

IN *GOLD* WE TRUST

The Irony of *Life After Death*

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31



STRUCTURE OF LUKE 16:19-31

Death Is The Centre of This Structure

LIFE BEFORE DEATH

Luke 16:19-21

The rich man wore expensive clothes, and the poor had sores.

Luke 16:20

The poor man longed to eat the rich man's food but he was denied.

Luke 16:20

The poor man's desires were never fulfilled. He was denied.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Luke 16:23

The rich man was in hell and the poor man was at Abraham's bosom.

Luke 16:24

The rich man wanted what the poor man had, and asked for water.

Luke 16:27-31

The rich man wanted to warn his brothers but both his requests were denied.

THE TARGET AUDIENCE

Luke 16:14-15

*14 **The Pharisees, who loved money,** heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. 15 He said to them, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God’s sight.*

THE CLASSES OF RICH IN 1ST CENTURY JUDAISM

1

The High Priestly Clan

They profited from the temple sacrifices of the people.

2

Herodians Family

Their political power was translated into wealth.

3

Remnants of The Older Jewish Aristocracy

People who became rich through trade and rented out their lands to tenants for farming.

4

Prosperous Merchants

They controlled much of the economic life of the country.

THE 3 MAIN POINTS OF THE PARABLE

They All Show *The Irony of Life After Death*

1

To be good stewards.

We should be good stewards of the blessings God gives us.

2

The poor matter to God no matter what we feel about them.

They are **not invisible** and are here to hallow His name. The church has an ***obligation*** towards them.

3

We will be judged by our treatment towards the poor.

The Scripture warns us about the consequences of neglecting the poor.

DEATH IS NOT THE END OF LIFE

*Death is a New **Beginning***

The Bible **repeatedly** teaches and **warns** that when we cease to exist on Earth life begins in another realm. Death is not the end of life, but the beginning of a better or worse life. No one can better explain this to us than Christ himself.

THE RICH MAN & THE POOR MAN

Luke 16:19-31

RICH



POOR

Had a luxurious and secured lifestyle.

Had nothing.

Had reputation, power and position.

Begged at the rich man's gate.

Died and went to eternal torment.

Died and went to eternal bliss.

LET US PRAY

Luke 16:19-31



PEOPLE DON'T GO TO HELL FOR BEING RICH

RIGHTEOUS RICH



Job 1:3

Job was committed to looking after the poor and feared God.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

The patriarchs were wealthy and owned many cows and sheep.

Mary and Martha, Bethany

They had a resort in Bethany where Jesus often stopped by with His disciples

Lydia, Thyatira

She was a cloth merchant and a woman of enormous wealth.

Philemon

He was a wealthy believer who owned slaves.

PEOPLE DON'T GO TO HEAVEN FOR BEING POOR

WICKED POOR



Proverbs 37:21

The wicked borrow and do not repay.

Proverbs 28:3

A poor man who oppresses the poor Is like a driving rain which leaves no food.

Matthew 18:28

But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him, saying, "Pay back what you owe me!"

NO ONE GOES TO HELL FOR BEING RICH, OR TO HEAVEN FOR BEING POOR.

1

The Bible **warns** us of the dangers of wealth and the sin of not being good stewards of what God has graciously given us.

2

The Bible tells us that it is a sin when **money occupies a prominent place in our hearts**, and we do not share our wealth with the needy.

THE PATTERN FROM LUKE 15 ONWARDS

The Parables Start Focusing on **Money**

1

The Parable of The Lost Son, Luke 15:11-31

The prodigal son demands his portion of the property and **wealth** and loses everything in scandalous living.

2

The Parable of The Shrewd Manager, Luke 16:1-9

The shrewd manager wastes his master's **money**, then uses money to gain friends and is commended.

3

The Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31

The rich man wastes his **money** and refuses to share it with those in need.

PSALM 49:16-20

16 Do not be **overawed** when others grow rich, when the splendor of their houses increases; 17 for **they will take nothing with them when they die**, their splendor will not descend with them. 18 Though while they live they count themselves blessed— and people praise you when you prosper— 19 they will join those who have gone before them, who will never again see the light of life. 20 **People who have wealth but lack understanding are like the beasts that perish.**

PROBLEMS IN INTERPRETATION

St Jerome (322-420)

The early theologian and priest says that this is not a parable but a **true incident** because names like *Lazarus* and *Abraham* are living people **not mere characters**. This is different from other parables that had characters without names.

LUKE 16:19

19 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day.

The hearers *knew* how rich this man was because in Bible times purple cloth was **expensive and hard to obtain**. Recall *Lydia* in **Acts 16:14-15**, a rich agent of purple dye in Thyatira and insisted on giving hospitality to Paul and his companions in Philippi.

THE DOUBLE-DYE METHOD



Purple fabric used to be made by dyeing the cloth in an expensive double-dye method. **8000 sea snails were required to produce 1 gram of purple dye**, also known as *Tyrian purple*, *royal purple* or *imperial purple*. So, *purple* was normally worn by **kings and nobles**. That means this man was not just rich but he was *filthy rich*.

LUKE 16:19

19 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day.



Fine linen was for undergarments. Even his undergarments were expensive, and he ate fancy meals.

LUKE 16:20

20 At his gate was **laid** a beggar named Lazarus, covered with **sores**.

LAID IN GREEK: BALLO

The Greek for *laid* meant *thrown* or *dumped*. Lazarus was too **weak** to **beg** and was **dumped** at the rich man's gate. Back then the helpless were placed at the gate of the wealthy because **the rich had a social responsibility towards the poor**.

LUKE 16:21

21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores."

LONGING IN GREEK MEANT: *DESIRING, LUSTING*

DOG IN GREEK: *KUON*

Lazarus was desiring for the food of the rich. *Kuon* meant *stray dogs*. *Kunarion* means *pet dog*. Lazarus lusted for the scraps from the rich man's table, but that was thrown to the stray dogs. He longed for the dog's food.

MATTHEW 7:6

6 Do not give dogs (*Kuon, hound dogs, scavengers*) what is sacred;...

MATTHEW 15:26

26 He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs. (*Kunarion, pet dog*)”

Parts of the New Testament use *kuon* to address an **unclean person**.

LUKE 16:21

21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores."

LICKED IN GREEK: APOILECHO

The Greek for *lick* meant to *clean the sores*. The narrative implies that *at least* the dogs were compassionate to Lazarus. The MSG version says, "*His best friends were the dogs who came and licked his sores*". This is how the economically disadvantaged are oppressed in the world today due to pride and greed.

***PRIDE
PREJUDICE
POWER***

over the economically disadvantaged

LUKE 16:22

22 “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side.

JOHN 1:18

18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the Father’s side has made him known.

GREEK: KOLPOS

To be at someone’s side in the New Testament would either mean you are **close to that person** and are at a place of **honour** and **love**, or that there is a **banquet** and you are **feasting**.

JOHN 13:21-25

21 When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” 22 Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke. 23 Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom (kolpos) one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke. 25 Then, leaning back on Jesus’ breast (kolpos), he said to Him, “Lord, who is it?”

So, this indicates that Lazarus was close to the heart of the patriarch and was feasting the luxurious meal he was begging while on Earth.

LUKE 16:22

22“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried.

BURIED IN GREEK: THAPTO

The Greek for *buried* means to celebrate funeral rites. The rich man probably had a **grand funeral** that lasted for **days** while he was in agony. But Lazarus had angels **carry** him to Abraham’s side.

LUKE 16:23-25

23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. **24** So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.' **25** "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony.'

Even now, the rich man had **pride** and look down on Lazarus. He **does not address Lazarus or apologise** but asks Abraham to send Lazarus.

MATTHEW 6

1 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. 5 And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have **received their reward in full.** 16 When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have **received their reward in full.**

LUKE 16:26-29

26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.' 27 "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father send Lazarus to my family, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

The situation changes, and now **the rich man is begging**. The brothers had the Word of God to **listen to** and **learn** from.

LUKE 16:30-31

30 “No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ 31 “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

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- 1 Jesus and another Lazarus rose from the dead, yet there was disbelief.
 - 2 The rich man wasn't willing to help Lazarus but now asks him for water.
 - 3 Abraham addresses the rich man as son due to lineage and faith, but even that could not save him from hell.
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MATTHEW 3:8-9

8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

LUKE 16:19-21

19 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.



The rich man did not have to go far to help the poor because the poor were **right in front of him**.

MATTHEW 25:31-46

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. **32** All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. **33** He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. **34** “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. **35** For **I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.**’ **37** Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? **38** When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?’

MATTHEW 25:31-46

39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King will reply, **'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'** 41 "Then he will say to those on his left, **'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'** 44 They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' 45 "He will reply, **'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'** 46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

PROVERBS 21:13

13 Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the poor will also cry out and not be answered.

This precisely depicts the situation of the rich man who ignored Lazarus. Let us be considerate towards the needy and marginalised for it has eternal consequences.

PROVERBS 3:27

27 Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act.

If we say we love God, but mistreat and neglect our fellow people, we are liars. The only proof of our love for God, whom we have not seen, is how we love others who are created in the image of God (*Imago Dei*) whom we can see.

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