

The Rich Man and Lazarus Revealed!

After I was converted I prayed and asked Yahweh to reveal His truth to me; I confessed that I was willing to put aside the teachings of men and that I would be willing to walk in the truth as He would reveal it by His Holy Spirit, even if I had to stand alone. You see, the truth is not popular, although it is very precious, **“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” (Proverbs 23:23)**. So what is the truth about this parable? Does it teach us about after-life experiences? Will the dead burn forever in hell fire? Do you possess an immortal soul?

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I know what it feels like to rise up to defend what one has been taught, and that's okay; however, I'm not interested in defending denominational beliefs, I'm only interested in defending what the Bible plainly teaches. I once had a preconceived theology when I accepted everything that was taught from the pulpit without checking and proving everything for myself. I used to have a preconceived theology concerning the immortal soul, as I was taught the same things that millions of others were (are) concerning this subject.

I was raised a Catholic and when I was converted at the age of 19, I attended a Pentecostal church for 11 years. Please do not think that I do not know where my evangelical friends are coming from. Do you think that I just decided one day to reject the doctrine of the 'immortality of the soul,' on a whim? I defended what I was taught and what I believed, just as many are doing today. Based on my understanding back then, I was convinced that I possessed an immortal soul, until I decided to study the subject in greater detail for myself.

I have had to un-learn, re-learn and learn many things for the first time after I came out of religious Babylon. (See Rev.18:4). I was willing to change my beliefs as Yahweh's spirit revealed truth through His Word. I did not want to accept error even if it had the Pope's stamp of approval on it! The Bible is very clear that we are accountable to Yahweh, and not to man. It is better to put our confidence in Yahweh, rather than in men (Psa.118:8). It is so easy and comfortable to just conform and follow the confused religious masses, hoping and believing that the whole world could not possibly be wrong. Yet this is precisely what the Bible teaches! The whole world **IS** deceived! (Rev.12:9).

I used to be an arrogant Pentecostal, who thought that I had it all together, that everything that I was taught was correct, and that all of my doctrines were based on the Scriptures. It's a very humbling experience to have to confess error and admit that I believed a lie. As a hungry student of the Scriptures I wanted to accept what the Bible plainly teaches, even if it went against the grain of so-called ecclesiastical authority, even if I would be rejected by my friends and peers, even if it was contrary to what the vast majority of professing Christians blindly accepted and believed. Yes, I have changed my theology when I proved myself wrong from the Word of the Eternal. Yes, I have made changes because I was willing to admit that I was taught wrong. Are **you** willing to do this? It takes courage and a great love for Yahweh and His Word.

So please, let us lay aside any doubt or question in your mind that this former Pentecostal may be closed-minded and ask **yourself** if **you** are prepared to reject your beliefs if you discover, through much soul-searching (being honest with yourself) and intense personal Bible study, that your beliefs do not measure up to the inspired Word of the Eternal.

This study requires an incredible undertaking. If we are **truth-seekers**, then we must be willing to compare Scripture with Scripture and as the Prophet Isaiah says, **“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little” (Isa. 28:10).**

Also, please understand that as a God-fearing man and a follower of our Master and Savior, Yeshua (Jesus) our Messiah, my words will be chosen very carefully and spoken in true brotherly love. I will not condemn, criticize or use sarcasm towards any dear brother whom Yeshua has died for, **“These things I command you, that ye love one another.”(John 15:17) and “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”(John 13:35).**

If at times I speak the Word of Yahweh with boldness, please do not hold that against me because I have nothing to boast of in myself but, my soul shall make her boast in the Master Yeshua the Messiah and in His Word; in His wisdom, strength, riches, righteousness, redemption, and salvation. Blessed be His Holy Name, now and forevermore!

Have you ever looked up the word “soul” in a concordance? Do you know that the word translated “soul” in the KJV Bible (my personal study Bible) appears 858 times in the Old and New Testaments and not ONCE is it connected in any way, shape or form with the word “immortal.” When you study the creation of man in Genesis 2:7, you will find that Yahweh created man a LIVING soul (being). There is a big difference between **“having”** something and **“being”** that thing. Man IS a soul. Yahweh does not say that he put an immortal soul **inside** of man. In fact, the word “immortal” only appears **once** in the entire Bible and it applies only to Elohim Himself! Listen:

“Now unto the King eternal, IMMORTAL, invisible, the only wise Elohim, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.” (1 Timothy 1:17).

Paul, in writing to Timothy several years after the resurrection, plainly states that only Elohim is immortal:

“WHO ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.” (1 Timothy 6:16).

It is only when you look up the word translated “soul” and examine all the passages, that you can begin to understand its diverse meanings. The Hebrew word rendered “soul” is “nephesh” and the Greek word is “psuche.” Their definitions according to Strong’s Concordance are as follows:

Hebrew - #5315 nephesh (neh'-fesh)

AV-soul 475, life 117, person 29, mind 15, heart 15, creature 9, body 8, himself 8, yourselves 6, dead 5, will 4, desire 4, man 3, themselves 3, any 3, appetite 2, misc 47; in total 753 times.

- 1) soul, self, life, creature, person, appetite, mind, living being, desire, emotion, passion
- 1a) that which breathes, the breathing substance or being
- 1b) living being
- 1c) living being (with life in the blood)
- 1d) the man himself, self, person or individual
- 1e) seat of the appetites
- 1f) seat of emotions and passions
- 1g) activity of mind
- 1h) activity of the will
- 1i) activity of the character

Greek - #5590 psuche (psoo-khay')

AV - soul 58, life 40, mind 3, heart 1, heartily + 1537 1, not tr 2; 105

- 1) breath
- 1a) the breath of life
- 1a1) the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing
- 1a1a) of animals
- 1a1b) of men
- 1b) life
- 1c) that in which there is life
- 1c1) a living being, a living soul
- 2) the soul
- 2a) the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions (our heart, soul etc.)

As you can see, the word has many meanings, however, nowhere in the Scripture is it said that it is immortal. We know that the Father is an Eternal Spirit, yet we read in Psalm 11:5, **“YAHWEH trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his SOUL hateth.”**

Does Yahweh, who is a spirit being, possess an immortal soul? That sounds silly, doesn't it? This verse is simply referring to His very being, His character.

A soul can die. **“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul (life) of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.** (Ezekiel 18:4).

The Psalmist declared that when a person dies, the exact opposite of Genesis 2:7 takes place: **“His breath goeth forth (breath of life), he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”** (Psa.146:4).

In Romans 13:1 Paul says, “Let every soul (person) be subject unto the higher powers (authorities).” Now we know that Paul is talking about people, not disembodied spirits.

According to Matthew 26:28 and Isaiah 53:10-12, Messiah shed His SOUL for us. Notice that His soul was an offering for sin. His shed blood caused His death. Isaiah 52:14 describes the horrible beating Messiah took when He was scourged, before being forced to carry His cross.

Yeshua died because He lost His blood, it was shed. Isaiah 53:12 says, “because he hath poured out his soul (blood or life) unto death.” “For the life of the flesh is in the blood.” (Lev.17:11).

Then where did this idea of an invisible, immortal soul come from?!?

Socrates, the Greek philosopher taught this pagan error to Plato who in turn wrote in his book, “The Phaedo,” that death was merely the separation of the soul and body. He did not teach (or want to believe) that death was really DEATH, rather he taught that death is a “separation” of the soul from the body.

In fact, this world has chosen to believe the lie of the serpent, “Ye shall not surely die,” rather than Yahweh’s word! The Bible teaches that souls (people, bodies) go to the grave (sheol/hades, rendered hell) when they die, and it is only through the hope of the resurrection that we can be redeemed from the grave. The word sheol in the Old Testament never meant eternal torture. Listen to Yahweh’s Word!

What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah. (Psalms 89:48).

Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. (Job 33:22).

But Elohim will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah. (Psalms 49:15)

As shown above in the definitions, sometimes the word “nephesh” rendered soul, refers to a person’s ‘heart’ as in pouring out one’s soul or heart: **“When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of Elohim, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.”** (Psa.42:4).

The apostle Paul makes it very clear **when** we actually **put on immortality**, in the great resurrection chapter of 1 Corinthians chapter 15. It is when the Messiah returns. Read the entire chapter, carefully. He says that there is a natural body and a spiritual body. Listen to how Paul describes the gift of eternal life as a future resurrection promise, not an indwelling immortal soul:

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruit of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all (future tense) be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruit; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.” (vs. 20-23).

“It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” (vs. 44).

Paul uses the future tense when he describes the spiritual body that we shall receive: “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we **shall also** bear the image of the heavenly.” (vs. 49).

He also tells us **when** all of this takes place, at the **last trumpet** blast when Yeshua returns, and only **THEN** does our corruptible flesh put on immortality:

Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, 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 shall be raised incorruptible, and we 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.”

Rome’s false “immortal soul” teaching makes the promise and joy of the resurrection meaningless!

I have only scratched the surface with you here on this crucial subject. So much more could be said, but I want to explain the real meaning of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke chapter 16, which many claim is not a parable.

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is, no doubt, one of the most quoted and least understood of all the parables given by the Master. Many sincere advocates of the immortal soul doctrine insist that this story is a literal account of after death experiences and therefore, it cannot be a parable. Many modern religious teachers have completely isolated the story from its original context and have used it as a device for scaring people. This tactic was very popular during the dark, Middle Ages, with the Romanists who desired to control the ignorant masses and bring every living soul into complete obedience and allegiance to the Mother Church of Rome.

After the Reformation had begun, this doctrine of eternal torture was still widely taught by those who had broken away from the Roman church. This is why many of the denominations

that came out of Rome (Yahweh calls them “harlots,” or daughters of the great whore of Babylon, see Rev.17:5), have retained many of her traditional doctrines and know it not! Many so-called “conversions” have taken place resulting from a fear of eternal torment as is depicted in this passage (Luke 16). These people were and are today, in desperate need of the true joy that comes from a greater understanding and appreciation of Yahweh’s holy and righteous character.

The Roman church has painted an unjust picture of the character of Almighty Yahweh, who is seen as an angry old man who takes pleasure in gazing upon his victims as they roast in the flames of Gehenna, without being consumed, for all eternity. After all, they deserve it, even if they didn’t ask to be born, right?

The Bible says that, “the wages of sin is DEATH,” but the Roman church and her confused daughters say, “No Way!” “The wages of sin is Eternal Life...in hell fire!” This is totally contrary to the Master’s own words who said, concerning the wicked, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment (not punishing).” (Matt.25:46). The “effects” of the punishment is eternal in nature. The Greek word from which the word “punishment” is here translated literally means “everlasting cutting off.”

Jude 1:7 says, “Even as 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.”** Are Sodom and Gomorrah still burning today! No, of course not! Once the fire accomplished its purpose it burned out. The consequence or effects of that fire were eternal, not the fire itself.

The same can be said of the city of Jerusalem. Yahweh warned the Jews that Jerusalem would be burned and the fire would not be quenched. “But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.” (Jer.17:27). You can read the account of the burning of Jerusalem in Jer.52:13. Is this fire still burning or did it burn itself out? When Yahweh says that a fire shall not be quenched, He means that **NOBODY** is going to put it out until it has accomplished its purpose.

Furthermore, the words of Yeshua in this passage (Matt.25:46), show that the punishment of the wicked cannot be eternal, conscious suffering for the simple reason that no creature could be in eternal conscious suffering without having “eternal life,” or “eternal consciousness.” But, this is the gift of the righteous only! Yeshua said in the same passage, “The righteous go away unto life eternal, which means that the wicked do not get eternal life, but eternal death -- eternal cutting off, the **“second death,”** from which there is no hope of another resurrection!

That’s right! The incorrigibly wicked are promised **death, destruction, perishing, eternal cutting off!** These are some of the most **strongest words in the Greek language** that are used to describe the **“cessation of life,”** yet the vast majority of professing Christendom has been brainwashed into believing that the wicked have been granted “eternal life” **in another place!**

Listen to the Words of the Eternal in your own Bible!!!

“He **preserveth not** the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.” (Job 36:6).

“For evildoers shall be **cut off**: but those that wait upon Yahweh, they shall inherit the earth.” (Psa.37:9).

“For yet a little while, and the wicked **shall not be**: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it **shall not be**.” (Psa.37:10).

“But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” (Psa.37:11).

“But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of Yahweh shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; **into smoke shall they consume away**.” (Psa.37:20).

“For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be **cut off**.” (Psa.37:22).

“For Yahweh loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved forever: but the seed of the wicked shall be **cut off**. The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever.” (Psa.37:28, 29).

“Wait on Yahweh, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are **cut off**, thou shalt see it.” (Psa.37:34).

“But the transgressors shall be **destroyed together**: the end of the wicked shall be **cut off**.” (Psa.37:38).

“Elohim shall likewise **destroy thee forever**, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living.” (Psa.52:5).

“When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be **destroyed forever**.” (Psa.92:7).

“I will early **destroy all the wicked** of the land; that I may **cut off all wicked doers** from the city of Yahweh.” (Psa.101:8).

“Whoso despiseth the word shall be **destroyed**: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.” (Prov.13:13).

“For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and **they shall be as though they had not been**.” (Obadiah 1:16).

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall **burn them up**, saith Yahweh of hosts, that it shall **leave them neither root nor branch**. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. 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 Yahweh of hosts.” (Malachi 4:1-3).

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to **destruction**, and many there be which go in thereat.” (Matt.7:13).

“The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but **the tares are the children of the wicked**...As therefore the tares are gathered and **burned** in the fire; **so shall it be in the end of this world**.” (Matt.13:38,40).

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Messiah: Whose **end is destruction**, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” (Phil.3:18, 19).

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to **destroy both soul and body in hell** (gehenna fire).” (Matt.10:28).

“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are **burned**.” (John 15:6).

“Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will **burn up the chaff (wicked) with unquenchable fire**.” (Matt.3:12).

“There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to **destroy**...” (James 4:12).

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not Yahweh, and that obey not the good news of our Master Yeshua the Messiah: Who shall be **punished with everlasting destruction** from the presence of the Sovereign, and from the preeminence of his power;” (II Thess.1:8,9).

“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest **destroy them which destroy the earth**.” (Rev.11:18).

“And death and hell 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.” (Rev.20:14,15).

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Master that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift **destruction**.” (2 Peter 2:1).

“Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, **perished**: But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and **destruction** of ungodly men.” (2 Peter 3:6, 7).

“For Yahweh so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him **should not perish** (in gehenna fire), but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16).

“For the wages of sin is **death**; but the gift of Elohim is everlasting life through Yeshua the Messiah our Master.” (Rom.6:23).

How many witnesses do you need to hear? **This fiendish doctrine of eternal torture is unreasonable, repugnant to justice, contrary to Yah’s love and completely unscriptural!**

It never entered into Yahweh’s mind to burn people forever. In the idolatrous practice of Baal worship, the heathen built alters in the valley of Hinnom (Ge-henna) to offer up their children as a burnt offering. Some of the Israelites fell into this idolatry.

Yahweh sent a message through the prophet Jeremiah, “And say, Hear ye the word of Yahweh, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the Elohim of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, **which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind:**” (Jer. 19:3-6). See also Jeremiah 32:35.

Now, think about this! If the wages of sin is “eternal torture,” and not “death,” then we must question if Yeshua really was our savior. If the penalty for our sin is eternal torture and Messiah agreed to accept our penalty upon Himself, then Messiah would have to suffer eternal torment on our behalf! Don’t you see? If Yeshua died in our place and if Yahweh said that the penalty for sin is eternal torture, then Yeshua **did not** pay that penalty because Yeshua did not suffer eternal torment! But, (thank Yahweh!), the wages of sin IS death. He took upon Himself the sins of the whole world and literally **died** (ceased to live, unconscious in the grave). He would have remained dead forever, but Yahweh raised Him from the dead as He promised (Acts 2:32). David prophesied, “**Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul (body) in hell (sheol – grave); neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One (Yeshua - Jesus) to see corruption**”. (Psa.16:9, 10).

David looked forward to the **resurrection**, knowing that he would live again and he knew that the Messiah (Yeshua) would not rot forever in the grave either, but that he (Yeshua) would be the first to rise from the dead and this is exactly what Peter testifies in Acts 2:25–36 after the resurrection has already taken place obviously. Peter says that David was talking about the resurrection of Messiah (vs.31). In case his audience was thinking that this passage applied to David, Peter states very emphatically, “**For David is not ascended into the heavens:**” (Acts 2:34). David is unconscious in the grave (“**For the living know that they shall die: but the**

dead know not any thing,” Eccles.9:5), and waiting for the resurrection when the “dead in Christ shall rise first.”

What actually happens at death is plainly revealed in the Scripture, **“Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto Elohim who gave it.”** (Eccles.12:7). What is this “spirit” that returns to Yahweh? It doesn’t say the “soul” or “immortal soul” returns to Yahweh, so we had better find out what this “spirit” is. The apostle James says, **“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”** (James 2:26).

The spirit then, is what keeps the body alive. The word “spirit” here comes from the Greek word “pneuma,” which can also be rendered “breath.” For the body without the breath is dead. The spirit gives life. These two words “spirit” and “breath” can be used interchangeably in some verses depending upon the context. Sometimes this word refers to the Spirit of Yahweh, the human spirit (mind), or the breath of life. Job said, **“All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of Eloah is in my nostrils;”** (Job 27:3).

The word “spirit” here comes from the Hebrew word “ruach,” which has the same meaning as the Greek word “pneuma” and can be translated, breath, wind or spirit. **“Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath (ruach), they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit (ruach), they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.”** (Psa.104:29, 30).

What a wonderful promise! When Yahweh takes away our breath (spirit) we die and return to our dust and when Yahweh sends forth His spirit we are created again or “resurrected” and then at that time He renews the face of the earth. **“But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?”** (Job 14:10).

The English word “ghost” is an old Saxon term and actually comes from the Hebrew word “gava” which literally means according to Strong’s, “to expire, die, perish, give up the ghost, yield up the ghost, be dead, be ready to die.” “Ghost” as you can see is a poor translation because it conjures up images of apparitions or phantoms and the Hebrew does not convey this meaning. To give up the ghost or spirit is to die and give up the last breath. This word is also used in the following verses:

“Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years;” (Ge.25:8).

“And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died;” (Gen.25:17).

“Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!” (Job 10:18).

“Into thine hand I commit my spirit (ruach): thou hast redeemed me, O Yahweh Elohim of truth.” (Psa.31:5).

“And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and **gave up the ghost** (pneuma): and great fear came on all them that heard these things.” (Acts 5:5).

Remember that the Hebrew word ruach corresponds with the Greek word pneuma and have several meanings: Holy Spirit, spirit, life, breath, wind. In Acts 7:59, after they stoned Stephen, he cried out to Yahweh and said, “Master Yeshua receive my spirit.” And James tells us that the “body without the spirit is dead.” The spirit then is what keeps the body alive. The spirit is not an “immortal soul.” The spirit which Yahweh breathes into man’s nostrils is the breath of life that activates the respiratory system and turns the computer (brain) on. Then when he dies that spark or breath or spirit of life returns to Yahweh who gave it and the individual’s identity, personality, character is safe in the hands, the “computer” of Yahweh.

So we see that when Yahweh breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life, he became a ‘living soul’ and when the breath of life is taken away he dies and becomes a ‘dead soul.’ This exact opposite is recorded in Ecclesiastes 12:7, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (ruach) shall return unto Elohim who gave it.”

If the union of the dust of the ground and the breath of life renders man a living soul then what happens to this soul when the two are separated at death? NOTHING! Man ceases to be a “living” soul until the Life-Giver reunites the two on resurrection morning. When a man dies he surrenders his consciousness and he sleeps in the grave until the day of the resurrection.

“O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.” (Psa.39:13).

“The dead praise not Yahweh, neither any that go down into silence.” (Psa.115:17).

“We shall not all sleep (in the grave), 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 shall be raised (from the grave) incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (1Cor.15:51, 52).

What about Lazarus and the Rich Man?

Now, let’s get back to Lazarus and the Rich man. As I started to say earlier, the story of the rich man and Lazarus is, no doubt, one of the most quoted and least understood parable given by the Master. The Gospel writers have recorded 40 main parables spoken by Yeshua and 25 are recorded by Luke. Luke introduces 10 of the parables in his gospel with the word “certain” (KJV, See Luke 7:41; 10:30; 12:16; 13:6; 14:16; 15:11; 16:1,19,20; 19:12; 20:9). It is somewhat peculiar to his writing style. There are seven parables in Luke’s gospel that are not specifically referred to as “parables” in the text nor do they begin with the word “certain,” yet they are commonly accepted and referred to as parables (11:5; 12:42; 13:18, 21; 14:31; 15:8; 17:7).

Beginning in Luke 16:1 through to Luke 17:7 we see three consecutive parables where the master deals with a continual, connected theme (The Unjust Steward, The Rich Man &

Lazarus and The Unprofitable Servant) directed towards the hypocritical Pharisees. More on this later.

Now, what is a parable? It is simply a short allegorical story designed to convey a truth or moral lesson. Yeshua used parables when he taught the people because he desired to stimulate their thinking and contemplation concerning the things of Yahweh's kingdom and many other wonderful truths. Quoting Isaiah 6:9, Yeshua told the disciples: "Unto YOU IT IS GIVEN to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Yahweh: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see and hearing they might not understand." (Luke 8:10). Yeshua used parables to veil the truth from those not willing to see it, but those who really desired to know the truth would not rest until they understood the meaning.

It is appropriate therefore, to ask TO WHOM was Yeshua speaking to in Luke 16:19-31?

The answer is in verse 14 and 15 immediately preceding this parable and after the parable of the unprofitable servant. "**And the Pharisees** also, who were **covetous**, heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto **THEM...**" You see, Yeshua was speaking to the Pharisees, a religious sect known throughout Israel, whom he often reprov'd for their self-righteousness and refusal to deal honestly with him and the many truths he taught.

On many occasions, the Pharisees understood that Yeshua was speaking directly about them though in an indirect way through parables. Their hearts were filled with hatred, anger and violence to the point of seeking to silence him by killing him. The safest way for Yeshua to deal with them was with wise, truthful words and sayings taught by parables and by allegory.

Mark tells us, "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them; and **when they were alone**, he expounded all things to his disciples." (Mark 4:33, 34). This is the key: **Yeshua expounded upon his parables – privately, with his disciples**. He did not publicly expound on deep, spiritual truths for the benefit of the Pharisees!

Now let's examine the story of the rich man and Lazarus and discover the real message that Yeshua was seeking to convey to the Pharisees.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously everyday: 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." (Luke 16:19-21).

Who is the symbolic rich man? The Jewish people had been blessed above measure with the knowledge of Yahweh and His plan of salvation for all of mankind. Paul says that they had received the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of Elohim, and the promises. (Romans 9:4). **The rich Jews were guilty of hoarding the truth, and in so doing, they had corrupted themselves.**

Later in the story we find the rich man praying to “Father Abraham.” Abraham was the father of the Hebrew race, only a Jew would appeal to Father Abraham. The Jewish nation is clearly represented by this character. By contrast, Lazarus represents all those people in spiritual poverty, i.e., the gentiles, with whom the Israelites were to share their heritage. The words of the prophet Isaiah were known among the Jews. **“I will also give thee for a light to the gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” (Isa. 49:6).**

Just think how grieved our Master must have been to see that **the Jews had not shared their spiritual wealth with the gentiles at all!** Instead, they considered them as “dogs,” who would have to be satisfied with the spiritual crumbs falling from their master’s tables. This metaphor was well known, in fact, Yeshua used it himself, when he tested the faith of the Canaanite woman, “It is not meet (fit) to take the children’s (Jews) bread, and cast it to the dogs (gentiles). Truth Master: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs, which fall from their master’s table.” (Matt.15:26-27).

So Lazarus represents the gentile nations, “desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table (Luke 16:21). The Jews hoarded the truth and just before Yeshua relates this parable, he rebuked them for their spiritual conceit. “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but Elohim knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of Elohim (Luke 16:15). What was to be the result of their spiritual conceit? Let’s examine the parable further.

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom, the rich man also died and was buried: and in hades 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 the 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.” (Luke 16:22-26).

The Jews enjoyed the “good life” while on this earth, but had done nothing to bless or enrich the lives of their neighbors, so no further reward was waiting for them. “Woe unto you that are rich! **For you have received your consolation.** Woe unto you that are full! For you shall hunger.” (Luke 6:24, 25).

Conversely, the poor in spirit, symbolized by Lazarus would inherit the kingdom of Yahweh. “Blessed be ye poor: for your is the kingdom of Elohim. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled.” (Luke 6:20, 21). The gentiles who hungered and thirsted after righteousness would be filled. The “dogs” and sinners, despised by the heart-less, self-righteous Pharisees, would enter the kingdom before they would. “Verily I say unto you, that the publican and the harlots go into the kingdom of Elohim before you.” (Matt. 21:31).

The parable concludes with the rich man begging for his brothers to be warned against sharing his fate. Asking Abraham to send Lazarus on this mission, he alleges that “IF only one went unto them from the dead, then they will repent.” (Luke 16:30).

Abraham replies, “If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, (pointedly referring to the Jews!), neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.” (vs. 31).

Yeshua used real names here for two very important reasons. First of all, he did not want us to miss the crucial point that he was speaking about two distinct groups of people; one being the Jews, symbolized by the rich man and clearly represented by the words: Father Abraham, Moses, the prophets; the other being the gentiles (Lazarus). Secondly, in verse 31, Yeshua actually rebukes the Pharisees, for their disregard of Scripture, foreseeing that even a supernatural event would not change the hearts of those who persistently rejected the teachings of “Moses and the prophets.”

Think about it! The miracle of raising the “real-life” Lazarus from the dead soon afterwards, confirms the accuracy of Yeshua’s prediction!

One **did rise from the dead**, yet the brothers of the “rich man” still did not repent! In fact, the Pharisees even plotted to kill Lazarus after his resurrection! Why? **Because his very life was a continual reminder to them of this parable and their hypocrisy and because many Jews went away and believed on Yeshua.** (John 12:10-11). In addition to this, Yeshua’s own words about “one rising from the dead” could have also referred prophetically to himself! Because after the resurrection of Messiah, they *still* didn’t believe and repent!!

There are many sincere Christians today who have swallowed a lie and have accepted the “traditional” teaching that this story is a historical account of two individuals’ literal after-death experiences. Nothing could be further from the truth! Many believe that those who are consigned to the fiery torments of hell will never stop burning throughout all eternity.

Let’s take a look now at some of the serious problems that arise with a literal interpretation of this story. In Judges 9:7-15 the trees are represented as talking together and anointing a king. Are we to accept this story as proof that trees can talk (perhaps behind our backs)? Obviously not. The same holds true for other parables. There are incidents or aspects to the story necessary to convey the point, but are not intended to be taken literally.

Let’s carefully consider the illustrations that Yeshua uses in the story of the rich man and Lazarus and then ask ourselves if Yeshua meant for the details of the story to be interpreted literally. If you notice carefully, the rich man died and went to hades, or the grave. Yeshua did not say that Lazarus went to heaven nor did he say that the rich man went into “gehenna” fire when he died. A bosom is a breast, not heaven. Can we believe that all the saints were/are gathered on Abraham’s breast? If they are, then in whose bosom does Abraham rest?

If there really is a “great” gulf fixed between heaven and hell, how could the rich man possibly have been heard by Abraham? Did Yeshua really mean that heaven and hell are not only in sight of each other, but within speaking distance of each other?

Did he mean that the saved or converted would be able to watch the torments of the unsaved or wicked?

Could the saints really enjoy the comforts and bliss of heaven while constantly enduring the cries of the wicked being tormented?

Perhaps a more disturbing thought is this. Will the All-powerful, All-merciful, All-loving, All-knowing Elohim of the universe somehow be able to ignore the cries of the wicked in torment?

If this passage refers to the sufferings of an “immortal soul,” are we to believe that an “invisible” soul or spirit, that can float independent of the body, has “physical parts”?

We find the rich man lifting up his **eyes**, and desiring to have his **tongue** cooled by a drop of water from the **finger** of Lazarus who was resting in Abraham’s **bosom**. Has anyone ever seen an invisible soul? Does the Bible describe what an immortal soul looks like? (Remember, the words “immortal soul” appear nowhere in Scripture!).

Are we to believe that heaven and hell are so close that a single “drop” of water on the tip of the finger could actually make it across those flames, before it would evaporate? And even if it could, do you really think that a single drop of water could bring relief or lessen the suffering?!?

No, my dear friend, from these few examples we can see that in this parable, Yeshua was not trying to explain the physical realities of the after-life. He was simply referring to the Jews and their unfaithfulness regarding their assigned responsibility as stewards of the special message of truth that they utterly failed to share with the gentiles who were eager to hear it.

In fact, the entire chapter of Luke 16 is devoted to the subject of stewardship!

Beginning in the first verse, Yeshua gave the parable about the stewardship of money or property. “There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.” After dealing with this subject or principle of earthly stewardship, i.e., being entrusted with material goods, he opens up the subject of being entrusted with the truth.

By the parable of one rich man’s steward, he graphically illustrated how the Jews had proven to be UNFAITHFUL with **PHYSICAL wealth or material riches**. The Pharisees knew he was referring to them, as Luke says so in verse 14 and 15. And by the parable of another rich man he illustrated how they had proven just as unfaithful with **SPIRITUAL riches**.

It is absurd to think that after a parable discourse on the subject of earthly stewardship that our Master Yeshua would suddenly change course and begin to teach and expound on after life experiences... and to who, the Pharisees?!? This is preposterous! For what purpose? It certainly doesn’t harmonize with the rest of the chapter.

To attempt to stretch the parable of the rich man and Lazarus to cover the doctrine of (Rome's) hellfire is to entirely miss the point Yeshua intended to convey! The Bible speaks with unmistakable clarity on the subject of hell in many other places. Nowhere does the Scripture teach that the wicked will continue to suffer in the fires of hell throughout all eternity. The Scriptures teach that they will be utterly destroyed. Yeshua would never have compromised the integrity of the Holy Scriptures by teaching a doctrine that was contrary to its own overwhelming testimony on the subject.

And not only that, but if Paul and the other disciples taught this, and since the New Testament writings were not collated and put into a book until the third or fourth century, then surely Paul had at least one example in the Old Testament Scriptures that supports this "traditional" teaching? My friend, the silence is deafening!

Referring to the **only** Scriptures he had, which we call the Old Testament, Paul tells us that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Imagine that! If, for example, someone needs to learn the truth about the doctrine of the biblical hell or needs to be corrected, perhaps, about their understanding of hell fire, the Apostle Paul (or anyone today) can use the same Old Testament to accomplish this!

Yeshua denounced the teachings and traditions of men and we can do no less. The Scripture cannot be broken. The wages of sin is **STILL death**, but the gift of Yahweh is eternal life through Yeshua the Messiah. (Romans 6:23). "For Yahweh so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...". Those who reject Messiah and will not repent, will perish, they will die forever. They will suffer the second death from which they will never be resurrected. That final death will never end. It is an eternal punishment because it is an endless, eternal death.

I trust that you will do your own research and prove all things for yourself. If you will allow your mind to open up and receive from Yahweh's spirit, you will see that what I have presented to you is the truth. You may have questions, but Yahweh's Word contains the answers. Praise His Holy Name! May Yahweh bless you in your search for truth.

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