

**Subject: *After Death, Then What?***

**Scripture: *Luke 16:19-31***

This story is a rare look at what happens after death. It is a real story, not a parable. We know the beggar's name. Jesus describes everything as a true story and not like a parable. Books have been written about life after death. Some of these books describe what heaven is like and what hell is like by those who have supposedly been there and seen it. We need to read and study the Bible and leave it at that. God has revealed the Scriptures to us. Everything else is speculation or imagination.

### **THE DESCRIPTION OF THESE MEN**

We see a certain rich man and a certain beggar named Lazarus. The first man was a prosperous man. The second man was a pitiful man. The rich man wore the finest clothes and ate the best food. The Bible says he "fared sumptuously" (lived in luxury) every day. The beggar named Lazarus couldn't walk, suffered greatly, and was starving. The only attention he received was from the dogs.

Had you asked people who knew them they would have said that the rich man was blessed and the beggar was not blessed, but that was only in appearance. We need to understand there is nothing wrong with being rich and there is nothing spiritual about being poor. We just need to remember that whether a person is rich or poor, this is only temporary.

### **THE DEATH OF THESE MEN**

Both men died. ***Hebrews 9:27*** *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.* We don't know how we will die or where we will die or when we will die, but we know that we will all die. ***Proverbs 22:2*** *The rich and poor meet together: the LORD is the maker of them all.* One day the philosopher Diogenes stood next to Alexander the Great near a pile of human bones. Diogenes said, "I can't tell the difference between the bones of your ancestors and the bones of the slaves." He made a powerful point.

The Bible says there is a time to be born and a time to die. Death is "the house appointed for all living." The Bible says the wages of sin is death. ***Romans 5:12*** *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Every hospital, every nursing home, every funeral home, every cemetery is a reminder that death is certain. See ***Luke 12:16-21***. This farmer was a fool because he was not prepared to die. He gave no thought to his soul. Think about these statistics:

- Worldwide, 3 people die every second
- 180 people die every minute
- Nearly 11,000 die every hour
- More than 250,000 die every day
- All of them go either to Heaven or Hell

Death is not the end. It is the beginning of the next life in eternity. Some people think they can end it all by taking their own life. They will find out that death is not the end. C. S. Lewis saw a grave marker with this inscription: "Here lies an atheist—all dressed up and no place to go." Lewis said, "I bet he wishes that were so."

## THE DESTINY OF THESE MEN

The beggar went to heaven and the rich man went to hell. Lazarus was taken to Abraham's bosom (vs. 22, 23), a Jewish way of referring to heaven. It is also called paradise. He was comforted. The rich man went to hell. It is a place of sight, a place of suffering, a place of sadness, and a place of separation.

The Bible teaches that Heaven is a real place of peace and joy for the saved and Hell is a real place of punishment for the unsaved. The word translated "Hell" here is *Hades*, which means "the unseen world." Jesus had more to say about Hell than He said about Heaven. Jesus told us what Hell is like:

Hell is a place of unbearable torment – Four times we find the word "torment" (vs. 23, 24, 25, 28). Jesus teaches us three important things about people when they die: 1) they still exist; they are not annihilated 2) they are conscious; and 3) they have some kind of physical body and these bodies are real; they can be comforted or tormented

Hell is a place of unquenchable fire – ***Matthew 25:41*** *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:* The same word used for everlasting fire is used of everlasting life. The torment is never ending. I saw a bumper sticker that really shocked me. It said, "Heaven don't want me, and Hell is afraid I'll take over." That kind of statement shows ignorance and arrogance.

Hell is a place of unforgettable memories – "Son, remember..." People in hell will remember all the opportunities they had in this life. They will be tormented by regrets for all eternity. They will remember the goodness of God was leading them to repentance, but they never repented. They will remember the truth of the Bible, but they never submitted and obeyed.

Hell is a place of unchangeable separation – "a great gulf fixed" – The Bible describes hell as a place of "outer darkness." Outer darkness is farthest from the light. The last thing every person in Hell will hear are the words of Jesus, ***Matthew 7:23*** *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* People in Hell will be separated forever from the Lord and all that is good. To die as a Christian is to be absent from the body and present with Lord. To die as a lost soul is to be absent from the body and absent from the Lord.

Hell is a place of undesirable companions – ***Matthew 25:41*** *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* ***Revelation 21:8*** *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

Hell is a place of unquestionable justice – We have noticed what the rich man said, but think about what he did not say. He didn't say a word in his own defense. There is no attempt to justify himself. He knew that he deserved to be there.

What is the point of this Scripture? Surely it is not given just to satisfy our curiosity. Three things we should take away:

- Now is the time to hear and obey God's Word (vs. 29)
- Now is the time to repent (vs. 30)
- Now is the time to be persuaded (vs. 31)

The facts about death and about heaven and hell should remind us just how important it is to do the right things now while we have the opportunity.

Evangelist Billy Sunday asked: “Why are so few people coming into the Kingdom? I will tell you why. There is not a definite effort put forth to persuade a definite person to receive a definite Savior at a definite time, and that definite time is now.”