

§184. Lazarus and the Rich Man - Life After Death

Luke 16:16–17:3a

2026-03-15

Introduction

1. Some think this is not a parable because the name of Lazarus is mentioned. However, compare with parable of good Samaritan where Jerusalem and Jericho is explicitly mentioned. Further, observe that the the connection between the two previous parables.
2. Pharisees derided Jesus because of his previous two parables about riches. Here the Lord is making his allegation more strong by demolition their theory of richness is a sign of blessing/

Exposition

16:19. “There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

1. **Purple:** Very expensive dress imported from Asia. Shows pomp and extravaganza.
2. **Fine linen:** Very expensive under garments imported from Egypt. Shows his comfortable life.
3. **Sumptuously every day:** Daily luxurious lifestyle of this person.
4. **Name of the rich man:** Not worth even mention it.

16:20. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,

1. **Beggar:** Not because of laziness, but because of not able to work. He was **laid** implies someone put him there.

2. **Lazarus:** The name means **Eleazar** meaning, God is my help. The name seems to be a joke. The rich man and the Pharisees might have laughed at him.
3. **Gate:** Not a normal gate; but the gate of a mansion.

16:21. desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

1. **Desiring:** Intense hunger. Might be impossible to have him to see the dining table. Must refer to garbage coming from his mansion.
2. **Dogs:** The only creature shown compassion to him and comforted him. It also shows his pathetic state.

16:22. 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.

1. **Died:** Common for both rich man and Lazarus. But there is interesting contrast.
2. **Beggar died:** No mention of burial. Most likely no great burial. The treatment on the left side; but great reception on the other side. **Carried by** angles indicate the great honor to person. No burial in Jewish culture is treated as curse from God. He was earlier with the company of dogs, and now is in the company of angels.
3. **Abraham's bosom:** Figurative of the great honor he received in heaven.
4. **Rich man Died:** Buried - imagine the kind of burial. No mention of reception on the other side **Burial:** For many; burial is the most important aspect of old age.

16:23. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

1. **Hades:** A reality, but is painful. Apparently, he could see Abraham and Lazarus. May be God permitted a view. He was conscious, able to communicate, has feelings, feels pain.

2. **Lazarus:** One can imagine the shock wave passed through him - his plight and Lazarus glory!

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.’

1. **Father Abraham:** He addresses Abraham as the father of the nation; may not be as the father of faith, but father of his race. Obviously, he was not humbled by his present state: considering Abraham as his father!
2. **Mercy:** He never showed mercy to Lazarus; but now he want mercy from the hand of Lazarus.
3. **Send Lazarus:** Observe he still want Lazarus to serve. Also, he is not repenting of his sin. There is no repentance in Hades.

16:25. 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.

1. **Son:** Called him as the son indicating general relation that he had with all Jews.
2. **Life time received good things:** Reversal of realities. It show for the unsaved, there is nothing better than what they have received will get in Hades. For the saved, nothing worse will happen in heaven. What is better: a short life of evil now verses a long life of evil in eternity.

16:26. 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.’

1. **Gulf:** The second reason why the request cannot be granted. The separation is permanent. Evidently, they can see each other;

16:27. “Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house,

1. **Send him to my father's house:** He is not leaving Lazarus.

16:28. for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'

1. **Five brothers:** What about his wife and children! May be he was having illicit relation; and his real concern is for his family alone.
2. **Illustration:**

16:29. Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

1. **Moses and Prophets:** The supremacy of the Word of God, both the law and prophecies in the old testament.
2. **Hear them:** Obedience to the Word of God is supreme.

16:30. And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

1. **No, father Abraham:** He is correcting the theology of Abraham.
2. **One goes from the dead:** Logic of fallen human being. Spectacular and miracles will trigger faith.

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.' "

1. **No not hear Moses:** If one do not believe in the Spirit inspired divine Word, there is nothing else can make him believe. It is a deception that some kind of supernatural can create faster or better faith.

Application

1. **Rich Vs Poor:** Richness is not necessarily a sign of blessing from God and neither poverty is sign of curse from God.
2. **Salvation is by faith alone:** What Lazarus have done to save? Nothing. Though not mentioned explicitly, he has come to faith.

3. **Now is the time to repent:** Now is the time to repent; even repentance is a grace of God.
4. **Word of God:** It is to be believed, obeyed, and taught to other: This can be done now only.