
THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

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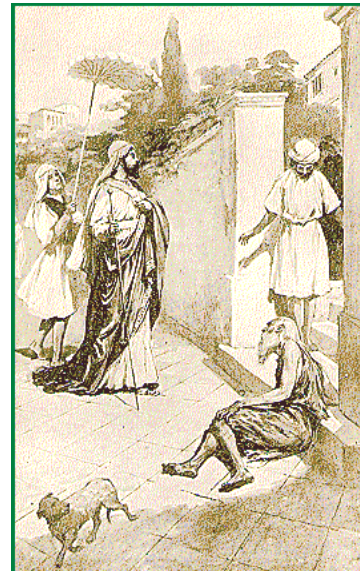
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Matthew 13:34 "Jesus spoke all these things in parables to the crowds; he did not speak to them without a parable." NET.

Mark 4:10-11 "When he [Jesus] was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. 11 He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables..." NET

When Jesus went preaching to the people He always spoke in parables. Parables are stories that contain the basic truth that Jesus wanted the people to understand. The parable of the Rich man and Lazarus is such a parable told to teach a moral lesson. While Jesus was traveling 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. On one occasion Jesus turned to face these people and explained to them the cost of being a disciple. As Jesus was talking Luke records that the despised tax collectors who worked for the Romans and a lower social class called "sinners" were all gathering around to hear Him. **Luke 14:25** "Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned to and said to them,..."

Luke 16:19-31 "There was a rich man who dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 But at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus whose body was covered with sores, 21 who longed to eat what fell from the rich man's table. In addition, the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 "Now the poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And in Hades, as he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far off with Lazarus at his side. 24 So he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue because I am in anguish in this fire.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things and Lazarus likewise bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in anguish. 26 Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us, so that those who want to cross over from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' 27 So the rich man said, 'Then I beg you, father—send Lazarus to my father's house 28 (for I have five brothers) to warn them so that they don't come into this place of torment.' 29 But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they must respond to them.' 30 Then the rich man said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' 31 He replied to him, 'If they do not respond to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'" NET.



That was the Parable as recorded by Dr Luke the Physician. It was the last of a series of five parables told in succession. Now lets set the scene of the story, where Jesus told it, and to whom He told it.

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." NKJV

"The pharisees (a strict sect of the Jews), and the scribes (experts in the law), muttered saying this man receives sinners and eats with them. Jesus heard them so he tells the crowd these five parables all recorded in Luke chapters 15 and 16. The stories in the order in which they were told and lessons behind them are these: -

- (1) The lost sheep. - The Sheep knew it was lost but did not know how to return home.
- (2) The lost coin. - The Coin was lost but did not know it.
- (3) The prodigal son. - The Son 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. - Life is not always what it seems. The danger of the love of money. Mans destiny is forever fixed at death. The way you treat others can send you to hell.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

The parables of the Shrewd Manager and the Rich Man and Lazarus begin with the statement “*there was a certain rich man*”. This is intentional as both parables were addressed to the pharisees who were rich men. The moral lesson that Christ was teaching these pharisees is that they cannot serve both God and money. Their love of money would be their downfall. The parable isn't about what takes place at death but is about the dangers of living selfishly in this life.

Luke 16:14-15 “The Pharisees (who loved money) heard all this and ridiculed him. **15** But Jesus said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in men’s eyes, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly prized among men is utterly detestable in God’s sight.” NET

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 God recognizes them as his people. He also taught that our eternal destiny is forever fixed in this life and that after death there is no second chance.

OUTLINE OF THE PARABLE.

Many use this parable to teach the doctrine of the eternal torment of the lost. But the imagery used in the parable centers around the time between a persons death and the final judgement. It is after the judgement that the lost will be cast into the fires of Gehenna. The scene in the parable is before the final judgement. Therefore this parable cannot be used to teach what happens to the lost after the judgement. Two scenes are portrayed (Scene 1) Life in the present world. (Scene 2) Eternal destiny in the after life. 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 or Abrahams lap. The Rich man was buried and sent to “*hades*” which is the Greek word for the grave or abode of the dead, where he found himself in torment before the judgement. 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 them so they don’t come to this place of torment. Abraham replied, “They have Moses and the prophets (the writings of the Old Testament) let them hear them”. (This indicates that Jesus believed that the Old Testament could teach a person how to avoid being lost). The rich man protested about the use of the writings of Moses and said ‘*no*’ but that if a person rises from the dead went to his brothers they would repent. Abraham says that if they will not believe Moses and the Prophets they will not be convinced even if a person rises from the dead to warn them.

LESSONS FROM THE STORY OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

The Rich man was dressed with purple (the colour of Royalty) and fine linen. Lazarus is covered with sores. The Rich man ate sumptuously every day while Lazarus starved. There is no hint that his money was by gained by fraud. Or that Lazarus was his victim. His sin was that he was oblivious to the presence of the beggar at his gate. The Rich man was not an unjust Judge like the Judge in another parable who did not fear God. This man regarded himself as a righteous son of Abraham.

In contrast, we find Lazarus. He is covered in sores, begs at the rich man’s gate, and eats scraps off the Rich mans table while dogs licked at his sores. This licking of the sores by dogs would have helped the healing of the sores. Dogs lick their own wounds and lick people as a sign of affection. These unclean animals showed more mercy to Lazarus than the rich man did. Also this skin disease would have made him unclean according to Jewish law and therefore unable to worship in the synagogue. Lazarus eventually dies and is carried to Abrahams side by angels. The Rich man also dies and is buried, probably anointed with oil and laid in an expensive tomb. While Lazarus was probably picked up and thrown in the city tip. Interestingly the name Lazarus (Gk:2976) means “he whom God helps”. This is an indication that things in life are not always what they seem.

The Jews were of the opinion that if a person was suffering they must have offended God by disobeying his law. Therefore they were thought to be suffering for their sins. The rich man thought that he was blessed by God for his strict adherence to the law of God. This is why a class of the poor were referred to as “sinners” - those who break the law. But these rich men had failed to learn the lesson taught in the book of Job.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

The Patriarch Job was an upright man and one of the richest men in the world at the time, who feared God and avoided evil, he was described by God as a “blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil”.

Job 1:8 “The Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.” NASB 1995

Because of his strict devotion to God Job was attacked by Satan and suffered dreadfully. He lost everything, his wealth, his family and his health and his reputation.

Job 2:7 “Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes.” NASB 1995

Sometimes in life the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer for what seems like no apparent reason. According to the parable after his death Lazarus is now living in luxury by Abraham’s side which for a Jew would be seen as paradise. While the rich man after his death is living in torment separated from Abraham by a great gulf. All his earthly possessions are gone; he now has nothing, but he’s still referred to as the rich man. While in torment there he seems to have a moment of regret, a time where the rich man seeks forgiveness. Verse 24 tells us that he calls out for mercy. We might feel bad for him... but we just need to read to the end of the verse to see that his character and attitude hasn’t changed in any way.

The rich man asks for mercy, but not mercy to be saved from his situation. Rather he makes two requests: 1. “*send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue*” and 2. “*send Lazarus to my father’s house.*” This unrepentant man still sees Lazarus as lower on the social scale to be his servant. He still thinks of himself as being more important than his fellow man.

In this parable, Jesus targets the rich religious leaders while also offering hope for those who are poor and oppressed. The attitude of the rich man has no place in the kingdom of God. That kind of life will always end in its possessor being lost. Jesus is warning his audience, and us today, that how we treat others matters to God. While this story is a warning to some, there is also hope as well. Many listening were the lonely, the people with no family, the oppressed, the poor, the sick, the taken advantage of. For them, this story is one of great hope. One day their pain both physical and psychological, the bad things that have marked their life, will come to an end and they will find the life they truly desire with God. An eternal life in the Father’s house that will not end. And that promise rings true for us today as well.

This parable is recorded by Luke for Christian pharisees and legalists to pay attention too. It’s designed to force us, the Christian reader, to examine ourselves on how we treat Lazarus-like people. The rich man remains nameless so that we can place ourselves in his shoes. And each of us should ask ourselves: “Am I the Rich man in the parable?” Was Jesus talking about me?

The rich man was blessed by God with great wealth. Wealth that was supposed to be used to help poverty stricken humanity. Instead of seeking out the poor he spent the money on himself. So God brought the poor beggar and laid him at the Rich mans door step. He knew Lazarus was in need, but he refused to help him. He had no compassion. Even in death he still saw Lazarus as beneath him. Ask yourself: Do I treat people like that? Do I have the resources to help others but refuse to give it to them? Is my heart hardened towards those in need? This parable shows us that our eternal destiny is our choice. The way we treat others shows us which direction we will take.

He asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers. But Abraham replied. “*They have Moses and the prophets; they must respond to them.*’ 30 Then the rich man said, ‘No, father Abraham’”. Here the rich man seems to have no interest in the bible. If he did he would have read these words

Isaiah 58:7 “Is it not to break your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him.”NASB 1995

He wanted a miracle instead of reading the bible and doing what it says. He wanted Lazarus to rise from the dead. But the truth is that a miracles will do nothing. Abraham says ‘*If they do not respond to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.*’ The power of the word of God is greater than seeing the dead return to life.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Are modern churches like the Rich man? Consider this: Lazarus was a poor beggar, but being poor does not necessarily mean poor in money. It can mean poor in education and it can mean poor in family. Loneliness is of epidemic proportions in the western world. There is a need for companionship and family by those who have none. Thousands of people leave Christian churches every year because they cannot find friends, cannot find emotional support and cannot find a wife or a husband. These can be the poor represented by Lazarus. People come to church and are shunned by other members. Occasionally people will acknowledge their presence by greeting them and then move away. Like Lazarus they are forced to feed off the emotional scraps that fall from the Rich mans table. And worse still are those agents of Satan in the church who laugh at these people.

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With the lesson of the parable explained we need to ask ourselves if this parable is a portrayal of what occurs after death. After we die do we go straight to a place of torment or bliss? Are we conscious in death? The imagery in the parable is based on the pagan idea that man is conscious in death because he has an immortal soul. Jesus did not teach or believe in the false doctrine of eternal torment. The imagery he used came from Platonic philosophy not taught in the bible. The rich man was NOT in the fires of Gehenna but in his grave. The word mistranslated Hell is the greek word "Hades" which means the "grave". Hades according to Greek thought was supposed to be an intermediate state before being cast into hell/Gehenna. Some of the people in the crowd believed this greek philosophy so Jesus constructed a parable around their belief.

The Jewish Encyclopaedia tells us:

"The belief in the immortality of the soul came to the Jews from contact with Greek thought and chiefly through the philosophy of Plato, its principal exponent, who was led to it through Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries in which Babylonian and Egyptian views were strangely blended..."

Source <https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8092-immortality-of-the-soul>
By: Kaufmann Kohler.

"...for while you believe that the soul is created and yet is made immortal by God according to the doctrine of Plato..." "Josephus' [Hippolytus] discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades." Kregal publications Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. 49501. (1981).

INCONSISTENCIES WITH THE IMAGERY IN THE STORY



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 which is absurd.

WHEN DO WE GET OUR REWARD? AT DEATH OR AFTER THE JUDGEMENT?

A literal interpretation of the imagery 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. But Paul says that God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world with justice. (Acts 17:31). When Paul as a prisoner in Caesarea testifying to the Roman Governor Felix he spoke of the future judgement (Acts 24:25). Jesus taught that the separation of the righteous

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

and the wicked will not come until the return of Jesus the Son of Man when he shall come in His glory and before Him will be gathered all the nations.

Luke 14:12 “Now He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, “Whenever you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor wealthy neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you *to a meal* in return, and *that* will be your repayment. 13 But whenever you give a banquet, invite people who are poor, who have disabilities, who are limping, *and* people who are blind; 14 and you will be blessed, since they do not have *the means* to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” NASB

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 of the Righteous at the resurrection, the time of the harvest, at 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). We do not receive our rewards or punishments when we die.

PLACE OF PUNISHMENT. GEHENNA OR HADES?

The place of torment in the parable is called ‘Hades’. Hades is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew ‘Sheol’; they both mean ‘the abode of the dead’ or the “grave”. But 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 ultimate destruction and disappearance of being of the wicked in His descriptions of the relentless fires of Gehenna.

ETERNAL LIFE WITHOUT CHRIST?

In the parable the wicked dead are still alive. They are portrayed 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.

1 John 5:12-13 “12 The one who has the Son has the life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” NASB

Obviously it is not possible for the rejectors of Christ to have eternal life yet the parable pictures hades the grave 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.

A MAN NAMED LAZARUS

Interestingly a friend of Jesus named Lazarus of Bethany died and Jesus raised him from the dead as recorded in John 11. Jesus' deliberate use of the name Lazarus in the parable is significant. As we have seen the Rich man appeals to Abraham to let Lazarus rise from the dead to warn his brothers of their danger. Jesus knew in advance that his friend Lazarus would die of sickness and that he would raise him from his grave. When Jesus performed that miracle, rather than convince the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, the Jews wanted to murder Jesus so that he could not perform a resurrection of any person again and to murder Lazarus to erase the evidence of a resurrection. It was this miracle that directly led to the final rejection and murder of Jesus. Thereby proving the words of Jesus that “if someone rises from the dead they will not believe”. See John 11:53;12:9-11.

John 11:11-14; 43-44. “...Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. But I am going there to awaken him.” 12 Then the disciples replied, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” 13 (Now Jesus had been talking about his death, but they thought he had been talking about real sleep.) 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, ... 43-44 “ When he had said this, he shouted in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 The one who had died came out,

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

his feet and hands tied up with strips of cloth, and a cloth wrapped around his face. Jesus said to them, "Unwrap him and let him go." NET

"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, character and soul of Lazarus were dead in his grave along with his body. Also significant is the fact that Lazarus did not mention anything at all about what happened to him while he was in the tomb. This is due to the fact that the dead are in a state of unconsciousness and therefore know nothing about what is happening around them.

This Lazarus who was a friend of Jesus is not the beggar pictured in the parable. That 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 IMAGERY

- (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 punished 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 believe that the imagery of the parable are 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 exclusive. If one is true the other is false.

Why would Christ construct a moral lesson about the dangers of the love of money and contempt for our fellow human beings, that our wealth is not evidence of divine favour, and that how we treat others determines our destiny that is forever fixed at death? And then use as a background to it, illustrations that are diametrically opposed to the rest of the bible? As we have seen there were many in the crowd who believed the unbiblical idea of the conscious state of existence after death. This belief had gained a foothold in Judaism through the influence of Platonic Greek philosophy. Especially in the Alexandrian schools of Philosophy in Egypt.

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 who 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.

Listed below are the titles of eight Jewish books that teach biblical Conditionalism and 7 Jewish books that teach Pagan Greek Immortal-soulism. All written about the same time period (200 BC- 100 AD).

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

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

The following information comes from "The Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers" Vol 1. Copyright 1966 By the Review and Herald Publishing Association Washington DC. Le Roy Edwin Froom. Professor of Historical Theology, Andrews University.

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. PP 718 – 740.

Athenagorus (133 - 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' He nominally accepted Christianity while still 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. PP 928 – 946.

Tertullian of Carthage (160 - 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. Tertullian was the first to formulate the concept of universal immortality and endless torment into a coordinated system. PP 947 – 968.

St. Augustine of Hippo (354 - 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. PP1070 - 1075.

Our conclusion is that this parable teaches us our duty to the poor and needy. The love of money is a deception that will lead to our eternal ruin. The imagery of the parable is taken from pagan beliefs not from the writings of Moses. There were people in the audience of Jesus who believed in the pagan idea of the immortality of the soul so Jesus crafted this parable around their belief to teach them a moral lesson on our obligation to the poor and the eternal result of selfishness. It is not a teaching on the intermediate state of the dead.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

APPENDIX 1

If we are to learn the lesson from this parable then we should understand how we are to treat Jesus himself in the person of the poor and needy.

“Our Duty in Ministering to the Poor”

“It is not wise to give indiscriminately to every one who may solicit our aid; for we may thus encourage idleness, intemperance, and extravagance. But if one comes to your door and says he is hungry, do not turn him away empty. Give him something to eat, of such things as you have. You know not his circumstances, and it may be that his poverty is the result of misfortune.

“But among all whose needs demand our interest, the widow and the fatherless have the strongest claims upon our tender sympathy and care. ‘Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.’

“The father who has died in the faith, resting upon the eternal promise of God, left his loved ones in full trust that the Lord would care for them. And how does the Lord provide for these bereaved ones? He does not work a miracle in sending manna from heaven, he does not send ravens to bring them food; but he works a miracle upon human hearts, he expels selfishness from the soul, he unseals the fountain of benevolence. He tests the love of his professed followers by committing to their tender mercies the afflicted and bereaved ones, the poor and the orphan. These are in a special sense the little ones whom Christ looks upon, whom it is an offense to him to neglect. Those who do neglect them are neglecting Christ in the person of his afflicted ones. Every kind act done to them in the name of Jesus, is accepted by him as if done to himself, for he identifies his interest with that of suffering humanity, and he has intrusted to his church the grand work of ministering to Jesus by helping and blessing the needy and suffering. On all who shall minister to them with willing hearts, the blessing of the Lord will rest.

“Until death shall be swallowed up in victory, there will be orphans to be cared for, who will suffer in more ways than one if the tender compassion and loving-kindness of our church-members are not exercised in their behalf. The Lord bids us, ‘Bring the poor that are cast out to thy house.’ Christianity must supply fathers and mothers for these homeless ones. The compassion for the widow and the orphan manifested in prayers and deeds, will come up in remembrance before God, to be rewarded by and by.

“There is a wide field before all who will work for the Master in caring for these friendless children and youth, placing them in a position favorable for the formation of a right character, that they may become children of God. There are unpromising children that need to be tenderly sought for; many that would otherwise grow up in ignorance, and drift into associations that lead to vice and crime, may be brought into favorable surroundings, and under Christ-like, tender watchcare may be saved to Christ.

“The children and youth are God's property; the Lord formed their bodies and gave them the breath of life, and Jesus died for them, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. Are you who profess to be children of God acting your part to teach these, who so much need to be patiently instructed, how to come to the Saviour? Are you overcoming your indolence and slothfulness, and acting your part as laborers together with God, faithful servants of Christ? Are these unformed, perhaps ill-balanced minds cared for with that love which Christ has manifested for us? The souls of children and youth are in deadly peril if left to themselves. They need patience, love, tender, Christ-like care. This will break every barrier down.

“Were there no revelation to point out our duty, the very sight of our eyes, and what we know of the inevitable working of cause and effect, should rouse us to rescue these unfortunate ones. If men would bring into this work the same energy and tact and skill that they employ in the common business relations of life, and while seeking wisdom from God would earnestly study how to mold these undisciplined minds, many souls might be rescued from the multitudes that are ready to perish.

“If parents would feel the solicitude for the salvation of their own children that they should have, if they would bear them in their prayers to the throne of grace, and then live out their prayers, knowing

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

that God is co-operating with them, they might become successful workers for children outside of their own family, and especially for those who have not parental counsel and guidance. The Lord calls on every member of the church to do your duty to these orphans. Do not, however, work for them merely from the standpoint of duty, but because you love them, and Christ died to save them. Christ has purchased these souls that need your care, and he expects you to love them as he has loved you in your sins and waywardness.

“Love is the agency through which God works to draw the heart to him. It is the power by which he expels sin from the soul. In every department of life this principle must be the controlling power. In every enterprise of mercy this alone can give efficiency; the finite must unite with the infinite; and ‘God is love.’

“This work for others will require effort and self-denial and sacrifice; but what is the little sacrifice that we can make, in comparison with God's great gift of his only begotten Son? God has granted us the privilege of becoming laborers together with him. In his plan there is a positive necessity for good works, for his plan made for the uplifting of man is dependent upon the co-operation of his human agents.

“God imparts his blessing to us, that we may give to others. And as long as we yield ourselves as the channels through which his love can flow, he will keep the channels supplied. When you ask God for your daily bread, he looks right into your heart to see if you will impart the same to others, more needy than yourself. When you pray, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner,’ he watches to see if you will manifest compassion to those with whom you associate. This is the evidence of our connection with God,—that we are merciful even as our Father who is in heaven is merciful. If we are his, we shall do with a cheerful heart just what he tells us to do, however inconvenient, however contrary it may be to our own feelings.

*“God is always giving; and upon whom are his gifts bestowed? Upon those who are faultless in character? He ‘maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.’ Notwithstanding the sinfulness of humanity, notwithstanding we so often grieve the heart of Christ, when we ask his forgiveness, he does not turn us away, although we are most undeserving. *It pleases and honors god when we expect great things at his hand. he has promised us great blessings through our saviour, and we cannot dishonor his name more than to doubt his love and his willingness to bless us.**

“How are the world to know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent?-- Through his word and through his human agents; we are to be his representatives. Through us the world will form their opinion of God and of the religion of Christ. Therefore Jesus said, ‘Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.’ ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’ When men see, they glorify God. Great dishonor is brought upon the cause of God because those who profess Christ do not possess his Holy Spirit, but walk in their own ways. What a terrible misrepresentation of God, his ways, his character, are the selfishness of life and hardness of heart of his professed followers. A profession of piety is not enough; if religion is not brought into practical service, and does not produce good works, it is valueless. If we do not live to bless others, we are unfaithful stewards, and we shall never receive the heavenly benediction, ‘Well done.’ But God will have a peculiar people, of whom it is written, that Christ is not ashamed to call them brethren. They bear his likeness. They are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.

“It is in doing the works of Christ, ministering as he did to the suffering and afflicted, that we are to develop Christian character. It is for our good that God has called us to practice self-denial for Christ's sake, to bear the cross, to labor and sacrifice in seeking to save that which is lost. This is the Lord's process of refining, purging away the baser material, that the precious traits of character which were in Christ Jesus, may appear in the believer. All dross must be cleansed from the soul, through the sanctification of the truth. If good works cost us no sacrifice, then they would not be disciplinary. There are obligations which bring us into conflict with natural feelings and propensities, and in fulfilling these obligations, we gain victory over every objectionable feature of our character. The warfare goes on, and thus we grow in grace. Thus our character is developed in the likeness of Christ, and we are prepared for a place among the blessed in the kingdom of God.

“Through the grace of Christ our efforts to bless others are not only the means of our growth in grace, but they will enhance our future, eternal happiness. To those who have been co-workers with Christ

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

it will be said, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' Although we have no merit in ourselves, in the great goodness and love of God we are rewarded as if the merit were our own. When we have done all the good we can possibly do, we are still unprofitable servants. We have done only what was our duty. What we have accomplished has been wrought solely through the grace of Christ, and no reward is due to us from God on the ground of our merit. But through the merit of our Saviour, every promise that God has made will be fulfilled, and every man will be rewarded according to his deeds. The precious rewards of the future will be proportioned to the work of faith and labor of love in the present life. 'He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.' We should be most grateful that now in probationary time through the infinite mercy of God, we are permitted to sow the seed for our future harvest. We should carefully consider what the harvest will be. Whether the crown of our eternal rejoicing shall be bright or dim depends upon our own course of action. We may make our calling and election sure, and may come into possession of the rich inheritance, or we may defraud ourselves of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever.” (The Review and Herald, June 27, 1893 issue, article title: “Our Duty in Ministering to the Poor,” pars. 1-16, by Ellen G. White; all-caps added for emphasis)

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

APPENDIX 2

The Discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades, also called Against Plato on the Cause of the Universe, is a short treatise believed to be the work of Hippolytus of Rome. It was erroneously attributed to the Jewish historian Josephus since at least the 9th century and was first published in a translation of Josephus' works by William Whiston. As Whiston's translation is in the public domain, it appears in many present-day English editions of Josephus' work without any noting of its erroneous attribution. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discourse_to_the_Greeks_concerning_Hades?

This treatise bears a remarkable similarity to the parable of the Richman and Lazarus. What is of interest is that in part 2 Hippolytus makes a bold admission that imagery in the story is based on the "opinion of Plato". Not the Judeo/Christian bible or the writings of Moses.

Hippolytus of Rome

(170-235 AD)

Hippolytus of Rome (170 – 235 AD) was the most important 3rd-century theologian in the Christian Church in Rome, where he was probably born. He came into conflict with the popes of his time and seems to have headed a schismatic group as a rival Bishop of Rome. He opposed the Roman bishops who softened the penitential system to accommodate the large number of new pagan converts. However, he was very probably reconciled to the Church when he died as a martyr.

Discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades

Part 1 And this is the passage regarding **demons**. But now we must speak of Hades, in which the **souls** both of the righteous and the unrighteous are detained. Hades is a place in the created system, rude, a locality beneath the earth, in which the light of the world does not shine; and as the sun does not shine in this locality, there must necessarily be perpetual darkness there. This locality has been destined to be as it were a guard-house for **souls**, at which the **angels** are stationed as guards, distributing according to each one's **deeds** the temporary punishments for (different) characters. And in this locality there is a certain place set apart by itself, a lake of unquenchable fire, into which we suppose no one has ever yet been cast; for it is prepared against the day determined by **God**, in which one sentence of righteous judgment shall be **justly** applied to all. And the unrighteous, and those who **believed not God**, who have honoured as God the vain works of the hands of **men, idols** fashioned (by themselves), shall be sentenced to this endless punishment. But the righteous shall obtain the incorruptible and un-fading kingdom, who indeed are at present detained in Hades, but not in the same place with the unrighteous. For to this locality there is one descent, at the gate whereof we **believe** an archangel is stationed with a host. And when those who are conducted by the **angels** appointed unto the **souls** have passed through this gate, they do not proceed on one and the same way; but the righteous, being conducted in the light toward the right, and being hymned by the **angels** stationed at the place, are brought to a locality full of light. And there the righteous from the beginning dwell, not ruled by necessity, but enjoying always the **contemplation** of the blessings which are in their view, and delighting themselves with the expectation of others ever new, and deeming those ever better than these. And that place brings no toils to them. There, there is neither fierce heat, nor cold, nor thorn; but the face of the fathers and the righteous is seen to be always smiling, as they wait for the rest and **eternal** revival in heaven which succeed this location. And we call it by the name **Abraham's bosom**. But the unrighteous are dragged toward the left by **angels** who are ministers

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

of punishment, and they go of their own accord no longer, but are dragged by force as prisoners. And the **angels** appointed over them send them along, reproaching them and threatening them with an eye of terror, forcing them down into the lower parts. And when they are brought there, those appointed to that service drag them on to the confines or **hell**. And those who are so near hear incessantly the agitation, and feel the hot smoke. And when that vision is so near, as they see the terrible and excessively glowing spectacle of the fire, they shudder in horror at the expectation of the future judgment, (as if they were) already feeling the power of their punishment. And again, where they see the place of the fathers and the righteous, they are also punished there. For a deep and vast abyss is set there in the midst, so that neither can any of the righteous in sympathy think to pass it, nor any of the unrighteous dare to cross it.

Part 2 Thus far, then, on the subject of Hades, in which the **souls** of all are detained until the time which **God** has determined; and then He will accomplish a **resurrection of all**, not by transferring **souls** into other bodies, but by raising the bodies themselves. And if, O Greeks, you refuse credit to this because you see these (bodies) in their dissolution, learn not to be incredulous. **For if you believe that the soul is originated and is made immortal by God, according to the opinion of Plato**, in time, you ought not to refuse to **believe** that God is able also to raise the body, which is composed of the same elements, and make it **immortal**. To be able in one thing, and to be unable in another, is a word which cannot be said of **God**. We therefore **believe** that the body also is raised. For if it become corrupt, it is not at least destroyed. For the earth receiving its remains preserves them, and they, becoming as it were seed, and being wrapped up with the richer part of earth, spring up and bloom. And that which is sown is sown indeed bare grain; but at the command of God the Artificer it buds, and is raised arrayed and **glorious**, but not until it has first died, and been dissolved, and mingled with earth. Not, therefore, without good reason do we **believe** in the resurrection of the body. Moreover, if it is dissolved in its season on account of the primeval transgression, and is committed to the earth as to a furnace, to be moulded again anew, it is not raised the same thing as it is now, but pure and no longer corruptible. And to every body its own proper **soul** will be given again; and the **soul**, being endued again with it, shall not be grieved, but shall **rejoice** together with it, abiding itself pure with it also pure. And as it now sojourns with it in the world righteously, and finds it in nothing now a traitor, it will receive it again (the body) with great **joy**. But the unrighteous will receive their bodies unchanged, and unransomed from suffering and disease, and unglorified, and still with all the ills in which they died. And whatever manner of **persons** they (were when they) lived without **faith**, as such they shall be faithfully judged.

Part 3 For all, the righteous and the unrighteous alike, shall be brought before **God the Word**. For the Father has committed all judgment to Him; and in fulfilment of the Father's counsel, He comes as Judge whom we call Christ. For it is not Minos and Rhadamanthys that are to judge (the world), as you fancy, O Greeks, but He whom **God** the Father has **glorified**, of whom we have spoken elsewhere more in particular, for the profit of those who seek the **truth**. He, in administering the righteous judgment of the Father to all, assigns to each what is righteous according to his works. And being present at His judicial decision, all, both men and **angels** and **demons**, shall utter one voice, saying, *Righteous is Your judgment*. Of which voice the justification will be seen in the awarding to each that which is just; since to those who have done well shall be assigned righteously **eternal** bliss, and to the lovers of iniquity shall be given **eternal** punishment. And the fire which is un-quenchable and without end awaits these latter, and a certain fiery worm which dies not, and which does not waste the body, but continues bursting forth from the body with unending pain. No sleep will give them rest; no night will soothe them; no death will deliver them from punishment; no **voice of interceding**

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

friends will profit them. For neither are the righteous seen by them any longer, nor are they worthy of remembrance. But the righteous will remember only the righteous **deeds** by which they reached the heavenly kingdom, in which there is neither sleep, nor pain, nor corruption, nor care, nor night, nor day measured by time; nor sun traversing in necessary course the circle of heaven, which marks the limits of seasons, or the points measured out for the life of man so easily read; nor moon waning or waxing, or inducing the changes of seasons, or moistening the earth; no burning sun, no changeful Bear, no Orion coming forth, no numerous wandering of stars, no painfully-trodden earth, no abode of paradise hard to find; no **furious** roaring of the sea, forbidding one to touch or traverse it; but this too will be readily passable for the righteous, although it lacks no water. There will be no heaven inaccessible to **men**, nor will the way of its ascent be one impossible to find; and there will be no earth unwrought, or toilsome for men, but one producing fruit spontaneously in beauty and order; nor will there be generation of wild beasts again, nor the bursting substance of other creatures. Neither with man will there be generation again, but the number of the righteous remains indefectible with the righteous **angels** and spirits. You who **believe** these words, O men, will be partakers with the righteous, and will have part in these future blessings, which *eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him*. To Him be the **glory** and the power, for ever and ever. **Amen.**<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/hippolytus-dogmatical.html>

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Much of the material presented here in this study has been gleaned from the two-volume work: “The Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers” Copyright 1966 By the Review and Herald Publishing Association Washington DC. Le Roy Edwin Froom. Professor of Historical Theology, Andrews University.
