

The Rich Man and Lazarus **(Luke 16:19-31)**

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

²⁴ “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.’ ²⁵ 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. ²⁶ 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.’

²⁷ “Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ ²⁹ Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

³¹ 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.’

Is This 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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The Point of the Story / Parable

- Parables are earthly stories with heavenly meanings.
 - Jesus preached in parables to separate those who earnestly desire truth from those who do not (**Matt. 13:12-15**).
- This parable pictures:
 - A rich man who fared well during life, died, and was punished.
 - A poor man (Lazarus) who fared poorly during life, died, and was rewarded.
- The “good” we receive in life is not necessarily indicative of what we will receive upon our deaths (**v.19-20, 24-25**).
 - Riches will not benefit the soul (**Matt. 6:19-21, 16:26, 19:16-22; Luke 12:16-21**).
 - 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**).

Consciousness After Death

- 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. That means:
 - We will feel reward (**v.25; see also Rev. 21:1-4**).
 - We will feel punishment (**v.23-24**).
 - **“Weeping and gnashing of teeth”** (Matt. 8:12, 13:42,50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30, etc.).
- The rich man did not see their earthly bodies (**Gen. 3:19; Ecc. 3:20; James 2:26**).

The Role of Angels

- Angels carried the righteous Lazarus in to Abraham's bosom (**v.22**). The rich man did not receive such a blessing.
 - We know angels are "**ministering spirits**" (**Heb. 1:14**; see also **Matt. 4:11**).
 - Some angels are 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 that those who die in the Lord will be carried by angels into Abraham's Bosom upon their death.

Hades

- The KJV translates “**Hades**” as “**Hell**” in **Luke 16:19-31**.
 - “**Hades**” is the more accurate translation.
 - This place is not the final abode of the wicked (Gehenna), but is referring to a different place (“**the realm of the dead**,” NIV) where the dead go to await the final judgment.
- Jesus went to “**Hades**” when He died (**Acts 2:24, 27, 29-31; John 20:17**).
 - Since Jesus died obedient to the Father (**Heb. 3:2; Phil. 2:8**), His soul would have been 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; Rev. 2:7**).

Hades

**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.**

Hades

- 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 at the end of Moses's life (**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 (**v.24**).
 - This scene is not a depiction of the final Judgment Day. There is only one final Judgment Day (**Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 4:5; John 12:48**).
 - The Judgment Day is described in **1 Thess. 4:15-17; Matt. 25:31-46**.
 - 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.

The Permanency of the Reward / Punishment

- 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 (**Matt. 25:41, 46**).
 - The Greek word for “**eternal**” and “**everlasting**” in **Matt. 25** is the same word describing God in **Rom. 16:26** and the Spirit of God in **Heb. 9:14**.
 - In other words, Hell really is eternal (**Rev. 20:10, 14:11; 2 Thess. 1:9**)!!
 - And Heaven really is eternal (**John 3:16; Rom. 6:23; 1 John 2:25**)!!
- 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.”
 - Though Hades is temporary, once we die, there is nothing we can do to change the outcome of our reward or punishment (**2 Pet. 2:9**).

The Brothers 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 who was unprepared to depart this earth, but, instead, let's all strive to be carried by angels to rest comfortably in paradise awaiting the final Judgment.