

Luke Chapter 16 Continued

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

This rich man was very rich. It appears from the scene above that he was sure to use his money for his own personal wants. He seemed to be pampering himself by buying himself fine clothes and eating all sorts of delicate foods.

In 1 Timothy 6:18-19 "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;" "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

You see a rich person must not hang on to his riches for themselves, but must be quick to help others in need. That does not seem to be the case with this rich man above. He seemed to be thinking just of himself.

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

“Lazarus”: Clearly not the Lazarus (in John 11), who died at a later time. This beggar was the only character in any of Jesus’ parables ever given a name. Some therefore have speculated that this was no imaginary tale, but an actual incident that really took place.

Either way, Christ employs it in the same fashion as all His parables, to teach a lesson, in this case for the benefit of the Pharisees. The rich man in the parable is sometimes called Dives, after the Latin word for “rich”.

Here is a picture of a person exactly opposite of the rich man. Lazarus lay at his gate, because begging was the only way he had of getting enough to live on.

Luke 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."

The mention of crumbs, sores, and dogs all made this poor man appear odious in the eyes of the Pharisees. They were inclined to see all such things as proof of divine disfavor. They would have to see all such things as proof of divine disfavor. They would have viewed such a person as not only unclean, but also despised by God.

We see here, the rich man had opportunity. It is strange that the rich man was not named and the beggar was. Two separate dictionaries give two different meanings to Lazarus name. Perhaps this can shed some light on why Lazarus' name was mentioned and not the rich man's. Lazarus means "God help, or God helped". The other meaning was "helpless".

This tells us a lot more about Lazarus. He is unable to help himself and God has heard his cry and helped him. It is not uncommon in the Old Testament for names to bring a hidden message to a Scripture, but we see more clearly from this name, the man Lazarus in this Scripture.

We see also, that Lazarus was not asking much, just the crumbs. He had no one to doctor his sores so the dogs licked them.

Luke 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;"

“Abraham’s bosom”: This same expression (found only here in Scripture), was used in the Talmud as a figure for heaven. The idea was that Lazarus was given a place of high honor, reclining next to Abraham at the heavenly banquet.

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

“In hell”: The suggestion that a rich man would be excluded from heaven would have scandalized the Pharisees; especially galling was the idea that a beggar who ate scraps from his table was granted the place of honor next to Abraham. “Hades” was the Greek term for the abode of the dead.

In the LXX, it was used to translate the Hebrew Sheol, which referred to the realm of the dead in general, without necessarily distinguishing between righteous or unrighteous souls. However, in New Testament usage, “Hades” always refers to the place of the wicked prior to final judgment in hell.

The imagery Jesus used paralleled the common rabbinical idea that Sheol had two parts, one for the souls of the righteous and the other for the souls of the wicked, separated by an impassable gulf.

But there is no reason to suppose, as some do, that “Abraham’s bosom” spoke of a temporary prison for the souls of Old Testament saints, who were brought to heaven only after He had actually atoned for their sins.

Scripture consistently teaches that the spirits of the righteous dead go immediately into the presence of God (23:43; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23). And the presence of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration (9:30), belies the notion that they were confined in a compartment of Sheol until Christ finished His work.

Why is Abraham mentioned here? Possibly because he was the father of the faithful. I love the part that said the angels came and carried him to Abraham's bosom.

It is quite a different story with this selfish, self-centered rich man who had eyes for no one's problems and had spent all his time and money on himself. Hell is not a beautiful scene. There is no need to go into all the horrors. It is important to not go there under any circumstances.

It appears from this that those in hell can see those in heaven which makes their torment worse.

Luke 16:24 "And 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."

“For I am tormented”: Christ pictured Hades as a place where the unspeakable torment of hell had already begun. Among the miseries featured here are unquenchable flame; an accusing conscience fed by undying memories of lost opportunity (verse 25), and permanent, irreversible separation from God and everything good (verse 26).

The fact that this rich man calls Abraham father tells us that he was of Hebrew decent. He was some of those who thought they would go to heaven just because they were Abraham's children and grandchildren in the flesh.

In (Luke 3:8), we read that were not to depend on being an ancestor of Abraham to get them to heaven. Of course, those in heaven have no desire to go to hell, even for the purpose he mentioned here. There is a great gulf fixed. They could not go, even if they wanted to. We do see from the Scripture above that hell is a place of torment and fire.

Luke 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."

We must notice here that Abraham does not deny that this rich man is a descendent of his. He calls him son. Abraham reminds him that he had opportunity to help Lazarus and he didn't. Had this rich man used his money and prestige to help this poor beggar, then both of them would have been in heaven together.

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."

Really these people who are in hell have been put there by the Lord. They had no control over going back and forth. They made their choice on earth; and once doomed to hell, there is no escape. The same thing applies to those who make heaven.

The way we live here on earth determines our final resting place. We must choose Jesus and His ways, if we are to make heaven. If we do not choose Jesus, then we are automatically on the side of Satan and will go to hell.

The decision is here on the earth before you die. There is no changing your mind after you die. Good and evil are miles apart here on earth, but even further in eternity.

Luke 16:27-28 "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:" "For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

“Send him to my father’s house”: The rich man retained a condescending attitude toward Lazarus even in hell, repeatedly asking Abraham to “send” Lazarus to wait on him (verse 24). The flames of hell do not atone for sin or purge hardened sinners for their depravity (Rev. 22:11).

I do not know anyone on the earth that I desire this type of torment to come to. Perhaps, that is why I am trying to write these Bible studies, to let people know before it is too late about heaven and hell.

One of the most dangerous false doctrines going around today would have you and I believe that there is no literal heaven and hell; that they are just of the mind. Don't you believe it!

Hell is real as this rich man found out too late. He finally realized there is no help for him. Now he wants someone to go and tell his brothers. He believes if maybe they could hear from someone who actually had died, they would believe.

Now the rich man’s concern is for his five brothers. They are rich too, and he wants to make sure they don't do the same sin that got him in this terrible place.

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

“Moses and the prophets”: I.e., the Old Testament Scriptures.

By this he is saying they have an equal opportunity to accept or reject the teaching of God. We said before, by the foolishness of preaching men are saved. That is the very reason God sent Moses and the prophets. That was their job to deliver the people; not only from physical bondage, but spiritual as well.

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

This speaks prophetically here, because Jesus will rise from the dead. He does appear to them 40 days and nights after His Resurrection. He does tell them, and all others who will listen even unto our day, in His Word. Will they repent?

Luke 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."

“Neither will they be persuaded”: This speaks powerfully of the singular sufficiency of Scripture to overcome unbelief.

The gospel itself is the power of God unto salvation. (Rom. 1:16). Since unbelief is at heart a moral, rather than an intellectual problem, no amount of evidences will ever turn unbelief to faith. But the revealed Word of God has inherent power to do so (John 6:63; Heb. 4:12; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23).

Those who have hardened their hearts will not believe Moses' words in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. They will not believe God's only begotten Son, Jesus, though He rose from the grave. There is your answer. They have chosen the world and its riches over God.

Luke Chapter 16 Continued Questions

1. How was the rich man dressed?
2. How did he fare in this world?
3. What did the rich man use his wealth for?
4. In 1 Timothy 6:18-19, what should a rich person do to please God?
5. What was the beggar's name?
6. What visible sickness did He have?
7. How did Lazarus make a living?
8. What did Lazarus desire to be fed with?
9. What does the name Lazarus mean?
10. Who carried the beggar to Abraham's bosom?
11. Where did the rich man go when he died?
12. What did the rich man see?
13. Why is Abraham possibly mentioned in this heavenly scene?
14. What does the rich man call Abraham?
15. What did he want Abraham to do?
16. What does the name the rich man called Abraham tell us about his nationality?
17. In Luke 3:8, God wanted them not to depend on what to get them to heaven?

18. What did Abraham remind the rich man of?
19. By what name did Abraham address him?
20. What is fixed between heaven and hell?
21. Who is the only one who has control over who goes where?
22. When do we still have control over where we go?
23. When he sees there is no hope for him, what does he ask Abraham to do?
24. How many brothers does he have?
25. What is one of the most dangerous false doctrines of our day?
26. Who did Abraham tell him they should listen to?
27. Who is intended by someone from the dead who went to them?
28. What books in the Old Testament did Moses write?
29. Name some of the prophets.