

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✦ THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

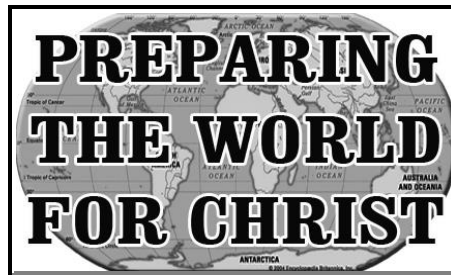
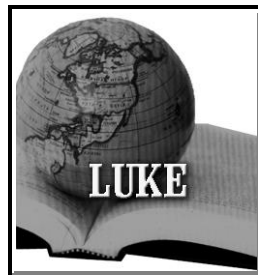
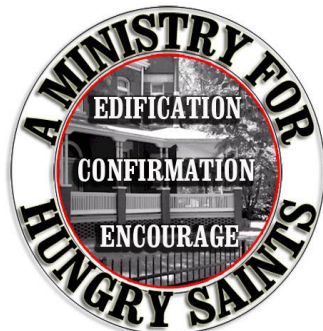
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

LESSON NUMBER 52

COMMENTARY ON: 16:19-31

LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN

Jesus delivers what many suppose was a parable – but a parable never provides the names of people included in it. Rather people are referred to as “a sower” (Matt 13:3), “a man” (Matt 13:24), “a woman” (Matt 13:33), “a certain householder” (Matt 21:33), “a certain king” (Matt 22:2), “a certain man” (Mk 12:1), “another servant” (Mk 12:4), “a judge” (Lk 18:2), “a widow” (Lk 18:3), “a certain rich man” (Lk 12:16), and “a certain nobleman” (Lk 19:11). Jesus did speak of particular individuals, but not in parabolic form: “Noah” (Matt 24:37) “Abraham” (Matt 8:11), “Jonah” (Matt 12:39), “Isaiah” (Matt 13:14), “the Queen of the south” (Matt 12:42), etc. So far as the record is concerned, Jesus never developed a fictitious story using the specific names of people. This would violate His nature, which includes Him being “the Truth.”

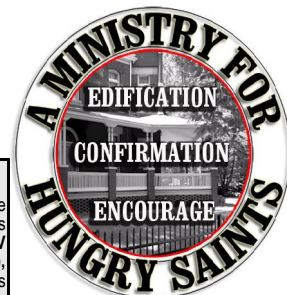


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke.3/3/17

Lesson Number 52



54 VERSIONS OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES

ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB =Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV =English Majority Text (2002); ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ETH = Etheridge Translation (1849); ETRV = Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), NIRV=New Int'l Readers Version (1998); ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LEW = Lewis Translation (1896); LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MGI = Peshitta Translation (2006); MIT =Idiomatic Version; MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NOY = George Noyes Bible (1869); NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), ROT = Rotheram Bible (1999); RPTE = Revised Patriarchal Greek Orthodox New Testament; RSV=Revised Standard Version (1962), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), TS2009=The Scripture, 2009; WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

FRIBERG; LOUW-NIDA; LIDDELL SCOTT; THAYER; VGNT GREEK DICTIONARY; GINGRICH, DANKER

A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN

Luke 16:19 "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: ²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, ²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; ²³ And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴ And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. ²⁵ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. ²⁶ And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. ²⁷ Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: ²⁸ For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. ²⁹ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ³⁰ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. ³¹ And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. Luke 16:19-31

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Jesus delivers what many suppose was a parable – but a parable never provides the names of people included in it. Rather people are referred to as “a sower” (Matt 13:3), “a man” (Matt 13:24), “a woman” (Matt 13:33), “a certain householder” (Matt 21:33), “a certain king” (Matt 22:2), “a certain man” (Mk 12:1), “another servant” (Mk 12:4), “a judge” (Lk 18:2), “a widow” (Lk 18:3), “a certain rich man”

(Lk 12:16), and “a certain nobleman” (Lk 19:11). Jesus did speak of particular individuals, but not in parabolic form: “Noah” (Matt 24:37) “Abraham” (Matt 8:11), “Jonah” (Matt 12:39), “Isaiah” (Matt 13:14), “the Queen of the south” (Matt 12:42), etc. So far as the record is concerned, Jesus never developed a fictitious story using the specific names of people. This would violate His nature, which includes Him being “the Truth.”

This is particularly relevant because this account is considered to be a parable by those who promote the idea of “soul-sleeping.” This particular doctrine takes the position that, upon the experience of death, the unseen part of the human makeup “seeps” with the body in the grave, and will remain there in the grave, unconscious, and completely unexpressive until the resurrection of the dead. This is based upon the use of the word “sleep” in

IN ONE OF HIS MATCHLESS PARABLES JESUS GIVES A GLIMPSE OF THE UNSEEN WORLD PRIOR TO THE RESURRECTION – Given O. Blakely

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reference to death – Moses (Deut 31:16), Job (Job 7:21), many (Dan 12:2), David (Acts 13:36); saints who died (1 Cor 15:51; 1 Thess 4:14; 5:10). These references concern the body, not the soul or spirit of man.

This doctrine is also based upon some references to death which suggest inactivity – expressions that were uttered before any revelation of the existence after death was made known.

- ⇒ *"For in death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?"* (Psa 6:5)
- ⇒ *"O LORD, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit."* (Psa 30:3)
- ⇒ *"Shall Thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or Thy faithfulness in destruction?"* (Psa 88:11)
- ⇒ *"What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?"*

Selah." (Psa 89:48)

- ⇒ *"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten."* (Eccl 9:5)
- ⇒ *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."* (Eccl 9:10)

A DEFINITION OF SOUL-SLEEPING

“Soul Sleep,” also known as the doctrine of ‘Conditional Immortality,’ is primarily taught by Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh day Adventists. To be more exact, Jehovah's Witnesses teach ‘soul annihilation.’ This refers to the belief that when we die, the soul ceases to exist. At the future resurrection, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the souls of the redeemed will be recreated.

Seventh-Day Adventists teach true ‘soul sleep,’ meaning after death believers are not conscious of anything and their souls become completely inert until the time of the final resurrection of the dead. During this period of soul sleep, the soul resides in the memory of God.”

Taken from “About Christianity” (<http://christianity.about.com/od/christiandoctrines/f/whatissoulsleep.htm>)

EVIDENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND LEARNING AFTER DEATH

Although the purpose of these texts is not to establish there is consciousness after death, they do reveal that reality.

- ⇒ ABEL IS STILL SPEAKING. *"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."* (Heb 11:4). This means more than the Scriptural record of Him. The point is that the Scriptural record is backed up by Abel, who is living in another realm.

⇒ AT THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS. *"And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him"* (Matt 17:3). Moses died and was buried (Deut 34:5-6). Elijah had been transported to another unseen realm (2 Kgs 2:11-12). Yet, both of these men spoke to Jesus about *"His decease which He would accomplish."* Yet, neither of them spoke of the death of the Messiah while on earth, and there is no record of Elijah saying anything about the Messiah. They gained some knowledge of the Messiah after they died.

⇒ JESUS' ACCOUNT OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS. *"And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom"* (Luke 16:23). This account will be expounded in this lesson.

⇒ JESUS AFTER HE DIED, AND BEFORE HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD. *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water"* (1 Pet 3:19-20). *"For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit"* (1 Pet 4:6).

⇒ SOULS JOHN SAW UNDER THE ALTAR. *"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said*

unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Rev 6:10-11).

⇒ ABSENT FROM THE BODY DOES NOT EQUATE TO SLEEP. *"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to*

be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor 5:8).

⇒ GOD IS NOT THE GOD OF THE DEAD. *"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of*

Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (Matt 22:32). If God is the God of Abraham, and He is not the God of the dead, then Abraham is living – not sleeping, but living.

I will keep these things in mind as we begin expounding this text.

A CERTAIN RICH MAN AND A CERTAIN BEGGAR

Luke 16:19 *"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:²⁰ And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,²¹ And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores."*

Jesus had just finished saying a parable that dealt with preparing for leaving ones stewardship (Lk 16:1-18). The *"unjust steward"* who had wasted his masters goods was commended for making preparation for when he would be thrust out from his stewardship.

Now, Jesus will give an account that will emphasize the value of preparing for the inevitability of death, and the nemesis of a lack of readiness for departing from this world.

THIS IS NOT A PARABLE

Some, especially those who have adopted the soul-sleeping heresy, insist that this is a parable – chiefly because it represents a conscious state after death. In this parable we will be told of:

- ⇒ Consciousness – Lk 16:23
- ⇒ Awareness – Lk 16:23
- ⇒ Remembrance – Lk 16:25
- ⇒ Feelings – Lk 16:25
- ⇒ Knowledge – Lk 16:27
- ⇒ Vision – Lk 16:23
- ⇒ Recognition – Lk 16:23-24
- ⇒ Perception – Lk 16:224
- ⇒ Verbal expression – Lk 16:24-30
- ⇒ Dialog – Lk 16:24-30
- ⇒ Strong desire – Lk 16:24,27,28,30

- ⇒ Learning after death – Lk 16:26,31
- ⇒ Being tormented – Lk 16:24,25,28
- ⇒ Being comforted – Lk 16:25

Additionally, the names of particular individuals are given: Lazarus, and Abraham. Jesus did not specify names in His parables. I take it, therefore, that this is an account of a very real happening.

And there is yet another consideration. I do not recall Jesus ever deliver a word said to be a parable likening the kingdom of God, or good or evil people, to heavenly personalities, or taking place in the heavenly realm, or in eternal environs. The parallels used in Christ's parables were generally things taking place on in the earth, or something in the earth: seeds, fields, a king taking a long journey, an unjust judge, a mustard seed, a fig tree, a vine, etc.

A CERTAIN RICH MAN

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day."

The point of this account is to confirm that riches, fine clothing, and a luxurious life style, of themselves, offer no advantage when it comes time to die. Of course, if this is really the case, then such things ought not to be the major quests of life. Whatever advantages such things hold only apply to life in this world – and this world is not the only world. When the rich man leaves this world, all of his riches, fine apparel, and sumptuous fare will be left behind. None of them will be taken into

the unseen realm. That is because they are not compatible with that realm.

The name of this man is not given, because, so far as eternity is concerned, his identity has been lost. Those in glory will have names (Luke 13:28; Rev 3:12). There is no record of people doomed to hell having names.

A BEGGAR NAMED LAZARUS

"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores."

The point of this account is to substantiate that being a beggar, being full of sores, being hungry, and receiving solace only from friendly animals offer no disadvantage when it comes time to die. The disadvantages and discomfort associated with the condition of Lazarus were only applicable to life in this world.

When he left this world, all of these handicaps were left behind, and none of them will transfer to the place in which he will be relocated. The life he had on the earth was the worst life he ever had – never again to be duplicated.

This account is an inspired commentary on the transitory nature of life in this world, and the lasting nature of life after death. It confirms that the best life sinners have is in this world, and the best life the saved have is in the world to come. Every person has to

choose which realm to emphasize – and a choice is not merely mandatory, it is impossible to avoid. Every person will make a choice.

THE BEGGAR DIED

^{22a} *And it came to pass, that the beggar died . . .*

Jesus now exposes us to some of the things that take place at death. At this point, He deals with those who are recognized by God, and have obtained favor from Him, and those who have not.

THE BEGGAR DIED

Death is common to every person, for *"it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Heb 9:27). As it is written, *"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"* (Rom 5:12). And again, *"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"* (1 Cor 15:22).

When it comes to the matter of death itself, there is no difference between the beggar and the rich man. However, there is a significant difference in their experience and future after death.

GIVING UP THE GHOST

In Scripture, death is frequently described as *"giving up the ghost"* (Gen 25:8,17; 35:29; 49:33; John 3:11; 10:18;13:19; 14:10; Jer 15:9; Lam 1:19; Matt 27:50; Mk 15:37,39; Lk 23:46; John 19:30; Acts 5:5,10; 12:23). Modern versions use the expression, *"breathed his last."*

The expression *"gave up the ghost"* comes from a single Greek word that means, *"To expire, to breathe out one's life,"* ^{THAYER} *to breathe one's last,* ^{FRIBERG} and

the process of dying. ^{LOUW-NIDA}

I do not care for those academic definitions. They are not complete enough. When God created man, *"the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"* (Gen 2:7). The *"breath of life"* is what animates the body, which of itself has no living or productive capacity.

It is the unseen part of man that exits the body at death, removing all bodily functions. When Rachel died, it was described in this manner: *"And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin"* (Gen 35:18).

On one occasion, when a certain widow's son died, she called for Elijah. The prophet *"stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived"* (1 Kgs 17:21-22).

Death, then, occurs when the last breath is breathed – *"the breath of life,"* and the unseen part of man leaves the body. The last thing that is done is breathing out, never again to breathe in – at the last we give out, dismissing, as it was, the unseen part of us.

ANGELIC ACTIVITY

. . . and was carried by the angels . . .

Other versions read, *"and he was carried away by the angels,"* ^{NASB} *"and angels took him,"* ^{BBE} and *"angels transported him."* ^{MRD}

The angels carried Lazarus himself, not merely his soul. He breathed out his last breath, but he himself remained. I understand this to refer to his spirit, although the Holy Spirit does not here make that particular point.

TO ABRAHAM'S BOSOM

. . . into Abraham's bosom. . .

Other versions read, *"to Abraham's side,"* ^{NIV} *"to be with Abraham,"* ^{NRSV} *"to Abraham's breast,"* ^{BBE} *"into Abraham's embrace."* ^{NJB}

In the King James Version the word *"bosom"* occurs forty-one times. It refers to *the front of the body between the arms.* ^{STRONGS} This is the place where a mother holds her little child, and where the gentle embrace of approval is experienced, like John *"leaning on Jesus' bosom"* (John 13:23). As the father of the Jewish nation, it was in Abraham's bosom that Lazarus, formerly a beggar, was made to forget all of the difficulties and hardships he experienced on the earth. That kind of experience will be realized by every begotten son of God. It will be introductory to the greater experience of being forever with Christ.

THE RICH MAN ALSO DIED

^{22b} *. . . the rich man also died, and was buried."*

Other versions read, *"was put in the earth,"* ^{BBE} *was buried in hell,"* ^{DOUAY} (Catholic Version referring to their

heresy of Purgatory).

The rich man's body was not all

there was to the rich man, but it was the best part of him, and therefore the only part of him that was assigned any

dignity in death. This confirmed that the best the rich man experienced took place in the earth. That is how it is with

the wicked, the lost, and the damned. Their best life is in this world, while Lazarus' best life was after his death.

IN HELL HE LIFTED UP HIS EYES

"^{23a} And in hell he lift up his eyes . . ."

"IN HELL"

Other versions read, *"in Hades,"* ^{NKJV} The NIV reads, *"in hell,"* with the foot note "Greek <Hades>." The Greek word for the lake of fire (hell) is "Gheenna." The rich man did not find himself in the lake of fire, for even to this point, no one occupies that realm – not even the devil. That will be populated after the day of judgment (Rev 19:20; 20:10,14,15). Jesus mentioned people being cast into this realm (Matt 5:29,30; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mk 9:43,45,47; Lk 12:5). James also mentions it in James 3:6.

"Hell," in this latter sense, is not a temporal, or holding, place. It is the final place from which no one will ever be delivered. Souls will be delivered from Hades (the "hell" to which the rich man went), when the dead are raised. This is the phenomenon referred to in Revelation 20:13-14: *"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second*

death" (Rev 20:14). "Death," in this case, refers to the grave, where the body is interred, and "hell" refers to hades, where the spirits are held.

From the etymological point of view, "Hades" means "out of sight." ^{STRONGS} In Old English "hell" was a general term, used to denote the realm of departed spirits, whether they were good or evil.

BEING IN TORMENTS

" . . . being in torments."

Other versions read, *"he was in torment,"* ^{NIV} *"being tormented,"* ^{NRSV} *"in great pain,"* ^{BBE} *"suffering terribly,"* ^{NIRV} and *"while suffering tortures."* ^{TS2009}

First, it is obvious that the rich man was not "asleep," or unconscious as soul-sleepers allege – for an unconscious person cannot suffer.

It is also apparent from the use of the word here, that "Hades" is divided into two locations, both of which are mentioned in this account. No such divisions exist in the lake of fire.

If Jesus did not say these words, there are many people who simply

could not believe such a condition exists. It contradicts their idea about the God who manages this domain, and determines who goes where upon their death.

Remember, we are speaking of a place concerning which men have no natural knowledge – none at all. Therefore, human language cannot fully express matters regarding this unseen realm. It surely cannot be couched in a parable, which can only liken things on earth to the deeper matter being addressed.

There are inspired records of individuals coming back FROM the dead, and even speaking:

- ⇨ Jesus (Matt 28:10; Lk 24:17-26; Mk 16:14, etc.)
- ⇨ Samuel (1 Sam 28:8-19)
- ⇨ Moses and Elijah (Matt 17:30-31)
- ⇨ Many saints that rose from the dead when Jesus died and was resurrected (Matt 27:51-53).

However, there is no record of someone speaking FROM the region of the dead to those living on the earth. However, Jesus is now speaking from heaven (Heb 12:25).

ABRAHAM IS SEEN AFAR OFF

"^{23b} . . . and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

I want to emphasize that these are the words of Jesus. I am alleging that Jesus cannot speak of an impossible situation, whether in a parable or in direct teaching. It is impossible for something that cannot exist or take place to be put into parabolic language. The old aphorism applies here, "it is

through the known, and only through the known, that we come to learn of things unknown." What is said here is the report of a real happening, that could not be known if it was not revealed by Jesus.

ABRAHAM SEEN AFAR OFF

" . . . and seeth Abraham afar off . . ."

The text will confirm that the rich

man knew whom he was seeing – even though Abraham had died hundreds of years before the rich man was even born. Assuming that this reflects a very real occurrence in the unseen realms, we presume that those who die and enter that region will know who everyone is. Jesus alluded to this when He said to some unbelieving Jews, *"But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye*

workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out" (Luke 13:27-28).

Abraham is seen "afar off" – "far away,"^{NASB} "at a distance,"^{CEB} "a long way off,"^{CSB} "in the far distance."^{NLT} The distance was obviously not negotiable. Further, the sight surely contributed to his discomfort.

To further accent the plight of the damned, and assuming that the experience of the rich man was, in fact,

a prelude to being cast into the lake of fire, not only will the condemned see persons they once knew, they "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev 14:10).

There simply is no price too great to pay to avoid being consigned to that dreadful place! It is no wonder we are admonished "to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from

the wrath to come" (1 Thess 1:10).

LAZARUS IN HIS BOSOM

" . . . and Lazarus in his bosom."
Other versions read, "by his side,"^{NIV} "right next to him,"^{MIT} *in his embrace.*"^{NJB}

The idea is akin to being embraced in loving care and comfort. There was a sense in which Abraham was ministering to Lazarus, and the rich man saw it. This also would add to his torment, for he could have comforted Lazarus when he was on earth, and Lazarus was daily placed at his door. But he did not minister to Lazarus.

A PLACE WHERE THERE IS NO MERCY

" 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

The details of this revealed experience are remarkable. They highlight the plight of the damned in this intermediate state, and of the intelligent expressions that take place while they await their final consignment to the lake of fire. Remember, there are persons in that place now who have been there for possibly thousands of years – and, for them, the worst is yet to come.

HE CRIED

"And he cried and said . . ."

Other versions read, "cried out,"^{NASB} "called to him,"^{NIV} "called out,"^{RSV} "gave a cry,"^{BBE} "shouted,"^{CEB} "cried with a high voice,"^{ETH} "called with a loud voice."^{MRD}

There was no gentleness in the cry, but it was urgent, frantic, fearful, and dreadful in every sense of the word.

HAVE MERCY ON ME

" . . . Father Abraham, have

mercy on me . . ."

The formerly rich man was a Jew – he cried, "Father Abraham." This further enhances his predicament, because he had been exposed to the Law, which taught him to not neglect the poor (Deut 15:11) – which he did.

SEND LAZARUS

" . . . and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue . . ."

Notice that the former rich man did not ask to come where Lazarus was. That had no appeal to him, for now he had no capacity to enjoy good. Instead, he asks that Lazarus would come to where he is – in flames. He wanted Lazarus – the man upon whom he had shown no mercy – to now come and show him mercy.

He does not ask for deliverance, because he senses there is none to be had. He does not request to be moved to a place of less torment, for he knows that is not possible. He does not even ask for very much at all. He requests just some water to cool his tongue – enough water that could cling to the "tip" of Lazarus' finger. Only a person recognizing the justice of his situation would make such an apparently meager

request. That further exacerbated his situation. For the saints, all things work together for their good (Rom 8:28). For the lost, all things work together for their ultimate sorrow and harm. In the end, there will not be a single thing for them that is "good" or "pleasant." The only place men in the flesh can realize "good" in this world, is to be "in Christ."

I AM TORMENTED IN THIS FLAME

" . . . for I am tormented in this flame."

Other versions read, "I am in agony in this flame,"^{NIV} "I am in anguish in this flame,"^{RSV} "cruelly burning in this flame,"^{BBE} "in severe pain in this flame,"^{MIT} "distressed in this flame"^{YLT}

If he were on earth, the fire would eventually consume him, like it did the inhabitants of Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboim, and Admah (Deut 29:23), and those Israelites that angered the Lord (Num 11:1). But this fire does not destroy him. It is the kind of fire of which Jesus once spoke: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the

fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:43-44) – a most dreadful circumstance. Men should not haggle about this account, but learn from it to prepare for death.

From this perspective, this is what salvation does: it prepares one to leave this world, and enter into the world to come. It teaches men to live in view of

revealed realities. Death and judgment are inevitable, and can in no wise be avoided.

A PLACE OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND REMEMBRANCE

"²⁵ But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

SON, REMEMBER

"But Abraham said, Son, remember . . ."

Abraham also recognizes him as a Jew - a Jew who neglected his opportunities. The wicked will remember things that will make their situation worse. They will remember how they had goods that could not be transferred where they are being held until the day of judgment.

By way of comparison, the godly will have no recollection of the sorrows and pains they had in this world. The comfort they will receive, even in the intermediate period, will overshadow all of the sorrows they had in this world.

Perhaps some will recall those martyrs who had been *"slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held."* John saw them *"under the throne"* (Rev 6:9-11). They cried out, *"with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"* (Rev 6:10). However, they did not ask why they had suffered so much. In fact, their suffering was not the point. What they were asking regarded the justice of God, and the adjudication of their cause. They knew God is righteous.

IN THY LIFETIME RECEIVED THY GOOD THINGS

" . . . that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things . . ."

Other versions read, *"thy pleasures,"* ^{GENEVA} and *"everything you*

wanted." ^{NLT}

Everyone is going to exist forever in some realm. While *"in the body,"* they remain in this world, with both the world and their body being temporal. Because of that circumstances, the ONLY *"good"* the former rich man received was what he had in *"this present evil world"* (Gal 1:4). Whatever is received and kept in this world cannot last, because the world cannot last. Whoever leaves this world, by virtue of that circumstance, loses everything that was compatible with this world. The former rich man could remember all of the things he had in this world, but he could not regain them. This also added to the grief he was experiencing – which grief would only increase, and never decrease.

There are those who object to this, saying that God is not that unkind – that He is a loving and merciful God. But they are seriously wrong. To be sure, God is loving, merciful, and kind – but that is not all He is, as the devil and his hordes can attest – and this former rich man as well.

LAZARUS RECEIVED EVIL THINGS

" . . . and likewise Lazarus evil things . . ."

We do not know how long Lazarus was *"a beggar full of sores,"* but this world was the only place he experienced such things.

Every child of God will receive some *"evil things"* while in this world. Other versions read, *"bad things,"* ^{NASB} *"terrible things,"* ^{CEB} and *"pains."* ^{GENEVA}

The expression *"evil things"* comes from a single word meaning, *ōof* a bad nature; not such as it ought to be; troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, baneful.ō

^{THAYER} Here, the expression does not mean immoral or sinful.

For the child of God, whatever is harmful, offensive, injurious, abusive, or troublesome, can only be experienced in this world.

NOW HE IS COMFORTED

"... but now he is comforted . . ."

Other versions read, *"gets his consolation here,"* ^{CJB} *"he is refreshed here,"* ^{MGI} and *"he is here at rest."* ^{MRD}

Seeing Lazarus being comforted also added to the discomfort of the former rich man.

A righteous life is arranged in this way: you receive comfort after you have been afflicted, made sorrowful, been disappointed, or persecuted. If it were not for adversity, there would be no such thing as *"comfort."*

Life in Christ Jesus introduces a situation where the saints are willing to wait for their ultimate comfort, consolation, or solace. Whatever comfort we receive here is but a pledge of what we will receive when we leave this world. There is some comfort for which you must be willing to wait. In the meantime, God will see to it that you receive enough comfort to maintain your walk of faith, and keep your hope.

THOU ART TORMENTED

" . . . and thou art tormented."

Other versions read, *"in agony,"* ^{NASB} *"in anguish,"* ^{RSV} *"in pain,"* ^{BBE} *"in great pain,"* ^{CEB} *"in terrible pain,"* ^{NIRV} *"art distressed,"* ^{YLT} and *"are suffering."* ^{TS2009}

There is no way to adequately describe the extensiveness of this suffering, agony, and pain. I do want to point out that with all of this agony, the

former rich man was able to think clearly, recollect, be concerned for others, and other things that characterize only a person who is not suffering intensely. That is one of the complicating factors that will continue

on into eternity. Intense suffering will not remove memory and regret. Thinking will be precise – the point.

To those wedded to the world, this does not make any sense at all. In this

world, severe pain, suffering, and discomfort disorient the individual. It is most difficult to think or reason with any degree of satisfaction. Communication becomes very difficult. But now, this was not so for the former rich man.

A GREAT GULF FIXED

"²⁶ And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

A GREAT GULF FIXED

"And beside all this, between US and you there is a great gulf fixed . . ."

Notice that the region of comfort has fellowship and mutuality – "US." But the former rich man is not mentioned as one of many, but is addressed as though he was alone. In the region of the damned there will be no fellowship, friendship, mutuality, or camaraderie.

In this world, Lazarus was daily laid at the gate of the rich man. If he had chosen to, the rich man had access to Lazarus, and could have ministered to him. But all such opportunities ended

when they both died. They did not go to the same place, and could not move from one place to another. God has so arranged things that they could see the other realm, but could not get there. Yet, the former rich man will request that Lazarus be sent on a pilgrimage to the place now occupied by himself. Not only was the time for the wheat being around the tares over, but there was no way for them to ever mingle again. Now there was "a great gulf," or chasm, between these two locations. It was "fixed." Other versions read, "a deep rift has been established," ^{CJB} set, "GENEVA" and "placed." ^{MGI}

This was a created arrangement made by God. It confirms that after death no essential change is possible, for there is no access to the means and agents of change. This is because God has determined that after death, there can be no substantive change or alteration in the individual.

THERE IS NO PASSAGE EITHER WAY

". . . so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

There was no provision to journey between the two locations. This created a situation where even a longing to change was not possible – and I do not think the damned will be capable of wanting change, even though they will beg for comfort, which shall be eternally withheld from them. If a moral and spiritual change is desired, it must be yearned for while a person is alive in this world – and it must be through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, which provides for a new creation in which the individual becomes a partaker of the Divine nature (2 Pet 1:4). If this kind of change is not realized while a person is "in the body," it will never be realized! The matter of salvation is always urgent.

A REQUEST FOR SOMEONE TO COME BACK FROM THE DEAD

"²⁷ Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house:²⁸ For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

The former rich man will now express his concern about those he has left behind. As unthoughtful as he was when in the earth, now he does not want any of his brothers to come where he is. Perhaps Lazarus can go on a mission – back to the earth, from which he has realized a thorough deliverance.

SEND HIM TO MY FATHER'S HOUSE

"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house . . ."

Other versions read, "I beg you," ^{NKJV} "it is my request," ^{BBE} "beseech thee," ^{DARBY} "Please." ^{NLT}

This man's entire attitude toward his father's house has changed – but it is too late. No requests coming from the realm he now occupies, will ever be answered. Prayers or requests from that domain are pointless and vain, in

every sense of the word. No petition issued from that place can be effective.

THAT HE MAY TESTIFY UNTO THEM

". . . For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them . . . lest they also come into this place of torment."

This would only be a good request if it was made from the earth, while the former rich man was in the body. But now, the request will only accentuate his suffering all the more, because he has left that arena.

Concerns for the lost must be entertained while we remain in the body. That is the time when people can avail themselves of God's great salvation, and avoid going to the place of torment.

There is certainly room for more warning of that place. In the world, sin and the appetite for it is actually increasing. At the same time, much of the professed church is lethargic, indifferent, and preoccupied with

temporal things. The brevity of both life and time rarely enters anyone's mind – unless they are in extreme danger, or dominated by ill health. Nevertheless the circumstances made known in this text are very real, and must be declared.

THEY HAVE MOSES AND THE PROPHETS

"²⁹ Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ³⁰ And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

THEY HAVE MOSES AND THE PROPHETS

"Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

Abraham knew of Moses and the Prophets, which came, ministered, and wrote, hundreds of years after he died. Yet, on the other side of death, he had learned of them, and knew them.

This was before provision for justification from all things had been available (Acts 13:39). It was before *"the day of salvation"* (2 Cor 6:2). Yet, God had made provision for men to prepare for that time.

God has made no provision for men to be saved, or to avoid going to the place of torment unless they pay attention to the revelation He has

provided. He simply will not ignore those provisions, and make a special way for the departed disinterested ones after their lives have been completed. That is still true today.

IF ONE WENT TO THEM FROM THE DEAD

"And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

The former rich man attempts to reason with Abraham. However, he cannot refrain from thinking as a man. He has excluded himself from the Source of right reasoning. He is sure that his brothers will listen to someone who rose from the dead and brought them a special message of warning.

Now, there are several things about this circumstance to be noted.

- ⇒ Life on earth was not forgotten.
- ⇒ What was really needed was known.
- ⇒ The torment was not like fleshly torment – there, the condemned one was not deprived of reason, even though he was tormented in flames.

The gravity of preparing for eternity must be seen by the people of this generation. However, it will not happen by someone coming back from the dead to warn them, or even by a great miracle worked before their eyes. A message has been provided for the people, and that message must be heard from God's proclaimers, just as surely as the former rich man's brothers had to pay attention to Moses and the prophets.

We are living in a time when the appointed means of deliverance are being neglected. Often, they are even pushed into the background by those professing to know the Lord. Anything God has provided must be heeded and acted upon. At one time that provision was through Moses and the Prophets. Then it was through John the Baptist. After that, it was Jesus Christ Himself. Then it was through His Apostles. Now it is the writings of the Apostles and those who themselves have experienced redemption. But all of those provisions are of no value at all unless they are believed, embraced, and acted upon.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 3/17/17. In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The fifty-third lesson will cover verses 1 thru 19 of the seventh chapter: "OFFENCES, FAITH, AND TEN LEPERS." Jesus teaches His disciples about offences, responds to their request to increase their faith, and confronts and heals ten lepers. Another busy day in the life of the Savior. We will begin our meeting at 6:30, which will be followed by a time of refreshments and fellowship.