

## L 11 ... What Happens When You Die

[Luke 16:19-31](#)

Suppose you died today. What would happen to you? Even though you try to avoid thinking about it, your own death is inevitable. You could die before this lesson is finished. Every day, worldwide almost two people die every second, 107 a minute, and 6,300 an hour. Over 3,000 will die while you study this lesson. One day, maybe sooner than you think, one of them will be you.

That's because of what fact in the last phrase of [1 Samuel 20:3](#)?

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Death is only a step, or a heartbeat, away for each of us. What happens then? Jesus tells us in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. He tells this parable because the Pharisees, like a lot of people today, loved money ([16:14](#)). This may be a real life story because it is the only time Jesus gives one of His characters a name. This parable is about a trio of two's.

### Two Men (16:19-21)

Jesus says the rich man's clothes were *purple and fine linen*, which refers to very expensive clothing, such as the wealthy today would buy at an exclusive store. He daily ate *sumptuously*, or extravagantly, of the finest food money could buy ([16:19](#)). He "showboated" his wealth. He would feel at home with the rich and famous. He was the man the Pharisees would love to be. **Being rich is not sinful, but being selfish is.** Like the Pharisees, this man loved money.

What warning about this obsession is given in [1 Timothy 6:10a](#)?

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In contrast, the poor man—named Lazarus—is *full of sores*, probably ulcers. He is *laid* at the rich man's gate. He longs to eat the table scraps that fall from the rich man's table ([16:20-21a](#)). In ancient times, people used bread as napkins to clean their hands as they ate. The bread would then be thrown on the floor and was usually fed to dogs ([Mt 15:27](#)). Lazarus was so weak the dogs would come lick his sores ([16:21b](#)).

It would be hard to imagine a greater contrast between two human beings. Economically and socially, they were polar opposites. After introducing us to **two men**, our Lord describes...

### Two Destinies (16:22-23)

When the poor man eventually dies, *angels* carry him to Abraham's side ([16:22a-b](#)). This is how the Jews referred to heaven and fellowship with believers who have died before them.

How is the death of a child of God described in [Genesis 35:29a-b](#)?

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Therefore, when Lazarus dies, he is gathered to his people in the wonderful place we call “heaven.” The rich man also dies and is gathered to his people. However, he goes to a place Jesus describes like this: *And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom* ([16:23](#)). In this passage, the word translated **hell** is **hades (hay´-dees)**, the intermediate place to which the lost go immediately at death. It is the equivalent of the Hebrew word **sheôl (she-ol´)**, sometimes translated “grave” or “hell” in the Old Testament.

The Greek word for “hell” (**geenna, geh´-en-nah-**), referring to the eternal place of everlasting punishment, is found only twelve times in the Greek New Testament. Eleven of those times it comes from the lips of the Lord Jesus ([Mt 5:22](#), [29](#), [30](#), [10:28](#), [18:9](#), [23:15](#), [33](#), [Mk 9:43](#), [45](#), [47](#), & [Lk 12:5](#)).

Hades is where the dead who are lost wait until the second resurrection and the Great White Throne Judgment of God ([Rev. 20:5-6](#)). The Bible speaks only of the first resurrection, but if there is a first, there must be a what? A second! At the second resurrection, *death and hell* (hades) will give up their dead, and they will be *judged* according to their deeds ([Rev. 20:13](#)).

After the degree of their eternal punishment is determined, what happens, according to [Revelation 20:14](#)?

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Hades is “hell’s waiting room” and is a terrible place. Peter explains: *The Lord knoweth how to... reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished* ([2 Pet. 2:9](#)).

Jesus tells us about **two men, two destinies**, and...

### **Two Requests (16:24-31)**

From hades, the rich man begs Father Abraham to have *mercy* on him and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue because he is *tormented* in the flames ([16:24](#)).

Abraham tells the rich man his request is impossible to grant because there is a *great gulf* that is *fixed* by God ([16:26](#)). Therefore, the fate of the dead cannot be changed. You have only one life to live. During that time, you must decide where you want to spend eternity. It is too late after a person dies. That’s why we are warned: *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts* ([Heb. 4:7d](#)).

The first request is for **relief**. Then, the rich man makes a second request. He begs Abraham to raise Lazarus from the dead and send him to his father’s house because he has *five* brothers. He wants Lazarus to warn them, so they will not come to this *place of torment* ([16:27-28](#)).

Don’t miss the implications of this request. The rich man is saying, “I didn’t have a fair chance. God should have done more to warn me about this place. If God raises someone from the dead to warn my brothers, they will change.” Abraham will not entertain this slander on God.

Therefore, how does he answer ([16:29b-c](#))?

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In other words, the witness of the Bible is enough to convince anyone. The rich man frantically responds, *Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent* ([16:30](#)). That statement makes it clear the rich man knew what he should have done to avoid hell—*repent*. He insists that if someone returns from the dead, his brothers will listen and will *repent*.

There is irony in this request because in Bethany, just days before His crucifixion, Jesus had raised another Lazarus from the dead. Bethany was only six miles from Jerusalem. Many Jews were eyewitnesses to his resurrection, and some believed. However, other Jews go to the Pharisees and tell them Jesus has raised a man from the dead ([Jn 11:45-46](#)). The priests and Pharisees call a meeting of the *council*, or Sanhedrin—the Jewish Supreme Court—which is made up of the leading religious leaders. At this meeting, they decide what to do with Jesus because of the irrefutable evidence of His raising Lazarus from the dead.

What do they decide to do ([Jn 11:53](#))?

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Later, they decide that is not enough, they must also get rid of the evidence. Therefore, the chief priests make plans to kill Lazarus, too ([Jn 12:10](#)).

If a person will not believe by reading or hearing the living and powerful Word of God ([Heb. 4:12](#)), he or she will not believe because of some miraculous sign, even someone coming back from the dead to warn people ([16:31](#)).

Abraham refuses the request, not because he doesn't care about the brothers, but because it is an insult to God and he knows it would be a waste of time.

If you are only born once, you will have to die twice. The second death is *the lake of fire*, or hell ([Rev. 20:14](#)). However, if you are born twice, you will only have to die once.

How does Jesus express this fact in [John 3:3](#)?

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The phrase ***born again*** literally means “born from above.” In other words, we must be born into God's kingdom just as we are born into our physical families. Being *born again* is what theologians call “**regeneration**.” It is the act by which God imparts eternal life through our faith in Christ.

Being *born again* is the fulfillment of what prophecy in [Ezekiel 36:27a](#)?

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When we receive Christ, God puts His Holy Spirit in us. The Spirit then gives us the will and power to live for Him ([Eph. 3:20](#)). So, the Holy Spirit is the One who enables us to be successful in kingdom living.

What it means to be born again is described in [2 Corinthians 5:17](#). Explain below:

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Jesus wants you to think about **two men, two destinies**, and **two requests**, so you won't end up like the rich man in this parable. Today, if you hear God's voice speaking to your heart, drawing you to Himself, do not harden your heart.