

*"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).*

## The Rich Man and Lazarus - A Pagan Parable

2 Kings 4:38-41 HNV

(38) Elisha came again to Gilgal. There was a dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him; and he said to his servant, Set on the great pot, and boil stew for the sons of the prophets.

(39) One went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered of it wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of stew; for they didn't recognize them.

(40) So they poured out for the men to eat. It happened, as they were eating of the stew, that they cried out, and said, man of God, there is death in the pot. They could not eat of it.

(41) But he said, Then bring meal. He cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. There was no harm in the pot.

There is a story in the Scriptures that has a false ring to it, though I have not often heard its validity questioned. It has bothered me for many years, and in this year, 2008, I finally asked God: Is the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16) of You or not?

I know that the story being in the Bible does not necessarily mean it is of God (there are several insertions by men). So how do we know the answer unless God shows us?

Here is the story in question:

Luke 16:19-31 MKJV

(19) There was a certain rich man who was customarily clothed in purple and fine linen and making merry in luxury every day.

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

(22) And it happened that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich one also died and was buried.

(23) And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

(24) And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.

(25) But Abraham said, Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted and you are tormented.

(26) And besides all this, there is a great chasm fixed between you and us; so that they desiring to pass from here to you cannot, nor can they pass over to us from there.

(27) And he said, I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,

(28) for I have five brothers, so that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

(29) Abraham said to him, They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them.

(30) And he said, No, father Abraham, but if one should go to them from the dead, they would repent.

(31) And he said to him, If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded, even though one rose from the dead.

(Click [here](#) to go directly to our answer about this story.)

## All that Satan and Men Have Touched Has Been Corrupted

There are many who like to believe that the entire Bible is the Pure Word of God. They err if they refer to any translation from the original tongues, though they do not err if they refer to the original writings, for Jesus referred to and quoted Them as the Authoritative Word of God, as did His followers, thus demonstrating that we can trust Them. In translations, however, men have erred and tampered with the Bible. There are several undeniable proofs.

So what do we do? Shall we trash the Bible as do the Muslims, who say it is not trustworthy because tampered with, thus leading men to their diabolical invention, the Koran? God forbid. We seek the Lord, Who is faithful, and His spiritual revelation to know freedom from fiction and faith from folly.

We declare by Scripture, principle, and reason that the story of Lazarus and the rich man is an example of tares sown by the enemy in the field of the good grain of God, the Scriptures. There is "death in the pot" which must be addressed with the meal of truth.

The story is a chameleon, which takes on the colors of the setting to appear as part of it, but is never part of it in reality. It is deceptive. "It is the foliage!" they say. "No, wait; it moved! But maybe that was just the wind. Now it's changing colors again! Well, we know it's real because the colors match the background, don't they?"

So the deceived continue on in their gullibility, strengthened by their own righteousness, unable to discern tares from wheat, or poison from food. Thinking to demonstrate their spiritual discernment and cleverness, they are not willing to question "the Bible" or the work of the enemy who sows tares at night.

The acceptance of this chameleon in the Scriptures turns its defenders into chameleons, demonstrating their faithfulness to idolatry of the Bible, while they appear to be faithful to God and His Word. But they are taken by strong delusion, not having a love of the truth, which they have forsaken in order to promote their own interests and notions. They are under the sway of the Prince of Darkness, who comes as an angel of Light.

Are you among the deceived who don't believe the enemy can sow tares in God's grain? Think about it: Why should an enemy not be able to sow tares in a neighbor's good field, as the Scriptures Themselves teach?

Do not the Scriptures teach that the enemy had access to tempt and deceive Eve in the pristine garden, and to succeed?

Do the Scriptures not reveal to us that Satan was able to assume control of the earth? Has he not been known as the prince of this world? How did he manage that?

Was not Satan able to provoke David, a man after God's heart, and the father of the Messiah, to count Israel and bring disaster (1 Chronicles 21)?

Do the Scriptures not testify that a man is able to enter into the wedding feast without a garment (Matthew 22:11)?

Did not Jesus testify that one can come up another way as a thief and robber (John 10:1)?

Do not little foxes spoil the vines (Song 2:15), and dead flies the apothecary's ointment (Ecclesiastes 10:1)?

God created the earth and everything else, and when He was finished, He beheld it all and said it was good:

"And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day" (Genesis 1:31 MKJV).

Yet Satan corrupted the earth, God's work.

God created man in His own image. Satan corrupted man.

God called Abraham out and made a nation of him, called Israel. Satan corrupted Israel.

Was not Satan free to come and go in Heaven and mingle with the sons of God (Job 1, 2) and to do evil to a righteous man, whose hedge of protection God removed that this might happen?

God gave Solomon wisdom above all men and rulers, so that even royalty traveled from afar to hear it, discovering that the report of it (which is usually greater than the reality) was less than the reality (1 Kings 10). Satan corrupted Solomon.

God sent His Son to redeem the earth. Satan entered into Judas, one of the Lord's chosen twelve apostles, and had none less than the Son of God Himself betrayed and handed over to a hateful crowd that he incited to crucify Him.

## Can Scripture Translations Be Corrupted?

God gave us the Holy Scriptures.

If Satan was able to corrupt the earth, that good thing that God created, man, whom God made in His own image, Israel, God's chosen and elect nation, and Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, why should Satan not be given the opportunity and freedom to corrupt the Scriptures, in order that the sons of men would be tried in all things according to their need? Who can argue that there are not inaccurate translations or inaccuracies in all translations? Who can rightly argue that certain translations such as the [KJV are pure or perfect?](#)

Anything man has touched, he has spoiled. Adam and Eve were told by God not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, but the serpent prevailed and persuaded them to do so. God has commanded that man not add or take away from His Word. Man has corrupted the Scriptures of God. Not only has he corrupted Them in translation, he has also subtracted from and added to Them.

Did you know that whenever God commands not to do something, you can be sure man will do it? That is the very nature, purpose, and outcome of sin. It is the law of opposites, the balance of good and evil. When God gives the command, there will always be disobedience to His command. To prove my point, just ask yourself this question: "What has God ever told man not to do that he has not done?" Our unrighteousness commends His righteousness; it

must always happen - it is a law. It is a law that we must break the law. There is always good and evil, and we must have both.

God's warning against adding to the Scriptures tells us that what He is warning against will happen.

"For I testify together to everyone who hears the Words of the prophecy of this Book If anyone adds to these things, God will add on him the plagues that have been written in this Book" (Revelation 22:18).

Men can and have added to the Scriptures. Satan has been sent to sow tares in the field of good grain because he has been given the job of sifting mankind.

Will man believe the Scriptures for the sake of the Scriptures, which is Bibliolatry, or will he believe the Truth, regardless of whether he finds It in the Scriptures or anywhere else? Is he for the Truth, or is he merely a spiritual sycophant, a naive, religious fool who says, "It's in the Bible; therefore, I believe it," just to show himself righteous and holy, to receive praise of men?

When God said to Abraham, "I want you to offer up your only son Isaac as a burnt offering" (Genesis 22), did Abraham reply to God, "Not so, this can't be God, for it is written, 'Whosoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed'" (Genesis 9:6)? Did Abraham live by the letter of the Law, as do those who find their righteousness in the Law, or did he believe and obey God, no matter how contradictory the command might have seemed to his carnal mind? Abraham believed and obeyed, and it was accounted as righteousness to him.

God also tries the sons of men by His divine instrument, the Devil, to see if men will believe and keep God's commandments. He has permitted the Scriptures to be tampered with. There are many who will vehemently deny it, thinking to be God's faithful servants by opposing such a thought, while indignantly condemning those who wisely acknowledge the possibility and reality of falsehood in the Scriptures. Those who oppose the possibility and reality of tampered Scripture do so in the face of insurmountable evidence that the Scriptures have indeed been meddled with, as God warned. And they do it because they are not secure in the Living Christ, the Author of the original Scriptures.

## **Proof of the Perversion of Popular Scripture Translations**

Let us provide three examples of error from the most beloved and revered translation of nominal Protestant Christendom (the King James Version):

**One**, we have the word "Easter" in Acts 12:4, which is an anglicized version of "Ishtar" or "Ashtoreth," the pagan sex goddess of fertility. The original Greek word is "Pesach," the Passover, a solemn feast of God, and not the pagan festival of fertility, with prolific "Easter bunnies" and all, held in honor of a pagan deity.

**A second example:** Did you know that the original KJV included the Apocrypha, which are not inspired books of God for sacred canon purposes? Many Protestants will not argue that point.

**A third example:** Did you know that in the first edition of the King James Version, one of the Ten Commandments was worded, “Thou *shalt commit* adultery”?

There were thousands of admitted errors in the KJV, with some serious ones still included to this day.

Few will deny that most translations are in error one way or another. How is it, then, that they even bother trying to argue that the Scriptures cannot be tampered with, deliberately or accidentally by men and Satan? It is proven that they can be, and have been.

It may be asked: “If you are going to question any portion of the Holy Bible, how then can we trust any of It? How do we know It isn’t **all** wrong? You are taking us down a slippery slope with this thinking, seeding doubt in our minds and hearts, are you not?”

Answer: Our faith must be in God, the Author, Who was before the Bible, and not in the Bible (mark the reaction of Bibliolaters here!). With a real relationship with God, one will know all things by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 1 John 2:20,27). One will know the difference between good and evil. It will most likely take time, but it will be so. In believing God, He is faithful and will show us what is of Him and what is not. All revelation and understanding is in Him.

After all, we can know nothing of the Bible unless God reveals it to us. We cannot understand It on our own, and the Bible does not have the power to give us that understanding, if only we open and read It. We have far more than enough proof of that - just count the denominations and multitudinous contradictory interpretations and opinions of the same Scriptures. Does God contradict Himself? No, God must be our Source, not the Bible, nor anything or anybody else.

## **A Controversial “Parable”**

Now for the “parable” of Lazarus and the rich man. There has been much debate about this story, perhaps more than any other in the Bible, particularly of those in the New Testament as told by Jesus, otherwise called parables. There has been confusion as to whether this story is a parable or the report of an event that really happened, and debate over what it means. The controversy over whether it is a story or parable, unique to these verses, should give us cause to question. Why the doubt and debate? Let me share with you what I see as problems in this story.

**There is a name used.** This is strange and out of character. Search any other parable and you will find no name - you may find titles, occupations, familial, or social positions, but no name.

**Abraham speaks from the other side of the grave.** In the jokes of this world, we hear of “St. Peter” chatting it up with those who appear at “the pearly gates,” but never do we hear stories from the Lord or in Scripture about saints who have died and their words to new arrivals in the next realm. And if this is a parable rather than a story, never did the Lord teach parables wherein He put words in the mouths of real people.

**Men, after death, are identified in the other world.** There is no speech from the

Lord by way of story of the afterlife and description of hell that reveals mysteries and hidden knowledge. Why does that happen here, with specific persons and names?

Because of these elements, several have deduced that this was a real historical happening - the Lord was revealing what happened to these persons in the next world, even though He does this nowhere else. Jesus does mention things like men and women being as angels in the world to come, not marrying, but He does not speak of specific happenings with certain people in the next world.

Please understand: A true story is itself not responsible for misinterpretations; I realize that. My point is that this particular story seems to lend itself to the promotion of false notions (as I will go on further to show). While it can be argued that this story conceals truth, as all true parables do, it leads one by direct suggestions to the senses to believe error, which Scriptural parables do not. This is not good.

We are instructed to let everything be established by two or three witnesses. Yet no other witness was given to this mystery. Why **would** the Lord relate an experience from the other side? Jesus never expected one to believe a single witness, not even His own. He abided by the Law and did not accept anything but complete fulfillment of the Law:

When John protested against the Lord's request to immerse Him, Jesus replied, "This is the proper way to do everything that God requires of us" (Matthew 3:15 GW).

**Why is a righteous person represented as a beggar?** David wrote this:

"I have been young, and am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread" (Psalms 37:25 MKJV).

A Psalm also declares: "The Lord God is our sun and our strength: the Lord will give grace and glory: He will not keep back any good thing from those whose ways are upright" (Psalms 84:11 BBE).

Of course, we assume Lazarus is righteous, because he is afterward seated with Abraham and being rewarded in the Kingdom of Heaven. But according to the Lord's consistent use of words and descriptions that agree with His definitions and laws, Lazarus would not have been in such a position. What virtues and fruits of faith were attributed to him that he should be carried by angels to Heaven and given a "front row seat" to boot? Poverty? Begging? Abuse? Suffering? None of these things avail with God, but the author of this story seems to think so.

**What if the parable is depicting poverty of spirit, and not literal poverty, in which case the Beatitude would apply to Lazarus - "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God"?** (As for the rich man, he would have been as the Pharisees, rich in spirit, self sufficient, careless..., the fire being symbolic of spiritual torment due to selfishness.)

If this story or parable were depicting poverty of spirit, why is Lazarus, in his great need, never aided by the Lord in this life?

Those who are poor in spirit are blessed, not **will be**; Jesus said so:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit! For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matthew 5:3 MKJV).

Or, since poverty of spirit is desirable, why is it even depicted as a curse and affliction? What is the problem with being poor in spirit, if it makes one look to God? And if one looks to God, won't all of his needs be supplied? The person who is poor in himself will be rich in God.

In other words, the poor in spirit will inherit the Kingdom, as Jesus said.

Those who are bankrupt of any spiritual value and living in sin, however, are anything but poor in spirit. Those live in hell even now. So which **was** Lazarus? Living in sin as a heathen, ignored and abused, if even passively, by the rich man, or was he poor in spirit, as was Zacchaeus, who joyfully received the Lord, made restitution, and gave away his goods? If the latter, how come there is no indication of Lazarus' faith in any manner?

If the physical poverty in this parable is symbolic, is Lazarus' death also symbolic? Would this, then, be the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to the poor in spirit of inheriting the Kingdom of God, in this life? In which case, why can't Lazarus speak to those in hell among the living, since he is also alive, only now raised spiritually to Heaven (how he believed and overcame is still not indicated)?

Didn't the Lord, the Son of Man Who came down from Heaven (John 3:13), preach to those in the death, hell, and darkness of this world when He walked the earth in the days of His flesh?

"The people who sat in darkness saw a great Light; and Light has sprung up to those who sat in the region and shadow of death" (Matthew 4:16 MKJV).

If Lazarus' death is a spiritual one, representing the taking up of the cross (no indication this happened), then what is the rich man's death? He obviously didn't take up the cross; so was his death simply being cut off from God by unbelief? But wasn't he in unbelief before he was cut off and sent into torment, as part of the living dead to whom the Lord referred, “Let the dead bury the dead”? What does it mean by saying he died and was buried? It had to be a physical death.

If Lazarus' physical poverty and sufferings are symbolic, yet his physical death is real, then we have a ball of confusion on our hands, don't we? It is obviously very confounding trying to interpret this story any way you look at it, which is not a hallmark of the Lord's teachings, as amply pointed out. Indeed, it is a hallmark of the harlot, Mystery Babylon (“Confusion”), religious deception at its finest.

**Was the rich man wrong in not giving to Lazarus?** Some say that the rich man represents Israel (or Judah), Lazarus the Gentile nations, and the food and status of each represents the spiritual rather than the physical. While it is good that these interpreters would interpret the parable spiritually rather than take it literally, as many foolishly and ignorantly do, there are obvious problems with the interpretation. It was not Israel's place to give God's holy things to the Gentiles. Jesus said to a woman of Canaan (Gentile):

“It is not good to take the children's bread and to throw it to dogs” (Matthew 15:26 MKJV).

In this woman's case, she exercised a faith so great that Jesus commended her, a "dog" (Gentile), for it:

"And behold, a woman of Canaan coming out of these borders cried to Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is grievously vexed with a demon. But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and begged Him, saying, Send her away, for she cries after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, Lord, help me! But He answered and said, **It is not good to take the children's bread and to throw it to dogs.** And she said, True, O Lord; but even the little dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' tables. Then Jesus answered and said to her, **O woman, great is your faith! So be it to you even as you wish.** And her daughter was healed from that very hour" (Matthew 15:22-28 MKJV).

Jesus marveled at the faith of the centurion (another Gentile):

"And when Jesus had entered into Capernaum, a centurion (Gentile) came to Him, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my son lies at home paralyzed and grievously tormented. And Jesus says to him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my boy will be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, Go! And he goes; and to another, Come! And he comes; and to my servant, Do this! And he does it. When Jesus heard, He marvelled and said to those who followed, Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the sons of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion, Go. And **as you have believed, so let it be to you.** And his boy was healed in that hour" (Matthew 8:5-13 MKJV).

Had these two Gentiles not had the faith, they would not have received from the Lord. So where was Lazarus' faith? Why was he covered with sores and eating only crumbs?

And is it not by faith that we receive favor with God? Here is what the Scriptures have to say about this:

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6 MKJV).

Is it not faith that is accounted for righteousness? Does God forsake the righteous? Not if He is righteous; His Word is true and His promises sure; neither does He wait until the afterlife to comfort and provide for the faithful. God is ever faithful; righteous people need not ever beg, because God amply provides.

"Behold, the righteous shall be rewarded in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner" (Proverbs 11:31 MKJV).

It can be argued that the Roman centurion and the Canaanite woman received only crumbs of what was available, but with that reasoning, Jesus would have to be condemned with the

rich man, for He was the One Who gave them their crumbs, which they received by faith - exceptional faith, by Jesus' own confession. Lazarus received what his faith was worth (all receive what is coming to them - "According to your faith, so let it be done to you"), so the rich man is not to be necessarily faulted for not giving Lazarus any more.

Israel was not necessarily sinning because not trying to succor other nations with her spiritual riches. What God gave to Israel, God was not giving to the Gentiles until He first finished His program with the Jews.

Something else to consider, however, is that while Israel's mission at the time was not to convert the world, there was no prohibition against Gentiles joining themselves to Israel, according to the Law of Moses and the prophets:

"The stranger that dwells with you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself. For you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:34 MKJV)

"Also the sons of the stranger, who join themselves to the LORD to serve Him, and to love the Name of the LORD, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and takes hold of My covenant, even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isaiah 56:6-7 MKJV).

According to the Word of God, Lazarus, if a Gentile, would not have been rejected by God while living among the Jews and recognizing the God of Israel, whether the hierarchy of Jews recognized him or not. Or was Lazarus not joining himself to the LORD, but simply throwing himself at the mercy of a rich man who happened to be a Jew? But if that is the case, how do we find Lazarus taken up into Abraham's bosom?

If the rich man's wealth was spiritual, that would tell us he was doing good and well. If he was in rebellion and unbelief, the Lord would not have depicted him as rich, but would have given us the appropriate symbolism: "Because you say, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Revelation 3:17 MKJV). If this man were rich in the things of God, he would not have "gone to hell."

If instead, the rich man represented Israel, the keepers of the vineyard who were given the Kingdom but who were irresponsible in not yielding the due fruits (as another parable put it), how is it the new caretakers at the foundation of the Body of Christ were still Jews (the rich man) and not Gentiles (Lazarus)?

And have the Gentiles been "poor in spirit"? Look around you! See the mess Gentiles have made - wars, slaughter, pollution, a destruction of the earth and its inhabitants! See how they hate the Jews, as manifest in their general treatment of Israel, both before and after Christ.

Israel was ever hated by the world. Empire after empire came against and conquered it. See then, how, according to this interpretation of the story, Lazarus hated the rich man and

warred with him! Should Lazarus “go to heaven” or to “Abraham’s bosom” (whatever that is) as a reward for it? Should the outcome not be otherwise?

Indeed, does not history declare otherwise? While Israel still stands, Babylon’s identity as a glorious empire has long ago ceased, as well as the similar identities and statuses of the Medes and Persians, Greeks, Romans, and others since. See how God has judged them severely for their wickedness.

Where are the Jews now? Israel rises from the ashes! Where is Hitler? Where did Saddam Hussein go? Where will Ahmadinejad be? Are the Jews cursed more than the Gentiles? Are the Gentiles cursed more than the Jews? Is the rich man making a comeback? Or is Lazarus? When one thinks about it and asks a few relevant questions to follow through on these various interpretations, the story makes no sense at all.

Another simple question: If Lazarus represented “dogs,” that is, the Gentile nations, then how is it there were dogs licking his sores? Were there two kinds of dogs intended by the story teller? I don’t think so - certainly not by the Lord.

No matter how one may explain or spiritualize it, this “parable” gives undue and unwise opportunity to contradict Scriptural Kingdom truths, laws, and principles.

**What is this about angels carrying away Lazarus at his death?** Again, we find no such concept in Scripture. We find it in pagan and Catholic folklore, the Apocrypha, Muslim and Hindu mythology, and fairytales, but we find no trace of anything like it in Scripture. The closest we come is when we find Michael disputing with the Devil over Moses’ body (Jude 1:9). But that was a dead body, from which Moses had already departed (“And die in the mountain where you go up, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died in Mount Hor and was gathered to his people” - Deuteronomy 32:50 MKJV).

**Does wealth condemn a man?** If so, what was Abraham, who was rich in this world’s good, doing in peace, comforting Lazarus? Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Boaz, Job, David, Solomon, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus were all wealthy men, and they were honored by God. James did not condemn wealthy men, as some suppose. What he did was admonish them to be faithful to God, to use their wealth for righteousness’ sake, to be liberal and charitable, and not greedy and selfish (James 5).

So was the rich man condemned not because he was rich, but because he was not charitable? I am confident we have covered that ground already. Nevertheless, the story can lead the simple to believe and espouse vile doctrines, perhaps the least of them being that it is wrong or bad to be rich, or that one should give to beggars anything they may need, desire, or ask, which is not necessarily true.

We have learned that we are foolish to give to beggars willy-nilly, simply because they appear poor and ask. Why are they poor? Could it be because they do not want to work? Did not the apostle Paul say that if any man did not work, he should not eat? Paul did not have patience for sluggards. “Let them starve,” he said. Beggars can be beggars for many reasons; God knows the hearts, and we judge and give according to His revelation and leading, and not according to what appears. Appearances are deceptive, always.

**And what is this about a suggestion of *total finality* dealt by death, as though death were the Omega?** How is it that while both men died, the one condemned was buried, while the other was taken up by angels, like the fictional Catholic account of Mary dying, her body not allowed to see corruption, but taken up by angels into Heaven, none of which is true? Does this not smack of carnal men's diabolical creeds? Jude's words regarding the devil disputing with the archangel Michael over Moses' body help to expose this story as false, because we know that Michael prevailed and the Lord buried Moses in Moab (Deuteronomy 34:6).

**There is no mention of repentance or any hope for the future whatsoever.**

We have the rich man in an inescapable torment, an impassable gulf from either side, and no words of comfort or hope from Abraham. All appearances are that it is a done deal with no hope of change. But is this the will of God? Does He condemn indefinitely? Is the rich man doomed forever, as we know the word "forever"? The answer is that no man is condemned to eternal torment forever and ever.

**How is it that Abraham contradicts the Word of God?** The story has Abraham saying the rich man's relatives have Moses and the prophets to hear and believe, and if they don't, they also will not believe one who is raised from the dead. But the Word of God says, "...to this day, at the reading of the Law of Moses, a veil is over their heart. **But when it is turned to the Lord, the veil will be taken away**" (2 Corinthians 3:15-16 BBE).

Is Abraham ignorant of the fact that men could not believe the Scriptures unless they believed the One about Whom the Scriptures testify, Who was raised from the dead, Jesus Christ? Jesus said of Abraham that he saw His Day and was glad. Abraham knows the Messiah is the Answer for all men, and that without Him, the Scriptures are a closed Book. How can anyone hear what God is saying in the Scriptures when there is a veil over their hearts and they are deaf?

Expecting people to be spiritually nourished from reading the Bible without the faith of Christ is like expecting a man to eat food from a can without a can opener. Abraham, as with all saints, would not speak this way, but would speak of the Way Himself, Jesus Christ.

Contrary to the words this story is putting in Abraham's mouth, God has not left unbelieving men dependent on their own wits and the Bible. God has sent men who are raised from the dead to preach the gospel of Christ to those who are dead, with life-giving power and results. Here are the words of one such man:

Romans 10:11-17

(11) For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him shall not be put to shame."

(12) For there is no difference between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord of all is rich to all who call upon Him.

(13) For "whosoever shall call upon the Name of the LORD shall be saved."

(14) **How then shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear apart from a preacher?**

(15) And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, of those preaching the gospel of good things!"

(16) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

(17) **So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God [preached by those He sends].**

There is power in the testimony of the resurrected Lord in His saints, but this story denies it. Didn't the One Who was raised from the dead, Jesus Christ, appear to Paul? Didn't Paul have his heart turned, believing for the first time? Previously he had been reading Moses, but did not believe him, according to the Lord's words to the Jews:

John 5:45-47 MKJV

(45) Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you, Moses, **in whom you trust.**

(46) For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me.

(47) But if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe My Words?

If Paul had believed Moses, he would not have been consenting to Stephen's death. He would not have continued to persecute the Lord in His saints, until the Lord intervened to stop him.

Doesn't the truth contradict the words of this story? Here we see a man, Paul, who does not believe Moses, is violently against the Lord, but whom the resurrected Lord turns after He appears to him, and after Paul had heard the testimony of those who met with the resurrected Lord. According to this parable or story, that was not supposed to happen.

Either Abraham, or the one putting words into Abraham's mouth, is in error, or the rest of the Bible is. The answer to this dilemma is obvious, and it is the reason for this writing.

Here is another point: Before Christ came to him, Paul was convinced that he did believe Moses: "Touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless" (Philippians 3:6). But what had been gain to Paul, he came to consider loss for Christ, after he came into the knowledge of God through the faith of Christ. So what good are the Scriptures to those without faith, who, though they believe Them as best they can, are still found to be at enmity with the Lord and Author of Them?

No, the testimony of Jesus Christ and His saints is not in agreement with these words attributed to Abraham. Jesus plainly said that searching the Scriptures without coming to Him is vain. As Paul was dead in the water without Christ, so are all others:

"You search the Scriptures, because you think that in Them you have eternal life; and These are They which testify about Me. But you are unwilling to come to Me, so that you may have life" (John 5:39-40 EMTV).

After Paul was raised from the dead, the Lord sent him to preach in the power of His resurrection. And thus the Word of the Lord was fulfilled:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live" (John 5:25 MKJV).

Some of those dead who came alive were like Paul before his conversion, having Moses, but not hearing him. Yet they believed after hearing the testimony of one raised from the dead:

"And it happened in Iconium, they both went together into the synagogue of the Jews, and spoke so as a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed" (Acts 14:1 MKJV).

"And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house. And hearing this, many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8 MKJV).

Yes, it is impossible for men in unbelief to believe, whether the Scriptures or the testimony of one raised from the dead, but the latter is the Seed of faith, being the Essential Life of Christ.

"And He said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God" (Luke 18:27 MKJV).

**This story is nothing less than a denial of the resurrection**, deceitfully so, because while it seems to imply the possibility of the resurrection (bodily or otherwise), it denies the power, essence, and application of the resurrection life of Jesus Christ in the lives of men. So the story is a denunciation of the preaching of the gospel to all men by those appointed by God, and particularly preaching to the Jews, whom it relegates to reading the Scriptures they can neither hear nor believe. That is diabolical. Can God not raise the dead bones of Israel, as prophesied by Ezekiel (chapter 37)? Read [The Key for Israel and the Jew](#).

**How is it that proponents of false doctrine find this story of all stories particularly useful?** Many have used this parable to directly support four particularly diabolical doctrines, all unBiblical and pagan, from orthodox nominal Christianity. They are:

**One**, eternal torment.

**Two**, literal fire in the afterlife.

**Three**, that Jesus came to take up the cause of the financially or physically poor, suggesting that we must follow His example. This is something, however, He did not do or advocate.

**Four**, that salvation possibly comes, not by faith, but by station in life, namely poverty and suffering, or by works. This is insidious Catholic heresy.

Two other false doctrines, as bad as the other four, are insinuated and supported by many as a result of this story. The first is the notion just alluded to, that the written Word is enough for people to believe and come to faith. The Word of God, however, says that the letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive (2 Corinthians 3:16). Unless you hear the Voice of the Lord and presently commune with Him Who was raised from the dead, you are still dead in your sins, only now self-righteously so, if you consider yourself justified because you "believe the Bible."

The other implied falsehood is "replacement theology," which argues that God has replaced physical Israel with the "church," simply meaning, for advocates of this delusional doctrine, "us." Some of those who see this story as a parable, with the rich man representing the Jews, see themselves as the Gentile "Lazarus," taking the Jew's place in Abraham's bosom.

But God has not cast off Israel forever, as Paul points out in Romans 11. Those from all nations who believe in the God of Israel are grafted into His people whom He foreknew, supported by the root. These newly converted recognize that God has temporarily blinded physical Israel, so that they, the Gentiles, might come in. But those among them who make a pretense of believing in Christ, the liars who would supplant God's Church with their own works in this world, find His plan of mercy and reconciliation for Israel inconvenient to their own ambitions. So they replace Israel, both the physical and the spiritual, by figuratively cloaking themselves in the mantle of God.

Others are innocently led by such spurious representations to see what is not said in the Scriptures, and to not believe what God has said and promised.

No story or any other segment in Scripture gives such support for any false doctrine, much less several, as does this one, even if it can be argued that one must not take the story literally or read those doctrines into it (which arguments, in principles of spiritual values and interpretation, are true).

**Abraham did not rebuke the rich man for calling him "Father."** Jesus said, "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in Heaven" (Matthew 23:9 KJV).

It could be argued that the rich man was a Jew, a descendant or son of Abraham and therefore not offending, because Jesus did not include blood relations in His admonition. It does not say, however, that the rich man was a Jew. This parable gives some subtle encouragement, albeit weak, for another false religious practice, contrary to Christ, that of calling some man "Father," as is established in the Catholic and other churches.

**There are some who freely admit that the story of the rich man and Lazarus is pagan,** yet consent that Jesus still used it as a lesson. Those who put forth this theory say that Jesus used it partly because it was familiar to the Jews, who received such from the Greeks and Egyptians. There are several points that will easily put to rest such speculations, showing them up as foolish:

**First,** Luke writes as though Jesus introduces it as an original story: "There was a certain rich man...." Otherwise, He might have said, "You have heard the story...."

**Second,** there was no need for Jesus to resort to pagan fables. Did He not have enough wisdom as God incarnate, the Source of all wisdom, that He should resort to the imaginations and concoctions of unbelievers?

**Third,** He would not use erroneous doctrine whether from pagans or believers, mixing clean

with unclean. Those who speculate that Jesus would have told just any borrowed story to drive home a point do not know Him.

**Fourth**, some of these speculators say He used these stories or parables that His hearers might understand more easily, which is not what the Bible says at all. On the contrary, He spoke in parables to hide truth from the hearers:

Matthew 13:10-13 MKJV

(10) And the disciples said to Him, Why do You speak to them in parables?

(11) He answered and said to them, Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but it is not given to them.

(12) For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. But whoever does not have, from him shall be taken away even that which he has.

(13) Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not; nor do they understand.

It is also said that Jesus used the Pharisees' fables to judge them out of their own mouths. Had He done so, however, He would have introduced the story differently, such as, "You have a story.." or again, "You have heard the story..."

**And what is the moral of the story?** We don't readily find one. There are those who speak of this parable as deliberately clustered with the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the 1 and 99 sheep, and the woman with the ten silver coins, purportedly speaking lessons to the covetous Jews. In each of the other parables, there is a lesson taught, whether within the parable or by explanation of it, but the story of Lazarus and the rich man leaves us with no more understanding than we had when we began. Instead, it leaves us guessing, unlike any other of the Lord's parables.

Is the lesson that we ought to help the poor? Who is the parable for? Is it for poor people? Is it for the rich? What good is that? Jesus said it was impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God (Matthew 19:23-26). So why a parable for them?

Worse still, with all the other parables, not only of the cluster, but of all those in the Gospels, there is hope offered by way of instruction or principle, but here there is none for the rich man, not now or later. It leaves one without hope or direction. Of course, one would say the implied lesson is to give to the poor, which is the right thing to do, granted the circumstantial conditions.

Does this "lesson" suit the interpretation that says Lazarus represents the Gentiles and the rich man the Jews? First of all, the Jews were not generally sent to the Gentiles, and second, Paul writes to the Romans saying that, at an appointed time, God purposed to cast off the Jews to bring the Gentiles in, which He did during the early days of Christianity. So what, then, is the purpose of the parable? Was it perhaps to simply prophesy that the spiritual grace would be removed from the Jews and given to the Gentiles? What were the Jews supposed to do with that? For that matter, what were the Gentiles supposed to do? Was anyone supposed to do anything?

None of the Lord's other parables predicted the future with such specifics, and, adding to that, in a way that is fraught with contradiction, as we have shown.

The words of the wise man regarding the harlot of false religion that authored this parable could not be more appropriately applied: "Lest you should meditate on the path of life, her tracks are movable; you cannot know them" (Proverbs 5:6 MKJV).

Many have reservations with this story, one way or another. There are those who believe that the last five verses were later added, while the rest was originally told by the Lord. I disagree. I say that the whole story is a concoction.

It appears that those who made up and inserted the Lazarus "parable" had a specific agenda and idea of what it was they wanted to convey, and they were not trying at all to depict something true about the Lord or His will.

In fact, their underlying message directly opposes all that the Lord preached about the Kingdom of God. Here we have a beggar with no apparent fruits of faith being ushered into Heaven, whereas the Lord spoke of striving to enter into His Kingdom. Jesus said that it was necessary to surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees, otherwise one could not enter. He said that we must forsake all that we have, take up the cross, and follow Him, enduring to the end. Unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood, He said, we have no part in Him.

There is no indication of any of these things with the Lazarus of this story. He is simply chosen of God on the implied merits of his physical poverty. This is a damnable lie, a bloodless gospel that teaches people not to put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, but in their poverty - physical or otherwise, or in nothing at all - let it suffice that one can suffer to Abraham's bosom without faith. Yet only through the blood of Christ is one forgiven and empowered to overcome, as the Lord said one must do by faith. There is no need of His blood or His faith, however, with this pernicious teaching. There is no apparent need of anything but to submit to being poor.

Believing this lie has been responsible for perpetuating great suffering in the world. It has been a boon to evil men, who have used this teaching to usurp power and authority over others in the Name of Jesus Christ. It warns the rich to submit to their power (or face the torments of hell), and encourages the poor to acknowledge their authority (and receive the rewards of Heaven). But only a heart set on truth, which pays the price in blood by faith in Christ through His blood, will break free from the tyranny of men to serve God and fellowship with Him presently in Heaven.

One last point: What is "Abraham's bosom" anyway? Some interpret it to be "heaven" and some say otherwise. Is there another witness in Scripture of such a place or state and what the expression represents? We don't know of one.

If we are wrong, we are wrong and will gladly allow anyone to correct us in this matter. As far as we are presently concerned, Jesus did not teach this "parable" or story; neither did Luke or any of Jesus' true and faithful servants. We see it as the concoction of men to promote their heinous doctrines and advance their own interests using the authority of the Bible.

As an invention of the carnal mind that is in darkness and enmity with God, the depiction of

Lazarus and the rich man promotes and lends itself to great confusion. We consider this story to be an evil and presumptuous machination of man using the Name of God and Scripture.

Victor Hafichuk  
Paul Cohen

### L. Ray Smith's Faulty Interpretation of the Rich Man and Lazarus

Has anyone heard or known of a Biblical parable, particularly in the Gospels, which has created even nearly as much controversy and confusion as has this one of Lazarus and the rich man? There is good reason for it. The parable is not of God, but of clever, mischievous men. Herein we present the interpretation of yet another writer, who is among millions or perhaps billions of people taken in by the allegation that it is true and, moreover, that Jesus Christ Himself authored it. We identify some of the contradictions L. Ray Smith presents in his interpretation and defense of the story and address them.

### Removing the Plagues of False Scripture

It is not an easy or light thing to question an established and famous (albeit highly controversial) portion of the revered Gospels. Nevertheless, if we believe it does not belong in the Bible, it is our responsibility before God to speak up. The matter should be addressed by those who know better, for all our sakes. It is written:

“For I testify together to everyone who hears the Words of the prophecy of this Book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add on him the plagues that have been written in this Book. And if anyone takes away from the Words of the Book of this prophecy, God will take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which have been written in this Book” (Revelation 22:18-19 MKJV).

We have no doubt that those who added the story of Lazarus and the rich man to the Scriptures have been plagued, as have their gullible followers, by confusion and by the diabolical doctrines supported or implied by this story. And as we take away this spurious portion from the Scriptures, it is our conviction that we will remove plagues both for ourselves and for those who believe us, and we will add, rather than subtract, our part in the Book of Life and the holy city.

It is difficult to remove something so powerfully rooted into Christian doctrine with its myriad of cancerous rootlets so thoroughly invading the legitimate body and organ tissues of sound doctrine.

God grant us the grace to be the naturopathic, holistic lethal enemy of spiritual cancer of every kind everywhere.

## [The Book of Luke Corrupted: A Deathbed Conversion Tale](#)

Why does the Gospel of Luke report a repentant thief on the cross with Jesus, when Matthew and Mark report both thieves railing on the Lord? The answer is simple: The Book of Luke has suffered the machinations of men who would subtly persuade their fellows to believe fables that deceive and enslave.

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