

Lazarus and the Rich man

This is a true account of a real history of two men. I say it is a real history because parables are hypothetical illustrations, and specific individuals are never named. However, here we have the names of both Lazarus and Abraham. Unlike 13 other clear cases in Luke's Gospel; our Lord does not call this a parable.

In verse 20, Jesus says "there was a certain beggar named Lazarus". As old Harry Ironside once said: "well was there or was there not" a beggar named Lazarus – "He definitely declared that there was". Abraham, Moses, the prophets and the patriarchs were real people, whereas New Testament parables never refer to specific Old Testament saints. Further, this story is narrated like a real history.

Moreover, parables use that which is commonly known to be true to illustrate moral lessons and are taken from everyday life – this does not. In addition, the dialogue between the rich man and Abraham just doesn't lend itself to parabolic format. Indeed, parables are usually given to illustrate a single point but many are contained herein – one being that it's too late to repent after death.

But now let's consider that it is a parable after all. Would that allow us to just explain away the solemn implications of the story and dismiss it with: "it's only a parable"? More to the point, would our Lord use "I am tormented by this flame", "thou are tormented", and "this place of torment" to teach and illustrate real truths within the story if these statements were non-truths? Even were it a parable, these examples would still have to be factual. Were this not so, how could our Lord declare of Judas that it were better had he not been born.

Of course our God is a God of love and compassion, but He *hates* the wicked. These are the lost who persist in rejecting His grace (see: Psa. 5:4-6, 10:3, 11:5; Lev. 26:30; Deu. 18:10-12, 25:16 etc.).

Either way, the story of the rich man and Lazarus teaches conscious, physical punishment beyond the first death. Finally, God doesn't send people to Hell. They send themselves by rejecting the loving pardon God made available through simple faith in Christ Jesus and His blood atonement for "the sins of the whole world" – five point Tulip Calvinism notwithstanding (1 John 1:7 and 2:2).