

“Eternal Conscious Torment and the Son of Man” – Luke 16:19-31

Please stand and open your Bibles to Luke 16:14-18

As we just read, we are in the middle of an interaction with Jesus and the Pharisees. This started back in Luke 15...

Luke 15:1-2

Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, “This Man receives sinners and eats with them.”

This is when he began three parables about God’s desire to save those that they despised and then last week we see Jesus use this opportunity to teach His followers on how to deal with that which they put their trust in...money. We know this from what we just read...

Luke 16:14

Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him.

This is very important to understand today’s teaching. If you do not see this, you will think rich people go to hell and poor

people go heaven. The rich person in this story represents the Pharisees and the Lazarus represents the Tax Collectors and Sinners that have repented.

The second thing to know is the huge debate whether this is a parable or a story of an actual event. Our study Bibles call it a Parable, but many scholars point out that Hebrew Parables never give peoples name. But in the context and what we learn from this it wouldn't matter if it is a parable or not. All parables speak about real things in a story form. But for all intents and purposes we are going to look at this as if it were a real event, as that is how I see it.

What we are going to do is read through the whole story and then come back and review the main points and then talk about what it all means for those that have died without Christ.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31

In this story, Jesus gives us a stunning description of what the afterlife looks like. It is an affront to the beliefs of the Pharisees. In terms we would understand the Rich Man is works and the Poor Man is faith. The story starts off with the condition of both parties. The Rich man had it going on. The term every day says

there was never a time in his life that he was in want. But Lazarus was always in want and was visible to the Rich Man as he was outside his gate. All he would be satisfied with is the crumbs. Basically, in our vernacular all Lazarus could get from the guy is whatever he threw in his garbage can. And the dogs show us that no one cared for him at all. Both of these men, being Jewish, under the law show us the deficiency of the Rich Man in not following the word of God that says...

Leviticus 19:18

... you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

The Rich man shows his indifference to the law and his unwillingness to show compassion to Lazarus. So, the story goes on to say...

Luke 16:22-23a

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...

They both died and both went to different places. The first thing you can learn today is that death in the bible does not mean an end. That is an atheistic western view that comes from what we

see in the physical realm. A body dies and seems to cease to exist. But that is not true. We have a soul that lives forever.

Now, we find out in our story that before Jesus went to the cross that the dead went to one of two places. Abraham's Bosom or Hades (Hell). The Hebrew word for Hades is sheol and means the place of the dead. It is also translated the grave in some places. It's use as hell can be confusing as there are two different words for it. Before Jesus dies for the sins of the world those that died in faith went to the place called Abraham's Bosom or Paradise awaiting His death and resurrection. This is because the animal sacrifices could only cover sins until Jesus could come and make the perfect sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:4

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

But once Jesus died and rose again when He ascended to heaven, He emptied paradise and brought all those that died in faith into the presence of God.

Ephesians 4:8-10

Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)

But those that die without faith now go to this place that the Rich Man is in our story.

Luke 16:24

“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.’”

This is a very serious position that the Rich man has found himself in. He is aware of his surroundings. He is conscious of his faults. And he is in great torment. He begs Father Abraham for only a drop of water. It is interesting that all of a sudden, he is aware of Lazarus. Can you see the horror of an afterlife without Christ? This is a reality that cannot be ignored.

Before we finish with what the rich man requests, we need to ask ourselves, “Is this condition forever?” There has been a lot of talk lately about the reality of hell and more importantly will

there be Eternal Conscious Torment for the unbeliever. This all started last month with * Kirk Cameron questioning this and appealing for something known as “Annihilationism”. In his podcast and rebuttal of the criticism towards his new view he claims he isn’t saying hell does not exist but that it does not continue forever. He feels that we should be able to have this conversation and still be in fellowship with each other. (*That is why, this coming Wednesday (the 28th) we will be dropping HELLGATE, a 2.5 hour round table discussion with myself, 4 scholars, and an open Bible, diving into all angles of this important topic. I hope you’ll watch on The Kirk Cameron Show!) But this view of his is not new and has been considered a heresy for thousands of years. It is a view held by the cults like the Seven Day Adventists and the Jehovah’s Witnesses. His recent conversion from Dispensationalism to Reformed theology has changed his definition of biblical words. He now sees the words like “Death” and “Destruction” to mean an end of all things. Calvinists believe that when you and I are dead in sins, we are inanimate just like a corpse. Again, this is not how the Bible approaches it. What does happen to those in Hades that are suffering now? The Bible tells us...

The Second Death

Revelation 20:11-15

One of the lessons you need to learn to be a follower of God's word is to not bring preconceived notions and definitions into it. We must derive all our definitions from the Bible itself. What happens to the dead after the White Throne Judgement? What is this second death?

We do know that Jesus mentions this Lake of Fire....

Matthew 25:41

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels’”

In the sheep and the goat judgement that will happen at the end of the Tribulation Period Jesus will separate those that are saved from those that are lost to go into the Kingdom Age. Those on his left will go into this place of Judgement. For how long?

Matthew 25:46

“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Do you see it? The same Greek word is used for the saved as well as the damned. If our life is forever so is theirs. No way around it. It is the same in the Old Testament...

Daniel 12:2

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.

We read about the first two people to be thrown into this final place...

Revelation 19:20

Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

They are alive when they enter and a thousand years later...

Revelation 20:10

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Again, we see people in the lake of fire burning forever and ever. It is what the Bible says. It is the truth and any other view must be rejected. My final question to someone who still wants to think the dead in the lake of fire will just cease to exist is: “who are these when we reach the eternal state?” ...

Revelation 22:14-15

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

Who are those people? Those that are forever separated from God to live in outer darkness also known as the lake of fire. Can you now see the desperation of rich man?

Luke 16:27-28

“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.’”

The problem is it's too late. There are no second chances. The Bible plainly says...

Hebrews 9:27

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment

And that is how Abraham answers...

Luke 16:31

“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.’ ”

Now my wife has been stumped on how Abraham could know about Moses and the Prophets since they came after his death. But we see in the story that he is aware of the Rich Man, Lazarus and the Rich Man's brothers. It would seem that those in paradise know about what is happening out here. Can't be dogmatic but nothing to split a church about.

An interesting point is that one did rise from the dead and his name just so happens to be Lazarus. What happened then?

John 12:9-11

Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

So, just as Abraham said happened. They have rejected the word of God. They have rejected the Messiah. Jesus said this to the same folks in our story today...

John 5:39

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

The Pharisees trusted in their works and despised Jesus for saying otherwise. Their destiny is sealed as they do not repent. You too need to think about these things and remember that there are no second chances.

Hebrews 9:27-28

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

If you are breathing, you still have an opportunity. Don't make the same mistake as the Pharisees and place your faith and trust in Christ today.