

# Hades: The “Waiting Place” for the Soul

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Luke 16:19-31

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<sup>19</sup> “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, <sup>21</sup> desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup> So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. <sup>23</sup> And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

<sup>24</sup> “Then he 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.’ <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. <sup>26</sup> And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

<sup>27</sup> “Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ <sup>29</sup> Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ <sup>30</sup> And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ <sup>31</sup> But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’

**Luke 16:19-31 (NKJV)**

## *Luke 16:19-31 – Just a parable?*

- It is debatable whether it is a parable or not.
- It is never called one by the Scriptures.
- If it is a parable, it is the only one where a person is given a proper name.
- Even if this is a parable, the facts of the story would not be nullified.
- **A parable either did or could happen; it is true to life.**
  - Parable Defined: *“Ordinarily signifies an imaginary story, yet one that in its details could have actually transpired”* (ISBE).
- Jesus would not have presented these facts about where a person goes at death if they were not true.
- The fact that Jesus spoke of such a place as Hades verifies its existence.

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*Upon death, our souls will be transported to Hades and are identifiable.*

- The rich man could identify Abraham and Lazarus (**v.22-23**).
  - It appears that there is some level of consciousness after death. We can see, speak, have feelings, memory, etc.
- The rich man did not see their earthly bodies though.
  - *“For dust you are, And to dust you shall return”* (**Gen. 3:19b**).
  - *“All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust”* (**Ecc. 3:20**).
- It is not our earthly bodies that will reside in Hades, but our souls.
  - *“The body without the spirit is dead”* (**James 2:26a**).

## *The righteous will be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.*

- The Bible does not teach us much about the nature of angels.
  - We know angels are “*ministering spirits*” (**Heb. 1:14**; see also **Matt. 4:11**).
  - Some angels are kept in “*everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day*” (**Jude 6**; see also **2 Pet. 2:4**).
  - Angels will appear with Christ upon the Judgment Day (**Matt. 25:31**).
- **Luke 16:22** teaches us that the faithful will be carried by angels into Paradise to await the final judgment.
- How comforting it is to know that if we remain obedient to Christ unto death (**Rev. 2:10**), we can be carried by angels into Abraham's Bosom in anticipation of eternal life.

## *We will know which side we are on in this “waiting place” for the soul.*

- The rich man could see the righteous side of Hades in front of him, but he could not cross over. His destination was fixed (**v. 23, 26**).
- We see a similar circumstance depicted at the end of Moses’s life.
  - *“Then the Lord said to him, ‘This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have caused you to see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there” (Deut. 34:4).*
    - While Moses was not able to enter an earthly place of rest, the rich man could not enter eternal rest.
- How scary a thought to be like the rich man, who himself was like Moses, with the goal of comfort and rest in sight but unable to enter in to that rest.

## *Punishment / Reward begins before the final judgment.*

- Punishment / Reward begins before the final judgment (**v. 24**).
  - This scene is not a depiction of THE Judgment Day. There is only ONE Judgment Day.
    - *“He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained” (Acts 17:31a).*
    - *“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God” (1 Cor. 4:5).*
    - *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).*

## *Punishment / Reward begins before the final judgment.*

- Punishment / Reward begins before the final judgment (**v. 24**).
  - However, this scene is not a depiction of THE Judgment Day. There is only ONE Judgment Day.
- The Judgment Day is described in **1 Thess. 4:15-17**.
  - Only God knows this day (**Matt. 24:36-44**).
  - This day will come suddenly (**1 Thess. 5:1-4**).
  - Hades will last until the Judgment Day (**Rev. 20:11-15**).
- There is but one Judgment Day where we will all meet the Lord in final judgment, but Hades will be a taste of our reward or punishment.
  - It too will come as a thief in the night. Are we prepared?



*What we receive in life is not indicative of what we will receive upon death.*

- The “good” we receive in life is not indicative of what we will receive upon death (**v. 19-20, 24-25**).
- Our destination upon death will be determined according to the works we have committed in our earthly bodies, whether good or bad (**2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:13-15**).
- Riches will not benefit the soul (**Matt. 6:19-21; Matt. 16:26; Luke 12:16-21; Matt. 19:16-22**).
- My grandad used to often tell people, *“I hope I have more time than I have money.”* When lifting up his eyes in torments, I imagine the rich man of Luke 16 had a similar thought!

## *Upon death, our soul's destination is unchangeable.*

- Once we die, there is no changing where our souls will reside.
  - Both in regards to our souls' temporary destinations (**v. 26**) . . .
  - As well as our souls' eternal destinations.
    - *“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matt. 25:46).*
- There was nothing the rich man (or anyone on earth) could do to change the outcome of his soul's condition.
  - This is contrary to the Catholic doctrine of “purgatory.”
- Likewise, there is nothing we can do upon our deaths if we leave this earth with anything undone or unaddressed (**see 2 Pet. 2:9**).

## *Jesus went to Hades, providing further evidence that we will too.*

- As Peter explained on the Day of Pentecost, God raised Christ from the dead, and "*loosed the pains of death*" from Him (**Acts 2:24**).
- However, God did not just release Christ from the pains of death, but also returned His son from "*Hades*," which the NIV describes as the "*realm of the dead*" (**Acts 2:27**).
- Peter would repeat David's prophecy about Christ's soul not being left in Hades.
  - "*Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption*" (**Acts 2:29-31, NKJV**).

## *Jesus went to Hades, providing further evidence that we will too.*

- Since Jesus died fully obedient to the Father (**Heb. 3:2; Phil. 2:8**), His soul was sent to Abraham's bosom between His death and resurrection.
  - This is confirmed by Christ's words to the thief on the cross: *"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise"* (**Luke 23:43**).
- *"Paradise"* in **Luke 23:43** is the righteous side of Hades. *"Paradise"* does not always refer to Hades, but can also refer to Heaven, or some part of it.
  - **2 Cor. 12:3-4**: *"And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."*
  - **Rev. 2:7**: *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."*
- **John 20:17** also confirms Jesus went to Hades and not Heaven.

*Jesus went to Hades, providing further evidence that we will too.*

**Even if the story of the rich man and Lazarus is a parable, we should all recognize from Christ's example that Hades is a real place where our souls will reside when we die.**

## *We are the brothers that the rich man left behind.*

- In a sense, we are the brothers the rich man left behind (**v. 27-31**).
- Like the rich man's earthly brothers who had Moses and the prophets, we have the message of salvation in the Scriptures, but if we reject it, nothing else can save us.
  - *“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free’” (John 8:31-32).*
- Let's not be like the rich man, unprepared to depart this earth and lifting up our eyes in anguish, but, instead, let's all strive to be carried by angels and resting comfortably in paradise before the final Judgment.