

Lazarus and The Rich Man

Probably the best known alleged "resident" in heaven is the famous beggar Lazarus! Countless millions have heard the story of "Lazarus and the rich man," much embellished, and with impassioned attacks against the unfeeling, insufferable hauteur of the rich and their disdainful contempt for the plight of the poor. The famous parable of Luke 16 seems to say, to many millions, that Lazarus died and went to heaven, but that the rich man died and went to hell! But is this what it really says? Jesus said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven" (John 3:13). Did Jesus make a mistake?

By Garner Ted Armstrong

For over 47 years, I have been offering a certified cashier's check for \$10,000 to anyone in my radio or television audiences who can show me any of the following phrases out of the King James Bible: "The immortality of the soul," "I have an immortal soul," "When we die we go to heaven," "When sinners die they go to an ever-burning hell fire."

In that span of time, there have been a few (probably fewer than a dozen in over 47 years) who have attempted to claim the check.

However, never have any of the would-be claimants shown me any such "scriptures" in the King James Bible, for they simply are not THERE!

Instead, they have shown me other substitute scriptures which have appeared to them to indicate that man does indeed have an immortal soul; that those souls go either to heaven or to hell when the body dies!

Surely, one of the favorite texts used as "proof" is found in Luke 16, in the parable of "Lazarus and the rich man."

Get your own Bible, and read the parable thoroughly. For the sake of those who may not have a Bible close at hand, the entire parable is now printed here:

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores,

"And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

"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;

"And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

"And he cried and said, father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

"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.

"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

"For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

"Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

"And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

"And he said unto him, if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:19-31).

I have shown you the entire parable of "Lazarus and the rich man" in Luke 16, verses 19 through 31, in order that you may refer back to it again and again as you read the remainder of this booklet.

Notice What the Parable DOES NOT SAY

Turn again to verse 22, and notice that the parable does not say that Lazarus was carried into HEAVEN! Rather, it says he was "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Because many have assumed Abraham to be in heaven, they think the expression "Abraham's bosom" means heaven. But it does not, as we shall see clearly proved.

Notice that the parable does not say that the rich man went to an ever-burning hell fire! The Greek word which is used is hades, which always means the GRAVE, as you will see thoroughly explained.

Notice that the parable says "the beggar DIED" It does not say that only his body died but that his "soul" continued to live on.

The parable says ". . . the rich man also DIED" and does NOT say that only the rich man's body died, and that his "soul" lived on in torment!

Now, with the necessary interruptions in order to supply ample biblical PROOFS so you can truly come to understand this parable, let us carefully peruse the entire parable.

What Is a Parable?

Jesus continually spoke in parables. A parable is an analogy--a simile, representation or analogous story;

which could even be a fable, so long as it is used to illustrate certain essential points of TRUTH. An analogy is not necessarily the truth all by itself--but is analogous to the TRUTH which it helps to illustrate.

For example, in modern English, one might wish to draw the analogy that God's Holy Spirit flows in and through converted Christians not unlike an electrical current flows through a light bulb.

We are the light bulbs; and, just as an incandescent bulb only glows when the filament is brightly lit up by the ongoing, circuitous FLOW of electrical energy, and is only going to be brilliantly lit when the switch is in the "on" position; so we, as Christians, will only give out our light when we are connected to God the Father through the conduit which is Jesus Christ!

The foregoing is a fair example of an analogy.

God's Spirit is certainly not electricity; we are certainly not light bulbs; Jesus Christ is certainly not a conduit. Yet, this representative story helps us to understand a spiritual mystery--how Almighty God, through the power of His Holy Spirit, can literally empower, enliven, ennoble and brilliantly vivify us human beings, transforming us into His own sons and daughters.

The disciples were curious as to why Jesus spoke to the public in confusing parables. Many have assumed Jesus spoke in such puzzles to "make His meaning plainer"! The exact opposite is true.

"And the disciples came, and said unto Him, why speakest thou unto them in parables?"

"He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

"For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

"Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

"And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

"For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matthew 13:10-18). Astonishing! Jesus Christ clearly shows that only those whom God has specially called and chosen can understand! He shows that He was NOT trying to convert the world then; that people were blinded to the truth "LEST they should be converted and He should heal them!" This flies directly in the face of a commonly accepted fable; that Christ tried to call and convert as many as He could!

Notice that the carnal-minded Pharisees and others in His audience were not privileged to understand.

How it would SHOCK millions of people if they knew that, even to this time in this modern, 20th century, Jesus Christ is STILL not attempting to reveal the truth of God to the MAJORITY!

It is quite obvious from the context that the story of Lazarus and the rich man is in fact a parable! Therefore, it was intended to cloud and confuse its true meaning to the carnal minded, rebellious, hostile Pharisees -- and it is intended to be confusing to carnal minded, anti-law people today! If you are a person who is hostile to God's Ten Commandments; who places himself above the Bible, the chances are you will NOT agree with the TRUTH explained in this booklet; that you will not accept the true meaning of the parable of Lazarus and the rich man!

Even if, people argue, there really was such a person as the rich man and Lazarus (and we will assume they truly were real people for the purposes of this article), it makes no difference whatever to the SENSE; the MEANING of what Jesus was conveying.

Now, refer back to the parable and read the description of the poor beggar named Lazarus, filled with sores, lying at his gate, desperately hoping merely for crumbs from the rich man's table--the dogs licking his open, running wounds, until he died!

"And it came to pass, that the beggar DIED" (Luke 16:22).

What Is Death--What HAPPENED When the Beggar Died?

Your Bible says the beggar DIED! What happened when he died?

Let the Bible answer!

God told Adam that in the day he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would "surely DIE" (Genesis 2:17). Later, Satan the devil lied to the woman and said, "You shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4), which is the first recorded instance of Satan's attempt to deceive the human race by convincing them they have an immortal soul which will never die.

But God said, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto DUST [dirt, soil, earth] shalt THOU return!" (Genesis 3:19).

God told Adam, the conscious man, that Adam would return to DUST! He did not tell Adam only his body would become corrupted and return to dust--that his "soul" would live on--he told ADAM, the conscious man, that HE would return unto the dirt of the ground from which he was formed!

Notice what God inspired Solomon to write: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one DIETH, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath, so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.

"All go unto one place; all are OF the DUST and all turn to dust again!" (Ecclesiastes 3:19, 20).

Here, God makes it plain that the temporal physical existence of animal life and human life are the same.

Both man and beast are kept alive by the circulation of the bloodstream; as life-giving oxygen is carried to the body by the beating of the heart, and the human (and animal) circulatory system!

God says, "And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust.

"For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off" (Leviticus 17:13, 14).

Jesus Christ of Nazareth died for the sins of mankind on the stake! He died because of the shedding of HIS BLOOD! It is the shed BLOOD of Jesus Christ which atones for the sins of mankind. Christ's death was typified by the slaying of the Paschal lamb at the Passover. The lamb was slain by having its throat cut, and shedding its blood into a basin, which was then painted on the window sills and doors of the Israelites' homes. Today, you and I can have forgiveness of sins only through the BLOOD of Jesus Christ, which depicts His LIFE which was offered in our place!

Will you believe Jesus Christ? He said, "I am He that liveth, and was DEAD; and, behold, I am alive forevermore . . ." (Revelation 1:18).

There are many who do not believe that Jesus was truly DEAD, but think He was IN HELL, preaching to lost souls! For a clear understanding of this horribly false teaching, call or write for my brochure about the "spirits in prison."

Jesus' side was pierced, the fluids of the stomach, plus His life's blood, came pouring out! It is by the shed blood of Jesus Christ that our sins may be forgiven!

"Christ died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:3) by the shedding of His blood!

Remember, the Bible plainly says the beggar, Lazarus, DIED! When he died, he was DEAD, not conscious, not alive!

Notice what God inspired David to write about the state of the dead. ". . . In death there is no remembrance of thee [God]: in the grave [Hebrew sheol] who shall give thee thanks?" (Psalms 6:5). ". . . Man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that PERISH . . . like sheep they are laid in the grave [Hebrew sheol]; death shall feed upon them . . . their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling" (Psalms 49:12-14).

"Man that is in honor, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that PERISH" (Psalms 49:20).

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day HIS THOUGHTS PERISH!" (Psalms 146:3, 4).

What, then, does the Bible say about the state of the dead? It says the same thing any medical doctor could tell you; any coroner, paramedic, registered nurse or student qualified to give first aid! It says the dead are

completely dead; not conscious; have no memory; cannot praise God; that they are slowly returning to the earth, just as God warned Adam and Eve! Your Bible is clinically correct concerning the state of the dead!

Scientists know that when all brain activity has ceased; when the heart has stopped pumping and the circulation of the life-giving blood has ceased, a human being (or any animal) is DEAD!

They also know that the dead are completely UNCONSCIOUS; that total oblivion is the result!

God says, "For the living know that they shall die: but the DEAD KNOW NOT ANYTHING . . . for the memory of them [their memory] is forgotten"!

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [Hebrew sheol], whither thou goest"! (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10).

So what happened to Lazarus?

He DIED!

In the instant he died all of his thoughts ceased! His body began to decay, gradually decomposed, and returned to the dust of the earth. Now, turn again to the parable at the beginning of this article. Notice, ". . . And [Lazarus] was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16:22).

But WHEN? How? WHERE was Lazarus carried?

What Is "Abraham's Bosom"?

The word bosom is used 41 times in the Bible and always means the same thing--the area of the chest or breast of the human being. For example, a man's wife is spoken of as "the wife of thy bosom" (Deuteronomy 13:16), indicating a close, loving, personal relationship.

Notice, too, in the famous "last supper" of Jesus Christ, that John was leaning on Jesus' bosom (John 13:23), which was indicative of the close, personal relationship that existed between Jesus and John, for John was mentioned in the Bible as that disciple "whom Jesus loved."

Therefore, when the parable mentions Lazarus being "carried by the angels" into "Abraham's bosom," it means carried into a close, loving, personal relationship WITH ABRAHAM!

But WHERE Is Abraham?

Is Abraham in heaven? Is this merely another way in which the Bible is trying to tell you that Lazarus did, after all, "go to heaven"?

Remember, Jesus said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the

Son of Man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). He said this during His earthly ministry, CENTURIES after Abraham had died! In plain language, this scripture -- a first-person quotation from Christ Himself, tells us ABRAHAM WAS NOT IN HEAVEN! David, a man after God's own heart, and the king of Israel who is prophesied to be resurrected and to yet become the KING over all Israel even during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ (Jeremiah 30:9), is NOT in heaven!

Notice the proof in your own Bible! "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both DEAD and BURIED, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day" said Peter on the day of Pentecost. But some might argue, "Yes, maybe DAVID was dead and buried; maybe HIS BODY died, but DAVID HIMSELF surely went to heaven, didn't he?"

The answer is NO, he did not! Only a few verses later, you read that Peter said, "FOR DAVID IS NOT ASCENDED INTO THE HEAVENS " (Acts 2:29-34).

Here, in Peter's own words, during his famous sermon on the day of Pentecost, when God sent the Holy Spirit to build His church, we are given the absolute, PLAIN, unambiguous, positive statement that David is DEAD! We are told that he has been BURIED; and we have learned from his own psalms (as God inspired him to sing and write them) and from other scriptures what happens when one is dead and buried! David's flesh gradually decayed--he returned unto "the dust" from which he came! His death was exactly like that of animals; he is completely unconscious, in OBLIVION-- and, furthermore, the apostle Peter tells us that David DID NOT GO INTO HEAVEN! Are you willing to BELIEVE your own Bible? It does not matter if these plain scriptures contradict what you have been taught all your life; what you have heard from others! The Word of God is SURE! It will JUDGE each one of us, and is judging us today!

Now, what of Abraham?

"And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred three score and fifteen years.

"Then Abraham gave up the ghost [an old King James English expression which means 'expired'; or breathed his last breath] and DIED in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered unto his people.

"And his sons Isaac and Ishmael BURIED him in the cave of Machpelah . . ." (Genesis 25:7-9).

In the famous faith chapter God's Word says, "These all DIED in faith, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES" (Hebrews 11:13). "These" who died include ABRAHAM!

Notice verse 8: "By faith ABRAHAM, when he was called to go into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went . . ." Then, just five verses later, the Bible plainly says Abraham, together with all others mentioned in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, including Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses and many, many more, DIED!

What was the "promise" Abraham did not YET inherit? Why, the promise of ETERNAL LIFE! Almighty God promised Abraham the very KINGDOM OF GOD! Yet, concerning not only Abraham, but others of the most noteworthy men and women in the entire Bible, God says, "And these ALL, having obtained a good report through faith, RECEIVED NOT THE PROMISE" (Hebrews 11:39). Jesus Christ said to the

Pharisees, "You shall SEE Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God and you yourselves cast out!" But Abraham is NOT YET in the kingdom! Today, he is unconscious; utterly oblivious to the passing of time.

Neither David nor Abraham is in heaven! Job said, ". . . Man DIETH, and wasteth away: Yea, man giveth up the ghost [expires, or breathes his last breath!] and where is he? . . . O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me.

"If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my CHANGE come!

"Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands"! (Job 14:10-15).

Like Job, Abraham is waiting--as is David and all the other patriarchs and famous men and women of the Bible--until his CHANGE comes!

WHEN will that change come? Let the inspired Word of God answer! "For as in Adam all die [just as Lazarus DIED!], even so in Christ shall all be made alive [they are NOT ALIVE, now].

"But every man in his own order [meaning at the appropriate TIME]: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING"! (1 Corinthians 15:22, 23).

Is there anything about the words "first" and "afterward" you do not understand? If a parent says to a child, "You must eat your vegetables FIRST, and then AFTERWARD you may have dessert," even the child understands! Christ was resurrected to become the FIRSTfruits from ALL OF THE DEAD, including Abraham and David! AFTERWARD, as Paul clearly explained, Abraham, David, all the righteous patriarchs and the righteous will be resurrected.

WHEN are the dead resurrected? At the second coming of Christ--"at His coming"! --and not one instant before!

Read the entire 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians. Notice particularly verses 49 through 53: "And as we have borne the image of the earthy [we are flesh, made of the dust, and to the dust shall we return] we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

"This I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

"Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep [meaning die], but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the LAST trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the DEAD [including Lazarus, Abraham and David!] shall be raised incorruptible, and we [the living who remain at that time] shall be changed!

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality,

then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory"! Notice the Bible says immortality is something we human, mortal beings must "PUT ON" at the time of the resurrection of the dead, or the time of instantaneous change, at the LAST TRUMP!

Now, back to our parable concerning Lazarus.

We have found that Abraham is DEAD. Yet we know that Abraham is as good as INSIDE the Kingdom of God--waiting only until the TIME of his resurrection!

Jesus said, "And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 8:11).

This is the same Jesus Christ who, during this same earthly ministry, said, plainly, "NO MAN HATH ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN"! Jesus spoke of Abraham as dead, together with all the other patriarchs; waiting in the grave, until the RESURRECTION!

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

"And shall come forth; they that have done GOOD [including Abraham, and Lazarus] unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil [including the rich man], unto the resurrection of damnation [judgment]" (John 5:28, 29).

Jesus taught the fact of the RESURRECTION of the dead! Notice! "And many of them that sleep [they are completely oblivious, unconscious of the passage of time] in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2).

Remember what you read about the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15? Christ is called the "first fruits" from the DEAD! It is only afterward, AT HIS COMING, and not one split second before, that the "dead in Christ," which include all the righteous patriarchs; men such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David--yes, and even the poor beggar Lazarus--will be raised from the dead!

The many PLAIN, incontrovertible statements of Jesus Christ concerning the future event of the resurrection of the DEAD cannot be swept aside as if they do not exist by what is admittedly a parable, or a puzzle, which Jesus used to deliberately confuse many of those who heard!

So--WHEN will Lazarus actually be taken into Abraham's bosom?

At the time of the resurrection of the righteous--at the sound of the last trump, and not one second before!

WHERE will he be? Why, he will be in "Abraham's bosom"!

And where will Abraham be? Jesus already told us, but notice another quote: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you yourself thrust out.

"And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:28, 29). Again, Jesus warned the evil Pharisees of the yet future

event of the establishment of the Kingdom of God on this earth, and said they would SEE Abraham in that Kingdom, and they themselves cast out!

Lazarus will be among the many who will come from the four corners of the earth to "sit down in the kingdom." The rich man will be in the category of the Pharisees, gnashing his teeth in fear, anger and frustration, yet seeing Lazarus "in Abraham's bosom," meaning in the KINGDOM OF GOD!

Jesus couched the language of Luke 16 in the past, present and future! He made no differentiation, choosing to relate the story (which will actually transpire over the course of thousands of years) as if an unbroken story for the purposes of the great warning, the LESSON, it contained!

Now, notice again the parable. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom . . ."

How is Lazarus finally "carried" into the bosom of Abraham; where the rich man sees him as if seated at a great banquet?

We have learned that Lazarus cannot "see" anything while he is in the grave! He is not conscious; unable to praise God, has no memory, but is in complete oblivion.

He is one of those who "sleep in the dust of the earth" (Daniel 12:2) and will not be resurrected until the resurrection to DAMNATION! Notice, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

"And death and hell [hades, meaning "the grave"] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:13-15). It is this final and THIRD resurrection in which the rich man finds himself! There are THREE resurrections depicted in scripture.

Notice what Jesus said!

". . . Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

"And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other . . ." (Matthew 24:30, 31).

Jesus is coming back to this earth.

". . . Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so COME in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

And how did they see Him go? They saw him slowly ascending up into the clouds, until He was received completely out of their sight.

Here, in the first inspired message to ever come back down to earth after Christ was taken away from the

earth, the biblical promise is given that is repeated over and over again in the Word of God: "HE IS COMING AGAIN!"

Few realize that, if the earth were shrunken to the approximate size of a desk-sized globe, the mantle of air which surrounds our earth and is part of its physical characteristics (atmosphere, lithosphere, bathysphere) would be thinner than the lacquer finish on the globe!

I use that analogy to illustrate the point that, when Christ comes again, He is coming all the way down out of heaven, down inside the Milky Way galaxy, past the outermost planets, our sun and moon, and to the very surface of this earth where the clouds form! He is coming TO THE EARTH, and not merely coming NEAR it! "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (Zechariah 14:4).

"Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him..." (Revelation 1:7).

Notice how the saints are caught up, even as Jesus explained that Lazarus will someday be caught up by the ANGELS!

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise FIRST:

"Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the CLOUDS, to meet the Lord in the air: And so shall we ever BE with the Lord"! (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

See how all of these important scriptures fit perfectly together? It is at the last trump; with the voice of the archangel; as Jesus Christ of Nazareth comes down to this earth WITH CLOUDS!

He sends His angels to the four corners of the earth, and they gather the elect, living and dead, to the central place of His arrival!

From that time on, they will "ever be with the Lord"!

But where will the Lord BE?

On this earth as you read above.

The 14th chapter of Zechariah describes the second coming of Jesus Christ, the establishment of Jesus as "King over all the earth" (verse 9), the beginning of the millennial reign of Christ on this earth, and His first edict to all the families of the earth, to come to the new capital of the world, Jerusalem, to keep the Feast of Tabernacles! (Read the entire 14th chapter of Zechariah.)

Notice too: "Thou wast slain, and hath redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue and people, and nation;

"And hath made us unto our God kings and priests: and we SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH"!

(Revelation 5:10).

So WHERE does Lazarus go? He is caught up and taken to Jerusalem, to meet Jesus Christ in the air, in the clouds of this earth's atmosphere, at His second coming.

How is he carried there? By the angels.

And will he see Abraham there--in the Kingdom of God, just as he will see David, many of the other patriarchs, righteous prophets and famous men of the Bible past and present?

Of course! Jesus said so! He will be leaning on Abraham's bosom, in a close, intimate relationship with Abraham, who is called the "father of the faithful."

And WHEN does all this happen?

According to the inspired Word of God, which will judge us, the resurrection of Lazarus will occur "at the last trump," "at the voice of the archangel," and precisely at the time of the second coming of Christ!

Now, continue with the parable.

What Happened to the Rich Man?

". . . The rich man also DIED, and was buried . . ." (Luke 16:22).

Surely there is no need to return to all of the scriptures we have quoted explaining the state of the dead. Read each scripture quoted above once more, if you need your memory refreshed about what happens when one dies.

Your Bible does NOT say only the rich man's "body" died--but that the rich man went to some other place!

It says, plainly, ". . . the rich man DIED"!

And what happens when people die? Just as Abraham was buried, and decayed long ago; just as David's "sepulchre is with us unto this day," and as David is not in the heavens (Acts 2:34) but is waiting in the grave for the time of the second coming of Christ and the resurrection, so, likewise, the rich man is dead, completely unconscious; oblivious to the passing of time; is buried and waiting in his GRAVE!

Notice: "And in hell [Greek hades] he lift up his eyes . . ." There are three Greek words used in the New Testament which are translated "hell."

The most common is hades, which means, literally, the grave. Search the exhaustive concordances, the lexicons, the diaglots, other translations, the Greek interlinear or any other Bible help, and you will find substantial PROOF that the Greek word hades NEVER has anything whatsoever to do with fires or infernal regions.

Rather, it is always used as the exact Greek counterpart of the Hebrew sheol, which means THE GRAVE! (See Bullinger's Companion Bible, appendix 131.) It should never have been translated "hell" in the English language in 1611, but should have been rendered "the grave" which is its true meaning.

The second Greek word which is rendered as "hell" in English Bibles is Gehenna, or Geenna. The word Gehenna is derived from the "sons of Hinnom," who, anciently owned a steep, precipitous valley in the immediate environs of Jerusalem. During Jesus' day, the valley became a public dump, a place of refuse, and even the bodies of condemned criminals or dead animals were deposited there. Such bodies would be shoved over the edge, together with refuse, trash and garbage, to gradually decompose and to eventually be completely consumed by perpetually burning fires.

When Jesus spoke of Gehenna fire, He was using the analogy of the Valley of Hinnom to portray the literal HELL FIRE spoken of in 2 Peter 3. Notice. "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men ... The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:7-13). This does not say the "works" of the earth, meaning evil men, are continually burning; being tortured in an "ever burning" hell! It says they are BURNED UP!

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud [including the rich man], yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: And the day that cometh shall burn them up: saith the Eternal of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch and ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Eternal of Hosts" (Malachi 4:1-3). Yes, the Bible DOES speak of burning FIRE as punishment for the wicked! But that fire is not burning now--nor is it an "eternal fire" burning forever and ever!

Notice additional proof.

". . . Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the VENGEANCE OF ETERNAL FIRE" (Jude 7).

Jesus said, "But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all"! (Luke 17:29).

Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth as an example of that final punishment which is to come upon the wicked--being consumed by FIRE; completely dissolved and turned to ashes! Even as the last verses of Malachi and the final verses of Isaiah tell us, the wicked (such as the rich man, who sees a wall of fire approaching him) are to suffer the vengeance of GEHENNA FIRE! That fire will consume them. It will burn them up. They will be turned into ashes! They are then dead; dead for all eternity, from which there is never any resurrection.

Notice. "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly . . ." (2 Peter 2:6).

Though Sodom and Gomorrah are said to have suffered the "vengeance of eternal fire," it begs the question, "Are they still burning?"

Of course not! As a matter of fact, many Bible scholars believe that the ancient foundation stones of Sodom and Gomorrah have been found. Where? Buried beneath the waters at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea!

Not only did the fire and brimstone from God go out after it had finished consuming all of the people, and other combustible and flammable material in ancient Sodom and Gomorrah--not only has that fire been out for centuries and centuries--apparently the very site of those two ancient cities has been buried for these many millennia beneath water! The fire was from "the Eternal," but was not to burn for all eternity! It WENT OUT after it had consumed all the fuel upon which it fed.

Surely, suffering death by fire is one of the most horrifying and excruciating ways to DIE! Almighty God's punishments are indeed horrifying to contemplate! Yet, God is a merciful God, and has decreed that the wicked are to be burned up -- NOT kept alive in fiendish torture, burning, burning, burning but never quite burning up, as the satanic, false doctrines of so many churches teach!

Now, WHEN will the rich man "lift up his eyes"?

The Rest of the Dead

Actually, there are three categories of the dead.

So far, we have learned about "the dead in Christ." These are obviously converted Christians who have been convicted; who have repented of their sins, received water baptism (Romans 6), and had the laying on of hands for the receiving of God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

Whether they were martyred (as was Stephen, James, the brother of John, the apostle Paul and others) or simply died of old age (as we believe John the apostle did), they are, like David, Abraham and Lazarus, in their graves, awaiting the resurrection to life at the second coming of Christ.

We have seen (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17) in a number of scriptures that the dead in Christ will rise FIRST, at the very instant of the sounding of the last trump, at the second coming of Christ! They will not "precede" those who are alive and remain, who will be changed instantaneously, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Corinthians 15:50-52).

The first category of the dead, then, consists of the "dead in Christ."

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them. . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4).

The dead in Christ, who are to be resurrected at His second coming, will become a part of the governing, ruling body of Jesus Christ--the very Kingdom and government of God--during the thousand-year reign of Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords over the entire world.

But, what of the literally hundreds of millions who have never heard the truth of God; never once heard the gospel of Christ, perhaps never even heard the name of Jesus Christ?

Of them the Bible says, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished"! (Revelation 20:5). The "rest of the dead" consists of the overwhelming MAJORITY of all mankind. Not only all those who have never heard, but also those who heard, but DID NOT UNDERSTAND, as Christ said, giving the reason for His parables! If God did not GIVE them understanding, they were NOT CALLED!

At the end of the millennial reign of Christ, a great, general resurrection is said to occur. John sees this monumental event in vision when he writes, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away: And there was found no place for them.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:11, 12).

There is strong indication that each of these individuals, no matter what his age when he died-- whether 90 years or 9 months--will be granted a lifetime of one hundred years' duration.

Notice. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that has not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old: but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed"! (Isaiah 65:20).

This is strong indication that not only will there be a 100-year period following the millennium, but that the average life span during the millennium will be 100 years! The Bible seems to be telling us that, having had the opportunity of living in the physical, human state for 100 full years under the very government of the Kingdom of God, if a person is STILL a sinner and has refused to repent for all that time, the "sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed"!

This is the Word of God, after all, and it appears we are seeing a revelation of the heavenly pattern involving the human life span from the time of the millennium to the consummation of the first stage of God's great plan; reproducing after His own kind.

The parable of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16 is not describing to us a rich man who was ignorant, and who never had a chance for salvation! Instead, it is describing a heartless, cruel, selfish man; one who had no compassion or pity; who stuffed his own face while utterly ignoring the poor, emaciated, sick and starving beggar at his doorstep!

The inference is that the rich man may well be among the incorrigibly wicked, who would not hear during his human, physical life.

Look at the description of what the rich man immediately sees when he is finally resurrected!

"And in [the grave] he lift up his eyes, BEING IN TORMENTS, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

"And he cried and said, father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (Luke 16:23, 24).

In order to clear up widespread misunderstanding of the parable, we must go to many other scriptures, equally inspired, many of them direct quotations from Jesus Christ Himself, to understand the whole truth of exactly WHEN the rich man "lift up his eyes, BEING IN TORMENTS..."

You have already seen documented proof concerning the first resurrection--the resurrection of "the dead IN CHRIST" who come out of their graves at the last trump, coincident with the exact moment of the second coming of Christ.

Also, you have seen biblical evidence concerning the "great white throne judgment" (Revelation 20) wherein "the rest of the dead" who "lived not until the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20:25) come up for an approximate life span of 100 years, during which they shall be judged!

Judging Is Not Sentencing

The traditional Protestant-Catholic view of "judgment" is like the childhood picture painted from thousands of pulpits by eager pastors. Many believe judgment day consists of millions slowly approaching a huge judgment bench. Seated behind the bench is a grandfather-like Figure, God the Father, who has a gavel in His hand. Apparently, Satan the devil is at the left hand to accuse, while Christ is at the right hand of the righteous Judge to appeal as a counsel for the defense. Angels, according to this myth, open up huge ledgers in which are actually written all of the evil deeds done by each individual.

Finally, after hearing all the evidence, the Judge pounds the gavel on the bench, and pronounces the person before the judgment seat either "innocent" or "guilty" If guilty, the myth teaches that the impenitent sinner is plummeted immediately down to hell fire, accompanied by cackles of glee of Satan, and wails from the righteous.

If "innocent," the penitent sinner is immediately sent to heaven!

This childish, purely mythological, fanciful and FALSE notion is pure applesauce, nonsense, and ridiculous!

Many people confuse "judgment" with sentencing.

Think. God has plainly said (read the entire 11th chapter of Romans) that "all Israel shall be saved." That certainly includes the Jews, and those of the tribe of Levi, who basically have remained anti-Christian--who rejected Christ in the first century, and whose progeny, down through the nearly 2,000 years since, have rigidly adhered to the traditions established by their fathers, utterly and totally rejecting Christ as Savior!

Yet the Bible plainly says that all of these shall YET, in the future, be **SAVED!**

How?

You have already read the answer. They are included among that vast, general majority of all humanity (the "rest of the dead" who lived not again until the thousand years are finished) who come up in the great general resurrection--the resurrection to **JUDGMENT!**

It is a resurrection, not to a sentencing, resulting from deeds already done during their lifetimes, but a resurrection to judgment.

Remember, judgment is not a SENTENCING. Judgment takes place during an entire lifetime.

Notice. "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God [the church]; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"

"And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:17, 18).

Every member of God's true church is being judged, daily!

Judgment is a process. Jesus said, "To him that overcometh" He will grant salvation; sitting with Him in His throne, wielding power over the nations! (Revelation 2:26; Revelation 3:21). Overcoming is a life-long process!

Even Jesus Christ ". . . learned obedience by the things which He suffered; . . . being made perfect . . ." (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

The Bible absolutely proves that the process of judgment takes place over the entire life span of a Christian! The church is being judged, daily. You and I are being judged, daily!

"The Rest of the Dead"

Who are the "rest of the dead"?

They are all other human beings who have ever lived and died who (1) were never converted; never had an opportunity for salvation; perhaps never even heard the name of Jesus Christ; they are NOT among the "dead in Christ." This means they are the vast majority of all mankind.

(2) They have not committed the unpardonable sin! This great truth--so simply and unerringly revealed in the Bible--is nevertheless concealed from the MILLIONS in professing "churchianity" today. The bulk of the mainstream Protestant, evangelical churches, holding to the pagan doctrines of the immortality of the soul, are BLINDED to this truth! The mainstream fundamentalist churches seemingly believe that all Chinese, Japanese, Russians, Southeast Asians, the Indians (in India), the bulk of all Africans and countless other human beings are going to go immediately to an ever-burning hell when they die--even though they have never had an opportunity for salvation--literally never heard the name of Jesus Christ! This ghastly, inhuman picture of unrelenting TORTURE is preached every day of the SUN in thousands of churches! It is A LIE!

You have seen vivid PROOF that God, in His infinite mercy, will DESTROY unrepentant sinners, but HE WILL NOT TORTURE THEM FOR ETERNITY! God may be "inhuman," but He is not "inhumane!"

Strangely, instead of accepting this precious truth with alacrity and joy--being vastly relieved that these

hundreds of millions of hapless human beings who have known only a lifetime of sickness, squalor and disease are NOT going immediately into the torments of hell, cynical evangelicals here and there scoff and sneer at this precious truth of God, and refuse to accept it! They shall bear the consequences of their own stiff-necked, hard heartedness.

The vast majority of all humankind represent the "rest of the dead" spoken of in Revelation 20 and verse 5.

Notice that they "lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

Later, in this same vision, John said he saw ". . . a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away [a metaphorical statement] and there was found no place for them.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was open, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:11, 12).

Now, WHAT is the standard by which God judges us? What code, what set of laws, what standards of living, what mores, what pattern of life has God set down by which He judges us?

Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). Jesus said, plainly, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Jesus said, "Thy word is TRUTH"! (John 17:17). So what is the set of regulations or standards God will use to judge His church?

Why, the BIBLE!

The word "Bible" is the English version of the Greek word biblos. Biblos in the Greek is a plural word which literally means "BOOKS." Transliterated, the expression "Holy Bible" should read "Holy BOOKS." The books of the Bible, containing the laws, statutes, judgments; the historical and prophetic books; the gospels of Jesus Christ; the epistles of the apostles--the whole Bible--is being used, daily, to JUDGE God's church, and each of us individually!

Remember, God says, "For I am the Eternal, I CHANGE NOT"! (Malachi 3:6) and tells us that "Jesus Christ [is] THE SAME yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Will God use some different standard to JUDGE this great host of multiple MILLIONS of human beings in the great white throne judgment--the second resurrection?

No! He does not change--He remains the same. Therefore, the virtually innumerable dead who will come up "when the thousand years are finished" will be JUDGED out of the same "books" (biblos--meaning the BIBLE) that God has used, and is using, to JUDGE His church today!

It is obvious then, that a period of time, after the millennium, will extend for 100 years (Isaiah 65:20). These hundreds of millions of human beings will be completely unaware of the passage of time! So far as their minds and memories are concerned, the difference between the moment their consciousness ceased at the

moment of their deaths and the time of their resurrection is less than the batting of an eyelash; the "twinkling of an eye."

They will be totally unaware of the lapse of ANY time! Remember, "The dead know not anything"!

But is the rich man in our parable included among this group?

No, of course not!

Remember, at the time setting of the rich man's resurrection he ". . . lift up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke 16:23).

The rich man is obviously facing imminent death by FIRE!

The Third Resurrection

Believe it or not, your Bible absolutely proves there are THREE resurrections! If you have not heard my sermon tapes which thoroughly expound this little-known truth, call or write for them immediately. They are entitled "Resurrection I and II."

Think about it. The FIRST resurrection (God says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection" --Revelation 20:6) takes place precisely at the instant of Christ's second coming!

The "rest of the dead" who "lived not again until the thousand years were finished" come up in the great, general resurrection, spoken of as "the great white throne judgment" in the Bible.

But there is one category of the DEAD we have omitted!

Who are these? Notice this prophecy.

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth [notice, there are still human, physical NATIONS on this earth, at some indeterminate time after the millennium!], Gog and Magog [all Bible commentators unanimously agree this is a spiritual term, obviously implying the incorrigibly wicked] to gather them together to BATTLE: the number of whom is as the sand of sea.

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, encompassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them [they are destroyed by FIRE].

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet [WERE CAST] and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever"! (Revelation 20:7-10). The word "are" is italicized, indicating that the translators supplied it.

But the Beast and the False Prophet WERE CAST into Gehenna fire immediately after the second coming of Christ, over 1,100 years BEFORE this picture of the incorrigible being destroyed.

This horrifying and great event, obviously placed at some time AFTER the expiration of the thousand years, is brought about for an obvious reason.

God will finally interrupt human reproduction!

Throughout the millennium, as many scriptures describe, human, physical nations will be living in a virtual UTOPIA; marrying, raising families, enjoying the miraculous and wondrous fruits and benefits of the very Kingdom of God--the GOVERNMENT OF GOD--which will rule over this entire earth! But during the final judgment a 100-year life span will be allotted (Isaiah 65:20).

Ironically, human beings can become accustomed to anything.

A few generations ago, our great-grandparents would have been SHOCKED, petrified, if an F-15 jet fighter had suddenly come roaring overhead, to bank steeply, turn straight up, and disappear out of sight, after-burners blazing, going up through 50,000 feet in less than three minutes!

They would have believed it to be a visitor from outer space!

Yet, today, millions of human beings in nations all over the world regularly hear sonic booms; travel in jet aircraft, watch their television sets as the exploits of American and Soviet astronauts are depicted; witness the blast-off of spaceship Columbia and the return and landing of the space shuttle. Millions sat transfixed as they watched the first American lunar landing; watched men walking, cavorting and driving lunar vehicles about on the surface of the moon. Millions have watched laser-guided "smart bombs" and cruise missiles smashing dead center into targets in Iraq and Afghanistan!

How quickly we human beings adapt. How quickly we take things for granted.

Apparently, at the end of 1,000 years, millions of human beings will have begun to take for granted the very Kingdom, rule and government of God! It will not seem at all "strange" to them to be in virtual daily contact with those of a different dimension, a spirit world, who will be visibly manifest to them!

During the entire thousand years--the millennial reign of Christ--Satan has been "imprisoned," barred from access to the human race.

Now, however, God is dealing with the final, end-time generation; the progeny of all those who have absolutely rebelled, and REFUSED to repent, and to submit to and accept the government of God.

God allows Satan to once again influence these human beings, and in his final and last great dramatic act Satan the devil once more attempts to marshal sufficient human forces, together with his millions of demons, to attempt to overthrow the very throne and government of God!

The number THREE is used by God to connote finality.

This will be Satan's THIRD and FINAL attempt to overthrow the government of God! The first was when he attempted to overthrow God prior to the creation of Adam. The second is depicted in the 12th chapter of Revelation, and takes place just prior to the great tribulation.

This, the third and final attempt of Satan the devil, ends in much the same way, except that this time Satan is banished from the earth FOREVER, and is to become, if the strong hint in the book of Jude is any guide, like a ". . .wandering star [s], to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 13).

Now, notice again the last two verses of the 20th chapter of Revelation.

"And death and hell [Greek: the grave] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the SECOND DEATH.

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:14, 15).

The macabre description of verse 14 strongly implies that those who are in the grave, even though they have met the first death ("to all men it is given once to die") are nevertheless waiting in their graves for a resurrection which will culminate in their being put to death BY FIRE!

The Bible plainly shows that all men die, ONCE." This first human, physical death is nothing more than the logical consequence of the aging process. It may come at great age simply because vital organs wear out, and a person dies of "old age." It may come quietly in one's sleep. It may be through infant mortality, sickness or disease, accidents, such as automobile collisions, airplane crashes, drownings, or even dying through smoke inhalation or in flames. It may come through warfare--and MILLIONS will yet die in global wars!

But, no matter how it comes, this first death is NOT the "second death" spoken of in the Bible; it is NOT the penalty for SIN! It is the normal, natural, human result of wars, accidents, caprice or old age!

It might be said that some people like my grandmother, who died at age 96, die in a pleasant fashion. She merely went to sleep in her chair with her Bible, which she had been reading, on her lap, and failed to wake up. No death could be more merciful.

Of course, she was a converted member of God's true church, and is not in the category we speak of here.

But Almighty God has decreed "the wages of sin is DEATH" (Romans 6:23) and He plainly shows us that the kind of death; the mode, method or TYPE of death, is being cast into the "lake of fire"!

The Bible clearly teaches that the final wages of sins unrepented of shall be HELL FIRE!

But it is not a fire which is burning forever; and human beings are not tortured endlessly; rather, they are burned up in the "lake of fire"! The true "hell fire" of the Bible is THOUSANDS OF DEGREES CENTIGRADE HOTTER than the false "ever burning hell fire" of paganism! The fire of God BURNS UP the wicked, instead of merely singeing them, torturing them!

Now, read Peter's description of this horrifying occurrence.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved. what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conduct and godliness,

"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2 Peter 3:10-12).

The incorrigibly wicked will be resurrected in a final, THIRD resurrection--which is a resurrection to DEATH! The rich man in the parable of Luke 16 is spoken of as being in the GRAVE (verse 23), where he finally "lift [s] up his eyes, being in TORMENTS . . ." (verse 23). A little later he begs, ". . . Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am TORMENTED in [by--Greek] this flame"! (verse 24).

What? Think about it! If he is already in a flame; completely surrounded by and engulfed by seething fires, would he be carrying on a conversation? Instantly his hair, eyebrows and eyelashes would have dissolved; his skin would begin blistering, and he would have only a fraction of a second to emit a bloodcurdling SCREAM!

No, this conversation is not coming from a man who is completely engulfed in flame! What, then, is TORMENTING the rich man?

Why, what he SEES COMING TOWARD HIM, AND THE CONTRAST OF WHAT HE SEES LAZARUS ENJOYING! Notice: It says he "lift up his EYES. . ." even as Jesus warned the Pharisees, "You shall SEE Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom, and you yourselves cast out"!

Shocked realization comes to the rich man's mind! According to the parable, he instantly recognizes Lazarus and Abraham. He sees them as if in a glorious state, perhaps even engaged in partaking of a sumptuous banquet, not unlike the hundreds of banquets the rich man enjoyed during his life, all the while refusing even the leavings of his table for Lazarus!

Instantly, he realizes a wall of flame is coming toward him, threatening to engulf him! Frightened nearly out of his wits, his mouth becomes completely DRY! His tongue virtually cleaves to the roof of his mouth, and he cannot even moisten his lips! In mental anguish and paralyzing fright, he calls out for Lazarus to at LEAST "dip the tip of his finger in water" and COOL HIS TONGUE!

If he were in the flames, he would call for a bucket brigade; for BARRELS, thousands of GALLONS of water, for several fire companies, dozens of hoses, or a thunderous cloudburst of rain!

His anguish is, at the very instant of his awareness, MENTAL anguish!

Now, complete the parable, bearing in mind all you have learned. After the statement from Abraham reminding the rich man that his brief lifetime brought him all the good things while he looked on Lazarus' suffering, Abraham says, "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"! (verse 26). The rich man is shockingly made aware that it is everlastingly TOO LATE! He had already committed, by hundreds of acts of omission; by a continuous attitude of cruelty and hardness of heart, the unpardonable sin!

Resigned, at last, to his fate, he begs Abraham to send someone to his father's house, to warn his five brothers--". . . lest they also come into this place of torment" (verse 28).

Abraham then says, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them"!

Amazing. Here, even in a New Testament parable of Jesus Christ, Christ characterizes Abraham as saying, in the future, to the rich man that there is sufficient knowledge and information in the OLD TESTAMENT to understand the plan of salvation! He strongly insists that anyone who will truly listen to "Moses and the prophets" can come into possession of saving knowledge!

Notice what the rich man then acknowledges. He says, ". . . Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent" (verse 30).

The rich man now realizes that Abraham has been DEAD. He realizes he, the rich man, has also been dead for an indeterminate number of years. Suddenly, he is aware that he has been completely OBLIVIOUS to the passage of time; in his own mind, his brethren, living in his father's house, are still there.

In his vision of the Kingdom of God, he hears Abraham finally say, ". . . If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, **THOUGH ONE ROSE FROM THE DEAD**"! (verse 31).

What a shocking truth!

Do you know what this final line of the parable obviously implies?

It implies the shocking TRUTH that this world will NOT take warning from, nor heed the invitation of, **JESUS CHRIST OF NAZARETH!**

For Jesus Christ of Nazareth DID, literally **RISE FROM THE DEAD!**

He commissioned His apostles, sent His Holy Spirit and formed them into the nucleus of His church.

He delivered to that church the great commission to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God (the coming ruling GOVERNMENT of God) as a WARNING, and as a witness against the nations!

It is actually TRUE, then, that, even though "one from the dead" witnesses to hard-hearted human beings, they WILL NOT hear! Millions of deceived, professing nominal "Christians" THINK they are saved! Yet, those same millions believe "Moses and the Prophets," in other words, the OLD TESTAMENT, is DONE AWAY! They do NOT BELIEVE "Moses and the Prophets," NOR do they believe Jesus Christ Himself!

Now you know the real TRUTH about the parable of "Lazarus and the rich man!"

Remember, the Word of God stands or falls on any one of its parts. The many plain, easy to understand scriptures and direct quotations from Jesus Christ concerning the state of the dead, the resurrections, the judgment, the second coming of Christ and the Kingdom of God cannot be torn out of the Bible by those who would seek to use a comparatively vague, ambiguous and somewhat puzzling PARABLE to teach the opposite!

Ignoring the hard-hitting lesson of the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, countless professing Christians have seized upon this vague parable, twisted it and distorted it out of all sense and meaning, and tried to use it to perpetuate the false doctrines of the immortality of the soul, an ever-burning hell and the myth that Christians go immediately to heaven when they die!

The sin of the rich man is a sin commonly shared by millions today! Without pity, without compassion and genuine empathy for their fellow man, they observe other human beings about them who are sick, diseased, injured or in poverty, and go their own way, lavishing every good thing on themselves, and ignoring those in desperate need!

Now, as a special study help, here is some important information from Dr. Bullinger's "Companion Bible" which demonstrates the truth about the Greek words translated "hell" in the King James Bible.

THE SYNONYMOUS WORDS FOR "HELL," ETC.

APPENDIX 131, REPRINTED FROM BULLINGER'S "COMPANION BIBLE"

"Hell" is the English rendering of two different Greek words in the N.T

The English word is from the Anglo-Saxon *hel*, Genitive Case *helle* = a hidden place, from the Anglo-Saxon *helan* = to hide.

It is in the N.T. used as the translation of two Greek words:

I. Gehenna. - Gr. *geenna*. This is the transliteration of the Heb. *Gai' Hinnom*, i.e. the Valley of Hinnom or "the Valley" of [the sons of] Hinnom, where were the fires through which children were passed in the worship of Moloch.

In the O.T Tophet was the Heb. word used, because it was a place in this valley.

In our Lord's day the idolatry had ceased, but the fires were still continually burning there for the destruction of the refuse of Jerusalem. Hence, *geenna* was used for the fires of destruction associated with the judgment of God. Sometimes, "geenna of fire." See 2 Kings 23.10. Isa. 30. 33. Jer. 7. 31, 32; 19. 11-14. *Geenna* occurs 12 times, and is always rendered "hell," viz. Matt. 5. 22, 29, 30; 10. 28; 18. 9; 23. 15, 33. Mark 9. 43,45,47. Luke 12. 5. Jas. 3. 6.

II. Hades. - Gr. *hades*. from a (privative) and *idein*, to see (Ap. 133. I. i); used by the Greeks for the unseen world.

The meaning which the Greeks put upon it does not concern us; nor have we anything to do with the imaginations of the heathen, or the traditions of Jews or Romanists, or the teachings of demons or evil spirits, or of any who still cling to them.

The Holy Spirit has used it as one of the "words pertaining to the earth," and in so doing has "purified" it, "as silver tried in furnace" (see notes on Ps. 12.6). From this we learn that His own words "are pure," but words belonging to this earth have to be "purified."

The Old Testament is the fountainhead of the Hebrew language. It has no literature behind it. But the case is entirely different with the Greek language. The Hebrew Sheol is a word Divine in its origin and usage. The Greek Hades is human in its origin and comes down to us laden with centuries of development, in which it has acquired new senses, meanings, and usages.

Seeing that the Holy Spirit has used it in Acts 2. 27, 31 as His own equivalent of Sheol in Psalm 16. 10, He has settled, once for all, the sense in which we are to understand it. The meaning He has given to Sheol in Ps. 16. 10 is the one meaning we are to give it wherever it occurs in the N.T., whether we transliterate it or translate it. We have no liberty to do otherwise, and must discard everything outside the Word of God.

The word occurs eleven times (Matt. 11. 23; 16. 18, Luke 10. 15; 16. 23. Acts 2. 27,31. 1 Cor. 15. 55. Rev. 1. 18; 6. 8; 20. 13, 14); and is rendered "hell" in every passage except one, where it is rendered "grave" (1 Cor. 15. 55, marg. "hell").

In the R.V. the word is always transliterated Hades, except in 1 Cor. 15. 55 (where "death" is substituted because of the reading, in all the texts, of thanate for hade), and in the American R.V. also.

As Hades is the Divine Scriptural equivalent of Sheol, further light may be gained from Ap. 35, and a reference to the 65 passages there given. It may be well to note that while Hades is rendered "hell" in the N.T. (except once, where the rendering "the grave" could not be avoided), Sheol, its Hebrew equivalent, occurs 65 times, and is rendered "the grave" 31 times (or 54 percent); "hell" 31 times (4 times with margin "the grave," reducing it to 41.5 percent); and "pit" only 3 times (or 4.5 percent).

"The grave," therefore, is obviously the best rendering, meaning the state of death (Germ. sterbend, for which we have no English equivalent); not the act of dying, as an examination of all the occurrences of both words will show.

1. The rendering "pit" so evidently means "the grave" that it may at once be substituted for it (Num. 16. 30, 33. Job 17. 16).
2. The rendering "the grave" (not "a grave," which is Hebrew keber; or bor) exactly expresses the meaning of both Sheol and Hades. For, as to direction, it is always down: as to place, it is in the earth: as to relation, it is always in contrast with the state of the living (Deut. 32. 22-25 and 1 Sam. 2. 6-8); as to association, it is connected with mourning (Gen. 37. 34, 35), sorrow (Gen. 42. 38. 2 Sam. 22. 6. Ps. 18. 5; 116. 3), fright and terror (Num. 16. 27, 34), mourning (Isa. 38. 3,10, 17, 18), silence (Ps. 6. 5; 31. 17. Ecc. 9. 10), no knowledge (Ecc. 9. 5,6, 10), punishment (Num. 16. 29, 34. 1 Kings 2. 6, 9. Job 24. 19. Ps. 9. 17 (R.V. = returned)), corruption (Ps. 16. 10. Acts 2. 27, 31); as to duration, resurrection is the only exit from it (Ps. 16. 11. Acts 2. 27, 31; 13. 33-37. 1 Cor. 15. 55. Rev. 1. 18; 20. 5, 13, 14).

III. Tartaroo (occurs only in 2 Pet. 2. 4) = to thrust down to Tartarus, Tartarus being a Greek word, not used elsewhere, or at all in the Sept. Homer describes it as subterranean (cp. Deut. 32. 22, which may refer to this). The Homeric Tartarus is the prison of the Titans, or giants (cp. Heb. Rephaim, Apt. 25), who rebelled against Zeus."

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-End-

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