"The End Time Dimension Of The Parables"
Lesson #4 - The Rich Man and Lazarus, Part 1

Focus: "The **Bible** is the **fully inspired Word of God**. It is the **infallible revelation of His will**. It is the **authoritative revealer of doctrine**, and it is the **trustworthy record of God's acts in history**. **Prayerfully and humbly read and study the Bible more**. For in it we will **find hope** for every crisis. But more importantly, **we will find our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**, who **died** to **redeem** us from our **sins**." ref. Psalm 119:142; Isaiah 8:20; 41:21-29; Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4; 24:25-27, 32, 44-49; John 3:16-17; 5:39; 8:58; 17:17; 1 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 1; 2 Peter 1:16-21

READ: Luke 16:19-31; John 8:37-39; 11:45-53; 12:9-10,19; Matthew 15:21-28; ***Christ's Object Lessons, p.160-271, Ellen G. White***

Introductory Matters:

1. **How does the story of the rich man and Lazarus begin?** *"There was a certain rich man. . . ."* (Luke 16:19)

Note 1: In the gospel of Luke, this is the **common introductory formula for the parables of Jesus, so there can be no doubt that the story of the rich man and Lazareth is a parable** (see, Luke 10:33; 12:16; 13:6; 14:16; 15:11; 16:1; 19:12; 20:9).

2. **What was the proper name of the beggar?** *"And there was a certain beggar named **Lazarus**."* (Luke 16:20)

Note 2: Some **scholars have concluded** that the **story of the rich man and Lazarus is not a parable** but rather a **true-to-life story**. They reason that **because the parables** (in the **Bible** as well as in **rabbinical tradition**) **never contain proper names, this must mean that this story was an actual historical occurrence**. But, as we shall find later in our study, **there was a particular reason why Jesus included a proper name in this particular parable**.[1]

3. **To whom was the parable of the rich man and Lazarus particularly addressed?** *"And the **Pharisees** also, **who were***

[1] The End Time Dimension of the Parables, #4, p. 27, by Pastor Stephen Bohr, SecretsUnsealed.org

***covetous**, heard all these things: and they derided Him."* (Luke 16:14) see Jn. 7:40-52; Jn. 8:13, 22, 33, 41, 48, 52-53, 57

4. **In what way were the beliefs of the Pharisees different from those of the Sadducees?** *"For the Sadducees say that **there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit**: but then Pharisees confess both."* (Acts 23:8) ref. Matt. 22:23; Mk. 12:18; Lk. 20:27

Note 3: The **Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus**, amplifies the **contrast** between the **beliefs** of the **Sadducees** and the **Pharisees**:

"They [the **Pharisees**] say that **all souls are incorruptible**, but that **the souls of good men only are removed into other bodies**,—**but that the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment**. But the **Sadducees**. . . . **take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades**." (***Flavius Josephus, Wars of the Jews, 2.163 & 2.164-2:165***) Isa. 29:13-14; Matt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7

Josephus, **who was himself a Pharisee**, describes the **nature of Hades** in his work ***"Discourse to the Greeks Concerning Hades"***. There he described **Hades** as **a subterraneous region consisting of two sections**. **The first section contained everlasting fire**. **The angels took the wicked to this region upon the moment of death**. **The second section of Hades consisted of a place which was called the Bosom of Abraham**. **Josephus affirms that there was a great gulf fixed between the two sections so that the righteous could not pass to the fiery region nor the wicked to the Bosom of Abraham**. **There is no place in the Bible which even vaguely suggests such a scenario**. **This whole picture of Hades was created by the rabbis**. In the **parable**, however, **Jesus** took what the **Pharisees** believed and **gave it a surprising twist**. ref. Titus 1:13-14

Can the Parable be Taken Literally

1. **According to Jesus, where do people go when they die?** *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are **in the graves** shall hear His voice."*[2] (John 5:28) see John 5:21-27

[2] ibid., p. 27-28

2. **According to the Bible, when will the wicked be burned in the fires of hell?** *"As therefore the **tares** are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the **end of the world**."* (Matthew 13:40)

Note 4: At this point it would be well to study the following Scriptures which **unequivocally teach the the wicked will be cast into the fire when Jesus comes, not at the moment of death**: Matthew 25:31-41; Mark 9:43-48; John 12:48; Revelation 20:7-10; 20:11-15; 2 Peter 3:7; 3:10-14; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Jude 1:1-7

3. **What does the story explicitly state about the rich man?** *"**the rich man also died and was buried**."* (Luke 16:22)

Note 5: The text is explicit. The rich man not only died, but was also buried. Now, **the Bible says that when a person dies, their body returns to the dust** (Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 12:7). This being the case, **what is the rich man doing in hell with all his body parts**? The story tells us **he had eyes** (Luke 16:23) and **a tongue** (Luke 16:24). On the other hand, **Lazarus** is said to **have fingers** after he goes to the **Bosom of Abraham** (Luke 16:24). In Mark 9:43-48 we are told that **the sinner's whole body will be cast into hell** (see also, Matthew 5:29-30) **so this cannot happen at death. The fact is that if both the rich man and Lazarus have body parts, and if the body is not cast into hell until the end of the age, then this must be describing what will happen at the end of the age and not what took place at the moment of death!**[3]

The problem with **body parts in hell**, has led **Robert Morey, a staunch defender of the immortality of the soul and the eternal torment of the wicked at the moment of death, to confess**:

"**Everyone understood that these parables and dialogues did not literally take place. It was understood that the rabbis used imaginative stories and dialogues as a teaching method. It was understood by all that these dialogues never took place. . . He [Jesus] was merely using the dialogue method to get across the concept that there is no escape from torment, no second chance,**

[3] ibid., p. 28-29

and we must believe the Scriptures in this life unto salvation.” (***Robert Morey, Death and the Afterlife, p. 85***)

So, the **only passage in the Bible which appears to teach eternal torment at the moment of death is, admittedly, an event which never took place!**[4] see 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; 2 Pet. 1:16

Appeal Song:

Closing: **“**The **doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul** has opened the way for the **artful working of Satan** through **modern Spiritualism**; and besides the **Romanish errors**, **purgatory**, **prayers for the dead**, **invocation of saints**, **etc.**, **which have sprung from this source, it has led many Protestants to deny the resurrection and the Judgment, and has given rise to the revolting heresy of eternal torment, and the dangerous delusion of Universalism** [**“A theological doctrine that all human being will eventually be saved.”** ***Merriam-Webster***].

And **even more dangerous and more widely held than these are the assumptions that the law of God was abolished at the cross**, and that the **first day of the week is now a holy day, instead of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment**. see Rom. 3:31; 6:1-2; 7:7-13

When **faithful teachers expound the Word of God**, **there arise men of learning, ministers professing to understand the Scriptures, who denounce sound doctrine as heresy, and thus turn away inquirers after truth**. **Were it not that the world is hopelessly intoxicated with the wine of Babylon, multitudes would be convicted and converted by the plain cutting truths of the Word of God**. **The sin of the world’s impenitence lies at the door of the church.”** ***Ellen G. White, The Spirit of Prophecy, Vol. 4, p. 235***; ref. Jn. 17:17; Rev. 14:8; Rev. 17:1-6; Prov. 6:16-19; Gen. 2:16-17; Gen. 3:1-5, 21-24; 1 Sam. 28:5-25; Job 3:11-19; Job 7:9-10; Ps. 88:10; Ps. 106:18; Ps. 115:17; Mal. 4:3; Matt. 5:18; 10:28; 24:35; Mk. 13:31; Lk. 16:17; 21:33; Jn. 5:17-29; Jn. 11:1-57; 1 Cor. 15:50-54; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:13-16; 2 Tim. 1:10; 2 Pet. 3:10; Isa. 30:8-14; Matt. 23; Lk. 11:37-54; 2 Thess. 2:1-12; 2 Tim. 4:1-4

[4] ibid., p. 29

Tune: Tis So Sweet To Trust In Jesus
by William J. Kirkpatrick

"Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to trust His cleansing blood;
Just in simple faith to plunge me
'Neath the healing, cleansing flood."

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him;
How I proved Him o'er and o'er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust Him more!

"Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His word;
Knowing that He ascended to heaven.
And will some day come again.

Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
For He died to set us free;
And He arose to live forever,
Braking death's hold on me.

Tis do sweet to trust in Jesus,
Who will return with a shout;
With the trump, and all the angels,
Then the dead in Christ will rise first.

Help me Lord to learn to trust Thee,
Claim Your promises, believe Your word;
Confident, that thou art with me,
Wilt be with me to the end.