

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:16-31

The Law, the Prophets, and the Kingdom

¹⁶“The law and the prophets *were* until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. ¹⁷ And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail. ¹⁸“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from *her* husband commits adultery.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

¹⁹“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰ But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹ desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

²³ And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴“Then 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 in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’ ²⁷“Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, ²⁸ for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ ²⁹ Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ ³¹ But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’”

Questions:

1. What does "the law and the prophets were until John" mean? How were people reacting to the kingdom? (Compare "everyone is pressing into it" with Matt 11:12 "suffers violence and the violent take it by force")
2. How did Jesus show that the law could not be set aside? How had the Pharisees mishandled the law with their traditions?
3. What is Jesus' view of divorcing one's wife or husband? (Gen 2:24-25; Matt 5:32; 19:4-9) (The Pharisees taught that men could divorce their wives for almost any cause.) What exception is taught in Matthew?
4. Vs 19ff Jesus says "there was a certain rich man..and a beggar named Lazarus." What may be said about treating the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus as a parable? Could these events really have happened?
5. What similarity is there between the rich man and the Pharisees (who were lovers of money vs 14)? How was the rich man living that would show he was not being a faithful steward with his wealth?
6. How did Jesus describe the condition of the beggar? What happened to him when he died?
7. When the rich man died, he was buried (vs. 22)? What kind of funeral do you expect he received? How was the appearance of the death of these two men very mistaken?
8. What was the state of the rich man in Hades? What does Hades mean (which is equivalent to "Sheol" in the OT)?
9. What does this story teach about consciousness and recognition after death? Can we accept this as an accurate view of life after death?
10. What request did the rich man make of Abraham? What two reasons did Abraham give for denying the request?
11. What does this teach about being able to change one's state after death? (A "second chance" such as Purgatory)
12. What is meant "they have Moses and the prophets"? Why would sending someone back from the dead not help more people to be saved?