

AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: “Rich Man and Lazarus” Luke 16

Scripture of Lesson: Luke’s Gospel 16: 19-31

1. *Where we will go after death: Preview of Hades*

A. The rich man went to ‘hades,’ where he was subject to “torment in flame.” [v. 24]

- 1) Hades is a temporary place where dead souls went. Hell is the place where the unrepentant souls go after the ‘white throne’ judgment. However, the devil, the beast and the false prophet are judged as a separate case and cast into ‘lake of fire and brimstone,’ a special place of torment prepared for them and those whose names are not in the book of life.

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. [Rev. 20: 10]

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. [Rev. 20: 11-12]

- 2) The word ‘torment’ is mentioned four times. The “tormented in flame” indicates actual physical pain, mental remorse, and the sense of utter hopelessness. And there is no relief to the torment. [v. 24]
- 3) There is a total separation between Hades and Paradise. [v. 26] There is no mention of an intermediate or transitory place such as ‘purgatory’ in the Scripture. The remorse in Hades is aggravated by the vision of seeing the state of the blessed in Paradise. [v. 23]
- 4) There is no fellowship of the crowd in Hades as commonly believed, but only suffering in torment. [v. 28]
- 5) No arguing with God is allowed in Hades. Your destiny is set at death and there is no change/ revision once you get to your destination. [v. 25, 26, 29, 31] Lord Jesus told us this story to help us understand what is waiting for us beyond death out of His kindness. Sufficient descriptions are given here and no excuse will be granted to those who hear/read the gospel message.

B. Lazarus went to Paradise to be in Abraham’s bosom. [v. 23] In this story, Paradise was a part of Hades where the dead souls went. According to some theologians, the Paradise portion of Hades was moved to Heaven when Lord Jesus was lifted up to Heaven and seated to the right of God based on the following verses:

And Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.” [Luke 23: 43]

But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless, to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. [Phil. 1: 22-24]

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” [Rev. 2: 7]

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. [Rev. 21: 3-4]

2. *What determined their eternal destination?*

A. The rich man lived for wealth, did not wisely use his wealth, and did not know God.

- 1) The rich man did not go to Hades just because he was rich. He did not practice what “Moses and the prophets” taught about “loving God with all your heart, soul, strength and body” and “loving your neighbor as yourself.” There was Lazarus at his gate begging and in torment. Lazarus offered opportunities to the rich man to show his love of God and of brethren. Yet, he lived a life of luxury to show off his wealth but chose to ignore the needs of Lazarus. He believed he was within the promise

of God given to Abraham because he was a Jew. But he did not live as a child of God. His heart had never been converted to belong to God.

- 2) Belatedly, he sought to bring a relief to his tormenting state by having Lazarus bring some water to him. Then, he asked to send Lazarus to his brothers so that they would not come to Hades. In fact, a person named Lazarus did come back from death, but the Pharisees and the Sadducees chose to ignore the message of his resurrection and sought to kill him. They showed the same hatred to God's message when Lord Jesus rose from death.

- B. Lazarus did not go to Paradise because he was a poor beggar. Finding him in Abraham's bosom tells us what kind of person Lazarus was while he was living. His soul became a true child of God during his life. He was a poor beggar, but he served God all his life. People disdained his poor state and only the dogs showed him kindness. When he died, the angels carried his soul to Abraham's bosom. In this story, Lazarus is a type of Christ.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. [Gal 3: 28-28]

3. Lessons from this story:

- A. This is an illustrative story on the parable of the unjust steward. The three lessons of the parable apply.
 - 1) ***Be faithful in your stewardship in caring for the little things in your charge***
 - 2) ***Buy eternal friendship of Jesus Christ by using the material blessings from Him***
 - 3) ***Be totally dedicated to serving God but not the pursuit of material wealth or pleasures***
- B. Let us consider carefully where each of us is traveling to. Our destiny is set by us, not by God, while we live here on the earth. Let us choose wisely and choose Jesus Christ instead of wealth, power and pleasures of flesh and the world.

Topics of Discussion:

1. *What will be 'my' destination when I die?*
2. *What are the assurances of my destiny?*