

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

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A Message From Torment

Luke 16:19-31

These passages in Luke 16 tell us of two men. Two men that were different in life, different in death and different in eternity. In life one was rich and the other poor. One had everything while the other was a beggar. In death one was buried. Probably in style. The other was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. What happened to his body? Probably filled a pauper's grave. He, most likely, was buried by society. In eternity the difference in these two men is even greater. One is saved, the other is lost. One in comfort the other in torment. One happy and blessed the other wishing for a drop of water. This is a tragic story. Yet, it is being retold every day. Today there are millions of people that are living the life of joy and ease, but who are not prepared for eternity. They, like the rich man of the text, are headed for a horrible future. There are many lessons we can learn from this incident. Notice some of them:

I. One man was saved, and one was lost. This refutes the doctrine of universal salvation.

The idea that everyone will eventually be saved is very popular, but untrue. This incident recorded in Luke shows that one man was saved, the other lost, hence everyone is not going to be saved. Jesus plainly taught that "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father in heaven." Matthew 7:21. Jesus further taught "many" enter the "broad way" that leads to destruction Matthew 7:13-14. Revelations 20:15 tells us that "whosoever was not found in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." Friend, don't be deceived into believing that you will eventually go to heaven regardless of the kind of life you live. It's not true.

II. Neither of these men ceased to exist when they died. This refutes the doctrine of materialism.

The idea that when we die, we are like Rover the dog, dead all over, is simply not a bible idea. Man continues to live after death as this incident proves. To believe that we should "eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die" and give no heed to our eternal destiny, is pure folly. All who do will be like the rich man in our story. They will survive the dying experience to stand before God. What then? Paul wrote in 2Corinthians 4:16 "for this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." The outward man (the body) perishes. The inward man (the spirit) lives on. In fact the wise man said long ago in Eccl. 12:7 that the body returned to dust and the spirit to God who gave it. Your spirit will not be put in the grave. You must stand before God someday and account for your life. Are you ready? Have you made preparation?

III. One pleads for mercy, and is told no. This refutes the doctrine of a second chance.

If we had a second chance, no one would be lost. The rich man of our text would have gladly converted, but it was too late. The truth is there is no second chance. Preparation for eternity must be made while we are alive. The rich man failed to do that. In torment he begged for a drop of water, but could not have it. He was told that a great gulf separated him from the beggar and Abraham. That gulf had no bridge. It could not be spanned. In other words, no second chance. The scripture says "behold now is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation." 2Corinthians 6:2.

IV. One wanted to deliver a message to the living, but was told that could not be. This refutes the doctrine of spiritualism.

Some claim to be able to communicate with the dead. Those in sorrow are often driven to try anything in order to talk to or hear from some departed loved one. Such are nothing but a hoax. This rich man wanted to get a message to his five brothers who were still alive. "Send Lazarus back" was his request. Abraham told him this could not be. "They have Moses and the prophets," he was told. He protested and said "if one goes from the dead, they will hear him." But Abraham assured him that if they would not hear Moses and the prophets they would not listen to one even if he rose from the dead. Today people have the bible, yet refuse to believe and obey it. Would they hear one who rose from the dead? No. How do I know? Well, Jesus rose from the dead and they won't listen to Him. Communications from the dead are not possible. We need to read our bibles and believe it and obey its teachings.

V. God refused to send one from the dead. This refutes the doctrine of miraculous powers separate and apart from the word of God.

Everybody seems to be looking for a miracle. "Expect a miracle" we are told. In this case God simply said "they have Moses and the prophets." In other words they have the bible. They had the writings of the prophets and Moses, and they rejected those. Today people who reject the word of God, would not listen even if Jesus or Paul were here talking personally. Those who refuse to believe and obey the written word, would not accept the oral teachings of the same people. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation according to Romans 1:16. No where does the bible affirm that miracles are God's power to save. Paul affirms in 1Cor. 15 that we are saved by the gospel. Not by miracles, not by signs and wonders, but by the gospel.

VI. The rich man's brothers could hear Moses and the prophets. This refutes the doctrine of "elect" and "non-elect."

The denominational doctrine of predestination teaches that God entered into a contract with Satan in the beginning agreeing that certain people would be saved and certain would be lost. And the number of both is so fixed that it can neither be increased nor diminished. Not that is a scary doctrine. It essentially says I have no say in my salvation. If I have been predestinated to death, then I cannot be saved. If I have been elected to eternal life, then I cannot be lost. Now notice this. If this doctrine is true, then what good would it do for the

rich man's brothers to hear Moses and the prophets? If they have been predestined to be saved, then they already are whether they hear Moses and the prophets or not. If they have been predestined to be lost, hearing Moses and the prophets will do them no good at all. So I must conclude that this doctrine is false, because the bible plainly says these people could hear and if they did and changed, it would make a difference. The truth is anyone can be saved by the gospel if they will believe and obey. Jesus said "come unto me ALL ye that labor and are heavy laden..." Mt. 11:28. he Lord charged his disciples to preach to "every creature." Mark 16:15 Every creature is just that every single one. No one has been elected to be lost.

VII. The destiny of the rich man was torment, the destiny of Lazarus was comfort. There was a great gulf between them, that they could not cross. This refutes the doctrine of purgatory.

The doctrine of purgatory essentially teaches that after one dies, if he is lost, his loved ones can pray or have someone pray him out of purgatory. First of all, the word purgatory is not in the bible. So far as the word of God is concerned, there is no purgatory. It is an idea of man, a figment of his imagination. If the rich man could be prayed out of purgatory his five brothers did not know it, he did not know it, and Abraham did not know it, for none of them mentioned it. If you are depending on such a thing, you are deceived. You need to awaken and realize that your only hope of salvation is to act in obedience to the gospel, while time is still on your side.

VIII. This is a message that testifies to the tragedy of being lost.

I cannot tell you today how awful it will be to be lost. To never enjoy the joys of heaven and not be able to spend eternity with God and the redeemed of all ages. To writhe in the suffering of an unending hell. To suffer the flames of God's wrath for all eternity. Think of it friend are you willing to lose your soul are you willing to risk being lost forever? Do you want to burn in the fires of hell? Do you want to be separated from God and the redeemed of all ages for all eternity? Surely not. Why not obey the gospel today. Believe on Jesus Hebrews 11:1-2, repent of your sins Luke 13:3, confess your faith in Christ Acts 8:37 and be baptized in water for the remission of sins Acts 2:38. Act today before it is too late.