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Hell's Still Waiting – Continued

Life In Hell

“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.” Luke 16:19-31

Intro:

The reality of this place called *Hell*, or *Hades* as it is called in the Greek, is found repeatedly throughout both the old and new testaments of the Bible. Moses talked about it, the prophets talked about, and so did Jesus Christ and the apostles. And because it is the ultimate reality and destiny of all those who have not believed on Jesus Christ as their Savior we need to address this topic with all solemnity.

We find in the old testament that *Sheol*, as it was called in the Hebrew language, was the destiny of everyone that died, both the righteous and the unrighteous. Except that when the righteous, the saved, and the unrighteous, the unsaved, died, they went to different areas in Hell. The unrighteous went to an area called “Torments” and the righteous went to an area referred to as “Abraham's Bosom”, or sometimes, “Paradise”.

These two areas, all in the one place called Hell, are separated by a great chasm, it is both wide and deep, and the quality of life for souls in these two places is as far apart as can be. The environment in the place called *Paradise* is Edenic, while the environment in the place called *Torments* is fiery, hot and miserable; a place where every moment of the soul's existence is tormented.

A. The Rich Man and the Poor Man

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:” - ανθρωπος δε τις ην πλουσιος και ενεδιδυσκετο πορφυραν και βυσσον ευφραινομενος καθ ημεραν λαμπρος Luke 16:19

“And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,” - πτωχος δε τις ην ονοματι λαζαρος ος εβεβλητο προς τον πυλωνα αυτου ηλκωμενος Luke 16:20

“And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.” - και επιθυμων χορτασθηναι απο των ψιχιων των πιπτοντων απο της τραπεζης του πλουσιου αλλα και οι κυνες ερχομενοι απειλειχον τα ελκη αυτου Luke 16:21

To begin with, we know that we're not dealing with a figure of speech, or a parable in this passage, but with two real men who lived on this earth because of the two phrases, *“There was a certain rich man”*, and, *“And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus.”* The use of the word certain tells us that the Lord was talking about two real men, and in the one passage he gives us the actual name of the beggar, Lazarus.

The rich man did not go to *Hell* because he was rich, nor did the poor man end up in *Paradise* because he was poor. The reason why the two ended up in different places after death is because the poor man had believed on Christ as his Savior, while the rich man had rejected him.

The rich man had a beautiful gated home, wore the finest clothes and had lavish banquets and feasts, while the poor man hoped just to eat the leftovers that were thrown away. His sores came from having an inadequate diet. This is parallel situation to so many people today with their big, beautiful homes in their gated communities, fine cars, SUV's, jewelry and furniture, and the homeless who live on the street.

These widely differing aspects of the two men's prior existences in temporal life are brought out to show the contrast of what happens after death when one is saved and another isn't. We must remember that Abraham himself was extremely wealthy before his death, far more than this rich man's wealth. Wealth isn't the issue here. What it does bring out is what happens to those after death, for those who have either believed on Jesus Christ, or have rejected him as their Savior, as to whether they are comforted in this paradise of a place, or are being tormented in the flames!

The subject of Hell is denied by many, and avoided by most, but Hell still exists and is the ultimate reality of what awaits those who have not believed on Christ as their Savior. It awaits all who have been born on this planet and have descended from Adam and Eve. But can be avoided because God has sent his Son to die on the cross for our sins, so that through faith in Christ we can receive God's forgiveness and avoid this terrible place. If you are alive, then know that one day you will die. The question is, where will your soul go at death?

B. Death Strikes Both Men

“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;” - εγενετο δε αποθανειν τον πτωχον και απενεχθηναι αυτον υπο των αγγελων εις τον κολπον του αβρααμ απεθανεν δε και ο πλουσιος και εταφη Luke 16:22

In time both men died, as all men do. The word for death is *apothnesko*, which actually looks at the separation of the soul from the body. Death is not just “dead like a dog” who has no soul, but is that point in time where the soul leaves the body. **The important issue is where does the soul go after it leaves the body?** The soul goes to another place at death where it will there exist.

When the rich man died, he was buried in the proper manner, which entailed the prescribed preparation of his body, the proper rites that went with it all, and then placed in a tomb. It's very possible that the beggar's body was thrown out into the valley of Hinnom, along with common criminals and others, where the vultures and the fires, much like the old garbage dumps, would take care of the body. Two men, two lives on earth, two different funeral preparations, but two different afterlife experiences.

There were two events in the beggar's life where he was carried. The first one was where somebody came and dumped him off at the rich man's gate. *Laid* was the pluperfect of ballo and it meant to throw or cast something. Apparently somebody didn't want to fool with him any more, so they took him and left him at the gate of the rich guy where he might be able to get something to eat.

The second time the beggar was carried by an angel at his death. But the word changes from *ballo* - to cast or throw, to *apophero* – to carry someone from one place to another with the idea of special care involved in doing so. You see, nobody cared for the beggar in his life on earth, as evidenced in the way he was treated and lived, but God cared for him all along. And when the poor man died, he was carefully carried by the angels down into the paradise section of *Hades* where he was comforted.

But not so with the unsaved rich man. He had a great life and he had a great burial, but when his soul left his body he was now existing in *Hades* in another place, a place of fire and heat and great suffering.

But there was one thing that separated the two men before they died, other than their financial positions, and that is the poor man had his faith and trust in Jesus Christ, while the rich man didn't. The rich man thought that, because he was a racial descendant of Abraham, he would be right with God. The issue is not race! Just because he was of Abraham's bloodline did not make him right with God. **He had to be of Abraham's faith!** Abraham had believed on Christ as his Savior when he was alive and that's what made him right with God. And to be a true child of Abraham you have to be of Abraham's faith. Even saved Gentiles can claim Abraham as their father spiritually speaking.

C. Being In Torments

“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” - και εν τω αδη επαρας τους οφθαλμους αυτου υπαρχων εν βασανοις ορα τον αβρααμ απο μακροθεν και λαζαρον εν τοις κολποις αυτου Luke 16:23

We notice that the dead still have a human body, eyes, ears, mouth, arms, legs, hands, a brain, able to see, able to think, able to remember, etc., just like they had in this life! It's just not a body of flesh. The word *seeth*, *horao*, had the idea of seeing something from a distance and looking at it. The rich man was staring, or looking intently afar off, and from a distance he recognized that it was Abraham and Lazarus.

The word for *being* is the present active participle of *huparcho* and it has the idea that one had existed in another time and another place, but now they are existing in this place. The rich man had existed in the physical life on the surface of the earth, but now he was existing in *Hades*, in the bowels of the earth. **Death doesn't stop one's existence! It's just the door through which one goes to exist in another place!**

The verb form of *torment* is *basanizo* and it was originally used of putting metal to extreme tests to see if it was what it was claimed to be. Then it was used for the torturing of men, (an evil and barbaric practice that our nation rejected in its beginning), to extract the truth from them. Then it was used of just the idea of being in pain, tormented.

“*In the bosom of*” was a phrase used commonly in those days that denoted: motherly love, as with a child, the place of the guest of honor at a meal, to express an inward relationship, or membership in a community and that one belonged to someone. The poor man wasn't loved in this life, but he was loved by Abraham after his death. He was never a guest of honor at a meal; he wasn't even invited, but now he is a guest of honor with Abraham. He had no relationships in his physical life, as evidenced by no family to take care of him, but now he had a face to face relationship with Abraham. He was an outcast in this life, but now he was a member of the family of God. No one wanted him in this life, but now he belonged to someone.

We know the name of the poor man, Lazarus, but not so the rich man. We don't know his name because it's not important; he's not important. He may have been important in this life, but now he's just one of countless millions languishing and suffering in the flames.

Lazarus would be what we call an invisible hero of the faith. One of the many “no names, no faces” we see in life; people that we walk right by and don't give a thought to, maybe we even look down on them. Yet if they have believed on Christ as their Savior they are known to God and deeply loved by him; and that's all that matters.

It's not important what we do in life, who we are, how much we have, what our titles or our positions are; the only thing that's important is if we have believed on Christ. If we haven't, then nothing else matters. And if we have, then we know that we have eternity and our future life in Christ's kingdom guaranteed.

D. Cool, Cool Water

“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.” Luke 16:24

The rich man refers to Abraham as his father, and Abraham refers to him as his son, but the term father, or son, was used of racial ancestry and other things. The rich man was a son in the sense that he had descended from Abraham's bloodline, but he was not a true son of Abraham because he had not trusted Christ as his Savior as Abraham did.

It's interesting that he still thinks of Lazarus as a servant, for he wanted Abraham to send Lazarus, like one would a servant, and fetch him some water. You notice that the attitude, as well as the memory of an individual, continues on past death. How he viewed Lazarus prior to death was how he viewed Lazarus after death.

We notice that the dead are able to see, think, feel, remember; they have the same, apparently, facial resemblances so that they can be recognized; they have emotions; they have sadness; they have will; they are able to be concerned; they are able to feel pain or pleasure. Everything stays the same except they are now existing in another place but not in the body of flesh that they had on earth.

We notice also there is water on the Paradise side of the chasm, a precious commodity that the Torments side doesn't have. And he wanted just a little bit to alleviate his suffering, for he said that he was being tormented by the flame, *phlox*, and Hell is a place of fire and burning.

Make no mistake about it, Hell and all its suffering awaits all those who have not believed on Christ as their Savior. It's a horrible place, a place of great suffering and torment. But it can be avoided by putting your entire faith and trust in Jesus Christ. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,”* Acts 16:31

The word for *torment* here is the present passive indicative of *odunomai*. In v.23 the word used for *torment* is *basanos*, where it says that he was now existing in a place of torments. We saw that the verb form had the idea of **being tortured** and the noun form, with the locative of sphere, would tell us that Hades is the place or location where this torturing is taking place. In v.28 he refers to it again as a place of torment.

We also want to notice that in v.23 the word for *torment*, βασανοις, is in the plural, which tells us that many forms of tormenting are going on there. Sadness, fear, despair, regret, pain, suffering, languishing, just to name a few.

“In the flames” should be better translated as *“by the flames”*. Make no mistake about it Hell is a place of deep darkness, suffering and misery that not only affects the soul, but the form of body that the dead have after they die. **And it is a place of fire and of being in close enough proximity to the fire that they can feel the flames!**

The word for *torment*, *odunomai*, in v.24 meant to feel pain, to have distress, to have severe pain due to a wound or fracture, to suffer, to have deep anxiety, deep agitation of the soul, to have deep sorrow.

So what we have is, “*For I am being tormented by this flame*”. The fires of Hell have sapped his strength where he can only languish. And as he languishes in Hell; he is constantly tormented by the flames, and on top of that suffering, he now thinks about the days gone by, what lies ahead, and that he has absolutely no hope. **This is the suffering that awaits the entire human race that has not believed on Jesus Christ as their Savior!**

E. The Great Gulf

“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.” Luke 16:25,26

The word *lifetime* is *zoe* which refers to the physical life that one has in the body. So Abraham is referring back to the rich man's prior existence, which was lavish as the result of the decisions that he had made in life.

All of us have decisions that we make in life. Sometimes we make decisions that result in us being poor, and sometimes we make decisions along the way to go for money and the good life. The rich man was like so many millions who have lived on earth, who have gone after money, education, success and the good life. And there are many who reach their goal! **But just because you finally hit the good life in this life does not mean that you will have it in the next!**

The rich man failed to make the most important decision of all; he failed to believe on Jesus Christ, as Abraham had done, and because of that he ended up in Hell. While Lazarus, as poor as he was, at least had made the most important decision of all and had believed on the Lord.

An interesting insight in this is the passage that talks about those in Paradise wanting to go over to the Torments side, and those in the Torments side wanting to go over to the Paradise side. There are those in Paradise who wanted, who desired, to help those on the other side, but weren't able to because of the chasm. This goes back to the changed nature of the Redeemed, who have a love in their heart to help others in distress, while the unsaved only care about themselves. They only cared about themselves in their previous life on earth, and they only care about themselves after they're dead. While those in Torments simply lacked the ability to go over to the Paradise side. Two groups of people, two differing motivations. The one group wanted to go over to the other side to be comforted; the other group wanted to go over to the other side to help those who were suffering, but neither group could do anything about the situation.

The sides of the chasm were far apart enough so that one could not step over it, or even jump across it, but close enough where one could have facial recognition. There is also the aspect that natural air currents would keep the blistering heat on one side of the chasm and not penetrate into the Paradise side.

One can only speculate on the actual configuration of the topical layout for the two sections of *Hades*. We know that at the bottom of the chasm is the place referred to as ***Tartarus*** where the fallen angels, who sinned against God pre flood, are chained in caverns of absolute darkness. “*For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to **hell**, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;*” 2 Peter 2:4 ει γαρ ο θεος αγγελων αμαρτησαντων ουκ εφεισατο αλλα σειραις ζοφου **ταρταρωσας** παρεδωκεν εις κρισιν τετηρημενους

There could be the concept that one could travel in Paradise over to a section that has an outlook over the Torments side. And the Torments side could actually have rocky outcroppings around its perimeter that are in one area close to the Paradise section. Anyway you look at it this is not a place to go and can be avoided by believing on Christ as your Savior!

F. Warning Unbelievers

“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.” Luke 16:27-31

It's interesting that Abraham knew about Moses and the Prophets, even though he lived over a thousand years before them. Some tend to think that life after death is a mental nothingness, where one exists and knows nothing of what transpired before, but here we see just the opposite.

The rich man recognized Lazarus when he saw him; he knew who Abraham was because he called him by name, even though Abraham had lived 2,000 years before him and he had never seen him. And Abraham knew about Moses and the prophets.

The rich man also remembered his family back in the land of the living and he was deeply concerned that they would now come to this place where he was! This is why he asked that Abraham send Lazarus back to the land of the living to warn them. But there were two flaws with his logic. One, Abraham did not have the power or authority to do that, only Jesus Christ does. Two, even if he could they would not believe him.

Moses wrote about *Sheol* in Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 44:29-31, and in Num. 16:30,33 with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. The **Prophets** in 1 Sam. 2:6; Psa. 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; Isa. 5:14; 14:9, 11, 15; 38:10; Eze. 32:21; Hos. 13:14; Amos 9:2; to name a few.

The body only houses the soul in this life and when we die the soul goes to exist in another place. Whatever we were before, whatever thoughts and memories that we have in this life, go with us beyond that experience of physical death. And it is these memories for the unsaved that compound their sorrow in *Hades*. The rich man still cared for his brothers, but there was nothing he could do for them.

The rich man wanted Lazarus to testify, *diamarturomai*, to his brothers about what Hell is like and not to come here. *Diamarturomai* is the word that one would use in a court of law to establish a fact, but with the added idea of intensity and solemnity. This is a very serious matter and needed to be treated as such.

Abraham said that his brothers have the writings of Moses and the Prophets and they can listen to them! This takes us back to the crucial matter of the Word of God and the men that God has ordained to communicate it. Today we have the Evangelists and the Pastor-Teachers whom God has ordained to teach the doctrines on this matter of Heaven, Hell and salvation in Christ, which they do regularly. If someone is positive to biblical truth, then they will hearken to their message. But if they aren't, then they will have to live with the consequences.

The rich man didn't believe the message of Moses and the Prophets when he was alive, so he ended up in Torments after his death. He didn't believe them about Hell when he was alive, but now he does. Well, actually, he doesn't have to believe it; he's living in it. So he reasons that if someone went back from the dead, someone they knew, Lazarus, and Lazarus could tell them the whole story and they would repent. In fact, he was arguing in a sense with Abraham about all this.

The rich man used a conditional clause in this passage when he said, "*but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent*". Ean plus the subjunctive mood translates out as if someone could come back from the dead, now maybe they can and maybe they can't, but if someone could, **then** my brothers would repent!

"*They will repent*" is the future active indicative of *metanoeo*, which means to change one's mind. The future indicative stresses the absolute certainty of something happening. The rich man was certain that if someone did come back from the dead his brothers would be so impressed by that act and that person's testimony his brothers would change their minds and believe on Christ as their Savior.

What he was saying in effect is that the Word of God is not sufficient in itself to convict people's hearts about these matters. He's saying that something more bold, something more dramatic is needed to get through to people. What he's saying is that the testimony of people is more valid than the testimony of God.

But Abraham corrected him with a doctrinal principle that, if they don't believe the teaching of the Word of God in this life, then they won't believe someone who has returned from the dead. Man needs to realize how important the Word of God is to us, for the Lord himself said that, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*" Matthew 4:4

*“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; **How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation**; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;” Hebrews 2:1-3*

The word *repent* has been mistranslated and misapplied by the Church for years. People incorrectly think it means to feel sorry for one's sins, to regret, to have certain remorseful feelings on the subject. This is why so many churches try to get the unsaved to feel sorry for their sins, to weep tears of repentance when believing on Christ.

But the word for *repent* in the Greek is *metanoeo*, and means to simply **change one's mind**. There is a word for feeling sorry, but that's *metamelomai*, which isn't used here. When the King James translators came to this word, *metanoeo*, they took the word *repent*, which came out of Romanism, and used it. *Repent* comes from the Latin and it does mean to feel pain, or to be grieved in the soul. **But they took the wrong word to convey the Greek idea!** In the Greek it simply meant to change one's mind! Sorrow, or emotions have nothing to do with it at all!

It looks at the idea that **one is not believing** that he is a sinner, that he is going to Hell, that he needs a Savior, that Christ died for his sins and was raised from the dead, and that without Christ as his Savior he is still on the path to Hell, and that he needs to be saved and can't save himself. But now he's changed his mind, (*repented*), about the entire subject and believes on Christ as his Savior!

And once you have believed on Christ as your Savior God takes that faith and **counts it as righteousness**. *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is **counted** for righteousness.” Romans 4:5*

The next thing that God does for you is **declare you righteous** before his court in heaven. *“Therefore being **justified** by faith, δικαιωθεντες, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:” Romans 5:1 Justification is a one time act that is never repeated, nor needs to be repeated. Christians become righteous at salvation by the grace of God, through faith in Christ, and remain that way forever.*

And there is something else God wants us to know, if we have believed on his Son, our sins are not only forgiven, but we have been given eternal life at the moment of salvation and it can never be taken away from us. *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may **know that ye have eternal life**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” 1 John 5:11-13*

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