

Luke 16: 19 - 31

The Rich Man and Lazarus

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores, and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

“Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’

“‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

“He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

Jesus was speaking to his disciples about specific people, Abraham, the father of the nation of Israel, a beggar named Lazarus, and a rich man who had lived a luxurious lifestyle. Prior to the crucifixion of Jesus, the spirits of all people who died were transported to a waiting place called Sheol, separated into two parts that were visible to one another, but not accessible: Paradise and Hades. While Abraham and Lazarus were being comforted on the Paradise side, the rich man was in torment on the other side, which is Hades. According to the Bible, after the Resurrection of Christ, he descended into Sheol, where he preached the Gospel (the Good News of salvation). The “saints of the old testament,” who had attempted to live by God’s law and were now in Paradise, accepted Christ’s message of salvation. As for the rich man in Hades, he had asked that someone be sent to his family to warn them NOT to come to this place. Abraham replied, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced *even if someone rises from the dead.*” That One, the one who DID rise from the dead, was Jesus Christ! After a life of wickedness that brings a person’s spirit to Hades, there is no evidence in the Bible of hope for salvation.

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