

# THE NATURE OF DEATH AND PUNISHMENT

## SECTION I. THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS (Luke 16:19-31)

Does the human spirit have conscious existence in physical death?

### INTRODUCTION:

The nature of death has always been a focal point of man's interest and concern whether Christian, atheist or infidel. The great skeptic, Robert Ingersoll, standing by the grave of his brother, cried out:

*“Life is a narrow vale between two cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights, we cry aloud and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death, hope sees a star, and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing.”*

Likewise, among those professing to follow the Bible there have been sharp disagreements. The orthodox view, held from Old Testament times is that the soul continues when the body dies and that after death there is a state of happiness for the righteous and torment for the wicked. This will be followed by a resurrection of the physical body at which the righteous will be awarded eternal joy and wicked eternal torment.

Opposed to this stands primarily churches related to the Advent movement of 1844 (Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, World Wide Church of God, etc.). They believe that at death the soul either entirely ceases to exist or at least has no conscious function. There is no place where the souls of the dead are in either pleasure or pain until the resurrection. The second death is total extinction of soul and body, generally with no future torment. Some even deny that the wicked will be raised. Others believe that Hell is a period of punishment after which the person is restored to God.

The historic description preferred by them for this doctrine is, “conditionalism.” This denotes that they believe in conditional immortality of the soul, which they believe is the focal point of the issue. They contend that “immortality of the soul” was borrowed from Greek mythology. Some even claim the early “Fathers” were conditionalists.<sup>1</sup>

To show the error of this teaching, I have chosen to begin with an examination of the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:1-8).

### A. THE STORY

#### 1. Introductory Setting

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<sup>1</sup> The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers, (two volumes) by LeRoy Edwin Froom, (Seventh-Day Adventist) 1966, Review And Herald Publishing Co.

In Luke 16:1-8, Jesus addressed his disciples with the story of the Unrighteous Steward, who was wise in his use of that with which he was entrusted. He then explained the lesson, teaching that we should use the wealth of this world to benefit others so that when it is gone we will be received into the “eternal tabernacles”. He warned that if we expect the “true riches,” we can not serve both God and money. (16:8-13)

The Pharisees, who were “lovers of money,” obviously felt the point of his words, and scoffed. Jesus then addressed them plainly concerning their self-justification, hypocrisy and failure to keep the Law. (14-18)

## 2. The Account

He followed this with the story of two men, one, a rich man, was intended to parallel their situation. He lived sumptuously every day and failed to listen to Moses and the prophets. The other was a beggar named Lazarus, who sat at the gate, hungry and receiving medical attention only from the dogs. In death their roles were reversed, with Lazarus carried by the angels to the bosom of Abraham and the rich man in torment. Thus justice would be accomplished.

The rich man saw Abraham afar off and called for Lazarus to be sent to ease his pain. Abraham reminded him that in his lifetime, he had his good things and Lazarus, evil. Now, Lazarus was “comforted” and the rich man was in “anguish”. Besides this, he is informed there is a great gulf between which cannot be crossed.

The rich man then pleads that Lazarus be sent to warn his five brethren who are still alive, that they might not come to this “place of torment.” Abraham tells him they have Moses and the prophets to whom they can listen. The rich man knows they will not and argues that they would listen if someone went to them “from the dead.” Abraham responds that if they will not hear Moses and the Prophets they would not listen to one who returned from the dead.

## B. OBSERVATIONS

Thus we have it, simple and crystal clear--so much so that neither Jesus (cf. Mtt. 13:18-23; 36-43) nor Luke offered any further explanation, as would have been if what was said was in any way unclear (Jn. 2:21; 7:39). The obvious lesson is that after death their position of pride over others and disobedience to the Law would be reversed. No matter what a man's rank, wealth or family relationships, he will not escape the consequences of his conduct. There, the righteous will be comforted and the wicked will suffer. For those who suffer now, there will be a better life with justice.

Many have attempted to dispute this but there is one overwhelming difficulty. **It is totally illogical that Jesus, who always used factual illustrations, would, with no**

**clarification, teach a pagan superstition that would mislead the overwhelming mass of honest readers!**

There is absolutely no reason or logic for it to be included other than that it is factually correct. If it is not, it is misleading in the extreme. Everything in the passage can be verified as factually correct from other scriptures and there is nothing in it that can be shown to be untrue.

**C. PROPOSITION: -To examine the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus in depth to show that this passage is well supported as representing the true nature of death, and to answer conditionalist objections.**

**I. CLAIMS THAT IT IS “JUST A PARABLE,” DO NOT DISPROVE SUFFERING OF THE WICKED IN DEATH.**

**A. IT IS NEVER CALLED A “PARABLE.”**

The nearest locations of the word, “parable” are in 15:3, where it refers to the lost sheep and, in 18:1, concerning the widow and the judge.

OBJECTION: “Jesus always spoke in parables (Mk.4:34; Mt.13:34).”

ANSWER: Not everything he said to them was a parable (see 16:9-18). Whether it is or not, the fact is that it is not called a parable.

In any case, the story appropriately applied to the Pharisees to whom Jesus was speaking. Luke says they, were “lovers of money” (16:14-17), and the story shows that after death their money would not help them.

**B. EVEN IF IT IS A PARABLE, THAT DOES NOT PRECLUDE IT FROM BEING TRUE.**

1. The Greek word, “parabolee,” is a combination of two words—“para,” meaning “beside,” and “balloo,” to “place” or “cast.” Thus, it refers to a story laid beside a lesson in order to illustrate it. An actual event so used would still be a parable.
2. True historical events were sometimes called parables. In Heb.9:7-9; 11:19, the services in the tabernacle and the actions of Abraham in preparing to sacrifice Isaac are called a “figure” (parabalee). Those parables were actual historical events.
3. The Septuagint also uses this word to describe actual events. Blessings pronounced upon Israel by Balaam were called, “parables” (Num.23:7, 18; 24:3, 15, 20, 21, 23). Balaam spoke of actual events, things that had taken place and things coming to pass.

OBJECTION: Jotham’s story of the bramble that made itself king, is in the Septuagint called a “parable.”

ANSWER: Fables and figures of speech were occasionally used as parables, but when this was done clarification was made in the context to show they were not literal. That is not the case in Luke 16. Furthermore, Jesus never used myths or fables in his parables.

OBJECTION: The very use of the word, “Hades” is taken from Greek mythology.

ANSWER: The nature of language is that the words in that language, nearest to the idea, are used to convey the ideas. “Hades” (Strong’s #86) was the place where the dead went after the body died. They commonly used this word in non-parable situations (Acts 2:27, 31; Mat. 11:23). The word is similarly used here. It would have been utterly misleading to use the word “Hades” to convey the idea of ceasing to exist—especially when it describes in detail a dead man in torment, concerned about his brothers who were still living.

4. An examination of the parables of Jesus shows that it was not his practice to use fables, much less, pagan superstition. Not one of Jesus’ parables can be shown to have been unhistorical. Indeed, every one of them could have been actual events.

OBJECTION: Jesus used figures of speech that were not real. He spoke of water of life, bread of life, that he was a door, of eating his blood, and water flowing out of people.

ANSWER:

Those were not called parables. They were common figures of speech.

The lesson is spiritual. However, the illustrations were based on fact. They were taken from real things (door, blood, water).

Water was real.

Bread was real.

The manna was real.

Shepherds often lay across the sheep fold entrance as the door to the sheep.

Eating blood was possible.

According to conditionalists the rich man and Lazarus could not have taken place at all.

OBJECTION: In Revelations, John speaks of a seven-headed dragon and a scarlet colored beast carrying a woman.

ANSWER:

Unlike the parables of Jesus, Revelation is in apocalyptic imagery. Revelation 17 makes this absolutely clear. Luke 16 does not say, “Lazarus means this” and “the rich man means that.” John was not speaking in parables.

5. Abraham, a real historical character, is named along with Lazarus. This tends to support the historical nature of the account.

To this, it is objected that Rabbinical literature has similar mythical accounts of Abraham and others speaking.

Answer: Those accounts were intended as factual events, but were false. Upon what basis may we equate the teachings of Jesus with those? Paul, in Tit. 1:14 warns against “*giving heed to Jewish fables.*”

Jesus would not have cited some Jewish fable in a way that would mislead the church throughout history. Had the account been a fable, either Jesus or Luke would have so indicated.

### **C. WHETHER OR NOT IT WAS AN ACTUAL HISTORICAL EVENT, THE PARTICULARS OF THE STORY ARE CONSISTENT WITH FACT.**

1. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (p.1143) says, “*In the more usual technical sense of the word, ‘parable’ ordinarily signifies an imaginary story, yet one that in its details could have actually transpired.... It differs again from the fable, in so far as the latter is a story that could not actually have occurred.*”

E. W. Fudge, in his book, *THE FIRE THAT CONSUMES*, tries to pass this off as “folklore” (p.204). However, if it were only a fable or myth, it would be better described by the Greek word, “*muthos*” (2Pe. 1:16; 2Tim. 4:4).

2. All of Jesus’ parables were factually based. There is no sound reason for supposing this is an exception.
  - a. Shoots on fig trees are real. (Lk.21:29-31)
  - b. New un-shrunken cloth was not used in an old garment. (Lk.5:36)
  - c. Fig trees are sometimes barren. (Lk.13:6-9. Cf. Mk. 11:13)
  - d. Sheep get lost. (Lk.15:3-7, cf. Mt.18:12-14)
  - e. Farmers sowed seed. (Mt.13:3, 18; Mk.2:10, 13; Lk.8:4, 9, 11)
3. The obvious nature of the lesson favors it being factual. The Pharisees were “lovers of money,” (Luke 16:14). They were hypocritical and they did not obey Moses and the prophets (16:14-18). In death their money would not provide the “true riches” (Luke 16:11). They would suffer without escape and could not even come back from the dead to warn their families.
4. It is nonsense that Jesus would have cited some pagan fable and neither He nor Luke would have made any attempt to indicate it’s true source, it’s nature, or even it’s point. God gave us the scriptures to thoroughly furnish us unto every good work. He meant for them to be understood.

History clearly demonstrates that readers who have not otherwise been primed against it normally view it as teaching that after death both the righteous and the wicked exist

and experience pleasure, or suffering, based on their behavior in life. God would never have used misleading statements.

OBJECTION: Parables were not intended to be understood. Jesus spoke in parables so the Pharisees might not understand (Matt. 13:10-13).

ANSWER: It was intended for his followers to understand (Matt.13:11). When they did not, he explained them (Matt.13:18, 37). Since he did not interpret the rich man and Lazarus it is obvious that Jesus considered it so clear that it needed no further explanation.

The claim that Jesus never spoke plainly and none of His parables could be understood by His enemies, is not correct (Matt.21:45).

5. The detail as to the conscious nature of death and the reality of subsequent reward and suffering is so emphatic that those who deny it in effect thereby make God to blame for perpetrating a monstrous deception. Indeed, the very fact **that annihilationists would not present such a picture of death**, and when faced with the passage, they must go to great lengths to explain it away, strongly indicates that they themselves sense that it manifests a compelling indication of a conscious state after the body dies.

God certainly could have used other language if he meant something else. In fact, if there is no punishment in death then the lesson of the passage is confused. If there is no consciousness of the soul, it would have been more understandable to speak of the consequences of sin after the resurrection.

If God did not clearly say what He meant then who can say it better? Who dares claim they know better what God meant? If death is annihilation, why would God use such a misleading description?

6. **No stronger or plainer language could be used to describe a state of suffering for the wicked in death.** Certainly, those who will not believe this would not believe if someone returned from the dead!

7. As we follow with an examination of the text, we will see that nothing in the story can be shown to violate fact. Indeed, it is further supported by other scriptures that demonstrate it's factual nature.

**D. EVEN IF THIS IS VIEWED AS FIGURATIVE, THE NATURE OF THE LESSON INDICATES A STATE OF MISERY FOR THE WICKED BEYOND DEATH.**

Figurative language must remain consistent in concept with the things portrayed and words must follow the rules of grammar and word usage. If death meant "annihilate" or "cease to exist," it is inconceivable that it would say, "*and the rich man ceased to exist and lifted up his eyes, being in torments.*" With such irreconcilable concepts words

become nonsense and communication becomes meaningless. Grim's Fairy Tales would make more sense!

Indeed, because of the limitations upon human experience, such descriptions of things beyond life portray things **greater** than themselves. For example, the tabernacle, which is called a "figure" (Heb.9:9. #3850 parable), was real and conveyed a limited picture of a greater and more perfect tabernacle (Heb.8:1-5; 9:11). Even in apocalyptic language, "streets of gold" and "gates of pearl" (Rev. 20) likely portrays a greater magnificence than the physical description.

In their struggle to break the strength of this, some have tried to minimize the rich man's guilt. They argue that wealth alone could not deserve such misery, and being poor could not be a basis for reward.

Of course not. He was speaking to the Pharisees who are specified as being "**lovers of money**" (Luke 16:14), who justified themselves in the sight of men but had wicked hearts (16:15), and did not listen to Moses and the prophets (16:16-17, 29, 31).

Also, it was a sin to turn away from helping the poor. Prov. 21:13 says, "*Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.*" Unlike Abraham, this rich man was not righteous.

Likewise, since going into the nature of the poor man's salvation would have been an unnecessary diversion from the purpose of the story, it is not considered. He was not saved because he was poor. Such objections are shallow and diversionary. They only confirm the bias behind them and are serve to confirm the bankruptcy of their case.

The lesson may be either of the following types or a mix of both:

1. A parable may be an actual example as presented in the story.
  - a. Luke 18:9-14. The Pharisee and the Publican.  
Justification was real.
  - b. Luke 12:16-21. The rich fool.  
He trusted his wealth but died without God, leaving all.  
Wealth and death were real
  - c. Mt. 15:15; Mk.7:17. Things that proceed from the man defile him.  
The "evil thoughts" etc. were literal.
  - d. Luke 4:23. "Physician, Heal thyself."  
"What you have done in Capernaum, do also in your own country."  
(The healing was real in both cases)

2. A parable may be different in fact but similar in nature.

If Luke 16 is viewed this way, the description of “eyes,” “tongue” and “flame” conveys corresponding concepts to those in the story. To do this, they must convey a similar concept. It cannot say, “I am in torment” and mean “I do not exist”!

- a. Mat. 13:24, 36. The “seeds” sown represent the teachings of God versus those of the devil.
- b. Mat. 13:3, 18; Mk 2:10, 13; Lk. 8:4, 9, 11. The different kinds of soil in which seed falls represents different kinds of hearts upon which the word comes.
- c. Luke 14:7-11. Sit in lower place rather than the higher.  
Everyone that exalts himself shall be humbled...  
The humbling of which he warns is before God.
- d. Mt.18:34, 35. The man who failed to have compassion was delivered to the tormentors. Jesus says, “so shall your heavenly Father do to you if you do not forgive every man his brother from the heart.” The story was on earth but the lesson was for heaven.
- e. Luke 18:1-8. The widow who cried for justice illustrated the need to be faithful in prayer.
- f. Luke 19:11-27. The parable of the pounds teaches faithfulness in waiting for the appearance of the kingdom.
- g. Mt. 21:28-32 (cf.v.33). The two sons represent the different reactions of the religious leaders and the sinners. One group professed to go but did not, while the others at first declined but afterwards went.
- h. Lk. 6:39. Blind leading the blind compares spiritual to literal blindness. (cf. Mt.15:14)

Thus, no matter whether the rich man and Lazarus are historical or symbolic, or the fire literal or figurative, it clearly indicates in death a terrible suffering for the wicked. To deny the obvious is to turn the Bible into a meaningless jumble of arbitrary nonsense.

## **II. AN EXAMINATION OF THE STORY FEATURES SHOW THAT THEY ARE CONSISTENT WITH IT’S FACTUAL NATURE.**

**A. 16:19,20. “*There was a certain rich man and a certain beggar named Lazarus*”**

**16:19. “*There WAS...*”** (Greek: “een” #5100)

Jesus said there “was.” Who dares say there was not? This word is used in many cases where there was. Indeed, every parable in which it is used may indicate that there really was such a case. Certainly the phrase is often used of real people, exactly as used here.

-**Luke 4:33.** “*There was a man which had a spirit of an unclean demon*”

-**Luke 13:11.** “*There was a woman which had a spirit*”

-**Matt. 12:10;** Mark 3:1; Luke 6:6. “*There was a man which had a withered hand.*”

**16:19.** “...*a CERTAIN...*” (Greek: “tis”)

-**Luke 14:2.** “*There was a **certain** man which had dropsy.*”

-**Luke 22:56.** “*a **certain** maid beheld Peter*”

-**John 4:46.** “*there was a **certain** nobleman*”

-**John 12:20.** “*There were **certain** Greeks.*”

**16:19.** “...*rich man...*”

All of the features of this man’s wealth are easily substantiated as factual.)

-**Mark 10:21-25.** The **rich** young ruler went away sorrowful. Jesus remarked about how difficult it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom.

-**John 3:17.** Those who have this world’s goods and shut up compassion [like the rich man in Luke 16] cannot have love for God.

-**Mat. 25:37-46.** Those who failed to care for the needy were sent away into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

**16:20.** “...*and there was a certain beggar...*”

Here again, everything said about this person (sores, hunger and dogs) can be shown as compatible with experiences of real people.

-**John 9:7, 8.** A blind man sat and **begged** at the pool of Siloam.

-**Mark 10:46;** Luke 18:35. Blind Bartimaeus sat **begging** near Jericho.

-**Acts 3:2.** A lame man **begged** at the Beautiful gate of the temple.

**16:20.** “...*named Lazarus...*”

Here we have something significantly different. It does not cite an anonymous individual representing a class but a specifically named person. Almost this identical phrase is used in reference to another Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha. The fact that Abraham, who is a real person himself, is also named, further supports the case for it being a historical fact.

-**John 11:1,2.** “*A certain man was sick, **named Lazarus***”

- Acts 9:10. “There was a certain disciple **named** Ananias”
- Acts 9:33. “A certain man **named** Aeneas ...was sick of the palsy.”
- Acts 9:36. “There was a certain disciple **named** Tabitha.”
- Acts 10:1. “A certain disciple was there **named** Timotheus”
- Acts 16:1. “A certain man **named** Justus”
- Luke 2:25. “There was a man in Jerusalem, whose **name** was Simeon.”
- John 3:1. “There was a man of the Pharisees, **named** Nicodemus.”

OBJECTION: Why was the rich man not named?

ANSWER:

1. Other real people so referred to are also left anonymous.
  - Luke 10:25. *And, behold, a **certain** lawyer stood up,*
  - Luke 11:27. *a **certain** woman of the company lifted up her voice*
  - Luke 14:2. *there was a **certain** man before him which had the dropsy.*
  - Luke 18:18. *a **certain** ruler asked him*
  - Luke 18: 35. *a **certain** blind man sat by the way side begging*
  - Luke 21:2. *he saw also a **certain** poor widow casting in thither two mites.*
  - Luke 22: 56. *But a **certain** maid beheld him as he sat by the fire,*
  - John 4: 46 *there was a **certain** nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.*
  - John 5:5. *a **certain** man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.*
2. The Lord may have avoided having the point of the parable lost in hostile response to charges of “personal aspersion on the dead,” or to avoid unnecessarily bringing pain to survivors.

B. 16:22-23. “...*the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom:*”

16:22. “...*died...*” Strong: “#599 ‘Apothneeskoo’ from #575 [‘away’ or ‘off’] and #2348 [‘thanoo’--’die’, ‘death’]”

-**Luke 16:22-24.** The Rich man, Lazarus, and Abraham (cf. Lk. 20:37, 38) are all said to be “dead,” yet clearly continue to exist.

I have never known anyone who, without being taught otherwise, did not see this as indicating what took place after death. God could not have said it plainer. To deny that this is their true state is to make God to be grossly misleading. How else could he possibly have said it more clearly to indicate continued pleasure and pain? Who dares to presume that they can say what God meant better than God?

If death is annihilation, it is totally incredible that Jesus, even in a parable, would say “*the rich man died...and in Hades he lifted up his eyes being in torment.*” Certainly, none of those who call themselves “conditionalists” would ever use such a story without clearly indicating it did not really happen. The annihilationist

concept of death is so radically contrary to the idea of torment that if they were correct it would be absurd even to use such imagery in relation to it.

**16:22.** “...*and was carried by the angels...*”

-**Heb. 1:13-14.** Angels are ministering spirits.

-**Jude 9.** When Moses died, the archangel, Michael, disputed with the devil over his body (cf. Deut. 34:5-6; Jude 1:9).

-**2 Corinthians 12:2.** *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one **caught up** to the third heaven. 4 How that he was **caught up** into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.*

**16:22.** “...*into Abraham’s bosom*”

Abraham was a real person and who died. In Jewish custom, seated on the floor, reclining on the bosom of someone was a common practice.

-**John 13:23.** John reclined in Jesus’ bosom.

-**John 1:18.** Jesus is now, “*in the bosom of the Father*”

C. “... *rich man also died, and was buried and in Hades he lifted up his eyes...and saw Abraham afar off*”

**16:23.** “...*and in hell (#86 Hades)...*”

Obviously, this is not the grave yet calls it a “place” (16:28). The picture of Hades both in Greek and inter-testament rabbinical literature is the unseen place where the souls of the dead exist apart from the body. In it there is a place of torment for the wicked called, “Tartarus” (2Pe. 2:4; cf. 1Pe.3:19; Jude 6).

Notice that the “grave” from which the other Lazarus came forth bodily was “mneemeion” [#3419], not “Hades” (John 11:38).

(For further examination, see section II on Hades.)

**16:23.** “...*he lifted up his eyes...and saw Abraham afar off*”

Annihilationists always try to escape the weight of this story by scoffing at the idea that the dead have “eyes.” However, man has a spirit (1Thes 5:23). “Spirits” are said to have eyes and to see. Spiritual eyes do not have to be physical. “*A spirit does not have flesh and bone*” -Lk.24:39

**Eph.1:18.** “...*having the eyes of your understanding enlightened*”

“God is a spirit” (Jn.4:24) yet is said to have “eyes.”

- 1Pe.3:12. “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous”
- Heb. 4:13. “All things are naked and laid open before His eyes.”
- Prov.15:3. “The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding...”

Angels are spirits. Heb.1:7. “He makes his angels spirits” -Ac.8:26, 29, 39. An angel who spoke to Philip was called a “spirit”.

- Matt. 18:10. Angels of children behold the face of God
- 1Tim. 3:16. “seen of angels”

Men can see while “in the spirit”

- Rev. 1:10. While John was “in the spirit” he “saw” the dead standing before God (Rev. 20:11,12).

Demons, who are also called, “spirits” can see. (Mark 3:11)

**16:24.** “...and he *cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me,...*”

Spirits, or souls, are said to speak. If this were not possible, the repeated picture of them doing so would be misleading.

**The holy spirit spoke:**

- Acts 13:2. “And the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul”
- Ac.10:19; 11:12. “The Spirit bade me go with them”

**Dead people were said to speak**

- 1Sam.28:3-19; 1Chron. 10:13, 14. “And Samuel said to Saul...” (28:15, 16)
- Rev. 6:9. “And I saw ...the souls of them that had been slain... and they cried with a great voice, saying...”
- Luke 9:29-31. Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration about his coming death. Note: Moses was dead and buried. (cf. Deut. 34:5-6; Jude 1:9).

OBJECTION: The transfiguration was only a “vision” (Mat. 17:5).

ANSWER: It is called a “vision” but Jesus, who was real, was discussing his coming death with Moses. It makes no sense that Jesus was discussing his death with someone who did not exist.

Real things were often seen in visions.

- Ac. 26:16, 19. Paul saw and heard Jesus in a “vision” (1Cor. 9:1; 15:8).
- Acts 9:12. Paul saw Ananias coming to him.

OBJECTION: These are figurative statements.

ANSWER: They could be literal. At least it is strange that God would use so much of this sort of language if He did not want us to think souls continue to exist.

**The devil and demons were spirits, yet they spoke.**

-Job 1:6, 7. Satan spoke with God. cf. (2Cor. 11:14)

-1Kings 22:21. A lying spirit came forth and spoke.

-Luke 4:1-6. The Devil spoke to Jesus.

-Matt. 8:28-32. Demons talked to Jesus about going into the pit.

-Luke 4:33-36. A spirit of an unclean demon in a man, spoke.

-Mat.12:43-45. An unclean spirit could speak while out of a man.

-Mark 3:11. Demons saw and cried out.

16:24. “...*dip the tip of his finger...*”

**God, who is a spirit with no physical body, has a “finger”.**

-Ex.31:18. The Ten Commandments were written by the finger of God. (Pretty substantial “finger”! cf. John 4:24; Luke 24:39)

-Luke 11:20. Jesus, “*by the finger of God cast out demons*”

16:24. “...*in water and cool my tongue*”

**God is said to have “lips” and a “tongue”**

-Is 30:27. “*The lips and tongue of the Lord*”

**Angels are said to have tongues**

-2Cor.13:1. “*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels*” (The word here refers to the language they speak but it comes from the idea of having a tongue to speak)

16:23. “...*being in TORMENTS*” [#931 basanois]

16:28. “*this place of TORMENT*” [#931 basanois]

#931 Basanois...*torment* [a noun]

-Mat. 4:24. “*taken with divers diseases and TORMENTS*”

#930 Basanistees...One who torments another. [a noun]

-Mat.18:34, 35. “*Delivered to TORMENTORS...so shall he do also to you*”

#928 Basanidzoo...*to torture* [verb]

-Mat. 8:29; Luke 8:28. (demons) “*TORMENT us before our time?*”

-Mat. 8:6. “...*sick of the palsy, grievously TORMENTED*”

-Rev. 14:9,11. “...*man...TORMENTED with fire and brimstone...*

*smoke of their TORMENT* [#929] *goeth up for ever and ever;*  
*and they have NO REST day and night...*”

Rev. 20:10-11. “*devil...TORMENTED day and night for ever and ever.*”

**16:24. “I am TORMENTED in this flame”**

**16:26. “*thou art TORMENTED*”**

#3600 “odunao”

Thayer: “to cause intense pain; pass. to be in anguish, be tormented”

**16:24. “*I am tormented in this FLAME*” #5395**

**-Acts 7:30, 31.** Moses saw bush BURNING.

(Note: Exodus 3:1-3. The bush was not consumed)

**-2Thes. 1:8, 9.** “*In FLAMING fire taking vengeance...who will punish with everlasting destruction [#3639 “olethros”] from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power”*

**-2Cor.5:5.** “*for the DESTRUCTION of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*” (NOTE: not annihilation of the flesh but merely its ruin in order to bring repentance.)

Here again, annihilationists become shrill in declaring how preposterous it is that the rich man could expect so little water to alleviate his suffering. That is because they have never been there. The issue is not that this man in his torment may have vainly hoped for the minutest diminishing of his suffering. The issue is whether Jesus is stating a factual situation. The fact is that annihilationists are in no position to contradict what he said. Their fundamental problem is that they insist on limiting God to what they have experienced, think, or like. They cannot accept God on His terms. If they do not like the picture of God being angry, or having a place of eternal torment for those who follow the devil and his angels, they simply rule it out and bend the scriptures to make it satisfy them. Faith accepts even that which it cannot understand and may not like.

A major objection is to the righteous being able to hear the cries of the wicked and to respond. Here again, the fundamental issue is that people limit God to their narrow human perceptions. Those who trust God know He will resolve the problem as He sees fit. When Abraham and Sarah tried to reason out how they could have a son when Sarah was barren, they ended in big trouble by devising their own solution. The world is still paying for that one. On the other hand, when told to sacrifice his son and he accepted without understanding, he was justified. That is what faith is all about.

**-Isaiah 55:8,9.** “*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*”

**-Rom. 11:33,34.** “*...how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor?*”

**-Deut. 29:29.** *“The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong unto us and our sons.”*

**-2Pe. 3:16.** *“wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”*

**16:28.** *“lest they also come to this place of torment”*

#5117 “topos” – “place”

**-John 4:20.** Jerusalem is called a “place”

(Many such scriptures showing the word referred to a specific location)

**-Ac.1:25.** Judas went to his “place”

OBJECTION: “Hades is a condition, not a place.”

ANSWER: God said it is a “place.” Even the condition of torment can not be without painful sensation.

**16:30, 31.** *“...if one went FROM THE DEAD”.*

This passage clearly indicates that this discussion takes place while the rich man was dead. It is not after resurrection of the body. The setting is before Jesus died as shown by the statement that they were to hear Moses and the Prophets. This indicates this is still under the Old Testament period (Mark 9:5-7; Heb. 9:15-17; Luke 16:16). The very fact that those who object have such difficulty deciding what this story means, among themselves, indicates the poverty of their case.

(Note: see more on death in Section II)