

Questions About Jesus Using Unsound Doctrine

Explain why Jesus would use unsound doctrine in the parable of the rich man & Lazarus . My family and I were raised with the idea that the wicked will burn forever. Thanks!

Answer:

That's such a wise and compassionate question — and one that shows you want to honor both truth and the tender hearts of your family. Let's walk through it carefully and biblically.

1. Jesus never taught unsound doctrine — even in parables.

Jesus always used stories familiar to His listeners to *illustrate a moral or spiritual point*, not to establish every detail as literal theology.

Parables are not meant to describe how heaven or hell literally function — they use *imagery and exaggeration* familiar to the audience to reveal truth.

When Jesus told the story of **the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31)**, He wasn't teaching the mechanics of the afterlife — He was exposing the *spiritual blindness* of the Pharisees, who loved money and ignored the poor (see verses 14–15).

2. The story mirrors a well-known Jewish folk tale.

At that time, the rabbis often used a story about a rich man and a poor man whose fortunes were reversed after death.

Jesus took that familiar tale and gave it a new, divine twist — turning their popular idea on its head to make a powerful point:

“If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.” — *Luke 16:31*

That's the real message: **repentance and faith must come through God's Word, not through miracles or visions of the afterlife.**

3. The parable uses their own mistaken imagery to teach truth.

Jesus didn't *endorse* every cultural detail in the story — He *used* it to reach the people where they were.

He often did this:

- In **Luke 16**, He uses their imagery of “Abraham’s bosom” and “flame” to make a moral point — not a literal description.
- In **Matthew 13**, He spoke of a man finding treasure in a field, even though people don’t literally sell everything for a single field — the story teaches a spiritual reality.

So Jesus wasn’t teaching eternal torment.

He was teaching the danger of ignoring truth while there’s still time to repent.

4. Scripture is consistent: the wicked are destroyed, not endlessly tortured.

The Bible is clear that the wages of sin is **death**, not eternal life in pain.

Scripture	What it Teaches
Romans 6:23	“The wages of sin is death.”
John 3:16	“Whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”
Malachi 4:1	“The day is coming... and all the proud and all who do wickedly will be stubble.”
Ezekiel 18:4	“The soul who sins shall die.”

So, eternal torment would actually contradict God’s justice, mercy, and character — because it would mean sin keeps existing forever.

Instead, God’s plan is to **end evil completely** — to cleanse the universe of pain and restore perfect peace (Revelation 21:4–5).

5. The parable's true message

The point of Luke 16:19–31 isn't about the geography of hell — it's about the **urgency of repentance** and **responsibility for mercy**.

Jesus is saying:

“You have the Scriptures right now — use them! Believe them! Don't wait for some great sign.”

In that light, the parable perfectly harmonizes with every other truth He taught — love, justice, mercy, and the final destruction (not torture) of sin.

Summary

- Jesus used familiar imagery, not literal doctrine.
- The parable's focus is moral accountability, not hell's description.
- The rest of Scripture clearly teaches the *end* of sin, not its eternal preservation.

A gentle way to tell your family

You might say:

“Jesus wasn't teaching that people burn forever — He was warning that we can't wait for miracles or death to take God seriously. The story speaks to our choices now, not the temperature of the afterlife.”

Closing Thought

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” — *Romans 6:23*

That's the beauty of the gospel: **God doesn't keep evil alive forever. He ends it — so love can reign forever.**

For More Questions, please contact Pastor Ed Anderson at
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