

“The End Time Dimension Of The Parables”

Lesson #4 - The Rich Man and Lazarus, Part 2

Focus: “The Bible is the fully inspired Word of God. It is the infallible revelation of His will. It is the authoritative revealer of doctrine, and it is the trustworthy record of God’s acts in history. Prayerfully and humbly read and study the Bible more. For in it we will find hope for every crisis. But more importantly, we will find our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who died to redeem us from our sins.” ref. Psalm 119:142; Isaiah 8:20; 41:21-29; Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4; 24:25-27, 32, 44-49; John 3:16-17; 5:39; 8:58; 17:17; 1 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Peter 1; 2 Peter 1:16-21

READ: Luke 16:19-31; John 8:37-39; John 11:45-53; John 12:9-10,19; Matthew 15:21-28; *Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 260-271, Ellen G. White*

Review: At this point it would be well to study the following Scriptures which unequivocally teach the the wicked will be cast into the fire when Jesus comes, not at the moment of death: **Matt. 25:31-32; Mk. 9:43-48; Jn. 12:48; Rev. 20:7-9; 20:11-15; 2 Pet. 3:7; 3:12-14; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 1:1-7.** What does the story explicitly state about the rich man? “the rich man also died and was buried.” (Luke 16:22)

The text is explicit. The rich man not only died, but was also buried. Now, the Bible says that when a person dies, their body returns to the dust (Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 12:7). This being the case, what is the rich man doing in hell with all his body parts? The story tells us he had eyes (Luke 16:23) and a tongue (Luke 16:24). On the other hand, Lazarus is said to have fingers after he goes to the Bosom of Abraham (Luke 16:24). In Mark 9:43-48 we are told that the sinner’s whole body will be cast into hell (see also, Matthew 5:29-30) so this cannot happen at death. The fact is that if both the rich man and Lazarus have body parts, and if the body is not cast into hell until the end of the age, then this must be describing what will happen at the end of the age and not what took place at the moment of death!¹

The problem with body parts on hell, has led Robert Morey, a staunch defender of the immortality of the soul and the eternal torment of the wicked at the moment of death, to confess: “Everyone understood that these parables and dialogues did not literally take place. It was

¹ The End Time Dimension of the Parables, #4, p. 28-29, by Pastor Stephen Bohr, SecretsUnsealed.org

understood that the rabbis used imaginative stories and dialogues as a teaching method. It was understood by all that these dialogues never took place. . . He [Jesus] was merely using the dialogue method to get across the concept that there is no escape from torment, no second chance, and we must believe the Scriptures in this life unto salvation." (Robert Morey, *Death and the Afterlife*, p. 85)

So, the only passage in the **Bible** which appears to teach eternal torment at the moment of death is, admittedly, an event which never took place!

Can the Parable be Taken Literally? - Continued

6. According to the **Bible**, where will the **angels take the faithful when Jesus comes again**? "And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (**Matthew 24:31**)

Note 1: In the parable, Lazarus was taken to the bosom of Abraham by the **angels**, but the **Bible** tells us that the **righteous will be caught up by the angels to Jesus** (see, **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; John 14:1-3**).

7. According to the parable, was the rich man able to communicate with Abraham after he died? "And he [the rich man] cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me... But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things. . . ." (**Luke 16:24-25**) see **Matthew 6:1-21**

Note 2: **Deuteronomy 18:10-11** strictly forbids the communication between the living and the dead. Are we to believe that **righteous** dead people can communicate with wicked dead people? Spiritualists believe this but certainly not Christians! see **1 Sam. 28:1-25; Isa. 8:1-22**

8. What does the **Bible** explicitly teach about the dead? "For the living know that they shall die but the dead know not any thing." (**Ecclesiastes 9:5**) see **Job 7:6-10; Eccl. 9:1-6; Acts 2:29-35**

9. What is meant by the expression, "the bosom of Abraham"? "Now there was leaning on **Jesus' bosom** one of His disciples, whom **Jesus loved**."² (**John 13:23**)

Note 3: The bosom, in the **Bible**, as well as today, refers to a position of particular closeness to someone (see **Isaiah 40:11; John 1:18;**

² *ibid.*, p. 29-30

Deuteronomy 13:6; Deuteronomy 28:54, 56). We will later see that the Jewish nation claimed to be particularly close to Abraham. Yet **Jesus** said that spiritually there was an impossible gulf between Abraham and them. Incidentally, if the parable is to be taken literally, then the “bosom of Abraham” must be literal! How large must that bosom be?!!

What indication do we have that **Jesus** was using satire and irony in this parable? “*And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he might dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.*” (Luke 16:24).

Note 4: How much good would it do for Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool the tongue of the rich man? If this were literal, the water would evaporate before it got to the rich man’s tongue. Obviously, **Jesus** is speaking with irony! Notice also that the rich man trusted Abraham to receive mercy instead of the LORD. ref. Ps. 146:3

The First Application of the Parable: The Covetous Rich and the Faithful Poor

1. What is the central theme of this parable? “In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, **Christ** shows that in this life men decide their eternal destiny. During probationary time the grace of God is offered to every soul. But if men waste their opportunities in self-pleasing, they cut themselves off from everlasting life. No after probation will be granted them. By their own choice they have fixed an impassable gulf between them and their God.” (COL, p. 260.1)
2. What contrast is drawn in this parable? “This parable draws a contrast between the rich who have not made God their dependence, and the poor who have made God their dependence.” (COL, p. 261.1)
3. The story does not say that the rich man mistreated Lazarus. What, then, was the sin of the rich man? “But he [the rich man] was selfishly indifferent to the needs of his suffering brother.” (COL, p. 261.1) This is not the sin of commission, but the sin of omission!!
4. What is the essence of all idolatry? “All covetousness is condemned as idolatry.” (COL, p. 261.3) This is corroborated in **Colossians 3:5**³: “*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;*

³ *ibid.*, p. 30

fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” see 1 Samuel 15:22-23

Note 5: If the litmus test for idolatry were applied to the church today, how many idolaters would there be in the pews?

5. Why did **Jesus** use this theologically erroneous parable? “In this parable Christ was meeting the people on their own ground. The doctrine of a conscious state of existence between death and the resurrection was held by many of those who were listening to Christ’s words. The Saviour knew of their ideas, and He framed His parable so as to inculcate important truths though these preconceived opinions.” (COL, p. 263.2) *Matt. 15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-31*
6. What did **Jesus** mean by the expression “a great gulf fixed”? “Thus Christ represented the hopelessness of looking for a second probation. This life is the only time given to man in which to prepare for eternity.” (COL, p. 263.3) *ref. Lk. 12:42-59; Heb. 9:24-28*
7. Whom did the rich man place above God? “He did not pray to God, but to Abraham. Thus he showed that he placed Abraham above God, and that he relied on his relationship to Abraham for salvation.” (COL, 263.4) *see I Sam.13:1-14; 1 Sam.15:1-35; Jn.8:33-47*
8. How do our privileges relate to our responsibilities? “Man’s responsibilities are proportionate to his opportunities and privileges.” (COL, p. 265.4) *Luke 12:48* corroborates this principle.

Closing: How can we lay up treasures beside the throne of God? “Far better might he lay up his money beside the throne of God, by using it to do good. Death cannot make any man poor who thus devotes himself to seeking eternal riches. But the man who hoards his treasure for self can not take any of it to heaven.” (COL, p. 266.1) *ref. Luke 12:13-40*

Note 6: See the Biblical background to this idea in *Matt 6:19-34, Matt. 7:1-29; Matt. 8:1-34; Matt. 9:1-38; Matt. 10:1-42; Matt. 11:1-30; Matt. 12:1-50; Matt. 13:1-58; Matt. 14:1-36; Matt. 15:1-39; Matt. 16:1-28; Matt. 17:1-27; Matt. 18:1-35; 19:1-30; Matt. 20:1-34; 21:1-9*. What shall we be able to carry to the heavenly courts? “Money cannot be carried into the next life; it is not needed there; but the good deeds done in winning souls to Christ are carried to the heavenly courts.”⁴ (COL, p. 266.2)

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 30-31

Give Of Your Best To The Master

by Howard B. Grose

1. Give of your best to the master,
Give of the strength of your youth;
Throw your soul's fresh, glowing ardor
Into the battle for truth.
Jesus has set the example -
Dauntless was He, young and brave;
Give Him your loyal devotion,
Give Him the best that you have.

Refrain

*Give of your best to the master,
Give of the strength of your youth;
Clad in salvation's full armor,
Join in the battle for truth.*

2. Give of your best to the Master,
Give Him first place in your heart;
Give Him first place in your service,
Consecrate every part.
Give, and to you shall be given -
God His beloved Son gave;
Gratefully seeking to serve Him,
Give Him the best that you have.
3. Give of your best to the Master,
Naught else is worthy His love;
He gave Himself for your ransom,
Have up His glory above;
Laid down His life without murmur,
You from sin's ruin to save;
Give Him your heart's adoration,
Give Him the best that you have.