

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31 (Page 61 in the NT section of the BPB)

April 4, 2021 – Easter Sunday

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Introduction

Easter Sunday is a day of celebration for those who have trusted in Christ to save them from the penalty of their sins. In the passage we are going to look at this morning there a truth that some might be tempted to overlook, that being, that while there will be a resurrection for all people not all people will be part of the resurrection to eternal life. I think in our day and culture just about everyone thinks that everyone is going to go to heaven. Our passage today confronts us with the reality that there are two destinations: a place of eternal joy which we should seek and a place of eternal torment from which we should flee.

Context

This is a story/parable of reversal like the parables of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) and the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14). These parables don't end like one would normally expect them to end.

We should not make the mistake to think that this story contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture where salvation is clearly set forth as a work of God in Christ through His life, death and resurrection. "For by grace that you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Eph. 2:8-10)

Notice the context of our story. 16:1 "...There was a rich man..."; 16:9-13 "...No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." (16:13). 16:14-15 "Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. And He said to them, You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."

Part One - Introduction to the Characters and the Story (16:19-23)

The Rich Man – Life on Earth (v. 19)

His name is not mentioned

Habitually dressed in purple and fine linen

Joyously living in splendor every day

The Poor Man – Life on Earth (vv. 20-21)

Lazarus (God helps me)

Was laid at the rich man's gate

Covered with sores

Longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table

Besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores

The Poor Man – Death and the Afterlife (v. 22a)

The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom;

The Rich Man – Death and the Afterlife (v. 22b-23)

And the rich man also died and was buried.

In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom.

Part Two – Conversation between the Rich Man and Father Abraham (16:24-31)

The Rich Man – First Request (v. 24)

He cried out and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.

Father Abraham – First Response (vv. 25-26)

Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things;
But now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able,

And that none may cross over from there to us.

The Rich Man – Second Request (vv. 27-28)

And he said, Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not come to this place of torment.

Father Abraham – Second Response (v. 29)

They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.

The Rich Man – Third Request (v. 30)

But he said, No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.

Father Abraham – Third Response (v. 31)

But he said to him, If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.

Resurrection Examples:

1. Lazarus – John 11:45-46, 53; 12:9-11
2. Jesus – Matthew 28:11-15

Observations

There is a place of eternal rest and joy and a place of eternal torment and agony.

There is no switching places once we die. Hebrews 9:27-28

God has given us an adequate revelation so that we might know the truth and seek Him.

2 Peter 1:19-21