dead with Christ*. Recall, too, that Adam did not lose a spiritual life, so it is his earthly life that will be restored. Christ gave his *flesh for the life of the world*. Therefore, the life offered to the *residue of men* is here upon this earth. Revelation 20:2, 3

### **Summary Questions on *The Highway of Holiness***

1. The destiny which leads to a perfect earth is called
  - a. the bumpy road to nowhere.
  - b. the highway of holiness.
  - c. the road with many exit signs.
2. Many people will chose this path in God's Kingdom because,
  - a. it will bring happiness and peace.
  - b. it will bring health and life.
  - c. it will be easier and more popular to be righteous than to sin.
  - d. they will receive their loved ones from the grave.
  - e. all of the above.
3. Who will not be on the highway of holiness?
  - a. lion-like characters.
  - b. Jesus and the Church.
  - c. both answers are correct.
4. While on this highway
  - a. mankind will learn righteousness.
  - b. mankind will take a detour to go back to their sinful ways.
  - c. mankind will continue to have wars.

5. The right to choose is
  - a. called being picky.
  - b. called free-will.
  - c. not important to God.
6. The highway of holiness is during
  - a. the Gospel Age.
  - b. the present evil world.
  - c. the Millennium—God’s Kingdom—the reign of Christ.

## *Two Paths of Salvation*

The Bible has thus shown us three paths, with three different destinies—two of these paths provide a hope of salvation. The first hope of salvation is the heavenly hope—reached by walking the *narrow way* of sacrifice. After Christ and his Church have finished their work of sacrifice, then there will be a *highway*—the second hope of salvation. These two destinies are pointed out in 1 Timothy 4:10, which reads: God is the “*Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.*” His *special salvation* is for those who are willing to *suffer* with Christ *now*. He will save all *others later*, in God’s earthly Kingdom when His will *shall be done in earth* as it is being done *in heaven*. Matthew 6:10

This is God’s plan when completed. It is the final solution to the disobedience and fall of man in the opening chapters of the Bible. It is the story of redemption in the closing chapters of the Bible: “*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away... And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain:*

*for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:1-4*

What is this *new Jerusalem*? It is Christ with his *brethren*—the glorified Church reigning from the heavens. When the Church of Christ is complete, fully tested, fully developed in character, and fully trained in righteousness, the world of mankind will be released from the prison house of death and brought up to perfect life on the *highway of holiness* with an opportunity to live in accordance with God’s laws. Then, even the earth shall be restored to its original perfection. The *new heaven* and the *new earth* will have replaced the *first heaven* and the *first earth* which were dominated by sin and death.



The promise of a brighter day for all the world of mankind gives us hope that there will be an opportunity for life after death for all. It should give great comfort to know that God’s penalty of death is for the purpose of education and not a vindictive, demonic thirst for revenge, as some teach. God’s gracious plan is the hope of the Church now and is the future hope of the world in Christ our Savior. 1 Corinthians 15:54; Isaiah 60:13-14

**Final Summary Questions on**  
***The Two Paths of Salvation***

1. There are three destinies of man, and
  - a. only two which bring salvation.
  - b. one is to heaven and one is to a perfect life on earth.
  - c. God has provided a way of escape from the first destiny.
  - d. all of the above.
2. God is the savior of all men, but *specially*
  - a. of innocent babies.
  - b. of those who choose a life of sacrifice now.
  - c. of those who can't help it that they sin.
3. The first three chapters of the Bible
  - a. explain how paradise was lost when Adam fell from God's grace.
  - b. talk about King David's throne.
  - c. introduce us to the nation of Israel.
4. The last two chapters of the Bible
  - a. give us a glimpse into the vast oceans.
  - b. tell us exactly when the Church will be complete.
  - c. explain how paradise will be restored through Christ and his Church.
5. The first heavens and the first earth
  - a. will just keep going on forever and ever.
  - b. were destroyed by an atomic bomb.
  - c. have been under the reign of sin and death.
6. The new heavens and the new earth
  - a. will be the hope of the world.
  - b. will mean the end of the broad road to destruction.
  - c. will be under the control of Christ and his Church.
  - d. will provide the way where God will communicate with the world.
  - e. will bring worldwide peace, health and happiness to all who receive Christ and his Church.
  - f. all of the above.