

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

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LUKE 16:19-31 (NKJV)

(19) *“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.*

(20) *But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at the gate,*

(21) *desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.*

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

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

(24) *Then he cried out 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.’*

(25) *But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.*

(26) *And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’*

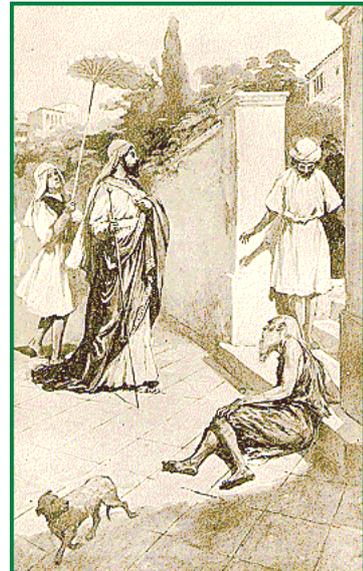
(27) *Then he said ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house,*

(28) *for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’*

(29) *Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’*

(30) *And he said ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’*

(31) *But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’”*



That’s the story. Now lets set the scene of the story, where Jesus told it, and to whom He told it too.

LUKE 14:25 – *Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned to and said to them,...*

While Jesus was travelling He was being followed by large crowds of people who were eager to see Him perform miracles and to hear what He had to say. Turning to these people Jesus explains to them the cost of being a disciple. As Jesus was talking Luke records that tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Him.

LUKE 15:1-3 *“Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained saying, ‘this man receives sinners and eats with them.’ So he spoke this parable to them saying*

“The pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered saying this man receives sinners and eats with them. Jesus heard them so he turns to them and begins to tell them some parables. Jesus told a series of five parables or stories to illustrate spiritual truths and moral lessons. The stories in the order in which they were told and the spiritual lessons behind them are like this. -

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| (1) The lost sheep. | - He knew he was lost but did not know how to return home. |
| (2) The lost coin. | - Was lost but did not know it. |
| (3) The lost or prodigal son. | - He knew he was lost and knew the way home. |
| (4) The shrewd manager. | - The use of present opportunities determines future destiny. |
| (5) The Rich man and Lazarus. | - Mans future destiny is forever fixed at death. There is no second chance after death. Your wealth and ancestry cannot save you. |

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In the stories of the lost son, the shrewd manager, and the rich man and Lazarus the opening line is virtually the same. "There was a certain rich man" – this is a classic introduction to a parable.

Luke 15:11 The lost son. "A certain man."

Luke 16:1 The shrewd manager "There was a certain rich man."

Luke 16:19 The rich man and Lazarus "There was a certain rich man."

In two other parables not told in this series the introductory lines are virtually the same.

Luke 14:16 Parable of the wedding banquet "A certain man"

Luke 18:1-2 Parable of the persistent widow "In a town there was a certain judge".

The parables of the Shrewd Manager and the Rich Man and Lazarus begin with the statement "*there was a certain rich man*". Both parables were addressed to the pharisees who were rich men. Christ taught these pharisees that they cannot serve both God and money.

LUKE 16:14 "Now the pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him."

In the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, Jesus taught the pharisees that just because they are rich does not mean that God favours them or that they will be saved. Also that our eternal destiny is forever fixed in this life and that after death there is no second chance.

OUTLINE OF THE PARABLE.

Two scenes are portrayed (1) Life in the present world. (2) Eternal destiny in the after world. First there is a certain rich man who lived in luxury every day. Then there was a poverty stricken beggar named Lazarus. Death came to both. Lazarus is carried away to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man was buried and sent to *hades* where he found himself in torment. He was able to see Abraham in the distance with Lazarus on his lap. Addressing "Father Abraham" rather than God thus relying on his relationship to Abraham, the rich man pleads for mercy asking that Lazarus dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue in this flame (v 24). But Abraham refused, reminding the rich man that in his earthly lifetime he had good things while Lazarus suffered evil things. Now this situation is reversed, Lazarus is comforted while the rich man is in torment. Abraham further reminds him of the great gulf fixed between them, which makes any passage between them impossible. The appeal for himself failing, the rich man asks that Lazarus be sent to his five brothers on earth to warn to warn them so they don't come to this place of torment. Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets (the Old Testament) let them hear them". (This indicates that Jesus believes that the Old Testament could teach a person how to avoid being lost). The rich man protested about the writings of Moses and said 'no' but that if only one from the dead went to his brothers they would repent. These particular pharisees had rejected the writings of Moses and were following Greek philosophy. Abraham says that if they will not believe Moses and the Prophets they will not be convinced even if one rises from the dead.

INCONSISTENCIES IN THE STORY

The story is either an historical narrative of a literal event or it is merely a fictional parable. It cannot be both or half-and-half. It is either one or the other.

Are the Rich Man and Lazarus disembodied spirits? If yes, then we have two ghosts devoid of bodies and bodily organs. But there is not the slightest reference in the story to a spirit of man or a soul. The Rich man is pictured as having eyes that see (verse 23) a tongue that speaks (verse 24) and as seeking relief from cooling water by means of the finger of Lazarus - real body parts.

Disembodied spirits are supposed to be able to travel anywhere yet we see in verse 26 a great chasm is fixed so that it is not possible to pass from side to the other.

If the Rich man and Lazarus are spirits then they are inconsistently portrayed as being physical with physical limitations. If they are not spirits but are in fact physical then the imagery of the parable indicates that dead bodies in their graves are infused with life.

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ARE REWARDS ARE GIVEN AT DEATH BEFORE THE JUDGEMENT?

A literal interpretation of the story indicates that these men receive their rewards immediately upon death and before the judgement day when Jesus said He would separate the good and the evil. This is repugnant to all justice. Paul says that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world with justice. (Acts 17:31). When Paul spoke to Governor Felix he spoke of the judgement to come (Acts 24:25). This judgement was still future in apostolic times. The separation of the righteous and the wicked will not come until the Son of Man shall come in His glory and before Him are gathered all the nations.

MATTHEW 25:31-46 *“When the Son of Man comes in His glory... all the nations will be gathered before Him and he will separate the people one from another... And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*

Christ’s own promise is “Behold I am coming quickly and My reward is with Me to give to every one according to his work.”(Rev 22:12) This tallies with His promise “you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” (Luke 14:14). That was Paul’s own personal expectation:“there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day...”(2 Tim 4:8). Christ definitely placed the reward at the resurrection, the time of the harvest, and the end of the world, when the wheat of Gods people are gathered into the barn and the wicked like tares or weeds are bundled for burning (Matt 13:30, 40-42)

PLACE OF PUNISHMENT. GEHENNA NOT HADES.

The place of torment is called ‘Hades’. Hades is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew ‘Sheol’; they both mean ‘the abode of the dead’. Whenever Jesus spoke of the punishment of the wicked the place of punishment was always ‘Gehenna’ not Hades. Jesus referred to Hell (Matt 10:28) Hellfire (Matt 5:22) the resurrection of damnation (John 5:29) The damnation of Hell (Matt 23:33) and eternal damnation (Mk 3:29). Jesus always put them as future, not present, and always after, not before, His Second Advent. Without exception Christ taught the utter ultimate destruction and disappearance of being of the wicked in His descriptions of the relentless fires of Gehenna.

ETERNAL LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST?

In the story the wicked dead are infused with life. They are pictured as having immortality apart from Christ. Remember the wicked dead are condemned to hell (Gehenna) because they have rejected Christ. The concept that the rejectors of Christ have immortality is flatly rejected by the bible.

1JOHN 5:12-13 *“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”*

Obviously it is not possible for the rejectors of Christ to have eternal life yet the parable pictures hades as a place throbbing with vibrant life in direct contrast to the teachings of Christ who taught that the abode of the dead is a place of unconscious sleep for all men between their deaths and the resurrection.

JOHN 11:11-14; 43-44. *“...Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up’ then His disciples said ‘Lord if he sleeps he will do well’ However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus said to them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead’ ...Now when He had said all these things, He cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them ‘Loose him and let him go”.*

Lazarus is sleeping Lazarus is dead. The bible constantly portrays death as being a state of unconscious sleep. Lazarus was asleep in his grave, he was not singing praises to God in paradise when Christ called him. There is no mention that any soul had left Lazarus’ body and had to be brought back. Jesus did not say “soul of Lazarus, come back down to earth and re-enter your body” Jesus said “Lazarus come forth”, indicating that the mind and character of Lazarus were dead in his grave along with his body. After Lazarus was raised from the dead there is no record of him mentioning that he had gone to paradise or that he was in a conscious state while his body was dead.

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This Lazarus who was a friend of Jesus is not the beggar pictured in the parable. The beggar was infused with life and consciousness while dead. The friend of Jesus mentioned here was in an unconscious state in death awaiting the resurrection.

The inconsistencies of a literal interpretation of the imagery of the parable and the teachings of Jesus are set forth as follows.

PARABLE

- (1) Death = conscious living.
- (2) Wicked punished in Hades before the judgement.
- (3) Rewards given at death.
- (4) Man has an immortal soul.
- (5) The lost have life without Christ.

TEACHINGS OF CHRIST

- (1) Death = unconscious sleep.
- (2) Wicked destroyed in Gehenna after the judgement.
- (3) Rewards given at the resurrection.
- (4) God alone is immortal. (1 Tim 6:15-16)
- (5) Only he who has the Son has life.

If you accept the parable as literal you have to reject the rest of the bible. If you accept the truth of the bible you must reject a literal interpretation of the parable. The truth of the bible and the illustrations of the parable are not only contrary to each other they are mutually destructive. If one is true the other is false.

Why would Christ construct a moral lesson that teaches us that our wealth is not evidence of divine favour and that our destiny is forever fixed at death? And use as a background to it, illustrations that are diametrically opposed to the rest of the bible? The answer to this question lies in an understanding of the beliefs of the people he was talking to. This parable was specifically addressed to the pharisees. (Luke 16:14)

The Alexandrian Pharisees beliefs regarding the state of the dead.

To find out what the pharisees believed we must ask a pharisee. A pharisee and historian by the name of Josephus has recorded for posterity part of an address he gave to the Greeks concerning the pharisees belief about hades and the state of the dead.

Flavius Josephus. (d 100 AD) Jewish priest, historian, and pharisee. He was not only highly trained in Jewish law but recorded the contemporary Jewish teachings, sayings and traditions of the times. His writings constitute the most comprehensive Jewish history of the century. He was an enthusiastic admirer of Rome, becoming an adviser to Emperor Vespasian and serving as an interpreter to Titus during the siege of Jerusalem in AD70.

Josephus received Roman citizenship, together with a pension and adopted the name 'Flavius' after that of the Imperial family. Thenceforth he devoted himself solely to writing. His works were highly esteemed by the church fathers especially Jerome. He was ever loyal to the Jewish customs and religion as then held - particularly that of the pharisees in whom we are most interested. His works are still the most comprehensive source of information on the times and beliefs and teachings of the Jews in the period of Christ and the apostles. Such is his competence and credibility as a first hand witness.

Josephus - Antiquities of the Jews Book 18 ch1 sec 3.

"They (the pharisees) also believe that souls have an immortal vigour in them and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life, and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and to live again."

It must be noted that it was only the Alexandrian Pharisees who accepted the pagan Greek idea of the immortality of the soul. These pharisees believed that man had an immortal soul that lived inside a mortal body. When the mortal body died the immortal soul went to a subterranean cavern to be punished or to paradise to receive rewards. The souls in paradise will eventually be raised from the dead when there will be a resurrection of the body. This body will be raised immortal and the immortal souls will be reunited with their bodies.

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It must be noted that the Alexandrian pharisees did not obtain these beliefs on the state of the dead from the Old Testament. They obtained it from the writings of the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, and from a Jewish Platonic philosopher named Philo of Alexandria.

Over a period of some two hundred years prior to Christ, tangent positions had been developing under the impact of Platonic philosophy. Thus the concept that Hades contained two chambers appeared in 4Esra 4:41 along with the idea that the righteous inhabit one chamber (Wisdom of Solomon) while the wicked are accursed, scourged, and tormented in the other (1 Enoch 22:9-13). The Midrash on Ruth 1:7 likewise assigns one chamber to the righteous with the wicked to the other. The visibility of one company to the other in the respective chambers is similarly in the Midrash on Eccl 7:14 and the wicked see the angels guard the righteous (4 Ezra 7:86).

4 Ezra: 85-95 tells of the welcoming of the righteous by companies of ministering angels. 4 Maccabees 13: 17 mention the righteous as welcomed in Hades by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And finally the righteous are privileged to sit in Abrahams lap (The Talmud).

AN EXTRACT OUT OF JOSEPHUS DISCOURSE TO THE GREEKS CONCERNING HADES.

Taken from "Josephus" complete works. Translated by William Whiston, Kregal publications Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. 1981.

This story told and recorded by Josephus explains what some of the Pharisees believed in regard to the destiny of the Immortal-soul after death. It describes what 'Hades' is like and what the soul can expect to find there. The whole story and concept of 'Hades' herein is based on the Pagan Greek concept of the immortality of the soul.

1. *Now as to Hades, wherein the souls of the righteous and unrighteous are detained, it is necessary to speak of it. Hades is a place in the world not regularly finished; a subterraneous region, where the light of this world does not shine; from which circumstance, that in this place the light does not shine, it cannot be but there must be in it perpetual darkness. This region is allowed as a place of custody for souls, in which angels are appointed as guardians to them, who distribute to them temporary punishments, agreeable to every one's behaviour and manners.*

2. *In this region there is a certain place set apart, as a lake of unquenchable fire, wherein we suppose no one hath hitherto been cast; but it is prepared for a day afore-determined by God, in which one righteous sentence shall deservedly be passed on all men; when the unjust and those who have been disobedient to God, and have given honour to such idols as have been the vain operations of the hands of men, as to God himself, shall be adjudged to this everlasting punishment, as having been the causes of defilement; while the just shall obtain an incorruptible and never-fading kingdom. These are now indeed confined in Hades, but not in the same place wherein the unjust are confined.*

3. *For there is one descent into this region, at whose gate we believe there stands an archangel with an host; which gate when those pass through that are conducted down by the angels appointed over souls, they do not go the same way; but the just are guided by the right hand, and are led with hymns sung by the angels appointed over that place, unto a region of light, in which the just have dwelt from the beginning of the world; not constrained by necessity, but ever enjoying the prospect of the good things they see, and rejoice in the expectation of those new enjoyments which will be peculiar to every one of them, and esteeming those things beyond what we have here; with whom their is no place of toil, no burning heat, no piercing cold, nor are any briers there; but the countenance of the fathers and of the just, which they see, always smiles upon them, while they wait for that rest and eternal new life in heaven, which in to succeed this region [This place we call The Bosom of Abraham](#)*

4. *But as to the unjust, they are dragged by force to the left hand by the angels allotted for punishment, no longer going with a good-will, but as prisoners driven by violence; to whom are sent angels appointed over them to reproach them and to threaten them with their terrible looks, and to thrust them still downwards. Now those angels that are set over these souls, drag them-into the neighbourhood of hell itself; who, when they are hard by it, continually hear the noise of it, and do not stand clear of the hot vapour itself; but when they have a nearer view of this spectacle, as of a terrible and exceeding great prospect of fire, they are struck with a fearful expectation of a future judgment, and in effect punished thereby; and not only so, but where they see the place [or choir] of the fathers and of the just, even hereby are they punished; for a chaos*

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deep and large is fixed between them; insomuch that a just man that hath compassion upon them, cannot be admitted, nor can one that is unjust, if he were bold enough to attempt it, pass over it.

5. This is the discourse concerning Hades, wherein the souls of all men are confined until a proper season, which God hath determined, when he will make a resurrection of all men from the dead, not procuring a transmigration of souls from one body to another, but raising again those very bodies, which you Greeks, seeing to be dissolved, do not believe [their resurrection:] but learn not to disbelieve it; for while you believe that the soul is created, and yet is made immortal by God, according to the doctrine of Plato, and this in time, be not incredulous, but believe that God is able, when he hath raised to life that body which was made as a compound of the same elements to make it immortal; for it must never be said of God that he is able to do some things, and unable to do others. We have therefore believed that the body will be raised again; for although it be dissolved, it is not perished; for the earth receives its remains, and preserves them; and while they are like seed, and are mixed among the more fruitful soil, they flourish, and what is sown is indeed own bare grain; but at the mighty sound of God the Creator, it will sprout up, and be raised in a clothed and glorious condition, though not before it has been dissolved, and mixed [with the earth.] So that we have not rashly believed the resurrection of the body; for although it be dissolved for a time on account of the original transgression it exists still, and is cast into the earth as into a potter's furnace, in order to be again, not in order to rise again such as it was before, but in a state of purity, and so as never to be destroyed any more: and to every body shall its own soul be restored; and when it hath clothed itself with that body it will not be subject to misery,

Hades is an underground cavern divided into two sections. One section on the right hand is reserved for the immortal souls of the righteous. This place is called the bosom of Abraham. The other section on the left hand is reserved for the immortal souls of the wicked to await the future judgement. A raging unquenchable fire is near by to instil the fear of the judgement into the wicked. Between the two sections there is an impassable gulf so that it is not possible to pass from one side to the other. This is exactly the same setting for the parable that Christ told. At the resurrection of the body the immortal soul will be reunited with the body. This whole belief is based on the pagan immortal soul doctrine of Plato.

“...for while you believe that the soul is created and yet is made immortal by God according to the doctrine of Plato...”

Evidently some of the Greeks believed that mans soul had no beginning but existed from eternity. The Greeks Josephus was addressing did not believe that and he makes mention of that fact by saying that they believe the soul is created or had a beginning. These Greeks also believed that God made mans soul immortal. This discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades shows us what the Alexandrian pharisees believed about the state of the dead. This entire false doctrine is based upon the belief in the immortality of the soul. IE The idea that man has an immortal spirit that lives inside his mortal body. This spirit or soul contains mans mind and character which survives the body at death. This belief is specifically named as the “Doctrine of Plato”. It is not the doctrine of Moses or the doctrine of the Old Testament. It is paganism.

We have observed that the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus was spoken to the Pharisees who had now committed themselves to the two Platonic doctrines of the immortality of the soul and the eternal torment of the wicked. This revolution in Jewish theology had transformed the abode of the dead into a place thriving with life instead of the Old Testament concept of the abode of the dead being a place of unconscious death. Under the insidious inroads of Platonic philosophy a select group of the Jews: the Alexandrian Pharisees had become immortal-soulists believing that man is innately immortal and conscious in death. This is in total contrast to the to the bible testimony that mans soul is mortal (Ezekiel 18:4) and unconscious in death. There is absolutely nothing about man that is immortal. Immortality is a gift from God that is given to His followers at the Second Advent of Christ on the condition that they have accepted the new covenant.

The nature and destiny of man was a major area of disagreement between Christ and the Pharisees. He was a scripturalist upholding the teachings of Moses and the prophets on the nature and the destiny of man. They were Platonists, having rejected the doctrines of Moses and advocated the Immortality of the soul concept of paganism. As to the destiny of man Christ taught the ultimate and utter destruction of the wilful sinner. Man, as the rejector of truth and life is mortal and hence susceptible to death and destruction. But the pharisees taught that the soul of man is innately immortal and indestructible and that the sinner is therefore

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destined to live on forever in excruciating torment. It was the irreconcilability of the two beliefs among other things that finally led the pharisees to reject Christ. Christ offered them immortality and the right to live in the presence of God on the condition they accept Him as the Messiah. They believed that they possessed immortality naturally, and their right to live in the presence of God was guaranteed because of their descendancy from Abraham. They therefore reasoned that they did not need Christ for anything, as they already had what He offered so they rejected Him. To teach that Christ supported and believed the same theory on the state of the dead as the Alexandrian Pharisees is to place Christ in the inconceivable position of adopting the false reasoning of paganism. This is why it is inconceivable that Christ in the controversial parable be made to support the Pharisees position.

HOW DID PAGAN PLATONIC PHILOSOPHY ENTER GOD'S CHURCH?

After the close of the Old Testament canon about 425 BC a series of Apocryphal and pseudopigraphical Jewish writings began to appear. These ranged in time between 200 BC and 100 AD. In these writings are found two distinctly opposing views on the origin, nature, and destiny of man. These two views are:

(1) Conditionalism: Man is a candidate for immortality but does not possess it naturally. Mans body, mind, soul, and spirit are mortal and that death is an unconscious sleep. Immortality is a gift from God given to His followers on the day of the resurrection on the condition that man has accepted the God's covenant of salvation. The wicked that reject this condition suffer the punishment of eternal death. Fire being the method of execution.

(2) Immortal-soulism: the idea that man has an immortal soul living inside a mortal body. That man is naturally immortal apart from God and therefore man is conscious in death. God's true followers enter paradise at death while the immortal wicked suffer for eternity in an underground pit of fire.

Here are the titles of 8 Jewish books that teach Old Testament Conditionalism and 7 Jewish books that teach Pagan Greek Immortal-soulism. All written about the same time period (200 BC- 100 AD).

8 Conditionalist books:

Book of Tobit
Sirach
Jewish Sibylline oracles
Ethiopian Enoch (1st)
Slavonic Enoch (2nd)
Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch
2 Esdras
Dead Sea scrolls

7 Immortal-soulist books:

2 Maccabees
Book of Jubilees
Wisdom of Solomon
Book of Judith
4 Maccabees
Philo's writings
Josephus' writings

Philo of Alexandria. (20BC – 47AD) This famous Alexandrian scholar became the most conspicuous champion of the immortality of the soul concept that he derived chiefly from Plato. Flourishing at the beginning of the Christian era he contributed materially to the acceptance of the immortal soul concept among both Jews and Christians.

He was the most distinguished of all Hellenic Jewish scholars. He was a native and life long resident of Alexandria. His life completely spanned the 33-year life of Jesus and he was contemporaneous with the early activities of the apostles as well. Philo came from a rich and influential priestly family and had a Pharisaic background. He received the highest Jewish and Greek education of the times and was intimately acquainted with Platonic philosophy, so much so that he was called the 'Jewish Plato'.

Philo taught that death was a separation of the immortal soul from the body. The unbodied soul does not die. It is inextinguishable and deathless. Philo did more than any other single individual of the Hebrew race to do away with the original teachings of the bible on the origin, nature, and destiny of man.

Athenagorus (190 AD) The concept of the innate immortality of the soul as a 'Christian doctrine' did not appear in the writings of the church fathers until towards the close of the second century AD. The Christian church prior to that time did not believe this doctrine. This doctrine was introduced into the Christian church by a Greek philosopher named 'Athenagorus' (190.AD) He nominally accepted Christianity while still

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holding to the beliefs of *Philos Neoplatonic philosophy* on the nature and destiny of man despite its conflict with Christian doctrines. Athenagorus was the first church father to publicly embrace the immortal - soul doctrine and to advocate it on a purely Platonic basis.

[Tertulian of Carthage \(240 AD\)](#) This theologian was the first man to introduce the doctrine of endless torment for the wicked into the Christian church. To sustain it he confessedly altered the sense of Scripture and the meaning of words so as to interpret death as eternal misery, destruction as pain, and consume as anguish. For the wicked, death became another phase of endless immortal life. Immortal suffering without ever ceasing to exist. Tertillian was the first to formulate the concept of universal immortality and endless torment into a coordinated system.

[St. Augustine of Hippo \(430 AD\)](#) It was Augustine's great influence that brought about the general acceptance by the church at large of the belief in the deathlessness of all souls and endless torment in fire for the wicked. His fundamental view was that death means endless life rather than cessation of existence. It was the powerful advocacy by Augustine of these two doctrines that they became generally accepted by the medieval church and became the dominant view for a thousand years. It should be noted that before his conversion to Christianity Augustine had written a book giving sixteen reasons for believing in the immortality of the soul. He was committed to this pagan doctrine before becoming a Christian. When he became a Christian he brought with him pagan doctrines he had adopted in his pre-Christian days.

Much of the material here presented has been gleaned from the two-volume work: [The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers](#) by LeRoy E. Froom. Review and Herald publishing association Washington D.C. 1966.

The Bible used was The New King James Version, published by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Copyright 1990.