

# **The Rich Man and Lazarus**

**A parable told by our Lord Jesus Christ to the religious  
leaders of his day and time.**

By

Pastor Lloyd Willhite

P.O. Box 360

Porter, OK 74454

(918) 483-3111 office

[lloydwillhite@yahoo.com](mailto:lloydwillhite@yahoo.com)

[www.kingdommessage.com](http://www.kingdommessage.com)

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

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

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

**And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;**

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

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

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

**And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.**

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

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

**Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.**

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

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

## The Rich Man and Lazarus

When the subject of "hell" is being discussed among Christians, there is one passage of scripture that is continually mentioned to try to prove that a man will be tormented in literal fire in a place called "hell". It is the parable of the *certain rich man* and the *beggar Lazarus* found in the 16th chapter of St. Luke.

The "beggar Lazarus" died and was carried by the angels into Father Abraham's bosom. The "certain rich man" also died and was buried.... and IN HELL.... he lift up his eyes, being in torments. Is this a picture of heaven and hell as many preachers say?

Who is the "certain rich man" and who is the "beggar Lazarus"? Who are "the dogs" and what is "Abraham's bosom"? What kind of "flame" was the rich man tormented in and what is the "great gulf" that was fixed? What was our Lord suggesting when he spoke this parable? What kind of picture was he painting for us? All these questions must be answered according to the scriptures before we can understand what Jesus was talking about in this parable.

### Is This a Parable?

Many do not believe this passage of scripture is a parable. They believe it is talking about an actual man. If this is not a parable then what does the scripture mean in Matthew 13:34, where it says...*"All these things spake Jesus unto the multitudes in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them"* ...and also in Mark 4:33&34... *"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"*? Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables...but to his disciples he expounded the scriptures.

### What is a parable?

A parable, according to Strong's Concordance #3850 is **Parabole**: a similitude ("parable"), i.e. (symbol), fictitious narrative (of common life conveying a moral), apothegm or adage: - comparison, figure, parable, proverb.

It is important to understand that a parable is a "fictitious narrative" because chapters 14, 15 and 16 of Luke are ALL parables or "fictitious narratives." If we had opportunity to study them in depth we would see they are ALL speaking about the priesthood and the Pharisees of that day... and NOT an individual!

Most preachers say the "certain rich man" in this scripture applies to the state of sinners after death. They make statements such as "all sinners are going to die and go down to a burning hell but, all Christians are going up to heaven and walk on streets of gold." They say, "It's just like the rich man in the Bible who went down to hell and lifted up his eyes in torments and saw Lazarus in heaven." *The Bible doesn't say that.... only preachers say that!!* And this parable does not mean that...preachers say it means that!! There is nothing in this parable that says what

will happen to a person after the physical death of his body. Yet, preachers continually use it to paint a vivid picture of life in hell after the death of a sinner.

This parable does however, speak of a "certain rich man" who died and was buried; and in hell he lift (not lifted) up his eyes being in torments. It speaks of a "certain beggar" named Lazarus who lay at this rich man's gate. He died also but.... he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

You will notice in this parable that Jesus never said the rich man led a "sinful life." He only said the rich man fared sumptuously everyday, dressed well, and would not share his food with Lazarus. Does such behavior merit punishment by torment?

Neither did Jesus say that Lazarus was a "righteous man" who did all kinds of good works and served God all his life so that he might go to Abraham's bosom. NO!! He just said that Lazarus was poor, or a beggar. So, is it scriptural to say all "poor people" will go to heaven and all "rich people" will go to a place of conscious torments? As we study let's allow the scriptures to identify who the "certain rich man" and the "beggar Lazarus" are. Then we will know what this parable is really saying.

### **Who Is Jesus Talking To?**

We must consider who the Lord is talking to when he is relating this parable. According to verse 14, 15 and 16 of this chapter the Lord is speaking to the Pharisees... *"And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."*

Then in verse 19, he goes on to tell them a parable about themselves. He relates to them (in story form) about the present condition of their established priesthood order and what was about to happen to them at the changing of the covenant. But, to those religious leaders, it was as prophesied in Psalms 78:2, *"he opened his mouth in a parable and uttered dark sayings of old."*

Turn with me to Luke 16:19 and we will read through this parable line by line and discover the great truth that is hidden in it.

### **A Certain Rich Man**

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

The first important point to understand in this parable is.... it says *certain*. It doesn't say *everyone who is rich*; it says a *certain rich man*, or a *specific one*. The Lord is making reference to a particular rich man. He is not just using a general term like most preachers do. Then, he goes on to describe this "certain rich man" .... he was clothed in purple and fine linen.

## Purple and Fine Linen

If you study the Old Covenant you will discover that "purple and fine linen" describes the dress of the Levitical priesthood order that God gave to Moses. We read this in Exodus 39:1-2... *"And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy place, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the Lord commanded Moses. And he made the ephod of gold, blue and purple and scarlet, and fine twined linen."* The robes of the Aaronic priesthood order were purple and fine linen. That was the description of their clothing.

Consider Exodus 39:27-29... *"And they made coats of fine linen of woven work for Aaron, and for his sons, And a mitre of fine linen, and goodly bonnets of fine linen, and linen breeches of fine twined linen, And a girdle of fine twined linen, and blue and purple and scarlet, of needlework; as the Lord commanded Moses."*

My, what a clear picture we have in the scriptures of who this ***certain rich man*** was. He was the one dressed in purple and fine linen! The scripture describes the Aaronic Priesthood as dressed in purple and fine linen! So, now we know "of whom" and "to whom" Jesus is speaking.

(The Aaronic Priesthood is also known as the Mosetical order, or the Levitical order, or the House of Levi. These are all interchangeable terms concerning this subject.)

## Who is Abraham the Father of?

In verse 24, we have another clue as to who this "certain rich man" was.... *"he [the rich man] cried and said, Father Abraham have mercy on me."* Can you answer this question.....who is Abraham the father of?

The answer is found in Matthew 3:7-9... *"But when he, [John the Baptist] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, WE HAVE ABRAHAM TO OUR FATHER: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."* Who was John speaking to? The Pharisees and Sadducees!! They are the ones who said, *"We have Abraham to our Father."* They are the ones who called Abraham their "Father" (compare St. John 8:31-33).

## Ordained of God

The Aaronic Priesthood order was a covenant of God with the House of Levi. It was God's ordained order. He established it and set it in order through Moses. But down through the years that priesthood became very rich; and with the riches came corruption whereby many were made corrupt. Jesus said, *"Woe unto you scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves"* (Matt. 23:15).

By A.D. 33 (in Jesus' time) the priesthood did not even resemble the original institution that was ordered of God. It became two separate sects (the Pharisees and the Sadducees); and the office of a priest was often bought by the very rich. It had become a political position to be desired rather than a religious position. The history of what happened to this priesthood (from the time of Moses until the time of Jesus) will help us understand the parable of the "certain rich man" and "Lazarus."

When Moses received the Law from God on Mt. Sinai, the High Priest was to be the ruling factor in Israel. He could only come from the House of Levi, the sons of Aaron. There was to be only one High Priest at a time and he ruled until his death. Then his eldest son became High Priest. That is how God ordained it to be. But, by the time Jesus came to this earth it had ceased to be that way. There was, instead, a council called the "Sanhedrin" which ruled in Israel and not the High Priest. *"Then said some of them of Jerusalem, is not this he, whom they seek to kill? But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers [the Sanhedrin] know indeed that this is the very Christ?"* (St. John 7:25- 26). You can see the priesthood had been totally changed from the way God ordained it.

### **What Is The Sanhedrin?**

According to Eerdmans' New Testament Bible Dictionary, Jewish tradition teaches that the Sanhedrin originally began with the seventy elders who assisted Moses, and had one form or another throughout Jewish history. In New Testament times it was comprised of the acting high priest (and those who had been high priests); members of the privileged families (from which the high priests had been taken); the elders (tribal and family heads of the people and the priesthood); and the scribes, that is, the legal experts. The Sanhedrin exercised not only civil jurisdiction according to Jewish Law, but also criminal jurisdiction to some degree. It had administrative authority and could order arrests by its own officers of justice. It was empowered to judge cases which did not involve capital punishment. Even the internal government of the country was in the hands of the Sanhedrin, and in most cases the Roman government was just an overseer although they reserved the right to interfere in any case they wished to.<sup>1</sup>

Now, consider this point carefully because this is important to our understanding of the time in which our Lord was ministering here on earth. In Jesus' time, the appointment to the priesthood had become political and aristocratic instead of the way God ordained it.... which was by inheritance through the tribe of Levi. The priesthood had become a position of high political power and one to be desired for something other than godly motives. Do you see this "certain rich man"?

### **The Priesthood Was Rich**

The Levitical priesthood order had become rich in the power it exercised over the common man. Those priests were rich in their own doctrine and interpretation of the scriptures. They were very pious, pompous, and elevated. They loved the high places and positions of their religious order. Jesus said.... *"Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets."* (Luke 11:43) When they had walked through the congregation they

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<sup>1</sup> New Testament Bible Dictionary, p 1143

received the reverence and admiration of the people; and they loved that.... more than they loved God.

All Israel poured their tithes and offerings into that priesthood order. They were not only rich in their doctrine, but in natural things as well. Instead of Priests of God they had become moneychangers who conducted their business right in the temple. When people would come from afar to offer their sacrifices, the priests would often tell them that the animals they brought were not acceptable to sacrifice due to a blemish. This forced them to buy their sacrificial offerings from the priests.

That is why... *"Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold, and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves [sacrificial offerings], and he said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves"* (Matt 21:12-13).

In the writings of Josephus, the Jewish historian, we read that the priests of that day had accumulated great wealth, which they kept in the treasury chambers of Herod's temple. When the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 by Titus (the Roman General) and his army, the soldiers took so much gold out of the temple that it caused the market price of gold to be cut in half. That priesthood "fared sumptuously" everyday and was the "certain rich man" Jesus was speaking of.

### **Laid at the Gate**

*"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."*

Having identified in the scriptures this "certain rich man" as symbolic of the Aaronic Priesthood, who then, was that "certain beggar" named Lazarus which lay at this rich man's GATE begging to eat from the rich man's table?

### **What Is a Gate?**

It will help us, if we will take a look at what the word "gate" means in this scripture since this is where the beggar Lazarus was laid. In the Strong's Concordance, the Greek word for "gate" is #4440, **Pulon** and it means: *a gateway, door-way of a building or city, by implication a portal or vestibule: -gate, porch.*

Let's look at the word "vestibule" in this definition of the Greek word **Pulon** because it best describes the meaning of a "gate" in the scriptures. One of the definitions for vestibule in Webster's Dictionary is... "a course that offers access, [as to something new]." Only the Levitical priesthood had access to the Word of God at that time. They had the law and the prophets which testified of the Christ to come...let's read... *"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [it was the entrance] to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"*

(Gal.3:23-24). Only the priests in that day had the knowledge of how to enter in. But, THEY would not...and THEY hindered those that would have...THEY were "the gate" where the "beggar Lazarus" laid.

### **Ye Entered Not In Yourselves**

Jesus rebuked those lawyers in his day (who were members of the Sanhedrin) saying... "*Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered*" (Luke 11:52). The common people in Israel (the beggar) would love to have partaken of the things of God. They would have entered in but were hindered by the lifestyle of those priests and their failure to minister the things of God to the nation.

In another place Jesus said, "*But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites! For ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in*" (Matt. 23:13).

### **The Kingdom of Heaven Is Not In The Sky**

Now, the Kingdom of heaven is not a place afar off in the sky, Praise God! Jesus said it was right here on earth! He was rebuking them for shutting up the Kingdom of heaven AGAINST MEN ...not against angels, not against some other form of being, but against men, RIGHT HERE ON THIS EARTH!! The Kingdom of heaven is a place here on earth that MEN can enter into now, Praise God!!

The whole nation of Israel (the common people, the beggar Lazarus) was begging to enter into the presence of God which Aaron's priesthood had knowledge of. But, that priesthood had become rich and did not care about the people; they themselves did not live the life that God commanded them to live and to teach his people. Just as Jesus said in Matthew 23:2-3, ... "*The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.*"

As Malachi spoke in chapter 2, verse 7... "*For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they [the people, the nation of Israel] should seek the law at his mouth [the priests]: is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.*" So we see, the priests in Jesus' time did not "keep knowledge" and were hindering those that would have entered in at the "strait gate" (Matt.7:13-14).

### **The Elders were Gates**

In the Old Testament the elders of a city were called the "gates." They were the rulers much like a city council of today. Proverbs 31 speaks of a virtuous woman (which was the house of Israel in type); and her husband (which was the priesthood or the religious leaders of that time) who was God's husbandman to them. It says in verse 23, "*Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.*" The "gates" were the rulers and the administrators of the

law. The House of Israel's husbandman (the priesthood) was known in the place of rulership in the land.

So, we see a "gate" is a place of authority, or a man who has authority to speak for someone else. In this case, the priesthood had the oracles of God. They were to speak *for God* to the House of Israel: and *to God* in behalf of the House of Israel. That is what a priest is for. They were not doing their job; they had become politically oriented to the place where they were absolutely buying their own offices in Jesus' time, even the office of the High Priest.

### **Lift Up Your Heads, Oh Ye Gates**

If it is still hard for you to understand what a "gate" is, then turn to Psalms 24:7.... "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.*" Have you ever heard of a natural gate with a head? Of course not! Have you ever talked to a natural gate and told it, "be ye lift up"? No!! We know this verse is symbolically speaking of the leaders of God's people, at that time. Look at verse 6, to see who he is talking about... "*this is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.*" So then, those who "seek the face of God"...THEY are the "gates" of God, for the people. Under that old covenant only the priests sought the face of God for the people. They were the "gates".

### **In The Beginning**

In Genesis 2:8-15, Adam was the "gate" for God's people but he disobeyed God's word. He was to "*dress and keep the garden*" (Gen 2:15). Because of his disobedience to God's word and his commandments the "fall of Adam" came. Adam failed to minister an entrance (gate or door) into the presence of God for the people of God.

Then, God made the covenant of the law with Moses, and that covenant was still in effect until the death of Jesus. That is why John the Baptist preached repentance. He was of the house of Levi; his father was a priest and his mother was a daughter of Aaron. The oracles of God were committed into the hands of those priests that they (the people) might be justified through faith for... "*the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ*" (Gal.3:24).

The Levitical Priesthood order failed also as Adam did. They were to lift up a standard to the people and prepare them for the coming of the Lord.... but they came short of it themselves. They failed to minister an entrance (a gate) into the presence of God for the people. They were to be the gates into the true city of God (the church). But, instead of an entrance into the things of God...instead of preparing the way of the Lord.... the priesthood of Aaron (the tribe of Levi) became the "shut" gate where the beggar Lazarus (the nation of Israel) lay begging when Jesus came.

What did Jesus say to those in the synagogue concerning his calling? "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor [the beggar]*" .....Jesus came to minister to the poor, to the "beggar Lazarus." He was sent to the lost sheep of the House

of Israel... *"He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord"* (Luke 4:18)

When Jesus came, he said unto them (the Pharisees) *"Verily, verily I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep"* (St. John 10:7). The Greek word for "door", in the Strong's Concordance, is **Thura** (#2374) and it means: *a door-a portal or entrance, (the opening or the closure, lit. or fig.) :- door, gate*. Jesus is the "door" of the sheepfold, or the "gate"..... *"for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

## Go Ye Into All the World

He commanded his disciples to be "doors" or "gates" (an entrance into the kingdom of God) when he told them... *"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15). Go ye into all the world and preach an entrance into the city of God so that "whosoever will" may enter into it. God's city, we shall see, is not a natural city!

Revelation chapter 21 describes the city of God and plainly tells you who the "gates" are in verse 12... *"And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel."* The twelve sons of Israel were the gates into the city. The twelve tribes of Israel were God's chosen people on the earth, at that time. Verse 14 says... *"And the wall of the city [New Jerusalem] had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."*

The twelve apostles of Jesus are the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem, which is the holy city of God (the church). We are... *"built upon the foundation of the apostle and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone."* The church is built upon the foundation teachings of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Praise God! *"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl"* (Rev 21:21). Tell me who is the one pearl of great price? It is our Lord Jesus Christ! The entrance into the holy city is through the "gate" or "door" which is Jesus Christ and his church.

## The Gates of Today

The "gates" of today are those preachers who minister an understanding of the things of God to you...an entrance. That is what God's ministers are called to do. But, the priests or religious leaders of that day and time did not... I repeat...**did not**...preach an entrance into the things of God. God never intended for his people to be beggars!! David said, in Psalms 37:25, *"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed "begging bread."* What was Lazarus doing? He was laid at the rich man's gate begging.... and desiring to be fed with the crumbs, which fell from the rich man's table.... *"moreover the dogs came and licked his sores."*

## The Dogs

Who were the "dogs" that licked the sores of Lazarus the beggar? To find a scriptural definition of "dogs" turn with me to Mark 7: 24-27 where we have the account of a certain woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit. She was a Greek, or a Gentile. She besought Jesus that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But, Jesus said unto her in verse 27... *"Let the children [the House of Israel] first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs."* Jesus called the woman a "dog".....*"And she answered and said unto him, Yes Lord: yet the dogs [gentiles] under the table eat of the children's crumbs."*

Under the Mosaic Covenant, even a Gentile could come in and be a slave or a servant unto Israel and come under their covering (or under their table).... even *"the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."* Healing is the "children's bread." This woman wanted her daughter healed and she knew God's provisions for the stranger and sojourner in Israel or she never would have answered the Lord that way. And you know what the Lord said to her... *"For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter."* He recognized her faith, or her understanding of God's provisions for her as a Gentile. Even the Gentile (dog) could eat of the children's bread or the crumbs under the table.

In the time of Jesus, the Gentile nation ruling over God's people was the Roman Government one of the "dogs." Down through the history of Israel, many Gentile nations ruled over God's people...Egypt, Babylon, Meda-Persia, Greece and then Rome. If you read the history of that time, you will see that the Roman government was oftentimes more protective of the common Israelite than their own priesthood was.

Jesus saw that the nation of Israel was in this "begging" condition and was relating it in this parable when he said...*"moreover the dogs [the Roman Government] came and licked his [Lazarus'] sores."* Even Titus, the Roman General, and his army tried to protect the common Israelite before the destruction of Jerusalem, in A.D. 70.

Several years before the city was destroyed, Titus and his army went to Jerusalem to quell a disturbance between different factions of the Jews. Josephus' writings say that the Jews were in such turmoil that one faction was killing the other and throwing their dead bodies over the wall of the city. Titus pleaded with them to quit their fighting because he did not want to defile or destroy their temple. He pleaded with those who were barricaded in the temple to stop polluting the Holy Place and quit offending God. Titus was so disturbed at their actions and what they were forcing him to do that he raised up his hands to heaven and called on God to witness that this was not his doing (from the Works of Flavius Josephus, books 2-6).

## Abraham's Bosom

***"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."***

"Abraham's bosom" means a favored position with God. It means you are in His will, in His care, and in His keeping. St. John 1:18 says, *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."* The writer of Hebrews wrote.... *"Then said he, Lo I come to do thy will."* This is speaking of Jesus. Where was he at?..... in the bosom of the Father!

If "Abraham's bosom" is symbolic of heaven as most preachers teach, and if "heaven" is a geographical place somewhere in outer space (as they also teach)... then isn't it strange to you that this "certain rich man" who was dead... and buried...and in hell...could actually TALK.... and SEE.... Lazarus in "Abraham's bosom"?

### **Can You See Heaven from Hell??**

If heaven is literally so far above the earth, and hell is literally so deep in the center of the earth (as so many teach) it would be impossible for the rich man to SEE Lazarus in "Abraham's bosom"! If this 'certain rich man' was speaking of a natural man instead of a parable (as some teach), it would be impossible for him (after having died) to see from a literal grave into a literal heaven! I'd say there would be a lot of crusted over dirt between them if hell is in the center of the earth and heaven is far above in space. How much dirt can you see through?....and being dead at that!! How then, could the rich man SEE from one place to the other? It makes you think doesn't it? We must see that Jesus is speaking SYMBOLICALLY in this parable.

Here is another point to consider, if heaven and hell are so far apart how did the rich man and father Abraham hear each other talk? The rich man *cried* and *said*... *"Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus..."* Sounds like they could hear all the way from hell to heaven.... they must have had a loud voice!!

### **What is This Talking About Then?**

Jesus was actually speaking prophetically to those religious leaders in this parable. He was telling them that the covenant of the law was going to change at his death, burial, and ascension.... and there was nothing they could do about it. There was coming a death to that administration of the Old Covenant. The covenant of Grace and Truth was going to be established by the work of Calvary and his disciples would begin to preach the gospel to *all*. He was prophesying to them just like he said in Luke 13:25, *"When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without..."* Jesus was saying. " this is going to cause a great disturbance among you." WHEN? Look at verse 28... *"When ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."* They were coming into a place of torment but the disciples would be in a place of power and peace.... in heaven!!

This is the same heaven that Jesus was in when he was relating this parable to the Pharisees. Jesus said, in St. John 3:13... *"No man has ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven"* [present tense]. Jesus was standing flat footed

right here on this earth looking Nicodemus in the eye and telling him that he (Jesus) was in heaven! Yes, you can see heaven from hell..... if you have a spiritual eye! The "rich man" was in hell, brother!

### **"We Be Abraham's Seed"**

The rich man called Abraham "father" when he cried out. In St. John 8:31-33 Jesus was teaching some of the Jews that believed on him and admonished them to continue in his word saying ...*"then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"*.... then they answered him, *"We be Abraham's seed [or Abraham's children] and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?"*

There was only one people who claimed they were never in bondage to any man and that was the Jews, or the house of Israel. Their priests were the teachers of the Law of Moses. They all called Abraham "Father." But when God's changing time and order came for them to move into Grace and Truth (the present day truth).... they would not change. God brought death to that old covenant of law and Judaism...the "rich man" died and was buried...and in "hell" and "torments."

That priesthood was no longer able to operate with God's blessing or covering. There was a change of COVENANT from the OLD to the NEW. The death of that old covenant was "the grave" or "the hell" that the rich man was cast into. He no longer *"fared sumptuously everyday."* The new order of Christianity was flourishing right in the presence of those unbelieving Jews who rejected Jesus. It was the apostles of Christ who were feeding the Word of God to the common people [Lazarus] now.... *"but now he [Lazarus] is comforted and thou [the rich man] art tormented."*

### **"In Hell He Lift Up His Eyes"**

There has probably been more written and spoken on "hell" than any other subject of the Bible. While this subject is much greater than we will be able to cover completely in this booklet, we must take time right here to outline what the Bible means in some places when it uses the term "hell" so that we might better understand this parable.

If you listen to traditional teachers on the subject of "hell," about all you hear is that hell is a place of fire and torment with flames leaping up around your body forever and ever. And, they say if you don't get "saved" according to their interpretation of scripture, or "baptized" according to their doctrine, then you are surely destined for hell, fire, and brimstone. But, if we will study the scriptures instead of just listening to the traditional teachings, we will find that the word "hell" simply means the "grave," both natural and spiritual.

### **Sheol is the Grave**

Let's look at some scriptures in the Old Testament to see what kind of state "the dead" were in. In Ezek. 18:4...*"Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth it shall die."* They are just dead! That's what "die" means!

Ecc.9:5 ... *"For the living know that they shall die, but the dead knoweth not any thing"...Verse 10... "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."*

Psalms 88:10.. *"Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee?"*  
Psalms 6:5... *"For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?"* There is no evidence in any of these scriptures that after death there is any activity or anything going on in the grave! Neither is there any evidence of any physical pain to any man in the grave or hell. Paul summed it up in this way... *"For the wages of sin is death" ...PERIOD!! NOT torment...NOT torture... NOT pain!!*

In the Old Testament, the word "hell" can be found in the King James Version 31 times; and in all 31 times it uses the Hebrew word **Sheol**, which is #7585 in the Strong's Concordance. It is defined as: "hades" or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat) including its accessories and inmates- grave, hell, pit."

The place where the body goes after physical death is the grave, not fire or torments. It is also the state of all men who obey not God. When the Bible speaks of "graves" it is not always referring to "six foot holes" in the ground. The "grave" is both spiritual and natural.

Jesus said.... *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for YE ARE AS GRAVES which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them"* (Luke 11:44). What Jesus was saying, is this.... you Pharisees are as graves.... dead while walking, whitened sepulchers, full of dead men's bones...it just hasn't appeared yet! And, it has yet to appear to many of God's people today what Jesus is saying to them!!

Paul said it like this concerning the dead.... *"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light"* (Eph 5:14). He was not out in the cemetery speaking to tombstones. He was speaking to people who were alive and walking on this earth who obeyed not God. They were in their graves, brother! And there are many today walking in that very same condition.... just as Paul described in 1 Timothy 5:6.... *"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."*

That is why Jesus said in this parable, *"the rich man died, and WAS BURIED; and IN HELL he lift up his eyes, BEING IN TORMENTS."* This has nothing whatsoever to do with a natural grave.... a literal fire...or torments, to the physical body. This "certain rich man" died, brother, while he was walking...and he was buried. He was in hell...the grave! He was not in the cemetery in a six-foot hole. He was alive yet dead while walking on this earth when Jesus spoke these words.

### **Can You Get Out of Hell??**

In the New Testament there are three words for "hell"- 1. **hades** 2. **gehenna** and 3. **tartarus**. Gehenna is used 12 times for the word "hell" in the New Testament. It is # 1067 in the Strongs

Concordance, Geenna: "valley of (the son of) Hinnom; gehenna (or Ge-Hinnom) a valley of Jerusalem, used (fig.) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment:-hell."

The valley of Hinnom was a place right outside the city of Jerusalem where they took their garbage and burned it. History tells us that possibly there was a deposit of natural gas leaking out of the earth and it was set on fire by lightning.

The religious leaders of today are so anxious to put someone in a literal burning fire. They always preach hell (gehenna) hot and full of fire. They tell you God has prepared it for all the sinners who die without Christ in their life. They say they shall burn in hell forever never to escape just like that "rich man" in the Bible. But, WHAT DOES GOD SAY about putting people in literal fire of hell? Turn to Jeremiah 7:31... "*And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, NEITHER CAME IT INTO MY HEART.*" God didn't command them to put their children in this fire; neither came it into his heart!! Malachi 3:6... "*For I am the Lord, I change not.*" It never entered his mind and never will to put people in a literal burning hell.

As a matter of fact, did you know God prepared a way for man to get out of hell? The Bible says so!! Proverbs 15:24... "*The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.*" If you are wise today you will accept the teachings of Jesus Christ; be born again; and then you can.... **DEPART....** from hell beneath. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, the life.*" **Yes, you can get out of hell.** But religious leaders will tell you, once you get in hell you will burn forever and ever and there is no way out.

The word **Hades** is used 10 times in the New Testament for the word "hell." It is #86 in the Strongs Concordance: and means - *properly unseen, i.e. "Hades" or the place (state) of departed souls \_ grave, hell.* This is the word Jesus used concerning the rich man in Luke 16:23... "*and in hell [hades, the grave] he lift up his eyes.*" That priesthood order had come to an end! God changed the covenant, and they went from a place of God's favor and blessing to being cast out of the kingdom. Jesus said, "*The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*" (Matt. 21:43). The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ brought in the New Covenant and the priesthood order of that day was cast into hell ... or Hades... the place of departed souls, the grave!

This was not a natural grave out in the cemetery. This is the kind of grave Jesus was talking about when he called the Pharisees... "*whited sepulchers, full of dead men's bones.*" This was a place of separation, a state of departed souls...they had departed from God's Covenant. Jesus came and established the everlasting covenant, "*He taketh away the first to establish the second*". And they, brother, were in "hell and torments" a place that was more real than literal fire! "*And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*" (Matt. 8:11-12).

## Every Man Presseth Into It

Before Jesus tells the Pharisees the parable of "the certain rich man and Lazarus" in Luke 16:19, he says to them in verse 16, "*The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it*" (Luke 16:16). Remember, this is Jesus speaking to those religious leaders. John the Baptist had already passed off the scene. John came preaching in the wilderness saying, "*who warned you.... [you Pharisees, Sadducees, and Priests, who claim to be Abraham's seed]... 'to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance'*" (Matt.3: 7,8).

John's message and Christ's message were both to bring about a complete change of the covenants. The order was changing from the Covenant of the Law, into the Covenant of Grace and Truth.... "*For the law was given by Moses but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*" (St John 1:17).

## The Kingdom of God Is Preached

John preached... "*prepare ye the way of the Lord*" ...and then, Jesus is standing there talking to the religious leaders of that time. He is saying unto them.... "*the law and the prophets were UNTIL John, since that time the kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth his way into it.*" EVERYBODY who.... "presses his way in".... gets into the Kingdom of God now.... and is part of it. Whereas, at that time, only the priests received the bread of life!!

## Being In Torments

Now, notice again the context of this parable. It says, "*the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes **being in torments**...*" The Greek word for "torments" is **basanos**. It is #931 in the Strongs Concordance and means: *perhaps remotely from the same as #939 (through the notion of going to the bottom): a touch-stone, i.e. (by analogy) torture: torment.*

Webster's Dictionary defines a **touchstone** as (#1.) a black siliceous stone related to flint and formerly used to test the purity of gold and silver by the streak left on the stone when rubbed by the metal and (#2.) a test or criterion for determining the quality genuineness of a thing, see standard.

Jesus is the standard God raised up, he is the pattern, and he is the test or criterion for determining the quality or genuineness of a priest of God. The Levitical Priesthood couldn't stand the test. When you get right down to the bottom of the matter they just didn't measure up to what God wanted, and being in the presence of the Lamb (God's true "standard") caused them great torment or anguish.

In Rev. 14:10, we read, "*the same shall drink of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he [the rich man] shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...IN THE PRESENCE of the holy angels, and...IN THE PRESENCE of the lamb.*"

## In This Flame

*"and he cried out Father Abraham, I am tormented IN THIS FLAME."*

First of all, the word "tormented" makes us think of physical pain so naturally we think of the flame" as literal fire. But let's take a look at what the meaning of the word "flame" is to help us understand what kind of "flame" it was. The Greek word for "flame" is **Phlox**, #5395 in the Strongs Concordance, and it means: (to "flash" or "flame"); a blaze: - flame (ing).

This word is used seven times in the New Testament. Let's look at the context of each of these scriptures. I hope you can see that none of them are speaking of a literal flame of fire. The first place where the word "flame" (Phlox) is used in the Bible, is in Luke 16:24 (the parable of the rich man and Lazarus). Then, in Acts 7:30 we read... *"When forty years were expired there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mt. Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush."* This is a reference to Exodus 3:2, which reads... *"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed"*. Brother, I told you, "this flame" is not a literal flame of fire or else it would have burned the bush!

Some more...let's turn to 11 Thess. 1:7,8 which says... *"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming (same Greek word as flame, #5395) fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Also, Hebrews 1:7 reads... *"and of the angels he saith, who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."* Are you beginning to see what kind of flame the "certain rich man" was tormented in?

Here's another one...Rev. 1:14, *"His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire"*...do you think that he had literal fire shooting out of his eyes? I think not!!

Rev.2:18... *"who hath his eyes like unto flame of fire."* Rev. 19:12... *"His eyes were as a flame of fire."* Now, if you think this word "flame" means a literal fire.....I must pray for you!! The "certain rich man" was tormented in this flame.

## Tormented Means Grieved

The word for "tormented" is **Odunao**, #3600 in the Strongs Concordance: *"from 3601; to grieve:- sorrow, torment."* As we have already stated, we think of the rich man as being in physical pain because the word "flame" is used in the story. But "tormented" actually means he was grieved and in great sorrow. Don't you know when his high place with God and the people was taken away it caused this "certain rich man" great grief and anguish and not physical pain as some have taught in the past.

Turn with me to Luke 12:49 to see where this "flame" started and what kind of fire produced it. Jesus said, *"I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?"* What does this mean, "already kindled"? It means "already begun" that is to say, the fire had already been sparked.

Jesus came and preached to all those in Jerusalem and Judea that there was a change to come and the change had already begun. Jesus said, I am come (present tense) to send fire on the earth and it's already kindled. But, the preachers say one of these days the Lord is going to come (future tense) and take his church to heaven and then send a literal fire to burn up this earth. Jesus came to send a fire on the earth 2000 years ago!! We need to understand what kind of fire he was talking about and what he sent it to burn.

It's the same kind of "fire" that Peter talked about in 11 Peter 3:12. It is spiritual fire, not literal... *"Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."* The heavens ("that shall be dissolved by fire") were the old covenant of the law and the priesthood of Moses. The elements *"that shall melt with fervent heat"* were the traditions and ordinances of the Jewish faith, (Gal 4 3-5).

It's the same kind of fire that John the Baptist spoke of in Matt. 3:11 when he said, *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me who is greater than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire."* This is the fire Jesus came to send on the earth. The Greek word for "fire" is **Pur**, #4442 in Strongs Concordance: *"meaning (literally, figuratively, specially, lightning): fiery, fire."*

Jesus was not speaking of a natural fire. He was speaking of some "fiery opposition" to those religious leaders of that time. Isaiah prophesied of this fire in Isa. 66:16 and 24. Jesus came to send fire on the earth, and the "flame" that tormented the rich man came from this fire! *"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 with unquenchable fire"* (Matt 3:12). There is only one fire that is unquenchable and that is the Holy Ghost and fire! Praise the Lord!

### **The Fan Is In His Hand**

What is "his hand"? It is the five fold ministry, the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, which fans the fire....and this fire is the Holy Ghost! For 2,000 years, his hand has been fanning His fire. Everytime the church flame goes down, God raises up anointed ministry on the earth and it fans the fire throughout the whole earth; and the works that are therein are burned up by this fire. Just as we saw a few years ago in the charismatic renewal the fire of God spread throughout the earth by the hand of God (his ministry). Everyone who received it was consumed by the fire of the Holy Ghost. Everyone that desired to go on with God began to take on a change.

## The Kingdom Shall be Taken from You

Here we see Israel's position with God being changed. They were God's chosen people at that time....*"for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself above all the nations that are upon the earth"* (Deut. 14:2). But Jesus said, *"The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"....."Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."* Who is "he that cometh in the name of the Lord"? It is none other than the body of Christ (the church), the people who follow the Lamb. For 2000 years now, the ONLY people who have come in the name of the Lord are those who are born again. We believe in Jesus! We preach Jesus! We follow Jesus! But, natural Israel rejected Jesus as the Christ of God. They rejected Him then, and they still do to this day!

That "certain rich man" (the priesthood of Aaron, the Mosetical order) died and was buried in A.D. 70, when Titus, the Roman general, and his army marched on Jerusalem and destroyed the temple (the Jew's place of worship). Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."* A "heaven" passed away right there. The rich man found himself tormented in the "flame" of the fire that Jesus kindled.

## Heaven and Earth Shall Pass Away

The ending of the Aaronic priesthood order was the passing of a Heaven. Lazarus died also. When God changed the covenant it affected ALL of the House of Israel. Lazarus represents those who received the Lord Jesus and moved out of the old covenant into the new covenant which Jesus inaugurated. From the old heaven (the Aaronic Priesthood), to the new heaven (the Body of Christ)....*"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."* (II Cor. 8:9).

Hebrews 1:10 says...*"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up (the heavens) and they shall be changed."* The change came at Pentecost, praise the Lord! Hebrews 10:9 says....*"Then said he, Lo, I come [this is Jesus] to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."* He taketh away the "first" what? The first covenant [the first heaven] to establish the second. We are talking about the "heavens." To ever understand the parable of the "certain rich man and Lazarus," you will have to understand what the Bible is talking about when it speaks of "the heavens" and the "heavens passing away."

Turn to Revelation chapter 12:12.....*"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens and ye that dwell in them"....also in Rev 18:20... "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets."* Heaven is the place where God dwells....it is the abode of God....it is the dispensation he is working in....and it is the ministry he is working through at the time. That is what heaven is! He hath raised us up with Christ, and he himself said he was **"In Heaven"** while standing here on earth. **HEAVEN**....is being in the order of God.

## There Was No More Sea

Consider Rev 21:1.... *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were past away; and there was no more sea."* None of these scriptures are talking about a place far above the earth called "heaven," or the Atlantic Ocean called the "Sea" but, ALL are dealing with a change of God's covenants.

Turn to I Kings 7:23-25 to understand what "sea" John was referring to that passed away. Under the Old Covenant the priests washed their bodies in a "molten sea." This was a huge brass pool filled with water where the priests bathed themselves before they entered into the temple. They washed in natural water but, under the New Covenant that Jesus brought, the priests are washed by the water of the word. The first heaven and the first earth are passed away and there is no more SEA.

## Is Heaven Eternal?

Let's go to Matt. 24:34-35, I want to show you some more about heaven so that we can better understand the parable of the "rich man and Lazarus." Remember, we're talking about heaven, hell, fire, and the earth. When the Bible speaks of heaven it is not always talking about an eternal abode, or an eternal dwelling place, as some preach. Heaven can be dissolved (or perish), as well as the earth (see II Peter 3:5-6)

Most preachers teach that Christians are going "up to heaven" when they die to LIVE FOREVER but, sinners are going "down to hell" in the center of the earth when they die to BURN FOREVER. That would make heaven eternal and hell eternal. No matter which one you go to it is eternal! You can hear this on the radio almost everyday but you will never find it written in the Bible like that. It's time we heard what the word of God says. Jesus said, in Matt. 24:34-35, *"Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."* Heaven and earth are going to pass away....now, that doesn't make "heaven and earth" sound so eternal, does it?

## This Generation Shall Not Pass

We can understand which "heaven and earth" he was talking about when we see what he meant by, *"This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled."* We have to go back to the beginning of the 24th chapter of Matthew and see the setting Jesus was in when he spoke these words to his disciples.... *"And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, "See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matt 24:1-3).* Then his disciples came unto him privately and asked him three questions; (#1) When shall these things be? (#2) What shall be the sign of thy coming, and (#3) of the end of the world?

Between verse 4 and verse 31, Jesus answers these three questions; and then in verse 32 he teaches them a parable of the fig tree to give them a clue as to when these things shall happen. He said, *"When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:*

*So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors " Notice he says "ye" not you and me out here, or someone out in some future generation.*

Then he says something very profound in verse 34 of this chapter that theologians and teachers have tried to interpret every way except exactly what he was saying..... "*Verily I say unto you, **This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled**"*.....Who was he talking to? He was talking to his disciples... **that generation!** Let me paraphrase what Jesus was saying..."Peter, James and John, your generation; those of you who are living now are not going to pass off the scene, till all of these things that I have spoken to you be fulfilled." What are the **all things** he is talking about? It is everything from verse one to verse 33 of this chapter..."*ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars...nation shall rise against nation ...famines, and pestilence, and earthquakes in divers places.....they shall deliver you up to be afflicted and kill you, ..many false prophets shall rise...let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains etc..etc* All those things had to be fulfilled in that generation, not in some future generation as dispensationlists teach. Jesus cannot lie! Why is it so hard to understand it was **that generation** he was talking to, the one who was alive at that present time, not some generation out in the future? Why would he warn his disciples if he meant a future generation would experience these things?

There never has been another time in history when those in Judea had to flee to the mountains other than A.D. 70 when Titus came into Jerusalem with his army and laid siege to it, destroying the city, including the temple, even to turning over the foundation stones of it. Now isn't that what Jesus said would happen that there would not be one stone left upon another? And it happened within 40 years after the church was birthed in the upper room, at the Day of Pentecost.

### **How Long is a Generation?**

Forty years is commonly accepted by many teachers of the Bible to be a generation. Theologians place the year of Jesus' death anywhere between A.D. 30 and A.D. 33. So from the time of his death, until the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, there was a period of 37-40 years that passed .....**a generation!!** The generation Jesus was speaking to in Matthew 24 was still alive when Titus destroyed the temple in A.D. 70. Now you see why he said, "*this generation shall not pass until all these things be fulfilled.*"

Most preachers today still preach that Matthew 24 is speaking of a time still yet in the future when "the great Tribulation" takes place. But Jesus was speaking to that present generation when he said, "*verily I say **unto you**. This generation (YOU, who are standing here, listening to me) shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away*" (Matt 24:34,35).

The "heaven" that passed away was the Aaronic priesthood order. In the space of 40 years after Jesus spoke these words, a 2000-year-old covenant order changed; this was that "certain rich man" that died, and was buried. And the "earth" that passed away was the Roman political rule over God's people. Soon after A.D. 300, the Roman Catholic Church, the Papacy, began to rule over God's people.

## Cool My Tongue

Let's go back now to Luke 16 and go a little further with this parable. I want to make sure that you see it is a parable, and then you can understand what Jesus was saying to those priests here in verse 24. The rich man says.. *"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."*

Get that! Just his tongue was tormented in the flame, not his whole body. I believe if this was literal fire he would have made mention of the rest of his body as well. If this was me I would have said "pour a whole bucketful on it" not just a little water on the tip of your finger! Preachers say this "certain rich man" was cast into a lake of fire just like all the others will be... *"whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life"* (Rev 20:15). If this be true my question is ...what good would one drop of water do you if you were in a whole "lake of fire?" Surely that little drop of water would evaporate before it could get to your tongue.... if this was a literal "lake of fire"? That should make us think, shouldn't it?

## Tongue Means Language

Let's see what this word "tongue" means in the Greek. It is #1100 in Strong's Concordance, **Glossa**, and it means: the tongue; by impl. a language (spec., one naturally unacquired):

We see that the "certain rich man" is concerned only about "his tongue" which would be better translated here as "his language" (or his ministry). This is not speaking of his literal, physical tongue...just as it's not speaking of a literal, physical tongue in James 3:5-6... *"even though the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."* No preacher would interpret these scriptures as saying the tongue was burning with literal fire.

So, this rich man's "tongue" is not speaking of a literal tongue neither is it set on fire of a literal hell fire. It is speaking of his language. The rich man's language (or tongue) is what was tormented in the flame. This again is what Jesus meant when he said, "I am come to send fire on the earth and what will I if it be already kindled?" Jesus wasn't a firebug. Nowhere is it recorded that he set fire to any building or anything else. But, he did send fire on that priesthood which was already kindled among the priests of that day. He did change a covenant at the day of Pentecost...*"the law [that covenant] was given by Moses, but Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."* The disturbance was already started before the cross while Jesus walked here in His earthen ministry. The priests were disturbed at everything he did because they did not want to give up their high position.

Jesus said, *"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when Ye [The Aaronic priesthood order] shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out"* (Luke 13:28). *"The kingdom of God is NOT meat and drink"* [like the ordinances the Jews kept]; *but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost"* (Rom 14:17). Grace and truth set their tongue (their message) on fire.

The rich man cried, *"Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus"...* but, listen to Father Abraham's answer.

### **A Great Gulf Fixed**

Father Abraham said in verse 25, (now remember, Father Abraham is a picture of God the Father, and he's calling this rich man a son)... *"Son remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."*

This is talking about believers in Christ who could in no way pass from Grace and Truth back to Judaism; nor can a Jew pass to Christ unless he is born again. There is a great gulf fixed. Those who are under the covenant of the law will not accept the covenant of Grace and Truth. Why? There is a great gulf fixed. Jesus knew when he related this parable there would be a great gulf fixed!! Do you know that there is not one Jew in this world that has ever come into Christianity without being converted from Judaism to Christ? Do you know that the Jews are not the only chosen people of God though they were at one time? But now God's covenant is with "whosoever will." Jews, Gentiles, Greek, Barbarian, free, all who have been born again, washed in the blood of the lamb, are the chosen people of God. Jesus came here and burned up the old order. That heaven (or priesthood) passed away. God has never honored it again, or ever shall!

More than 30 years after the Lord's death and his ascension into heaven the Jews, the Aaronic priesthood (that which was rich, and clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously everyday), still continued to offer up sacrifices on the altar in Herod's temple at Jerusalem. They continued to go into the most holy place and try to get God to come down and commune with them in that order: not accepting the fact that God brought an end to it at the day of Pentecost.

There is a new covenant ... Jesus brought it! Grace and truth is the covenant we are in now. *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; all things are become new"* (11 Cor.5: 17). Hear it!! There is a great gulf fixed between these covenants.

Until the Holy Ghost baptizes Jew or Gentile, they will never come into the new covenant that Jesus brought. Any Jew who has been born again and baptized with the Holy Ghost will never go back into Judaism. There is a great gulf there. They won't go back; and the others, who haven't received the new birth won't come over to Christianity. It takes the baptism of the Holy Ghost to span this gulf.

### **I Have Five Brethren**

The "rich man" said to Father Abraham... *"I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he testify to them lest they also come to this place of torment."* In this parable, Jesus is speaking of the "father's house" which is referring to the whole house of Israel. When he says, *"I have five brethren"* it is still yet another picture of Aaron's time. For us to understand that we must read Exodus 28:1, which is the

commandment God gave unto Moses to make the priests garments... *"And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel that he may minister unto me in the priests office, even Aaron, Nadab, and Abinu, Eleazer and Ishmar, Aaron's son."*

If we count them...Aaron and his sons...there were five. In the priesthood, under the old covenant (the law of Moses) there were five brethren. That was the "father's house" Jesus was speaking of in this parable. Now, look what Father Abraham's reply was.... *"Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."*

### **Though One Rose from the Dead**

The Law and the Prophets foretold of the coming of Christ and what his ministry would be like. They foretold how he would come and suffer and die. Jesus came and fulfilled it all before their very eyes; and they rejected Him as their Messiah and still do. The rich man said, *"Nay Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent and he said unto them if they HEAR NOT MOSES AND THE PROPHETS neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."* The veil is still upon the understanding of natural Israel until this day in the reading of Moses.

### **Their Minds Were Blinded**

In 11 Corinthians 3:13 Paul was speaking to this very thought.... *"Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished [that priesthood]: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."*

Therefore, we need to go to the nation of Israel; we need to preach the gospel of salvation to the Jews lest they come unto the same torment. But they must hear Moses and the prophets or they will never be persuaded.... even though Jesus rose from the dead.

### **The New Covenant**

From the time the church was birthed in the upper room God's priesthood has been the "body of Christ".... and Jesus is the high priest of it! God left the old priesthood order of Aaron. The oracles of God that were once committed to the Jews have been removed from them and placed into the hands of the church. Now.... the Church is the instrument by which the God of heaven brings about his kingdom on the earth.... not Judaism!

Those who still believe the Jews are God's chosen people, hear this! We, as Christians, have looked to the natural Jew too long. God changed that order at the Day of Pentecost. The natural

Jew is no different than you; it matters not ALL must be born again. We are all one family in the body of Christ. In this day it doesn't matter who your genealogy stems from. Jew or Gentile, you must be born again!

Oh, how we Christians need to take off our religious blindfolds and come out in the open. We need to declare the message of the Kingdom, which is that the chosen people of God in this day come from every kindred, nation and tongue. It is the "whosoever will, let him come" that are the chosen people of God; they are the body of Christ in the earth. God makes no difference between the Jew and Gentile under the New Covenant... *"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord is rich toward all who call upon Him"* (Rom 10:12). This will get rid of all prejudices.

We need to have a better understanding of this parable. This passage in St. Luke chapter 16, concerning the rich man in hell is not speaking of a sinner burning in literal flames of fire! What foolishness!! It is the burning up and the passing away of an order...an age...a world. We must not be ignorant of how God speaks in His Word of the passing away of a world for there have been many worlds pass away down through history... *"by whom also he made the worlds"* [plural] ...and... *"through faith we understand that the worlds [plural] were framed by the word of God"* (Heb. 1:5 and 11:3).

### **Some are Willingly Ignorant**

Let's go to 11 Pet. 3:5... *"For this they willingly are ignorant of"* .... [that may be hard for you to believe but some people really are willing to be ignorant about the truth of what the Bible is really saying!].... *"that by the word of God the heavens of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, [Noah's world, or age] being overflowed with water, perished..."* This is describing the days of Noah when the flood came and killed everyone except those in the ark. There were eight souls that were saved in the ark: Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives. When the flood came and ended the world...it perished brother! A new world began. Eight is the number of a new beginning. The first thing Noah did when he came out of the ark into the new world was to build an altar unto God (Gen. 8:15,16,18,20).

### **A World Perished**

We know that this planet earth is the same earth that was here in the days of Noah. A world perished.... NOT the earth. The word "world" means "age." This present age, or world system that we are now in, is passing also. How? By a "Holy Ghost and fire" anointed preacher ....preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God as Jesus did, and converting the world, (or age), to righteousness... *"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"* (Habakkuk 2:14). Praise the Lord!!

### **The Heavens Shall Be Dissolved!**

*"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the*

*works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein **the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?**" (11 Peter 3:10-12)*

Many today teach the earth is going to catch on fire after they have escaped in the rapture to heaven ..... but according to these scriptures, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.... and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. My question is, if heaven and earth shall BOTH be burned up and pass away in literal fire as they say; ***where will the saints go to escape the fire?***

### **What are the Elements?**

They say this fire has to be literal fire because it has to melt the elements, the stars, and all! They used to think it would happen with one atomic bomb now they say it is a nuclear war that will consume everything. But, we know by studying the following scripture that none of this is literal or natural. It is the passing away and the burning up of past religious traditions.

Galatians chapter 4:3-9.... *"Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" ... [This is the changing of the covenant from The Law to Grace and Truth].... "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years."*

Who observed days, and months, and times, and years? The Jews!! Paul uses this same Greek word here in Galatians, (referring to the Jews religion), as Peter does in II Peter 3:10.... *"the elements shall melt with fervent heat."*

This word "elements" is #4747 in the Strong's Concordance, **STOICHEION**: Something orderly in arrangement, i.e. (by impl.) a serial (basal, fundamental, initial) constituent (lit.), proposition (fig.): element, principle, rudiment.

**Stoicheion** is the same Greek word used for "rudiments" in Colossians 2:20-22.... *"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"* Whose ordinances demanded.... Touch not..... taste not.... handle not? The Jews' order of religion!

Now, back to II Peter chapter 3. In verse 12 it says.... *"the heavens being on fire"* .... think of that.... ***the heavens on fire!***....it makes you wonder why everyone wants to go to heaven so bad, if the heavens are going to be on fire with literal fire!!

## Where Is Heaven?

The word "heaven" has various meanings. One meaning is the expansion between the earth and the sky. But Jesus spoke to Nicodemus in St. John 3:13, of a "heaven" that is right here on earth... "*no man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, (speaking of himself) which is in heaven.*" He wasn't up in the sky, or beyond the sky, but was standing right there on the earth looking at Nicodemus, and he (Jesus) said he was "in heaven." Where was he at? He was in a position with God, a relationship with his Father that he called "heaven." That's the heaven I want to go to! And, I don't have to leave this earth to get there.... Jesus didn't!! There is nothing in the scripture (from Genesis to Revelation) that says you will go to any other heaven. The new heaven and new earth is one "*wherein dwelleth righteousness.*"

## Praise God!!

Jesus said, in St. John 14:20-23.... "*At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you*" .....(Jesus told Nicodemus he was "in heaven," and here he says he is in us. Now, tell me, where is heaven?) .... "*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him..*" Some say, they want to **GO to** heaven to be with Jesus, but Jesus said, "***I and my father, will COME and make our abode with you.***"

## No "Streets" of Gold

Many teach that the saints are going to go to heaven and walk on streets (plural) of gold. But, the scripture says... "*and the street (singular) of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass*" (Rev. 21:21). I guess there is only ONE street in heaven, right? No!! This is really talking about "a way" that is pure.

A "street" means a "way;" and gold speaks of "purity." What God is really after in man is a way that is pure. He has no interest whatsoever in a literal street of gold. He said... "*I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire.*" There is only one thing that has been tried in the fire of the ages and stood the test...and that is God's word, the Logos. "*Buy the truth (gold) and sell it not*" (Proverb 23:23)

He said, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.*" Through the ages God's word has been tried; it is pure there is no lie in it! "*I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.*" See, I told you the beggar became rich...and clothed with white raiment...and had his eyes anointed that he might see the truth!! The rich man died and was buried; but the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom...Glory to God!! Jesus was made poor that we might be made rich!!

## **Our God is a Consuming Fire**

There is a "fire of judgment" to the wicked and unrepentant that shall bring destruction and there is a "purging fire" to the believer that will cleanse the heart. It is all God and all the same fire... the Holy Ghost and fire! Our God is a consuming fire. You will never purge sin with a literal fire. "Hell fire" in the center of the earth will never burn up a spirit. Spirit is spirit and is not subject to an element. The Holy Ghost fire is a spirit and you cannot escape the righteous judgments of God. That is the fire that does burn unto the end.

On the day of Pentecost the New Covenant was inaugurated. That "certain rich man" died and was buried. That old priesthood order refused to follow on with God and God Almighty brought the common people of Israel (the beggar Lazarus) into His bosom (a "favored position" with Him). That was the "casting of the certain rich man into torments" and he has been in it ever since! Jesus.... "*came unto his own, and his own received him not, but as many as received him, TO THEM gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name*" (St, John 1:11-12).

How clear God makes this parable of the "certain rich man and Lazarus" to us as we look at His Word which is the pattern (the standard, the touchstone). If you study Bible History you will understand Bible prophecy. Then you will be able to see clearly that the parables of the Lord are not fairy tales.... but the very unveiling of Christ, *the Truth*.

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**Kingdom Life Tabernacle, Inc.**

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**(918) 483-3111 office**

**(918) 483-2702 fax**

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