

## The Doctrine of Lazarus

### Introduction

1. There are two men called Lazarus in the Bible. The first Lazarus is the subject of a story told by Jesus.

1.1 This Lazarus was very poor, probably homeless, and definitely a beggar.

Luk 16:20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

1.2 He often stayed at the gate of a rich man in hopes of getting scraps from his table. Both men died, and Jesus tells of how Lazarus was taken to “Abraham’s side,” a place of comfort and rest, while the rich man went to “Hades,” a place of conscious torment.

Luk 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

Luk 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

1.3 Some Bible scholars believe that Jesus was telling a parable, that is, a fictional story not meant to be a literal account. However, Jesus uses actual names in the story, He does not interpret the story, and neither does He add a moral to the end. He lets the story stand for itself.

Luk 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

Luk 16:20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

Luk 16:21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

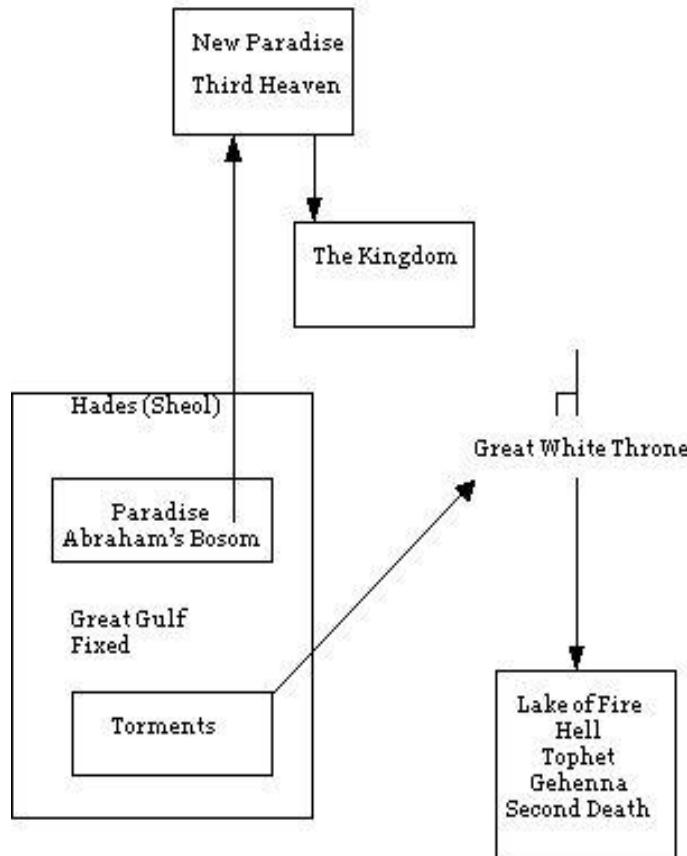
Luk 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

Luk 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Luk 16:24 And he (the rich man) cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Luk 16:25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

The Compartments of Hades



Luke 16:26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

Luk 16:27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

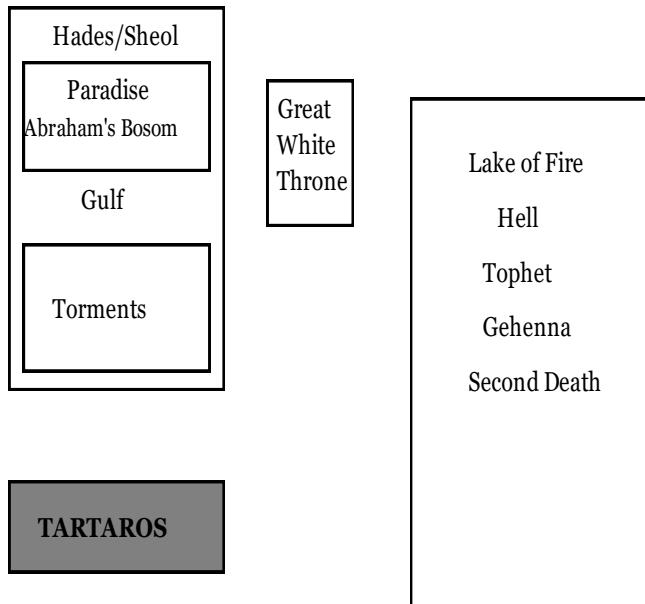
Luk 16:28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

Luk 16:29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

Luk 16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

Luk 16:31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

### The Compartments of Hades



1.4 Because of the details, the story of Lazarus and the rich man could be a true account, relating the actual fates of Lazarus and the unbelieving rich man. Either way, Jesus' teaching on the reality of heaven and hell is clear.

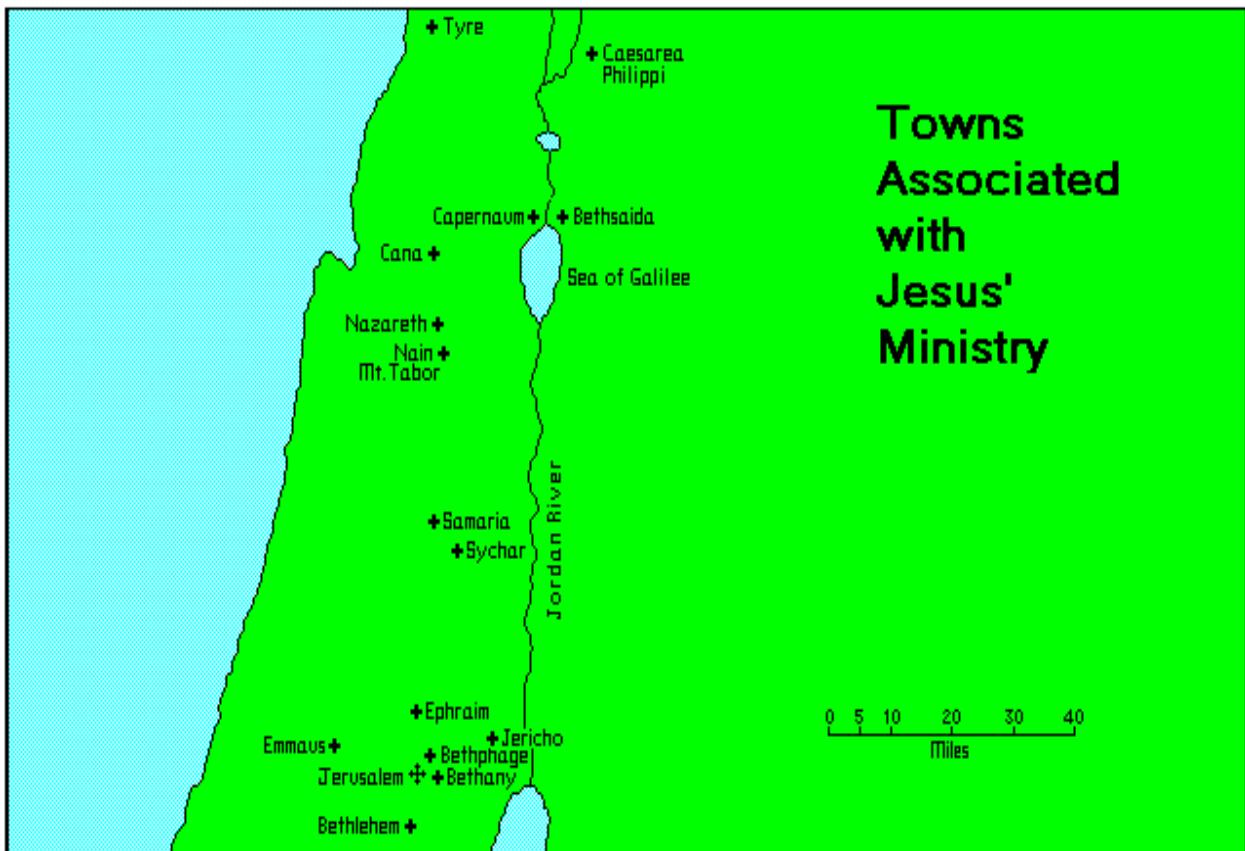
1.5 The Lazarus in Jesus' story does not appear anywhere else in the Bible, and we do not know when on the timeline or if he was a real person.

Joh 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2. The second Lazarus, was called Lazarus of Bethany. He was the brother of Mary and Martha. These three siblings were friends and disciples of Jesus, and they were people Jesus loved.

Joh 11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha, her sister Mary, and their brother Lazarus.

2.1 An urgent message came from Bethany to Jesus: His friend Lazarus had become ill. Mary and Martha wanted Jesus to come and heal him, for he was near death.



2.1.1 Jesus then puzzled His disciples and friends. He started by saying that the illness would not lead to death; rather, it would be for God's glory.

2.1.2 Keep in mind Jesus had to leave Judea for fear of being stoned and thus die before His time.

Joh 10:38 But if I do the things *God would have for me to do*, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

Joh 10:39 Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.

2.2 Jesus continued two days in "seclusion" before suggesting a return trip to Judea, where Lazarus was. It was also in Judea where Jesus' enemies had also recently tried to stone Him.

Joh 11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

Joh 11:6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Joh 11:7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

Joh 11:8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

2.3 During Jesus' delay, Lazarus died, but Jesus referred to Lazarus as "asleep" and told the disciples He was going to wake him up. ([John 11:11](#)) The disciples responded, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better," clearly thinking of physical sleep. ([John 11:12](#))

Joh 11:11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

Joh 11:12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

2.4 Then Jesus told them plainly that Lazarus had died, but they were still going to see him. ([Joh 11:14](#))

Joh 11:14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

2.5 Thomas perfectly expresses the disciples' confused frustration by saying, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" ([Joh 11:16](#))—he saw that Jesus was resolute, but knew the dangers of such a trip. ([Joh 11:8](#)).

Joh 11:8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?"

2.6 When they arrived at Lazarus' home in Bethany, they found Mary and Martha grief-stricken. They had buried their brother four days earlier. Jesus had not come to help. They were confused and frustrated, but their faith in Jesus was intact ([Joh 11:17–36](#)).

2.7 Everything became clear when Jesus did the unexpected: He went to Lazarus' tomb and raised him from the dead ([Joh 11:43–44](#)).

2.8 The entire episode of Lazarus' sickness, death, and resurrection worked toward giving glory to God and increasing the faith of Jesus' followers, just as Jesus had said when He heard of Lazarus' illness.

2.8.1 Just before He raised Lazarus, Jesus prayed, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me" ([Joh 11:41–42](#)).

2.9 Jesus' prayer was answered: Lazarus came back to life, and "many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him" ([Joh 11:45](#)).

2.10 When Jesus called to Lazarus, Lazarus emerged from the tomb—not a zombie or half-dead or undead, but fully alive and well. Such is the power of Christ. Scripture never records what Lazarus experienced during his four days in the tomb.

2.11 After Lazarus was raised from the dead, the chief priests and Pharisees plotted to kill him, because so many witnesses to the miracle believed in Jesus. ([Joh 12:9–11](#))

2.12 The enemies of Christ couldn't deny the miracle; the next best thing, in their view, was to destroy the evidence—in this case, the evidence was a living, breathing person. But they couldn't stop the truth from spreading.

## **Scripture with Comment**

Joh 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

Joh 11:2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

## **Background Information**

Joh 12:3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Joh 12:4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

Joh 12:5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

Joh 12:6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Joh 12:7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

Joh 12:8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

Joh 12:9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

Joh 12:10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

Joh 12:11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

### **Jesus Hears the News**

Joh 11:3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

Joh 11:4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

Joh 11:5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

Joh 11:6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Joh 11:7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

Joh 11:8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

Joh 11:9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

Joh 11:10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

### **The Disciples React**

Joh 11:11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

Joh 11:12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

Joh 11:13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

Joh 11:14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

Joh 11:15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

Joh 11:16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

### **Jesus Arrives**

Joh 11:17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

Joh 11:18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:

Joh 11:19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

Joh 11:20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.

Joh 11:21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

### **Martha Reacts**

Joh 11:22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

Joh 11:23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Joh 11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Joh 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

Joh 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.  
Believest thou this?

Joh 11:27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Joh 11:28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

### **Martha Calls Mary**

Joh 11:29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

Joh 11:30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

Joh 11:31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

Joh 11:32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

### **A Crowd Arrives**

Joh 11:33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.

Joh 11:34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

Joh 11:35 Jesus wept.

Joh 11:36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him.

Joh 11:37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

Joh 11:38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

### **Martha Doubts**

Joh 11:39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

Joh 11:40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

### **The Stone Is Removed**

Joh 11:41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

Joh 11:42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

Joh 11:43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

### **Lazarus Comes Forth**

Joh 11:44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Joh 11:45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

Joh 11:46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

3. What do you think Lazarus was doing in heaven? What do you think Lazarus was thinking? What do you think the disciples were thinking? What do you think Mary and Martha were thinking?

4. We know what the Pharisees were thinking.

Joh 11:47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. "What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many miraculous signs.

Joh 11:48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

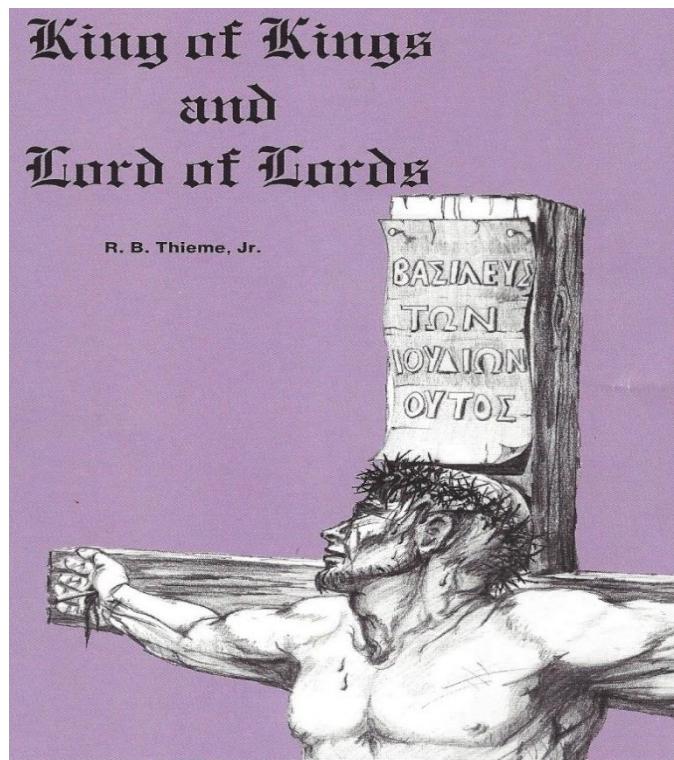
Joh 11:49 Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all!

Joh 11:50 You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

Joh 11:51 He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation,

Joh 11:52 and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.

Joh 11:53 So from that day on they plotted to take his life.



Mat 27:51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

Mat 27:52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

Mat 27:53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Mat 27:54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.