

Lazarus and the Rich man

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Summary: Does the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16 show that when we die we either instantly go to heaven – or instantly, if we were bad, go to suffer eternally in hell fire? Did the beggar go to heaven when he died? Be sure you're understanding this important parable correctly. And will the wicked be tormented and tortured forever in an ever-burning hell fire that never quite ends their life? Find out in this teaching.

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To many, this story proves that when we die we immediately go either to heaven or hell fire. Let's see what the Bible actually says. Many of you may be very surprised. Here's the proper explanation. (Remember that this Lazarus in the parable is not the Lazarus who was resurrected from the tomb in John 11, four days after he had died.)

First, here's the first third of the parable in **Luke 16:19-31**. We'll show the rest of the parable as we go through this account.

Luke 16:19-31 NKJV

"There was **a certain rich man** who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20 But there was a **certain beggar named Lazarus**, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

So in the story, Jesus obviously sees the rich man as indulgent, selfish and self-centered. Then there was the poor beggar, and surely there were many such beggars in Judaea when Jesus lived there. We can infer the beggar was righteous. Jesus described what happened to each of them.

Verse 22: "And it came to pass, **that the beggar died**, and was **carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom**: the **rich man also died, and was buried**". They both died!

Did Jesus say the beggar went to heaven? He certainly did not! He said the beggar "*was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.*" *The word "heaven" is nowhere mentioned in this parable or story. Neither does Jesus give us a time period. No time frame showing us how long it was after his death that the beggar was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. We're simply not told. One thing it does not say is that the beggar was carried straight to heaven immediately upon his death. It's not there.*

In fact, look at what Jesus says in John 3:13 "NO ONE has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man." (NASB)

We surely will want to believe Jesus, the son of God., won't we? He's the same one who gave us the parable we're looking into. *He won't contradict himself. With Jesus saying, "NO one has ascended to heaven," we surely have to believe then that Abraham, the prophets, and righteous*

women like *Ruth and Sarah* are not in heaven. Not even David is in heaven (**Acts 2:34**). So far, no human – except Christ – who has ever died, is in heaven presently. *And so, not even this beggar went to heaven upon his death.* This has to also include Enoch and Elijah by the way (see our blog on that).

All who have died are in a period of time the Bible calls a **“Sleep.”** God sees death as being temporary, like sleep. Even referring to the other Lazarus, who died and was placed in a tomb, Jesus said “Lazarus sleeps” (**John 11:11-14**). Remember that is a different Lazarus. All who have died are awaiting **their resurrection** – either the resurrection of the just or the unjust. Everyone will be resurrected back to life again.

“But what about **my immortal soul,**” some may ask. **We’ve been so programmed to believe we each have an immortal soul that can never die.** The Bible nowhere has the phrase “immortal soul.” What we read in fact is “The soul that sins shall DIE” (**Ezekiel 18:4, 20**). Someone immortal cannot die, but the soul can die. And look what Jesus teaches us:

Matthew 10:28

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather **fear Him who is able to destroy both SOUL and body in hell.** (hell here is ‘gehenna’ – hell fire)

Though there *are* scriptures that – in our English language – imply that hell fire punishment is “forever,” or ongoing, the Greek word used there is *aionos*, which means “an age, a space of time, or age long.” It does not mean it never ends. Check it out. The only one who will be tormented forever is Satan himself (Rev. 20:10), who is cast into the lake of fire where the Beast and False prophet were also tossed in Rev. 19. Your Bible may say “where the beast and false prophet are” – but “are” is NOT in the original Greek. And KJV and others have “*are*” in italics, showing it was added.

AND, if everyone who has already died is already in either heaven or hell fire, contrary to what Yeshua/Jesus clearly said that NOBODY has ascended to heaven (John 3:13), then why would there even need to be a resurrection? So though this article will go against the grain of what most of Christianity believes, it’s based clearly and squarely on Jesus’ words and the rest of the Word of God.

SPIRIT IN MAN

Scripture says the dead make no plans and know nothing when they die (**Ecc. 9:5**). However, **there is a spirit in man (Job 32:8)** component we all have, that gives us life and that makes us different from animals. Humans can paint, create, compose music, solve math problems, build steel bridges and do all the things animals can’t do *because of* this spirit in man. This spirit in man is what makes us understand human things, gives us a mind (**1 Corinthians 2:11**). But it’s not God’s Holy spirit. ***This spirit in man does go up to God when we die.*** (Do a Search on our website “spirit in man” for much more information on it.)

Ecclesiastes 12:7 (and Ecc. 3:21)

“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was,
And the spirit will return to God who gave it.”

Even Jesus, at his death, said to his Father, “Father, Into your hands I commit my spirit” – (Luke 23:46). Yes, our spirit in man (NOT the soul) goes to God upon our death.

And very interestingly, if God ever sends back that spirit in man to someone who had died, he or she is revived and comes back to life again – as in the story of **Jairus’ daughter (Luke 8:54-56)**, and the lad for whom Elijah prayed (**1 Kings 17:19-22**) and others. Look up those verses. We read that their spirit returned and they came back to life. Jesus’ story continues

Luke 16:22

“So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.”

WHEN the beggar is carried by the Angels

WHEN are God’s children carried by ANGELS anywhere? Jesus does not explain the timing or all the details here, but He and his Word do tell us the details elsewhere. This angelic transportation *does not happen upon our death, but upon the return of Christ*, according to the Messiah himself.

Jesus and all scripture is clear that when we die, we all will be awaiting the voice of Christ in the resurrection. God’s children who died in Christ will rise first, ahead of the righteous in Christ still alive. “The dead” would have to include Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the holy prophets and all the men and women saints who have died in Christ before His return – as well as this righteous beggar. Then the rest who remain alive in Christ will be changed instantly to spirit and meet Christ in the air. ***This is the first resurrection at Christ’s return and it is to spirit, immortal bodies.***

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. **And the dead in Christ will rise first.** 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

HOW do they rise up to meet our Lord? They are transported up by angels.

Matthew 24:30-31

“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

So all the elect, God’s holy people, come up together at almost the same time to receive the promises – first the dead in Christ, then those who remain alive, but mere moments separate the two events. The men and women of faith in Hebrews 11 have NOT YET received the promises (Hebrews 11:13), as they’re all waiting for us so we can all receive the promises together (Heb. 11:39-40), at the same time.

John 5:28-29

“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which ALL who are in the GRAVES **will hear His voice 29 and come forth** — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”

Ultimately everyone is brought back to life, but in their right order. Scripture fills in the details as we go along. **Carefully read 1 Cor. 15:50-54** where it is explained that we elect, in the first resurrection, are changed to immortal spirit, no longer flesh and blood, as *“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God”* (1 Corinthians 15:50).

John 5:28-29 looks like, at first glance, that there is only one resurrection that happens at the same time: the just to life, and those who have lived evil to condemnation. And it seems, if that's the only scripture you read, that a separation takes place between the good and the bad.

But God revealed to John later, that in fact there's a thousand years that separate the resurrection of the just from the unjust. The just are resurrected immortal, the unjust are not. The time differential and the type of IMMORTAL SPIRIT beings the righteous will be at that time, is a great gulf that cannot be crossed by those who are still flesh. *Immortality, eternal spirit life is the gulf that cannot be crossed by mere mortals remaining on earth.*

Revelation 20:5 “(But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished). This is the first resurrection.”

In any case, it's clear that **the righteous dead are waiting** in the grave for the return of our King and Savior. It's like they're in a deep sleep. They're not in heaven though (John 3:13), but all of the righteous dead ones are waiting to receive God's promises together, at the same time, at the same first resurrection of just the righteous.

Hebrews 11:13 NKJV “**These all died in faith, NOT having received the promises**, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

Hebrews 11:39-40 NKJV “And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, **that they should not be made perfect apart from us.**”

So the beggar is resurrected at Christ's return and, as we read, transported by the holy angels to meet Christ in the air, and everyone else who is righteously there, including Abraham. These are details we glean if we search for the whole counsel of God.

Death prior to resurrection is referred to in Scripture as “SLEEP.” Jesus said “Lazarus sleeps” – meaning he died. (**John 11:11-14**). Other references to death being called “sleep” are **Daniel 12:2; Matt. 9:24; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:51; and 1 Thess. 4:15.**

Some churches use the term “soul sleep.” I do not. The term “soul sleep” *is not* in the Bible that way so I just say “sleep,” just like the Bible does.

THEN what?

We believe that the first thing that happens next for God's elect after being resurrected to immortal spirit life (**read 1 Cor. 15:50-55**), is that they will be taken by our Savior to our Father, who will put on on a wedding for his Son in heaven. Where else could it be? The King clearly is God the Father. The Son is the Son of God -- Jesus.

Matthew 22:2

“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son...”

The King, our father, shows up. *Where is our Father?* We pray “Our father in heaven...” (Matthew 6:9).

So WHY would we go to heaven? To be part of the wedding of the Father’s SON -- the Lamb in heaven, described in Revelation 19. See our sermons on “Wedding of the Lamb” for full details. *Where else in the universe* could there be a wedding befitting the Lamb of God and his Bride, in the presence of God Most High, the Father?

The 7th trumpet sounding is mentioned in Rev. 11:15. That’s the last trumpet when the first resurrection occurs. AFTER Rev. 11, we can read how the firstfruits elect of God, the righteous saints, are seen in HEAVEN, before the throne of GOD. That’s in heaven! (**Rev. 14:3, 5.**) **Revelation 15:1-2** shows righteous saints of God who had the victory over the Beast, *standing on the sea of Glass in heaven!* So we go to heaven and see what Jesus has prepared for us (“I go prepare a place for you” – John 14:2-3). This includes all the saints and the righteous beggar.

I believe we *will* be in HEAVEN for a time. Heavenly Jerusalem is OUR city – the city of God, prepared for those who are in the first resurrection. Abraham looked forward to the city whose builder and Maker is God... and so should WE (**Hebrews 11:10**). But it’s not just Abraham’s city. **Hebrews 11:16** says “...for God has prepared a city for THEM.”

Revelation 14:1-5 HOLMAN Apologetics

“Then I looked, and there on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with Him were 144,000 who had His name and His Father’s name written on their foreheads. **2** I heard a sound from heaven like the sound of cascading waters and like the rumbling of loud thunder. The sound I heard was also like harpists playing on their harps. **3** **They sang a new song before the throne** and **before the four living creatures** and *the elders*, but no one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been **redeemed from the earth**. **4** These are the ones not defiled with women, for they have kept their virginity. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. **They were redeemed from the human race as the firstfruits for God and the Lamb**. **5** No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.”

Revelation 15:1-3 Holman Apologetics

“Then I saw another great and awe-inspiring sign in heaven: seven angels with the seven last plagues, for with them, God’s wrath will be completed.

2 **I also saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had won the victory from the beast, his image, and the number of his name, were standing on the sea of glass with harps from God.**

3 They sang the song of God’s servant Moses, and the song of the Lamb:

How can anyone read **Rev. 14:1-5 and 15:1-3** and not realize human beings, then born of spirit and immortality, *are in heaven, before the throne of God*, standing on the *Sea of Glass*, as we just read. That can only be describing heavenly Jerusalem itself. Hallelujah! What wonderful truth to look forward to experiencing.

The throne of God, the 24 elders, the thrones of the four living creatures are in HEAVEN, before God (**Revelation 4**). So YES, the Beggar will go to heaven for a time, as will all of us who are in the first resurrection, to be married. *While we're in heaven* for a time, Yeshua/Jesus Christ will show us the mansions and places he's prepared for us. We'll meet all those in the first resurrection. We'll probably meet our specific guardian angels and all the prophets and holy men and women.

Then the wedding of the Bride of Christ and the Lamb of God take place – Jesus and His church -- **described in Revelation 19**. After the wedding, HE leads all the holy angels and saints (**Jude 14**) with him to descend from heaven back to earth to land on the Mount of Olives after destroying armies gathered to fight the Christ, and then we rule the earth (**Zechariah 14**) together for 1,000 years, as Rev. 20:4-6 clearly says.

Abraham's BOSOM

Luke 16:22 – “So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.”

Now what does "bosom" represent in scripture? Look in your dictionary. A "bosom" is the breast of a human being, with the arms as an enclosure; a loving embrace by the arms of one person about another; an intimate relationship.

There is no doubt as to how the Bible uses the word "bosom." Turn to [Isaiah 40:11](#). Here we find God will care for His people as a shepherd does his sheep, carrying them "in His bosom". Jesus was "in the bosom" of the Father ([John 1:18](#)), enjoying the Father's blessings and close relationship. Moses carried the children of Israel in his bosom ([Num. 11:12](#)). To be “in one's bosom” was to have that one's love, protection, and to share his blessings and inheritance. So it will be at the resurrection of the just.

Jesus said Lazarus was carried into a close relationship with Abraham – “carried to Abraham's bosom” -- upon his resurrection. First remember he is resurrected, meets Christ in the air as we've seen in other scriptures, and then Christ takes him and all of us in that first resurrection to be in close relationship with Abraham. Don't make more out of “bosom” than we should, though, as other translations simply translate it as “at his side.”

We do believe that Jesus Christ has been preparing a place in heaven for his followers (**John 14:2-3**), as he promised “I go prepare a place for you”. That will be our home, though we will rule on earth in the Millenium. Our city (**Heb 11:16**) – heavenly Jerusalem -- will come down to the new earth, when there are a new heaven and new earth (**Rev. 21**).

Check out our sermon on “I go prepare a place for you”

<https://lightontherock.org/index.php/sermons/message/i-go-prepare-a-place-for-you-john-14-1-3?highlight=WyJwcmVwYXJlIiwYSIsInBsYWNIIO=>

Israelites and Gentiles alike can inherit eternal life if they have faith in Christ. In God's eyes they become heirs of Abraham's promises. **Galatians 3:7** says those “who are of faith *are sons of Abraham*.” And verse 29 says “And if you are Christ's, you are Abraham's seed, and heirs

according to the promise.” In fact, we become **“heirs of God” (Romans 8:16-17)**. This is not a promise for Israel alone, but for all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile.

Originally Abraham was promised the land of Canaan and all he could see (Genesis 13:14-17). **Later it was expanded. Those who are meek shall inherit the earth (Psalm 37:11; Matthew 5:5)**. Those of faith are heirs of the world (Romans 4:13).

So we and the beggar shall inherit the earth and rule with Christ right here on earth for one thousand years (**Revelation 20:5-6**). All the wicked who died are still dead, and buried, during that time. **We don’t inherit heaven, though our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). We inherit earth (Matthew 5:5)**.

As already shown, all the righteous who “sleep” are all resurrected together first, then those who remain alive with them, to receive the promises together at that time, as **Heb. 11:12-13 and verses 39-40** explain.

Now again let's get back to what Jesus said about Lazarus in Luke. Jesus said this beggar died. So, like Abraham, the prophets and all the righteous dead, they await the voice of Christ in their resurrection.

Where are they right now? *They are in the grave, though all our Bibles use the **untranslated Greek word “hades” – meaning the grave, buried in the ground***. The KJV translates even that word “hades” as “hell” but it means in the ground here.

This word “hades” is where Jesus also was entombed when he died (Acts 2:31). He was in *hades*, not in hell fire. Let’s read part of Peter’s sermon on Pentecost in Acts 2 and see how he explains it. **Where the Greek word where Jesus was placed after his death is “hades,” the KJV unfortunately translates that as “hell.”**

Acts 2:29-34

"Men and brethren, let me [Peter] speak freely to you of **the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried**, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,

31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in **Hades**, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

34 **"For David did not ascend into the heavens**, but he says himself..."

When the rich man died, he was buried and was in Hades, the same place Jesus was placed – in *hades* – when HE died. This was not hell fire at this point. When Lazarus died, it nowhere says he immediately went to heaven or hell fire.

The concept that “hades” is the “underworld” – if you research it – comes straight from Greek mythology. Hades in their ancient myths, was the “god of the dead and king of the

underworld, with which his name became synonymous” (Wikipedia, “Hades”). So the concept of even ‘hades’ being a place of torment in the underworld came into wide societal acceptance.

So when the beggar died, he was surely buried, then at the last trump of God he and others who are the righteous dead, hear the Lord’s voice and the shout of an archangel (probably Michael or maybe Gabriel) and the trumpet of God, and we’re all resurrected to spirit immortal life as I’ve explained already (**1 Thess 4:15-17; 1 Cor. 15:50-54**). How exciting! The beggar and all the elect actually, are transported together into a super close relationship with Abraham, as heirs with Abraham of the promises of God – into “Abraham’s bosom.”

What about the evil Rich man?

Now let's see what happened to the rich man — and when.

Luke 16:22

“So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

23 And being in torment **in Hades**, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side.”

Notice the rich man comes back to life in Hades, from the grave – when HE is resurrected.

When we put all of scripture together, we learn **there is a thousand year gap between the first resurrection and when the rest of those who have died will come back to life**. Let’s pick up at Rev. 20:4-5 discussing the righteous who did not succumb to the Beast power of the end time. They are rewarded with rulership.

Revelation 20:4b-5

“... and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

5 But the REST of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.

This is the first resurrection.” [The First resurrection refers to those who were resurrected when Christ returned.]

So when the righteous are resurrected to spirit life at Christ’s return, that’s a different resurrection compared to what the rest of the dead will experience, back to physical life, a thousand years later. (The Next Paragraph is not in the audio).

*And please get this: this should also help you realize that your wicked friend or uncle who has died is not – is NOT – being tormented or tortured in a grisly hell fire right now. He is dead and buried, waiting for his resurrection. The Catholic church, when needing money to build St. Peter’s basilica in Rome, came out with the **doctrine of Indulgences**, meaning if someone would pay enough money, they could **BUY** their condemned relative out of hell. Study “indulgences”. So the idea that unsaved loved ones are right now being tortured in a painful hell fire became accepted doctrine. But it’s a false doctrine.*

The Rich man in the story will be resurrected to face judgment a thousand years after Lazarus is resurrected and carried up by the angels, as I’ve explained. I know that’s not how you’ve had it explained, but that’s what scripture explains. The rich man was dead and buried. One thousand years after Lazarus is resurrected, the rich man comes up with the rest of the dead who did not

die “in the Lord” or “in Christ” – when we look at all of scripture and preach the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

Let’s continue now with the rich man.

Luke 16:23-24 Holman Bible

“And being in **torment in Hades**, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side. 24 ‘Father Abraham!’ he called out, ‘Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!’

There are three Greek words translated “hell” in some translations.

- One is **HADES** – meaning the grave, though even commentators want to believe it is the underworld, which is from Greek mythology. KJV translates “hades” as “hell,” but most people think of “hell” as “the lake of fire” or Dante’s Inferno kind of “hell.” **The Greek word is “hades” meaning the grave, in the earth, buried.**
- Another is **Gehenna** – and that one IS Hell fire. Jesus DID speak of this hell FIRE frequently, actually! The word is based on the fire kept burning in the Valley of Hinnom, on the south side of Jerusalem, where garbage and dead bodies were burned. The fire only stopped when there was nothing left to burn.

Many believe we have an immortal soul, though those two words can never be found together. Most believe the soul cannot ever die or be destroyed. Look at the facts as given by Jesus himself.

Matthew 10:28

“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather *fear Him who IS ABLE to destroy both SOUL and body in hell.*”

And remember, “the soul who sins shall die” (**Ezekiel 18:4, 20**).

- And there’s a third word for “hell” – *tartaroo*. **2 Peter 2:4**, used one time only in scripture.

Unfortunately, many automatically think of **Dante’s Inferno type of hell fire** when we read about someone “in hell.” Any of you who study from *a KJV Bible, be aware that KJV translates “Hades” – the grave, in the ground, in the earth – also as “hell.”* Almost all other translations say “hades.” I don’t know why translations did not translate that Greek word into its proper English meaning of the “Grave, the earth.”

Truly Jesus did speak of hell fire – Gehenna -- more than all the other New Testament leaders combined.

Obviously, though the Rich man was buried initially in Hades, upon his resurrection he has apparently been judged and is in torment as he sees the flames of Gehenna fire ahead of him. There will be “wailing and gnashing of teeth” (**Matthew 13:41-42**) as they see the burning lake of fire ahead of them.

The words “**Gehenna**” or “**hell fire**” are not even used in this parable but the rich man speaks of being “in agony in this flame.” Could it be this hell fire of gehenna is what is being described as something he is about to face? He’s “stressed to the max” and his tongue and mouth have gone dry. He knows he won’t live much longer. So honestly, there is “torment” obviously in this other resurrection as people await their turn to be *thrown into the lake of fire* if that end is what is determined by God for them.

But the torment is only for a moment. The punishment is permanent, for forever. But not the punishing. Punishment, not punishing. **Look up for yourself the meaning of “forever” from the Greek word** and you’ll see that it means “for a period of time,” not forever as we think of it in English.

Remember also that the Bible teaches us that the **wages of sin is DEATH (Rom 6:23), not eternal life being separated from God in never-ending torture** by a God who claims to be love personified. Somehow these flames from the hell fire that most of Christianity teaches never seem to end the sinner’s life. How are they suffering the wages of sin as death, if they keep living, though tortured forever? The prophet Malachi though, says the wicked will be ashes under the feet of the righteous.

Malachi 4:1-3

"For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven,
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.
And the day which is coming shall BURN THEM UP,"
 Says the LORD of hosts, that will leave them neither root nor branch.
 2 But to you who fear My name, The Sun of Righteousness shall arise
 With healing in His wings; And you shall go out
 And grow fat like stall-fed calves.
3 You shall trample the wicked,
For they shall be ASHES under the soles of your feet
 On the day that I do this," says the LORD of hosts."

When hell fire is discussed in your religious circles, is **Malachi 4:1-3** ever brought up? Probably not. There are other parallels like **Matthew 13:30** when tares, picturing the lawless, will be burned up but the wheat will be gathered into the barn. John the Baptist warned the Pharisees to bring forth fruit of repentance or they’d be like chaff that is burned up. (**Mathew 3:12**). That’s pretty clear, is it not?

Here are more verses about hell fire. Remember the Greek meaning of “everlasting” means “age-lasting.” Study it yourself.

Jude 7 for example, tells us Sodom suffered the punishment of “eternal fire” – but we know that area is not burning today.

Matthew 18:8-9

"If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be **cast into the everlasting fire.** 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to **be cast into hell fire.**"

2 Thessalonians 1:6b-9

“since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, **8 in flaming fire taking vengeance** on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 These shall be **punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord** and from the glory of His power,”

Notice the destruction is everlasting. It’s an END to their punishment. Not never-ending torment. I realize there are some verses that appear to say there is torment that goes on and on. But remember again, the Greek does not mean “never ending” in every instance.

Revelation 19:20-21

“Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. **These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.**

21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

EVERLASTING TORMENT?

If and when anyone, or this Rich Man, is put into the Lake of Fire Gehenna hell, he will burn up. That’s what flesh does. It burns up and turns into ashes. He will be ashes under the soles of the righteous (Mal 4:3). It is the second DEATH, or death a second time. There will be no further resurrection or life for any who go through the second death. It’s pretty much final. We all die once – but then **those who are not written in God’s Book of Life** at some point, will be thrown into the lake of fire and be burned up. This happens after the Millennium, as Revelation 20 explains. Pray God has your name written in his Book of Life. VALUE and CHERISH your high, high calling.

Revelation 20:13-15

“The sea gave **up the dead** who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 **Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second DEATH.** 15 **And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**”

The punishment is everlasting. Not the punishing, but the punishment. Those in hell fire will cease to exist because they will be burned up. When the Rich man is put into the actual lake of fire, he will die the second death. Yes, he had an initial torment, realizing what lay ahead of him as he could see the flames, but the torment was not forever.

Probably the verse that seems to say God’s enemies will be tormented forever, nonstop could be **Revelation 14:10-11**. But from what we’ve already seen, flesh burns up. **Malachi 4:2-3** speaks of being ashes after God burns up the wicked. The smoke of their torment will rise longer than their lives will. I’m saying I do understand why many believe the lake of fire torments people forever, but putting all the verses together on the topic doesn’t support that.

The NEXT FEW PARAGRAPHS are additional NOTES:

Scripture indeed, also does speak of the lake of fire whose fire shall never be quenched. I'm not ignoring these verses. I just believe we must put all the scriptures together.

Mark 9:43

"... rather than having two hands, to go to hell, **into the fire that shall never be quenched...**"

It's interesting that in the newer translations like NIV, NLT, ESV, etc. – other than KJV and NKJV – the next verse (44) and verse 46, DO NOT EVEN EXIST, though verse 48 has the same wording and is included.

John the baptizer also spoke of God's FIRE that can never be quenched (**Matthew 3:12**). God may well have a fire so intense that no human will be able to ever quench it. Or, perhaps He has it continuing to burn on and on for all His own reasons, maybe even as a warning to everyone.

In **Matthew 25:41** Jesus speaks of the wicked being thrown into **an everlasting fire** prepared for the Devil and his angels. But a fire that never burns out is not telling us that people are being tormented forever in this fire and never die. Other scriptures tell us clearly they DO die, becoming ashes and stubble. **And verse 46** speaks of the wicked going into everlasting punishment. Not Punishing, but punishment. I just wanted to acknowledge these other verses exist.

We're also told that the wicked go into everlasting **destruction** (2 Thess 1:9). The Greek word for "destruction" means "death, completely destroyed." We can say "they are destroyed forever." *It's not saying the great merciful God tortures them forever. The wages of sin is death* and so anyone who does not accept God's grace and offer to let his perfect Son take your sins upon Himself and pay for your death penalty for you – will have to pay for their own death penalty. God is a merciful God, but he is also a just God.

The penalty for sin has to be paid either by His Son for us, or the unrepentant have to pay for their own death penalty. The unrepentant wicked are destroyed forever.

WOULD GOD OF The Bible really be SOMEONE WHO TORTURES OTHERS forever?

Besides that, can you and I really accept that Almighty God will forever and ever and ever and ever torture in a terrible hell fire without ever killing them -- all those who never accepted Jesus as their Savior?

- **To burn in a hell fire for eternity must mean they also have eternal life** so they can be tortured forever. But eternal life is supposed to be God's gift to those who have God's righteousness by faith. (Rom 6:23).

Romans 6:23 KJV

"For the wages of sin is death; but the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

- How about those who never even had the opportunity to hear the name Jesus, the only name by which we must be saved? **Acts 4:12**. How FAIR would God be to torture

forever all humans of all races and ethnic groups who didn't even ever hear about Jesus?
How FAIR is that?

- **And answer me this: what's would be the POINT of torturing anyone, no matter how evil, for forever and ever?** What would be God's purpose or reason for doing this? God surely has a good purpose for everything he does.
- Could we really say that *anyone* could torture others forever and still call himself "Love" --- as in "God is love," "God is good" and "God is just"? No matter how much I might be angry at anyone, I certainly could not let them be tortured for forever and ever. But somehow we think God can?
- The true God is so loving that he sacrificed his own son so we can become his children. And now we are to believe that this wonderful God of heaven could torture men and women for eternity? Something's so wrong with that theology.
- Would you and I even be able to enjoy eternity as spirit immortal beings knowing so many of our loved ones are being tortured in hell, as Dante's inferno envisioned?

Let's strive – by faith in Christ – to be sure to be in the first resurrection. If we're there, we will never be able to die again. If we believe in Christ, and accept Jesus as our Savior, and have a change of heart in repentance and turn from our wicked ways and let the Messiah be our new life (Col 3:3-4), we will never have to fear the lake of fire. Yeshua is our new life. We are a new creation in God's Anointed One, Jesus the Messiah (**2 Corinthians 5:17**), "who became sin for us, that WE may be the righteousness of God in him" (**2 Cor. 5:21**).

When you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, that is exactly what you're doing. You're now taking on HIS life, HIS righteousness and you're no longer condemned.

You can read the rest of the parable. Even if someone were to go back from the dead to speak to the rich man's brothers, it would do no good. Let's use the opportunities we have to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Praise the Lord. Praise Jesus. Praise God Most High, our Father for the high calling he has given us and the opportunity to be in the better resurrection, the first resurrection.

Closing prayer