

## Who Then Can Be Saved?

Can we judge the rich young ruler this morning? Can we see what kind of man he was? Then we can put out a freepaper to see whether it will reach the heart of others who are like the rich young ruler, so they wouldn't do the same thing he did in response to the encounter he had with our Master and the gospel.

The inquiry he made was, "What must I do to have eternal life?" Evidently he knew he needed eternal life, but he wanted his own possessions more. That was why he was gloomy and downcast. Let's read the whole story: Mk 10:17-30

It can be said of the rich young ruler that he was more concerned with keeping his money than keeping our Master's commandment, "You lack one thing..." He bent his knee, but not his will. He wanted heavenly possessions, but was not willing to give up earthly possessions.

*He came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mk 10:17)*

He knew what he *needed*, but was not willing to give up what he *wanted*. He wouldn't give up his possessions for what he needed — *eternal life*. He would not *forego* what he wanted — all of his possessions. Messiah Yahshua called him to sacrifice the present for the future, calling him to come alongside of Him and His disciples. He chose to be a miser instead, thinking of his money. Money was something he was always thinking of, even when he was talking with our Master. And when he heard the answer to his question, he started thinking about his possessions, his security.

What a tragic climax! The man came running; he was ardent<sup>1</sup> in his inquiry. The rich young ruler had great and high aspirations, but they were suddenly strangled by a secret revealed: the sudden exposure of his slavery to Mammon.

*But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful. (Mk 10:22)*

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<sup>1</sup> *Ardent* — characterized by intense feeling; passionate; fervent; intensely devoted, eager, or enthusiastic; zealous; burning, fiery, or hot

When he was confronted by our Master, he became gloomy; he went away *grieved and sorrowing* (Amplified), because of the saying, “Sell all, and give to the poor” (Mk 10:21). Of course, we know so many Christians who just want to go to heaven when they die, but when they hear these words, they are cut to the quick and reject the gospel they hear (Lk 10:16). Christians do not believe the Master’s words here apply to every rich person. Jn 3:36 — They *disbelieve* Lk 14:33 and Lk 6:24 and 1 Tim 6:9, since *all who believe* are as Acts 2:44-45 and 4:32-35.

### **Our Master’s Look of Love**

*Then Yahshua, looking earnestly, tenderly at him, loved him. (Mk 10:21)*

This is what was working in our Master. He loved this man, seeing something in him; and we want to see the same thing in him (as we have seen in so many people who have walked away, even though they heard the gospel). Our Master looked earnestly and tenderly into this man’s soul, with sympathy. This is what our Master was doing. The Spirit in our Master was penetrating him. The eyes of our Father were making a *divine penetration* into the man’s soul. He saw him; He saw his heart in what he asked for, and in how he had kept the commands from childhood (Mk 10:20). He saw all these things as He weighed his inner motives, down to the very spirit of the man.

### **A Heart-Melting Look**

The sincerity of the young ruler was beyond question; we would fall in love with him ourselves, as our Master did when he “looking at him, loved him.” Our Master could only find *one thing lacking*. Think of it: *only one thing*. He knew, of course, what was in man (Jn 2:23-25). Many believed in our Master because they saw the miracles, but they didn’t believe *all the way* so as to be joined to Him.

“Then Yahshua, looking upon him, loved him...” So what kind of “look” was this? What kind of look did our Master give that man?

*And He said to him, "You lack one thing; go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come and accompany Me. At that saying, the man's countenance fell and was gloomy, and he went away grieved and sorrowing, for he was holding great possessions. (Mk 10:21-22, Amplified)*

He called him to get on the same road He was on. What kind of look did our Master give? It was a heart-melting look. He saw into his soul; He saw sincerity in the man. The rich young ruler was eager, and seemingly humble. He came running to our Master in broad daylight, with unashamed courage in front of the Scribes and Pharisees. He was honest as he asked an honest question: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Our Master told him plainly: "You know the commandments..." Since the rich young ruler was concerned about the life to come, he answered, "Teacher, I have carefully guarded and observed all these and taken care not to violate them from my boyhood." He answered according to the light that he had, and he was blameless in that.

*And He said to him, "You lack one thing; go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come and accompany Me (Mk 10:21, Amplified)*

Thus we would have expected the rich young ruler to have answered Yahshua's request, "Certainly, Master! I will do this, at once!" Instead, there was a sudden change in him. That ready tongue he had became dumb. His once-bright eyes became dull. All watched the formerly kneeling figure slowly rise with a downcast head, then slowly and sadly walk away.

*"He went away sorrowing, for he was holding great possessions." (Mk 10:22)*

### **Proven Character**

*No one can be My disciple unless he gives up all of his possessions. (Lk 14:33)*

Mk 10:22 is why Lk 14:33 is part of obeying the gospel. He walked away. He didn't have the disciples' response: "Lord, where shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (Jn 6:68)

The rich young ruler in Mk 10:17 was eager, reverent, and courteous. He also had spiritual discernment and was morally upright and well-meaning. According to the faith of Judaism, he seemed pious. But what was the state of his heart? I remember holding my daddy's hand, when he was dying, and he said to me, "Gene, get your heart *right* with God...." That's the last thing I heard him say, and it never left me. So what can we say about the rich young ruler? Was his heart right with God?

*If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself. (Jn 7:17)*

Was he willing to do our Father's will? He seemed to know that our Master was speaking from the Father; but still, his possessions — his security, maybe his wife, his family, his estate, his position — took priority over everything. Therefore, his soul wasn't saved, which comes from obeying the Word in faith — that is, being persuaded by the Word of God speaking to him in his heart.

We are writing to unbelievers who, like the rich young ruler, may be:

- ~ anxious about their salvation
- ~ reverent toward God
- ~ unashamed of our religious connection
- ~ spiritually inclined, morally upright
- ~ well-meaning
- ~ highly religious

But most people today don't go away *sad*. They think they're already "all set" — they're already saved. At least the rich young ruler knew that he didn't have eternal life.

**ha-êmeq** — In verse 22, this version says he was *stunned*. I thought of police who use a "stun gun" to absolutely paralyze someone. All he wants to do is get away, but he's so paralyzed that he can't move. It holds him for a certain amount of time.

The rich young ruler was *stunned* by what our Master said. Probably, a few seconds elapsed as he looked at our Master and thoughts raced through his mind. Then he was able to move again, and he could actually get up on his feet. He walked away with his head dropped. Everyone must have been quiet. And then it says, "Yahshua looked around, and He said, 'How hard it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom.'"

Those disciples were astonished, absolutely flabbergasted, shaking their heads. He repeats it again: "Children, how hard?" And then it says

they were even more astonished. They wondered, “*Well, then who can be saved?*” It was truly a dramatic moment for all: *stunned... grieved... astonished... even more astonished...*

I don’t know whether he was saved later or not, but what if he didn’t repent? We have thought he might be Joseph of Arimathea. But if not, if he did reject the gospel, that means he is already judged (Jn 3:18), because he came face-to-face with the Son of God (1 Tim 2:5). But the consequences are the same if someone rejects us, if we’re righteous sent ones (Jn 7:17-18). Such a person has been *judged already* and so doesn’t have to be judged in Rev 20:11-15. He is sealed by his rejection of our Master (Jn 3:36; 2 Ths 1:8-10).

**No amount of religious observance can give anyone a new heart.**

Jn 2:23-25 — It says they *believed*, but it really wasn’t the kind of belief that our Master could entrust Himself to. They believed just because they saw great miracles. Millions of people today are in the same condition of spiritual blindness to their own heart, unaware of its wickedness, and so they are *still unjust and filthy* as Rev 22:11 says.

*Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and let the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and let the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.*

They are *still unjust*; they are *still filthy*. They are that way, *still*, having a heart of self-deception.

**ha-êmeq** — Then our Master went on to talk about *leaving everything* in verse 29, and then in my Bible, it puts a new heading in there, right after He says “*many who are first will be last*” in verse 31, as if it’s switching to another subject. But it’s obviously not. It says, “*They were on the road, up to Jerusalem, and they were astonished...*” (Mk 10:32)

So they were *still* astonished, as it says already two times in the last paragraph, and *they were afraid*. So then my Bible says, “*He took the twelve aside again.*” It seems as if the whole situation was still lingering in them. Then He started talking to them about what was going to happen. It was just a very dramatic and moving situation, for the disciples to *still* be astonished at what they had seen. It was more astonishing than feeding the 5000, yet you rarely hear about it from Christians. It obviously shook them

so much that they were astonished (verse 24), then *very* astonished (verse 26), then *still* astonished (verse 32) — just from this encounter.

**Neshef** — I wonder if it was because they saw this man’s potential and how sincere he was and they thought, “Oh, we have so many needs... We really could use this farm, and disciples can go into that cottage. If we could use this field here, we could harvest it and send it to that village where the disciples don’t have enough to eat. All his workers can help build the kingdom. *This is great!*”

And then what happens? The Master sends him away sad, and you can just hear the disciples talking among themselves. “I mean, what are we going to do without all his things? He’s going away! What about the fields? What about the houses? What about the workers? What about the people in that village who need the food?”

Yes, right. But you never hear that type of message spoken in sermons. Rich people never hear one iota of that. They don’t have to give up anything. And our Master, if He was from another spirit, would have said, “*Oh, it’s okay. You can follow me anyway, since you believe...*” Can you imagine what that would have caused, later on?

1 Tim 6:9 came upon the rich young ruler.

**David Zerubbabel** — What a picture you get in the beginning part, where he runs up and kneels before him. Then he says afterward, “*I’ve kept all these things from youth up.*” So, even though this rich young man was a devout Jew, he sensed he didn’t have eternal life. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have been so “beside himself” to go after the Master when he was leaving the village to just run after him and ask him “*What must I do to have eternal life?*”

Why did he ask Him that? He wasn’t content; so you wonder what happened after that story, after he went away sorrowful. It seems that the moment passed him and maybe he just dove into his wealth (1 Tim 6:9), bringing upon himself all the more grief.

*But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. (1 Tim 6:9)*

He couldn’t go on and just be a devout person after that. He had to realize that he really didn’t have eternal life, and that he had to go find the Master again, or he had to bury himself in all of his pursuits.

**Yochanan Abraham** — I wonder if when our Master said that second time, “*How hard it is for those who trust in riches,*” whether something vital was revealed. The man knew he didn’t have eternal life, yes, but I wonder if all that he desired was to add another dimension to his life, as Billy Graham says, “Add Jesus to your life.” After all, the Master did say there was “*one thing he lacked.*”

“I could have wealth, and more, too? If I had wealth *and* eternal life, I’d be all set.” Maybe he was thinking something like that. And this is basically what the present-day “Prosperity Gospel” teaches. He would be really satisfied by just adding eternal life to all the rest.

But our Master said, “It is hard for those who *trust in riches...*”

“*Well, as long as you’re not trusting in it, then it is okay to have riches,*” preachers tell everyone, “*You’re still saved.*” I guess we’d better look up what the word *trust* means.

**David Zerubbabel** — If you follow that Christian reasoning, and it was only since he was trusting in riches that the Master told him he had to give it up, then you would have to apply it to anyone else today who is trusting in riches. I suppose nobody else is trusting in riches in Christianity, or they would have to hear this same gospel.

**Yochanan Abraham** — And the reason most don’t “trust in riches” is because they don’t *have* riches. They want riches really badly, and if they could have it, boy, they’d be so satisfied.

**ha-êmeq** — That is so true.

If you look at Mk 10:29, you don’t see the word *wife* there in translations like the NAS, but you do in the other two parallel passages (Mt 19:29; Lk 18:29). It actually does say *wife* in Mk 10:29 also, but the NU<sup>2</sup> took it out. The translators were too stupid to compare it with the other two places in the gospels.

Anyway, Mk 10:29 tells of the *hundredfold increase* you’re going to bring in — if you gave up a house or farm, you’ll get *100 houses, 100 farms*. It’s going to happen, just as surely as the resurrection. It’s right there in the Scripture, along with persecutions and *in the age to come, eternal life*. That is our Master’s Word, so we can expect exponential

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<sup>2</sup> Nestle-Aland/UBS critical edition of the Greek New Testament, upon which most modern English Bible translations are based.

growth — a *hundredfold* to everyone who has given up something. It says *100* times, but in other places it says *many*. A *hundred* is more specific, so our Master must have said *100 times* instead of just *many*. We can expect that some day, if we're praying for it. If we're not praying for it, we're not the people who will get it. We just foolishly gave up everything then, and we won't get the *hundredfold* of what we gave up, and we're not His people either, if we're following a different Jesus, a *different Yahshua*.

**ha-êmeq** — And He said in Mk 10:30, “*And eternal life.*” Here was the answer to question of the rich man, “How am I going to receive eternal life?” It goes all the way through that, and then it says “*If you leave this, then you will receive all that AND eternal life.*”

I always put Mk 10:17 together with Mk 10:30 — *with eternal life*.

**David Zerubbabel** — Yes, he certainly has some material possessions, but really, he's pretty poor. He doesn't have everything that the “100 brothers, sisters, mothers, and fathers” entails. He doesn't have the *true* riches, as it says in 1 Tim 6:17-19. It tells how you'll *lay hold of that which is life indeed* — if you get rid of all that material stuff. We have an even richer life, and I don't mean just in material comfort...

We have chauffeurs; we have people who wash our clothes for us, people who go shopping for us, people who cook for us, etc. There is no one like us, really. People who have material riches can hire somebody to clean their house. But then they're going to be afraid the people they hire are going to be stealing from them when they clean the house. And they will be.

So each person does what he is supposed to do in the Body, down to taking care of the goats, the barn, etc. I mean, I would like to write something on this some day. We're going to have to express the synergistic way of looking at the functioning of the Body of Messiah.

**ha-êmeq** — The other day, when I was in the supermarket (it was around 5:30 or 6:00 PM), the whole place was full of men, dressed in their business clothes, pushing shopping carts. They looked as if they were insurance salesman and people like that. I realized that most of them were divorced, middle-aged or older men. When I was young, you'd never see a



man like that in the supermarket. They didn't do the shopping. It was usually their wives or their mothers.

These men looked rich enough, but they all had to push their own shopping cart, and obviously they were going to go home and cook something for themselves. I thought, "How sad..."

So then you give everything away, and trust that our Master will care for it. You're not going to be living by yourself when you come in the Body; everyone serves one another. There's nothing greater than this, so we're richer than Solomon. We have more servants than Solomon.

**David Zerubbabel** — So, what ha-êmeq said really underscores the irony, because the very thing the rich young ruler said he wanted is what our Master had to give him — eternal life; and the very thing he feared losing is what he would have received — all that we have would have been his, too, just like any disciple. But our Master didn't run after him and try to explain, "Well, you didn't understand what I meant when I said that. You *are* going to be rich! Don't worry about anything.

**ha-êmeq** — "You're going to be given 100 times as much!"

**David Zerubbabel** — That's exactly what Christian preachers say, especially when they pass the offering plate: "You can't out-give God!"

**Gad** — It really affected me to hear, "No amount of religious observance gives a new heart." There is a lot in that statement. We have used the phrase, "*Following the dusty Messiah.*" Maybe the rich young ruler had this great, awe-inspiring feeling toward our Master, but then he looked at those with Him and despised them: "Oh, boy, look at that fisherman. He can't even count. And He's calling *me* to live with that brash *tax gatherer*? *No way.* And look at how they do things — they're not following God right."

We know that *the water of life* is the Holy Spirit. Our Master made that plain in Jn 7:37. And then, in Rev 21:6-8, if a person rejects *the water of life*, as the rich young ruler did, then he is *cowardly and unbelieving*, the first thing on that list. That is the worst thing you can be, and the worst thing you can do is to reject our Master Yahshua. It is the worst sin possible that you can commit. You are *judged already*. You won't have to go to judgment later on, to determine how good or how bad you were. *Cowardly and unbelieving* is #1 on the list in Rev 21:6-8.

You can really see the reality of that whenever one is confronted with the truth. But then, what kind of people do we have to be to present the gospel to someone? We have to be as Jn 7:18 says — we can have *no unrighteousness* in us, but it is more than that. There can't be *any falsehood* in us either, or *seeking our own glory*. If you're seeking our own glory, just to see how many disciples you can make, then they obviously won't be able to receive the Spirit through you.

**Neshef shel Zerubbabel** — It must have really tested the disciples when they saw that rich young ruler, *a sincere, good person*, leave. And it makes you want to be sharp, to preach the right gospel, and not make exceptions: “Wow, let's make an exception, because he is so valuable,” because, he would be just so destructive if he came in that way.

**Gad** — I always liked the freepaper idea we came up with when we were in Vista: *What would happen if the rich young ruler met Billy Graham? What would Billy Graham tell him to do? Would the gospel he preached be the same Word of God as Messiah himself told that man?*

Can you get it going? Are we going be able to do something with this? We have to embellish this now, and see if we can reach these people.

**Soreph Gamaliel** — I think the disciples looked at that man and believed him, and saw our Master's response to him, how He loved him, yet let him walk away sad. Maybe the disciples began to realize how deep the gospel would be reaching in their own hearts. They looked at the rich man as a “better man” than themselves. In Peter's first encounter with our Master, he said to Him, “*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man. (Lk 5:8)*”

It would seem to me, looking back, that the people whom I offended were often the ones who were saved. But often we're afraid to offend someone. We're just so afraid we're going to scare them away. Did our Master do that? “*Give up all your possessions.*” He didn't *have* to say that, did He? Maybe some of the disciples thought, “That's just the thing that man didn't want to hear. Don't tell him that!”

When Nicodemus came to Him by night, our Master just interrupted him and said, “You need to be born again.” He didn't waste any time getting to the point.

They shared everything in the first church, and that's the end of selfishness — *no longer living for your self*. There it is. The only possibility of *not* living for your self is here; it's living for others. In the world, you can't help it. You can be a good, righteous man, and even be *righteous still* (Rev 22:11), but you still have to fend for yourself. Certainly, our Father understands what people face, and what they have to do to provide for themselves and their families. The people of the nations have to do that, but still, in a way, it's selfish. It's not evil, nor is it necessarily hurting other people to seek for your own food and clothing. But it's not the *most excellent way*. Here we have opportunity to come to the end of selfishness.

**ha-êmeq** — Can you imagine it? This man only lacked *one thing!* You can see he was an amazing person. But even if he was sincere, not even deliberately evil, he was feeling as if he had been *blessed* since he had lots of things. Probably every day at the table, as his riches grew, he thanked God. As he grew up, maybe his parents had said, "*Some day the Messiah will come; then everything will be great.*" He must have heard someone say they had *seen* the Messiah, so he thought, "*I'd better go see Him. What if He is the Messiah? He's going to fulfill everything for us!*"

So when he heard our Master say, "There's only one thing you lack," maybe he thought, "*Yes! That one thing is you; it's the Messiah taking over Israel, the one thing I've been waiting for. And here He is — the icing on the cake!*" But when our Master said what that *one thing* was...

It was the very thing he *didn't* want to hear...

**ha-êmeq** — Yes, I guess our Master always knows the *one thing* we need to hear, what we need to give up.

**Havah bat Zerubbabel** — Any encounter with our Master Yahshua is going to be a life-changing experience, one way or the other. You come into a new life or your old life is going to be miserable. You can see what happens when people *see Yahshua* and then they walk away. They can never get their life together after that, just like what we saw happened to that couple from Love Valley who were coming around when we first moved here. He didn't want to give her up, and then she left him for someone else. You could see how miserable they were after they rejected the gospel, and they probably blame it on us.

Many people who leave say, “The Twelve Tribes ruined my life; I could never get my life together after that,” but it’s *because* they rejected Yahshua. If they’d just given up their life, they would have received a hundred times more. I remembered something David Derush said while he was here: *The miser will be miserable.*

So when you encounter our Master, it is a life-changing experience. Somehow, though, when people encounter *Jesus* in Christianity, their life goes on as usual.

So what can be compared with the value of eternal life? Can anything be compared with it? That’s what our Master meant: *Nothing can be compared to eternal life.* We’re just giving up our little puny life, just a short time here on earth. And the earth is God’s testing ground. We might not think we have a life to give up if we were raised in the community, but we do have a life to give up.

### “City, O City, O City of Yah”

Do you know why the Body is called *a city*? It has what all cities have — facilities and public works, its own infrastructure with many departments. We need to increase that aspect of our articles when we speak about how the Body of Messiah functions. Everyone has his function in the city to make it thrive, just as in the café. Everyone has his work to do, and everyone is important and necessary. That is why our Father called us *Derushah* — *sought out, wanted, needed.* In our café, what would we do without a bus-boy? What would we do without the sandwich maker? What would we do without the dishwasher?

**ha-êmeq** — And the laundry person, the sexton, the fire-fighter...

And on and on. The city needs *all* the facilities. We all have our function to do in order to make the city great. And it is going to be a great city. We are that city. So then, just take the dishwasher away, and try to run your café without a dishwasher during the rush, and see what happens. Or take away the bus boy, and just leave everything dirty on the tables, or take away the waitress so nobody gets waited on. Can you imagine what would happen?

**David Zerubbabel** — That's what they did in the fast-food restaurants; they got rid of the bus boy, they got rid of the dish washer, and invented a system of do-it-all-yourself. No waitresses.

That's how Christianity is for you. That is so revealing. Let's work on it. We're going to write a paper, and then we're going to put it in all the rich people's newspaper boxes. What if the rich young ruler was saved at Pentecost? What if he was Joseph of Arimethea who went and got our Master's body and gave him his own tomb? I hope that it was him. If not, then where is he now? How horrible what he would be going through right now in death! You can't even imagine. "*What was it that I wouldn't give up my possessions for?*" There would be no hope for him forever and ever. But our Master loved him, and we love him. Just think about what a person gives up to hang onto his puny little life for another few years here on earth.

*Woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full. (Lk 6:24)*

That's why our Master said that. You'll never have any more comfort than what you have now, *because* you didn't give it up. Our Master did reach out to the rich. There are so many things in the Scriptures addressing the rich. Obviously he wants us to reach out to them, too.

So the question the rich young ruler fervently asked was, "What must I do to have eternal life." And when he was told, Lk 6:24 was the eternal result of his choice. He would swap the offer of eternal life for having his comfort in full in this present life, as our Master said a little before He said Mk 8:34-37.