



Rich Man and Lazarus



The Rich Man and Lazarus

PREFACE

Thank you for taking the time to read this instruction, I pray that the Ruach Ha’Kodesh (Holy Spirit) is present with you as you read and check with you own Bible its contents. The contents of this instruction are based entirely on God’s word the Bible, to challenge your current beliefs in the spirit of love that Yeshua spoke of in John 13:35.

Please remember that I have no religious affiliation other than to Yeshua Ha’Mashiach and Almighty God that sent Him, therefore I am bound by the Ruach and not by a manmade religious practice or tradition, assuring you that I have no ulterior motive other than the spreading of the truth that can only be found in Almighty God’s word via His gift to us all... the Bible. I pray that this instruction will help you in your quest for truth.

When we begin to study the word of Almighty God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob it is necessary to bear in mind our dedication to the obedience of His Law (Torah) as, if we do not shema (Hear and Obey) God will not hear our prayers.

Proverbs 28:9 KJV He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

Numbers 6:24-26

[All scripture quotes are taken from the King James Bible unless otherwise stated.]

Introduction

Most people of the Christian faith will know of the parable of the “Rich Man and Lazarus” found at Luke 16:19-31. It is a wonderful example of the way in which Yeshua used parables in his teachings in order to put across the gospel message to those who were not fully conversant with the Tanakh (Hebrew scriptures). How I envy those who witnessed these wonderful illustrations that he gave, some of which even his disciples did not fully understand.

Throughout his ministry Yeshua always used the Tanakh to prove a point, in this manner all his teachings can be said to be the word of his Father, Almighty God, the creator of the universe. It is a fact that all his teachings, including the parables, upheld his Father's words. As we know that he did not speak of his own accord, but the words of the one who sent him, his Father.

In this manner the parables he spoke of reflected his Father's will, they could do nothing else, this means that they had to be in harmony with all scripture, on this I feel sure that you will agree.

In this short study we will unpick the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in order to get a clearer understanding of the context that lead Yeshua to feel the need to explain a situation that was and still is common to all of us. After all, if our Master Yeshua considered it to be of importance, I think it only right that we, as his followers consider its meaning to be of importance too.

In Christendom there is a tendency to ‘nudge’ certain scriptures in order to align them with a particular doctrine, as we know from our studies, this has become a common practice over the centuries following the resurrection of our Master and, as followers of Yeshua we must be able to discern between what is absolutely true from the almost but not quite true statements and doctrines. We want to be sure of (prove) all things as Sha’ul (Paul) tells us in 1Thessalonians 5:21.

Let us now unpick this important parable in order to clarify what it really means to us.

Parable

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

parable noun par·a·ble 'per-ə-bəl 'pa-rə-

Synonyms of parable

: a usually short fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle
the Biblical parable of the Good Samaritan.

Setting the Scene

The first step we must take in unpicking this parable is to find out why the parable was needed in the first place. Remember. A parable is not based on fact, it is a fictitious story used to illustrate a particular message in a word picture to enable clearer understanding.

There is a clue as to the origin of this parable, it is found at Luke 16:1 where Yeshua is beginning of the parable of the dishonest manager, both parables begin with "...a certain rich man" so the parable is aimed at certain rich people, but only certain rich people as we shall see.

As with most, if not all Yeshua's sermons there were the rabbinic Jewish leaders (Pharisees) present, these were supposed to be teaching the written torah to the people but instead, they were teaching the laws and traditions of men from the non-inspired oral torah of their own making, this is the reason why Yeshua condemned them, it was not as much as for what they were doing rather for what they were not doing that caused him to call them out.

These Pharisees were lovers of money and were present when Yeshua began his Rich Man and Lazarus parable, they were listening and scoffing as he was teaching. Luke 16:14.

So, we now have identified two common principles, we know that the parable is aimed at rich men and we know that the rabbinic leaders were rich and liked to show their wealth so it would be reasonable to identify the first of the key players in this parable as the rabbinic Jewish leaders. So, in context we know that this parable is for all of us but it is specifically aimed at the rabbinic leaders.

The second party focuses on a desperately poor and needy man and beggar called Lazarus Luke 16:20, he desired to eat from the crumbs from the rich man's table, was covered in sores which the dogs used to lick causing him much pain. Luke 16:21. Here we have the other end of the affluential scale, such a vast gulf between the rich man and Lazarus that was impossible to cross between as to the circumstances.

In the written torah we are commanded to care for the poor, in Hebrew the word is Tzedakah (Tzedaka) which refers to the religious obligation to do what is right and just, which Judaism emphasizes as an important part of living a spiritual life. Unlike voluntary philanthropy, tzedakah is seen as a religious obligation that must be performed regardless of one's financial standing, and so is mandatory even for those of limited financial means. These commandments can be found at Deuteronomy 15:11 *"For the poor will never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt surely open thy hand unto thy brother, to thy needy, and to thy poor, in thy land"*, and at Deuteronomy 24:15 *"in his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it (for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it); lest he cry against thee unto Jehovah, and it be sin unto thee"*. Do you think that the rabbinic leaders were obeying this command? Or, were they, like the rich man, ignoring this God given command through their greed?

That should set the scene for what was happening and why Yeshua spoke the parable that was condemning the rabbinic leaders and all such people that covet their wealth in this world.

A Great Misunderstanding

Like many of the scriptures in the Brit ha'Dashah, this parable has been used in a manner that is in conflict with its true meaning. This truly highlights the need for us to study the scriptures in context with surrounding scriptures but not only this, the contextual evidence must also be based on the whole of Almighty God's inspired word and prove true and in complete harmony with what His truth is. If it fails in any way, it should be discarded as false for its non-compliance. Those are YeHoVaH's rules, I am not making this up as I go along!

Christendom has taught that this parable is evidence that, when a person dies, they either go to heaven or hell (Catholics teach that the soul goes to purgatory). This is absolutely incorrect. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus has nothing to do with heaven and hell, Yeshua is not telling people that they go to heaven if they are good or hell if they are bad... NO!!! he's rebuking the rabbinic leaders for not following the written torah!

Let us unpick this section to come to the proper conclusion.

Yeshua would NEVER contradict the written torah of his Father, he kept the parts of the torah that were applicable to him perfectly to his death and we must keep this in mind. He taught from the Tanakh in all of his sermons and teachings and never swerved from left to right or right to left, that is why he is the "Living Torah", Master, King and Cohen Gadol.

We must now split the verses up and drain the very essence out of them...

Luke 16: 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;

The Tanakh is clear on the state of the dead, this is non-negotiable and Yeshua knew from the scriptures that, when someone dies, they cease to exist, both body and soul. I feel sure that he had read Ecclesiastes 9:5-6 more than once! *"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. ⁶Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun".* How about Psalm 146:4 *"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish"*. Yeshua also knew that the Greek philosophy of the immortal soul is a gentile (pagan) belief and I am quite sure that he would also have read Ezekiel 18:4 *"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die"*. (Compare this verse with Matthew 26:38). How does Isaiah measure up to the immortal soul theory? Isaiah 26:14 *"They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish"*. In all honesty, does this sound to you like it is possible that, when Yeshua gave the parable, do you truly imagine that he would go against his Father and lie to us concerning the gentile doctrine of life after death just as the opposer did? Let that never be!

The beggar died but his soul was not in any way, shape or form, transported to some place, certainly not heaven. John 3:13 *“And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven”*.

This means that even the righteous Abraham, Almighty God’s personal friend is not in heaven rather throws water on the theory that good people go to heaven when they die don’t you think? Another thing to consider is why Yeshua chose the bosom of Abraham? Whilst it is true that Abraham was a righteous man in YeHoVaH’s eyes, he certainly did not merit such a high standing position, Abraham was dead, and unable to do anything under the sun as the scriptures tell us. There is a Hebraism involved here that not many can see, the bosom of Abraham shows Lazarus as being a righteous man just as Abraham was, even though he was poor and suffered much Yeshua is telling us that he endured till the end, what a beautiful way of describing Lazarus’ demeanour. Yeshua ends this verse with the simple statement that the rich man also dies, and was buried.

On close scrutiny, this verse shows that the “story” of the Rich Man and Lazarus is wholly fictional, a true parable. If Yeshua was telling this parable as a true story he would be in direct conflict with his Father. I will say one thing is for certain, the rich man and Lazarus never died due to the fact that, to die you have to first exist.

Luke 16:23

And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Although we have now established that this is a true parable let us now dig further into what Yeshua had in mind when he told it. “And in hell he lifted up his eyes,” Hell is the acronym of the Hebrew word “Sheol”^{H7585} (Gr “Hades”^{G86}), both mean “grave” or, a more accurate description would be “the common grave of all mankind”, it is not a physical location rather it is a name tag, just as we use the word “time” to explain a non-physical state. To illustrate, to us humans time is very important for the simple reason that we are finite, we have an end but to Almighty God who is eternal, time does not hold a great meaning.

“...and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” This is a very interesting statement that says so much. So, the rich man figuratively sees Lazarus with Abraham, the question is, where is Abraham at this time? That answer to this question can be found in Luke 13:28 *“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”*. So, Yeshua is connecting this parable to the end days, thus illustrating to the rabbinic leaders what is to happen to them if they do not keep the written commandments.

It is all now starting to fit into place.

Luke 16:24

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.

Due to the rich man's statement that "I am tormented in this flame" indicates that he has failed judgement and is now about to be cast into Gehenna (The lake of fire Revelation 20:15) which means the second death. Unfortunately for the rich man it is too late, he has received adverse judgement and there is no way back. How does Abraham react to the cries of the rich man?

I don't know about you but, if my whole body was suffering in flames I would want more than a drop of water on my tongue!

Luke 16:25

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.

Abraham confirms that he can do nothing to alter the situation, whilst on earth the rich man could have averted this plight if he had only obeyed God's commandments, instead his god was his wealth and that god had blinded him to the plight of others. This shows that Almighty God is a just God, He rewards the righteous and punishes those unrepentant sinners who require punishment. In his lifetime the rich man had possession of all that he desired; it is only now that he sees the terrible price he had to pay.

Luke 16:26

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.

In a secular court of law, once a sentence has been passed the guilty party will not be heard again, they are taken to their cell to await execution of their punishment. Sometimes it is possible that the guilty party may appeal but, the judge that passed sentence in this case is not an ordinary Judge, the evidence for that judgement is proven accurate and there are no grounds on which to appeal. There is no going back for the guilty party neither can those who are found righteous pass into the place of judgement, that is the great gulf that is fixed by the sentence. If this is the case in a secular court, how much more so in a divine court.

Luke 16:27-31 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.

The last 5 verses of this parable speak volumes, the rich man is worried about his five brothers, knowing that it is too late for him to warn them about their decadent way of life he asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn them as to what would befall them if they did not return to Almighty God's commandments as written in the torah.

Abraham responded by telling him that they already have several warnings at hand through Moshe (Moses) and the prophets that are written in the TaNaKh and these were sufficient warnings for them. It is obvious that these five brothers of the rich man did not read God's word, if they had they would have heeded the warnings but, like their brother, they too were blinded by the "god" of this world so that the warnings and threat of punishment for not keeping the written torah was of little or no consequence to them. We understand that God's word is more than sufficient for teaching us how to live our lives and avail ourselves of the promise made by Almighty God YeHoVaH to His friend Abraham, we do not require any added instructions from sinful human beings. As followers of Yeshua, we must be obedient to our Master, that is what "follow me" really means furthermore, it is imperative that we are aware of this if we are to truly "know" him.

After this rebuke the rich man pleads with Abraham, knowing that his brothers are like him he is desperately fearful that they are in line to receive a similar adverse judgement and be condemned to Gehenna as he is however, Abraham is not too impressed with the rich man's pleadings. They already have all they need to repent but only if they *chose* too and this is the focus of the whole parable. The five brothers of the rich man were not interested in spiritual matters only in their decadent way of living, they had little time to read the scriptures because they thought it of less importance than creating wealth so, even if someone that they knew had died came back from Sheol to warn them, they still wouldn't listen, they had made up their own minds concerning their own moral standards and this would be their downfall, just as it was with their brother, what a hopeless situation.

The Real Truth about Luke 16:19 - 31

As we have seen, a parable is a fictitious story, an allegory, in order to highlight a truthful message. We know that, when Yeshua told this story he was not talking about life after death, this is so blatantly obvious by his choice of words. Besides what we have learned, have you ever thought about the one who takes the leading role in this parable? Why does Yeshua elevate Abraham to such a lofty seat of judgement? After all, according to scripture, Abraham is dead too and asleep in the common grave of mankind awaiting resurrection himself.

The reason is due to the fact that those religious leaders relied on the righteousness of Abraham for their salvation. Matthew 3:9-10 *"And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. ¹⁰And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire"*.

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is probably one of the most misunderstood of all the parables of Yeshua, this has been misquoted so many times throughout the centuries to promote the theory of the eternal soul, this theory is not a bible teaching, its origins are from Babylon and are in direct conflict with Almighty God's word.

Let us recap on how Almighty God views death, after all, this is how we, as followers of His son Yeshua should think too wouldn't you agree?

First, let us jog our memory, the whole death thing started when YeHoVaH told Adam *"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"*. Genesis 2:17. This is the instruction that He gave to Adam and Adam passed on to his wife Eve and the rest of us down to this day, it has not changed.

Now the lie part... *"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:"* Genesis 3:4 this is where the adversary voiced the first lie and became the father of the lie.

The reason for the lie? *"For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil"*. Genesis 3:5.

With this in mind Eve now takes it on her own understanding *"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat"*. Genesis 3:6. There is no mention about the instruction that she had been told concerning the terrible retribution that it would bring to all mankind, she just saw through her own eyes how good the fruit looked and all the physical attributes that could be possible, she even convinced Adam to share it with her and we all know the suffering for this disobedience.

We must be ABSOLUTELY clear that, death is a punishment, not a reward as the opposer would have us believe. The saying is true *"The wages sin pays is death..."* (Romans 6:23a), when we die, we receive the wages of our sin *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"*; Romans 3:23. We categorically do not go anywhere other than Sheol (Hades) which is the common grave of all mankind where there is no consciousness, thoughts, emotions or understanding, we are, as Yeshua puts it "asleep" and awaiting the resurrection.

John 11:11-14 *These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. ¹²Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. ¹³Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. ¹⁴Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.*

The disciples didn't understand what Yeshua was telling them, they thought that Yeshua's friend Lazarus was just asleep but Yeshua had to clarify what he meant by "sleep", he told them that Lazarus had died. Martha knew the condition of her brother Lazarus and she also knew that he was unconscious in Sheol and awaiting the resurrection.

John 11:24 *"Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day"*.

So, we as followers of Yeshua know the condition of the dead because we know that our Father has told us, in no uncertain terms what death is.

We know the rest of the story, Yeshua called Lazarus and he heard the voice of the Master Shepard and woke from his sleep. Such a joyful occasion it must have been.

This proving that Yeshua was who he said he was. “... *I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live*”: John 11:25.

When we read this story, we must also bare in mind that, at some stage in the future Lazarus died again and returned to Sheol where he still remains as do all that have died. If we assume that Lazarus was a good person and went to paradise in heaven when he died, do you think it would be justice for Yeshua to call him out of paradise just to face pain and death again? Of course not.

If we honestly believe that there is life after death in the “Christian” manner then, in effect, what you are doing is denying the resurrection, for your belief negates the need for the Biblical promise of resurrection and Yeshua died for nothing.

The pharisees believed in the resurrection, this is why this parable is directed at them, but it is also good for us to learn from too.

This parable speaks of the end times when Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Lazarus and the rich man are resurrected and judged, this is what the word of Almighty God tells us, it can mean nothing else.

The good news is that Sheol is only a temporary state where Gehenna (the second death) is permanent, John 5:28-29 “*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, ²⁹And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*”.

This scripture in John sums up the parable so eloquently.

The key to understanding this verse... Like most scriptures the answer is usually staring us in the face but many do not see it until the Ruach ha’Kodesh reveals it to us and then we tend to kick ourselves for not seeing it when it is hidden in plain sight!

Verses 19 to 24 of Yeshua’s parable as recorded by Luke set a figurative scene that sets the stage for the lesson of the parable that is found in verses 25 to 31. If you read verses 25 to 30 you will find that the rich man realises that his plea for his salvation to Abraham is too late so he asks Abraham to resurrect the poor man and send him to warn the members of his family least they fall into the same trap, again Abraham rebukes the rich man telling him that they have the law and the prophets to warn them of the consequences of wickedness (v29). The rich man seems ignorant of the torah and prophets when he says to Abraham “Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent” (v30).

Now Yeshua reveals the true meaning of the parable in the very last verse where he shows that when we die it is too late to make amends for our sin, we cannot repent whilst we are in the common grave of mankind as there is no consciousness or reasoning in Sheol.

Ecclesiastes 9:10 KJV 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.

In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus Yeshua is highlighting the necessity to observe the written torah (Moses) and the prophets if you are to avoid the punishment that the rich man suffered, as Abraham replied to the rich man “...If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (v31).

The torah and the prophets are all we need to avoid the plight of the rich man; it is all written for our edification so let no one tell you otherwise.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19 – 31 (KJV)

Luk 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

Luk 16:20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

Luk 16:21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

Luk 16:22 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;

Luk 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Luk 16:24 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.

Luk 16:25 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.

Luk 16:26 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.

Luk 16:27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

Luk 16:28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

Luk 16:29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

Luk 16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

Luk 16:31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

GLOSSARY

- **YHVH [יהוה]** The personal Name of Almighty God. Y_eH^oV_aH.
- **Yehoshua (Yeshua)** The personal name of Almighty God's son. (Modern: Jesus).
- **Ruach Ha'Kodesh** Yehovah's motive force. (Holy Spirit).
- **Kohan Gadol** High Priest.
- **Shaúl** Saul (Paul).
- **Israel** The nation comprising the 12 tribes of Jacob (Israel) including people of the nations grafted into Israel.
- **Gentile** Any person that does not follow the Abrahamic Religion (Pagan).
- **Tanakh** The books of the Hebrew scriptures. (Old Testament).
- **B'rit HaDashah** The Renewed Covenant. (New Testament)
- **Torah** The instructions or laws given to the Israelite Nation by Yehovah to Moses.
- **Oral Torah** The additional instructions added by the Pharisaic (Rabbinic) Jews which form the basis of the Mishnah and other Jewish religious books.
- **Gospel** Good News.
- **Christendom** All religions that profess belief in Jesus Christ.
- **Apostolic Fathers** The group of gentiles that directed the formation of the early church after the last apostle (John) died.