



Christian Questions

Think about the Bible like you never have before

Hi Rick and Jonathan, I have recently discovered your podcast and have been really enjoying it so firstly wanted to thank both of you for your efforts! My question deals with the concept of hell being a location or an event. I have always wrestled with a God who loves can condemn people to eternal torture. I want to believe that burning forever for those who have not accepted Christ is not true but I cannot ignore the Luke 16 parable about Lazarus and the rich man. My question is...if hell is not real then what does the Luke 16 parable mean? - Shane

We recently did a second 3-part series called "Is the Hell of Christian Tradition Taught in the Bible?" Part III specifically addresses the Rich Man and Lazarus parable. Here are the links:

Episode 1021 (Part I)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1021-bible-hell-part-1/>

Episode 1024 (Part II)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1024-hell-taught-bible-part-ii/>

Episode 1027 (Part III)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1027-hell-part-iii/>

Briefly, this is the 5th in a series of 5 parables told by Jesus. A parable is a story used to explain a spiritual lesson or show the difference between right and wrong.

There is nothing stating the Rich Man is wicked or the Poor Man is good. Therefore, there is nothing said about the wicked going into eternal torment at death. Obviously, the story is symbolic, as interpreting the story literally creates absurdities. All wearing purple and fine linen who eat heartedly every day are placed in a furnace of fire. It would mean unless we are poverty-stricken beggars and full of sores and hanging out with dogs, we would never be able to arrive - not in heaven - but in Abraham's bosom (which makes no sense - how does everyone fit?) when we depart this life. (No one was able to go to heaven anyway before Jesus died to open the way.) Upon closer inspection, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a remarkable prophecy of the conditions relating to the Jews and the Gentiles and their role reversals of having God's favor. Jesus, warning the Pharisees, predicted they and the nation of Israel being "rich" with God's favor and looking down upon the Gentiles pictured by Lazarus, would soon have that favor removed as the Gentiles were given the opportunity to hear and

respond to the gospel message. Jesus was illustrating the suffering the nation of Israel would experience because of their hardened hearts.

God has a comprehensive plan that includes every man, woman and child who ever lived. The Bible describes it in two phases - a heavenly phase for footstep followers of Jesus and an earthly phase for the "everyone else." There are consequences for what we do, say and think in this life, but it is absolutely not eternal torture with no hope of learning, growing, forgiving or reconciliation. We are happy to provide related Scriptures on this and recommend additional podcasts that methodically walk through God's plan in the Bible.

We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up on our website for our weekly newsletter to receive the CQ Rewind Show Notes. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

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