

The Great Gulf Spanned

September 4, 2022 · PM · <https://letgodbettrue.com/sermons/2022/the-great-gulf-spanned/>

The Great Gulf God Spanned

Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!

Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!

Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span

At Calvary!

Introduction:

1. Today is communion of the Lord's Supper, and we want to consciously remember what His death did.
2. You and all of us deserve to go to hell, a punishment after death that makes death nothing (Heb 9:27).
3. There is a great difference between heaven and hell by any measure we might choose to apply to either.
4. We can only know about heaven or hell by revealed truth in the Bible, for we have not been there yet.
5. What we shall now read and consider for a few minutes is more true and important than anything else.
6. The world, rushing ignorantly to an eternity in hell, tries to distract you with worthless noise or news.
7. This calamity, fear, loss, pain, problem, and trouble totally annihilates all other concerns combined.
8. Due to purpose and time, much more could be said developing this view of Christ's cross. Be content.
9. Due to the desperate need and perfect accomplishment of the cross, we should be dramatic as scripture.

THE CONTEXT (Luke 16:1-18)

- A. The parable or account of the unjust steward taught wise preparation for eternal future.
- B. The Pharisees did not like His lesson and application, for they were covetous adulterers.
- C. For much more about unjust steward and this little-known lesson by Jesus Christ ... [The New Bible Economics](#).

THE TEXT (Luke 16:19-31)

- A. This is the parable or account of a rich man and a beggar Lazarus about hell and heaven.
- B. It fits the context, where Jesus taught future preparation against Pharisee covetousness.
- C. A great deal more could be said here about this lesson of our Lord and its other details.
- D. A rich man who had every comfort and implied public adulation died and went to hell.
- E. A poor beggar named Lazarus with sores craved crumbs also died but went to heaven.
- F. Abraham's bosom is heaven – the place Abraham sought, and where he was gathered.
- G. In our Lord's account, the rich man could see Abraham and Lazarus together in heaven.

- H. The rich man begged for a drop of water to help ease the suffering of his fiery torment.
- I. Abraham's response was curt and strict – there is now a reversal of fortune; embrace it.
- J. Abraham added further to the unfairness of any comfort by declaring it fully impossible.
- K. The rich man then begged for Lazarus to visit brothers to keep them from joining him.
- L. Abraham replied by explaining the five brothers had plenty of warning in O.T. scripture.
- M. Of course, they cared more for success than preaching (context), so he begged for more.
- N. He was sure a messenger from the dead would convince them, which Abraham denied!
- O. Before leaving the text, let it be declared: *No evangelistic method can help dead sinners.*
 - 1. No soul is in heaven, rescued from hell, by the preaching or warning of any man.
 - 2. Preachers only inform the elect of what God has done and what they should now do.
 - 3. The key lesson is the fiery torment and punishment of hell with no hope for comfort.
 - 4. Condensing the whole chapter, flush earthly ambition to lay up treasure in heaven.

HOW BAD IS HELL

- A. The rich man was in *torments*. The Spirit used *torment* four times (Luke 16:23-25,28).
- B. **Torments** = torture; to afflict with great suffering or misery, physical or mental; to pain, distress, plague.
- C. The rich man was tormented in a flame. No one can approach God's creative design.
- D. The fiery torment was so bad that even a drop of water to cool his tongue was sought.
- E. No comfort is allowed and certainly no escape to satisfy the justice of Almighty God.
- F. Hopelessness of eternal suffering without relief or rescue will torment to man's limits.
- G. For much more about hell and the lake of fire and coming judgment ... [Warnings about Hell \(4 Sermons\)](#), [Judgment Seat Of Christ, Is There A Burning Hell?](#).

THE GULF (Luke 16:26)

- A. When the rich man begged for a drop of water for his tongue, Abraham said it would not be fair, since he and Lazarus had had opposite fortunes during life (Luke 16:24-25).
- B. Abraham then added (Luke 16:26) ... *And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*
- C. **Gulf** = A deep hollow, chasm, abyss. A yawning chasm or abyss; a vast ravine or gorge. These definitions exclude those involving water like a bay, such as our Gulf of Mexico.
- D. Gulf has only this use in the Bible. The Bible does not have *abyss, chasm, ravine, gorge*.
- E. **Gulf** = A wide interval, an impassable gap, serving as a means of eternal separation.
- F. This gulf, or impassable chasm ... is *great* ... expanding and increasing *vast* and *wide*.
 - 1. If a gulf is small enough, then the thought arises that it might be crossed with effort.
 - 2. The Gulf of Mexico is the largest (930w), the Gulf of California the smallest (90w).

3. **Great** = Thick, coarse, massive, big. Having a high position in scale of measurement or quantitative estimation. (Opposed to *small, little*.)
 4. But Abraham cut off any speculation of crossing, clearly saying it could not be done.
 5. He declared it totally impossible for any persons desiring to travel either direction.
- G. This gulf, or impassable chasm ... is *fixed* ... meaning it cannot be altered or adjusted.
1. **Fixed** = placed or positioned firmly; fastened securely; made firm or stable in position; securely established; secured against alteration or dislodgment.
 2. For something to be fixed between two creations of God must be another creation.
 3. For anything to be created or fixed by God means His eternal and immutable decree.
 4. Rather than limit the idea to distance simply considered, think about God's decree.
 5. What God decrees cannot be altered or even questioned (Eccl 3:14; Daniel 4:35).

THE GULF DESCRIBED

- A. It is impossible to get out of hell and make your way to heaven, as any there might wish.
- B. It is impossible, and far less desirable, to travel from heaven to hell to help any there.
- C. Abraham, as nice as he was, think Lot, Hagar, Ishmael, told the rich man to accept it.
- D. The great gulf fixed between heaven and hell is a difference and distance to understand.
 1. It is first fixed by infinite wisdom of a sovereign God choosing vessels like a Potter.
 2. It is then fixed by a holy God that gave a simple rule with a three-fold death attached.
 3. It is then fixed by sin, which our first father chose in our place, to rebel against God.
 4. It is then fixed by our choice to partner with God's enemy for whom hell was created.
 5. It is then fixed by our sins, which we add to the list of crimes in His books of works.
 6. It is then fixed by the Day of Judgment and the impeccable righteousness of God.
 7. It is then fixed by the arrogance of sinners to claim their goodness to save them.

THE GULF APPLIED

- A. You are either hearing this sermon preached or reading its outline while still on earth.
- B. Your situation is just like the rich man and Lazarus before they died and were sentenced.
- C. If we are honest, right, and true about the matter, we are at least as bad as the rich man.
 1. Thus, for this simple lesson from our Lord, we are as good as in hell by our lives.
 2. Our character and conduct is no better than the rich man's, so we are doomed to hell.
 3. We know the Bible condemns us legally, vitally, and practically as doomed to hell.
 4. You should never think for even a second that you deserve better than the rich man.
- D. Therefore, your life examined and judged in light of God's law puts you in hell for sure.
- E. Your legal situation without any intervention is condemnation and sentencing to hell.

THOSE IN HELL

- A. Here is the worst news of all. You have done so much more than enough to spend eternity there that you yourself have fixed a great gulf that will keep you there forever.
- B. Any one of your sins is enough to send you to hell, let alone the thousands you commit.
- C. If you hallucinate that you have not sinned, yet Adam's sin will hold you there forever.
- D. If you hallucinate that you have sinned only once, you are guilty of all sins (James 2:10).
- E. If you hallucinate that your sins are not bad, the lake of fire has the fearful, unbelieving, and all liars in it (Rev 21:8), which surely includes you many times over.
- F. Preacher, how many will be in hell? Everybody will be in hell for Adam's sin or for their own sins, for all have sinned and come short (Rom 3:23; 5:12-14; 6:23; Heb 9:27).

HEAVEN'S RULES

- A. Unrighteous like fornicators, thieves, covetous, drunkards cannot get in (I Cor 6:9-11).
- B. Hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, envying, reveling cannot get in (Ga 5:19-21).
- C. If you hallucinate that you can get in, liars and murders are outside (Revelation 22:8).
- D. If you think you have not committed murder, you are truly a serial killer (Mat 5:21-22).
- E. If you think you can talk you way in, Jesus addressed your case directly (Matt 7:21-23), for He is sick of those that say Lord, Lord and do not do what He taught (Luke 6:46).
- F. Here is a *Romans Road* if you wish to gain eternal life and get into heaven (Rom 2:7,11), but these verses by Paul are infallibly designed to condemn all men without saving any.
- G. And the sign says clearly, *No Fools Allowed*, for God hates all such (Psalm 5:5; 11:5).

THE GULF SPANNED

- A. Calvary in Latin (Luk 23:33) = Golgotha in Hebrew (Mat 27:33; Mark 15:22; Jn 19:17).
- B. Both mean the same thing – *the place of a skull* – Rome's place of public execution.
- C. A cursing thief – whose sins denied him any kingdom place – was in heaven that day!
- D. Think about the fixed great gulf – but spanned in a few hours – by Jesus the Son of God.
 - 1. God told Satan the woman's Seed would bruise his head – ***He would span the gulf!***
 - 2. David and Isaiah prophesied of this Son bearing our sins – ***He would span the gulf!***
 - 3. Haggai foretold *the Desire of all Nations* in that temple – ***He would span the gulf!***
 - 4. An angelic choir filled Judean sky to announce a Savior – ***He would span the gulf!***
 - 5. He was called JESUS to save His people from their sins – ***He would span the gulf!***
 - 6. Jesus was given a body; He said He would do God's will – ***He had to span the gulf!***
 - 7. He told John Baptist to baptize Him for all righteousness – ***He had to span the gulf!***
 - 8. Moses and Elijah encouraged Him toward His decease – ***He had to span the gulf!***
 - 9. Jesus set His face to go to Jerusalem though hated there – ***He had to span the gulf!***

10. He denied the apostles' advice not to return to Jerusalem – *He had to span the gulf!*
 11. Mary anointed His feet with oil in preparation for burial – *He had to span the gulf!*
 12. He told eleven, *Arise, let us go hence*; He had work to do – *He had to span the gulf!*
 13. A good shepherd, He said He would die for the sheep – *He chose to span the gulf!*
 14. Jesus begged God with sweat like great drops of blood – *He chose to span the gulf!*
 15. Jesus was arrested but did not call the legions of angels – *He chose to span the gulf!*
 16. He was nailed to a Roman cross for a cursed death – *He was about to span the gulf!*
 17. Soldiers cast lots for His clothes as He hung naked – *He was about to span the gulf!*
 18. God forsook His Son and darkness covered the earth – *the gulf was being spanned!*
 19. His blood dripped fast and furious from His torn body – *the gulf was being spanned!*
 20. Jesus fulfilled all prophecies to then cry, *It is finished* – *the gulf was being spanned!*
 21. Jesus died, ripping away the veil to God and opening graves – *the gulf was spanned!*
 22. Jesus rose, conquering death and resurrecting many bodies – *the gulf was spanned!*
 23. Jesus ascended, to open the covenant book of our salvation – *the gulf was spanned!*
 24. Jesus charged His apostles to preach this gospel worldwide – *the gulf was spanned!*
 25. When we are judged, the Lamb's book will save us – *because the gulf was spanned!*
 26. We should sing passionately today and for eternity – *because the gulf was spanned!*
 27. We now sit at His Supper of the Passover fulfilled – *because the gulf was spanned!*
 28. You should never have a doubt about eternal life – *because the gulf was spanned!*
 29. You owe total love and obedience to Jesus Christ – *because He spanned it for you!*
 30. You should want to find and tell God's elect – *because He spanned it for them, too!*
- E. We have recently celebrated words, *By himself purged our sins and sat down* (Heb 1:3).
- F. Let us wait for Jesus from heaven, who delivered us from wrath to come (I Thess 1:10).
- G. For more about the deliverance from hell at Calvary, [A Lake, A Book, A Lamb](#).
- H. For more about the war at Calvary between Jesus and Satan from many angles ... [War at Calvary](#).
- I. For more about the work of Calvary making a huge difference on Judgment Day ... [The Cross at Judgment Day \(2 Sermons\)](#).

THE SONG

- A. William R. Newell (1868-1956) was a foolish, rebellious, teenage pastor's son in Savannah, Ohio that was sent by his father after much effort to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, where he eventually believed on Christ under President R.A. Torrey's care.
- B. One day years later while on staff, he was gripped by some thoughts of his salvation, so he stepped into an empty classroom and quickly wrote them on the back of an envelope.
- C. He described the spontaneous poem as a word picture of what had happened in his life.
- D. He took the envelope with the poem and left it in the office of the head of the music department, D.B.

Towner, who, moved by the message, quickly put the poem to music.

Conclusion:

1. Today is communion of the Lord's Supper, and we want to consciously remember what His death did.
2. Tomorrow is Labor Day, its origin and purpose we mostly reject, but real labor took place at Calvary.
3. Let us now remember and celebrate together what our Lord Jesus accomplished for us at Calvary.
4. Let us sing the song, *At Calvary*, that speaks about God spanning the mighty gulf at Calvary, and then, *Rock of Ages*, to allow your participation in His praise. Both songs are printed in their entirety below.
5. When we conclude our Supper, we will sing this song He deserves: *Crown Him With Many Crowns*.

At Calvary

Words: William R. Newell (1868-1956)

Music: D. B. Towner (1850-1919)

1. Years I spent in vanity and pride,
Caring not my Lord was crucified,
Knowing not it was for me He died
On Calvary.

Chorus:

*Mercy there was great, and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty
At Calvary.*

2. By God's Word at last my sin I learned;
Then I trembled at the law I'd spurned,
Till my guilty soul imploring turned
To Calvary.
3. Now I've giv'n to Jesus everything,
Now I gladly own Him as my King,
Now my raptured soul can only sing
Of Calvary!
4. Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan!
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span
At Calvary!

Rock of Ages

Words: Augustus M. Toplady (1740-1778)

Music: Thomas Hastings (1784-1882)

1. Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.
2. Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.
3. Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die.
4. While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.