

51. Legalism has so indoctrinated the souls of the lost that the necessity of human good works is required to negotiate a yes vote from God for an eternal future.
52. Sometimes, the response to the grace offer of “faith alone in Christ alone” is rejected with the sorrowful response, “I’d like to believe that, but I just can’t.”
53. If the follow-up question, “Why can’t you?” is presented, the typical response is, “I just have to believe you must be a good person to go to heaven.”
54. This erroneous and fatal conclusion has robbed heaven of millions of souls in the United States alone, only God knows how many over the course of history.
55. This false gospel results in entire congregations becoming involved in human good works. The evil of this cosmic lie is revealed when, one by one, these people experience physical death.
56. In the next paragraph, the Lord explains the young ruler’s decision to his disciples:

Matthew 19:23 - And Jesus said to His disciples, “Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.”

1. The Lord’s comment verifies a typical human response to the gospel of salvation. Most prosperous people have difficulty responding to grace.
2. With an overplus of assets, a rich man is comfortable depending on them as his security rather than the grace of God.
3. The Lord introduces His claim with the exclamation **Ἀμήν (Amén)**: “I am telling you the truth.” And the truth He tells is that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

4. The term “kingdom of heaven” refers to the eternal state into which the Lord says is difficult to enter when a person has acquired an abundance of earthly possessions.
5. It is not impossible for this to occur, but it is typical that such individuals are so invested with their material wealth that it becomes a distraction from things ethereal.
6. The rich young ruler is also involved in religion. He is not a devoted keeper of the Levitical order of rituals except as it satisfies his penchant for doing good works.
7. The combination of personal wealth and human good makes it especially difficult for this man to trust in the integrity and grace of a divine power he cannot see.
8. Rationalism demands that thoughts must be based on reason and imperialism requires that reality must be material.
9. To place one’s confidence in faith alone to insure one’s eternal future requires that ethereal things must become reality.

Hebrews 11:1 - Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (NASB)

Hebrews 11:1 - In fact, the Word of God is the reality from which we keep receiving confidence, the proof of matters not being seen. (EXT)

10. From the Lord’s affirmation of doctrine and the statement by the writer of Hebrews, we may note a few principles:
 - (1) The more truth we inculcate into the *kardía*, the more real becomes the unseen blessings that are realities in the eternal state.
 - (2) The greater the doctrinal inventory, the more real becomes the presence of the Lord Jesus.

- (3) The greater the application of biblical truth the more real becomes the absolute reality of the plan of God and His management of it for our benefit.
11. Absent this perceptive ability, the unbeliever is handicapped in his evaluation of the gospel.
 12. Common grace is the work of the Holy Spirit acting as a human spirit to interpret for the unbeliever the supernatural concept of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone.
 13. This handicap is intensified for the prosperous unbeliever who is dependent upon his works for salvation while being distracted by his material possessions.
 14. Some additional passages amplify this principle:
1 Timothy 6:9 - But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.
v. 10 - For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.
 15. In context, Paul is discussing the loss of thought among believers. Some that are prosperous are vulnerable to the cosmic distractions caused by their possession of worldly goods.
 16. Worse is allowing these distractions to degenerate into the various stages of reversionism. The four early stages of reversionism deal with apostasy: