

Lazarus and the Rich Man

By Herbert W. Armstrong

Do people burn forever in a Hell-fire? DO SAVED mothers up in heaven see the writhing and hear the shrieks of their own lost children down in hell?

STOP AND THINK! Would you really want to spend eternity in a heaven where you would be forced to gaze constantly upon your own loved ones who were lost, hearing them frantically screaming to you for help you would be unable to give, gazing constantly upon their indescribable agony, as they, on fire, are burning--burning to death-- yet never really burning up? Would you be happy?

Yet that is exactly the kind of heaven that is being pictured by most of the churches and the clergy! They rely more on Jesus account of Lazarus and the Rich Man than any other argument to support their teaching that the "saved" go instantly, at death, to heaven while the lost leave their bodies and are plunged into an ever-burning inferno of eternal torture.

What the Bible SAYS

Those who deny going to heaven or to hell at the instant of death have said the account of Lazarus and the rich man was merely a parable. But the "immortal soul" advocates insist this is not a parable! Jesus was stating facts that had happened, they argue.

So let's pretend this was not a parable. Let's take it literally. Jesus surely meant exactly what He said. But He did not say what is popularly believed!

Jesus said, "There was a certain rich man." Then there really was a certain rich man! Jesus said definitely that this particular rich man "was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." He really lived in luxury and splendor! (Luke 16:19)

Also, Jesus said, "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 mans table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." (Verses 20-21.)

Yes, there were many such beggars in Palestine when Jesus lived there.

What Happened?

Next Jesus described what happened to them.

"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." (Verse 22.) They both died.

That is exactly what Jesus said. Now read that again. Did Jesus say the beggar went to heaven?

He certainly did not! He said the beggar "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom."

Did the Beggar Go to Heaven?

Now what is a "bosom"? If you can find what a "bosom" is, and in this case Abraham's bosom, you will know where the beggar was taken.

Look in your dictionary. A "bosom" is the breast of a human being, with the arms as an enclosure; a loving embrace by the arms of one person about another; an intimate relationship.

So Lazarus was carried into an intimate relationship with Abraham.

Lazarus here is pictured as a Gentile, who received salvation. Do Gentiles, upon being converted and becoming Christ's, enter into any intimate relationship to Abraham? They certainly do! To the Gentile-born Galatians, the Scriptures written by Paul say definitely: "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed (children), and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. 3:29.)

Thru Christ they become the children of Abraham. Thru faith we all become "the children of Abraham." (Gal. 3:7.) That is an intimate relationship with Abraham. That is being taken into Abraham's bosom!

Now Abraham is an HEIR of God. God gave Abraham a PROMISE. Notice (Gal. 3:29), those who thru Christ become Abraham's children are heirs-- but heirs according to the promise God made to Abraham!

The PROMISE Was Not Heaven!

Now what did God promise Abraham? To what promise was this beggar now an heir? Did God promise Abraham and his children HEAVEN?

Let's not put any interpretation upon the sacred Word of God. No scripture is of any private interpretation it is interpreted by other Scriptures. It ought not to be interpreted by man.

To learn what God promised Abraham, we must turn back to Genesis 12.

"And Abram took Sarai his wife,...and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. ...And the Eternal appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed I give THIS LAND." (Gen. 12:5-7.)

The land of Canaan is called PALESTINE today. It is on this earth, not up in heaven. This beggar thru Christ became "Abraham's seed,"-- in the intimate relationship of one of Abraham's children. Then God included this beggar when He said, "Unto thy seed will I give THIS LAND ."

Again, later, God promised Abraham: "For all the LAND which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed FOREVER." (Gen. 13 :15.)

Again, still later: "In the same day the Eternal made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." (Gen. 15:18.) Here God wrote into the agreement, or the title to the property, the very boundary line of the property. Of course the expression "thy seed" refers in particular to Christ, but since this beggar was Christ's, he, also, was "Abraham's seed, and heir according to the promise."

The PROMISE was not heaven. The promise was the LAND of Palestine, on this earth. It was for ever, so the promise included eternal life, and eternal inheritance. (Heb. 9:15.) The PROMISE then, was ETERNAL LIFE ON THIS EARTH!

Only an Heir!

Now notice an important point. The beggar was carried by the angels into Abraham's BOSOM-- that is, by Bible explanation, he became one of Abraham's children, and therefore he became an HEIR to inherit the LAND ON THIS EARTH and ETERNAL LIFE. He was not yet a possessor--not yet an inheritor--merely an HEIR!

The next question is, when was this beggar to inherit to come into possession of ETERNAL LIFE in THE PROMISED LAND? Jesus, in telling about Lazarus and the rich man, did not cover that point. He only told what happened, not when. We must find the answer, not in human imagination or the false teaching of man, but IN THE BIBLE!

The son, who is heir to his father's property cannot come into possession of it before his father inherits it. This beggar, carried into the intimate relationship of a son of Abraham, could not inherit either eternal LIFE, or this LAND, prior to the time his father Abraham receives these promises.

When, then, did Abraham actually receive these promises? The startling answer of Scripture is--HE DIDN'T! -- he has not, even yet in our day, inherited these promises!

WHEN We Inherit the Promises

Scripture reveals the answer thru the inspired speech of the very first Christian martyr, Stephen, who was stoned to death for these very words.

It is in Acts 7: "And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our Father Abraham . . . and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into THE LAND which I will show thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans . . . into this land, wherein ye now dwell. (Palestine.) And He gave him none inheritance in it . . . yet He promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him." (Acts 7:1-5.)

Again this amazing fact is stated in the FAITH chapter Hebrews 11: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; . . . By faith he sojourned in the LAND of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: . . . These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb. 11:8-13.)

Abraham died, but has not to this day inherited the promises!

Abraham died, and was still DEAD, not living on earth or in heaven or anywhere, but was still DEAD, at the time of Christ's earthly ministry. We read in John 8:52, "Abraham is dead". At that time-- centuries after he died, Abraham WAS DEAD! He is still dead today. When, then, is he to inherit the promises?

At the time of the RESURRECTION of the just, of course! The Kingdom of God is the government to be set up IN PALESTINE to rule all nations after the Second Coming of Christ.

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first." (I Thes. 4:16.)

Human mortals, in Christ, living and dead, receive eternal life-- immortality-- the PROMISES God made to Abraham at Christ's Second Coming. That is when they shall put on immortality! "Flesh and blood (human mortals) cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead (including Abraham and the beggar) shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." (I Cor. 15:50-53.)

Again, notice when Abraham and all his children co-heirs are finally to inherit the promises-- the Kingdom of God, on this earth, in Palestine:

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him,"--notice, this is the Second Coming of Christ--and all the ANGELS come with Him "THEN shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: . . . THEN"--and not until then--"shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, INHERIT THE KINGDOM prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Mat. 25:31-34.)

Jesus said Abraham would receive the promises, including eternal life, thru the RESURRECTION: "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the

dead, but of the living." (Mat. 22:31-32.) Jesus did not say Abraham was then living. Yet the things God has promised are so certain they may be counted as if already accomplished. Abraham, as shown above by Scripture, was and still is DEAD, But Jesus spoke this about Abraham "as touching the RESURRECTION of the dead." Abraham will be RESURRECTED.

Jesus told the Pharisees they would see Abraham in the Kingdom (Luke 13:28), because Abraham, now DEAD, will then be RESURRECTED from the dead!

Carried by Angels

Now again let's get back to what Jesus said about Lazarus in Luke. Jesus said this beggar died. So, like Abraham, he is STILL DEAD !

But Jesus said that, after he died, "he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." We now know that WHERE he was carried was not up to heaven, but into the status of a son and heir of Abraham, to inherit THE LAND on this earth, and ETERNAL LIFE upon it, at the time his father Abraham comes into his inheritance--at the time of the Resurrection.

But notice, Lazarus is to be carried there by the angels!

When do the angels come down from heaven? In Matthew 25:31, quoted above, we saw that it was at the Second Coming of Christ-- at the time of the RESURRECTION!

Again, Scripture reveals: Christ shall "send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds"-- out of their graves in a RESURRECTION. (Mat. 24:31.) The TIME when the angels carry Lazarus and the saints into sharing the INHERITANCE with Abraham-- into Abraham's bosom-- is the time of the RESURRECTION! Lazarus is to be resurrected, and carried by the angels thru the air to meet Christ, at His return, and to be with Abraham, in the intimate relationship of father and son! Yes, HOW PLAIN! Lazarus will then enjoy the fond embrace of his father thru Christ, Abraham--both then resurrected and LIVING forevermore, in the promised LAND, then inherited!

There is no doubt as to how the Bible uses the word "bosom." Turn to Isaiah 40:11. Here God will care for His people as a shepherd does for his sheep, which He will carry "in His bosom." Jesus was "in the bosom" of the Father (John 1:18), enjoying the Father's blessings and close relationship. Moses carried the children of Israel in his bosom. To be in one's bosom is to have that one's love and protection, and share his blessings and inheritance. So it will be AT THE RESURRECTION!

The Fate of the Rich Man

Now let's see what happened to the rich man-- and when!

Jesus said of him: ". . . rich man also died, and was buried." (Luke 16:22.) Jesus did not say the rich man was taken immediately at that time to an eternally burning hell. He did not say the body was buried but that the rich man himself was plunged immediately into a burning hell. He said the rich man died--and the rich man, himself, was buried.

Now one would hardly say of one being put into the burning caldron luridly described as the imaginary hell that the act of throwing one into that burning region was a BURYING of the person, would he? One is not buried unless he is covered up.

People are buried in a grave, and covered with earth. But the imaginary hell that was invented by Dante Alighieri accepted by the Roman Catholic church and later by most Protestants is never pictured as a place of BURIAL! But this rich man died and was buried! He, himself, was buried - -not a "house" he had lived in. JESUS SAID so--read it in your Bible! The rich MAN was buried!

What Kind of Hell?

In the next verse, Jesus said, "And in hell he lifted up his eyes." (v. 23.)

So the rich man was in a place called hell, after all, wasn't he? And in this hell he "lifted up his eyes." His eyes had been closed, in death, and now there came a time when they opened--he "lifted up his eyes!"

What kind of hell is this?

Startling though it may be, the rich man was buried in the same kind of "hell" Jesus was buried in! Yes, Jesus died and was buried-- and in "hell!"

In the first inspired sermon preached by Peter on the day the New Testament Church started, Peter said: "He (David) seeing this be fore spake of the RESURRECTION of Christ, that His soul was not left IN HELL, neither his flesh did see corruption." (Acts 2:31.)

Jesus, too, died and was buried. And in "hell" He, too, lifted up His eyes-- WHEN HE WAS RESURRECTED!

Now let me explain that, and make it plain!

The New Testament was written in the Greek language. Your Bible is a translation in the English language. In the English language your Bible probably reads "And in hell he lifted up his eyes." However, in the original Greek in which the New Testament was written there are three different Greek words, each having a totally different meaning, but all three of which were translated into the "King James" and Catholic translations by the English word "hell."

One of the Greek words is "tartaros," which refers only to the present condition of darkness, or perversion, and of restraint, of the fallen angels, or demons. Another is "gehenna," a place at the bottom of a high ledge at the south end of Jerusalem, where garbage, refuse, and bodies of dead animals and the worst criminals were dumped over the ledge to be burned up. Down below, the fires were kept continually burning. They burned up, or consumed--totally destroyed the bodies and refuse dumped there. This is the word Jesus used when He spoke of being finally DESTROYED in "HELL FIRE."

But this rich man was not buried in that "hell." He was not in "gehenna." The third, and most commonly used Greek word was written here by Luke-- "hades." And "hades" means THE GRAVE--a place of BURIAL in the ground!

When the King James translation of the Bible was made, Englishmen spoke commonly of "putting their potatoes in hell for the winter." They buried them in the ground!

This is the "hell" Jesus was buried in--the "hell" His soul was not left in-- the grave, or tomb, from which He was RESURRECTED! And this, hades, was also the "hell" in which the rich man was BURIED!

WHEN Did He Open His Eyes?

Now once again, Jesus did not say when this rich man, "in hell," lifted up his eyes. Jesus pictured him as one of the wicked, or lost. We must look to other Scriptures to tell us when the unjust will lift up their eyes in their graves.

Daniel speaks of the resurrection of the just, and of the unjust: "And many of them that sleep (their eyes closed) in the dust of the earth (their graves-- buried--in "hades"), shall awake (lift up their eyes) some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan. 12:2.)

Jesus said: ". . . the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves (the original Greek word Jesus used is "hades") shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil (including the rich man), unto the RESURRECTION of judgment." (John 5:28-29.)

Here Jesus speaks of two different, separate resurrections. Quoted above are Scriptures showing that the "dead in Christ" are to be resurrected AT HIS SECOND COMING. In I Cor. 15:22-24, we read that ALL are to be resurrected but in an order of different resurrections--Christ Himself, 1900 years ago; afterward, in a different resurrection, "they that are Christ's at His coming," and then "cometh the end,"--indicating the resurrection of the unjust later.

In Rev. 20:4 we read of the resurrection of those in Christ at His coming. But Rev. 20:5 says: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." So the resurrection of the rich man and all the unjust or unsaved will take place after the millennium! It is pictured and described in Rev. 20:11-12.

So, while Jesus in speaking about the rich man and Lazarus did not say when the rich man will open his eyes and be resurrected out of his grave, other Scriptures do reveal that it will be after the millennium!

Are the Dead Conscious?

Notice, now, Lazarus, with Abraham and all the saints who are Abraham's children, are to be resurrected at the time of Christ's coming. They shall live thru the millennium. But the rest of the dead shall not live until the thousand years are past. The rich man, then, will not come back to life until a thousand years after Abraham, Lazarus, and all who are Christ's, have been made alive.

Will this rich man be conscious of the great lapse of time?

Your Bible says, if you will believe what it says, "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything . . . for the memory of them is forgotten" (Eccl. 9:5)-- that is, there is no longer any conscious memory. They are totally unconscious! Job speaks of a dead man and says: "His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them." (Job 14:21). Isaiah says our father Abraham knows nothing of us, today. (Isa. 63:16). David was inspired to write: "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." (Ps. 146:4).

Many times people have died, and by the drug adrenaline or other methods the heart has been started beating again. Always they say they were totally unconscious--no dreams--no knowledge-- just a total blank.

The rich man, then, at the time of his resurrection, after the millennium, will come to consciousness, open, or lift up, his eyes, knowing absolutely nothing of the hours, days, and years since he died. To him it will be the next fraction of a second from the time he died. It will SEEM to him as if he had gone immediately to this state or condition in which he finds himself rising up out of the grave.

What Is This FLAME?

But when he is resurrected, he sees a flame which torments him. What is this?

Now Jesus did, on other occasions, speak of perishing and being destroyed in "gehenna FIRE." What is this? It is described in Rev. 20:14-15, as a "lake of fire."

Scripture everywhere describes the final fate of the wicked as being burned up by fire. It is this "lake of fire," which is "the second death," from which there shall be no resurrection! The PUNISHMENT is death by fire! They remain forever DEAD! This death is for ALL ETERNITY-- ETERNAL PUNISHMENT--but is not eternal punishing!

Now, opening his eyes in his grave, this rich man SEES Abraham, and Lazarus in his "bosom"-- his embrace! Yes, Jesus told the Pharisees that they would SEE Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom and they themselves thrust out! This rich man sees them! He also sees this awful flame of fire -- this LAKE OF FIRE which is about to destroy him forever! He is terrified!

What happens when one is suddenly so horrified with fear? His mouth goes dry. His tongue sticks to his mouth and throat!

The rich man cries out in this mental agony: "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."

Now if the rich man were in the kind of "hell" most people seem to believe, his whole body would be on fire--you would think he would have called for at least a bucket of water to put out the fire, wouldn't you? Look at this!

How much water did he call for? He said to Abraham: ". . . send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water." Just a couple of drops that's all the water he requested! Doesn't that strike you as strange?

Why did he call for water? To put out the fires of all "hell"?--the kind of hell people would have you believe he was in? Ah, no! He only wanted a mere couple of drops of water on Lazarus finger--WHY?--"to COOL MY TONGUE!" That's what the rich man said! Open your own Bible again, and read it!

The flame, he said, was "tormenting" him. This word "tormented," used in verses 24 and 25 is translated from the original Greek word "odunasai." This is defined in Liddell & Scott's Greek-English Lexicon as "to cause pain, to pain, distress: From 'ODUNH' pain of body, but also, 2, of mind, grief, distress."

Why, of course! This rich man opens his eyes in his grave in a resurrection. He is resurrected MORTAL, just as he was before he died--not immortal like Lazarus! He sees this lake of fire. Now he knows the frightful, the AWFUL doom he is to be thrust into--to be burned up--destroyed! He is suffering mental anguish such as he never experienced in his life-time. HIS TONGUE IS DRY. He breaks out in cold sweat. He cries for a little water on the tip of Lazarus finger TO COOL HIS TONGUE! He is in a condition of WEEPING and GNASHING OF TEETH!

The Final Hell Fire

Now once again READ IN YOUR BIBLE! Read exactly what Jesus said, not what the "hell-fire" preachers have told you He said! Did Jesus say this rich man was going to suffer endlessly and forever--always burning-- being on fire--yet never burning up! DID HE? Of course not!

There is not one word here about how long his anguish is to last.

Jesus was saying these things to the Pharisees (verse 14). What did He want to make them understand, when He gave this account about Lazarus and the rich man? Jesus answers this question for us in Luke 13:27,28 where He said to these same Pharisees: "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." Yes, they are going to be in exactly the same position as this rich man! Jesus is using him as an illustration to show the Pharisees what is to befall them! They are to be THRUST OUT--into the LAKE OF FIRE which shall consume them, leaving them neither root nor branch, as the Scriptures say!

The wicked are going to be cast into the lake of fire! When they lift up their eyes in their resurrection, they shall KNOW that they are doomed, now to be cast into the lake of fire to be burned up!

This rich man cried out for help because of his mental and physical anguish-- KNOWING what was now to befall him! He knew he was GUILTY! When a man realizes he is guilty, and faces his just and terrible retribution, the very first part of the body to be affected is the tongue, which dries out-- seems to be on fire!

What is the Great Gulf?

But Abraham and Lazarus were far off, and no water was brought. The rich man had to suffer mentally for his sins. He had had his reward, in the material things he sought and craved, during his mortal life-time.

There is a great gulf fixed between this doomed sinner and all the glorified saints in God's Kingdom. What is that great GULF?

The gulf mentioned by Abraham which prevents the wicked from escaping death by hell-fire, and which also keeps the righteous from being burned, is immortality. Those who are immortal shall never die because they are born of God. (Rev. 20:6). But human beings who have not been begotten and born by the Spirit of God are still flesh, subject to corruption and death. They can be burned by fire.

Don't forget, this is a literal fire and the rich man is a human being composed of flesh and blood. Only the saved possess immortality as the gift of God (Rom. 2:7), but the wicked reap anguish and wrath that shall devour the adversary--fiery indignation (Heb. 10:27). What happens when a human body is being burned by a flame?

There is a period of torture during which the fire consumes the body before the person dies. Then what about this rich man? Jesus didn't say he was immortal, for if he were he would be spirit and flames do not burn spirit. Fire is a physical process. It is combustion of matter.

The rich man is a physical person as you and I.

Not Completed

And Jesus leaves us in this account, with the rich man hearing the words of Abraham in his mind or conscience and tormented by the flames that are billowing about his body.

A human body doesn't burn forever. It finally turns to ashes in a fire. Therefore we must go to other verses of the Bible to find out exactly what did happen after the short conversation recorded.

Matthew 13:30 speaks of the wicked being gathered into bundles to be burned. What happens to tares (weeds) when in fire? They burn up!

Again in Matthew 3:12, John warned the Pharisees that they would be burned up as chaff if they didn't repent. They are to be burned with unquenchable fire, too. A fire so hot that no amount of water put on it could put it out, because the flames would turn the water to steam.

When God punishes the wicked the fire will be unquenchable! But that doesn't say it won't burn itself out when it has nothing more to burn. An unquenchable fire can't be put out, but it can burn itself out when it has consumed everything.

Malachi 4:1,3 speaks of this fire that will burn the rich man: "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this." That is the end of the wicked! They shall perish and not be any more. "Into smoke shall they consume away." (Psalm 37:20).

The rich man then, being mortal flesh, is going to burn up after being tormented in the flame. He is going to die the second death. (Rev. 20:14). The wages of sin is death, not endless torment. (Rom. 6:23)

The Rich Man's Brothers

The rich man at last realized he was DOOMED! He now comprehended the gulf that existed between him and those who had been made immortal. Abraham had made clear the utter impossibility of the rich man crossing that gulf into immortality. He had had his chance during his life-time. He had passed it up for this

world's material riches and pleasures. There was no hope for him. He was now DOOMED to perish in this lake of fire.

His last thought flashed finally to his five brothers. He gave one last cry to Abraham, begging him to send Lazarus to his father's house to plead with his brothers, lest they come to his terrible fate. Abraham replied they had the writings of Moses and the prophets. But the rich man realized they would not hear these Scriptures.

"Nay, Father Abraham," he screamed, "but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent!" (verse 30).

The rich man knew Lazarus was RAISED FROM THE DEAD! This one statement proves that the whole experience of Lazarus and the rich man was given by Jesus to SHOW THE TRUTH OF THE RESURRECTION--not to teach any immediate going to "heaven" or "hell" at the instant of death. Abraham replied, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one ROSE from the dead." (verse 31).

THERE IT IS! In plain language! The experience of Lazarus and the rich man shows the RESURRECTION from the dead--not an instantaneous going to "heaven" or "hell." It is a resurrection from THE DEAD--not from life. It shows MORTALITY which dies, and is DEAD not immortality which never loses consciousness and lives forever in an eternal punishing of the imaginary "hell." Jesus was showing a RESURRECTION--or bringing back to life of one who was DEAD--of one who had no consciousness whatever of the lapse of centuries and millenniums since his death.

Far from illustrating immortality of the soul and the lurid eternally burning torture of Dante's fabled "hell," Jesus illustrates DEATH--total UNCONSCIOUSNESS thru the centuries,--RESURRECTION from death and restoration of consciousness,--and, finally, the SECOND DEATH in the lake of fire that shall totally destroy the wicked in which they PERISH and become ashes under the soles of the feet of the saved--the eternal punishment of DEATH--eternal DEATH--the SECOND death!

The Warning for YOU!

Finally, what is the REAL LESSON?

Jesus was preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God--the NEW Testament Gospel. He was showing salvation, the resurrection to eternal LIFE as the gift of God--inheritance of the Kingdom of God on this earth.

The Apostle Paul plainly tells us that the New Testament Church of God is BUILT upon the FOUNDATION of the apostles and the PROPHETS, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone. (Eph. 2:20). Jesus said, "I will build my Church." Paul reveals it was built on the foundation of the PROPHETS as well as the apostles!

Jesus here teaches YOU that if you refuse to hear Moses and the PROPHETS--and Moses was one of the prophets--you have no hope of salvation! The SCRIPTURES (Old Testament as well as New), according to II Tim. 3:15, are able to make us wise unto salvation! We are to take the WHOLE BIBLE, not the New Testament only.

Those who teach that the Commandments of God are done away teach a message of DOOM! Those who teach the pagan doctrine of the immortality of the soul going off to "heaven" at death, or eternal punishing--teach contrary to what Jesus SAID!

May YOU take heed, and hear ALL the Word of God!

