



Do the Fires of Hell Come From God? (Part III)

Acts 3:23: (NASB) *And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.*



The world is messed up. If you believe in God, then you most likely believe in some sort of ultimate justice system. The question is, what does God's system of justice consist of - what kind of penalty? For generations, the majority of Christianity has believed in a hell of fire and torment as the answer to this question. However, there is a mountain of biblical evidence to the contrary. Today we will embark on Part III of our series that examines this evidence. We will look at some of the really difficult and seemingly contradictory

Scriptures that talk about the condition of those who were evil in this life. Do they go to hell? Is there fire and torment in hell?

recap
recap

"Do the Fires of Hell Come From God (Part I)" on June 7, 2015 examined the biblical phrase *weeping (or wailing) and gnashing of teeth*, with the conclusion that its meaning was focusing on deep heartbreaking sorrow and anguish coupled with consternation, anger and pain at a GREAT loss. This reaction never applied to any eternal torment or torture - only to the loss of opportunity of God's favor at one time or another.

"Do the Fires of Hell Come From God (Part II)" on July 26, 2015 examined the Greek word *Gehenna*, meaning the Valley of Hinnom, a word often translated as *hellfire*. We saw how this Valley was used as a garbage dump where fires constantly burned to utterly destroy all therein, and how it symbolized utter and disgraceful destruction. Because of the heinous sins previously committed there, God declared it a place of utter destruction, not torture. Bodies of criminals (dead, never live) were thrown in here, denied an honorable burial.

Today, **Part III** will examine the word *Hades* and its Old Testament counterpart *Sheol*, often translated *hell*. What does it mean? How is it used? Jesus used the Old Testament as his foundation for the New Testament, so we will as well.

In the Old Testament, there is only one word translated *hell*:

Sheol: Strong's #7585 she'owl (sheh-ole') Hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates

When translated into English, this Hebrew word *Sheol* is translated:

- Grave - 31 times
- Hell - 31 times
- Pit - 3 times

When we think of "the grave," it brings to mind where we respectfully put a deceased body. When we hear the word *hell*, based on our Christian denomination, we could think of several different things. Some may think of it as a place of eternal torment.



So, our first problem is the Old Testament uses the exact same word, *Sheol*, but translates into English three different ways with three different English meanings.

Let's look at some of the "warnings" using this word:

Deuteronomy 32:21-23: (KJV) ²¹*They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those, which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. (This text was quoted and fulfilled in Romans 10:19-21 relating to the Gentiles coming to favor thousands of years later.)* ²²*For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest **hell <7585>**, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.*

This is figurative language describing the "fire" of God's anger.

 **Shot myself and left my body, Went to Hell, Tamara Laroux, 700 Club**

- *Pat, when I pulled that trigger I knew my body was dying. I felt the blood rushing through my lungs. Death gripped my body. I became blind, I became deaf, and as my soul left my body I began traveling faster than the speed of light, and I began falling and falling and falling and all of a sudden this explosion happened on the inside of me. It was as if there was a sulfuric-type acid burn that consumed me in every way. It was so hideous.*



Psalms 9:17: (KJV) *The wicked shall be turned into **hell <7585>**, and all the nations that forget God.*

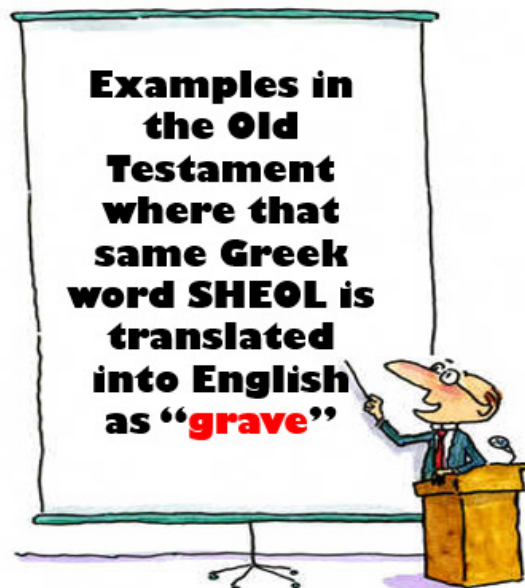
Psalms 55:15: (KJV) *Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into **hell <7585>**: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.*

Hell (Sheol) does sound bad for wicked people! But wait! There is more...

1 Samuel 2:6: (KJV) *The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the **grave <7585>**, and bringeth up.*

Job 14:13: (KJV) *O that thou wouldest hide me in the **grave <7585>**, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!*

Job was a godly man who prayed to be hidden in Sheol - the same place for wicked people, right?





In the Old Testament, both good and bad people go to the same place - *Sheol*. There is no thought or evidence of *Sheol* housing any fire or any torture - it is a pit - a place of the sleep of death - the grave!

Job 14:13-14: (KJV) ¹³*O that thou wouldest hide me in the **grave <7585>**, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! ¹⁴If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.*

Ecclesiastes 9:10: (KJV) *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the **grave <7585>**, whither thou goest.*

You may be interested in reviewing the programs, "Where Does Your Soul Go When You Die?" (Part I) March 15, 2015 and (Part II) April 12, 2015 for more scriptural foundations.

 **Why hell is eternal, Is Hell Forever, Real Truth Real Quick**

- *Let me just explain a little bit of why hell is eternal and why it should be and why that verse in Romans 12 is in there, where God says, "Vengeance is mine sayeth the Lord." Because all things, all sins are sins against God and that ultimately means even when there's a gross injustice against me, it's a sin against my Father who values me and says I'm made in His image and I have dignity because He's given me dignity. To be wicked towards a human being is to be wicked towards God's opinion and towards God's decree that men and others are valuable.*

When God talked about vengeance in the Old Testament, the punishment was death. His justice had nothing to do with tormenting them forever. We will talk more about this shortly.

What about the New Testament?

New Testament Greek word:

Hades: Strongs #86 haides (hah'-dace); properly, unseen, i.e. "Hades" or the place (state) of departed souls; KJV-- grave, hell.

Something buried under the ground is unseen.

Matthew 16:18: (KJV) *And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of **hell <7585>** shall not prevail against it.*

The gates of hell (Hades) - what was Jesus referring to? The gates of the grave, of death. Jesus was the resurrection and the life. Death does not have power over him.

But can we connect the Old Testament word, *Sheol*, and the New Testament word, *Hades*?

The next two examples are undeniable links between Sheol and Hades:

Psalms 16:10: (NIV) *Because you will not abandon me to the **grave <Sheol - 7585>**, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*

Acts 2:27: (NIV) *Because you will not abandon me to the **grave <Hades - 86>**, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*



Isaiah 25:8: (NIV) *He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.*

Hosea 13:14: (NIV) *I will ransom them from the power of the **grave <7585>**; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, are your plagues? Where, O **grave <7585>** is your destruction? I will have no compassion.*

Sheol is mentioned twice in the context of death.

1 Corinthians 15:54-55: (KJV) ⁵⁴*So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (Quoting from Isaiah 25:8) ⁵⁵O death, where is thy sting? O **grave <86>**, where is thy victory?*

There is no permanence in death because of Jesus' ransom. This speaks of the grave in its "biggest sense" - not just limited to "good" or "bad" people.

Can *Hades* mean the grave, just like *Sheol*? Yes! With this thought, consider these texts:

Jesus' being (his life) was not permitted to be forever lost in the grave:

Acts 2:27: (KJV) *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell <86>**, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

 **Agony and beings of death, Went to Hell, Tamara Laroux, 700 Club**

- (Pat Robertson) *There wasn't anybody else around you?*
- (Tamara) *Pat, I could look out and I could see thousands, millions of people that were all around me, but I was unable to communicate with them.*
- (Pat) *Was it like a lake? Was it molten fire?*
- (Tamara) *I don't know that it was like a lake. It's hard to describe. I guess you could say it was a lake. It was a huge sea of people and there were many, many chambers that were all around me and all of the people that were there were in the same formless being screaming out in agony and total terror in a hideous scream and there was no end to it, Pat. There are no words to describe how horrific this was.*
- (Pat) *They were screaming in agony?*
- (Tamara) *They were screaming in agony because they had become total beings of death.*

Yikes. That is disturbing imagery! Who can be comfortable with millions of people in an endless scream of pain and agony? Is *that* really God's justice?

Hell - Hades - the grave - will be emptied out and the grave (death because of Adam's sin) will be destroyed! How do we know that?

We are specifically told:

Revelation 20:13-14: (KJV) ¹³*And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it; and death and **hell <86>** delivered up the dead, which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. ¹⁴And death and **hell <86>** were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*



Especially with a subject like this, we need a **SCRIPTURAL** foundation, not just a **TRADITIONAL** one.



A caller from Connecticut wonders if you take your own life, will the stress and anger that brought you to that decision be carried with you when you die. The thought had entered her mind but she did not go through with it because of her love of God. She asks, "What I am feeling right now...will I feel that same pain when I are dead?"

The love and compassion of God through Christ can be life-changing. We all have points where we come to depression and feel like giving up. We implore our caller and the many listeners in the same situation to go to the Scriptures to find comfort and help because there is always something better. There is nothing wrong with seeking professional help, either.

People have been known to have "out of body" experiences. We believe those are more of a dream state of the brain. No, we do not believe those who commit suicide will burn in hell forever, as we do not believe the Scriptures teach anyone will. (Please refer to the program "Does God Forgive Suicide?" from February 3, 2013.) Keep focused on the goodness of God!



Human vengeance and wrath, Is Hell Forever, Real Truth Real Quick

- When I was speaking one time to some people who had just suffered through a holocaust, literally, I was in Africa and talking to some individuals there and they were asking me questions about why they shouldn't have vengeance. What I did is, I shared with them what I would do if somebody had done to me what had been done to their children, to their spouses, and I just said, this is what I would do. I would take that person and I would torture them to the point of extreme suffering and as close to death as I could get them, and then I would get the finest medical staff in the world to come in and bring them*



back to life and full health and then I would torture them and make them suffer again if I saw my kid macheted, my wife brutally raped, my daughters raped, my daughters brutally suffering under the hands of wicked men the way that they had. I painted a picture of such hateful vengeance and bitterness and wrath and I would do that as long as God gave me life, and when I got to heaven I would pray that he would give me ten thousand years to do it again.

He is being sarcastic to prove a point. This is his reasoning for attempting to explain why he believes there is a hell of torment and why God is legitimate in creating such a place. However, the laws of justice, as written in the Scriptures, talk about life and death, not torment and torture.

Wait a minute! What about the Rich Man being in "Hell" and being tormented in a flame?

Luke 16:23-24: (KJV) ²³And in **hell <86>** he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴And 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.

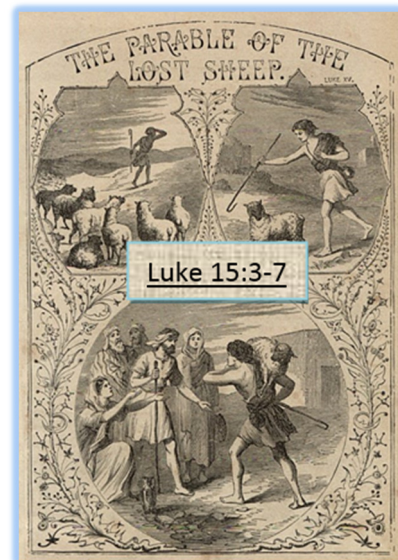


How does this fit in with the clarity of definition we have just discussed? It is a parable. How do we know? Context!

Jesus is teaching several audiences all at once with a series of parables:

Luke 15:1-3: (NKJV) ¹Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to him to hear him. ²And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them. ³So he spoke this parable to them, saying:

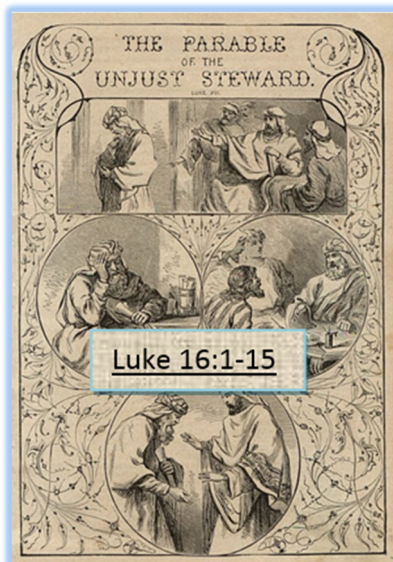
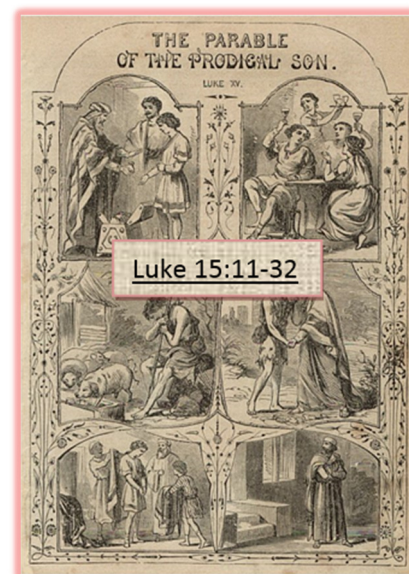
Luke 15:3-7: The first Parable of the Lost Sheep shows the recovery of mankind from their lost state of sin. Jesus gives the interpretation of his theme - joy in heaven. He tells them this lesson plainly, so they can follow his themes as they unfold into lessons of plain truth about the development of his Father's kingdom - and condemnation for being too proud and egotistical to comply with it. He is talking directly to the Pharisees.



Luke 15:8-10: The second Parable of the Lost Coin illustrates in its big picture the value of the redeemed race of man as a part of the symmetry of the ten coins being restored - the lost coin symbolizing the race of man and the woman symbolizing the work of reconciliation.



Luke 15:11-32: The third Parable of the Prodigal Son shows the two classes of Israel - the Pharisees represented in the older brother and the sinners and publicans represented in the younger one. (Incidentally, all of these classes of people were in front of Jesus while he was telling these parables!) This story reveals the attitudes of both classes and the grace of God in accepting repentance.



Luke 16:1-15: The fourth Parable of the Unjust Steward frontally attacked the selfish and compromising spirit the Pharisees displayed, showing their hypocrisy and godlessness.

Jesus is dealing with a wide audience from publicans and sinners to tax collectors, scribes and Pharisees.

Now, The fifth Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, a lesson in reversal: The story starts with the rich man being favored and the beggar out of favor.

Luke 16:19-21: (KJV) ¹⁹There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

- *Rich Man* - the Jewish nation, specifically the Pharisees
- *Clothed in purple (royalty) and fine linen* - the promise of the kingdom and righteousness
- *Fared sumptuously every day* - he enjoyed but did not appreciate his blessings



²⁰And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, ²¹And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

- *Lazarus* - represented the Gentiles - the "everybody else" outside of the Jewish favor
- *Laid at his gate/full of sores* - outside the gate of favor - outside of the atonement Israel received from their annual sacrifices
- *Desired crumbs/company with dogs* - the Gentiles at this time were spiritually hungry, unclean and detestable



This predicted reversal would soon happen shortly after Jesus' crucifixion - see Acts 10:9-16 and refer to our programs "Why Cornelius? Why a Soldier?" (Part I) May 17, 2015 and (Part II) June 14, 2015.

THE FIRST THREE PARABLES ARE ADDRESSED TO THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES FOR CRITICIZING JESUS SHOWING THE CONVERSION OF ONE DEEMED "LOST" IS AN OCCASION FOR GREAT REJOICING IN HEAVEN:

1. LOST SHEEP
2. LOST COIN
3. PRODIGAL SON

THEN JESUS TURNS TO HIS DISCIPLES WITH THE NEXT PARABLE, SHOWING THAT THE CURRENT STEWARDS, THE PHARISEES, WERE ABOUT TO BE DISPLACED. THEY PICKED UP ON THIS AND DERIDED HIM:

4. UNJUST STEWARD

FINALLY, JESUS PREDICTS THE TRANSITION OF FAVOR FROM THE JEWS TO THE GENTILES:

5. RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

 Only Jesus Mattered, Went to Hell, Tamara Laroux, 700 Club

- It's hard for the physical mind to understand those things but when I would look out I remember looking at an individual particularly, and they were as close to me as you are. And when I saw them, Pat, I knew everything about them. I knew every sin they had committed. My knowledge about their life was completely full. I knew everything they had done wrong, I knew their thoughts, I knew their emotions, I knew their will. I knew everything I could think upon. My wisdom was in its fullness. It was like a Harvard degree instantly but it didn't matter. In that hideous state of a burning torment, the only knowledge that mattered was that Jesus Christ was Lord. And here I am in this state of agony, indescribable agony, and the only thing that mattered was that I never surrendered to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

We will come back to this later.



Here is the reversal...the beggar is now favored and the rich man is *out of favor!*

Luke 16:22-23: (KJV) ²²And 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; ²³And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.



100,000 year lesson, Is Hell Forever, Real Truth Real Quick

- I would say, Lord if I slipped up and messed up and that guy died, resurrect him so I can make him suffer again and I would do that. I was describing my anger and my justice against what happened to them that finally they were like, "Bro, you've got anger problems. You shouldn't want to see people suffer like that." And I said but gang, listen, I think if I did it for a hundred thousand years I would eventually go, "Okay, now you've learned a lesson. Don't ever do that to me and to my family again."*

Torment and torture were not allowed in the context of God's Law for humanity. Does God, who is above us, commit torment and torture because He can? What happened to the teachings of Jesus - loving your enemies and forgiveness?

Luke 16:22-23: (KJV) ²²And 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; ²³And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

If this was NOT a parable and if they literally went someplace, then there are many questions one has to ask:

- Where would Abraham's bosom be? Is this a metaphor for heaven?
- Do all faithful people go there?
- If so, how big a space are we talking about?
- Was Lazarus faithful or just poor?
- Was the Rich Man bad or just rich?
- If not a parable, who goes to the bosom? Who goes to this hell and where does everyone else go?



Consider these:

- Beggar died* - sinners and Gentiles died to their situation of disfavor
- Carried by angels* - the angels were the apostles and ministers of the Gospel
- To Abraham* - became the children of God and heirs of the Abrahamic promise - **Galatians 3:29:** (NIV) *If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*
- Rich man dies/is buried* - the Jews "died" to their favor and are buried in sin once again



- *Lifting his eyes in hell* - entombed as a nation in the death of disfavor

So, verse 22 is teaching us about a *state* of being dead and not being any particular *place*.



A caller from Connecticut suggests to the previous caller James 4:8: *Draw nigh unto God who will draw nigh unto you*. If you really want to be strong and joyful, study God and His word. The notion that God would torment people eternally dishonors His character. Psalms 30:5: *God's anger is but for a moment but joy cometh in the morning*.

Luke 16:23: (KJV) And in **hell <86>** he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.



Mutual feeling to save others, Went to Hell, Tamara Laroux, 700 Club

- (Pat) Was this like regret in your mind as part of that fear?
- (Tamara) Absolutely regret. There was so much regret and shame and guilt that I had believed a lie, and that I had believed the deceit. When I looked out across the lake, across the heavens, I could see the entire universe Pat and it was like the earth was magnified and there was a mutual feeling, a mutual understanding everyone, of the millions of people that were there with me that we did not want anyone to go where we were. We wanted people to go back to earth and warn everyone, don't believe the lie and do not be deceived by your enemy. Do not come here.

In her story, apparently even though the inhabitants of this place came to a point of repenting and wanting to "keep others out," it did not matter. Is that the God of love Jesus represented to us?

We know the *hell* in Luke 16:23 cannot be the lake of fire, Gehenna:

Revelation 20:14: (KJV) And **death <2288>** and **hell <86>** were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

- *Being in torments* - this Greek word here literally means "a touchstone." He was being tested and his true colors revealed. As a touchstone, another way to say this might be: "You are revealed for what you are." So when the Pharisees are being told that when they die to their position of favor, they will be revealed as counterfeit. Their hypocrisy would be made known. They would have recognized the touchstone as a symbol. We can imagine Jesus was looking directly at them while he was talking!

Torments: Strong's #931 basanos (bas'-an-os); a touchstone

Greek English Lexicon: a touchstone, which is a black siliceous stone used to test the purity of gold or silver by the color of the streak produced on it by rubbing it with metal by which one is forced to divulge the truth





(Source: Wikipedia, "Metallurgical assay") The age-old touchstone method is particularly suited to the testing of very valuable pieces, for which sampling by destructive means, such as scraping, cutting or drilling is unacceptable. A rubbing of the item is made on a special stone, treated with acids and the resulting color compared to references. Red radiolarian chert or black siliceous slate were used to view the resultant treated streak of the sample. Differences in precious metal content as small as 10 to 20 parts per thousand can often be established with confidence by the test. It is not indicated for use with white gold, for example, since the color variation among white gold alloys is almost imperceptible.



The only other time this word is used:

Matthew 4:24: (KJV) *And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and **torments** <931>, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.*

Torments here meaning "hard testings."

- *Seeing Abraham and Lazarus - Lazarus as the spiritual seed of Abraham.*
- *In his bosom - no longer aliens, but children.*

Romans 11:17-20: (NRSV) *¹⁷But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸...remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. ¹⁹You will say, Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in. ²⁰That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe.*

The Gentiles were the wild branches that did not belong on the olive tree (represented by Lazarus in the parable) grafted in so they could be of favor. The other natural branches were cut off! This story of the Rich Man and Lazarus shows us the change from the way things were.

Okay, so tormented means "tested" or "proven,"
but what about the flames?

 **100,000 years is finite, God is infinite, Is Hell Forever, Real Truth Real Quick**

- *If God didn't change my heart to help me to see the real glory of who He is, I think the number one problem I would have with God when I get to heaven is hell. And I think what He's going to have to show me is, "Todd, I know that you would do that for a hundred thousand years but this isn't a sin against you. You're finite, so your justice can be satisfied. I am infinite in My glory and infinite in My goodness, so when they're rejecting me, they are rejecting My eternal glory and My goodness. So, if they don't want to accept My eternal glorious provision for them, which is my son, and the evidence of who I am clearly seen throughout all creation, then their offense is against Me. Since you're nothing like Me, there is no way you can understand eternal hell but just know this: I'm an eternal God and to enjoy Me is to enjoy Me forever and to not know Me is to suffer in being away from Me forever."*



We believe he makes a great leap in speaking of "eternal justice." We as Christians spend our lives talking about the love of God and want others to appreciate it. The Scriptures never speak of God initiating everlasting torment on anyone. God has revealed enough of His character to show this is not His way.

Luke 16:24: (KJV) *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** <3600> in this **flame** <5395>.*

- *Father Abraham, have mercy* - essentially, this is the nation of Israel saying, "Don't abandon me even though I abandoned you."
- *Send Lazarus with a drop of water* - water is a symbol of truth - put us back on the right path
- *I am tormented* - the Rich Man was grieving a great loss, not being tortured with physical pain.

Tormented: Strongs #Tormented: 3600 odunao (od-oo-nah'-o); to grieve

For example:

Luke 2:48: (KJV) *And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee **sorrowing** <3600>.*

Jesus' parents grieved when they thought they lost him as a child.

Acts 20:38: (KJV) ***Sorrowing** <3600> most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.*

The people, grieved, were sad, that the Apostle Paul had to leave them.

So, *tormented* here has nothing to do with physical pain. It is all emotional!

- *In this flame* - (notice not *in the fire*) the revealing of past indiscretions and misuses of favor

Flame: Strongs #5395 phlox (flox); (to "flash" or "flame"); a blaze

In all cases EXCEPT FOR this parable, the word describes actual fire, stated as in *flame of fire*.

Some uses:

Real fire: Acts 7:30: (KJV) *And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in **a flame** <5395> **of fire** <4442> in a bush.*

The flame describes the brightness of the fire.

Symbolic fire: Hebrews 1:7: (KJV) *And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers **a flame** <5395> **of fire** <4442>.*

Again, the flame describes the brightness of the fire.

So in our parable, Jesus' lesson here is not one of torture, but of the *revealing* of past indiscretions and misuses of favor. (Unfortunately this very accurately described Israel at the time.) The flame is not destructive, but revealing and bright. Its purpose is to be the light that uncovers all things.



We see this story had a specific purpose - the loss of opportunity and the giving of favor to someone else. Jesus knew the blessings would go to the Gentiles and the Jews would be out of favor because they were not obeying God. Remember, parables use picture language. The Parable of the Lost Sheep was not talking about real sheep!



Torment without end, *Went to Hell, Tamara Laroux, 700 Club*

- (Pat) Was there any end to it for these people?
- (Tamara) No, there was no end. You could look across the gulf expanse. You could see heaven, you could see the peace, the joy, the love, the wholeness and you knew that you were never going to experience that because time does not exist in eternity. Time does not exist at all, so you know that you are there forever with no relief. The burn will never stop, the screaming will never stop and the only thing you can do is hope that no one else will come where you are.
- (Pat) It's a horrible prospect when you think of it. The human mind can't conceive anything as absolutely awful as that.

...And the mind of God did not conceive of it either! The Scriptures tell us this is a tradition-driven and superstition-driven belief, not a God-driven belief. History shows this was created to keep the masses in line through fear. That is what a dictator does and God is not a dictator. His justice is not out of sync with His love.



Luke 16:25: (KJV) ²⁵But Abraham said, 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.

With this understanding of *torment* being anguish and *flame* meaning light, let's review and paraphrase verse 24.

Luke 16:24: (KJV) 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** <3600> in this **flame** <5395>.

Restated: Father, have mercy on me! Send Lazarus (those whom I despised) that he may dip the tip of his finger in water (truth) and give me just a drop of it, for I am in deep anguish of heart in this light that has revealed my irresponsibility, my pride and my fall from favor...

This is all about lost opportunity but not about forever. Suddenly, we are not seeing hellfire and torment - we are seeing the anguish of heart from sin being revealed in the light of truth. This agony is not caused by physical pain, but by the realization that there is no place to hide. There is now nothing you can do but to accept the consequences that you so richly deserve.

But if you take away hell, do you take away God's justice? NO. You take away a *perversion* of His justice. God's justice ALWAYS requires accountability. It ALWAYS has consequences commensurate with the sin. There is no sin a human being can commit that warrants being eternally tormented.

Jesus was forcefully teaching that Israel- the Pharisees (the Rich Man), were about to lose favor with God (being close to Abraham) and the Gentiles



(Lazarus the beggar) were about to gain that favor. Jesus was illustrating the suffering and anguish that they (Israel - the Pharisees) were going to experience. For the interpretation of the rest of the parable, please see the **Bonus Material**.

By the way, what comes after this parable? Four parables followed before it, and after is the millstone and faith as a mustard seed - more picture language to teach the audience. Jesus used pictures to teach lessons but nothing to do with eternal torment.

What about Revelation and the smoke of their torment rising up forever?

There are two texts from Revelation that need explanation: Revelation 14:9-11 and Revelation 20:7-10.

Revelation 14:9-11: (KJV) ⁹And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship *the beast and his image*, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, ¹⁰The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹And the *smoke* of their *torment* <5293> ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

Obviously, Revelation is a book of symbols. For example, we believe *the beast and his image* represent great religious systems who falsified the true meaning of Christianity. Antichrist does not mean 'against Christ,' it means "in place of Christ." It means taking the sacrifice of Jesus and replacing it with something else.

Time does not permit more detail but the *mark*, the *forehead* and the *hand* are all symbols as well, as is the *wine of God's wrath* and the *cup of indignation* - so is it any surprise that the *fire*, *brimstone* and *smoke* are symbolic as well? We cannot take the last ones literally if the former we take symbolically.

Torment used here is from the same root word as in the Rich Man parable - a touchstone.

Torment: Strong's #929 basanismos bas-an-is-mos', touchstone

 **God's mercy to my screams, *Went to Hell, Tamara Laroux, 700 Club***

- (Tamara) What's so amazing is God's love is so incredible that before I actually shot myself, I cried out to God to forgive me and in that cry of desperation for forgiveness God heard me, and He is so faithful to His word and to His promise that in my screaming and in my agony and in the revelation of what I experienced, God came down from heaven and this hand scooped me up, Pat, and picked me up, and I realized I was not in hell because I shot myself, because no act can take you to hell as no act can take you to heaven. We are saved by faith, and so I realized that I wasn't there by my actions - I was there because I didn't receive Jesus as my Lord, and so when this hand picked me up and took me over the vast expanse, took me over that gulf fixed, and it's huge but to God it's just a simple dividing line.
- (Pat) That's what Jesus said in the parable -there's a great gulf between us, fixed.

Hmmm...interesting that Pat Robertson admits that this is a parable...



The speaker talks of the mercy and love of God. Did the others who were crying out not get the mercy of God? There is gross inconsistency in describing the character of God. He is manic according to that description. We use these stories as examples because this is what people are saying out there. They are based on tradition and not scriptural foundation. There is a big difference.

Blood, fire and smoke being used as symbolic warnings:

Acts 2:19-20: (NASB) ¹⁹and I will grant wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. ²⁰the sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the lord shall come.

Smoke rising as a symbol of complete annihilation:

Isaiah 34:5,8-10: (ASV) ⁵For my sword hath drunk its fill in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Edom, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment...⁸For Jehovah hath a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion. ⁹And the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become **burning pitch**. ¹⁰It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

What an apt picture of destruction - Edom is still desolate to this day! Notice nothing is alive in this picture; it is all destroyed.

The smoke of their torment - the evidence of what had been done; a remembrance.

When an ancient city was sacked and burned, those fires would smolder literally for years. You could see the smoke of that siege miles in the distance. It showed what used to be - a remembrance.


While the above Revelation text does not use the actual word "Gehenna," the destruction of Gehenna is certainly implied with the fire and brimstone put in the Valley of Gehenna.

Once we try to establish the scriptural basis and meaning, we try to put the pieces in order and see if they make sense.

We suggest the following interpretation:

All of the great false religious systems that lead people away from truth (the Beast, his image) and any who worship them will be subject to the wrath of God and be utterly exposed as false and hypocritical and as such will meet with complete destruction (fire and brimstone), in the presence of Jesus and his true followers (the lamb and his angels). Though destroyed, the remembrance of their now revealed false systems and hypocrisy (the smoke of their torment) will be forever (they have no rest day or night) in the minds of men.

God will allow the sinfulness of sin to ALWAYS be remembered so no one ever will have a desire to go back to the way mankind was before His kingdom.

 Can't explain it but God said it, *Is Hell Forever, Real Truth Real Quick*

- I can't explain it in a way just because it's just too hard for me. It doesn't make sense to me now and it won't make sense to me in heaven until I see the*



fullness and the glory of God. He just tells me that it's there and it's true and we do know this: that God takes no delight in the death of the wicked, and we do know that's why He's slow in bringing judgment - not because He doesn't care about those suffering right now in the midst of sin, but because He loves the sinner and He desires that none should perish but all come to repentance.

What he accomplishes is admitting it makes no sense to anyone at any time. Do you know why it does not make sense? Because it based on tradition and not Scripture.

Revelation 20:10: (NRSV) *And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

This text is very similar to Revelation 14 discussed above. We believe that it warrants the same answers as already given. We get a sense that all evil in all of its forms ends up in this "Lake of Fire" in total destruction, called *the second death*. God WILL destroy and God's justice WILL prevail. God's justice cannot truly exist within the character of God if there is a place of eternal torment and torture.

Evil and all those who represent it will be destroyed. That evil will never be forgotten. The experience of evil is indelibly stamped upon His creation. They can always look back and see life without God is miserable. From a standpoint of godliness, there is no greater punishment than not to be able to have life.

*So, do the fires of hell come from God?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



The Greek word "tartaroo" occurs once in the Scriptures and is translated *hell*:

2 Peter 2:4: (KJV) *God spared not the angels that sinned, but **cast down to hell** ["tartaroo"], and delivered [them] into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.*

This word very closely resembles "tartarus," a word used in Grecian mythology as the name for a dark abyss or prison. But *tartaroo* seems to refer more to an act than to a place. The fall of the angels who sinned was from honor and dignity, into dishonor and condemnation, and the thought seems to be: "God spared not the angels who sinned, but degraded them."



We appreciated our time spent in this three-part series investigating the biblical use of the word *hell*. We are glad we find no such place of everlasting torture as years of creeds have erroneously taught. Yet we have found "hell, sheol, hades" to which all our race were condemned on account of Adam's sin, and from which all are redeemed by our Lord's death, and that hell is the tomb: the death condition. And we find another hell ("Gehenna" the Second Death: utter destruction) as the final penalty upon all who, after being redeemed and brought to the full knowledge of the truth and the ability to obey it, they choose death by choosing a course of opposition to God and righteousness.

A QUICK RECAP...



According to the Scriptures, hell is *not* the fire and brimstone and eternal torment taught by tradition; rather, we believe the Scriptures teach that hell is the state of death - the grave - before the resurrection of the Last Day. That resurrection is a re-standing up of life so that one can be accountable in the Day of Judgment for one's actions.

Hell is simply no more than the state of not being alive, the state of death that brings us to the payment of the ransom of Jesus and therefore the resurrection. We aren't resurrected because we deserve it, we are resurrected because of Jesus' sacrifice.

All of the New Testament passages that use the word "hades":

Matthew 11:23: (KJV) *And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to **hell** <86>: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.*

Matthew 16:18: (KJV) *And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of **hell** <86> shall not prevail against it.*

Luke 10:15: (KJV) *And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to **hell** <86>.*

Luke 16:23: (KJV) *And in **hell** <86> he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

Acts 2:27: (KJV) *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell** <86>, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

Acts 2:31: (KJV) *He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in **hell** <86>, neither his flesh did see corruption.*

1 Corinthians 15:55: (KJV) *O death, where is thy sting? **O grave** <86>, where is thy victory?*

Revelation 1:18: (KJV) *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of **hell** <86> and of death.*

Revelation 6:8: (KJV) *And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and **Hell** <86> followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth*



part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Revelation 20:13: (KJV) *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and **hell** <86> delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

Revelation 20:14: (KJV) *And death and **hell** <86> were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

The rest of the "Rich Man and Lazarus" Parable:

Luke 16:26: (NIV) *And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.*

The chasm fixed between the two:

The prophetic facet of this chasm: A chasm is a giant pit or hole. Jesus was referring back to Zechariah 9 to make his point. **Zechariah 9:11** refers to the end of Israel's "double" of disfavor, the period that those Pharisees in Jesus' audience were about to enter.

Zechariah 9:9-12: (ASV) *⁹Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon a (donkey), even upon a colt the foal of a (donkey). ¹⁰And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the nations: and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹As for thee also, because of the blood of thy covenant I have set free thy prisoners from the pit wherein is no water. ¹²Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee.*

Again, a reference all too familiar for the Pharisees! How did the pit/gulf get there? The nation of Israel itself was carefully excavating it, specifically the Pharisees, over the previous three years of Jesus' ministry, and through history. Day by day, the Pharisees created this distance between, by not hearing, heeding or respecting the teachings of their Messiah. The more wonderful the teaching, the more pure the message and the more miraculous the evidence became, the faster the Pharisees dug. Day by day they chose to ignore truth, shun righteousness and criticize that which was good. Now there was no turning back - this great gulf was dug with self-centered complacency and could not be undone.

Luke 16:27-28: (NIV) *²⁷He answered, then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, ²⁸for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.*

- **Begging for mercy** - again they beg mercy of Father Abraham - Please, please pity my brothers - save them from this pain of humiliation and exposure - this anguish of heart. I pray thee, send Lazarus to them - for I am sure that if one risen to such favor, from such humiliation were to go to them, they would believe, and avoid this suffering. Please have mercy on one who has lost all.
- **The five brothers** - the Jews of Palestine in Jesus' day represented chiefly the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, while the majority of the other ten tribes were scattered abroad in various lands. Whereas two



tribes, Judah and Benjamin, were represented by the one rich man, so proportionately the other ten tribes would be represented by five brethren.

What would father Abraham say?

Luke 16:29: (NIV) *Abraham replied, they have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.*

Again they are indicted by their past - Moses and the prophets - the message had always been clear and can speak for itself. They already had everything they needed.

Interpretation and paraphrase: *Your mercy was in the prophets, their prophecies and their examples. They were the evidence of God's care for you!*

Imagine the deep-seated regret you feel as you hear those words. You had Moses, you had the prophets. Now it was time for your brothers to hear them, for you now know that you did NOT hear them; you did not WANT to hear them..

Luke 16:30: (NIV) *No, father Abraham, he said, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.*

Interpretation and paraphrase: *Still pressing the issue, hoping against hope... The drama of one going to them from the dead, father, they will surely hear that message. Just give them a chance...*

But again father Abraham reinforces their sentence with plain hard truth:

Luke 16:31: (NIV) *He said to him, if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.*

Interpretation and paraphrase: *Recovery to the favored position is not possible. They had Moses, they had the prophets, they had Jesus himself for over three years of a sterling ministry. Miracles, teachings, compassion, humble leadership, and yet they fought truth every step of the way. Not even one rising from the dead could alter the path they had chosen.*

Here the parable ends. The lesson is clear: you (the Pharisees as representatives of the Jewish nation) have sealed your fate, by your continual rejection of the teachings and miracles of your Messiah.

This lesson was accentuated by one more fact - subtle but dramatic...

Jesus, in this parable, used a proper name - Lazarus - why?

Approximately two weeks later Jesus raised him from the dead! What was their reaction to this, the most dramatic of all Jesus' miracles?

John 11:46-53: (NASB) ⁴⁶But some of them (who witnessed the event) went their way to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. ⁴⁷Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council and said, what do we? For this man doeth many miracles. ⁴⁸If we let him thus alone all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. ⁴⁹... Caiaphas said... ⁵⁰Consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should perish not. ⁵¹And this... he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. ⁵²And not for that nation only, but that he also should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. (a clear reference to the other five brothers) ⁵³Then, from that day forth they took council together for to put him to death.



Lastly...

Total destruction is the biblical end for the incorrigible:

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: (ASV) ⁷and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, ⁸rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: ⁹who shall suffer punishment, even eternal **destruction <3639>** from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

Romans 6:23: (KJV) For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Acts 3:23: (KJV) And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be **destroyed <1842>** from among the people.

Destroyed: Strong's #1842 exolothreuo, to destroy out of its place, destroy utterly, to extirpate (destroy completely)

For the “typical” person, does JUSTICE demand that an eternal suffering be the price of a finite life lived in sin? Is that God’s justice?

Here is God’s justice:

Acts 17:31: (NASB) because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising him from the dead.

Romans 5:18: (NASB) So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

Daniel 12:1-2: (NASB) ¹Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. ²Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.