

## Correspondence Course Lesson 7

### Is There a Hell Fire?

Will you go to hell? Are some of your loved ones already in hell? There is no need to be alarmed. Hell is not what most people have imagined. The Bible reveals the reassuring truth about this most-misunderstood subject.

#### From the Philosophers

A few influential men since the time of Messiah left writings and teachings that became so universally believed that they became the accepted doctrine of the Christian world. One of the most important of these influential writers was Augustine (A.D. 354-430). Augustine reasoned that there should be a temporary cleansing of imperfect souls in purgatorial fire. He, like many other early Christian theologians, was influenced by "pre-Christian doctrine"; the doctrine of the ancient pagan philosophers and other early church fathers (see Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed., article "Purgatory")

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) wrote a tremendously popular poem, La Divina Commedia, in three parts; Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. "Of all poets of modern times," says a modern author, "Dante Alighieri was, perhaps, the greatest educator. He possibly had a greater influence on the course of civilization than any other one man since his day. . . . [He] wrote . . . an imaginative and lurid account of a dismal journey through a lurid hell; a long poem containing certain phrases which have caught the attention of the world. (Thomas N. Page, Dante and His Influence, pp. 3, 7). Dante is reported to have been so fascinated and enraptured by the ideas and philosophies of the philosophers Plato and Virgil that he believed they were divinely inspired.

But who were Plato and Virgil? Says the Encyclopedia Americana: "Virgil, pagan Roman poet, 70-19 B.C. belonged to the national school of pagan Roman thought, influenced by the Greek writers. Christians of the Middle Ages, including Dante, believed he had received some measure of divine inspiration."

Plato, a Greek philosopher, born in Athens, 42 ~ B.C., was a student of the renowned Socrates, Plato's famous literary work Phaedo taught the immortality of the soul - the foundation for other writings on the doctrine of an eternal hell when wicked souls are supposedly punished forever. So the world's concept of hell is admittedly a product of human thinking and speculation! Men have puzzled over the eventual fate of the wicked.

But what does the Bible say about hell and what punishment did Yahshua warn would ultimately befall those who refuse to quit sinning?

***Mark 9:43 And if your hand offend you, cut it off. For it is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go away into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire,***

**COMMENT:** What did Yahshua mean by this Aramaic idiom? He obviously did not mean we should literally cut off parts of our bodies, but rather stop using them to commit sin. "Hell" is an English word. When Mark recorded Yahshua's words, he wrote them in the Aramaic language. The word translated "hell," which Mark was inspired to write down, is Gehenna. Since in this verse Yahshua says the sinners "go into hell, into the fire," it follows that those who go to Gehenna will receive punishment by fire. Keep in mind, then, that Yahshua associated the Aramaic word Gehenna with fire.

What did Yahshua say in **Mark 9:45** to emphasize what he said in **verse 43**?

***Mark 9:45 And if your foot causes you to offend, cut it off, for it is profitable for you to enter into life lame, than having two feet to be thrown into Hell, into the unquenchable fire,***

**COMMENT:** Mark wrote down the same Aramaic word Gehenna here in verse 45 that he used in verse 43. The translators of the Authorized or King James Version of the Bible of A.D. 1611 selected the English word "hell" to translate this word Gehenna. We will learn more about the real meaning of this word later.

## English Word "Hell" Misapplied

Let's read what A Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings, says about the use of the word "hell" in the Old and New Testaments. Keep in mind as you read this that the Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew language, and that the New Testament was originally written in the Aramaic language. Hastings says: "In our Authorized Version the word 'hell' is unfortunately used as the rendering of three distinct words with different ideas [or meanings]. It represents (1) the "sheol" of the Hebrew Old Testament, and the "hades" of the New Testament. It is now an entirely misleading rendering, especially in the New Testament passages. The English revisers, therefore, have substituted 'Hades' [going back to the original Greek word] for "hell" in the New Testament. In the American Revision the word "hell" is entirely discarded in this connection. No wonder millions have been confused about this subject.

### What do these words really mean?

The Aramaic and Hebrew word sheol and the New Testament Greek word hades mean the same thing; simply *the grave*. These words have been correctly translated as "grave" in many places in the Bible. However, these words have also been translated "hell." "Hell" is an old English word. More than 350 years ago, when the King James Version was translated, the people of England commonly talked of "putting their potatoes in hell for the winter"; a good way of preserving potatoes; for the word then meant merely a hole in the ground that was covered up-the dirt; a dark and silent place; a grave. But misconceptions caused people to misapply the old English word "hell" to the lurid imaginations of Dante.

The second word for hell is tartaros, and comes from the Aramaic takhtaya, and occurs as a verb form in the New Testament. It is found only in *2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2:4*, where it has been translated into the English expression "cast down to hell." Tartaros does not refer to humans, but to the restrained condition of fallen angels (or demons). Its meaning, translated into English, is "darkness of the material universe," "dark abyss" or "prison."

But what about Gehenna? This Greek word is derived from the name of the narrow, rocky Valley of Hinnom, which lies just outside Jerusalem. It was the place where refuse was burned up. Trash, filth, and the dead bodies of animals and despised criminals were thrown into the fires of Gehenna, or the Valley of Hinnom. Ordinarily, everything thrown into this valley was destroyed by fire; completely burned up. Therefore, Messiah used Gehenna to picture the fate of unrepentant sinners.

### The Different "Hells"

In many of the passages of the New Testament where we see the word "hell," the Greek word is not Gehenna. Often it is hades; which does not refer to fire at all, but to a grave; a hole in the ground or dirt. Yet the translators have confused and obscured the two entirely different meanings of these words by indiscriminately rendering them both by the same English word "hell." Let's study the proof.

What did Yahshua say about "hell" in *Luke 12:5*?

***Luke 12:5 But I will warn you whom you should fear; fear the One who after the killing has authority to cast into Gehenna; yea, I say to you, Fear that One!***

**COMMENT:** If you were to look up the Greek word that is here translated into the English word "hell," you would find it is Gehenna. Gehenna, remember, is the place where dead bodies were thrown and destroyed by fire.

How is the same English word "hell" used in *Acts 2:31*?

***Acts 2:31 foreseeing, he spoke about the resurrection of the Messiah, "that His soul was not left in sheol, nor did His corpse see corruption***

**COMMENT:** The Greek word that is translated into the English word "hell" in this verse is hades. The Aramaic counterpart is Sheyul. Sheyul and Hades means the grave, as its usage in this verse clearly shows. We can plainly see that the English word "hell" can have different meanings. So when we come to the word "hell" in the New Testament (except for *2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 2:4*), we must keep in mind these two vastly different meanings and carefully determine by the context

whether it refers to destruction by fire, or the grave where the dead lie buried.

Whenever you're in doubt about the intended meaning of the word "hell" in the New Testament, look it up in an exhaustive concordance, such as Strong's or Young's, to see which word it was translated from, and hence its true meaning.

### **Where to After Death?**

According to the Bible, when a person dies and is buried in his grave, he knows absolutely nothing (*Ecclesiastes 9:5*). He merely lies quietly and silently there as in a "sleep," totally oblivious to everything. Let's briefly examine several scriptures that illustrate this important understanding.

What one thing befalls both men and beasts?

***Ecc 3:19 For that which happens to the sons of men, and that which happens to beasts, even one event is to them. As this one dies, so that one dies; yea, one breath is to all;***

Do they all go to one place; the same place, when they die?

***Ecc 3:20 All go to one place; all are of the dust, and all return to the dust.*** (Also *Genesis 3:19*.)

Is there any remembrance of Elohim in death?

***Psa 6:5 For there is no memory of You in death; who shall give thanks to You in Sheol?***

**COMMENT:** Death is the opposite of life. Death is the cessation of all activity; the end of life. What place does Yahweh say man goes to when he dies?

***Ecc 9:10 All that your hand finds to do, do it with your strength. For there is no work, or planning, or knowledge, or wisdom, in Sheol, there where you go.***

When a believer dies he does not go to heaven but is sleeping in his grave unconscious waiting the resurrection of the just at the coming back to earth of Yahshua Messiah.

***1st Cor 15:20 But now Messiah has been raised from the dead; He became the first-fruit of those having fallen asleep.***

***1st Cor 15:22 for as in Adam all die, so also in Messiah all will be made alive.***

***1st Cor 15:23 But each in his own order: Messiah, the first-fruit; afterward those of Messiah at His coming.***

You may have heard that some ministers preach that unbelievers go directly to hell fire when they die. If there is a place of eternal torment, this teaching would mean they are condemned to a fiery inferno before they are formally judged and sentenced. Let's notice when and how the dead will be judged by Yahweh.

***John 5:28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming in which all those in the tombs will hear His voice.***

***John 5:29 And they will come out, the ones having done good into a resurrection of life; and the ones having practiced evil into a resurrection of judgment.***

***2Co 5:10 For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, so that each one may receive the things done through the body, according to what he did, whether good or bad.***

**COMMENT:** Here is further proof that the unsaved dead are not being tormented in a fiery hell. They are now dead. But there is coming a time ("the hour is coming," said Yahshua) when they will be resurrected for judgment.

Does the first sentence of *Revelation 20:5* and verses *11-12* also prove there is to be a future resurrection to

judgment? (Note that the first sentence in verse 5 is a parenthetical statement inserted within *verses 4-6*, which describe the first resurrection)

***Rev 20:11 And I saw a Great White Throne, and the One sitting on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled; and a place was not found for them.***

***Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, the small and the great, standing before YAHWEH. And books were opened. And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works.***

**COMMENT:** Some of the dead; the "dead in Messiah"; will be resurrected to eternal life in the first resurrection at Yahshua's second coming (*1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:16-17*). But the "*rest of the dead*" will not live again for a thousand years. They will then be resurrected to mortal life. These are the unsaved dead who will rise in the second resurrection to be "judged." The Great White Throne Judgment described in *Revelation 20:11-12* is the period when the vast majority of mankind (the dead, and most who are now alive) will be resurrected and judged according to the things they did while they lived. These scriptures prove that the judgment is coming at the White Throne Judgment and **HAS NOT** happened yet. If they were already burning in hell fire then they would have already been judged, which the Bible clearly states hasn't happened yet.

After the Great White Throne Judgment period when all those who ever lived will be judged by their works and those written in the Book of Life will enter Yahweh's Kingdom, the incorrigible wicked, who may have perished at sea or on land (*Revelation 20:13-15*, the Greek word for "hell" in *verse 13* is hades), They will then be formally judged by Yahweh and sentenced to eternal death in the Gehenna lake of fire. The Bible clearly shows that the dead are dead, and that the time when the unsaved dead will be judged is still in the future.

What is the ultimate penalty, the "wages," or reward, of sin? Is it eternal life in torment? Or is it eternal oblivion? What is the ultimate fate of incorrigible sinners? The Bible makes the truth very clear.

What is the "wages of sin"?

***Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death***

**COMMENT:** The wages of sin is death. Death is the opposite of life. The final wages the incorrigible will receive is the complete cessation of life.

What does Paul warn will be the judgment or sentence of those who, knowing Yahweh's commands and having tasted of his way of life, sin willfully? Will they live on in torment in fire; or will they be "devoured" by it? **Verse 27.**

***Heb 10:26 For if we are willfully sinning after receiving the full knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice concerning sins,***

***Heb 10:27 but he is ready for the fearful judgment and "zealous fire being about to consume the adversaries.***

***Heb 10:29 how much worse punishment do you think will be thought worthy to receive, the one trampling the Son of YAHWEH, and having counted the blood of the covenant as common in which he was sanctified, and having insulted the Spirit of Grace?***

***Heb 10:30 For we know Him who has said, "Vengeance belongs to Me; I will repay," says YAHWEH. And again, "YAHWEH will judge His people.***

What did Messiah say to the unrepentant scribes and Pharisees of His day? ***Matthew 23:33***

***Mat 23:33 Serpents! Offspring of vipers! How shall you escape the judgment of Gehenna?***

**COMMENT:** The word translated here as "hell" is Gehenna - meaning the Valley of Hinnom. Yahshua used the fire that burned up refuse in the Valley of Hinnom as a type of the final fate; complete destruction, of the wicked by fire. Those rebellious and stubborn religious leaders could well understand Yahshua's analogy. They knew they were being threatened with complete destruction in fire. What did Yahshua warn would happen to those who will not repent of their

sinful ways?

**Luke 13:3 No, I say to you, But if you do not repent, you will all likewise be destroyed.**

**COMMENT:** "Destroyed" means to cease existing. It does not mean to continue living. Life in eternal torment is not what Yahweh has decreed for incorrigible sinners. The punishment revealed in the Bible is death -cessation of life forever. Eternal life is something we were not born with. It is a gift of Elohim that He will bestow upon those who obey Him (**Romans 6:23**). Eternal life and death are contrasted throughout the Bible. The soul is not immortal, but the wages of those who continue a life style of sin is death.

**Eze 18:4 Behold, they are all My souls. As the soul of the father, also the soul of the son, they are Mine. The soul that sins, it shall die.**

Did Yahshua show by His parable of the tares that there is to be a future harvest? Did He say the evil people-the "tares" - will afterward be burned? Same verse.

**Mat 13:30 Allow both to grow together until the harvest. And in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, First gather the tares, and bind them into bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my granary.**

**COMMENT:** In this parable Yahshua likened the earth to a "field" (**verse 24**), the obedient people to "wheat" (**verses 25, 29**), and the disobedient to "tares" (**verses 25, 29-30**).

Does **Malachi 4:1** also show that the ultimate fate of the wicked will be destruction by fire? Will this fire be so hot that it will burn up - consume the wicked? Same verse. What will be left of the wicked? **Verse 3**.

**Mal 4:1 For, behold, the day is coming, burning like a fire pot; and all the proud and every doer of wickedness shall be chaff. And the coming day will set them ablaze, says YAHWEH of Hosts, which will not leave root or branches to them.**

**Mal 4:3 And you shall tread under the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day which I am preparing, says YAHWEH of Hosts**

**COMMENT:** The "hell fire" that the Bible speaks of will be thousands of degrees hotter than the imaginary hell fire of most preachers-which is only hot enough to torment. The biblical hell fire will totally consume the disobedient. Never will they exist again.

The Bible plainly shows that those who have been given "exceeding great and precious promises" (**2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:4**) and willfully disobey and refuse to repent will reap the wages of sin-death for all eternity (**Romans 6:23**). This scripture means what it says. The attempts of many theologians to explain away death and to interpret it as mere "separation from Elohim" cannot be reconciled with Scripture.

Death clearly does not mean eternal life in the horrifying torments of an eternal hell. The author of this deception is none other than the father of lies - Satan the devil (**John 8:44**).

**What Is the "Lake of Fire"?**

And now comes a most interesting revelation. Exactly what is the Gehenna fire that will consume the wicked? When and where will it occur?

Are all who stubbornly refuse to repent and who persist in breaking Yahweh's commandments ultimately to find themselves in a lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death? **Revelation 21:8**.

**Rev 21:8 But for the cowardly and unbelieving, and those having become sinful, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and to all liars, their part will**

***be in the Lake burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.***

**COMMENT:** We've already seen that the fate of the wicked is Gehenna fire. So Gehenna and the lake of fire are the same. Mortals naturally die once, because we just wear out (*Hebrews 9:27*). But if anyone dies the second death, that individual will have been judged by Yahweh to be guilty of persistent disobedience and incorrigible rebellion. The second death will be for all eternity. Notice it is the second death, not life in a hell fire.

After Yahweh's plan of salvation for mankind is complete, will the flames of the "lake of fire" purify the earth's surface, burning in one vast worldwide inferno? *2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:7,10*

***2Pe 3:7 But the heavens and the earth now, having been stored up by the same Word, are being kept for fire to a day of judgment and destruction of wicked men.***

***2Pe 3:10 But the day of YAHWEH will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with rushing sound, and the elements shall separate as they burn, and earth and the works in it will be burned up.***

Will all the things man has created be burned up, as well as the rest of those people who will not have received salvation and eternal life because of willful rebellion against Yahweh? Same verses; *Revelation 20:15*

***Rev 20:15 And if anyone was not found having been written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire.***

***1Co 3:11 For no one is able to lay any other foundation beside the One having been laid, who is Yahshua Messiah.***

***1Co 3:12 And if anyone builds on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw,***

***1Co 3:13 the work of each will be revealed; for the Day will make it known, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire will prove the work of each, what sort it is.***

***1Co 3:14 If the work of anyone which he built survives, he will receive his reward.***

**COMMENT:** Here is Yahweh's description of the final hell fire. It is yet in the future. It has not yet occurred. Nothing is said anywhere in the Bible about souls descending into the earth into hell fire, or of torture for all eternity. Rather, the Bible shows that all incorrigible human beings and their works will suffer destruction once for all eternity. Are the wicked to be reduced to ashes by the fire that will consume the earth's surface? Turn to *Malachi 4:3* once again.

Can ashes be tormented forever and ever? Of course not! The death the incorrigible wicked will have suffered will be an eternal, everlasting punishment, not an everlasting punishing. There is a big difference between punishment and punishing. "The wages of sin is death" (*Romans 6:23*), not eternal life in hell fire. Also *Ezekiel 18:4* states;

***Eze 18:4 Behold, they are all My souls. As the soul of the father, also the soul of the son, they are Mine. The soul that sins, it shall die.***

***Jud 1:6 And those cherubs not having kept their first place, but having deserted their dwelling-place, He has kept in everlasting chains under darkness for the great judgment day;***

***Jud 1:7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them, in like manner to these, committing fornication, and going away after strange flesh, laid down an example before-times, undergoing vengeance of everlasting fire.***

The punishment at Sodom and Gomorrah is final. You can see the results of that punishment today as the cities are still completely burned with only ash remaining. But the fire is finished, it has burned itself out after it had burned everything out that there was to burn.

Did John the Baptist ever speak of "unquenchable fire"? *Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17.*

***Mat 3:12 whose fan is in His hand, and He will cleanse His threshing-floor and will gather His wheat into the storehouse. But He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.***

***Luk 3:17 He who holds a winnowing fan in His hand and has cleansed His threshing floor, He will gather the wheat into His granaries, but the chaff He will burn in the fire that can not be put out.***

Did Yahshua say that hell fire will never be "quenched"? *Mark 9:43-48*. (Recall the word for "hell" in verses 43, 45 and 47 is Gehenna)

**COMMENT:** People have carelessly assumed the "fire that never shall be quenched" (*verse 43*) is a fire of torture that has been in existence for centuries, and will continue to exist for eternity. But we have proved that this idea is absolutely false. Notice the biblical truth about unquenchable hell fire.

Did Yahweh (more than 2,500 years ago) warn the inhabitants of Jerusalem that He would kindle a fire in Jerusalem's gates that would not be quenched, and what would that fire do to the city's palaces?

***Jer 17:27 But if you will not listen to Me to keep the Sabbath day holy, and to not carry a burden and enter at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in her gates. And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem; yea, it shall not be put out.***

**COMMENT:** This fire occurred a few years later, and it destroyed all the houses of Jerusalem (*Jeremiah 52:13*). Since Elohim said this fire "*shall not be quenched*" and since it is not burning today, it obviously went out by itself after devouring all combustible material.

What punishment befell the notorious cities of Sodom and Gomorrah? *Genesis 19:24*. Was it literal fire that destroyed human beings?

***Luke 17:29 but on the day Lot went out from Sodom, YAHWEH rained fire and brimstone from the heaven and destroyed all of them.***

***Judah 1:7 as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them, in like manner to these, committing fornication, and going away after strange flesh, laid down an example before- times, undergoing vengeance of everlasting fire.***

**COMMENT:** Is there still a fire burning in those cities that Yahweh destroyed long ago? Of course not! We visit Gomorrah each year on our pilgrim tour and you can clearly see the remain of the ashes from that fire from 4,000 years ago, and even retrieve sulfur balls but the fire clearly is not burning. The expression "eternal fire" in *Jude 1:7* means a fire whose results are permanent or everlasting-obviously not a fire that burns forever. Sodom and Gomorrah were utterly destroyed millennia ago - they are not burning today. The fires that burned these wicked cities simply died out after consuming all combustible material. These scriptures prove the "*fire that never shall be quenched*" will not torment people forever. The fires were never quenched or put out prematurely by anyone. The flames merely died out when they had nothing more to consume. Even so it will be with the final Gehenna fire that will consume the wicked. It will be unquenched - but it will finally burn itself out.

**"Worm That Dies Not"** A startling statement is found in *Mark 9:44, 46* and *48*. In these verses, Yahshua spoke of a worm that "dies not." Are these immortal worms?

Some people think Yahshua referred to people as worms, and that He was trying to say that these "people" never die but live on forever in agonizing torment. However, those who believe this fail to notice that what Yahshua spoke of was "*their worm*." So the wicked themselves are not the "worm." What is this mysterious "worm" that does not die? Notice what Yahshua really meant.

Yahshua clearly had reference, as the marginal notes of many Bibles show, to *Isaiah 66:24*, where a similar statement is made about "their worm", the worm of "carcasses. Now what is the "worm" of a decaying carcass?

***Isa 66:24 And they shall go out and see the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled***

***against Me; for their worm shall not die, nor shall their fire be put out; and they shall be an object of disgust to all flesh.***

If you have ever seen a putrefying carcass, the answer should be obvious. To put the matter beyond all doubt, we find that the lexicons define as grub or maggot both the Greek and the Hebrew words translated as "worm" in ***Mark 9:44*** and ***Isaiah 66:24***.

When a dead body occasionally lodged on one of the rocky ledges above the garbage fires of the Valley of Hinnom, it was soon infested by many worms or maggots, which hatched out of eggs laid by flies. It was simply these worms to which Yahshua referred when He said, "*their worm dies not.*" But Yahshua didn't mean that each individual worm continued to live forever. Actually, the larvae - maggots - would hatch from eggs, eat the flesh, continue in the larval form only a few days, then go through metamorphosis and finally emerge as flies. The worms didn't die-they became flies. Later, the flies died. So this idiom, simply means the whole process will be completed.

The misunderstanding of Yahshua's simple statement by some people should be an object lesson to always be careful to use wisdom and common sense in studying Elohim's Word. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of a sound mind (***2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1:7***). Yahshua used an Aramaic idiom to show they would be dead forever.

### **The Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man**

Yahshua's parable of Lazarus and the rich man (***Luke 16:19-31***) is perhaps one of the texts most frequently used by those who attempt to prove there is an eternal hell fire. What lesson did Yahshua intend to illustrate by this misunderstood parable? Let's carefully study this entire parable, comparing it with other crystal-clear scriptures.

First of all, when we look at the story, we must realize it is a parable. Meaning, it is a story to portray a message. Who then is Lazarus a portrait of? Lazarus is a corruption of the Hebrew name Eleazar. And was there an Eleazar that had a connection to Abraham?

***Gen 15:2 And Abram said, Adonai YAHWEH, what will You give to me? I am going childless and the son of the inheritance of my house is Eleazar of Damascus?***

**Comment:** Eleazar or in the Greek, Lazarus, was the gentile slave of Abraham, who he had thought would be the inheritor of his estate when he died, because up to that point he had no heir from his own seed. In this parable, it is showing that even though the promises to Abraham did indeed come through the promised seed of Isaac, that gentiles can still be grafted into the covenant of Abraham, through the true promised seed of Yahshua, Messiah.

***Gal 3:29 And if you are of Messiah, then you are seeds of Abraham, even heirs according to the promise.***

So, before even getting into the rest of the actual story, we need to realize that the meaning of the parable actually is not even about whether someone goes to heaven or a burning hell fire when they die, but it is about gentiles converts in Messiah being grafted into the covenant and promises of faithful Abraham. That is why Eleazar/ Lazarus is used as he example of a righteous gentile being grafted into the covenant as he was faithful to Abraham all his life.

Did Lazarus/Eleazar - a poor but righteous man - die? ***Luke 16:22***. Was he later carried by angels to "Abraham's bosom"? Same verse.

**COMMENT:** As mentioned, if we are Messiah's, we become heirs with Abraham to receive the promises Yahweh made to him (***Galatians 3:29***). Through faith we may all become the spiritual "children of Abraham" (***verse 7***). This is an intimate relationship - a close or bosom relationship, spiritually speaking - with Abraham. We are to be in close contact with him in sharing the promises. This is the sense in which righteous Lazarus was taken to "Abraham's bosom." When, then, will Abraham and Eleazar/ Lazarus actually receive the promises?

***Heb 11:39 And having obtained witness through the faith, these all did not obtain the promise, Heb 11:40 YAHWEH having foreseen something better concerning us, that they should not be perfected without us.***

The answer given in the Bible is that Abraham and the saints-his spiritual "seed" - will inherit the promises at the resurrection of the just, when Yahshua Messiah returns to earth. And what about the sinful rich man of Yahshua's parable? Did he also die? **Luke 16:22**. Do we next see him lifting up his eyes, indicating his having been resurrected, and calling to Abraham for a few drops of water to cool his tongue, being in mental torment? **Verses 23-24**

***Luk 16:22 And it happened, the poor one died and was carried away by the cherubs into the bosom of Abraham. And the rich one also died and was buried.***

***Luk 16:23 And being in torments in hades, lifting up his eyes, he sees Abraham afar off and Eleazar in his bosom.***

***Luk 16:24 And calling he said, Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Eleazar that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and moisten my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.***

**COMMENT:** The first thing we see here is that the rich man was buried in the dirt in his grave. He was not immediately sent to some burning hell fire. The word "hell" used here is translated from the Greek word hades, and the Aramaic word Sheyul, which both words we already know means the "grave." It is not from the word Gehenna, which represents the future lake of fire that will destroy the wicked forever. In verse 23, the rich man is pictured at the very moment he comes up out of his grave in a resurrection at the Great White Throne Judgment.

This phrase depicts Abraham and Eleazar having already inherited eternal life in Yahweh's kingdom (**Matthew 25:34**). They are pictured as having been immortal for more than 1,000 years before the wicked rich man is resurrected to be burned in the lake of fire (**Revelation 20:4-5, 13-15**). The parable gives no indication that the rich man will have been anything other than dead in his grave until his resurrection.

***Rev 20:11 And I saw a Great White Throne, and the One sitting on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled; and a place was not found for them.***

***Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, the small and the great, standing before YAHWEH. And books were opened. And another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works.***

At his resurrection, the rich man will see the flames of the lake of fire beginning to surround him. He knows these flames will destroy him forever, and he will burn and cease to exist.

***Rev 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead in it. And death and the grave gave up the dead in them. And they were each judged according to their works.***

***Rev 20:14 And death and the grave were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death.***

***Rev 20:15 And if anyone was not found having been written in the Book of Life, he was thrown into the Lake of Fire.***

Being in great mental agony, he asks for just a little water to cool his tongue, which has become dry from his mental anguish. He does not ask for buckets or oceans of water to put the fire out. This clearly shows he is not burning in some eternal hell fire. Also, in the parable the water represents the Holy Spirit, and the rich man only asking for a drop of water, and not buckets, shows that as when he was alive, he still has not interest in receiving and being filled with the Spirit of Yahweh. This also shows that someone's character when they die will be the same when they are resurrected. One can't think he can continue to sin and not be an overcomer, and somehow when he is resurrected he would be completely different.

What answer is Abraham depicted as giving to the rich man? **Luke 16:25-26**

***Luk 16:25 But Abraham said, My Son, remember that you fully received your good things in your lifetime, and Eleazar likewise the bad things. But now he is comforted, and you are tormented.***

***Luk 16:26 And besides all these things, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those desiring to pass from here to you are not able, nor can they pass from there to us.***

**COMMENT:** The great "gulf" between the two will be the difference between mortality and immortality. Those who will have been made immortal shall never die because they will have inherited eternal life. Abraham and Eleazar/Lazarus are pictured on the immortal side of this gulf - the rich man on the mortal side, facing imminent eternal death by fire.

The rich man has no idea he had been sleeping in his grave for thousands of years, or that Abraham and Eleazar have been reigning with Yahshua for the 1,000 millennium, and the second death of the Lake of Fire, which the rich man is about to enter and burn to death has no bearing over them who are in the first resurrection.

***Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is the one having part in the first resurrection. The second death has no authority over these, but they will be priests of YAHWEH and of His Messiah, and will reign with Him a thousand years.***

The parable graphically illustrates the rich man representing our brother Judah (who also actually had 5 brothers), and wanted to have his relatives warned (*verses 27-28*), not realizing how much time has elapsed since he died, and that all other people would also have already had a chance to receive salvation.

The parable of Eleazar and the rich man does not prove eternal punishing by Yahweh in hell fire. Rather, Yahshua used this short illustration to picture to his listeners the reality of the resurrection from the dead from both Judah, and also from the nations. Yahshua was illustrating that if Judah rejected him and the nations were grafted into the covenant through Abraham that it is the belief in Him (Yahshua) for eternal life that gives entrance into the Kingdom not simply the physical bloodline of Judah through Abraham.

Why do so many people have a false concept of hell; because they do not understand Yahweh's master plan of salvation. The obedient will be given the free gift of eternal life. But the disobedient must be paid the "wages" they have earned (*Romans 6:23*). It is the final or second death-death in the lake of fire. These are the two alternatives Yahweh places before each of us. This truth should not inspire unreasoning terror as the idea of eternal punishing in hell fire has caused in so many people. Yahweh is a merciful Elohim, and would never want to see people burn and suffer for all eternity. He would also not want to have His children suffer for all eternity knowing that some of their relatives and love ones are suffering and burning in an everlasting hell fire. It is clear from scripture that those who reject Yahweh's free gift of eternal life through repentance and the shed blood of Yahshua Messiah will simply have their mortal bodies burn in the Lake of Fire and cease to exist.

On the other hand, the lake of fire should stand as a warning to all who know Yahweh's way of life and still stubbornly refuse to obey it. It should be clear from this parable that we have to change NOW! And if we don't. we will be the same person when resurrected. It would be naïve to think that one can go through life now without change, and bearing no fruit for the Kingdom of Yahweh, and that some miracle will happen at the resurrection and they would be a completely different person. If that was the case why even go through this 6,000 year of sin and horror now?

You have now proved for yourself that the idea of an ever-burning hell is clearly not grounded in the Bible, but was a manmade doctrine of the medieval era that is not supported by Scripture.

### **Points to Remember**

- 1) The Bible does not support a hell fire where people burn forever.
- 2) The dead are asleep waiting the resurrection.
- 3) It is appointed to all once to die and then the judgment where all will stand before the judgment seat of Messiah and the righteous will inherit eternal life and the sinners judged (*Ro 6:23*).
- 4) Those who do not repent and change from evil will burn in the Lake of Fire at the judgment and cease to exist.

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