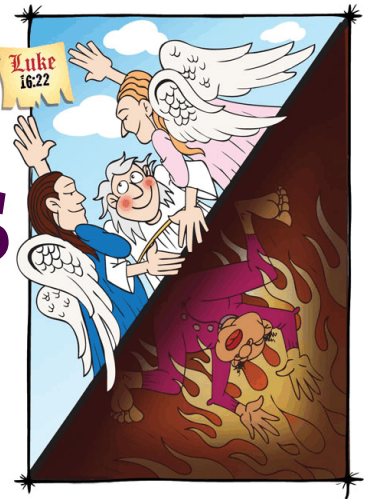


# The Rich Man And Lazarus

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## (Cries Of The Damned)



This is one of the most stirring passages in the entire Bible. Jesus tells us about an **actual dialogue** that occurred on the other side of the grave between a person who died and went to the **fiery side of hades** and Abraham himself who was **in comfort** on the other side of an impassable gulf.

That dialogue provides invaluable information on the afterlife. Among other truths that are reinforced are a clear **denial** of **soul sleep**, **annihilation of the wicked dead**, **purgatory**, **reincarnation**, **transmigration**, **universal salvation** for all, etc. Moreover, **hell is not the grave**. Even though millions of people believe in such false teachings, they are all refuted by Jesus' teaching found in this passage at Luke 16:19-31. Furthermore, this teaching tells us something about the afterlife that is not as clear anywhere else, that is, **the righteous can see the wicked suffer in fire** and **the wicked can see the righteous in comfort**. Also, the wicked can recognize the righteous there. You are about to be stirred. Jesus taught:

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and **lived in luxury every day** (Luke 16:19).

That rich man, when on earth during his *test* (James 1:12), was dressed like a king and knew *luxury* daily. He must have had big meals with many delicious selections and plural servants to wait on him. The crumbs that fell to the floor from his feasts were enticing to humble Lazarus.

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 (Luke 16:20,21).

On the extreme other end of the financial spectrum was a hungry, sickly beggar, named Lazarus. (It is understood that he was *righteous* because he went to the same side of the gulf as righteous Abraham.) While on earth Lazarus was in such a horrible situation physically that even dogs came and licked his sores.

In Jesus' teaching he spoke of real people and gave their names. This teaching can not be a *parable* as some (like the Jehovah's Witnesses) say in their effort to protect their own faulty theology.

The best place in that whole area for Lazarus to beg for food was at the gate of that rich man. Maybe the rich man gave him the scraps and crumbs that were left over each day, but we can't be sure. Unsaved people can do kind things at times (Acts 28:2).

Lazarus was laid at his gate. *Laid* is the same Greek word as in Mt. 13:42 and can mean *thrown*. In other words, Lazarus was carried to and thrown down by that rich man's gate. Those were the best people he could get to carry him there. Luke 16:22 reads:

The time came when **the beggar died** and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. **The rich man also died** and was buried.

Both died physically. For Lazarus the trouble and sorrow (Psa. 90:10) of this life, especially that poverty stricken experience, were now past tense forever.

But the time also came for the rich man to die, which ended his on-going daily party of self-indulgence. His death was a rude and painful awakening.

The rich man's body was *buried* (and would rot in the ground) but nothing is mentioned about Lazarus being buried. But more important than a burial, Lazarus was carried by plural *angels* to Abraham's bosom. (The real person is not the flesh and blood part that we see with the natural eye. That part of Lazarus was left behind. However, his spirit and soul were taken to Abraham's side and safety by God's angels.)

In **hell**, where he was in **torment**, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side (Luke 16:23).

The rich man died and went to hell. **Hell came after his physical death**. **This life is not hell**, like some say. To be more precise, the actual Greek word is *hades* and it was there that he was in *torment*. He also saw Abraham off in the distance and the beggar Lazarus was next to him. It was the soul and/or spirit of Lazarus that was recognized by him. This shows, in the afterlife, we will resemble our physical appearance now (without the emphasis on the outer appearance).

### The Rich Man Speaks The First Time

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**" (Luke 16:24).

The rich man, who was in misery, initiated this conversation with Abraham. That rich man was Jewish. We know this because he called Abraham, *father*. On his side of the impassable gulf was **fire that produces torment and agony**, which he was experiencing. There is **no evidence** that he would ever find relief or get out of that situation.

The rich man's words are probably typical for other damned souls. Again, the cries of the damned **humbly** ask for water from someone's finger. That once rich man, who **left all of his wealth behind**, was now asking for *pity*. (Jesus taught those that are proud will be humbled.) When he lived he probably rarely, if ever, had to ask any person, in that same way, for anything tangible. **His humble request now for a meager drop or two of water was denied**. When that rich man was alive he feasted daily, but now he longed for the most basic creature comforts. NOTE: He didn't even ask for cold water or a glass of water, but just a drop of water to cool his tongue. Also, **his first request was for himself**.

### Abraham Responds in Luke 16:25,26

... "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 fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us."

The righteous in Jesus' teaching could see the wicked in torment and agony in fire. The wicked dead can *remember* their earthly life and how they lived it apart from God. **He was not having a nightmare.**

## The Rich Man Speaks The Second Time

He answered, "Then **I beg you**, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have **five brothers**. Let him **warn them**, so that they will not also come to **this place of torment**" (Luke 16:27,28).

People who go to hell don't want their loved ones to follow in their steps to hell also. **If you had loved ones that died in their sins, be assured they do not want you in hell with them.** They want someone to warn you, as you are at this very moment, about the serious danger you are in. Your entire future beyond the grave will be one of regret, misery, pain, etc., unless you **repent**. **You will not escape hell while in your sins.** This is fact.

**Hell is no party** like some ignorant people say in our day. People joke about hell, but it is no laughing matter. The rich man wasn't in a party situation. He was in agony and there wasn't any pain medicine to bring relief for him. That rich man was now interested in evangelism and souls being saved, which was probably of zero interest while he was alive. He loved his five brothers and wanted to see them get saved from the place of fire he was in. **He knew their greatest and most important need was to repent.**

[*Repent* means to *turn from wickedness*. We can be certain this is the meaning by comparing two Scriptures. Jesus said the Ninevites **repented** at the preaching of Jonah (Mt.12:41). We actually read about that event in Jonah 3:10 where it says **they turned from their evil ways**.]

**The rich man's second request was also denied.** This one was for his own family members—his brothers. He wanted them to be *warned* by Lazarus, who they probably knew had died. Just like his first request, the once-rich man asked for Lazarus to be sent to do his wishes. NOTE: Now, **Lazarus didn't have to be carried around, as those physical afflictions and restrictions end upon death.**

**Hell is not just real if you think it is real.** The rich man probably didn't believe that the type of hell he was experiencing existed. Moreover, he certainly didn't think he would go there and suffer as he was. Yet in spite of this he still found himself in such a horrible and real place.

## Abraham Responds Again

Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them" (Luke 16:29).

What a powerful endorsement that statement is for the Word of God being preached and the need to follow its life-giving message. Let people in our hour act upon the message of the Bible.

## The Rich Man Speaks The Third And Final Time

"No, father Abraham," he said, "but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will **repent**" (Luke 16:30).

His rebellious know-it-all attitude surfaces. He is disagreeing with Abraham about which is more convincing. He apparently realizes the reason why he is in fiery torment—he didn't *repent*. This is why he knew his brothers needed to repent, that is, to prevent them from going to this same horrible, nightmare-like place. What an important truth which refutes those who have been deceived into thinking one can be forgiven without repentance.

NOTE: That fire was not a sin-purging fire (as taught by *Purgatory*) and like many have been deceived to believe in.

## Abraham's Last Words

... If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

**The written Scriptures are more convincing to bring about repentance than someone coming back from the grave.** This would even include the so-called near death experiences of our day, which do not promote turning from wickedness.

Why did Jesus give the Luke 16:19-31 teaching? Perhaps his audience will reveal the answer. The Pharisees were present and were already

*sneering* at Jesus before he taught about the rich man and Lazarus. We learn something else about them that is important:

The Pharisees, who **loved money**, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus (Luke 16:14).

In their presence, **Jesus taught about the rich man, who probably also loved money like the Pharisees.** What good did his wealth do him beyond the grave? It didn't spare him from such a painful future. Hence, riches are not nearly as important as many exalt them to be. In other words, money won't get you into the kingdom of God. Only **righteousness** will:

Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but **righteousness delivers from death** (Prov. 11:4).

## Final Points To Ponder

➤ Lazarus was not saved because he was a *beggar* or *had bad physical health*. Sins are not forgiven in these ways. **Jesus' cleansing blood alone can wash our sins away**, which we contact upon *repentance* and *faith* in him. **Jesus is our only hope of salvation** and you must cleave to him or be lost. If you are *ashamed* of him, he'll be *ashamed* of you (Luke 9:26).

➤ God looks inwardly on the *heart* and not on the outward appearance. Lazarus was probably dirty and stinky yet God received him into his kingdom because of his *pure* heart. The rich man was probably clean outwardly, but went to the **fires of hades** because of his **sins** and spiritual defilement.

➤ That unnamed rich man might have thought he was basically a good person, one who never hurt anyone, that did the best he could and believed in God. If that was the case, he didn't recognize his lost condition (like many today) and therefore didn't know he needed to *repent* for salvation's sake.

➤ On the other hand he could have thought he had plenty of time to *repent* and died much earlier than he thought he would, like some reading this will. ➤ Perhaps that rich man heard about God many times, but simply didn't want the righteous life. In that case, he could have died abruptly and without warning, which happens every day. See Proverbs 29:1.

➤ Maybe that rich man planned to repent on his death bed. People who plan to *repent* on their death beds need to take warning. There may not be time to repent in the end. You may die in a car crash the next time you go for a ride, or in your sleep the next time you lay down.

➤ In his teachings, Jesus repeatedly warned people about hell and the sufferings there. This is vital information so we can properly plan for eternity.

➤ Remember: **You are a heartbeat away from heaven or hell** as you read this. **Where will you spend eternity?** Will you be with that rich man and other *wicked* people in *fiery torment* 100 years from now, or with Lazarus and other *righteous* people in a *paradise* environment?

➤ That rich man is still in *fiery torment* as you read this important message. He would give anything to have the chance you have *now* to **repent and place a submissive faith in Jesus** for salvation. It is too late forever for him. He has no more hope—no more opportunities. His time ran out and he died unrepentant and in his sins. He died spiritually dead and lost like the majority of people do. See Mt. 7:13,14.

➤ When alive that rich man might have thought he was successful and a pretty smart person, but now from the other side of the grave, he knows how deceived and what a *fool* he really was. He wasted his life and his money. **He wasn't rich towards God.**

➤ There will be **one last opportunity** for you to *repent and turn to Jesus* and this might be it. (The rich man has one last opportunity too.)

➤ If you are unsaved, you are like his five brothers **on the road to hell**. You need to *repent* more desperately than you need food, water, sleep, shelter, etc. **Your soul is your most valuable possession and it is in the greatest danger that exists.** To get out of this danger you must get forgiven of your sins. Sincerely ask God for mercy and forgiveness now. **Turn from all sin and place 100% of your faith [trust] in the Lord Jesus** for your salvation and **follow him faithfully until death.**

➤ If you were once saved in the past but since fell away, **you too need to repent for salvation's sake** and reverse your spiritually *lost* and *dead* condition (Luke 15:24,32; James 5:19,20; Rom. 11:19-22). **There is no such thing as eternal security.**

➤ Jesus has the words of *eternal life* (John 6:68). What you do with them is your most important life's decision. It is your choice, but it is also your eternity. **What will you do?**