

INVESTIGATION:

A man in a dark blue suit and white shirt is holding a white rectangular sign with both hands. His index fingers are pointing towards the text on the sign. The background is plain white.

Is
there
a hell?

(Part 4)

Summary so Far

- 1) The OT makes no Reference to 'hell'
- 2) The OT mentions Sheol, the 'grave'
- 3) The OT makes no reference to eternal punishment
- 4) The NT makes no reference to 'hell'
- 5) The NT Greek uses 'hades', 'Tartarus', & 'Gehenna', which are not equivalent to hell for humans



Summary so Far

- 6) The concept of eternal punishment for the wicked was developed during the inter-testamental period
- 7) 'Gnashing of teeth' was an ancient expression of rage
- 8) 'Weeping and gnashing of teeth' has nothing to do with eternal punishment
- 9) Jesus' use of the expression related to the destruction of Jerusalem with the end of the OC



Summary so Far

10) The separation of the sheep and goats is part of the 'Olivet Discourse'

** (Read Matthew 25 in conjunction with Matthew 23 & 24 as well as Mark 13 and Luke 21)*

11) In these chapters, Jesus is addressing his judgement on the Jews for their apostasy.

12) The 'sheep & goats' parable plus the '10 virgins' and the 'wheat & the tares' parables are about the end of the OC and the beginning of the NC.

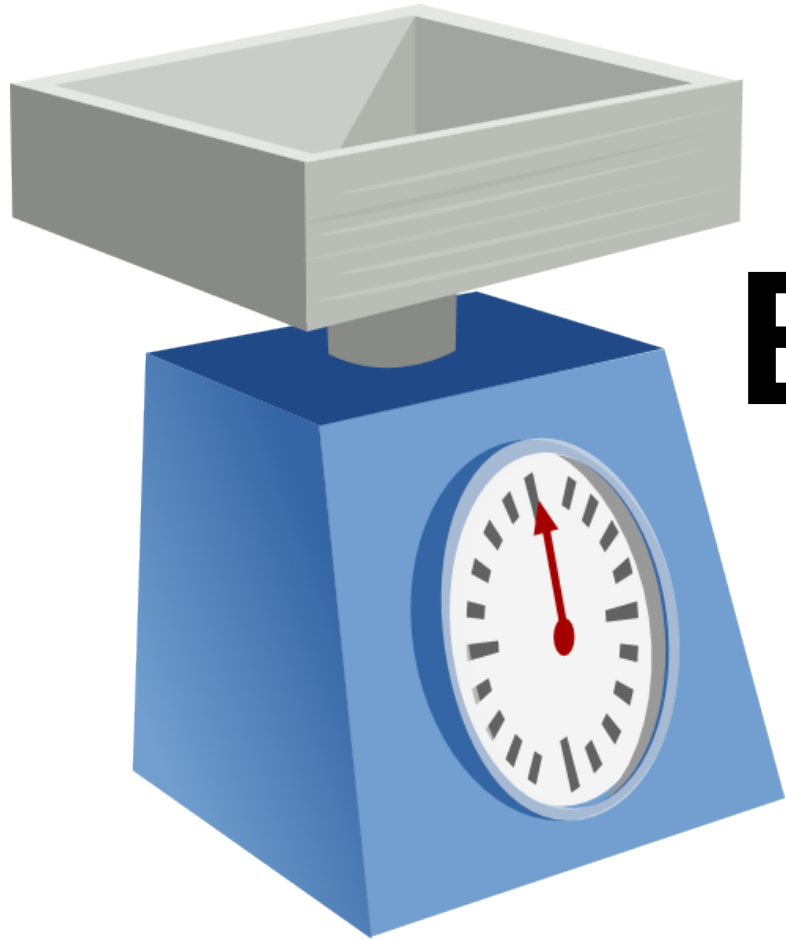


Summary so Far

- 13) The “sheep” were the righteous Jews (e.g. Christians) and “goats” were the apostate Jews.
- 14) Every Christian miraculously escaped before the fall of Jerusalem. The Romans massacred 1.1 million non-combatants there.



**Don't Jump
to any
conclusions
yet**



We must
weigh up
EVERYTHING

WHY THE LAKE OF FIRE LAZARUS & GNASHING TEETH CAN'T CONJURE UP ETERNAL TORMENT



Part 4

Eternal Punishment

The Rich Man & Lazarus

The Parable

...So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom...

Luke 16:22-23 (NKJV)
[from Luke 16:19-31]





**Could the
parable about
the rich man and
Lazarus be
about something
other than
eternal
punishment?**

The literal interpretation

This traditional view imagines that Jesus' intention was to describe the outcome of divine judgement on the damned who are placed in fiery Hell.

The problem with this interpretation:

The symbolic nature of parables is neglected and the parable treated as a revelation of the afterlife



IMPORTANT:

In the Greek text it's
"Hades"
not
"Hell"



Therefore:

The rich man must be in Sheol,
the place of the dead



This must also be **PRIOR** to Judgement Day:

The rich man couldn't desire to warn his brothers if this was after the Great White Throne Judgement – no one will be left alive to warn (see 1 Corinthians 15:24-26)



A problem with simplistic literal interpretation:



How does
the rich man
communicate
with
Abraham
across the
chasm?



More problems with simplistic literalism:

- Does everyone there have a direct line to the patriarch?
- Does someone being incinerated in a furnace care about thirst?
- Are these literal flames?
- And since Hades precedes the resurrection of the body, do we have literal tongues with which to feel thirst?

And...

- Is this the literal Abraham?
- Do the millions in his care take turns snuggling with him?
- Is his bosom big enough to contain us all at once?
- How big is he?
- Etc., etc., into implausibility.



What is Abraham's Bosom?

Abraham's bosom is not a biblical concept. It is a Jewish mythological & cultural idea. It can be found in the Talmud which is a collection of Jewish writings that are the centrepiece of Jewish life.

Questions about Hell from the parable:

- 1) When we are in Heaven, does this parable mean we'll be able to see our loved ones in 'Hell'.
- 2) Will we be able to talk to them, but offer them no hope?
- 3) Will we remain happy knowing that?

So, it's not literal:

Jesus was using a culturally accepted idea as the background for his teaching



“Taking the parable seriously means we mustn’t take it so literally. Rather than text-mining for the architecture of the underworld, we ought to be digging for the intended message of Jesus. He is using the afterlife to illuminate some truth about this life. If we read carefully, we begin to see hints of the rich strata of meaning that beckon us deeper beneath the surface.”

“The context of the story is all about wealth and true riches. In the verses immediately preceding this parable Luke tells us that the Pharisees were lovers of money. Jesus is not offering a treatise on the afterlife, but a warning about putting your trust in riches and failing to help the poor.”

“Jesus quite literally means that the rich and poor of that age will see a reversal of fortunes in the next. Losing your soul for temporal gain is the cost of materialism and the results of living a DIY self-righteous life.”



**Hold
Everything**



Let's look at it from
another
perspective

**What is the aim
of the restoration
of all things?**



Isn't it Edenic conditions here on Earth?

Won't we be ruling the natural realm as Adam was created to do?

BTW: Heaven's not our eternal home – it's the Kingdom's headquarters



Conclusion:

The parable cannot be a literal description of Heaven and Hell for the various reasons given

Resources on the Topic of 'Hell'

The following publications and websites raise issues that God is drawing our attention to today.

DISCLAIMER: The fact that they are listed here should not be taken to imply that I agree with all the doctrinal positions, conclusions or opinions of the authors.

- “Her Gates Will Never Be Shut: Hope, Hell, and the New Jerusalem” – Bradley Jersak
<https://www.amazon.com.au/Her-Gates-Will-Never-Shut-ebook/dp/B00IGGZRJY>
- “An Exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 3: 7b-10” – Matthew DiStefano (‘All Set Free’ blog)
<http://www.allsetfree.com/exegesis-2-thessalonians-17b-10>
- “Hell in a hand basket” – Brazen Church <http://brazenchurch.com/hell-in-the-bible>
- “Why The Lake of Fire, Tormented Lazarus & Gnashing Teeth Can’t Conjure Up Eternal Torture” – Brad Jersak
<https://medium.com/@BrazenChurch/why-the-lake-of-fire-tormented-lazarus-gnashing-teeth-can-t-conjure-up-eternal-torture-648a7c86aca>
- “Raising Hell” – Julie Ferwerda (PDF) <http://www.raisinghellbook.com/files/2014/04/Raising-Hell-Complimentary.pdf>
<http://www.raisinghellbook.com/files/2016/06/Raising-Hell-ShortAndSweet-Complimentary.pdf> (*Abridged version*)
- “A New Day Dawning” blog – Chuck Crisco
<https://www.anewdaydawning.com/blog-1/2015/7/13/the-sheep-and-goats-judgment>
- Tentmaker website: <http://www.tentmaker.org/articles/ifthellisreal.htm> <http://www.tentmaker.org/ScholarsCorner.html>
- “Lazarus and The Rich Man” – David Johnson:
<http://rejoicinglifeministries.com/Lazarus%20and%20The%20Rich%20Man.htm>
- “The Rich Man, Lazarus, & the Afterlife” – Samuel G. Dawson:
<https://www.truthaccordingtoscripture.com/documents/death/the-rich-man-and-lazarus-dawson.php#.WpfdNei5vcs>
- ‘The Biblical Doctrine of Hell’ in “The Origin and History of the Doctrine of Endless Punishment” – Thomas B. Thayer (1855): <http://www.auburn.edu/~allenkc/tbhell.html>
- “Hell, Hades and the Afterlife” – Dirk Waren: <http://www.hellhadesafterlife.com>

To be continued

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