

# Luke 16 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Luke 16:1](#)

[Luke 16:2](#)

[Luke 16:3](#)

[Luke 16:4](#)

[Luke 16:5](#)

[Luke 16:6](#)

[Luke 16:7](#)

[Luke 16:8](#)

[Luke 16:9](#)

[Luke 16:10](#)

[Luke 16:11](#)

[Luke 16:12](#)

[Luke 16:13](#)

[Luke 16:14](#)

[Luke 16:15](#)

[Luke 16:16](#)

[Luke 16:17](#)

[Luke 16:18](#)

[Luke 16:19](#)

[Luke 16:20](#)

[Luke 16:21](#)

[Luke 16:22](#)

[Luke 16:23](#)

[Luke 16:24](#)

[Luke 16:25](#)

[Luke 16:26](#)

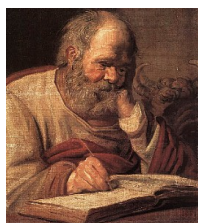
[Luke 16:27](#)

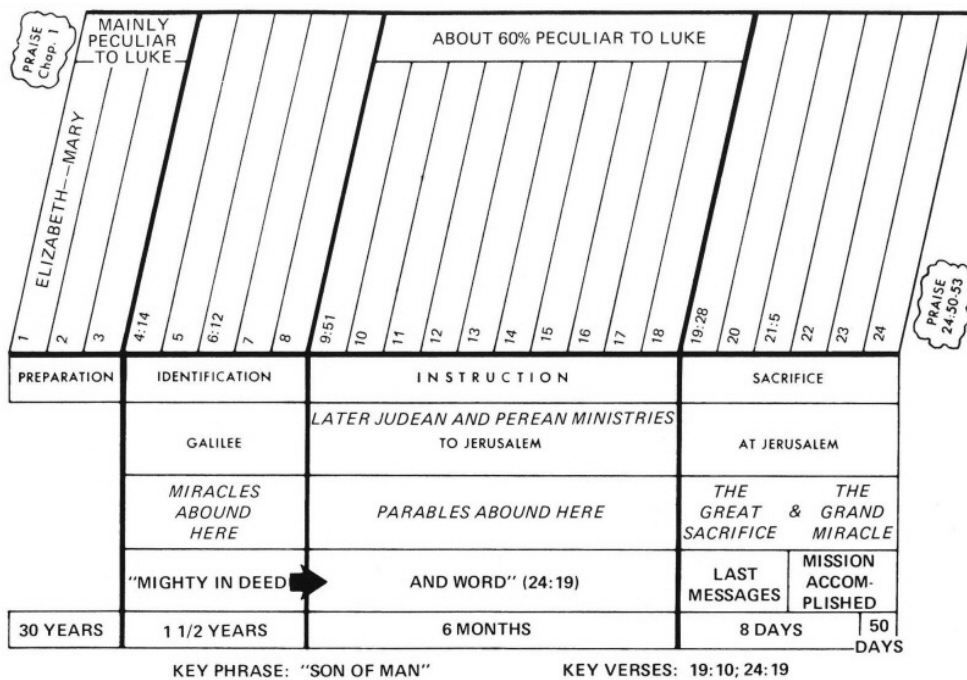
[Luke 16:28](#)

[Luke 16:28](#)

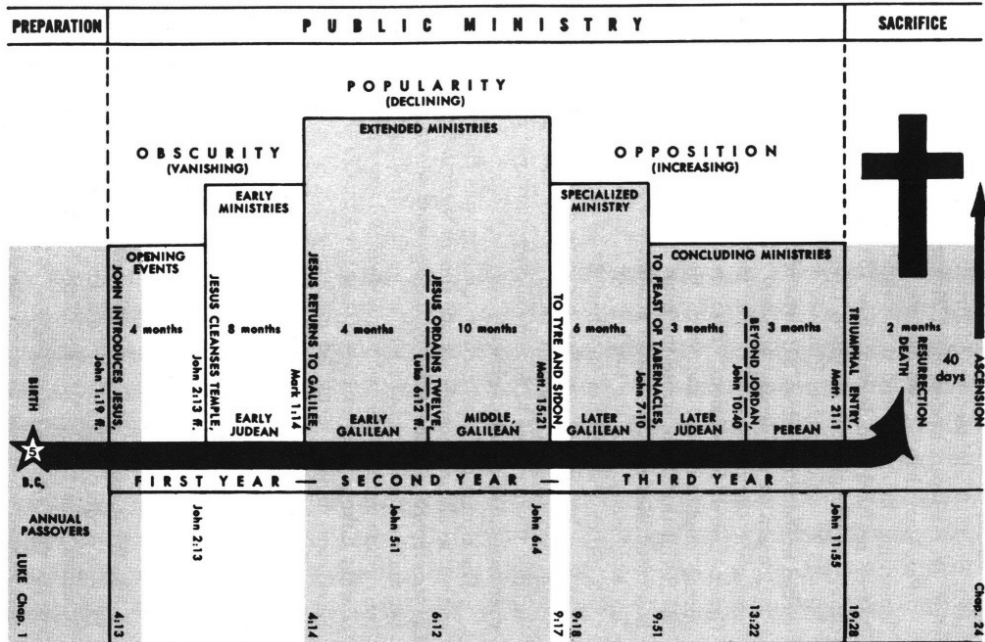
[Luke 16:30](#)

[Luke 16:31](#)



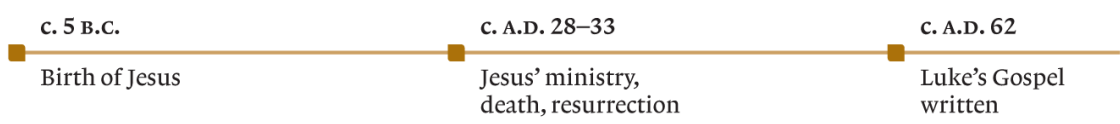


From [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) by permission  
[John MacArthur's Introduction to the Gospel of Luke](#)  
[Charles Swindoll's Introduction to Luke](#)  
[Luke Overview Chart](#) by Charles Swindoll



Click chart to enlarge LIFE OF CHRIST IN GOSPEL OF LUKE (See Shaded Areas)  
 Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

Ryrie Study Bible -Borrow



Source: [ESV Global Study Bible](#)

Luke 16:1 Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions.

BGT Luke 16:1 λεγεν δ κα πρ ς το ς μαθητ ς· νθρωπ ς τις ν πλο σιος ς ε χεν ο κον μον, κα ο το ς διεβλ θη ατ ς διασκορπ ζων τ π ρχοντα α το .  
 KJV Luke 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

NET Luke 16:1 Jesus also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who was informed of accusations that his manager was wasting his assets.

CSB Luke 16:1 He also said to the disciples: "There was a rich man who received an accusation that his manager was squandering his possessions.

ESV Luke 16:1 He also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions.

NIV Luke 16:1 Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions.

NLT Luke 16:1 Jesus told this story to his disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a manager handling his affairs. One day a report came that the manager was wasting his employer's money.

**Barclay** - Jesus said to his disciples, "There was a rich man who had a steward. He received information against the steward which alleged that he was dissipating his goods.

- **There was a rich man** Mt 18:23,24; 25:14-30
- **who had a manager**, Luke 8:3; 12:42; Ge 15:2; 43:19; 1 Chr 28:1; 1 Cor 4:1,2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pe 4:10
- **this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions** Luke 16:19; 15:13,30; 19:20; Pr 18:9; Hosea 2:8; James 4:3
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

#### Related Passages:

Luke 6:24+ "But woe to you who are **rich** ([plousios](#)), for you are receiving your comfort in full.

Luke 12:16+ And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of **arich** ([plousios](#)) man was very productive.

Luke 14:12+ And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or **rich** ([plousios](#)) neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment.

Luke 16:19, 21-22 Now there was a **rich** ([plousios](#)) man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. 21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the **rich** ([plousios](#)) man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. 22 "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the **rich** ([plousios](#)) man also died and was buried.

Luke 18:23+ But when he had heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely **rich** ([plousios](#)).

Luke 18:25+ "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for **arich** ([plousios](#)) man to enter the kingdom of God."

Luke 19:2+ And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was **rich** ([plousios](#)).

Luke 21:1+ And He looked up and saw the **rich** ([plousios](#)) putting their gifts into the treasury.

### THE UNRIGHTEOUS STEWARD

Although Jesus does not specifically label this story a parable, many commentators assume it was a parable (which has one central point/teaching) and entitle it the "Parable of the Unjust Steward." It is not the easiest story to understand, but when one does grasp Jesus' intent, it gives us a powerful principle we can apply practically. Keep reading and don't be frustrated as there is "a pot of gold at the end of this rainbow!" That may not be the best idiomatic phrase as most dictionaries state it is something one longs for or hopes to get but is unlikely to achieve or receive. There is some truth in that regarding this parable for it does describe something every believer hopes to receive but which not every believer will receive, i.e., unless they seek to practice the principle which Jesus teaches (you will have to read the full parable to fully understand this somewhat enigmatic statement!) One of the main problems for interpreters is they see Jesus seeming to praise an **unrighteous manager (steward)**. However the text does not say he praised his

dishonesty, but because he **"had acted shrewdly."** (Lk 16:8+) Furthermore, it is not Jesus Who is praising the unrighteous manager, but the manager's master as we shall see.

**John MacArthur** gives us some background information to help set the stage for Jesus' teaching in Luke 16 - Jesus gave us just shy of forty parables. They are included in the gospel record. One out of three — or about a third — deal with money in some way. That is not surprising that money should have a dominant role in the teaching of Jesus, since it has such a dominate role in our lives. We spend, according to statistics, more of our waking time thinking about money than not thinking about money, how to acquire it, how to acquire more of it, how to spend it, how to save it, how to invest it, how to borrow it, counting it, sometimes giving it away, loaning it. Money and possessions, wealth are so much a part of this world's experience that they actually dominate, define, and determine an inordinate, if not a consuming, portion of our lives. If you were to be, say 85 yo, statistics say that you would have spent nearly fifty years of your waking time thinking about money! That's too much. Sadly, all that thinking about money may not be wise. We can be so foolish when it comes to money. Our Lord redirects our attitude toward money in the parable. ([Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#))

**Bruce Goettsche** - This morning we are going to look at a parable that describes a man of the world. I'm going to tell you up front that you probably aren't going to like this guy. He's like a scam artist that is out to steal your identity and empty your bank account. However, Jesus draws some lessons from this guy that we need to hear. Lessons that could change the entire complexion of our church, and if embraced widely, could change the focus of the church as a whole. (**ED: I WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREE - IF WE WOULD LET JESUS' WORDS IN THIS PARABLE REALLY SINK IN, THEY HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO RADICALLY CHANGE OUR LIFE NOW ON EARTH AND OUR LIFE LATER IN HEAVEN AND FOR ALL ETERNITY!**) ([Taking a Lesson from the World](#))

**Now** (kai) **He was also saying to the disciples** ([mathetes](#)) **there was a rich man** ([plousios](#)) **who had a manager** ([oikonomos](#) - a steward) - **Now** (kai) is a coordinating conjunction and suggests a connection this the previous parable in Luke 15:1-32 (but not everyone agrees). In any event the "lost and found" in Luke 15 now turns to possessions/money in Luke 16. In Luke 15 the message was more "evangelistic" and directed especially at the prideful, legalistic **Pharisees and scribes** who desperately needed to recognize that they were (spiritually) lost so that they might be found by God. Now Jesus shifts to His **disciples** and while clearly the Pharisees are listening (Lk 16:14), this message is more of a discipleship lesson, on how disciples are to live their lives although it clearly ends with a warning to the Pharisees in the death and fate of a very rich man (Lk 16:19-31+). Now keep in mind that although Jesus is addressing "the disciples," this group is not necessarily all saved individuals. As explained below, **disciples** were followers and probably most of those who were following Jesus at this time were interested in His teaching and His miracles but had not yet placed their faith in Him as their Messiah and Redeemer. For example in John 6:66 we see the response to His teaching the disciples that He was the Bread of life and "As a result of this **many of His disciples** ([mathetes](#)) **withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.**" In other words they were not truly disciples, truly believers as defined by Jesus in John 8:31-32 ("If you continue [remain, abide] in My word, then you are **truly** [[alethos](#)] **disciples** of Mine"). They did not abide with Jesus but withdrew from Him! They enjoyed eating the bread He supplied, but not His word that He was the "living Bread" (life giving Bread) which they were to eat in order to live forever! (John 6:51)

**Steven Cole** - Every once in a while I receive in the mail an ad inviting me to sign up for a book or a course on how I can get rich. It may involve someone's scheme for buying stocks or trading commodities. The guy who is selling the book or the course is playing off the common desire to get rich, preferably with a minimum of effort. But what if we spend our lives climbing the ladder of success only to find out that it's leaning against the wrong wall? What if we get rich only to discover that we're really poor? In Lu 16, Jesus tells two parables—the unrighteous steward and rich man and Lazarus—to show that God's perspective on riches and our perspective are often diametrically opposed. If we want to be truly rich, we need God's perspective on money.....The entire chapter should make us all stop and think carefully about our attitude toward money. God's ways are higher than our ways (Is 55:9), especially with regard to money. Since we're all prone to the world's ways, we need to think carefully about what Jesus is saying so that we follow God's way to true riches rather than the world's way to deceptive wealth and ultimate, eternal poverty. ([How to be Truly Rich](#))

**MacArthur** explains that "Jesus actually was very adept at doing that (USING ILLUSTRATIONS OR EXAMPLES OF SINFUL MEN). Jesus taught, as I said, from the expected and the unexpected experiences of life and life offers us both and both can be good places to learn from. In Luke 18, as we shall see in the future, he used an unjust judge as an analogy to God himself. Here the main character is a man identified in verse 8 as the **unrighteous** steward. There's no question that this man is unrighteous. He is evil. He is wicked. He is conniving. He starts out as irresponsible and ends up an embezzler. And some people have worked really hard to try to protect Jesus from using a bad man to make a good point, and so they have tried to read into this story some kind of stuff in the cracks and between the words and somehow cast this man in a different light and make him good. You can't do it because there's no way around the fact that he is called the **unrighteous** steward. And by the way there are no hidden details. **This is fiction.** This is a story Jesus made up. He created it. He invented it. There are no more components than the ones He gave. There's nothing more to the story. No secret explanation, no hidden details to uncomplicate it or complicate it.... And we are shocked as the audience of disciples would be when the master praises him. Punish him? We would understand that. Beat him publicly? We would

understand that. They would understand that, but commend him? **That's the surprise ending, but that's the whole point of the story.** And it's really not unusual for Jesus to teach this way. Frequently Jesus followed a rabbinical pattern of teaching and the rabbis loved to teach from the lesser to the greater. The little phrase, "how much more," if an unjust judge will do this what will God who is a just judge do? If an irritated man will open the door just to get rid of you what will a God who loves you do when you knock on His door with a need? If a wicked, evil man is shrewd in the use of money that he has access to, what will you do? It's from the lesser to the greater and the rabbis love to teach that way and so did Jesus. How much more, how much more? " ([Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#))

**Steven Cole** explains that Jesus "is saying that we can learn a valuable lesson from this pagan scoundrel, who is wiser than many **"sons of light,"** (Jn 12:36, 1Th 5:5) in that he saw what was coming and he used what had been entrusted to him while he could to prepare for the future. **The lesson for us is a faithful steward will use his Master's money shrewdly to provide true riches for eternity.** Jesus is telling us that there *is* a way you can take it with you, namely, by **wisely investing the resources that God has entrusted to you now in things that matter for eternity.**" ([How to be Truly Rich](#))

**Hendriksen** - In the parable of The Shrewd Manager (The Steward with Foresight) Jesus shows that worldly people are often more shrewd, more forward-looking, than are the people upon whom the light has been shining. Of course, none of this means that Jesus in any way whatever praises this "manager" for his dishonesty. The very opposite is true, as verses 10–13 (climaxed by "You cannot serve God and mammon") clearly show. ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

**Robertson** - The three preceding parables in chapter 15 exposed the special faults of the Pharisees, "their hard exclusiveness, self-righteousness, and contempt for others" (Plummer). This parable is given by Luke alone. The καὶ [kai] (also) is not translated in the Revised Version. It seems to mean that at this same time, after speaking to the Pharisees (chapter 15), Jesus proceeds to speak a parable to the disciples (16:1–13), the parable of the Unjust Steward.

**Now He was also saying to the disciples** - This discourse is directed to the disciples but we know the Pharisees are listening for we see them respond in Lk 16:14 as they "were scoffing at Him." Their response prompts Jesus' instruction in Lk 16:15-18 and then the parable Lk 16:19-31 both of these sections directed at the Pharisees, men who "were mastered by desire for material gain, while claiming to be the teachers of the moral law and interpreters of spiritual life." ([Brian Bell](#))

**Keener** - Many well-to-do landowners had managers to oversee their estates; these managers, or stewards, could be slaves or, as here (16:3–4), free persons. Squandering another's possessions was considered a particularly despicable crime (cf. 15:13). (See [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#))

**MacArthur** on **had a manager** - A steward like this, an *oikonomon*, would be a free man and not a slave. He would be of high social status and high responsibility. He would be trusted because he would have the right to act on behalf of his master in the full operation of this agricultural business. He manages all the land. He manages the crops. He is responsible for the assets. He is responsible for the liabilities. He is the full administrator of the estate with all the right and power to act in behalf of the rich owner. ([Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#).)

**Wiersbe** notes that "The most important thing about a steward is that he serve his master faithfully (1 Cor. 4:2). When he looks at the riches around him, the steward must remember that they belong to his master, not to him personally, and that they must be used in a way that will please and profit the master." (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

**NET Note** on **reported to** - These are not formal legal charges, but reports from friends, acquaintances, etc.; (The marginal note in the NAS translates it "accused.")

**Matthew Henry** - Here is the *dishonesty* of this *steward*. He *wasted his lord's goods*, embezzled them, misapplied them, or through carelessness suffered them to be lost and damaged; and for this he was *accused to his lord*. .... The parable itself, in which all the children of men are represented as *stewards* of what they have in this world, and we are but stewards. Whatever we have, the property of it is God's; we have only the use of it, and that according to the direction of our great Lord, and for his honour....We are all *liable* to the same charge (AS THAT MASTER MADE AGAINST THE STEWARD). We have not made a due improvement of what God has entrusted us with in this world, but have perverted his purpose; and, that we may not be for this *judged of our Lord*, it concerns us to *judge ourselves*.

**Barclay** - "The steward had followed a career of embezzlement."

**Wiersbe** - This particular steward *forgot* that he was a steward and began to act as if he were the owner. He became a "prodigal steward" who wasted his master's wealth. His master heard about it and immediately asked for an inventory of his goods and an audit of his books. He also fired his steward. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

**And this manager was reported ([diaballo](#)) to him as squandering ([diaskorpizo](#)) his possessions ([huparcho](#))** - This story reminds



me of [Bernie Madoff](#) who created the greatest Ponzi scheme in history (at one time worth of 64.8 Billion dollars)! If you are finding yourself envious of that huge number, you definitely need to read the story of Madoff, who paid an even higher personal price for his **squandering** the **possessions** of investors who put their trust in him! **Squandering** is in the [present tense](#) meaning it was habitual practice to scatter abroad or disperse his master's possessions! Of course in this context the verb meant to squander and is the same word used to describe the prodigal son squandering his inheritance (Luke 15:13+). **Mattoon** says the idea of [diaskorpizo](#) is "to winnow, like a person that separates the grain from the chaff by throwing it up high into the air and letting the wind blow away the chaff (cf Mt 25:24, 26)." This literal use depicts the way this "scam artist" handled his master's resources, throwing away money with no sense of responsibility or accountability. This is the antithesis of a good steward and violates the basic sense of the role a steward was to fulfill which was to take judicious, wise care of his master's **possessions**.

**THOUGHT**- Beloved, as we read this story, we need to be reminded of the fact that as God's children we are stewards of our Father's **possessions**, and one day will be required to give an account to Him of our handling of those possessions. Paul writes "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, **according to what he has done**, whether good or bad." (2 Cor 5:10+) and "So then each one of us **will give an account** of himself to God. (Rom.14:12+) **Vance Havner** often said, "God called us to play the game, not keep the score." If we are faithful stewards, God will reward us generously, and that reward will forever bring glory to His name. **Do you really believe you will have to give an account to God?** You say now wait a minute - Jesus paid for all my sins didn't He? Yes, your sins are totally forgiven, but that is not what this accounting is about! It is about how you used (or wasted) your time, talents and money in this drama call life! You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead! Are you? I sometimes wonder why twice in heaven John says God will wipe away **every tear**? (Rev 7:17, Rev 21:4). It is only a guess, but it occurs to me that it could be because in heaven we realize what we could have done on earth for God's glory if we had used the time, talents and treasures faithfully and fruitfully, abiding in His Vine (Jesus Jn15:5) and filled with (supernaturally enabled) His Spirit (Eph 5:18+)! O God, don't let us (myself or anyone reading these words) waste this fleeting treasure of time You've given us (Ps 144:4), but to use it for Your great glory and bring forth eternal fruit "far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think" (Eph 3:20+) In Jesus' Name. Amen

**David Guzik** adds - "**Give an account of your stewardship**" are words that everyone will hear, both sinner and saint. All will have to give account in some way, and we will give account to God. **Spurgeon** once noted that each of us will have to give account of our stewardship regarding our time, our talents, our substance, and our influence. For each of us, our stewardship will one day come to an end. The preacher's voice, mental faculties, and strength will not last forever. The wealth of this world may not last even in this life. A mother's stewardship over her children changes and diminishes greatly. If Jesus does not come first, we all will die and pass from this life to the next. (REDEEM THE TIME!) ([Luke 16](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - In His portrait of the prodigal and the elder brother, Jesus described two opposite philosophies of life. Prior to his repentance, the prodigal *wasted* his life, but his elder brother only *spent* his life as a faithful drudge. Both attitudes are wrong, for the Christian approach to life is that we should *invest* our lives for the good of others and the glory of God. This chapter emphasizes that truth: life is a stewardship, and we must use our God-given opportunities faithfully. One day we must give an account to the Lord of what we have done with all He has given to us, so we had better heed what Jesus says in this chapter about the right and wrong use of wealth. Neither of the two accounts in this chapter is called a parable either by Jesus or by Luke, so it is likely that our Lord was describing actual happenings. However, whether they are actual events or only parables, the spiritual values are the same. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

**Brian Bell** - Like the prodigal(wasteful) son, this steward wasted his master's goods , just as many people are doing today. From the prodigal son to the prodigal steward. Many people are doing the same today...wasting what God has entrusted into their care! (**ED**: GREAT POINT AS LUKE USES THE SAME VERB DIASKORPISO OF THE PRODIGAL SON IN Lk 15:13+ AND HERE OF THE PRODIGAL STEWARD!)

---

**Michael Andrus** has some helpful background on the parable in Luke 16:1-9 - On the surface this appears to be a strange story for Jesus to tell. Why would he employ a rogue like this dishonest manager as an example of something good? But it doesn't seem quite so strange when we look at some of the other characters Jesus appealed to in His teaching. Perhaps you recall the parable of the unjust judge in Luke 18:1-8 he didn't fear God and he didn't respect man, but Jesus saw in him a positive spiritual truth. Or recall how Jesus commanded us in Mt 10:16 to be "wise as serpents?" Or what about the simile He used of His own return, namely that He will come as a "thief" in the night?

In none of these cases is the Lord condoning all the activities of the one pictured. He is not condoning the judge's hard-heartedness, or the serpent's poisonous mouth, or the thief's penchant for relieving other people of their personal

property. Nor is he here in this parable condoning the shrewd manager's dishonesty. Rather in each case He is attempting to make one salient point, to teach us one positive truth from the illustration. An ancient proverb explains Jesus' use of these characters: "It is wise to learn, even from an enemy."

The unjust judge does allow himself to be moved by the needs of people, and so does God. A serpent is careful and on the lookout for danger, and so should a Christian be. A thief will come at an unexpected moment, and so will Jesus Christ. Likewise the dishonest manager in our story demonstrates cleverness, shrewdness and prudence in the way he uses money to prepare for the future, and so should we.

The real theme of this parable, and indeed of the entire chapter, Luke 16, is money. [Luke 16:1-9 Money—Godly Ways of Giving It: A Bad Man's Good Example](#)

---

**ILLUSTRATION** of stewardship - This past summer we all heard about Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation receiving Warren Buffett's gift of \$31 billion. In 2 years they will start receiving Increments of \$3 billion a year. Must give away every nickel that is contributed in the previous year. In the next 2 years, the foundation plans to double its staff to about 600 people to handle the additional money. I wonder what they'll invest in. I wonder how much will be a temp blessing(earthly), or a how much will be an investment to the future? ([Brian Bell](#))

---

**Disciples** (3101)(**mathetes** from **manthano** = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*") describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. **Mathetes** is used of superficial followers of Jesus as well as of genuine believers, so clearly the ultimate sense is determined by the context.

**Mathetes** uses by Luke - Lk. 5:30; Lk. 5:33; Lk. 6:1; Lk. 6:13; Lk. 6:17; Lk. 6:20; Lk. 6:40; Lk. 7:11; Lk. 7:18; Lk. 7:19; Lk. 8:9; Lk. 8:22; Lk. 9:14; Lk. 9:16; Lk. 9:18; Lk. 9:40; Lk. 9:43; Lk. 9:54; Lk. 10:23; Lk. 11:1; Lk. 12:1; Lk. 12:22; Lk. 14:26; Lk. 14:27; Lk. 14:33; Lk. 16:1; Lk. 17:1; Lk. 17:22; Lk. 18:15; Lk. 19:29; Lk. 19:37; Lk. 19:39; Lk. 20:45; Lk. 22:11; Lk. 22:39; Lk. 22:45; Acts 6:1; Acts 6:2; Acts 6:7; Acts 9:1; Acts 9:10; Acts 9:19; Acts 9:25; Acts 9:26; Acts 9:38; Acts 11:26; Acts 11:29; Acts 13:52; Acts 14:20; Acts 14:22; Acts 14:28; Acts 15:10; Acts 16:1; Acts 18:23; Acts 18:27; Acts 19:1; Acts 19:9; Acts 19:30; Acts 20:1; Acts 20:30; Acts 21:4; Acts 21:16

**Rich man** (4145)(**plousios** from **ploutos** = wealth, abundance, riches) is an adjective which defines that which exists in a large amount with implication of its being valuable. Literally **plousios** refers to having an abundance of earthly possessions that exceeds normal experience. The idea of being materially affluent and rich dominates its secular usage. Luke uses this adjective 3 times in this parable (Lk 16:19, 21, 23) with 7 other uses of rich, most in the context of who does or does not attain to eternal life in heaven (Kingdom of God):

**Plousios** uses by Luke - Lk. 6:24; Lk. 12:16; Lk. 14:12; Lk. 16:1; Lk. 16:19; Lk. 16:21; Lk. 16:22; Lk. 18:23; Lk. 18:25; Lk. 19:2; Lk. 21:1

**Manager** (steward)(3623) (**oikonomos** from **oikos** = house + **némo** = manage, distribute, dispense; [see](#) related **oikonomia**) is literally the manager or superintendent of a household or estate. A **steward** manages another's wealth. He does not own that wealth himself, but he has the privilege of enjoying it and using it for the profit of his master. **Vincent** notes that in the Greek culture the **steward** was the one who "assigns to the members of the household their several duties, and pays to each his wages. The paymaster. He kept the household stores under lock and seal, giving out what was required; and for this purpose received a signet-ring from his master." Although **stewards** usually were slaves or freedmen (former slaves), many had considerable responsibility and authority.

**Oikonomos** - 10v - manager(3), managers(1), steward(2), stewards(3), treasurer(1). Lk 12:42+; Lk. 16:1; Lk. 16:3; Lk. 16:8; Rom. 16:23; 1 Co. 4:1; 1 Co. 4:2; Gal. 4:2; Titus 1:7; 1Pe 4:10

**Reported** (1225)(**diaballo** from **dia** = through + **ballo** = throw, cf devil = **diabolos**) means to bring charges, bring complaint against, accuse, inform. This is the only NT use ([Hapax legomenon](#)) **Reinecker** says it means "To bring charges with hostile intent, either falsely and slanderously or justly (**Ed**: **diabolos** means slanderer). It means being accused behind one's back." So in this context slander comes back and it's legitimate slander!

**Robertson** on **diaballo** - It means to throw across or back and forth, rocks or words and so to slander by gossip. The word implies malice even if the thing said is true. The word **diabolos** (slanderer) is this same root and it is used even of women, she-devils (1 Tim. 3:11).

**Possessions** (5225)(**huparcho** from **hupó** = under + **árcho** = begin or **arche** = beginning) means literally to begin under and then

to exist, be present or be at hand. **Vine** says **huparcho** means to be in existence and in a secondary sense to belong to with the definite article ("the" in Greek) signifying one's possessions (the things which one possesses, which exist so to speak)." **Robertson** - "His belongings," a Lukan idiom.

**Huparcho** - 31v - **been(2), being(9), belonging(1), exist(1), existed(1), gone(1), live(1), owned(1), possess(1), possessions(11), private means(1), property(1).** Matt. 19:21; Matt. 24:47; Matt. 25:14; Lk. 7:25; Lk. 8:3; Lk. 11:13; Lk. 11:21; Lk. 12:15; Lk. 12:33; Lk. 12:44; Lk. 14:33; Lk. 16:1; Lk. 16:23; Lk. 19:8; Acts 3:2; Acts 3:6; Acts 4:32; Acts 4:37; Acts 7:55; Acts 8:16; Acts 16:20; Acts 17:29; Acts 22:3; Acts 27:21; 1 Co. 11:18; 1 Co. 13:3; 2 Co. 8:17; Gal. 1:14; Gal. 2:14; Phil. 2:6; Heb. 10:34

**ILLUSTRATION** - Anita Sharpe, writing in the April 5, 1996 edition of the *Wall Street Journal*, penned a penetrating article entitled "More Spiritual Leaders Preach the Virtue of Wealth." The opening line reads: "God has a new co-pilot: Midas." Her thesis is that the convergence of the conspicuous consumption of the 1980s and the more spiritual focus of the 1990s has produced a climate in which virtually every religious expression is preaching the spiritual virtue of wealth: Jews, charismatics, evangelicals, liberals, and New-Agers. She reports that a large charismatic church in Seattle hosted a seminar led by conservative Jew Paul Zane Pilzer on the topic of his book *God Wants You to Be Rich*. The church's pastor is quoted as saying that the denomination's college uses *God Wants You to Be Rich* as a text: "It's a kind of foundation for our economics class." **(WOE!)** God supposedly wants every layperson, pastor, and missionary to be rich. Ms. Sharpe goes on to report on two Chicago churches, one evangelical and one liberal, that have had huge responses to seminars about money and the Bible. She concludes her article with snippets from New-Age spokespersons such as Catherine Ponder of the Unity Church Worldwide (**A CULT**) who sponsors "prosperity dial-a-thought" and Deepak Chopra's best-selling *The Seven Laws of Spiritual Success*, which draws from the Bible, Khalil Gibran, Lao-tzu, and the Rig-Veda. New-Agers even have a retreat center devoted to success and affluence—the Little Horse Spa for the Spirit.

Many in our culture, from evangelicals to New-Agers, are doing their best to serve God and mammon. But as Christians we want to know what Jesus says about all this, and we find out in Luke's Gospel. We have heard him in the jolting woe of the Sermon on the Plain ("Woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort," Luke 6:24) and in the pungent Parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:13-21. Now Jesus raised the issue again in the successive parables of the dishonest manager (Luke 16:1-13) and the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and not much later in the account of the rich ruler (Luke 18:18-30), followed by the story of Zacchaeus who gave half his possessions to the poor (Luke 19:1-9). Jesus has indeed spoken on the issue! (See R Kent Hughes - [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

---

## **Croft Pentz - USING OUR MONEY PROPERLY Luke 16:1–18**

The sin most linked with pride in the Bible is greed, or the lust for worldly possessions. Loving money or possessions more than God is sin (ED: THAT MAKES MONEY AN "IDOL" AND A "MASTER")—and this sin is rampant in our world today. The more people get, the more they want—they are never satisfied. Rich people are fearful of losing what they have, so they have no joy. Poor people have less to lose, but instead of enjoying what they have they wish for the things they can't afford (ED: SO THEY HAVE NO JOY EITHER! TRUE JOY IS IN JESUS BY THE SPIRIT! Cp Gal 5:22, Ro 15:13).

### **I. FAILURE CONDEMNED—Luke 16:1–3**

1. Unjust steward—v. 1. The steward becomes careless. We, too, are stewards. All we have belongs to God. We are responsible to God for:
  - a) Our time. We should use our time wisely (Ps. 90:12).
  - b) Our talents. We must develop our God-given aptitudes (Eccles. 9:10).
  - c) Our tithes. We owe this to God (Mal. 3:8–10).
  - d) Our traits. Our character and habits must be molded according to God's law (Gal. 5:22–23).
  - e) Our testimony. We must witness for Christ (1 Cor. 9:27).
2. Undisciplined steward—vv. 2–3. The steward did not take good care of the Master's goods. His master called him to account for his actions. As Christians we should remember these three things as we live for God:
  - a) Death is coming (Heb. 9:27).
  - b) Christ is coming (John 14:1–3; Matt. 24:44).
  - c) Judgment is coming (For believers = 2Cor 5:10, For lost = Rev. 20:11–15).

### **II. FORESIGHT COMMENDED—Luke 16:4–9**

1. Steward's foresight—vv. 4–8. The steward used his position to decrease the amount of the poor people's debts to his master. The master praised the steward for his foresight. But it was wrong—the steward was really "buying friends" at his master's expense.
2. Sound foresight—vv. 8–9. We should use our money to advance the kingdom of God. Some people feel that their money



will “buy their way into heaven.”

Many people will spend thousands of dollars on their bodies, but spend no (or little) time on their souls, which will live forever!

### III. FAITHFULNESS COUNSELED—Luke 16:10–18

1. Faithful in service—v. 10. The Christian must learn to be faithful in “small things.” Note the importance of being faithful (Rev. 2:10; Matt. 24:13).
2. Faithful in substance—vv. 11–12. God wants our tithes and offerings. Our money belongs to God. All we have belongs to God!
3. Faithful servant—v. 13. Some people’s god is money. They stay home from church on Sunday, but never from work on Monday. They miss church to visit friends, but never neglect their jobs to visit friends!
4. Foolishness seen—vv. 14–18. The religious leaders knew the way, but refused to accept it. They were foolish.

Christ’s teaching was not popular in His day. Likewise, those who today preach His Word are not popular. All of God’s true children face persecution and trouble. People who love money will despise: (1) self denial, (2) self discipline, and (3) self dedication. Put Christ first in your life! ([Expository Outlines from Luke](#))

**Luke 16:2 "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.'**

BGT Luke 16:2 κα φων σας α τ ν ε πεν α τ τ το το κο ω περ σο ; π δο ς τ ν λ γον τ ς ο κονομ ας σου, ο γ ρ  
δ ν τι ο κονομε ν.

KJV Luke 16:2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

NET Luke 16:2 So he called the manager in and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Turn in the account of your administration, because you can no longer be my manager.'

CSB Luke 16:2 So he called the manager in and asked, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you can no longer be my manager.'

ESV Luke 16:2 And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.'

NIV Luke 16:2 So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'

NLT Luke 16:2 So the employer called him in and said, 'What's this I hear about you? Get your report in order, because you are going to be fired.'

- **What is this I hear about you?** Ge 3:9-11; 4:9,10; 18:20,21; 1 Samuel 2:23,24; 1 Cor 1:11; 1 Ti 5:24
- **Give an accounting of your management** Luke 12:42; Eccl 11:9-10; 12:14; Mt 12:36; Ro 14:12; 1 Cor 4:2,5; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Pe 4:5,10; 1 Ti 4:14; Rev 20:12
- **for you can no longer be manager** Luke 12:20; 19:21-26
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

#### Related Passages:

Ecclesiastes 12:14 For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

Matthew 12:36+ “But I tell you that every careless (idle - [argos](#)) word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment.

Romans 14:12+ So then **each one** ([hekastos](#)) of us will give an account of himself to God.

**DISHONESTY OF THE STEWARD:  
FIRED ON THE SPOT**

**What is this I hear about you?** - Jesus does not say how the rich man found out. "Although phrased as a question, the charges were believed by the owner, as his dismissal of the manager implies." ([NET Note](#))

**THOUGHT** - While this is not Jesus' main point we all do well to remember one of God's promises in Nu 32:23+ "But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and **be sure your sin will find you out.**" (cf Ge 4:6-7+, Ps 90:8, 1Co 4:5+) We may hide our sins for a time, but eventually we will be exposed! Next time we willfully contemplate sinning against Jehovah, we need to pause and run this passage through our mind. It is a good "preventative medicine" which can save us much grief, misery and shame! Remember, no sin against God or His Word will remain secret and unpunished!

**Give** ([apodidomi](#)) **an accounting** ([logos](#)) **of your management** ([oikonomia](#)) - **Give** is a command in the [aorist imperative](#) meaning "Do it right now!" The [chickens have come home to roost](#) His sin has been exposed. It reminds me of an old classic sermon by Pastor R G Lee entitled "[Pay Day. Someday!](#)" (Read Pastor Lee's short biography "[R.G. Lee – a peerless pulpiteer](#)") This command from the owner is not in order giving him a chance to save his job. It's like we see in companies today who give bad employees "two weeks notice." In fact, the master should have fired him at that very moment and not given him more time to mismanage the master's resources. But this is a story and so Jesus says the master gives the manager some time to report back to him regarding his management. As **Hughes** says "In today's terms, "Give me all your records, and clean out your desk. You're outta here!" This is depressing, even if you are a crook."

**For** (term of explanation) **you can** (absolutely) **no longer be manager** - In short, like Donald Trump would often say on the show the Apprentice, "You're fired!" It was a management position and clearly he had mismanaged the master's money. As noted above, while he was in essence fired, he was given some notice before he had to leave. In real business, this obviously would be bad practice.

**Matthew Henry** applies this - Now this is designed to teach us, (1.) That we must all shortly be discharged from *our stewardship* in this world (ED: WHEN WE DIE OR ARE RAPTURED); we must not always enjoy those things which we now enjoy. Death will come, and *dismiss* us from our stewardship, will *deprive* us of the abilities and opportunities we now have of doing good, and others will come in our places and have the same. (2.) That our discharge from our stewardship at death is *just*, and what we have deserved, for we have wasted our Lord's goods, and thereby forfeited our trust, so that we cannot complain of any wrong done us. (ED: THIS IMPLIES THERE MIGHT BE SOME WRONG DONE AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT - BETTER TO THINK OF IT AS LOSING REWARDS WE COULD HAVE HAD FOR ETERNITY cf 2Jn 1:8, Col 4:17, 1Cor 3:13-15+) (3.) That when our stewardship is taken from us we must *give an account* of it to our Lord: *After death the judgment*. We are warned both of our discharge and our account, and ought to be frequently thinking of both. (ED: We should think much of Ps 144:4, James 4:14+, Ephesians 5:15-16+ and 2Co 5:10+)

---

**Give** ([591](#))/([apodidomi](#)) from **apó** = from + **didomi** = give and so to "give off" from one's self) literally means to give back, then to put away by giving and then in a more figurative sense to pay back or recompense. **Apodidomi** can mean to give back or pay back (implying a debt and conveying the idea of obligation and responsibility for something that is not optional) and was a technical term for repaying a debt (Mt 18:25, 20:8, 21:41)

**Apodidomi** - 46v - **account\*(1), award(1), fulfill(2), gave...back(2), give(4), give back(1), given(1), giving(1), make some return(1), must(1), paid(3), pay(2), pay...back(1), pay back(3), render(6), repay(8), repayment to be made(1), repays(1), returning(1), reward(3), sold(3), yielding(1), yields(1).** Matt. 5:26; Matt. 5:33; Matt. 6:4; Matt. 6:6; Matt. 6:18; Matt. 12:36; Matt. 16:27; Matt. 18:25; Matt. 18:26; Matt. 18:28; Matt. 18:29; Matt. 18:30; Matt. 18:34; Matt. 20:8; Matt. 21:41; Matt. 22:21; Matt. 27:58; Mk. 12:17; Lk. 4:20; Lk. 7:42; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 10:35; Lk. 12:59; Lk. 16:2; Lk. 19:8; Lk. 20:25; Acts 4:33; Acts 5:8; Acts 7:9; Acts 19:40; Rom. 2:6; Rom. 12:17; Rom. 13:7; 1 Co. 7:3; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Tim. 5:4; 2 Tim. 4:8; 2 Tim. 4:14; Heb. 12:11; Heb. 12:16; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 3:9; 1 Pet. 4:5; Rev. 18:6; Rev. 22:2; Rev. 22:12

**Account** ([logos](#)) This involved a presentation and examination of records, receipts, disbursements, cash on hand and the settlement of accounts.

**BDAG** - **a formal accounting**, esp. of one's actions, and freq. with fig. extension of commercial terminology account, accounts, reckoning λόγον δοῦναι (Hdt. 8, 100; X., Cyr. 1, 4, 3; Diod S 3, 46, 4; SIG 1099, 16; BGU 164, 21; Jos., Ant. 16, 120; Just., D. 115, 6) give account, make an accounting καστος περ αυτο λόγον δώσει τ. θε Ro 14:12. Also λ. ποδοῦναι abs. (Just., D. 116, 1 al.; Diod S 16, 56, 4; 19, 9, 4) Hb 13:17. τιῖνι to someone (Diod S 16, 27, 4; Plut., Alcib. 7, 3; Chariton 7, 6, 2; SIG 631, 13 τ πόλει; 2 Ch 34:28; Da 6:3 Theod.; Jos., Bell. 1, 209) τ τοίμως χοντι κρ ναι 1 Pt 4:5. τινος of someth. (SIG 1044, 46; 1105, 10 το ναλώματος; Jos., Ant. 19, 307) Lk 16:2 (here λ. w. the art.; on the subject of undergoing an audit cp. Aeschin. 3, 22). Likew. περί πινος (Diod S 18, 60, 2 δος ατ περ τούτων λόγον=taking account [considering] with

himself; BGU 98, 25 περ τούτου) Mt 12:36; Ac 19:40. περ τινος concerning someone Hv 3, 9, 10.—α τε ν τινα λόγον περὶ τινος call someone to account for someth. 1 Pt 3:15 (cp. Pla., Pol. 285e; Dio Chrys. 20 [37], 30; Apc4Esdr Fgm. b καστος π το ο κείου ργου τ ν λόγον πατηθήσεται; Just., A I, 17, 4. For another perspective s. d below.).—Of banking responsibility λόγος το θεο (PStras 72, 10 [III A.D.] τ ν θε ν λ.; PHerm 108 [III A.D.] λ. το Σαραπείου) in wordplay Ac 6:2 (w. τράπεζα q.v. 1c); s. also 1aβ.—Of a ledger heading (POxy 1333 [II/III A.D.] δ ς α τ λόγ θεωρικ ν=credit him under 'festivals'; for others s. Preisig., Wörterbuch s.v. λ. 14; s. also Fachwörter 119) Ro 9:6 (the point is that God's 'list' of Israelites is accurate; on κίπτω in the sense 'is not deficient' s. s.v. 4); vs. 9 (the 'count' is subsumed by metonymy in divine promise); Gal 5:14 (all moral obligations come under one 'entry': 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself'; for commercial association of νολίσκω vs. 15, which rounds out the wordplay, s. s.v.). The contexts of these three passages suggest strong probability for commercial associations; for another view s. 1aβ. (Borrow [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament, and other early Christian literature](#) - BDAG)

**Management** (administration) (3622) **oikonomia** from **oikos** = house + **némo** = manage, distribute) in secular Greek referred literally to the management of a household by the **oikonomos**, the **steward** manages a house and is accountable to the owner (which even involved a presentation and examination of records, receipts, disbursements, cash on hand and the settlement of accounts - our English words "economy", "economic" are derived from **oikonomia** and this background helps one see some association). **Oikonomia** indicates the task given to responsible and faithful servants who were appointed over the economy or an area of responsibility in the household. Thus **oikonomia** stresses obligation, responsibility, and faithfulness of the servant to his master in carry out the entrusted task.

**Oikonomia - 9v - administration(3), management(3), stewardship(3).** Lk. 16:2; Lk. 16:3; Lk. 16:4; 1 Co. 9:17; Eph. 1:10; Eph. 3:2; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:25; 1 Tim. 1:4

**Luke 16:3 "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg.**

KJV Luke 16:3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

NET Luke 16:3 Then the manager said to himself, 'What should I do, since my master is taking my position away from me? I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm too ashamed to beg.

CSB Luke 16:3 "Then the manager said to himself, 'What should I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I'm not strong enough to dig; I'm ashamed to beg.

ESV Luke 16:3 And the manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.

NIV Luke 16:3 "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg--

NLT Luke 16:3 "The manager thought to himself, 'Now what? My boss has fired me. I don't have the strength to dig ditches, and I'm too proud to beg.

NRS Luke 16:3 Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.

YLT Luke 16:3 'And the steward said in himself, What shall I do, because my lord doth take away the stewardship from me? to dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed: --

GWN Luke 16:3 "The manager thought, 'What should I do? My master is taking my job away from me. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg.

NKJ Luke 16:3 "Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg.

NAB Luke 16:3 The steward said to himself, 'What shall I do, now that my master is taking the position of steward away from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I am ashamed to beg.

MIT Luke 16:3 The manager thought to himself: What shall I do now, for my boss is relieving me of my

position as manager? I am unable to dig as a laborer. I am ashamed to beg.

NJB Luke 16:3 Then the steward said to himself, "Now that my master is taking the stewardship from me, what am I to do? Dig? I am not strong enough. Go begging? I should be too ashamed.

- **The manager said to himself**, Luke 18:4; Esther 6:6
- **What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me** Luke 12:17; Isaiah 10:3; Jer 5:31; Hosea 9:5; Acts 9:6
- **I am not strong enough to dig** Pr 13:4; 15:19; 18:9; 19:15; 21:25,26; 24:30-34; 26:13-16; 27:23-27; Pr 29:21; 2 Th 3:11
- **I am ashamed to beg** Luke 16:20,22; Pr 20:4; Mark 10:46; Jn 9:8; Acts 3:2
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

## THE STEWARD'S SOLILOQUY

**The manager said to himself** - (cf the rich man's dilemma in Lk 12:17-note) He is much like another bad character, the unrighteous judge in Lk 18:4-5 who "**said to himself**, 'Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.'" As he speaks to himself, he realizes he is on the street soon with no job, no money, no home. And then he crosses off two options - laboring and begging. He has become used to a certain level of living and will seek to preserve it as best he can.

A crisis does not make a man  
but it shows what a man is made of!

**What shall I do** - Luke uses this question 5 times in his Gospel - Lk 10:25+, Lk 12:17+, Lk 16:3, Lk 18:18+, Lk 20:13+. Cf "what shall we do" three times in Lk 3:10-14+, Acts 2:37+. It is often Luke's way of introducing a [soliloquy](#) (from Latin *solus* = alone+ *loqui* = to speak), a speech you make to yourself. He has a dilemma and so begins to deliberate. For believers when we have a dilemma we don't have to carry out a soliloquy, for we are never alone (Heb 13:5-6+) and can always speak with our wise, omniscient Father! Is that our usual practice when we find ourselves in a dilemma (just asking this as rhetorical question)?

**I am not strong enough to dig** - In modern vernacular one might say he is a "[white collar worker](#)." So this is more likely a case of *disinclination* than *disability* as manual labor was beneath his dignity. Can't do often times means won't as would be the case of a man spoiled by a life of plenty and a high standard of living!

[Matthew Henry](#) conjectures (remember always be careful in interpreting every detail of a parable) - It does not appear that he is either old or lame; but the truth is, he is *lazy*. His *cannot* is a *will not*; it is not a natural but a moral disability that he labours under.

**NET Note on dig** - Here "**dig**" could refer (1) to excavation ("dig ditches,") or (2) to agricultural labor ("work the soil,"). In either case this was labor performed by the uneducated, so it would be an insult as a job for a manager.

**I am ashamed ([aischunomai](#)) to beg** - Begging was the only form of welfare available in the ancient world. And yet this is even a step below manual labor, and it ultimately reveals his pride. He would not have liked the classic soul song "[Ain't Too Proud to Beg](#)." The Pharisees listening would surely have mumbled an "*Amen*" to this statement by Jesus.

**Matthew Henry** - He knows that he has not such a degree of *humility* as to get his bread by begging: *To beg I am ashamed*. This was the language of his pride, as the former of his slothfulness. Those whom God, in his providence, has disabled to help themselves, should not be *ashamed* to ask relief of others. This steward had more reason to be ashamed of cheating his master than of begging his bread.

**NET Note on to beg** - **To beg** would represent a real lowering of status for the manager, because many of those whom he had formerly collected debts from, he would now be forced to beg from.

The non-canonical book of Sirach says, "My child, don't live the life of a beggar; it is better to die than to beg. If you have to depend on someone else for your food, you are not really living your own life. You pollute yourself by accepting food from another. Begging is torture to the soul of any sensitive person. A shameless person can make begging sound sweet, but something inside him burns." (Sirach 46:28-30).

**Luke 16:4** 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their

KJV Luke 16:4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

NET Luke 16:4 I know what to do so that when I am put out of management, people will welcome me into their homes.'

CSB Luke 16:4 I know what I'll do so that when I'm removed from management, people will welcome me into their homes.'

ESV Luke 16:4 I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.'

NIV Luke 16:4 I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.'

NLT Luke 16:4 Ah, I know how to ensure that I'll have plenty of friends who will give me a home when I am fired.'

NRS Luke 16:4 I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.'

YLT Luke 16:4 I have known what I shall do, that, when I may be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me to their houses.

GWN Luke 16:4 I know what I'll do so that people will welcome me into their homes when I've lost my job.'

NKJ Luke 16:4 `I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'

NAB Luke 16:4 I know what I shall do so that, when I am removed from the stewardship, they may welcome me into their homes.'

MIT Luke 16:4 Say, I know what to do to provide security after my departure from management. My plan will open the door to people's homes for me.

NJB Luke 16:4 Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes."

ASV Luke 16:4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

- Pr 30:9; Jer 4:22; James 3:15
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

## PORTFOLIO PLANNING!

[Portfolio](#) – all the investments held by an individual

**I know what I shall do** - He may be unrighteous but he is resourceful, as many unrighteous people can be! As **MacArthur** says "he had a sudden flash of inspiration; a "eureka moment," or epiphany....The solution he came up with would provide all the things he would need: a place to live, income, and status. (See [Commentary](#)) **Know** ([ginosko](#)) describes acquisition of information as through sense perception. Without going too far in interpretation, the fact that this verb for **know** often speaks of experiential knowledge, it suggests this unrighteous manager is skilled in unrighteous handling of mammon.

**So that when** (not "if") **I am removed** ([methistemi](#)) **from the management** ([oikonomia](#) - stewardship), **people will welcome** ([dechomai](#)) **me into their homes** ([oikos](#)) - **So that** ([term of purpose](#)) reveals his purpose was to propagate his prosperity as best he could. He is thinking of his future, knowing he is soon out of a job as manager. His scheme involves using his present position to perpetuate future profits. **Will welcome** speaks of the future fruit he expects to enjoy as a result of his present planning (or "plotting"), specifically that folks he had helped now would "put out the welcome mat" for him in the future after his present position was terminated.



**Henry** - My lord turns me out of his house. I have none of my own to go to. I am acquainted with my lord's tenants, have done them many a good turn, and now I will do them one more, which will so oblige them that they will bid me welcome to their houses, and the best entertainment they afford; and so long as I live, at least till I can better dispose of myself, I will quarter upon them, and go from one good house to another.

**Luke 16:5 "And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'"**

BGT Luke 16:5 κα προσκαλεσμενος να καστον τ ν χρεοφειλετ ν το κυρ ου αυτο λεγεν τ πρ τ · π σον φε λεις τ κυρ μου;

KJV Luke 16:5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

NET Luke 16:5 So he contacted his master's debtors one by one. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

CSB Luke 16:5 "So he summoned each one of his master's debtors. 'How much do you owe my master?' he asked the first one.

ESV Luke 16:5 So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

NIV Luke 16:5 "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

NLT Luke 16:5 "So he invited each person who owed money to his employer to come and discuss the situation. He asked the first one, 'How much do you owe him?'

NRS Luke 16:5 So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

YLT Luke 16:5 'And having called near each one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first, How much dost thou owe to my lord?

GWN Luke 16:5 "So the manager called for each one of his master's debtors. He said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

NKJ Luke 16:5 "So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

NAB Luke 16:5 He called in his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, 'How much do you owe my master?'

MIT Luke 16:5 So he got in contact one by one with each of his boss's debtors. He said to the first, "How much do you owe my boss?"

NJB Luke 16:5 'Then he called his master's debtors one by one. To the first he said, "How much do you owe my master?"

ASV Luke 16:5 And calling to him each one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

- **his master's debtors** Luke 7:41,42; Mt 18:24
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

**LET'S MAKE  
A DEAL!**

**And he summoned each one of his master's ([kurios](#)) debtors ([chreopheiletes](#)) And how much do you owe ([opheilo](#))?** - Jesus now gives two examples of the manager's "*shrewd*" handling of the debtors. In essence what the manager is doing is "robbing" from

his master by renegotiating the terms of the debt to lower the amount the debtors owed the master. Is this like "[robbing Peter to pay Paul](#)?"

**Brian Bell** - Rent was often paid to a landlord, not in money, but in kind. This would have 2 effects: First, the debtors would be grateful to him. . Second, and much more effective, he had involved the debtors, if worst came to the worst, he was now in a strong position to exercise a little judicious blackmail!

**Hughes** has an interesting comment - In order to get the sense of just how clever this was, we must understand that it was illegal in Jewish culture to charge interest to fellow Jews (cf. Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:36; Deut. 23:19). There was no such thing as principal and interest. So they would hide the business interest by hiding it in the loan, so that the principal included the interest. It was not unknown to charge as much as 100 percent interest on profitable commodities. The manager, according to common, accepted business practice, was making such usurious loans, just like everyone else. (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

---

**Debtors** ([5533](#)) (**chreopheiletes** from **chréos** = a loan, debt, and **opheiletēs** = a debtor) literally mean a debt owner. **Vine** adds it is "is found in Luke 7:41, of the two "debtors" mentioned in the Lord's parable addressed to Simon the Pharisee, and in Luke 16:5, of the "debtors" in the parable of the unrighteous steward. This parable indicates a system of credit in the matter of agriculture. In the Sept only twice., Job 31:37, (Brenton's English =) "having taken nothing from the debtor;" Pr 29:13, "when the creditor and the debtor meet together." The word is more expressive than opheiletēs ("one who owes anything to another").

**Gilbrant** adds "In ancient times a person may take a loan to avert hunger or loss; rarely if ever was a loan issued for commercial enterprise. And though the Old Testament required mercy in the payment of debts (Ex 22:25; Dt 24:6,17; Job 24:3, etc.), by New Testament times the treatment of debtors became harsh under Roman influence (see Mt 5:25,26; 18:34). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** ([lengthy discussion](#)) adds "It would seem that as Israel came into contact with the surrounding nations, debt became increasingly a commercial matter. The Mosaic laws regarding clemency toward the poor who were compelled for the time being to become debtors were utterly disregarded, and the poor were oppressed by the rich."

#### Related Resources on debt:

- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Debt](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Debt](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Debt](#)
- [What does the Bible say about going into debt? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [I am a Christian in debt. What should I do? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are some Bible verses about debt? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Luke 16:6** "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, **Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.**'

BGT Luke 16:6 ὁ ἐπεὶ κατὰ βίβλους λαοῦ. ὁ ἐπεὶ αὐτὸς ὤξαι σου τὸ γράμμα καὶ καθύσας ταχὺς γράψον πεντήκοντα.

KJV Luke 16:6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

NET Luke 16:6 The man replied, 'A hundred measures of olive oil.' The manager said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and write fifty.'

CSB Luke 16:6 " 'A hundred measures of olive oil,' he said. " 'Take your invoice,' he told him, 'sit down quickly, and write 50.'

ESV Luke 16:6 He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'

NIV Luke 16:6 " 'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied. "The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.'

NLT Luke 16:6 The man replied, 'I owe him 800 gallons of olive oil.' So the manager told him, 'Take the bill and quickly change it to 400 gallons. '

NRS Luke 16:6 He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.'

YLT Luke 16:6 and he said, A hundred baths of oil; and he said to him, Take thy bill, and having sat down write fifty.

GWN Luke 16:6 "The debtor replied, 'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil.' "The manager told him, 'Take my master's ledger. Quick! Sit down, and write "four hundred!"'

NKJ Luke 16:6 "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.'

NAB Luke 16:6 He replied, 'One hundred measures of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note. Sit down and quickly write one for fifty.'

MIT Luke 16:6 He replied, "100 units of olive oil." He said to him, "Take your invoices, have a seat quickly, and change the amount to 50."

NJB Luke 16:6 "One hundred measures of oil," he said. The steward said, "Here, take your bond; sit down and quickly write fifty."

ASV Luke 16:6 And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bond, and sit down quickly and write fifty.

- **Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.** Luke 16:9,12; Titus 2:10
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

**And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.'** **Take your bill, and sit down quickly** ([tacheos](#)) **and write fifty** - One by one the manager is reducing the debt of the debtors. Remember, the manager still has control of the debts at this point, but he will have that control for only a short period and so adds the instruction to this debtor to act **quickly**! The shrewd manager knows he must move swiftly while he still has time and authority. What a lesson for sleepy saints who are sadly failing to redeem the time they have left on earth to win souls, store up treasure and glorify their Father in Heaven! "A **measure** (sometimes translated "bath") was just over 8 gallons (about 30 liters). This is a large debt - about 875 gallons (3000 liters) of olive oil, worth 1000 denarii, over three year's pay for a daily worker." ([NET Note](#)) Think about what it would be like to be called into the loan office of the bank and be told that they were cutting your new car loan in half! Imagine how grateful you would be.

**MacArthur** - By reducing what they were obligated to pay his master, he put them under obligation to him. [Reciprocation](#) was an integral part of Jewish society (**ED**: "I'll rub your back if you'll rub mine."); if someone did a person a favor, that person was obligated to do one for him...One **hundred measures of olive oil** was 875 gallons, or the yield of about 150 olive trees, and was worth about one thousand denarii—more than three years' wages for a common laborer. The new deal, which cut the debt in half, created a significant loss for his master. (See [Luke Commentary](#))

[NET Note](#) - The bill was halved (sit down quickly, and write fifty). What was the steward doing? This is debated. 1) Did he simply lower the price? 2) Did he remove interest from the debt? 3) Did he remove his own commission? It is hard to be sure. Either of the latter two options is more likely. The goal was clear: **The manager would be seen in a favorable light for bringing a deflationary trend to prices.**

**Luke 16:7 "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'**

BGT Luke 16:7 πεπτα τ ρ ε πεν· σ δ π σον φε λεις; δ ε πεν· κατ ν κ ρους σ του. λ γει α τ · δ ξαι σου τ γρ μματα κα γρ ψον γδο κοντα.

KJV Luke 16:7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore

KJV Luke 16:7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

NET Luke 16:7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' The second man replied, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' The manager said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

CSB Luke 16:7 "Next he asked another, 'How much do you owe?' " 'A hundred measures of wheat,' he said. " 'Take your invoice,' he told him, 'and write 80.'

ESV Luke 16:7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

NIV Luke 16:7 "Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?' " 'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied. "He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.'

NLT Luke 16:7 " 'And how much do you owe my employer?' he asked the next man. 'I owe him 1,000 bushels of wheat,' was the reply. 'Here,' the manager said, 'take the bill and change it to 800 bushels. '

NRS Luke 16:7 Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.'

YLT Luke 16:7 'Afterward to another he said, And thou, how much dost thou owe? and he said, A hundred kors of wheat; and he saith to him, Take thy bill, and write eighty.

GWN Luke 16:7 "Then he asked another debtor, 'How much do you owe?' "The debtor replied, 'A thousand bushels of wheat.' "The manager told him, 'Take the ledger, and write "eight hundred!"'

NKJ Luke 16:7 "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

NAB Luke 16:7 Then to another he said, 'And you, how much do you owe?' He replied, 'One hundred kors of wheat.' He said to him, 'Here is your promissory note; write one for eighty.'

MIT Luke 16:7 The process kept being repeated. He asked another how much he owed, and the response was 100 units of grain. He said to him, "Take your invoices and adjust the amount to 80."

NJB Luke 16:7 To another he said, "And you, sir, how much do you owe?" "One hundred measures of wheat," he said. The steward said, "Here, take your bond and write eighty."

ASV Luke 16:7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. He saith unto him, Take thy bond, and write fourscore.

- **A hundred measures of wheat** Luke 20:9,12; Song 8:11,12
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

**And how much do you owe ([opheilo](#))? A hundred measures ([kor](#)) of wheat** - Note that he is not "**restructuring**" the loan as we commonly see when a person or business is struggling to make payments on their loan, but reducing the amount owed. This is a large amount, equivalent to 8-10 years' wages for a common laborer.

**Take ([aorist imperative](#)) your bill, and write eighty** - The shrewd manager is laying up for his future good will with men on earth, a principle that Jesus will apply to exhort disciples to lay up for themselves "good will" in heaven (cf Lk 16:9).

**Andrus** comments "It was a very clever thing to do. It was thoroughly dishonest, but it was also unquestionably shrewd. This rogue of a manager uses his head to make a couple of warm friends, before he has to walk out into the cold, hard world of employment." ([Money—Godly Ways of Giving It: A Bad Man's Good Example](#))

As **Goettsche** says "Suppose you went to the mortgage company and they offered to reduce the amount of your mortgage by 20%. Would you be grateful? Of course you would. And that is exactly what this guy was counting on. He probably did this with every customer. The result was that all these people felt they "owed" him. When he needed a job, a hand-out, or even a place to stay, they would be inclined to help the guy out." ([Taking a Lesson from the World](#))

---

**Owe** ([3784](#))/[opheilo](#) from **ophéillo** = heap up) means to owe something to someone. Literally it speaks of financial indebtedness and thus means to owe money, to be in debt, or to describe that which is due (Mt 18:28, Lk 7:41, 16:5, 7, Phile 1:18). The verb **opheilo** was sometimes used to describe "the debt" itself.

**Luke's** uses of **opheilo** - Lk. 7:41; Lk. 11:4; Lk. 16:5; Lk. 16:7; Lk. 17:10; Acts 17:29;

**Measures** (2884)(kor) is used only here and is the largest Hebrew dry measure, holding 11 bushels (10-12) or about 390 liters. **NET Note** - The hundred measures here was a hundreds kors. A **kor** was a Hebrew dry measure for grain, flour, etc., of between 10–12 bushels (about 390 liters). This was a huge amount of wheat, representing the yield of about 100 acres, a debt of between 2500–3000 denarii.

**Take** (1209)(dechomai) in this context means to take something in one's hand (used with this same sense in Lk 22:17, Eph 6:17).

**Luke 16:8 "And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light."**

BGT Luke 16:8 καὶ πνεσεν κριος τινον μον τς δικας τι φρον μως πο ησεν· τι ο υ ο το α νος του φρονιμ τεροι π ρ το ς υ ο ς το φωτ ς ε ς τ ν γενε ν τ ν αυτ ν ε σιν.

KJV Luke 16:8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

NET Luke 16:8 The master commended the dishonest manager because he acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their contemporaries than the people of light.

CSB Luke 16:8 "The master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted astutely. For the sons of this age are more astute than the sons of light in dealing with their own people.

ESV Luke 16:8 The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light.

NIV Luke 16:8 "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.

NLT Luke 16:8 "The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. And it is true that the children of this world are more shrewd in dealing with the world around them than are the children of the light.

NRS Luke 16:8 And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.

YLT Luke 16:8 'And the lord commended the unrighteous steward that he did prudently, because the sons of this age are more prudent than the sons of the light, in respect to their generation.

GWN Luke 16:8 "The master praised the dishonest manager for being so clever. Worldly people are more clever than spiritually-minded people when it comes to dealing with others."

NKJ Luke 16:8 "So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

NAB Luke 16:8 And the master commended that dishonest steward for acting prudently. "For the children of this world are more prudent in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.

MIT Luke 16:8 Yet his boss commended the immoral manager because he had acted astutely. In that respect secular people are keener as a whole, in their contemporary frame of reference, than are those who are enlightened.

- **his master praised the unrighteous manager** Luke 16:10; 18:6
- **because he had acted shrewdly** Luke 16:4; Ge 3:1; Exodus 1:10; 2 Samuel 13:3; 2 Kings 10:19; Pr 6:6-8
- **for the sons of this age** Luke 20:34; Ps 17:14; 1 Cor 3:18; Philippians 3:19
- **are more shrewd in relation to their own kind** Ps 49:10-19; Mt 17:26
- **than the sons of light** Jn 12:36; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Th 5:5; 1 Pe 2:9; 1 Jn 3:10
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

**A BAD MAN'S  
GOOD EXAMPLE!**



**And his master praised ([epaineo](#)) the unrighteous (ESV, NIV, NLT - dishonest - [adikos](#)) manager because he had acted shrewdly** - Note that it is the **master** in the story, not Jesus per se who is commending the shifty steward! Obviously the master is not saying the manager did a great job in reducing the income the master would receive from the debtors. But while the master did not approve of the manager's squandering the master's possessions, he praised for acting wisely and with insight and foresight. In short, he did not commend his method but his insight. Jesus clearly states that the manager is **unrighteous**. So Jesus is not suggesting believers follow this man's path of unrighteous behavior. The story is an example of prudence and not of methods. In essence the dishonest manager was "investing" in his future. In other words, the unrighteous steward was showing wisdom by using present opportunities to prepare for future needs. This begs the question, are you taking advantage of your opportunities for wise uses?

**THOUGHT** - If you were told you had 6 months to live or if you discovered that today was the last day of your life, what effect would it have on your priorities?

**Freddy Fritz** - There is a legitimate moral difference between saying, "I applaud the clever steward because he acted dishonestly," and saying, "I applaud the dishonest steward because he acted cleverly." The master was saying the latter, not the former, and this is the key to understanding the parable. ([Stewardship: It's All Under Our Management](#))

**Michael Andrus** - **Christians should be shrewd as well as good.** Jesus states this principle negatively in Luke 16:8 as he laments the fact that "The people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light." As we have previously stated, there is no hint that Jesus is commending the manager's dishonesty. It is taken for granted that Christians will be honest. But that is not enough—a Christian should also be smart. It's as though Jesus was placing a want-ad in the paper: "Wanted: Good people with this bad man's business sense." Christians, wise up! God has never put a premium on ignorance, except in regard to evil (Romans 16:19 says, "I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent (or naive) about what is evil."). When it comes to the use of money, we need to be shrewd. Every Christian is ultimately going to be in the same boat as this manager. We, too, are facing the certain end of our material resources. Within a few years at best, each one of us will stand before God with no wealth, no money, no titles, no influence. All that will be left behind. We brought nothing into this world and there is nothing we can take out of it. Or can we? **As a matter of fact, there is something you can take with you to the other side—friends!** ([Luke 16:1-9 Money—Godly Ways of Giving It: A Bad Man's Good Example](#))

**William Hendriksen** - What is the owner's reaction? He realizes, of course, that the renters, and the people of the village in general, are already celebrating, praising both the manager and the owner. If the owner should now tell these people what has really happened and should change the figures back to where they were originally, his reputation will go down to zero. This he cannot risk. So, he makes the best of the situation. He must have said to himself, "What a clever crook!"... It should be stressed that the **master praised** the (now discharged) manager not for being so dishonest but for being so clever, so astute, so shrewd. In other words, for "feathering his nest," seeing to it that his physical needs would be supplied for a long time to come, perhaps for the rest of his life....The owner **praised** him not because he had been so crooked but because he had planned ahead. Jesus agrees that looking ahead is the thing to do, ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#)- borrow)

## **SINNERS SHREWDER THAN SAINTS!**

**For the sons of this age are more shrewd ([phronimus](#)) in relation to their own kind** (generation - [genea](#)) - Notice that the parable ended in the middle of verse 8 and now Jesus gives His application of the moral lessons to the lives of His disciples. Who are the **sons of this age**? Those who are lost and are living for time (this "age") and not for eternity (the ages to come)! **For** (hoti = because) is a [term of explanation](#). What's Jesus explaining? The word **'kind'** is literally **generation**, so it can be read "in their own generation." **Wiersbe** comments that "The children of this world" are wiser **only** "in their generation"; they see the things of time, but not the things of eternity. Because the child of God lives "with eternity's values in view," he should be able to make far better use of his opportunities." **Sons of this age** describes unsaved sinners in general and is used by Jesus later in Luke describing the distinction in marriage on earth versus the situation in heaven...

"In the resurrection therefore, which one's wife will she be? For all seven had married her." 34 Jesus said to them, "The **sons of this age** marry and are given in marriage, 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age (ETERNITY IN HEAVEN - THEIR **"CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN"** - Php 3:20+) and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. (Luke 20:32-36+)

**Shrewd** ([phronimus](#)) is a morally neutral term which speaks of common sense, keen foresight, practical intelligence, smarts, being prudent. Most of the NT uses have a positive sense conveying the sense of prudence. Jesus' point of comparing **sons of light** to this dishonest manager is that the believer is expected to think and to use his God-given wealth wisely.

**MacArthur - Sons of this age**, people in this world, not in the kingdom of God, part of this temporal world, this kingdom of darkness, the unrighteous, the people not in God's kingdom, who belong to this passing world, are more clever in securing their future than the sons of light. Take care of your future. We hear that incessantly pounded into us. We're subject to all that advertising all the time. Take care of your future, take care of your future, and you go through life and you live and you save and you save and you save and at 65 you quit working and there it is, there's your retirement and you die at 66. What a ridiculous deal that is. All those years of sending it forward and sending it forward and when you get there it's a year, or maybe you live three, or maybe you enjoy it for five and then you hit 70 and you can't see like you could see, and you can't hear like you could hear, and you can't taste anything and who cares, you know? Maybe you could buy the car of your dreams, but they take your license away. And you don't want to take a long trip because you don't want to go through the airport lines with a walker. ([Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#))

**Brian Bell** - The dishonest manager had not done a good thing. But he had been careful to plan ahead, using material things to insure a secure future. Jesus was not teaching that His disciples should be dishonest. He was teaching that they should use material things for future spiritual benefit. This was a good lesson from a bad example. Thus my title, "A Bad Man's God Example!"

**Bruce Goettsche** - "Alistair Begg tells the story of a couple who had their car stolen. In the morning the car was returned with a note of apology and two tickets to the theatre. The note invited the couple to enjoy a night out as their way of apologizing for stealing their car. The couple took the tickets, went to the show, and when they returned their home had been cleaned out by the robbers! Be honest. Don't you just a little admire the creativity of the crooks? ([Taking a Lesson from the World](#))

**Norman Crawford** explains that "Worldly stewards use their influence and wealth to promote their own interests and to better their position for a future in this world. This is our lesson, but we must apply it to heavenly things. "As good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet 4:10), we have had the Lord's treasures entrusted to us. Even our material blessings are Another's (Lk 16:2); they are held in trust against a day to come. In view of that day, when we must give account, we should use present opportunities to lay up treasure in heaven (Lk 12:31-34). ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

**NET Note** - Is the manager dishonest because of what he just did? Or is it a reference to what he had done earlier, described in Lk 15:1? This is a difficult question, but it seems unlikely that the master, having fired the man for prior dishonesty, would now commend those same actions. It would also be unusual for Jesus to make that point of the story the example. Thus it is more likely the reference to dishonesty goes back to the earliest events, while the commendation is for the cleverness of the former manager reflected in Lk 15:5–7.

**NET Note** - Where this parable ends is debated: Does it conclude with Lk 15:7, after Lk 15:8a, after Lk 15:8b, or after Lk 15:9? Luke 15:8a looks as if it is still part of the story, with its clear reference to the manager, while 8b looks like Jesus' application, since its remarks are more general. So it is most likely the parable stops after Lk 15:8a.

**The sons of light** - This phrase describes believers, those who are righteous by grace through faith (Eph 2:8+). Jesus' pithy point is that the worldly (lost) are wiser in preparing for their temporal future in this passing world (1Jn 2:17+) than God's people are in their spiritual pursuits focused on the eternal world to come!

**THOUGHT-** Woe! Are you as convicted as I am? The unrighteous do it for **TIME**, and we should do for **ETERNITY**. There is no comparison regarding the potential harvest. The yield of the sinner ends with death while the reward of the saved "begins" with death and lasts forever! In John 15:16 Jesus declared the disciples' **"fruit would remain or abide** (meno in [present tense](#) = continually abide ~ eternally abide!). Clearly believers should be profoundly motivated to "redeem their short time on earth." Why don't we see believers doing that? (i.e., as a general rule of life -- some are of course, but most of the true church is asleep!)? From this context one reason is clearly the fact that believers **do not have a sense of need and urgency** (like the unrighteous manager - cf the sense of urgency brought out by the phrase **"do it quickly"** in Lk 16:6). The Body of Christ needs personal and corporate revival that revives in us an "eternal vision" during this short time we each have left on earth (Ps 144:4, James 4:14+, Eph 5:16, Ps 90:12)! Do you need to have your "vision" renewed? Do you really believe the principle that Jesus is teaching? If you really believe it, you will act upon it. To hear it and remain unmoved is not acting upon it. What can you change in your lifestyle, your goals, your dreams, etc, that focuses not on this world but the world to come? If you are not convicted yet, then take 4'45" to listen to all the words in this provocative song by [Keith Green](#) from 1978...it almost makes you want to cry!

### [Asleep In The Light](#)

Do you see?

Do you see?

All the people sinking down?

Don't you care?

Don't you care?  
Are you gonna let them drown?

How can you be so numb?!  
Not to care if they come  
You close your eyes,  
And pretend the job is done

"oh, bless me, lord!  
Bless me, lord!"  
You know, it's all I ever hear!  
No one aches,  
No one hurts,  
No one even sheds one tear  
But, he cries,  
He weeps,  
He bleeds,  
And he cares for your needs  
And you just lay back,  
And keep soaking it in

Oh, can't you see such sin?!  
'cause he brings people to your door,  
And you turn them away  
As you smile and say,  
"god bless you!  
Be at peace!"  
And all heaven just weep,  
'cause Jesus came to your door,  
You left him out on the streets

Open up! open up!  
And give yourself away  
You see the need,  
You hear the cries,  
So how can you delay?!  
God is calling,  
And you are the one  
But like Jonah, you run  
He told you to speak,  
But you keep holding it in

**Oh, can't you see such sin?!**  
**The world is sleeping in the dark,**  
**That the church just can't fight,**  
**'cause it's asleep in the light!**  
**How can you be so dead?!**  
**When you've been so well famed**  
**Jesus rose from the grave,**  
**And you!**  
**You can't even get out of bed!**  
**Oh, Jesus rose from the dead!**  
**Come on, get out of your bed!**

How can you be so numb?!  
Not to care if they come  
You close your eyes,  
And pretend the job is done!  
You close your eyes,

And pretend the job is done!  
Don't close your eyes,  
Don't pretend the job is done

Come away! come away!  
Come away with me, my love!  
Come away from this mess,  
Come away with me, my love!  
Come away from this mess!  
Come away with me, my love!  
Come away,  
Come away with me my love!

**See related discussion** of [Vertical Vision](#). Who you are looking for will determine Who you are living for. Remember that 1 in 25 NT verses refer directly or indirectly to the Second Coming of Jesus. (cf 1 Jn 3:2-3, Titus 2:11-14).

When Jesus comes, will He find you faithful?  
What would He find, should He come just now;  
A faded leaf or a fruitless bough;  
A servant sleeping, an idle plow;  
What would He find should He come just now?

What would He find should He come tonight,  
Your garment soiled or a spotless white;  
Your lamps all burning or with no light;  
What would He find should He come tonight?  
Author Unknown

In Exalting Jesus in Mark, **Daniel Akin** gives us words of exhortation that are appropriate for our present passage -

Stay awake! Stay awake! It could be in the evening.  
Stay awake! Stay awake! It could be at midnight.  
Stay awake! Stay awake! It could be when the rooster crows.  
Stay awake! Stay awake! It could be in the morning.

Bottom line, "He might come suddenly." His coming is **IMMINENT**! It could happen at any time, including today. You don't want Him to find you asleep, unprepared. Not doing the work He has given you. Oh, how tragic it would be for our Lord to return and find His church asleep at the wheel, neglecting her assignment, squandering her resources, deceiving herself into thinking He won't come today. How tragic to say, "Tomorrow, I will get busy serving Him," only to discover tomorrow is never coming. (See also [Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming](#))

**Adrian Rogers** said it this way - Do you know what Napoleon said when he looked at China? Napoleon saw the vast teeming millions in China, and Napoleon said, "There lies a sleeping giant, and let him sleep, because if he awakens, he will shake the world." I really believe the devil says that about the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. There lies a sleeping giant. And, I believe that this church is just that, a sleeping giant. We're asleep, and the reason that we're asleep is that so many of us have been chloroformed by the spirit of this age. We're bombarded on every side by all kinds of amusement, and you know what "amuse" means. "Muse" means "to think," the alpha prefix in front of it, "amuse," means "not to think". We're a generation that is amusing ourselves into oblivion. We live in a day in which a "hero" is a sandwich, "Life" is a magazine, "Power" is a candy bar, "Joy" is a detergent, "My sin" is a perfume, a "Star" is somebody who is an actress been married three times, and "The real thing" is a soft drink. Those are the things that are in our minds, and we need to wake up. One deacon thought he would impress his pastor, he said, "Pastor, when I come into church, what would be a good prayer for me to pray?" The pastor, knowing his way, said, "Why don't you try 'Now I lay me down to sleep?'" And, I think sometimes it's the pastor's fault. Too many sermons are like bedtime stories, lullabies. God's alarm clock is going off around the world. Have you listened to the news lately? I mean, can you see the time in which we're living? If the Apostle Paul said in his day, "It is high time to wake up," how much more for us? My dear friend, you don't have to have eyes to see that we are living in the middle of moral, and spiritual, and social, and political darkness, but we need not to sleep in the night. The maps of the world are changing overnight, and nations are being shuffled like checkers on a checkerboard, and I believe that the stage is being set. I believe it with all of my heart, for the final act in the drama of the ages. Don't you feel that way? I mean, there's an ominous sense that we're living in the end time. But, the sad thing is that so many of our churches, like ol' Samson, have gone to sleep in the lap of Delilah. And, then because we are so powerless when we do rise up to shake ourselves,

nothing happens because the Spirit of the Lord has departed. What time is it? Friend, it is time to wake up. Wake up. Don't let these days pass. It is high time to wake up. What time is it? My dear friend, listen, it is not only time to wake up, it is time to get up. Do you know another problem that we have? We come to church and listen to these choirs. We come to church and listen to our Sunday school teachers. We come to church and listen to the pastor, and he stirs us, and he wakes us up, but the problem is when we wake up, we don't get up. We just roll over in bed, yawn in the face of God, and go back to sleep until the next message. Now, the Bible says here that, "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand." (Ro 13:12<sup>+</sup>)

**Sons of light** is used twice in the NT to describe believers

John 12:36; "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become **sons of Light**." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

1 Thessalonians 5:5-note for (explains what Paul just stated in 1 Th 5:4) you are all **sons of light** and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness;

Compare Ephesians 5:8-note

for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light

**John MacArthur** - What about the **sons of light**, those of us whose life is in the age to come are looking for that city whose architect and builder is God? What about us who live in the realm of salvation, the kingdom of light, the realm of righteousness and holiness, those of us whose home is in heaven, whose citizenship is in heaven, whose inheritance is in heaven, whose reward is in heaven? How can the sons of light be so foolish in their preparation for a future that lasts forever? Do you work as hard on the use of your material wealth and your possessions and your money for eternal purposes as you do for temporal ones? That's the question. Do you have an eternal perspective? Is that where you're investing your resources? ([Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#))

**R Kent Hughes** - The dishonest manager had faced reality. He refused to live with his head in the sand. If he did not do something fast, he would be out on the street. He used all his intelligence, wit, and energy to insure his earthly comfort. **In contrast, "the sons of light" stand on the edge of eternity but lack the vision, foresight, and strength of will to do anything about it—especially in their relationships with others.** If only Christians would give as much attention to the things that concern **eternity** as they do to their **worldly business**.... If only we would be as **spiritually shrewd** as the corrupt manager was in temporal pursuits. (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#)) (Bolding added)

**David Guzik** - Jesus added the thought that the businessmen of his day (**sons of this world**) were more wise, bold, and forward-thinking in the management of what they had (more **shrewd**) than the people of God were with managing what they had (the sons of light). Some consider this to be one of Jesus' most difficult parables, because it seems that Jesus used an obviously dishonest man as an example for His disciples. Yet God sometimes uses evil things familiar to us with to illustrate a particular point, without praising the thing itself. Other examples of this principle are when Paul used things like war and slavery as illustrations of the Christian life. Yet, the dishonest steward was a good example on several points. First, he knew he would be called to account for his life and he took that seriously. Christians should take seriously the idea that they will be called to account, and that idea can be a joy if we are properly about our Master's business. Second, he took advantage of his present position to arrange a comfortable future. Jesus' assessment is still true: the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. If we pursued the Kingdom of God with the same vigor and zeal that the children of this world pursue profits and pleasure, we would live in an entirely different world. It could be said that it is to the shame of the Church that Coca-Cola is more widely distributed than the gospel of Jesus Christ. Simply, it is because the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. "Go to the men of the world, thou Christian, and do not let it be said that the devil's scholars are more studious and earnest than Christ's disciples." (Maclaren) ([Luke 16](#))

**NET Note** - Here the phrase "**sons of light**" is a reference to the righteous. The point is that those of the world often think ahead about consequences better than the righteous do.

**Brian Bell** - **Sons of this world** are more shrewd in their generation (KJV - where NAS "kind" is "generation" in KJV) – Pharisees & Scribes. Key – only in their generation. [mark the limit to it] They were wiser in carrying on their enterprises, than the sons of light are in carrying out theirs. These only invest in this life, thus are better at it because it is their sole focus. "They are clever for today and fools forever!" (Morgan). **Sons of light** - the disciples. Different both in motive and method. These wisely make investments in the future kingdom. **The worldly are more creative in working toward their aims than those enlightened (ED: READ THAT AGAIN!)** Many well-intentioned people are bound, when seeking solutions, by lack of imagination, freedom and grounding in reality. **The people of this world are much better at seeing opportunities and profiting from them, than are the children of God.** Eph .5:15-17 "Be very careful, then, how you live-not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is" **If only the Christian was an eager and ingenious**



in his attempt to attain goodness as the man of the world is in his attempt to attain money and comfort, he would be a much better man. If only men would give as much attention to the things which concern their souls as they do to the things which concern their business, they would be much better men! Over and over again a man will expend 20x's the amount of time and money and effort on his pleasure, his hobby, his garden, his sport" as he does on his church. Our Christianity will begin to be real and effective only when we spend as much time and effort on it as we do on our worldly activities. Money is not immoral. Money is entirely non-moral. There is no evil in money and there is no good in it. It can be used for both. It can be used to blast our own souls, and others around us, or to bless our own souls, and those around us. John Wesley's motto regarding money, "*Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can.*" Jesus urges his followers not to use the materials of this world in a wicked way, but for noble ends.

**Martin Luther** took the perspective that believers are merely stewards of any wealth we might have, but that God is the Owner of it all writing "Therefore we must use all these things upon earth in no other way than as a guest who travels through the land and comes to a hotel where he must lodge overnight. He takes only food and lodging from the host, and he says not that the property of the host belongs to him. Just so should we also treat our temporal possessions, as if they were not ours, and enjoy only so much of them as we need to nourish the body and then help our neighbors with the balance. Thus the life of the Christian is only a lodging for the night, since we have here no continuing city, but must journey on to heaven, where the Father is."

---

**Bruce Goettsche** - I've enjoyed reading a number of secular books on management, books on historical events, counseling insights from those outside the church, and biographies of great leaders. The reason I read these books is because I have learned that often the people of the world see some things more clearly than the people of the church. ([Taking a Lesson from the World](#))

---

**Praised** (1867) (**epaineo** from **epí** = upon or intensifies meaning of + **aínos** = praise) is literally to bestow "praise upon" -- to commend, to praise, or approbate (formally or officially approve). In classical Greek the verb *epaineō* means to approve, sanction, to praise, give a public mark of esteem. In the spirit of the OT, this word for praise involves commending God for himself, his qualities, and his works. This word is also used in commending people. Excitingly, we learn that God will commend believers for faithful service. Now in this context God is clearly not commending the man's dishonesty. It is a man (the master) who knows business commending the slick acumen of his manager.

**Epaineo** - 6x in 5v - praise(5), praised(1). - Lk. 16:8; Ro 15:11; 1 Co. 11:2; 1 Co. 11:17; 1 Co. 11:22. Note that of these verses the verb appears only once in relation to God (Romans 15:11). In the other four verses it refers to man's praise or commendation of man.

**Epaineo** - 28x in 28v in the Septuagint - In Ps 34:2 and Ps 44:8 the idea is to boast (in God). Other uses (below) refer to praise to God (or His Word). - All uses

Ge 12:15 = "**praised** her to Pharaoh"; Ps. 10:3; Ps. 34:2; Ps. 44:8; Ps. 56:4 = "In God, whose word **I praise**"; Ps. 63:3 = "Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips will **praise** You"; Ps. 63:11; Ps. 64:10 "all the upright in heart **will glory**"; Ps. 102:8; Ps. 105:3 = "Glory in His holy name"; Ps. 106:5 = "That I may **glory** with Your inheritance"; Ps. 116:19 = "**Praise** the LORD!"; Ps. 145:4 = "One generation **shall praise** Your works to another,"; Ps. 147:12 = "**Praise** the LORD, O Jerusalem!"; Eccl. 4:2; Eccl. 8:10; Eccl. 8:15 = "So I **commended** pleasure"; Dan. 5:1

**Shrewd** (5429) (**phronimos** from **phronéo** = think, have a mindset related to **phren** = diaphragm, regarded by ancients as seat of mental and spiritual activity, came to mean mind or understanding) is an adjective which describes one who is thoughtful, sagacious or discreet. It describes the quality of one's thinking which is the result of insight and stands in opposition to *moros* which means foolish. The idea is that there is understanding combined with wisdom and insight. *Phronimos* implies a cautious, sensible, prudent character and in Mt 10:16 refers to one as "shrewd" as a serpent. One who is shrewd has clever discerning awareness, acute perception and sharp powers of judgment. *Phronimos* also includes the ideas of one who is prudent, sensible and practically wise in relationships with others. There is a type of *phronimos* that is desirable (eg, here in Mt 7:24, 10:16, et al) and a type that is not desirable (Ro 11:26, 12:16) this latter describing the person who relies on their own innate wisdom.

**Phronimos -14v** - Matt. 7:24; Matt. 10:16; Matt. 24:45; Matt. 25:2; Matt. 25:4; Matt. 25:8; Matt. 25:9; Lk. 12:42; Lk. 16:8; Rom. 11:25; Rom. 12:16; 1 Co. 4:10; 1 Co. 10:15; 2 Co. 11:19

---

**Steven Cole** - the unrighteous steward got it right and the sons of light tend to get it wrong. Jesus is saying that unbelievers are often more shrewd in figuring out how to secure *temporal* wealth than believers are in figuring out how to secure *eternal* riches. By shrewd, Jesus does not mean dishonest, but rather, as Webster defines it, "clever, discerning awareness; practical, hardheaded cleverness and judgment" **How was the unrighteous steward shrewd?** In at least two ways. First, *he was shrewd in that he*

*seized an opportunity while he still had time to act.* He saw the handwriting on the wall: his days were numbered! He was going to get fired. So he quickly went into action, using his authority while he still had time, to get on the good side of his master's debtors. The application for us is, if we hear of a window of opportunity for the gospel, we should do all we can to seize it while we can. If we hear of a good investment opportunity that is reasonably certain to earn a decent profit and we have the funds to invest, we would probably jump at the chance. In the same way, if we hear of an opportunity for the gospel and God has given us funds to invest, we should go for it. I was so encouraged at the way the church responded to the recent opportunity in Egypt, raising over \$16,000 to provide evangelistic materials for the summer outreach! That's the idea here! Invest in eternity while you can.

Second, *the unrighteous steward was shrewd in that he used his present resources to provide for his inevitable future realities.* He knew that he was going to be fired. While many would have despaired, he went into action, using what he had to provide for his future security. The application for us is, we know that the time is soon coming when **the mammon of unrighteousness will fail.** (Lk 16:9) **We will die or Christ will return, and money won't do us any good in heaven But we can use our money now to store up treasures in heaven by making eternal friends through the gospel. Can you imagine the joy someday of meeting someone in heaven who says, "Thank you for giving to the cause of world evangelization! (Because you gave, missionaries came to my country and I got saved."** ([Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Bolding added)

---

## Wise Christians

The people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. Luke 16:8

Today's Scripture & Insight: Luke 16:1–9

The coronavirus pandemic resulted in canceled schools around the world. In China, teachers responded with DingTalk, a digital app that enabled class to be held online. Then their students figured out that if DingTalk's rating fell too low, it might be removed from the App Store. Overnight, thousands of one-star reviews dropped DingTalk's score. (**ED**: "inventors of evil" - Ro 1:30!)

Jesus wouldn't be impressed with the students shirking their responsibilities, but He might admire their ingenuity. He told an unusual story about a fired manager who on his final day slashed the bills of his master's debtors. Jesus didn't praise the manager's dishonesty. Rather He commended his cleverness and wished His followers would be equally shrewd: "I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings" (Luke 16:9).

When it comes to money, most people look at how much they might lose. Wise people look for what they can use. Jesus said giving to others "gain[s] friends," which provides safety and influence. Who is the leader in any group? The one who pays. Giving also gains "eternal dwellings," for our willingness to part with our cash shows our trust is in Jesus.

Even if we don't have money, we do have time, skills, or a listening ear. Let's ask God to show us how to creatively serve others for Jesus. By: Mike Wittmer ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Who does Jesus want you to serve today? How might you creatively use your skills, money, or time to bless this person?

Jesus, I want to give to others for You.

**Luke 16:9 And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.**

BGT Luke 16:9 Καὶ γὰρ μὴ λήγῃ, αὐτοὶς ποίσατε φίλους κτὸ μαμωνᾶ τῆς δίκης, ἵνα τὰν κληρονομίαν ἔσται ἡμεῖς.

KJV Luke 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

NET Luke 16:9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by how you use worldly wealth, so that when it runs out you will be welcomed into the eternal homes.

CSB Luke 16:9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous money so that when it fails, they may welcome you into eternal dwellings.

ESV Luke 16:9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

NIV Luke 16:9 I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

NLT Luke 16:9 Here's the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your earthly possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.

NRS Luke 16:9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

YLT Luke 16:9 and I say to you, Make to yourselves friends out of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye may fail, they may receive you to the age-during tabernacles.

GWN Luke 16:9 Jesus continued, "I'm telling you that although wealth is often used in dishonest ways, you should use it to make friends for yourselves. When life is over, you will be welcomed into an eternal home.

NKJ Luke 16:9 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.

NAB Luke 16:9 I tell you, make friends for yourselves with dishonest wealth, so that when it fails, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

MIT Luke 16:9 I instruct you to make friends for yourselves by using the material goods tarnished by injustice so that when such runs out, the friends made might welcome you into everlasting dwellings.

NJB Luke 16:9 'And so I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into eternal dwellings.

ASV Luke 16:9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.

DBY Luke 16:9 And \*I\* say to you, Make to yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails ye may be received into the eternal tabernacles.

BBE Luke 16:9 And I say to you, Make friends for yourselves through the wealth of this life, so that when it comes to an end, you may be taken into the eternal resting-places.

- **make friends for yourselves** , Luke 11:41; 14:14; Pr 19:17; Eccl 11:1; Isaiah 58:7,8; Daniel 4:27; Mt 6:19; 19:21; Mt 25:35-40; Acts 10:4,31; 2 Cor 9:12-15; 1 Ti 6:17-19; 2 Ti 1:16-18
- **by means of the** Luke 16:11,13
- **wealth of unrighteousness.** Pr 23:5; 1 Ti 6:9,10,17
- **so that when it fails** Ps 73:26; Ecclesiastes 12:3-7; Isaiah 57:16
- **they will receive you into the eternal dwellings** 2 Cor 4:17,18; 5:1; 1 Ti 6:18; Jude 1:21
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

#### Related Passages:

1 Timothy 3:8KJV Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of **filthy lucre**."

#### UNRIGHTEOUS MAMMON

**And I say to you** - (Lk 11:9, similar to the phrase "I tell you" = Lk 15:7, 10, Lk 18:8, 14) Who is you? His **disciples** (Lk 16:1). Jesus is giving His disciples an application of this parable. **Dear follower of Christ, are you listening?**

**Make** ([poieo](#) - [aorist imperative](#) = "Don't delay to make") **friends** ([philos](#)) **for yourselves by means of the wealth** ([mammonas](#)) **of unrighteousness** ([adikia](#)) - If we took this portion of the verse out of context and stopped right here, we might think that money can buy influence, aka "**friends**" (as least the fair weather kind!). But we need to read on. Here Jesus discusses money and our attitude toward others. He is encouraging us to use our (HIS) money to **make friends**, and the context tells us that this does mean "earthly" **friends** but "heavenly **friends**" who "**will receive you into the eternal dwellings.**" Use your money, literally, to **make friends** who are going to welcome you into your **eternal** home. This is an amazing privilege Jesus is describing! Do we really understand what He is saying?

**NET Note** - The point is not that money is inherently evil, but that it is often misused so that it is a means of evil; see 1 Tim 6:6–10, 17–19. The call is to be generous and kind in its use. Zacchaeus becomes the example of this in Luke's Gospel (Lk 19:1–10). (**Ed**: And the rich man in Lk 16:19-31 is a negative example of handling unrighteous mammon).

This passage reminds me of Jesus' command in the Sermon on the Mount

**Do not store up** ([present imperative with a negative](#) - command to stop doing this or do not begin) for yourselves treasures **on earth**, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 "But **store up** ([thesaurus](#) in the [present imperative](#) - make this your lifestyle, [only possible as you are enabled by the Holy Spirit!](#)) for yourselves treasures **in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 **for** (gar = [term of explanation](#) - this is a crucial term of explanation) where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Mt 6:19-21+, cf Mt 19:21)

**Comment:** If we are filled with (controlled by) the Spirit Who enables us to obey this command, we can be sure that we are "**making friends in heaven!**" How are you doing? Don't miss this opportunity of a lifetime! Beware of storing up in your temporal 401K and missing God's unfailing retirement plan in heaven! If you say you believe this truth, than your actions will show it. In short, where your heart is, is the "bank" in which you will put your money!

**JOSHUA PROJECT** - One way to be making countless friends who will welcome you into Heaven is by Praying for People from Every Tribe, Tongue, People and Nation (short discussion of the Biblical rationale). I would highly recommend downloading the [mobile APP](#) from the [Joshua Project](#) which will send you a daily email ([fill out this form](#)) to pray for the unreached people group of the day. The [APP](#) is great because it will send a reminder to your phone later in the morning if you were too rushed or forgot to pray for the people group in the morning. On the authority of God's Word, I am confident that if you faithfully, daily pray (no legalism) for these hidden people groups for the rest of your short time on earth, you will be absolutely "blown away" by the "friends" who will welcome you into Heaven some day, for by praying you would have played a small but real role in their acceptance of the Gospel and you will rejoice with them forever and ever. Amen. Peter says that "in this way **the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied** ([epichoregeo](#)) to you." (2Pe 1:11+)

Compare similar sentiments expressed by Paul...

1Thess 2:19-20+ For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, **in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming**? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

**John MacArthur** notes that Paul opens with a question and then follows up with another question - Paul immediately answered the question of what brought him joy with a rhetorical question that is somewhat surprising. One might think the answer should be the Lord Jesus Christ. But the apostle said, Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Paul's anticipation for the future was the assurance that he would be in the presence of his Savior (cf. 1:10; 1 Cor. 1:7; Rom. 8:19–20; Phil. 3:20; Titus 2:13), but **a crucial element of the joy of that experience is that at His coming he would see all the believers to whom he had ministered, including the Thessalonians** (cf. 2Cor. 1:14; Phil. 2:16).

For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God (NLT = So two good things will result from this ministry of giving -- the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God."). 13 Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all (NLT = As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ") 14 while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. 15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! 2 Cor 9:12-15+

**MacArthur** - The Greek word for "supplying" ([prosanapleroo](#)) is a doubly intense term that could be rendered "really, fully supplying." This indicates the Jerusalem church had an extremely great need. Many of its members had gone to Jerusalem as pilgrims to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, had been converted through Peter's message, and had then remained in the city without adequate financial support. Many residents of Jerusalem had undoubtedly lost their jobs in the waves of persecution that came after the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 8:1+). However, the Corinthians were wealthy enough (they had not yet suffered persecution and deprivation like the Macedonians; 2 Cor 8:1-4) to help meet the huge need with a generous monetary gift (see 2 Cor 9:5+). (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

1 Timothy 6:17-19+ **Instruct** ([present imperative](#) - make this your lifestyle) those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches (cf Jesus' words **when it fails**), but on God, Who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 18 **Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share**, 19 storing up ([present tense](#) = as your lifestyle) for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future (making it your practice of laying up in store good works now that will provide rewarding benefits in the future life), so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed (they may experience true life. = NLT)

**Comment:** "The idea is that the rich in this world should not be concerned with receiving a return on their earthly investment (**ED: FATHER FORGIVE ME FOR FALLING INTO THIS TRAP!**). Those who make eternal investments will be content to receive their dividends in heaven. See Lk 16:1-13." (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#)).

**Wealth** ([mammonas](#)) **of unrighteousness** ([adikia](#)) (same description in Lk 16:11) - Why does Jesus call **wealth** or mammon unrighteous? What He is saying is that it is unrighteous in the sense that it belongs to this unrighteous world, this world which is passing away (1 Jn 2:17+). When this age ends (or when one's life ends), the usefulness of unrighteous mammon will end. As an aside, while the coins in America still have the phrase "**In God we trust**," our increasingly godless culture is doing everything they can to remove every vestige of God from every aspect of our society. I am afraid that many in America would be quite pleased if the government were to replace "In God we trust" with the phrase "In Mammon we trust," justifying their call for this removal with the ludicrous doctrine of "Separation of church and state!"

**MacArthur** adds that this **wealth** is termed **unrighteous** because it is "an element of fallen society's experience. It belongs to the unrighteous life among sinners. It burns up. It says in verse 9, "That when it fails," when your time to deal with money is over, it will fail. It's only (useful) for here. It's only a part of this fallen (godless) system. It doesn't matter, as we saw in Luke 12:16-21-note, if you have huge crops and you build bigger barns....and stuff more...in those bigger barns, (because) the day is going to come when your soul is required and that stuff will disappear out of your life! ([Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#))

**Steven Cole** adds that by the phrase "**the mammon of unrighteousness** Jesus means money, which the world uses for unrighteous purposes, but which believers can use for God's purposes." ([How to be Truly Rich](#))

**Robert Stein** on **Wealth** (mammon) **of unrighteousness** - This expression does not refer to wealth gained through dishonesty, for in Lk 16:11 we are told to be trustworthy in our handling of the "mammon of unrighteousness," and one cannot be trustworthy with respect to wealth obtained dishonestly. The expression is idiomatic and refers to "filthy lucre" (cf 1 Ti 3:3KJV) or as the NIV translates it "worldly wealth." (**Ed:** as does the Lk 16:11NLT) (See [Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**THOUGHT** - Jesus' point is clear and begs a serious, soul-searching question for every one of us who call ourselves disciples -- What are you spending your life on? What are you doing that will last forever? And here Jesus is making the amazing statement that you can use the same **unrighteous mammon** that the sinful, godless world uses (to accomplish temporal purposes) as a means to invest in God's Kingdom and reap eternal "dividends" (rewards). We won't have money or have need of money in the world to come! Money (unrighteous mammon) is only useful now. **How are you using it?** There are two choices -- Are you using it with **time** or **eternity** in view? You cannot take it with you, but you can send it on ahead so to speak! **MacArthur** adds that "This is a wonderful and a gracious gift by God to us, a gift that transcends this world. You can use your money (now) to make **friends** who will **receive you into heavenly dwellings, eternal dwellings**. This is the foundation of our Christian giving." ([Ibid](#))

**ESV Study Bible** on **unrighteous wealth** probably refers to the way in which the pursuit of money may often involve: (1) unrighteous means in acquiring wealth by taking advantage of others; (2) unrighteous desires in the use of wealth for personal gratification and selfish purposes, rather than for the care and well-being of others; and (3) the corrupting influence of wealth that often leads people into unrighteousness. ([ESV Study Bible](#) - this resource can be borrowed)

**So that** ([terms of purpose](#)) **when it fails** ([ekleipo](#)) - The word **when** means the time in which something is done or comes about, in this case failure of funds! Unrighteous mammon ceases to be of service. Notice that Jesus does not say "**IF** it fails," but "**WHEN** it fails," for it WILL SURELY fail! For every soul that dies without Jesus as their Savior, that is **WHEN** their money and retirement portfolio will utterly, abysmally fail! But even for believers our potential to use the **mammon of unrighteousness** will cease when our breath ceases. We need to have a sense of urgency (regardless of our current age, for no one can be sure of tomorrow!).

**Solomon** alludes to the fleeting nature of fortunes writing "When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings, Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens." (Pr 23:5) **NET Note** - The term "wealth" is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied in the translation based on the previous verse. This seventh saying warns people not to expend all their energy trying to get rich



because riches are fleeting (cf. Instruction of [even the pagan] Amememope, chap. 7, 9:10–11 which says, "*they have made themselves wings like geese and have flown away to heaven*"). **In the ancient world the symbol of birds flying away signified fleeting wealth!**

What a contrast is **failing mammon** with our **unfailing Messiah!**

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8+)

**Hendriksen** - I am in agreement with Danker when he expresses surprise that this comment "caused so much perplexity." He regards this as "one of the curiosities in the history of interpretation." And so it is. **Jesus is not telling us that we should become worldly-minded or crooked.** He is stating the obvious fact that **in worldly matters worldly people often show more astuteness or shrewdness than God's children do in matters affecting their everlasting salvation.....** Jesus wants his people similarly to look ahead and by means of "the mammon of unrighteousness" so to support all good causes and needy people that when the givers die, there will be a grand welcome for them. Those heavenly inhabitants who, while still on earth, benefited by the kindness of these big-hearted ones will then be welcoming the new arrivals. They will with gladness usher them into their heavenly habitations....With respect to this interpretation, accepted by most commentators, where is there a problem? There is none, unless we ourselves create it. The objection is raised, at times, "Surely, no honest individual would ever praise a crook; yet, here the owner is actually doing this. Worse even, Jesus joins in bestowing praise on this fellow." We ask, "And why not?" Neither the owner (or master) nor Jesus is praising the crook for his crookedness, only for his shrewdness, for the fact that he looks ahead and makes provision for his future needs. What is wrong with that? Nothing, of course. When, in spite of ever so many precautions and burglar protection devices, a bank is robbed, and the newspapers describe how it was done, people will remark, "How clever!" This surely does not mean that they are recommending the burglars for a Distinguished Service Medal! Far from it. They want those criminals to receive the sentence they deserve. But it is, nevertheless, consistent to say, "Would that all true believers were as clever in spiritual matters as are these crooks in plying their trade." ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

Based on this passage in Hebrews, where should we place our trust, in the temporal or the eternal? Of course this question is rhetorical. Assuming you answered "the eternal," the question is did you (or yours truly) just convict/condemn yourself as a hypocrite? In other words, what do your credit card and check entries for this past year reveal --a temporal or eternal focus? You be your own judge, because I have to carry out the same convicting exercise!

## **R.O.I. THANK YOU FOR GIVING TO THE LORD!**

**R.O.I.** - This abbreviation means "**Return on Investment**" and is a measure of the gain or loss generated on an investment relative to the amount of money (**mammon of unrighteousness**) invested. If we accept (trust) the advice of Jesus, the best "Financial Planner" in history, one day in the future we will discover that the "ROI" is INFINITELY VALUABLE FOREVER! It's hard to beat that level of return on your unrighteous mammon! But you can read these words and even say "Amen!" but still not follow through! Jesus is giving us the investment tip of a lifetime (this one life He has given to us to use for His glory)!

Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

-- [C. T. Studd](#)

**MacArthur** exhorts us not to take the wealth (**mammon of unrighteousness**) that God has given each of us "and be so stupid as to use it all only to pad **a few years of temporal life** (Ed: cf James 1:10-11, 4:14, Ps 37:2, 39:5, 102:11, 103:15,16, Ps 144:4, Isa 40:6,7, Job 7:6,7, 9:25, 26, 14:1,2 [and Job lived 200 years!], Moses who lived 120 yrs = Ps 90:4-6, 9, 10) when it can be used to create a richness that will last **forever**. Use your money for eternal purposes. You'll be welcomed into heaven by all those — *and you'll never know who they are until you get there* — who were reached because you gave. On the final day when your life ends your money fails. You're separated from your money forever. You're going to go to heaven and find out if any of it was used to purchase friends who are there to welcome you when you arrive. Use your money, beloved, for eternal uses. Give while you live to those ministries, those gospel ministries, church ministries that you know and you trust. Endless personal accumulation is sinful, wasteful, and robs us of eternal blessing. You give to the Lord, Luke 6:38-note, "**and He will give, pressed down, shaken together, running over,**" not just here but even more importantly in eternity. And you will enjoy the fruit of that forever and ever and ever." ([Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#))

**They will receive (dechomai) you into the eternal (aionios) dwellings (skene)** - This is another example of a classic rabbinical method of logic, from lesser to greater. In this case the lesser is that if earthly men and women (even scoundrels) are shrewd to plan for their short future, how much more should heavenly minded men and women plan for their eternal future! Jesus pictures our **R.O.I. (Return On Investment)** with a fascinating statement saying that if we use our money to "**make friends**" on earth who are

going to heaven, they will be in glory awaiting our arrival and will **receive** us with open arms because of our investment in the Gospel that they heard and believed and by which they were saved. **Eternal dwellings** refer to the believer's eternal home with God.

**THOUGHT** - So use your money wisely to invest in gospel ministry that is winning others and advancing the Kingdom of God and you will reap a rich reward. And by extension use your time wisely. One of the best ways to redeem the time is by praying for Hidden People Groups (See [Joshua Project](#) and get their app on your phone) and you will have "made friends" with many people on earth who will be friends forever in Heaven!

**REDEEM THE TIME** - Recording of Zoom Talk given given to men's ministry on Jan 13, 2021

You might skip over the first few minutes of announcements, etc. Below is the link to the recording which lasts about 1 hour

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/ShdYySwjdfQcvOCacvj7CZZw3HToUB2tk554kwhvdpyxK3GKd8HcH2sagfv1DI95.OuYP4VinAMcDhtRG>

**Passcode: Ug3gD0=a**

Here is a link to the "slides" that go along with the zoom talk -- not sure they show up on zoom. <https://www.preceptaustin.org/zoom1> In depth article on [Redeem the Time](#)

#### **ACRONYM FOR "TIME"**

**T** ----- Time

**I** ----- Impacts

**M** ----- My

**E** ----- Eternity

**Bock** says there are 3 possibilities for **"they"** - The reference to "they may receive you" is (1) a reference to friends who receive the benefit and welcome the generous one into heaven, (2) a reference to angels who represent God, or (3) a [circumlocution](#) for God himself (Lk 6:38, 44; 12:20, 48; 14:35). God responds to disciples who love their neighbors with concrete action, even down to the use of money. (**Ed**: In my opinion, the **context** favors interpretation #1 because Jesus specifically says **"make friends"** with God honoring use of your mammon. It follows that those who will receive or welcome us into heaven will be those very same friends. Obviously God is pleased but in the text Jesus did not say "make friends with God".) (See [Luke Baker Exegetical Commentary](#))

**Jim Bomkamp** on **make friends** - Jesus is obviously referring to friendships that are eternal in nature or that are made between those who shall spend eternity together in heaven. Whenever we win someone to Christ we have "made friends." Whenever we use our money for the reaching of others with the gospel we have "made friends." Whenever we invest in the growth and discipleship of a young Christian we have "made friends." Those whom we have made friends with in this life through the use of our money for eternal purposes will 'receive you into the eternal dwellings,' and I believe that this implies: When each of us as Christians get to heaven, those whom we have led to Christ in this life will be waiting there to greet and thank us as we enter. Also, when we get to heaven those for whom our money, which was given to missions or our local church, was used to win them to Christ will likewise be waiting there to greet and thank us.

**Brooks** - Jesus urges us to be urgent in our pursuit of what matters. William Barclay says that "if only the Christian was as eager and ingenious in attaining goodness as the man of the world is in his drive to attain money and comfort."

**What the Bible teaches** - In application, our use of means to minister to the needy, feed the hungry, clothe the poor, nurse the sick, further the work of the Lord is a "making friends" of mammon that if merely spent in self indulgence would fail and leave us with nothing. The proper use of the mammon gives it eternal value through the people who have been blessed by it. ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

**Stein** clarifies that "The giving of alms to the poor does not bring about eternal life, but the life of repentance and faith that gives alms out of a love for God and neighbor does. The use of one's possessions described here does not bring about God's mercy and grace (to earn "grace" is a contradiction of terms) but is itself brought about by God's mercy and grace." (See [Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**Hughes** writes "The Lord calls us to be **shrewd**, to use all our mind, intellect, and will in the management of money, so that we will be welcomed above. What are we doing with our money? How shrewd and calculated are we with our wealth so we can make sure we are gaining eternal friends to welcome us to Heaven? It must begin with giving. Dr. [Carl F. H. Henry](#), the dean of evangelical theologians, was asked in a 1990 interview, "One of the major weaknesses, perhaps, of the Western church is our **affluence**. What kind of crippling effect has this had on the Western church and what can we do to remedy that?" Dr. Henry answered: **I don't think**

*that God despises riches; in fact, He gives them to us. What He despises is the misuse of them, and He rewards stewardship. Even Christian missions owe a great debt to the consecrated and often sacrificial philanthropy of well-to-do Christian leaders. What we need to do is enlarge the vision and burden of those to whom God has given much so they understand that they have an opportunity that is rare in the history of Christianity to substantially advance the way of Christ.* Our giving must be matched by the sharing of all we have for the well-being and refreshment of God's people and the proclamation of the gospel. (See [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#))

If we've been blessed with riches,  
We should be rich in deeds;  
God wants us to be generous  
In meeting others' needs.  
—Sper

Riches have eternal value when we use them to bless others.

**J. C. Ryle** notes “that a right use of our money in this world, from right motives, will be for our benefit in the world to come. It will not justify us. It will not bear the severity of God’s judgment, any more than other good works. But it shall be an evidence of our grace, which shall befriend our souls.” (Luke 16 Commentary)

**Michael Andrus -**

Jesus goes on, “I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.” The term “worldly wealth” is translated “mammon of unrighteousness” in the KJV. There is often a good deal of unrighteousness in the earning of it—tax manipulations, gambling, greed, cheating—as well as in the spending of it. The next time you hold a \$20 bill in your hand, think about all the evil things that may have been done with that bill in the past year. But there is a way to redeem that \$20 bill—use it to make a friend. But Jesus’ concern is not that we accumulate earthly friends to help us in case we one day find ourselves destitute. He clearly defines the friends He’s talking about as those who may welcome us into eternal dwellings.

I suggest to you that this concept could be a major paradigm shift for many of us, a whole new motive for generous giving: godly giving is all about making friends for God. I think a lot of people do their giving to try to make God their friend—to buy His favor, if you will. But the right goal is to make friends for Him.

In order to accomplish that, it is not enough to pray for the lost; we must also be willing to pay for them, too. Now when I say “pay for them,” I’m not talking about the practice of some religious faiths whereby one is encouraged to give a certain amount to the church so special services and prayers will be said for your departed loved ones. Frankly, I see nothing in the Bible to indicate that you can influence an individual’s eternal destiny after he or she has died. No, Jesus is talking about investing in them while they are still living, with the goal of reaching them with the Gospel! Heaven should be populated with people who will welcome us when we arrive because we invested in their salvation. Or, if we get there first, we can welcome them.

Now this investing can be done either indirectly or directly. Whenever you give money to a Bible-believing local church where the Gospel is preached, you are indirectly using your money to make eternal friends, even if you never get to know them personally. Whenever you give to a parachurch organization that has as one of its basic goals the winning of lost people to Christ, you are indirectly using your money to make eternal friends. Whenever you give to an effective missionary, whether at home or abroad, you are using your money to make friends for God.

**I am not a wealthy man by most standards, but I do have a global investment portfolio. When I get to heaven, I expect to be greeted by some French believers. I have never met them, but my wife and I invested monthly for twelve years in the ministry of Jim and Diane Brower, our best friends in college, while they were missionaries in the northern suburbs of Paris. I also have investments in southern Mexico, in Venezuela, and in Tatarstan, where other missionaries we have supported work in God’s vineyard. I have investments in Vermont and Huntington, Utah and Portland and Fort Myers, FL where men I have mentored are carrying on effective ministries.**

Some of my investments are in a mutual fund, called the First Free Missions budget. It allows me to have a small investment everywhere our church has missionaries and outreach. Another mutual fund is Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. As I give to that great seminary, which I do every year, I am investing in every local church, every Bible School, and every mission where its graduates eventually end up serving!

But I also invest heavily here at home. When I give to this church, whether the money is used to pay a light bill or buy S.S. curriculum or help pay for a youth retreat, or even keep the coffee pots going in the courtyard, I am investing in making friends for God. By doing so, I participate at some level in the conversion of every child, every youth, and every adult who comes to faith in Christ through the ministry of this church. Even paying on a mortgage is an indirect investment—because this building is currently being used to make friends for God, and the sooner the mortgage is paid off, the sooner those funds will be freed up from paying interest to being used in even more effective ways.

But there are also direct ways in which we can use our material possessions to make friends. Think about how a salesman makes friends. He studies his product, studies his client, takes his prospective buyer to the fanciest of restaurants, doesn't hesitate to make long-distance calls, entertains in his home, etc. He realizes that you can't make money without spending money. Why shouldn't we use these same methods in our personal evangelism? Businessmen, have you ever taken an associate to a fancy restaurant with the specific purpose of sharing your faith? Some of you have, I know. Have the wives ever invited neighbors to a nice dinner at your home in order to let them see Christianity at work in your family? When you have an extra ticket to a WSU basketball game, do you take a friend from church or do you take someone who has yet to become a friend of God? (From [Luke 16:1-9 Money—Godly Ways of Giving It: A Bad Man's Good Example](#))

**Randy Alcorn** expresses the antithesis of the wise advice from our Lord Jesus in Luke 16:9 -

When earth becomes our heaven -- when we see God's blessings as being primarily immediate and temporal - we lose sight of who we are, why we are here, and what awaits us beyond the horizons of this world. (Borrow [Money, Possessions, and Eternity](#) - Highly Recommended if you need a radical adjustment in your perspective on Money, etc)

---

**Related Resources: All below are from Randy Alcorn and all can be freely borrowed from [archive.org](#).**

- [The Treasure Principle](#) by Randy Alcorn (Or [Here](#)) ([See also in depth commentary - 2 Corinthians 5:10](#))

"Supercharged with stunning, divine truth! Lightning struck over and over as I read it." -John Piper

"The Treasure Principle will change your life! This book is destined to become a classic." -Howard Dayton, Co-CEO, Crown Financial Ministries

"The Scripture passages and illustrations really ring true. Just what I needed!" - Hugh Maclellan, President, The Maclellan Foundation

"I enthusiastically endorse The Treasure Principle. I hope millions will read it." - Ronald W. Blue, Founder and CEO, Ronald Blue & Company

Readers of Randy Alcorn's bestseller *The Treasure Principle* encountered a revolution in material freedom and generosity that utterly changed their quality of life. In this companion Bible study, the principles become personally applicable and more real than ever, with a powerful combination of biblical concepts, practical quotations from the book, thought-provoking questions, group discussion starters, and short Scripture passages for meditation and memorization. Managing God's investment in their lives will become a new delight, as Christians learn to put their resources to their most rewarding use.

Publishers Weekly - "When you discover the secret joy of the Treasure Principle, I guarantee you'll never be content with less." So claims Alcorn in the introduction to this small gift book on Christian generosity. Noting that fifteen percent of Christ's teachings in the New Testament deal with money and possessions—more than his teachings on heaven and hell combined—Alcorn compares heavenly treasure, which is eternal, with earthly riches, which "will always be lost" after death. Alcorn encourages Christians to understand that everything they believe they own is actually God's; they are merely managers. He is a compelling storyteller, whether drawing on Scripture, accounts of others who have lived generously, or recounting his own experiences; all of his book royalties and a large portion of his salary go to charity. Analyzing the pervasive disease of "affluenza" and the fact that Americans' unprecedented wealth does not seem to be bringing extraordinary happiness, he says that he and other people who have discovered the secret of unfettered giving know that they are storing up treasures in heaven, their true home. Alcorn's writing here is more akin to a motivational speech (including an overabundance of rhetorical questions, italicized words and exclamation points for emphasis) than a book. However, many Christians will appreciate his countercultural messages that "giving is the only antidote to materialism" and the "health

and wealth gospel dishonors Christ." Indeed, for many, this could be a life-changing book.

- [Money, Possessions, and Eternity](#) by Randy Alcorn [369 ratings](#)
- [The Law of Rewards](#) by Randy Alcorn
- [Managing God's Money : a Biblical Guide](#) by Randy Alcorn
- [The Promise of Heaven : Reflections on our Eternal Home](#) by Randy Alcorn
- [Wait Until Then](#) by Randy Alcorn
- [Seeing The Unseen A Daily Dose Of Eternal Perspective](#) by Randy Alcorn Reach through the fog of this life?and see the world beyond. **From the author of the bestselling book Heaven, here are 60 meditations that will inspire you to live each day with an eternal perspective.** Spiritually speaking, we live in the Country of the Blind. Sin has blinded us to the truth about God and Heaven, both of which are real yet unseen. But just as the physically blind must accept by faith there are stars in the sky, we must remind ourselves what Scripture tells us about eternal realities. In daily doses, author Randy Alcorn offers insights on the Christian life along with Scriptures and inspirational quotes that can transform the way you think and live today. It's time to open your eyes and see the unseen.

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - Years ago here in Wichita I had lunch in a restaurant with two men—one a chaplain at a Federal penitentiary (some of you may remember him, David Pipping), and the other a recent graduate of that fine institution, Mark Choate, an ex-con. Both of them spoke here at First Free back in the 70's. Mark had come to know Christ under David's ministry, and his story was amazing. As we were leaving the restaurant I put down a 15% tip and a Gospel tract. Mark, however, dug in his pocket for some additional money, commenting, "When I leave evidence of my faith I want to be sure it's read." That guy was shrewd. I don't know if he learned that in prison, but wherever he learned it, he was right. (Michael Andrus - [Luke 16:1-9 Money—Godly Ways of Giving It: A Bad Man's Good Example](#))

---

**Adoniram Judson** a famous missionary to Burma wrote that "**A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity.**" The same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever. Each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will **IMPACT** our **ETERNITY**. How shall we then wish to see each day marked with usefulness! It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power. Let us, then, each morning, (**Ed**: enabled by God's Spirit) resolve to send the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever. And at night let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone, indelibly marked."

---

Let us pray like the old Puritans

Turn my heart from vanity, from dissatisfactions, from uncertainties of the present state, to an eternal interest in Christ. Let me remember that life is **SHORT AND UNFORESEEN**, and is only an **OPPORTUNITY FOR USEFULNESS**; GIVE ME A **HOLY AVARICE** TO REDEEM THE TIME, to awake at every call to charity and piety, so that I may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, instruct the ignorant, reclaim the vicious, forgive the offender, diffuse the Gospel, show neighborly love to all. Let me live a life of self-distrust, dependence on Thy Spirit, mortification, crucifixion, prayer." In Jesus' Name. Amen (From Valley of Vision)

---

**Wealth** (mammon) ([3126](#))([mammonas](#)) is a transliteration of an Aramaic word meaning wealth, riches or earthly good. **Mammon** is the comprehensive word for all kinds of possessions, earnings, and gains, a designation of material value and materialism. **Boice** adds that "**Mammon** came from a Hebrew verb meaning "to entrust" or "to place in someone's keeping." The noun, therefore, referred to the wealth one entrusted to another for safekeeping. At this stage the word did not have any bad connotations. If something bad was meant, it was necessary to put another word with it, as in "**mammon of unrighteousness.**" Yet as time went by, the meaning of **mammon** (wealth) shifted from the passive sense of "**that which is entrusted**" to the active sense of "**that in which one trusts.**" When that happened, the word originally spelled with a small "m" came to be spelled with a capital "M," as designating a god, which is why the New International Version capitalizes the word Money! As an aside, how ironic it is that the saying on our coin says "In God We Trust." The saying that typifies our age would be better stated "In Gold We Trust!"

**Unrighteousness** ([93](#))([adikia](#) from **a** = not + **dikê** = right) is a condition of not being right, whether with God, according to the standard of His holiness and righteousness or with man, according to the standard of what man knows to be right by his conscience, etc. **Adikia** encompasses the idea of ungodliness but focuses on the result. **Adikia** is the same word Luke used to describe the "**unrighteous** steward" Lk 16:8, or later, the "**unrighteous** judge" Lk 18:6. Luke records that the traitor Judas Iscariot "acquired a field with the price of his **wickedness** (adikia)." (Acts 1:18).

**Fails** ([1587](#))([ekleipo](#) from **ek** = out or an intens. + **leipō** = to fail, to leave out or off) means to leave out, leave off, by implication to cease. Transitive = to relinquish, desert. Intransitive = to leave off, to fail, cease (Lk 22:32; Heb. 1:12 quoting Ps 102:27) BDAG has



(1) to be no longer in existence, fail, give out, be gone of money (2). to go away from a place, depart - some manuscripts have ekleipo in Acts 18:19 but not in the more reliable like Nestle-Aland. (3). to cease as state or event, fail, die out - of faith (Lk 22:32) In **classical Greek** applications of **ekleipō** meant "to abandon a responsibility or a thing," consequently, "to desert an army or abandon a city." Figuratively, the sun might "eclipse"; someone might "fail," "faint," or even "die." In the **Septuagint ekleipo** can mean - to forsake, to desert = Jdg 5:6; to die = Ge 49:33; to faint = Ge 25:29; to cease = Ge 18:11; to fail = Ge 25:8; to remain, to be left = 2 Ki 7:13; Pr 24:31 = forsaken, destitute for "thorns". Water "evaporates" or is used up (Ge 8:13; 21:15); a number of things do or do not "cease" (Exodus 13:22; Isa 7:8; 54:10); travelers "abandon" highways (Jdg 5:6). People "die" (Jer 42:17; 44:18). (See also uses in **bold font** in the list of 179 verses below)

**Ekleipo** - 4x in 4v - come to an end(1), fail(1), fails(1), obscured(1).

Luke 16:9 "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it **fails**, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.

Luke 22:32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith **may not fail**; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers."

Luke 23:45 because the sun was **obscured**; and the veil of the temple was torn in two.

Hebrews 1:12 AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP; LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED. BUT YOU ARE THE SAME, AND YOUR YEARS **WILL NOT COME TO AN END.**"

**Ekleipo** - 194x in 179v in the Septuagint - Gen. 8:13 = "the water **was dried up** from the earth"; Ge 11:6 LXE = "nothing shall fail from them of all that they may have undertaken to do"; Gen. 18:11 = " Sarah **was past** (ceased) childbearing."; Gen. 21:15; Gen. 25:8 = "Abraham **breathed his last**"; Gen. 25:17 = (Ishmael) "**breathed his last**"; Gen. 25:29; Gen. 25:30; Gen. 35:29 = "Isaac **breathed his last**"; Gen. 47:13; Gen. 47:15; Gen. 47:16; Gen. 47:18; Ge 49:10 = "The scepter shall not depart from Judah"; Ge 49:33 = "breathed his last (died)"; Ex. 13:22 = "He **did not take away** the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night"; Nu 11:33; Dt. 15:11 = "the poor **will never cease** to be in the land"; Dt. 28:65 = "failing of eyes"; Deut. 32:36; Jos. 3:13 = "the waters of the Jordan **will be cut off**"; Jos. 3:16; Jos. 4:7; Jos. 5:12 = "The manna **ceased** on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land"; Jos. 9:23 "you (the deceiving Gibeonites) **shall never cease** being slaves"; Jdg. 5:6; Jdg. 5:7; Jdg. 8:5; Jdg. 8:15; 1 Sam. 2:33; 1 Sam. 9:7; 1 Sam. 16:11; 2 Sam. 3:29; 2 Sam. 20:18; 1 Ki. 17:14; 1 Ki. 17:16; 2 Ki. 7:13; 2 Chr. 4:18; 2 Chr. 6:16; Est. 9:28; Job 6:15; Job 13:19; Job 14:7; Job 21:19; Job 31:26; Ps. 9:6 = "The enemy **has come to an end** in perpetual ruins"; Ps. 12:1 = "Help, LORD, for the godly man **ceases to be**"; Ps. 18:37; Ps. 31:10 = "For my life **is spent** with sorrow"; Ps. 37:20; Ps. 39:10 = "Because of the opposition of Your hand I am **perishing**"; Ps. 55:11; Ps. 64:6; Ps. 68:2; Ps. 69:3 = "My eyes **fail** while I wait for my God"; Ps. 71:9 = "Do not forsake me when my strength **fails**"; Ps. 71:13; Ps. 72:20; Ps. 73:19; Ps. 73:26 - "My flesh and my heart **may fail**, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. "; Ps. 78:33; Ps. 84:2 = "My soul longed and even **yearned (LXE = "fainted")** for the courts of the LORD"; Ps. 90:7; Ps. 90:9; Ps. 102:3; Ps. 102:27; Ps. 104:29; Ps. 104:35; Ps. 107:5; Ps. 119:81; Ps. 119:82 = "My eyes **fail** with longing for Your word,"; Ps. 119:123 = "My eyes **fail** with longing for Your salvation"; Ps. 142:3; Ps. 143:7 = "Answer me quickly, O LORD, my spirit **fails**"; Prov. 3:3 = "Do not let kindness and truth **leave** you"; Prov. 4:21; Prov. 10:20; Prov. 24:10; Prov. 24:31; Isa. 7:8; Isa. 15:6; Isa. 19:5; Isa. 19:6; Isa. 19:13; Isa. 21:16; Isa. 29:20; Isa. 38:14; Isa. 51:6; Isa. 53:3; Isa. 54:10; Isa. 55:13; Isa. 56:5; Isa. 58:11; Isa. 59:21; Isa. 60:20; Jer. 4:31; Jer. 6:4; Jer. 6:15; Jer. 6:29; Jer. 7:27; Jer. 9:10; Jer. 14:4; Jer. 14:6; Jer. 15:10; Jer. 18:14; Jer. 24:10; Jer. 27:8; Jer. 31:40; Jer. 35:19; Jer. 36:23; Jer. 36:29; Jer. 37:21; Jer. 42:17; Jer. 42:22; Jer. 44:12; Jer. 44:18; Jer. 44:27; Jer. 46:28; Jer. 48:11; Jer. 51:30; Jer. 51:58; Lam. 1:19; Lam. 2:11; Lam. 4:17; Lam. 4:22; Ezek. 15:4; Ezek. 22:15; Ezek. 24:11; Ezek. 34:16; Ezek. 34:21; Ezek. 47:12; Hos. 4:3; Hos. 13:2; Amos 8:13; Jon. 2:7; Nah. 1:4; Hab. 2:13; Hab. 3:17 = "Though the yield of the olive should **fail**"; Zeph. 1:2; Zeph. 1:3; Zeph. 2:9; Zeph. 3:6; Zech. 11:9; Zech. 13:8 = "It will come about in all the land," Declares the LORD, "That two parts in it will be cut off and **perish**; But the third will be left in it." = **in the Time of Jacob's Trouble!**

**Receive** (Welcome)(1209)(**dechomai**) means to receive with the sense of welcoming one as when they visit your house. It means to "put out the welcome mat" so to speak. In this context the "welcome mat" leads to our eternal home with our brothers and sisters who are there to welcome us because of our role in their redemption story. Incredible! Jesus used **dechomai** to describe the way that humble, childlike believers (Mt 18:5), faithful preachers of the gospel (Mt 10:14), and the gospel itself (Luke 8:13; cf. Acts 8:14; 17:11) should be received. It is interesting that **dechomai** is used 4x in Luke 16 - twice for receiving a **'bill'** (Lk 16:6,7) and twice for welcoming into another's presence - Lk 16:4 "when I am removed from the management people **will welcome** me into their homes" and here in Lk 16:9. So just as the unrighteous manager makes plans for his future to assure that he is "welcomed" into the



earthly homes of the debtors, we as "servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor 4:1-2) will be "**welcomed**" into our eternal dwelling by those souls who were impacted by our God-honoring handling of the Gospel.

**Dechomai - 45v - accept(2), accepted(3), receive(16), received(12), receives(15), take(3), taken(1), took(1), welcome(2), welcomed(1).** Matt. 10:14; Matt. 10:40; Matt. 10:41; Matt. 11:14; Matt. 18:5; Mk. 6:11; Mk. 9:37; Mk. 10:15; Lk. 2:28; Lk. 8:13; Lk. 9:5; Lk. 9:48; Lk. 9:53; Lk. 10:8; Lk. 10:10; Lk. 16:4; Lk. 16:6; Lk. 16:7; Lk. 16:9; Lk. 18:17; Lk. 22:17; Jn. 4:45; Acts 3:21; Acts 7:38; Acts 7:59; Acts 8:14; Acts 11:1; Acts 17:11; Acts 22:5; Acts 28:21; 1 Co. 2:14; 2 Co. 6:1; 2 Co. 7:15; 2 Co. 8:17; 2 Co. 11:4; 2 Co. 11:16; Gal. 4:14; Eph. 6:17; Phil. 4:18; Col. 4:10; 1 Thess. 1:6; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Thess. 2:10; Heb. 11:31; Jas. 1:21

**Eternal** (166)([aionios](#) from [aion](#)) means existing at all times, perpetual, pertaining to an unlimited duration of time (Ro 1:20 - God's power, Mt 18:8 - God's place of judgment, Ro 16:26 - God's attribute). Thayer = without beginning or end, that which always has been and always will be. Luke uses **aionios** elsewhere in his writings only in reference to eternal life - (Lk 10:25; 18:18, 30; Acts 13:46, 48).

**Dwellings** (4633)([skene](#)) is a tent, booth, hut, tabernacle, any covered or shaded place. Friberg - tent, booth; (1) generally, of transitory, movable lodging places for nomads, pilgrims, herdsman, soldiers, constructed of various materials tent, lodging, dwelling (Heb 11:9); (2) as the portable divine sanctuary Tabernacle, Tent (Heb 8:5); (3) as referring to the temple in Jerusalem (Heb 13:10); (4) as referring to the outer and inner rooms of the Tabernacle, comprising the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (Heb 9:2-8); (5) as a portable case for an idol shrine (Acts 7:43); (6) figuratively, of the heavenly dwelling place of God, sanctuary (Rev 13:6); (7) plural, as the eternal habitations of the righteous dwellings, homes (Lk 16:9); (8) figuratively, as a ruling dynasty or lineage ruling family, kingdom (Acts 15:16) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**Skene - 20v - dwellings(1), tabernacle(15), tabernacles(3), tents(1).** Matt. 17:4; Mk. 9:5; Lk. 9:33; Lk. 16:9; Acts 7:43; Acts 7:44; Acts 15:16; Heb. 8:2; Heb. 8:5; Heb. 9:2; Heb. 9:3; Heb. 9:6; Heb. 9:8; Heb. 9:11; Heb. 9:21; Heb. 11:9; Heb. 13:10; Rev. 13:6; Rev. 15:5; Rev. 21:3

---

There is a great old song entitled [Thank You](#) (which won the Song of the Year prize at the 1990 Dove Awards) -- give it a listen (be sure and watch in full screen view for best experience), pondering the truth of Jesus' words as you listen and don't be surprised you have a tear in your eye by the end of the video!

I dreamed I went to heaven  
And you were there with me;  
We walked upon the streets of gold  
Beside the crystal sea.  
We heard the angels singing  
Then someone called your name.  
We turned and saw a young man running  
And he was smiling as he came.

And he said, "Friend you may not know me now."  
And then he said, "But wait,  
You used to teach my Sunday School  
When I was only eight.  
And every week you would say a prayer  
Before the class would start.  
And one day when you said that prayer,  
I asked Jesus in my heart."

Thank you for giving to the Lord.  
I am a life that was changed.  
Thank you for giving to the Lord.  
I am so glad you gave.

Then another man stood before you  
And said, "Remember the time  
A missionary came to your church  
And his pictures made you cry.  
You didn't have much money,  
But you gave it anyway.

Jesus took the gift you gave  
And that's why I'm here today."

Thank you for giving to the Lord.  
I am a life that was changed.  
Thank you for giving to the Lord.  
I am so glad you gave.

One by one they came  
Far as the eye could see.  
Each life somehow touched  
By your generosity.  
Little things that you had done,  
Sacrifices made,  
Unnoticed on the earth  
In heaven, now proclaimed.

And I know up in heaven  
You're not supposed to cry  
But I am almost sure  
There were tears in your eyes.  
(see Rev 7:17, 21:4)  
As Jesus took your hand  
And you stood before the Lord.  
He said, "My child, look around you.  
Great is your reward."

Thank you for giving to the Lord.  
I am a life that was changed.  
Thank you for giving to the Lord.  
I am so glad you gave.

Thank you for giving to the Lord.  
I am a life that was changed.  
Thank you for giving to the Lord.  
I am so glad you gave.

---

## Investing in Others

Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves. Luke 16:9

Today's Scripture & Insight: Luke 16:1–12

When a corporation offered one thousand frequent-flier miles for every ten purchases of one of their foods, one man realized their cheapest product was individual cups of chocolate pudding. He bought more than twelve thousand. For \$3,000, he received gold status and a lifetime supply of air miles for himself and his family. He also donated the pudding to charity, which netted him an \$800 tax write-off. Genius!

Jesus told a controversial parable about a cunning manager who, as he was being fired, reduced what debtors owed his master. The man knew he could rely on their help later for the favor he was doing them now. Jesus wasn't praising the manager's unethical business practice, but He knew we could learn from his ingenuity. Jesus said we should shrewdly "use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings" (Luke 16:9). As "the pudding guy" turned twenty-five cent desserts into flights, so we may use our "worldly wealth" to gain "true riches" (v. 11).

What are these riches? Jesus said, "Give to the poor" and you will "provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys" (12:33). Our investment doesn't earn our salvation, but it does affirm it, "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (v. 34). By: Mike Wittmer ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How have you recently helped meet someone's physical needs? Why is your charity an investment?

Loving God, help me to invest in the poor, for Jesus' sake and Yours.

---

## Big Money

Read: Luke 16:1-15

Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that . . . they may receive you into an everlasting home.  
—Luke 16:9

Some athletes and entertainers receive astronomical salaries. I can understand why they would take all they can get, but I wonder about a culture that spends so much to be entertained when countless people in the world are homeless and hungry.

Our attitude toward money and how we use it is a barometer of our spiritual state. It reveals whether we are foolishly thinking only of the present or wisely looking to eternity.

Jesus told a story about a money manager who knew he would soon be fired because he had wasted his employer's funds. So he went to the debtors and issued a "paid in full" receipt for a partial payment. This put him in their good graces so that when he lost his job he could go to them for help and not have to beg. No doubt his employer was unhappy about not receiving all that was owed him, but he commended the man for his shrewdness.

That story illustrates the wisdom of spending money with eternity in view. We can use our money now to help spread the gospel, and the people who receive Christ will be our friends forever and will greet us when we enter heaven.

Money can't buy happiness or eternal life. But when invested in Christ's cause, it pays eternal dividends. By Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Some think that they have everything  
When riches come their way,  
But that they're poor will be revealed  
On God's accounting day.  
—HGB

The wise use of money pays eternal dividends.

**Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much."**

BGT Luke 16:10 πιστ ς ν λαχ στ κα ν πολλ πιστ ς στιν, κα ν λαχ στ δικος κα ν πολλ δικ ς στιν.

KJV Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

NET Luke 16:10 "The one who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and the one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.

CSB Luke 16:10 Whoever is faithful in very little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much.

ESV Luke 16:10 "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.

NIV Luke 16:10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.

NLT Luke 16:10 "If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities.

NRS Luke 16:10 "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.

YLT Luke 16:10 'He who is faithful in the least, is also faithful in much; and he who in the least is unrighteous, is also unrighteous in much;

GWN Luke 16:10 Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with a lot. Whoever is dishonest with very little is dishonest with a lot.

NKJ Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

NAB Luke 16:10 The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones.

MIT Luke 16:10 One who is faithful in small matters is also faithful in great responsibilities. One who is dishonest in small stuff is also dishonest with great obligations.

NJB Luke 16:10 Anyone who is trustworthy in little things is trustworthy in great; anyone who is dishonest in little things is dishonest in great.

ASV Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much: and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much.

DBY Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in the least is faithful also in much; and he that is unrighteous in the least is unrighteous also in much.

BBE Luke 16:10 He who is true in a little, is true in much; he who is false in small things, is false in great.

- **He who is faithful in a very little thing** Luke 16:11,12; 19:17; Mt 25:21; Heb 3:2
- **he who is unrighteous in a very little thing** Jn 12:6; 13:2,27
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

## **AN AXIOMATIC TRUTH FAITHFUL IN LITTLE AND BIG**

This maxim is essentially a proverbial statement that is generally true in every aspect of life. When a person is faithful in little matters, he will tend to be faithful when he has greater responsibilities. If he is irresponsible in small matters, you can mark it down, he will be irresponsible in greater matters. Why is this maxim true? It is because character of a person affects the way he handles responsibility and ideally (and usually) a person's character does not change when he is given greater responsibility after showing faithfulness in lesser responsibility.

**Rod Mattoon** - The greatest ability that you can have is dependability. When people can count on you to do what they need you to do or what you have promised to do in an excellent manner, they will be interested in your services and abilities. Dependability, discipline, and diligence in doing a good job will lead to promotion, because those are traits of a good leader. They are traits that employers look for in their managers that serve under them. Faithfulness is important to men, but it is also important to the Lord. Your faithfulness as a Christian, with what God has entrusted to you, will determine the responsibilities you are rewarded with in His kingdom one day. One of the key hindrances to being faithful to Christ is when a Christian has a greater love for money than for the Lord. When money becomes the dominating factor in your decisions, when it causes you to compromise with corruption or cool off spiritually in your devotion to Christ, it in essence has become your master. You will be unable to play both sides of the fence. The Lord makes it clear that you cannot serve two masters. ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

**What the Bible teaches** - The person who can be trusted in small things where there is little accounting, can be trusted in larger responsibilities. It is also true that dishonest acts seldom begin with large thefts. Conscience is usually fed the opiate of small dishonesties until there is a graduation to greater crimes. ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

Circumstances don't determine faithfulness, character does.

-- John MacArthur

**He who is faithful ([pistos](#)) in a very little thing is faithful ([pistos](#)) also in much** - NIV = "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much." This is a truth that is self-evident. A man or woman with integrity who manifests godly (god-like) character will be faithful in handling God's money whether they have a little or a lot. Don't say if I had more, I would give more! For most people that is a lie if you are alluding to percentage-wise giving. "Some, like the poor widow described in Luke 21:1-4+, who have nothing give everything; others who have everything give nothing." (MacArthur)

**What the Bible Teaches** - When we are "faithful" we are yielded to God and His Spirit, with Christ as the pattern. It means that the

most insignificant task that springs from a heart devoted to His will has utmost importance and eternal value. "Faithfulness in that which is least" was epitomised by Abraham in his words to the king of Sodom, "I will not take from a thread to a shoelatchet ..." (Gen 14:23). On the positive side, this faithfulness would include voluntary work in the care of a building where the believers meet; a gospel tract given to a stranger; a kind deed done for a needy person in the Lord's name; a careful preparation in prayer and study before sitting down with a little Sunday school class and much more. ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

Here's a little ditty that is very convicting!

**Mighty deeds** as we had thought them,

He may show us were but sin.

**Little deeds** that we'd forgotten,

He will tell us were for Him.

As **MacArthur** says giving is a test of character - "The truth is **circumstances** don't determine faithfulness, **character** does. You hear people say, "If I had more I'd give more." No you wouldn't. It doesn't matter how much you have. The widow who had nothing gave everything. People who have everything give nothing. It's never about circumstances. It's a view of heaven and a view of earth. It's a perspective that has captured your heart." ([Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#))

**Jesus** alluded to the incomparable value of faithfulness in this lifetime "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' (Mt 25:21)

**And he who is unrighteous (adikos) in a very little thing is unrighteous (adikos) also in much** - A person who cannot be trusted with a **little**, cannot be trusted with **much**! Jesus seems to present **faithful** as the antithesis of **unrighteous** in this section.

**Nelson's NKJV Study Bible** - A person who cannot handle money certainly cannot handle spiritual matters that are of much more value.

---

**Unrighteous (94)**(**adikos** from **a** = without + **dike** = justice) is an adjective which in general generally describes that which is characterized by violation of divine law. It means acting in a way that is contrary to what is right (unjust, crooked). **Adikos** is what God is NOT (Heb 6:10-[note](#), Ro 3:5-[note](#)). As in the Old Testament, the "**unrighteous**" (**adikos**) are a class of people who stand over against the "righteous," or the people of God. The "righteous" will be "rescued" (cf. above Ps 18:48; 120:2; 140:1 and 2 Pe 2:9), while the "**unrighteous**" will be punished and judged (2 Pe 2:9-[note](#); cf. 1 Cor 6:9 - referring to a lifestyle or continual behavior that is **adikos**)

**Friberg** summarizes **adikos** - (1) as doing contrary to what is right, unrighteous, wrong (Mt 5.45), opposite dikaios = (righteous, just); (2) as characterized by disregard for God = ungodly, unjust (2 Pe 2.9-[note](#)), opposite = devout, godly; (3) as characterized by lack of integrity dishonest, untrustworthy (Lk 16.10), opposite of pistos (trustworthy, faithful); (4) of things obtained by wrong means - unjust, dishonest (Lk 16.11); (5) [substantially](#), of a person not a member of a Christian community = unbeliever (1 Cor 6.1) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**Gilbrant** - This adjective was employed by **classical writers** from the time of Hesiod (Seventh Century B.C., see Bauer) (cf. adikeō, adikia). Classical definitions ranged from "unjust," or "unrighteous" (either persons or objects) to being used to depict a "day on which the courts were closed" or of a "person who had failed to appear in court" (Liddell-Scott). These legal nuances continued to influence the term's usage in the Biblical writings. Basic to **adikos** are its legal nuances: "the **adikos** is the 'violator of the law' in the widest sense" (Schrenk, "adikos," Kittel, 1:149). Like adikia, adikōs, adikēma, and adikeō, **adikos** was a familiar term to the translators of the **Septuagint**. Nineteen different Hebrew words were replaced by **adikos**. If any single term dominates as a Hebrew counterpart it would have to be sheqer ("falsehood, deception"). Also figuring prominently is 'awlāh ("wickedness"). **Adikos** may describe some "wrong, perverse, or unfair act," from sexual immorality (e.g., Ge 19:8) to bearing false witness (Ex 23:1; Lev 19:12), the latter being a reflection of its frequent legal context (e.g., Lev 19:15,35; Dt 19:16,18). At times it is virtually synonymous with **anomos**, "lawless". Frequently the victims of "injustice" are God's people (Job 5:16,22; Ps 25:19), who wait for His salvation (2 Samuel 22:3; Ps 18:48; 120:2; 140:1). On numerous occasions **adikos** is linked to the "tongue" or to "testimony." Perhaps this reflects its legal heritage (e.g., Ps 139:4; Pr 6:17; 10:31; 12:17,19). But the legal and religious were not so easily separated in Hebrew thought. Thus Jeremiah condemned the prophets who prophesied "unjust matters" (cf. NIV, "lies"; Jer 5:31; 27:14,16; cf. 28:15). To trust in them was to reject God (Jer 29:9,31). This reflects the belief that the world is essentially composed of two types of people—the righteous and the unrighteous (that is, those living in concert with God's covenant and those rejecting it and Him). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Adikos** - 12x in 11v - unjust(3), unrighteous(8), wicked(1).

Matthew 5:45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the **unrighteous**.

Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is **unrighteous** in a very little thing is **unrighteous** also in much.

Luke 16:11 "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of **unrighteous** wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?

Luke 18:11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, **unjust**, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

Acts 24:15 having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the **wicked**. (cf "the living and the dead" 2 Ti 4:1 [note](#), see also Da 12:2-note, John 5:28, 29)

Romans 3:5 [note](#) But if our **unrighteousness** demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)

1 Corinthians 6:1 Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the **unrighteous** and not before the saints?

1 Corinthians 6:9 Or do you not know that the **unrighteous** will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,

**Comment** - The phrase **not inherit the kingdom of God** means they will not be saved. This is not taking about an occasional slip-up but a lifestyle of such behavior with never a hint of repentance!

Hebrews 6:10 [note](#) For God is not **unjust** so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.

1 Peter 3:18 [note](#) For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the **unjust**, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;

**Comment** - Unjust here means falling short of the righteousness required by divine laws

2 Peter 2:9 [note](#) then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the **unrighteous** under punishment for the day of judgment,

**Adikia** - 117x in 112v in the Septuagint - Gen. 19:8; Exod. 23:1; Exod. 23:7; Lev. 19:12; Lev. 19:15; Lev. 19:35; Deut. 19:16; Deut. 19:18; Deut. 25:16; 1 Sam. 25:21; 2 Sam. 18:13; 2 Sam. 22:3; 2 Ki. 9:12; Job 5:16; Job 5:22; Job 6:29; Job 6:30; Job 13:4; Job 16:11; Job 16:17; Job 18:21; Job 22:15; Job 22:23; Job 24:19; Job 27:4; Job 29:17; Job 31:3; Job 36:4; Job 36:23; Ps. 18:48; Ps. 25:19; Ps. 27:12; Ps. 35:11; Ps. 43:1; Ps. 63:11; Ps. 101:7; Ps. 119:118; Ps. 119:128; Ps. 120:2; Ps. 140:1; Ps. 140:4; Ps. 140:11; Prov. 4:24; Prov. 6:17; Prov. 6:19; Prov. 10:31; Prov. 11:18; Prov. 12:17; Prov. 12:19; Prov. 12:21; Prov. 13:5; Prov. 13:23; Prov. 14:5; Prov. 15:26; Prov. 16:33; Prov. 17:1; Prov. 17:15; Prov. 29:12; Prov. 29:27; Isa. 9:17; Isa. 29:21; Isa. 32:7; Isa. 54:14; Isa. 57:20; Isa. 58:6; Isa. 59:13; Jer. 5:31; Jer. 7:9; Jer. 27:12; Jer. 27:15; Jer. 27:16; Jer. 28:15; Jer. 29:9; Jer. 29:31; Ezek. 21:3; Ezek. 21:4; Ezek. 33:15; Amos 8:5; Zeph. 3:5

---

**POSB** - Scripture says that the true heavenly riches and rewards are beyond comprehension:

#### **Rewards Dealing with Our Nature and State of Being**

- ⇒ Being adopted as a son of God (Ga. 4:4–7; 1 Jn. 3:1).
- ⇒ Being made blameless and harmless (Ph. 2:15).
- ⇒ Being given eternal life (Jn. 3:16; 1 Ti. 6:19).
- ⇒ Being given an enduring substance (He. 10:34).
- ⇒ Being given a glorious body (Ph. 3:11, 21; 1 Co. 15:42–44).
- ⇒ Being given eternal glory and honor and peace (Ro. 2:10).
- ⇒ Being given eternal rest and peace (He. 4:9; Re. 14:13).
- ⇒ Being given the blessings of the Lord (Pr. 10:22).
- ⇒ Being given the knowledge of Christ Jesus (Ph. 3:8).
- ⇒ Being given durable riches and righteousness (Pr. 8:18).
- ⇒ Being made priests (Re. 20:6).
- ⇒ Being given a crown of incorruption (1 Co. 9:25).
- ⇒ Being given a crown of righteousness (2 Ti. 4:8).
- ⇒ Being given a crown of life (Js. 1:12).



⇒ Being given a crown of glory (1 Pe. 5:4).

#### **Rewards Dealing with Work and Position and Rule**

- ⇒ Being made exalted beings (Re. 7:9–12).
- ⇒ Being made ruler over many things (Mt. 25:23).
- ⇒ Being given the Kingdom of God (Js. 2:5; Mt. 25:34).
- ⇒ Being given a position of rule and authority (Lu. 12:42–44; 22:28–29; 1 Co. 6:2–3).
- ⇒ Being given eternal responsibility and joy (Mt. 25:21, 23).
- ⇒ Being given rule and authority over cities (Lu. 19:17, 19).
- ⇒ Being given thrones and the privilege of reigning forever (Re. 20:4; 22:5).
- ⇒ Being given the privilege of surrounding the throne of God (Re. 7:9–13; 20:4).
- ⇒ Being made priests (Re. 20:6).
- ⇒ Being made kings (Re. 1:5; 5:10).

#### **Rewards Dealing with Our Inheritance or Wealth**

- ⇒ Being made an heir of God (Ro. 8:16–17; Tit. 3:7).
- ⇒ Being given an incorruptible inheritance (1 Pe. 1:3–4).
- ⇒ Being given the blessings of the Lord (Pr. 10:22).
- ⇒ Being given durable riches and righteousness (Pr. 8:18).
- ⇒ Being given unsearchable riches (Ep. 3:8).
- ⇒ Being given treasures in heaven (Mt. 19:21; Lu. 12:33). (Borrow [Luke Commentary](#))

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - Sometimes people say that they would give more to God's work if they had more money to give. But that is not always so.

Dr. D. James Kennedy told a story of a man who came to Peter Marshall, former chaplain of the United States Senate, with a concern about tithing. He said: "I have a problem. I have been tithing for some time. It wasn't too bad when I was making \$20,000 a year. I could afford to give the \$2,000. But you see, now I am making \$500,000, and there is just no way I can afford to give away \$50,000 a year."

Dr. Marshall reflected on this wealthy man's dilemma but gave no advice. He simply said: "Yes, sir. I see that you do have a problem. I think we ought to pray about it. Is that alright?"

The man agreed, so Dr. Marshall bowed his head and prayed with boldness and authority. "Dear Lord, this man has a problem, and I pray that you will help him. Lord, reduce his salary back to the place where he can afford to tithe."

---

#### **Honor System**

Read: Luke 16:1-10

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. —Luke 16:10

Many homes near ours offer produce and perennials for sale by the road. Sometimes we'll drive up to an unattended stand that operates on the "honor system." As we make our selection, we put our money into a cash box or an old coffee can. Then we go home to enjoy the freshly picked fruits and vegetables.

But the honor system doesn't always work. My friend Jackie has a flower stand in front of her house. One day, as she glanced out her window she saw a well-dressed woman with a big hat loading pots of perennials into the trunk of her car. Jackie smiled as she mentally calculated a \$50 profit from her labors in the garden. But when she checked the cash box later, it was empty! The honor system revealed that this woman was not honorable.

Perhaps to her, taking the flowers seemed like a small thing. But being honest in little things indicates how we will respond in the big things (Luke 16:10). Honesty in all areas of our lives is one way we can bring honor to Jesus Christ, our Savior.

The best "honor system" for a follower of Christ is Colossians 3:17, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." By Cindy Hess Kasper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Give of your best to the Master;  
Give Him first place in your heart;

Give Him first place in your service,  
Consecrate every part.  
—Grose

Honesty means never having to look over your shoulder.

---

## **Here is a summary from Rod Mattoon on Principles for Faithfulness**

### **a) Surrender the Care of Your Life to God**

Faithfulness comes from total confidence in God's plan, God's will, God's care, and God's guidance in your life. A sweet peace comes from releasing this care to Christ and putting your life, your comfort, and your safety into God's hands. This is why Peter told us to totally load our worries upon Him.

1 Peter 5:7— Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

### **b) Settle in Your Heart That Serving the Lord Is Not a Waste**

1 Corinthians 15:58— Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

If you believe you are wasting your time in living for God, you are heading for defeat. You are going to quit. On the other hand, if you will understand the truth that what you do for Christ has eternal value, and that He is using you, even though you may not see it, it will help you to be faithful. Our responsibility is to be faithful and obedient to Christ and leave the rest to Him. He will reward us for our steadfastness.

Revelation 2:10— Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

### **c) Shield Your Heart From Fear by Walking with God**

Daniel 6:4— Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

Daniel had a close, intimate relationship with God. It was real. His love and devotion to the Lord was so great that he could not be intimidated by the death threats of others. The three Hebrew children refused to be intimidated by the death decree of Nebuchadnezzar. They were not going to bow to his idol, even if it meant their death. Their love for God emboldened them to remain faithful.

Daniel 3:16-18... Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. [17] If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. [18] But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

### **d) Set Your Sights On the Promises of God and Shadow God's Leading in Your Life**

In spite of the wicked society that Noah lived in, Noah faithfully believed God's warning and promise of deliverance. Because he was faithful, he saved the Human Race.

Hebrews 11:7— By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Caleb was another man that did not get discouraged and turn his back on God. He was not afraid to trust the Lord and obey His commands because he wholly followed the Lord and claimed God's promises. He walked in the shadow of the Lord, letting Him lead his life.

Joshua 14:8— Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the Lord my God.

The Bible energizes, enthuses, encourages, and excites us in doing the will of God. It gives us hope when our circumstances seem hopeless and it gives us joy in the midst of trials, enabling us to "keep on keeping on." Make it a part of your life each day.

Romans 15:4— For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Jeremiah 15:16a— Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart:....

#### **e) Be Sincere and a Serious About Doing Your Best All the Time**

Matthew 25:21— His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Luke 16:10— He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

Faithful people do their best all the time, no matter how big or small the task may be. When we are faithful with smaller responsibilities, God will entrust us with greater responsibilities down the road. Faithfulness breeds more faithfulness. One reason why people do not get the promotion at work or are not given leadership responsibilities is because they are not faithful or dependable.

You are asking for problems if you put people into leadership positions who are not faithful, whether it is work, school, or church.

Proverbs 25:19— Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.

Let me ask, "Are you responsible? Do you show up on time? Are you prepared when you show up? Do you do your best when you perform your tasks?"

#### **f) Shun and Strip Your Life of Sinful Weights**

Hebrews 12:1— Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Sin is the boulder that bogs down the believer. Instead of strengthening you, it sponges the spiritual strength out of you. It does not lift you up; it drags you down. Sinful living damages and tears up your testimony for Christ, your tenacity in serving Him, your temperance or self control, your tenderness for others and the souls of men, and your tongue as what is truly in your heart comes out of your mouth.

Sin takes, and takes, and takes. King David lost the joy of his salvation and the harmony in his home. Samson lost his freedom and his life. Achan lost his family and his life. The Prodigal Son lost his possessions and his purity. Lot lost his family and his peace as he was vexed by the wickedness of Sodom. These folks paid a price for being unfaithful.

On the other hand, Moses was faithful and used of God because he shunned the sinful lifestyle of Egypt. He avoided the weights of sin that would have hindered him from doing what God was telling him to do.

Hebrews 11:24-25... By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; [25] Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

#### **g) See in Your Mind the Final Outcome of Your Faithfulness**

Men like Abraham and Moses were faithful and greatly blessed because they saw by faith what God had promised them. They saw Him who was invisible.

Hebrews 11:8, 10— By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. [10] For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Hebrews 11:13— These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Hebrews 11:27— By faith he (Moses) forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Jesus faithfully endured the cross because of the joy He saw in the future. He saw the salvation of the souls who would trust in Him and the joys of Heaven with His bride, the Church.

Hebrews 12:2— Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We too, can have the same joy as we see the Lord bless our giving, our labors for Him, and answer our prayers. Hearing His "Well done" and receiving His reward will motivate us to be faithful. Moses was faithful and looking forward to God's reward for him. He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of God than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to his great reward.

Hebrews 11:26— Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

Paul also was looking forward to the reward that the Lord had for him.

2 Timothy 4:7-8... I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: [8] Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. Beloved, you have only one life. Make it count for Christ.

#### **h) Squelch Any Distractions That Will Hinder You From Serving the Lord**

Nehemiah 6:3— So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?"

Nehemiah had the task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. He faced all sorts of opposition in this project. As he began to accomplish what the Lord led him to do, men attempted to distract him from his goal. Nehemiah refused to be distracted and kept his focus on God's will.

Beloved, if you are going to be faithful, you will have to deal with your distractions and not allow them to get you sidetracked or stop you from serving the Lord Jesus Christ. You will find that some of your greatest or most powerful distractions will be close friends or family that are not committed to the Lord at all. Paul was a great Christian because he knew how to remain focused on doing the will of God.

Philippians 3:13-14... Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, [14] I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Demas, on the other hand, was a man that was distracted by the delights of this world. He is remembered as a quitter.

2 Timothy 4:10a— For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica;....

#### **i) Set Your Sites On the Second Coming of Christ**

Knowing the Lord could come at any time will be a great motivator to remain steadfast and faithful in serving Him. The committed Christian does not want to shame his life by living in sin. If the Lord returns today, he wants the Lord to find him faithful. John, Peter, and Paul urged us to be alert and keep our eyes open for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The return of the Lord was a key factor in their faithfulness to Him.

1 John 2:28— And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

Titus 2:13— Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

2 Peter 3:12— Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? [13] Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. [14] Where fore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

2 Timothy 4:7-8... I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: [8] Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day:

and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

## j) Be Saturated or Filled with the Spirit of God

Ephesians 5:18— And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

The filling or control of the Holy Spirit of your life will do more for you in being faithful than anything else. Yield to His leading each day. Submit to His guidance. If you let Him pilot your life, He will not steer you in the wrong direction. The Holy Spirit will give you what you need to be faithful:

- peace and patience in times of pandemonium
- confidence, courage, and calm in chaos
- tenacity in times of trial or temptation
- submission and surrender to the scheme of God for your life

The Holy Spirit is the flame of our passion and zeal. Warmed like a dove fledging in its downy nest, the Holy Spirit warms our heart like sunbeams on an October morning. His fragrance is like the breath of flowers blooming on a summer day. You cannot see Him, but you know His presence is near.

His whisper in our soul is gentle like morning light. He offers calming assurance and strength that are as sweet as a fresh spring to a weary wanderer in a barren wilderness. His direction is clear, hopeful, and beautiful like sunbeams that peak through puffy, pewter clouds after a summer storm.

Yet, His power should not be underestimated. Like gale winds from a rolling sea that shake and fill homes with its breath, I have seen the Spirit of God invade and sweep a church service in the same powerful manner, rattling the cages of men's hearts and moving them to brokenness and repentance.

Beloved, when we finally become conscious and aware of the presence of God and His holiness, it is then we will enjoy revival in our own life, home, and church. What a valuable friend is He, who is frequently ignored, snubbed, spurned, or shunned by those believers He indwells. Yet, the Spirit of God is patient with us like a gentle stream that flows day by day through rolling hills and deep valleys. Though grieved and quenched, He still gently pleads with us to yield to His direction and His summons for fellowship with Him.

He is our best friend, but unfortunately, we are not a best friend to Him. He is the key to our success at focusing and finishing what God leads us to do. When we fall in love with Him, when we fall in love with Jesus Christ all over again, we will see revival in our own lives. ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

---

## Steven Cole - Faithful versus unrighteous: Be faithful, not unrighteous, in financial matters.

The first contrast, in verse Lu 16:10, is between **“the one who is faithful”** and **“the one who is unrighteous.”** Jesus is saying, **“Do not be unrighteous as the steward in the parable was, but be faithful stewards,”** as those who will give an account to the Master. There are two crucial concepts here:

### A. The concept of stewardship: God owns it; I manage it.

Implicit in Jesus' teaching, both here and elsewhere, is that God owns everything and we are stewards or managers of what He has entrusted to us. We are stewards of our time, our abilities, and our possessions and money. In the parable, the steward was squandering his master's possessions (Lu 16:1). There is much debate over whether his action of reducing the bills of his master's debtors was illegal or legal. Some argue that his master had cleverly violated the Jewish laws against charging interest, and that the steward was rectifying the situation and putting the master in the awkward position of going along with the adjusted bills or else openly being guilty of charging interest. Others say that the steward was giving up his own commission on the sales. Others say that the steward was stealing from his master. We can't know for sure, but it seems to me that the steward was not doing anything illegal or the master would have prosecuted him.

And yet, while staying within the letter of the law and acting within the authority given to him, the steward was not acting in his master's best interests, but in his own. Even though the master lost a lot of money through the steward's actions, he grudgingly had to praise him for his shrewdness. But the fact is, although shrewd, the steward was still unrighteous or unfaithful because he was using his master's money for his own selfish ends, not for the master's profit.

One of the key concepts of being a steward is that the steward does not own what the master or owner has entrusted to him. He merely manages it for the owner's purposes. If the steward begins to act as if he owns it,

spending the owner's resources for his personal betterment rather than for the owner's benefit, he is an unrighteous, not a faithful, steward.

The principle of stewardship is a fundamental concept of Christian living. When you keep it in focus, it radically affects how you live. Paul says, "It is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy," or faithful (1Co 4:2). To be faithful as a steward, you must keep in mind at all times that you do not own your money; God does. You do not own your car; God does. You do not own your house; God does. You do not own your own life; God does. To forget or ignore God's purposes and to live as if what we have is ours to use for our purposes is to abuse our stewardship by being unfaithful.

Now I am going to make a radical statement. I believe that the concept of tithing has fostered the erroneous notion that ten percent belongs to God and the rest is ours to use as we please. Many pastors teach tithing because if Christians would give just ten percent of their incomes to the Lord's work, giving would increase dramatically. I once calculated at my church in California that if our church families were only earning welfare-level incomes and tithing, our church income would increase significantly. Statistics vary slightly, but polls show that American evangelicals give far less than ten percent. Conservative Protestants give about three or four percent, which is about twice as much as members of mainline denominations. But before you congratulate yourself, the Mormons give an average of six percent, with 30-45 percent of Mormons giving ten percent of their pre-tax income!

Also, polls show that the more people make, the less they give as a percentage of their income. The more you earn, the more tempting it is to spend it on yourself, rather than to give to the Lord's work. But I am arguing that the concept that ten percent belongs to the Lord and the rest is yours to use as you please is not biblical. One hundred percent belongs to the Lord. The New Testament standard for giving is not ten percent, but "as the Lord has prospered you" (1Co 16:2). If under the Law, ten percent was required, then under grace, ten percent should be the bare minimum, unless you are in dire straits. Even then, the Lord's purposes (He is the owner), not your purposes, should be your focus in managing what He has entrusted to you. While the Lord allows us to enjoy the bounty of His material blessings (1Ti 6:17), He also wants us to focus on storing up the treasure of a good foundation for the future by being generous and ready to share (1Ti 6:18, 1Ti 6:19). To give sporadically on impulse or to give a pittance with no view to eternity is not to be a faithful steward.

#### **B. The concept of accountability: Some day I must give an account to God for my stewardship.**

Every business manager knows that the owner will be checking the books to see how things are going. If the business has been earning a profit for the owner, then the manager may get a raise. But if the manager has been skimming off the profits to finance his new yacht and his Mercedes, he's going to be in trouble when the books are examined. The idea of accountability is inherent in the concept of management or stewardship.

Crucial to being a good steward is understanding the owner's purpose for his business. In the world, the purpose usually is to make all the money you can. But what is our Master's purpose? Jesus tells us in verse Lu 16:9: **"Make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings."** Mammon comes from an Aramaic word meaning riches. By **"the mammon of unrighteousness,"** Jesus means money, which the world uses for unrighteous purposes, but which believers can use for God's purposes. Jesus means that just as the unrighteous steward used his master's money to make friends for himself, so that when he got fired they would welcome him into their homes, so we should use our Master's money to make friends for ourselves in heaven. Some commentators interpret "they" to refer to God and the angels, but I think it refers to the friends who have become Christians because of our faithful stewardship. When earthly riches fail, as they surely will when we die, we will have friends in heaven who are there because we gave to the cause of world evangelization.

Each of us must ask ourselves the sober question, "Am I managing the resources God has entrusted to me with a view to giving an account some day in light of His purpose of being glorified among all the nations through the spreading of the gospel?" God is a generous and gracious Father, who gives to us not only enough for our basic needs, but also for our enjoyment. So, it is not wrong to enjoy many things beyond the bare essentials. But, if we grasp the concept of faithful stewardship and accountability, our focus will not be on our own financial success, but rather on the financial "success" of God's enterprise, namely, the gospel. ([How to be Truly Rich](#))



KJV Luke 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

- **who will entrust the true riches to you** Luke 12:33; 18:22; Pr 8:18,19; Ephesians 3:8; James 2:5; Rev 3:18
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

## EARTHLY STEWARDSHIP AND ETERNAL REWARDS

**Therefore if you have not been faithful ([pistos](#)) in the use of unrighteous wealth who will entrust the true ([alethinos](#)) riches to you** - This is really Lk 16:10 stated another way. It's still about faithfulness and how you handle your (His) money. **Unrighteous wealth** is the same phrase we saw earlier (the mammon of unrighteousness) and refers to earthly money and possessions. The point is if you have not been faithful in handling the mammon of unrighteousness, Jesus asks why should you be entrusted with true riches which refers in context to eternal riches, eternal reward.

**MacArthur** - People's perspective on money and their resulting faithfulness or unfaithfulness has implications for their eternal reward.

**Hughes** says Jesus "means that if you have not been faithful with money, "worldly wealth," God will not trust you with true spiritual riches—the care of souls, missions, evangelism, the oversight of his church." (Ibid)

As **MacArthur** comments "Do you think God is going to reward you in eternity if you have frittered and wasted your opportunity, your stewardship? You can buy yourself endless junk and trinkets and creature comforts and earthly possessions, all the shallow, corrupting temporary things that burn up and when you come into the presence of the Lord do you expect Him to give you the true riches, literally the true things, that eternal reward that comes to those that are faithful?"

[See list of eternal rewards](#) above.

**Stein** - Since it is the use of this worldly wealth, not the possession of it which is condemned, worldly wealth is in itself neutral. The rich fool in the next parable is not culpable because he was wealthy but because he did not use his wealth to love God and his neighbor, Lazarus. (New American Commentary – Volume 24: Luke).

**Who will entrust ([pisteuo](#)) the true riches to you** - The point as alluded to above is that God will not trust you if you put your trust in worldly wealth. In context "true riches" are riches that will endure forever! This makes me think of men like [R.G. LeTourneau](#) to whom God entrusted a great amount of the **wealth of unrighteousness**, for He trusted LeTourneau's character and attitude toward earthly wealth. (Read [Why RG LeTourneau Gave 90 Percent](#) - Woe! Are you as convicted as I am?)

**NET Note** - **Entrust you with the true riches** is a reference to future service for God. The idea is like 1 Cor 9:11, except there the imagery is reversed.

**True riches** - These are riches that belong to God's kingdom and thus endure forever, in contrast to "worldly wealth" which endures at best only for one's lifetime (and even here sometime gives out before we die). Jesus has already alluded to one of the most incredible riches any person could ever imagine and that is the glorious prospect that others with whom you have had some role in their salvation will be at the "gates" to "receive you into the eternal dwellings."

**Steven Cole** says that how we handle our money "is the litmus test by which God tests us to see if we can handle **true riches**, namely, souls. If we are faithful in managing the money God gives us for His purposes, He will entrust eternal souls into our care. We will have eternal rewards in heaven, even if we don't have much in terms of earthly possessions....The ironic thing is, you are 100 percent certain to lose all the money you accumulate on this earth—it will fail (Lu 16:9). You are 100 percent certain to keep all the rewards you lay up in heaven—they are your own (Lu 16:12), secure where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in to steal (Mt 6:20). And yet, most of God's people **major** on laying up money on earth and **minor** on laying up treasure in heaven! Puritan **Thomas Adams** put it, "To part with what we cannot keep, that we may get that we cannot lose, is a good bargain. Wealth can do us no good, unless it help us toward heaven."" ([How to be Truly Ric](#)) (**Ed**: Thomas Adams' quote sounds like **Jim Elliot's** famous quote - "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.")

**John Piper** reminds us that "money is going to fail. It will do you no good at all on your death-bed. And whether you have an eternal

habitation will depend, at least in part, on whether you used your money to advance the cause of Christ in the lives of others, or whether you used it to advance your comforts and your status symbols. That is the point of Lk 16:11: "If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you the true riches?" In other words, the possession of money in this world is a test run for eternity. Can you pass the test of faithfulness with your money? Do you use it as a means of proving the worth of God and the joy you have in supporting his cause? Or does the way you use it prove that what you really enjoy is things, not God?" ([Luke 16:19-31 Preparing to Receive Christ Hearing Moses and the Prophets](#))

Jesus repeatedly links **faithful** use of our **earthly wealth** with the accumulation of **heavenly treasure**

Luke 12:33-note "Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, **an unfailling treasure in heaven**, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys.

Luke 18:22-note When Jesus heard this, He said to him, "One thing you still lack; sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have **treasure in heaven**; and come, follow Me."

Mt 6:19-21-note Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

---

**Entrust** (4100)(**pisteuo** from **pistis**; **pistos**) means to consider something (in this context some ONE) to be true and therefore worthy of trust. This is same verb used by Jesus when He said "**repent** and **believe** in the Gospel." (Mk 1:15 where both **repent** and **believe** are commands in the [present imperative](#) = make this your lifestyle = something only possible as we daily depend on the Holy Spirit - [see more detailed explanation](#))

**True** (adjective) (228)(**alethinos** from **alethes** = true, one who cannot lie) is an **adjective** which pertains to being in accordance with historical fact - genuine, real, true, valid, trustworthy (worthy of confidence, dependable). Alethinos describes that which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name, in every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name -- thus genuine not spurious, fictitious, counterfeit, imaginary, simulated or pretended.

**Luke 16:12 "And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"**

KJV Luke 16:12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

- **if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's** Luke 19:13-26; 1 Chr 29:14-16; Job 1:21; Ezek 16:16-21; Hosea 2:8; Mt 25:14-29
- **who will give you that which is your own** Luke 10:42; Col 3:3,4; 1 Pe 1:4,5
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

## **FAITHFULNESS IN HANDLING GOD'S FUNDS**

**And if you have not been faithful (**pistos**) in the use of that which is another's-** Here Jesus refers to trustworthy use of other's things, and in context other's money and possessions. Ultimately, this refers back to God, because it all belongs to Him! Haggai 2:8 says " 'The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine,' declares the LORD of hosts." The psalmist agrees that "The earth is full of Your possessions." (Ps 104:24) Asaph records God's declaration that "every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills." In sum, it all belongs to God. We as believers simply have temporary stewardship. Everything we have is a stewardship. It belongs to God and He asks that we would use it for His glory.

**Who will give you that which is your own-** ("Why should you be trusted with things of your own?" = NLT)) In other words we are held accountable for our stewardship. Jesus' statement causes us to examine our heart, fully understanding that our faithfulness or unfaithfulness in using mammon now will impact our future, including our future reward (see [rewards](#)). And the sad irony is the more we accumulate for ourselves here on earth, the less we will store up for ourselves treasure in heaven. What we do depends to a large extent on our perspective -- is it primarily temporal or primarily eternal? (See related topic - [Vertical Vision](#)) Paul alludes to this

when he wrote that in this present life believers are to "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor 4:18-[note](#))

**THOUGHT** - How's your eternal vision? Is it "20/20" so to speak? Perhaps you need an eye (heart) checkup!

**MacArthur** explains "if you're sinful in the use of your money, who then is going to entrust to you the true riches? You're going to forfeit your reward and if you haven't been faithful in using what is God's, then **who will give you that which is your own**, which is another way of saying you're also going to forfeit your eternal reward. That which you look forward to you won't receive. We will all be in heaven, but we are all not going to have the same "welcome committee" nor are we all going to have the same reward.

**Wiersbe** - It is tragic to see how God's wealth is being wasted by Christians who live as though Jesus never died and judgment is never coming. The old couplet is certainly true: *The only difference between men and boys is that men buy more expensive toys*. The heritage of the **past** must be used wisely in the **present** to guarantee spiritual dividends in the **future**. **All of us should want to meet people in heaven who trusted Christ because we helped to pay the bill for Gospel witness around the world, starting at home.** Thoreau (AN UNBELIEVER) wrote that a man is wealthy in proportion to the number of things he can afford to do without, and he was right. I once heard the late Jacob Stam pray, "Lord, the only thing we know about sacrifice is how to spell the word" I wonder if today some of us can even spell the word! (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

---

**Faithful** ([4103](#)) ([pistos](#) from [peitho](#) = to persuade) is someone who is dependable, trustworthy, steadfast, unswerving. **Webster** says that "Faithful" means firm in adherence to whatever one owes allegiance and implies unswerving adherence to a person or thing or to the oath or promise by which a tie was contracted.

---

**Steven Cole on Luke 16:10-12 - Temporal versus eternal: Lay up treasures in heaven.** The second contrast consists of three contrasts that all point to the same thing, namely the temporal versus the eternal. Jesus contrasts "a very little thing" with "much" (Lu 16:10); "unrighteous mammon" with "true riches" (Lu 16:11); and, "that which is another's" with "that which is your own" (Lu 16:12). The "very little thing," "unrighteous mammon," and "that which is another's" all refer to temporal resources, or money. It belongs to another, namely, to God, as we have seen. "Much," "the true riches," and "that which is your own" all refer to eternal treasures laid up in heaven, which no man can take from you (thus you truly possess them [Mt 6:20]). Thus Jesus is saying that the faithful steward will provide true riches for eternity in contrast to this unrighteous steward who provided himself only with temporal provisions.

Isn't it ironic that to us, money is a big deal, but to God it's **a very little thing**! If you don't think that money is a big deal to people, even to God's people, just ask some dear old saint to part with his or her riches for the sake of God's work and see what kind of response you get! In my church in California, a very wealthy man who was in his eighties had set up a fund to help young people who wanted to go into Christian work attend Christian colleges or seminaries. He had moved out of the area and the fund was depleted, so I wrote him a very tactful letter thanking him for his generosity, telling him of some of the young people who had been helped, and informing him that the fund had been depleted. He wrote back an angry letter accusing us of being after his money and telling us that if we ever asked him for money again, he wouldn't give! We hadn't even asked for money; we had just informed him that the fund was depleted. I'm sure that he could have given \$100,000 to the fund and he still would have had plenty left for all his years on this earth. Sadly, none of this man's four grown children were Christians, and they were all financially successful. But rather than willing his large estate to the Lord's work, he probably willed it all to his unbelieving children. **His money was a big deal to him!** But God views our money as **a very little thing**. It is the litmus test by which God tests us to see if we can handle **true riches**, namely, souls. If we are faithful in managing the money God gives us for His purposes, He will entrust eternal souls into our care. We will have eternal rewards in heaven, even if we don't have much in terms of earthly possessions. ([How to be Truly Rich](#))

---

**Luke 16:13 "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."**

---

KJV Luke 16:13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

- **No servant can serve two masters** Luke 9:50; 11:23; Joshua 24:15; Mt 4:10; 6:24; Ro 6:16-22; 8:5-8; James 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15,16
- **he will hate the one and love the other** Luke 14:26
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:1-13 How to be Truly Rich](#) - Steven Cole

- [Luke 16:1-13 Investing Earthly Finances with an Eternal Focus](#) - John MacArthur

## Related Passages:

Joshua 24:15+ "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

## THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF SERVING TWO MASTERS

See [in depth comments](#) on Jesus virtually identical statement in Matthew 6:24 (some duplication of comments below)

**Warren Wiersbe** - If God is our Master, then money will be our servant, and we will use our resources in the will of God. But if God is not our Master, then *we will become the servants of money*, and money is a terrible master! We will start *wasting* our lives instead of *investing* them, and we will one day find ourselves "friendless" as we enter the gates of glory. Henry Fielding wrote, "Make money your god and it will plague you like the devil!" Jesus said, "Make money your servant and use today's opportunities as investments in tomorrow's dividends." Be a wise steward! There are souls to win to the Saviour, and our money can help get the job done. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

**No servant** ([oiketes](#)) **can serve** ([douleuo](#) - present tense - continually) **two masters** ([kurios](#)) - **No** ([oudeis](#) from ou = not + dé = but + heis = one) means literally "**but absolutely not one**", and emphasizes not even one or not the least. Absolutely no man has the inherent ability habitually serve two owners at the same time, in the sense that they both can be his master. This is a basic foundational truth. Why? Because servitude to one consumes your life and precludes servitude to the other. A servant was not part time but belonged to one master 100% of the time. He was subject to the master at all times and in everything he said or did. He was not free to relate to another master at any time. Everything he was and everything he possessed in fact belonged to the master! That is picture Jesus wants us to understand. Slavery was full-time and "all in" so to speak! Note there are only **Two** options. No middle ground allowed. No straddling the fence. Compare Joshua 24:15, 19, 20+, 1Sa 7:3 1Ki 18:21, Hosea 10:2KJV, Jas 4:4, 2Ti 4:10

**Spiros Zodhiates** - The absence of neutrality is conspicuous. It goes without saying that multiple bosses never work. Two owners will fight over the priorities and work of a single employee. If both impose equal work, the employee either has to work two shifts or prioritize at the risk of angering one of his bosses. Contradictory orders from two owners are impossible to carry out. Opposing employers wear out their employees. In plain language, Jesus said, it cannot be done. ([Exegetical Commentary on Matthew](#))

## See in depth commentary on related passages:

- James 4:4 -James 4:4 Commentary
- 1 John 2:15 - 1John 2:15 Commentary
- 1 John 2:16 -1John 2:16 Commentary

Jesus carefully choose the picture of a slave. There could be no doubt about the issue of control. Jesus' point is that our **will** will be enslaved by either God or materialism ("mammon"). Either Jesus Christ is our **Lord**, or money is our **lord**, but both cannot be **lord** at the same time (cp 1 Ti 6:9)

Jesus' teaching reminds me of the old saying that "oil and water" don't mix. We see this same principle in many other ways. You cannot be a liar and be a truthful man at the same time. You cannot be immoral and be virtuous at the same time. You cannot be a [worldling](#) and be spiritual at the same time. You cannot gain the approval of the world and the approval of God at the same time. Many try to play both sides of the fence but the Lord states that this is impossible.

## WHO IS YOUR MASTER?

(From a note I wrote on Mt 6:24 in 2009) - Dear believer, guard your heart carefully, lest it be deceived by sin and you try to create heaven on earth rather than setting your mind on things above. Remember that whatever you store up, will cause you to spend much of your time and energy thinking about! It is the early part of 2009 as I write this note and America is reeling from a painful recession (or worse). As one who is fully retired, I have lost about 25% of my retirement fund, and this has served as a poignant test of my heart and where my allegiance and trust lies. I never gave money much thought before this recession, but God has used this down time to expose the roots of evil in my heart. He has shown me that my love for money was more than I would have ever realized in

times of plenty. Blessed be the ways of the Lord, Who lovingly discloses our "blind spots" that we might grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**THOUGHT** - Ask yourself "Does Christ or money occupy more of my thoughts, time, and efforts?" Or to phrase it another way "Have I bowed to Christ or financial security as my lord and master?" The answer might be painful as it was to me, but if properly responded to, it will yield a sharing in His holiness (Heb 12:10+) and the peaceful fruit of righteousness (Heb 12:11+)

**Life Application Bible Commentary** – **MASTER MONEY** - Money can easily take God's place in your life. It can become your master. Money is a hard master and a deceptive one. Wealth promises power and control but often cannot deliver. Great fortunes can be made—and lost—overnight, and no amount of money can provide health, happiness, and eternal life. Instead, let God be your Master. His servants have peace of mind and security, both now and forever. **How can you tell if you are a slave to money? If you answer yes to most of these questions, you have a problem.**

1. Do you think and worry about it frequently?
2. Do you give up doing what you should do or would like to do in order to make more money?
3. Do you spend a great deal of your time caring for your possessions?
4. Is it hard for you to give money away?
5. Are you in debt?

**John Phillips** - We cannot be a slave to material possessions and at the same time own the lordship of Christ in our lives. No compromise is possible. We have to decide which world we are going to live for and which master we are going to serve.

**For either he will hate ([miseo](#)) the one and love ([agapao](#)) the other or else he will be devoted([antechomai](#)) to one and despise ([kataphroneo](#)) the other** - **For ([term of explanation](#))** introduces the following explanation of why we cannot serve two masters and/or what happens when we try to do so. The principle is that you will **hate** and **despise** one you are not serving and **love** and be **devoted** to the one you are serving. So if you are laying up for yourself treasure on earth you can be sure that you are hating and despising servitude to God! There is no middle ground. No neutral position. Stated another way you are either for or against God's will and plans.

**THOUGHT** - Of course, no believer is perfect in this area, so the question is what is the general direction of your life? And if you answer it is earthward and temporal, then perhaps you need to soberly, prayerfully ponder Paul's exhortation in 2 Cor 13:5+ **"Test ([present imperative](#)) yourselves** (notice this a command to take a personal inventory - we are not to go around judging others) to see if you are in the faith; **examine ([present imperative](#)) yourselves!** Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test ([adokimos](#))?"

Jesus deals with the attitudes or affections - hate versus love, then devotion versus despising. Christ says you cannot be loyal to both or honor both.\

**Adam Clarke** makes the point that "The word **hate** has the same sense here as it has in many places of Scripture (cp Luke 14:26); it merely signifies to love less—so Jacob loved Rachel, but hated Leah; i.e. he loved Leah much less than he loved Rachel. God himself uses it precisely in the same sense: Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated; i.e. I have loved the posterity of Esau less than I have loved the posterity of Jacob: which means no more than that God, in the course of his providence, gave to the Jews greater earthly privileges than he gave to the Edomites, and chose to make them the progenitors of the Messiah, though they ultimately, through their own obstinacy, derived no more benefit from this privilege than the Edomites did. How strange is it, that with such evidence before their eyes, men will apply this loving and hating to degrees of inclusion and exclusion, in which neither the justice nor mercy of God are honored! ([Luke 16](#))

**H A Ironside** - The love of one crowds out love for the other (see Luke 11:34-36-).

**A. W. Tozer** - The streets of gold do not have too great an appeal for those who pile up gold here on earth.

**Thomas Adams** - Wealth can do us no good unless it help us toward heaven.

**You cannot serve God and wealth ([mammonas](#))**- The above axiomatic principle is now directly applied to the present context. One either serves God or mammon, but not both. As they say "pay your money and take your choice," but as a believer do so with eyes wide open, knowing that your choice will have not only temporal consequences, but even more importantly eternal consequences! Notice Jesus is not saying you can not make mammon. That is not the issue. The crux of the case is what you do with what you make. If you use it for your temporal life, you are serving wealth or mammon. If you use it for God's glory and honor and Kingdom growth, then obviously you are serving God. The choice is yours, but as noted above, the consequences you reap are concordant



with your choice. The truths Jesus is teaching in this section are directed straight at our heart and our pocketbook and for many this makes them very uncomfortable because they are living for time not eternity. As someone once said a good messages (and every message by Jesus is good) is one that afflicts the comfortable, and comforts the afflicted! If you are uncomfortable pray Psalm 139:23-24 (note the 6 imperatives in **red**)

**Search** me, O God, and **know** my heart; **Try** me and **know** my anxious thoughts; And **see** if there be any hurtful way in me, And **lead** me in the everlasting way.

**William Barclay** - Originally **mammon** was not a bad word at all. The Rabbis, for instance, had a saying, "Let the mammon of thy neighbor be as dear to thee as thine own." That is to say, a man should regard his neighbor's material possessions as being as sacrosanct as his own. But the word mammon had a most curious and a most revealing history. It comes from a root which means to entrust; and mammon was that which a man entrusted to a banker or to a safe deposit of some kind. Mammon was the wealth which a man entrusted so someone to keep safe for him. But as the years went on mammon came to mean, not that which is entrusted, but that in which a man puts his trust. The end of the process was that mammon came to be spelled with a capital M and came to be regarded as nothing less than a god. The history of that word shows vividly how material possessions can usurp a place in life which they were never meant to have. Originally a man's material possessions were the things which he entrusted to someone else for safe-keeping; in the end they came to be the things in which a man puts his trust. Surely there is no better description of a man's god, than to say that his god is the power in whom he trusts; and when a man puts his trust in material things, then material things have become, not his support, but his god... One thing emerges from all this—the possession of wealth, money, material things is not a sin, but it is a grave responsibility. If a man owns many material things it is not so much a matter for congratulation as it is a matter for prayer, that he may use them as God would have him to do. ([Matthew 6 Commentary](#))

**R Kent Hughes** writes that "**Wealth** has its disadvantages. It is difficult to have it and not trust in it. Material possessions tend to focus one's thoughts and interests on this world alone. It can enslave so that one becomes possessed by possessions, comforts, and recreations. Jesus said, "The deceitfulness of wealth and the desire for other things come in and choke the word" (Mark 4:19)." (See [Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul](#))

**John Calvin** - Where riches hold the dominion of the heart, God has lost His authority.

Possessions are interesting for if one is not careful he or she will be possessed by their possessions! The two great tests of character are wealth and poverty (but both can be mastered by wealth, one because they have it and the other because they covet it! For example, as has been well said gold is the heaviest of all metals, but is made more heavy by covetousness. There is but one letter difference between gold and God! And as **Matthew Henry** said "Worldlings make gold their god; saints make God their gold." And as **George Swinnock** said "Many a man's gold has lost him his God."

**Matthew Henry** however reminds us that "Poor people are as much in danger from an inordinate desire towards the wealth of the world as rich from an inordinate delight in it."

**J C Ryle** wisely reminds us that "**Wealth** is no mark of God's favor. **Poverty** is no mark of God's displeasure. Money, in truth, is one of the most unsatisfying of possessions. It takes away some cares, no doubt; but it brings with it quite as many cares as it takes away. There is the trouble in the getting of it. There is anxiety in the keeping of it. There are temptations in the use of it. There is guilt in the abuse of it. There is sorrow in the losing of it. There is perplexity in the disposing of it." (Luke 16 Commentary)

Remember **Jesus'** words to Martha "Only one thing is necessary." (Luke 10:42+)

**Vernard Eller** rightly said that "One's ultimate loyalty must converge at a single point. To try to go two ways at once will rip a person down the middle."

**Warren Wiersbe** - If God grants riches, and we use them for His glory, then riches are a blessing. But if we will to get rich, and live with that outlook, we will pay a great price for those riches. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

**Adam Clarke** - The master of our heart may be fitly termed the love that reigns in it. We serve that only which we love supremely. A man cannot be in perfect indifference betwixt two objects which are incompatible: he is inclined to despise and hate whatever he does not love supremely, when the necessity of a choice presents itself. Our blessed Lord shows here the utter impossibility of loving the world and loving God at the same time; or, in other words, that a man of the world cannot be a truly religious character. He who gives his heart to the world robs God of it, and, in snatching at the shadow of earthly good, loses substantial and eternal blessedness. How dangerous is it to set our hearts upon riches, seeing it is so easy to make them our God!

**Craig Bloomberg** - Many perceptive observers have sensed that the greatest danger to Western Christianity is not, as is sometimes alleged, prevailing ideologies such as Marxism, Islam, the New Age movement or humanism but rather the **all-pervasive materialism of our affluent culture**. We try so hard to create heaven on earth and to throw in Christianity when convenient as another small addition to the so-called good life. Jesus proclaims that unless we are willing to serve him wholeheartedly in every



area of life, but particularly with our material resources, we cannot claim to be serving him at all (cf. under Mt 8:18-22) (See Getz, A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions (Chicago: Moody, 1990) and R. J. Sider, Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger, rev. Dallas: Word, 1990). (New American Commentary)

**A.W. Pink** - These two are diametrically opposed, God and money. One commands you to walk by faith, the other to walk by sight; one to be humble, the other to be proud; one to set your affection on things above, the other to set them on the things that are on the earth; one to look at the things that are unseen and eternal, the other to look at the things that are seen and temporal; one to have your conversation in heaven, the other to cleave to the dust; one to be anxious for nothing, the other to be all anxiety; one to be content with such things as you have, the other enlarge your desires; one to be ready to distribute, the other to withhold; one to look at the things of others, the other to look at only one's own things; one to seek happiness in the Creator, the other to seek happiness in the creature. Is it not plain, "You can't serve two such masters." (Sermon on the Mount).

**C H Spurgeon's** - Here our King forbids division of aim in life. We cannot have two master passions: if we could, it would be impossible to serve both; their interests would soon come into conflict, and we should be forced to choose between them. God and the world will never agree, and however much we may attempt it, we shall never be able to serve both. Our danger is that in trying to gain money, or in the pursuit of any other object, we should put it out of its place, and allow it to get the mastery of our mind. Gain and godliness cannot both be masters of our souls: we can serve two, but not "two masters." You can live for this world, or live for the next; but to live equally for both is impossible. Where God reigns, the lust of gain must go. Oh, to be so decided, that we may pursue one thing only! We would hate evil and love God, despise falsehood and hold to truth! We need to know how we are affected both to righteousness and sin; and when this is ascertained to our comfort, we must stand to the right with uncompromising firmness. Mammon is the direct opposite of God as much today as in past ages, and we must loathe its greed, its selfishness, its oppression, its pride; or we do not love God. ([Luke 16](#) - exposition)

**Spurgeon** -- A gentleman of Boston (U. S.), an intimate friend of [Professor Agassiz](#), once expressed his wonder that a man of such abilities as he (Agassiz) possessed should remain contented with such a moderate income. "I have enough," was Agassiz's reply. "I have not time to make money. Life is not sufficiently long to enable a man to get rich, and do his duty to his fellow men at the same time." Christian, have you time to serve your God and yet to give your whole soul to gaining wealth? The question is left for conscience to answer. (Feathers for Arrows)

**James Montgomery Boice** has an interesting story - "You cannot serve both God and Money," says Jesus. We like to think we can; we are great compromisers. Or we think we are serving God by making money. True, we can use our money to serve God. Some do. But if our hearts are set on our possessions, which is probably an accurate description of most of us, we are not actually serving God whatever we may suppose we are doing. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones tells of a farmer who reported happily to his wife that his best cow had given birth to twin calves, one red and one white. He said, "You know, I have been led of the Lord to dedicate one of the calves to him. We will raise them together. Then when the time comes to sell them, we will keep the money from the one calf and give the money from the other to the Lord." His wife asked which one he was going to dedicate to the Lord, but he answered that there was no need to decide that now since he was going to treat both of them alike. Several months later he came into the kitchen looking very sad. When his wife asked what was troubling him he answered, "I have bad news. The Lord's calf is dead." "But you had not decided which was to be the Lord's calf," she objected. "Oh, yes," he said. "I had always determined that it was to be the white one, and it is the white one that has died." [D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Studies in the Sermon on the Mount Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967, vol. 2, 95-96] Sadly, it is always that way with us—it is always the Lord's calf that dies—unless we decide from the beginning that we are here to serve God above everything else and that everything we possess has been given to us by God and is to be held in stewardship for him. If we make such a decision, we will find when we die that we have actually been laying up eternal spiritual treasure in heaven and that nothing has destroyed it.

Many people may think they possess **mammon** or **wealth**, but Jesus shows that more often the mammon owns the person. People end up serving mammon rather than mammon serving them. They are possessed by their possessions! Mammon is a stern master who holds its subjects firmly in its grip as it did the **rich young ruler** in Mt 19:21-23 who had asked "*Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?*"...

Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieved; for he was one who owned much property. And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. (Mt 19:21-23)

**Mattoon** - There is no passage or command anywhere in the New Testament asking the believer to make Christ "Lord of his life" after salvation. The very experience of receiving Christ as Savior is looked upon throughout the Scriptures as an acknowledgment of His lordship and ownership. When you receive Christ as your Savior, you are acknowledging Him as your Lord. If you are not, then your decision is not sincere or genuine....

**Be Submissive to God's will in your life**—The captain of the ship looked into the dark night and saw faint lights in the distance. Immediately he told his signal-man to send a message, "Alter your course 10 degrees south!" Promptly a return message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north." The captain was angered; his command had been ignored. So he sent a second message: "Alter your course 10 degrees south—I am the captain!" Soon another message was received: "Alter your course 10 degrees north—I am seaman third class Jones." Immediately the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear it would evoke: "Alter your course 10 degrees south—I am a battleship." Then the reply came "Alter your course 10 degrees north—I am a lighthouse." In the midst of our dark and foggy times, all sorts of voices are shouting orders into the night, telling us what to do, how to adjust our lives. Out of the darkness, one voice signals something quite opposite to the rest—something almost absurd, but the voice happens to be the Light of the World, and we ignore it at our peril. The smartest thing we can do is be submissive to God's will for our lives. This was David's attitude for most of his life. ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

In ancient times "two masters rarely shared slaves, but when they did it always led to divided interests." (Bible Background Commentary) [Robertson](#) writes that "Many try it, but failure awaits them all. Men even try "to be slaves to God and mammon"!"

#### Related Resource:

- [How can we store up treasures in heaven? | GotQuestions.org](#)

---

**Servant** (3610)([oiketēs](#) from **oikos** = house) means one who lives in the same house as another and then household slaves or domestic servants not as strongly servile as [doulos](#). Many of these household or domestic slaves were well educated and held responsible positions in the households. Many of them were doctors, teachers, musicians, actors and stewards over great estates. The **oiketēs** describes one who generally holds closer relations to the family than other slaves.

**Can** (is able to)(1410)([dunamai](#)) conveys the basic meaning of that which has the inherent ability to do something or accomplish some end. Thus **dunamai** means to be able to, to be capable of, to be strong enough to do or to have power to do something. In short absolutely no person can continually (**dunamai** is in the [present tense](#) = continually) be in bondage to and give total allegiance to two supreme authorities. It is impossible! If they attempt to do so, they will experience a divided allegiance (so in truth **neither** is a "true" allegiance!). Compare a similar idea in the word **double-minded** (**dipsuchos**)

**Zodhiates** adds this note on **can** (is able) - The phrase, "Not even one can [from **dunamai** = to be able] serve" (a.t.) implies that prior to conversion, men and women are enslaved to treasures on earth. Accordingly, they are not neutral (free) toward God; they hate and despise Him, so they are unable to serve Him. In Romans 1:30 Paul called them "haters of God" (from *theostugēs*). At conversion, they love, hold to, and serve God while now hating, despising, and not serving the world. ([Ibid](#))

**Serve** ([present tense](#) = continually)(1398)([douleuo](#) from **doulos** = servant) means to be a slave, to serve, to do service, to be in the position of a slave and thus act accordingly. It means to act or conduct oneself as one in total service to another. **Douleuo** means to be owned by another as abject slaves (Luke 15:29, John 8:33, 1Ti 6:2). Most NT uses are figurative and refer to serving mammon (Mt 6:24, Lu 16:13, Ro 9:12-note), sin (Ro 6:6-note), God (Ro 7:6-note; 1Th 1:9-note), the law of God or sin (Ro 7:25-note), Christ (Ro 14:18-note; Col 3:24-note), one's own appetite (old nature, Ro 16:18-note), idols which are not really gods (Gal 4:8), other Christian brethren out of love (Gal 5:13), or one's fallen lusts and pleasures (Titus 3:3-note).

**Douleuo** - 23v - Matt. 6:24; Lk. 15:29; Lk. 16:13; Jn. 8:33; Acts 7:7; Acts 20:19; Rom. 6:6; Rom. 7:6; Rom. 7:25; Rom. 9:12; Rom. 12:11; Rom. 14:18; Rom. 16:18; Gal. 4:8; Gal. 4:9; Gal. 4:25; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 6:7; Phil. 2:22; Col. 3:24; 1 Thess. 1:9; 1 Tim. 6:2; Tit. 3:3

**Masters** (lords, owners)(2962)([kurios](#) from **kuros** = might or power, related to *kuroo* = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign (used this way of Roman emperors - Act 25:26) and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. **Kurios** is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28)

**Hate** (3404) (**miseo** from **misos** = hatred) means dislike strongly, with the implication of aversion and hostility. **Miseo** usually implies active ill will in words and conduct.

**Miseo** - 36v - **hate(13), hated(12), hateful(1), hates(12), hating(2)**. Matt. 5:43; Matt. 6:24; Matt. 10:22; Matt. 24:9; Matt. 24:10; Mk. 13:13; Lk. 1:71; Lk. 6:22; Lk. 6:27; Lk. 14:26; Lk. 16:13; Lk. 19:14; Lk. 21:17; Jn. 3:20; Jn. 7:7; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 15:18; Jn. 15:19; Jn. 15:23; Jn. 15:24; Jn. 15:25; Jn. 17:14; Rom. 7:15; Rom. 9:13; Eph. 5:29; Tit. 3:3; Heb. 1:9; 1 Jn. 2:9; 1 Jn. 2:11; 1 Jn. 3:13; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 4:20; Jude 1:23; Rev. 2:6; Rev.

**Love (25) (agapao)** means to love unconditionally and sacrificially love. **Agapao** is not love of the emotions but of the will. This quality of love is not just a feeling but ultimately can be known only by the actions it prompts in the one who displays agape love. to love, have affection for—1. of persons: God Jn 3:16, Jesus Mk 10:21, and people 2 Cor 12:15 love, cherish, show the greatest solicitude for, of the finest and most typical Christian virtue (more frequent and typically Christian than file,w but prob. equivalent to it in Jn 21:15–17). Prove or show love (for) Jn13:1; 1 Jn 3:18.—2. of the love for things love, long for, value, hold in high esteem Lk 11:43; Jn 12:43; 2 Ti 4:8.

Luke's uses - Lk. 6:27; Lk. 6:32; Lk. 6:35; Lk. 7:5; Lk. 7:42; Lk. 7:47; Lk. 10:27; Lk. 11:43; Lk. 16:13;

**Devoted (472) (antechomai** from **antí** = against + **echo** = have, hold) means literally to hold oneself face to face with. The idea of this verb in the present verse is to strongly cling or adhere to, to hold firmly, to cleave to and then to join with and to maintain loyalty to. **Antechomai** expresses the sense of a strong attachment to someone or something. To be devoted (feeling or demonstrating loyalty and thus ardent, devout, loving). To cling to (adhere as if glued firmly to and so to hold on tightly and tenaciously).

**Antechomai - 4v** - Matt. 6:24; Lk. 16:13; 1 Thess. 5:14; Tit. 1:9

**Despise (2706) (kataphroneo** from **katá** = down or against + **phroneo** = think) means literally to think down upon or against and so to despise, to think lightly of, to neglect, to not care for, to hold in contempt or to feel contempt for someone or something because it is thought to be bad or without value.

**Kataphroneo - 9v - despise(5), despising(1), disrespectful(1), look down(1), think lightly(1).** Matt. 6:24; Matt. 18:10; Lk. 16:13; Rom. 2:4; 1 Co. 11:22; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Tim. 6:2; Heb. 12:2; 2 Pet. 2:10

**ILLUSTRATION The Bat's Mistake** - "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24). Aesop speaks in one of his fables about a time when the beasts and fowl were engaged in war. The bat tried to belong to both parties. When the birds were victorious, he would wing around telling that he was a bird; when the beasts won a fight, he would walk around them assuring them that he was a beast. But soon his hypocrisy was discovered and he was rejected by both the beasts and the birds. He had to hide himself, and now only by night can he appear openly. One is our Master, even Christ. Serve Him!—Sunday School Times

**Matthew Henry** illustrates how these two masters are in diametric opposition to one another. Below I have organized his comments in tabular form:

GOD SAYS	MAMMON SAYS
"My son, give me thy heart."	"No, give it me."
"Be content with such things as ye have."	"Grasp at all that ever thou canst. Rem, rem, quocunque modo rem Money, money; by fair means or by foul, money."
"Defraud not, never lie, be honest and just in all thy dealings."	"Cheat thine own Father, if thou canst gain by it."
"Be charitable."	"Hold thy own: this giving undoes us all."
"Be careful (anxious) for nothing."	"Be careful (anxious) for every thing."
"Keep holy thy sabbath-day."	"Make use of that day as well as any other for the world."

Thus inconsistent are the commands of God and Mammon, so that we cannot serve both. Let us not then halt between God and Baal, but choose ye this day whom ye will serve, and abide by our choice. ([Matthew 6](#))

**Mattoon on serve** (douleuo) - To understand all that this means and implies we must remember two things about the slave in the ancient world. **First**, the slave in the eyes of the law was not a person but a thing. He had absolutely no rights of his own; his master could do with him absolutely as he liked. In the eyes of the law the slave was a living tool. His master could sell him, beat him, throw him out, and even kill him. His master possessed him as completely as he possessed any of his material possessions. **Second**, in the ancient world, a slave had literally no time which was his own. Every moment of his life belonged to his master. The slave had literally no moment of time which belonged to himself. Every moment belonged to his owner and was at his owner's disposal. The

slave then could only meet the demands of one master. In our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, as Christians, we have no rights of our own. God must be the undisputed, unchallenged master of our lives. Paul made this very clear to us in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Our attitude is not to be "What do I want to do with my life?" Instead, we should ask, "What does the Lord wish me to do?" We have no time which is our own. We cannot sometimes say, "I will do what God wants me to do," and, at other times, say, "I will do my own thing." Do you realize and understand the fact that the Christian has no time off from being a Christian? There is no time when he can relax his Christian standards, as if he was off duty, and remain right with God. A partial or a spasmodic service of God is not tolerated or acceptable. Being a Christian is a full-time responsibility that demands consistent obedience to God's Word and will for our life. **ILLUSTRATION** The March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005, issue of the *Suburban Chicago News* records the story of Roger Powell. According to fans and sportswriters, Roger Powell looks a lot like Michael Jordan. This forward for the University of Illinois Fighting Illini basketball team is an impressive player. He seems like a natural for the NBA. However, the 22-year-old senior from Joliet, Illinois, is leaning in the direction of full-time ministry. Although Roger was raised in Mt. Zion Full Gospel Church, his commitment to Christ was half-hearted. His love of basketball was one of several competing interests. In March, 2004, when the Fighting Illini were in Indianapolis to compete in the Big Ten tournament, something happened that changed Roger's motivation. It was as if the Holy Spirit had given him a full-court press. When the rest of the team headed into town to look for some excitement, Roger was reluctant to go along. Seeing a stream of young people headed into a downtown hotel for a Christian music concert, he followed them. What began as simply a way to pass the time before the team meeting later that night, became much more. During the concert, Roger felt God asking him to fully surrender his life and help spread God's Word. When the Illini's season ended, Roger totally dedicated his life to the Lord and proceeded toward becoming a licensed preacher of the Gospel. While completing his senior year at the U of I, and contributing to his team's near flawless season, he's been actively involved in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, leading small group Bible studies and preaching at his home church. "It was kind of like a struggle from my freshman year to junior year," said Powell. "It was back and forth, but once God came into my life and revealed my purpose, I just gave it all to Him, and He's been blessing me." Roger made the decision to serve one master the best he could. He realized that a castle can only have one king. **Beloved, you cannot go two ways at once. You cannot do business on both sides of the street. You cannot be for and against. No man can serve two masters. It is a simple axiom and an irrefutable one, yet many try to beat it, but no one has.** If you are a Christian that desires to bring honor to Christ with your life, your master cannot be yourself, people you want to please or be accepted by, money, power, popularity, possessions, or positions. Christ must be the king of your castle. This leads us to this question, "Why can't we serve two masters?" Notice the conflict in verse twenty-four. ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

---

### Servant Or Master?

Read: Proverbs 30:5-9 Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. 6 Do not add to His words Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar. 7 Two things I asked of You, Do not refuse me before I die: 8 Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, 9 That I not be full and deny You and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God.

No servant can serve two masters . . . You cannot serve God and mammon. —Luke 16:13

An Illinois resident asked his employer for a two-thirds pay cut in order to put his income below the poverty level. He reasoned that by making himself poor he would not have to pay income tax, and therefore he would not have to support military policies he didn't agree with. This would make him more consistent in practicing his beliefs. A close friend commented, "He has a strong commitment to justice and peace, and I think this is his way of carrying that out."

I'm not suggesting that we should follow his example, but he is a person who doesn't want money to divert him from his ideals. He reminds me of Agur, the wise author of Proverbs 30, who expressed concern that too much or too little wealth can get in the way of commitment to God.

So we are left to consider it—money. The Illinois resident gave up part of it. Agur didn't want too much or too little of it (Proverbs 30:7-9). Jesus used it (John 13:29). Paul could take it or leave it (Philippians 4:11-12). The rich young ruler clung to it (Luke 18:23). Ananias and Sapphira died because they lied to God about it (Acts 5).

What about our relationship to money? Do we use it wisely or does it control us? Is it our servant or our master? We cannot serve both God and money (Luke 16:13). By Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If money is your highest goal,  
The thing you long to gain,  
Its power will enslave your soul  
And cause your life much pain.  
—DJD

Money is a good servant, but a poor master.

---

## What's Your Preoccupation?

Read: Luke 16:1-15 | Bible in a Year: Daniel 11-12; Jude

No servant can serve two masters . . . . You cannot serve God and mammon. —Luke 16:13

The Lord's teaching about money in Luke 16 is as up-to-date as today's newspaper. Some Pharisees listened as Jesus told a parable about an unfaithful steward. He said, "You cannot serve God and mammon." The Pharisees scoffed at this, for they loved money. Jesus responded, "What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God" (v.15).

Author Wayne Jacobsen points out that when Jesus used the word abomination, He wasn't referring to sordid immorality. He was referring to the Pharisees' preoccupation with temporal possessions—very much the mindset of many today and still detestable to God.

To help us reverse our preoccupation with money, Ken Gire wrote this prayer: "Dear Jesus, help me this day to see with the eyes I will one day be given at death. I see clearly enough now what is highly valued in the sight of men. Give me eyes to see what is highly valued in Your sight." And what does God highly value? People in need—the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the sick, the lonely, the prisoners (Matthew 25:34-40). Valuing people involves listening, understanding, and meeting their needs.

**Are we preoccupied with earthly values or with God's eternal values?** By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I want to do service for Christ while I live,  
And comfort and cheer to poor lonely hearts give;  
For this is the program approved by the Word,  
To visit the needy and speak of the Lord.  
—Bosch

**Hold loosely to what is temporal and tightly to what is eternal.**

---

## The Options

Being in torments in Hades ([hades](#)), he lifted up his eyes. —Luke 16:23

Last time I checked, nobody likes having problems-problems with money, problems with cars, problems with computers, problems with people, problems with health. We would all prefer a life with as few difficulties as possible.

So, if you were to offer people the choice between (1) a future totally free of problems, sorrow, tears, and pain, and (2) a future full of pain, suffering, regret, and anguish—they would choose option one, right?

Jesus died on the cross to give us opportunity to experience that option. If we repent of our sins and trust Him as our Savior, He has promised us a life of fellowship with God in a place the Bible calls heaven. A place with no problems. A place where there are no more tears.

People living in a problem-filled world ought to be standing in line to grab that offer. Unfortunately, many haven't heard the good news; others have refused to trust Christ. When people die without Jesus, it's too late to take the offer, and they go to a place of torment the Bible calls hell.

Do you hate trouble and pain? Turn to Jesus and accept His offer of forgiveness. Your problems in this world won't disappear, but you'll reserve a home in heaven—a place of eternal joy and peace with God By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Jesus is calling, "Today you must choose!"  
If you delay, you surely will lose;  
Listening now, you can hear the Lord's voice,  
Take His salvation—make heaven your choice!  
—Hess

You must accept God's Son today if you want to live in heaven's sunshine tomorrow.

---

## The Best Eraser

Read: Luke 16:19-31

I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions. —Isaiah 44:22

What is memory? What is this faculty that enables us to recall past feelings, sights, sounds, and experiences? By what process are events recorded, stored, and preserved in our brain to be brought back again and again? Much is still mystery.

We do know that memories can be blessings—full of comfort, assurance, and joy. Old age can be happy and satisfying if we have stored up memories of purity, faith, fellowship, and love. If a saint looks back on a life of Christian service and remembers the faithfulness of Him who promised: “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb. 13:5), his or her sunset years can be the sweetest of all.

But memory can also be a curse and a tormentor. Many people as they approach the end of life would give all they possess to erase from their minds the past sins that haunt them. What can a person do who is plagued by such remembrances? Just one thing. He can take them to the One who is able to forgive them and blot them out forever. He’s the One who said, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (Heb. 10:17).

You may not be able to forget your past. But the Lord offers to blot out, “like a thick cloud, your transgressions” (Isa. 44:22). By M.R. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The deep remorse that’s in the soul  
No human eye may trace;  
But Jesus sees the broken heart,  
And can its woes erase.  
—Bosch

The best eraser is honest confession to God.

---

## A Devoted Heart

Read: 2 Chronicles 17:1-11

He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. —2 Chronicles 20:32 niv

A successful Christian businessman shared his story with us at church. He was candid about his struggles with faith and abundant wealth. He declared, “Wealth scares me!”

He quoted Jesus’ statement, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:25 niv). He cited Luke 16:19-31 about the rich man and Lazarus and how in this story it was the rich man who went to hell. The parable of the “rich fool” (Luke 12:16-21) disturbed him.

“But,” the businessman stated, “I’ve learned a lesson from Solomon’s verdict on the abundance of wealth. It’s all ‘meaningless’ ” (Eccl. 2:11 niv). He determined not to let wealth get in the way of his devotion to God. Rather, he wanted to serve God with his assets and help the needy.

Throughout the centuries, God has blessed some people materially. We read of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 17:5, “The Lord established the kingdom . . . so that he had great wealth and honor.” He did not become proud or bully others with his wealth. Instead, “his heart was devoted to the ways of the Lord” (v. 6). Also, “he followed the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord” (20:32).

The Lord is not against wealth for He has blessed some with it—but He’s definitely against the unethical acquisition and wrong use of it. He is worthy of devotion from all His followers. By Lawrence Darmani ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Giving thanks to God often helps us learn contentment with what we do have. What are you thankful for?

Wealth or no wealth, devoted hearts please the Lord.

---

## Spendthrifts Or Stewards

Read: Luke 16:1-13



See that you abound in this grace [of giving]. —2 Corinthians 8:7

A mortician at Forest Lawn Cemetery in California told author Gilbert Beers about a man who many years ago spent \$200,000 on his own funeral. Estranged from his wife and children, that bitter man squandered all his money on his own burial and left them nothing.

Because the casket and other expenses added up to only \$100,000, he ordered that the remaining \$100,000 be spent on orchids! Only three people attended that memorial service. What a warped sense of values! What a waste of money that might have been used to help the needy or to support a worthy cause! And what a lesson we can learn from such egocentric folly!

We all need to ask ourselves if we are squandering the resources God has entrusted to us on worthless things. If so, we need to heed what Jesus said in Luke 16:9, "I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings" (niv).

When we use our resources to benefit others, especially to communicate the gospel to them, we reap eternal dividends. Someday they may be at heaven's door to greet us. Let's be good stewards of what God has given us. - Vernon Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If we've been blessed with riches,  
We should be rich in deeds;  
God wants us to be generous  
In meeting others' needs.  
—Sper

Riches have eternal value when we use them to bless others.

---

### **Steven Cole - God versus Mammon: Choose your Master!**

In verse Lu 16:13, Jesus draws the third contrast, that we either can serve God or mammon (money), but not both. So we must make a basic decision as to our choice of masters. Clearly, the unrighteous steward was living for money, but disciples of Jesus should be serving God. It is a delusion to think that you can own money. That is not one of the choices. Either God owns you, including your money, or your money (mammon) owns you. Those are the only choices. Most of us would like to think that there is some middle ground, where we can mostly serve God, but also keep one foot in worldly wealth. We're like the guy who said,

"They say it's better to be poor and happy than rich and miserable. But couldn't something be worked out, such as being moderately wealthy and just a little moody?"

But Jesus draws the line in the sand and makes us ask, **'Who is my Master: God or mammon?'** It is sad that the world can point the finger at those who claim to be servants of Christ, but who really are serving mammon. They are the ones who get all the press. But many of God's servants have been faithful to serve Him, not mammon.

**ILLUSTRATION** The story is told that one day Cardinal Sadolet, a high-ranking Roman Catholic official who had tried to coax Geneva back to Rome, passed through Geneva incognito. He wanted to have a look at the famous Protestant reformer, John Calvin. He stood in front of the simple house on Canon Street. Did the famous Calvin live in this little place? Even the bishops of Rome in that day lived in mansions surrounded by wealth and servants. Archbishops and cardinals lived in palaces, like kings. Sadolet knocked and was dumbfounded when Calvin himself, dressed in a plain black robe, answered his own door. Where were the servants? Here was the most famous man in the whole Protestant church, living in a simple house, answering his own door! When Calvin died, Pope Pius IV said of him, "The strength of that heretic came from the fact that money was nothing to him." (Thea Van Halsema, *This Was John Calvin* [Baker], pp. 164-165). That's not a bad testimony from an enemy! May it be said of us all!

**ILLUSTRATION** - Years ago, on the TV game show, **"Let's Make a Deal,"** the contestants were told to choose between a prize that was visible to them or another prize that was concealed behind a curtain. Often the visible prize was quite nice—perhaps a new stereo or TV set. The audience would always urge the contestant to go for the prize behind the curtain. But sometimes the unseen prize would turn out to be some impractical gag gift, like 10,000 boxes of toothpicks. The contestant would groan as he realized he just traded a beautiful prize for something useless. At other time, however, the prize behind the curtain would be something of far greater value, such as a new car. If the contestant chose the visible prize of a new stereo and forfeited the unseen new car, you could feel with him the awful sense that he made a very foolish decision. The difference between that game show and reality is this: God has promised that what is hidden behind the curtain is so much better than what you can see now that there is no comparison. "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Co 2:9). The question is, will you believe God and live by faith in His promises? Will you give up temporal riches that you will lose anyway by investing them in His kingdom, with His promise that you will inherit eternal riches that you will

never lose? It's a sure-fire way to get rich—truly rich!

It's not that you can give enough to get into heaven. Heaven is God's gift, freely available through the death of Christ who paid the penalty for the sins of all who will receive Him. If you think that any amount of good works will get you into heaven, you do not understand the gospel. You can get into heaven only by acknowledging that you are a sinner and trusting in Christ as your Savior from sin and judgment.

But if you have received God's gift of eternal life, you must live with God as your Master, not mammon. You need to ask yourself, "Am I living as a faithful steward, shrewdly using the resources God has entrusted to me to lay up treasures in heaven? Or, have I slipped into squandering God's resources for my own purposes, losing sight of the fact that eternity is quickly approaching?" I urge you to learn the lesson from this scoundrel: Invest your Master's money in that which will pay eternal dividends. ([How to be Truly Rich](#))

---

**Ray Pritchard** offers some practical thoughts on these two masters...

It's not wrong to own a bicycle, even a nice one, but it's wrong if your bicycle owns you. It's not wrong to own a big home, a summerhouse, a motorcycle, nice clothes, fine jewelry, an expensive sound system, a fishing boat, or any of the other marks of success in modern life. None of those things is inherently evil. You can enjoy them as long as you understand that everything you have belongs to God, and the things you have are only temporarily loaned to you by the Lord. It's not wrong to own nice things, but you are in a dangerous place when those nice things own you. How do you know when something "owns" you?

§ When you need that "thing" as a major source of happiness or fulfillment in your life.

§ When you can't imagine living without it.

§ When you get angry at the thought of losing it.

§ When that possession is the first thing you think about in the morning and the last thing you think about at night.

§ When you find yourself thinking about it in every spare moment.

§ When you are gripped with fear at the thought of losing it.

§ When you find yourself bringing it up in almost every conversation.

§ When you get upset if someone else touches it or comes near it.

§ When you plan your schedule around it.

§ When you enjoy that "thing" more than being with family and friends.

§ When others warn you about your attachment to your possessions.

§ When worries and concerns about your possessions crowd out the joy in your life.

... When you know deep in your soul that something you own has started to own you, give it away. Find someone who needs it and give it to them. Don't make a big deal about it. Just give it away. You will be free, and someone else will be blessed. And your heart will start to sing again. ([Matthew 6:19-34 The Treasure Principle](#))

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - The conflict between two masters is seen in the story of a middle-aged man who seriously courted two women at the same time. This is not a good idea at all. This man's hair had begun to turn gray. One of the women he was courting was young, and the other was well-advanced in years. The elder woman, ashamed to be courted by a man younger than herself, made a point, whenever her admirer visited her, to pull out some portion of his black hair. The younger woman, on the contrary, not wishing to become the wife of an old man, was equally zealous in removing every gray hair she could find on his head. Thus, it came to pass that between them both, he soon found that he had not a hair left on his head. The lesson here is if you court two women at the same time, you'll get scalped! In a nutshell the idea is you cannot serve or devote yourself to two different loves or lords. ([Mattoon Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - Money or mammon can get such a grip on a person's life that he will do almost anything to get it. For example, just when you thought advertisers had made use of every available location, another prime spot for advertising has been identified. Andrew Fischer recognized his forehead was going to waste. Fischer, a Web page designer, decided to auction off the

empty space to the highest bidder on e-Bay. Amazingly, Fischer attracted a great deal of interest. The snoring remedy, *SnoreStop*, rented the blank space above his eyes. SnoreStop's CEO commended Fischer as "a man who clearly has a head for business in every sense of the word." Renting out his forehead as a billboard for 30 days earned Fischer \$37,375. Beloved, don't get yourself into a position where you will do sinful, embarrassing, or foolish things just to make a buck. Don't let material things become your master. A castle can only have one king. Make sure that king is the Lord Jesus Christ. (Mattoon [Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

---

## Contentment

No one can serve two masters. —Matthew 6:24

A gripping photograph of an old woman sitting in a pile of garbage made me ponder. She was smiling as she ate a packet of food she had foraged from the garbage dump. It took so little for the woman to be satisfied.

There is much talk about a struggling economy and the cost of living going higher. And many are getting increasingly anxious about their livelihood. Is it possible to heed our Lord Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:25, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on"?

Our Lord was not saying that we don't need to work, that we don't need to eat, or that we shouldn't bother about how we dress. He was warning against those things becoming so important that we become slaves of money instead of trusting Him. "No one can serve two masters," He said (v.24).

Seeking first "the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (v.33) is recognizing that no matter how much effort we expend to make a better life for ourselves and our families, ultimately it is the Lord who takes care of our needs. And since God is our heavenly Father, we will have enough. By C. P. Hia ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand,  
Never foe can follow, never traitor stand;  
Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care,  
Not a blast of hurry touch the spirit there.  
—Havergal

Money serves us well if we receive it as God's provision.

---

## The "What Then?" Test

Riches are not forever. —Proverbs 27:24

From the 16th century comes a story of a probing conversation between an ambitious young man and a devout Christian named St. Philip Neri. The youth said to him excitedly, "My parents finally agreed to my studying law!" Philip asked simply, "What then?"

He replied, "Then I shall become a lawyer!" "And then?" pursued Philip. "Then I shall earn lots of money, buy a country house, get a carriage and horses, marry a beautiful woman, and lead a delightful life!" he responded.

Again Philip asked, "And then?" "Then . . ." The young man began reflecting for the first time on death and eternity. He realized that he had not acknowledged God in his plans and was building his life on temporal values.

The point of this story is not that riches are wrong. But if they become our central goal, we are ignoring eternity and trusting money, not God. **Jesus said it's impossible to love both money and God** (Matthew 6:24), and He warned, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (vv.19-20).

Young and old alike must make important life-plans. But let's keep eternity in mind by always subjecting them to the "what then?" test. By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Shall the great Judge say, when my task is through,  
That my soul had gathered some riches too?  
Or shall at the last it be mine to find  
That all I had worked for I had left behind?  
—Anon.

The true measure of our wealth is the treasure we have in heaven.

---

## The Money

You cannot serve both God and money. Matthew 6:24

Early in my career while doing work that I saw as more of a mission than a job, another company offered me a position that would give a significant increase in pay. Our family could surely have benefited financially from such a move. There was one problem. I hadn't been looking for another job because I loved my current role, which was growing into a calling.

But the money . . .

Lord, help us not to see the obstacles but to see what You are teaching us.

I called my father, then in his seventies, and explained the situation. Though his once-sharp mind had been slowed by strokes and the strain of years, his answer was crisp and clear: "Don't even think about the money. What would you do?"

In an instant, my mind was made up. The money would have been my only reason for leaving the job I loved! Thanks, Dad.

Jesus devoted a substantial section of His Sermon on the Mount to money and our fondness for it. He taught us to pray not for an accumulation of riches but for "our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). He warned against storing up treasures on earth and pointed to the birds and flowers as evidence that God cares deeply about His creation (vv. 19–31). "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness," Jesus said, "and all these things will be given to you as well" (v. 33).

Money matters. But money shouldn't rule our decision-making process. Tough times and big decisions are opportunities to grow our faith in new ways. Our heavenly Father cares for us. By Tim Gustafson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Never confuse temptation with opportunity.

INSIGHT: One of the most remarkable aspects of today's reading is the harmony our Lord maintains between a heavenly perspective and the practical issues of daily life. He uses examples in nature to show how our heavenly Father tenderly cares for animal and plant life. Since we are of far more value than they are, Christ counsels us to trust Him to care for us one day at a time (v. 34).

---

**GARBAGE IN THE SALAD** - If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5:25 - Our Christian walk should square with our Christian talk! Many who know the Lord as Savior are not ready for the life of full surrender and discipleship which is necessary for true joy, victory, and fruitfulness in the Christian life. They love to dabble in the world while still clinging to Christ for salvation. As a result they live defeated lives and their testimony is almost worth-less. It was Jesus Himself who declared, "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24). Paul says: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit!" After what Jesus has done to redeem our soul, can we do anything less than obey this admonition if we truly love Him and wish to bring others to His side?

Many years ago the Home Life Magazine published the following illustration: One day as a mother was scraping and peeling the vegetables for a salad, her daughter came to ask her permission to go to a worldly center of amusement. On the defensive, the daughter admitted it was a questionable place, but all the other girls were going, and they did not think it would actually hurt them. As the girl talked, suddenly she saw her mother pick up a handful of discarded vegetable scraps and throw them into the salad. In a startled voice she cried, "Mother, you are putting the garbage in the salad!" "Yes," her mother replied, "I know; but I thought that if you did not mind garbage in your mind and heart you certainly would not mind a little in your stomach!" Thoughtfully the girl removed the offending material from the salad, and with a brief, "Thank you," to her mother, she went to tell her friends she would not be going with them.

If you have spiritual indigestion, and have a "sick" testimony, maybe it's because you have allowed too much "garbage in the salad"! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Earthly pleasures vainly call me,  
I would be like Jesus;  
Nothing worldly shall enthrall me,  
I would be like Jesus!

—J. Rowe

You must separate yourself from the fellowship of the world,  
or the world will separate you from the fellowship of God!

KJV Luke 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

- **Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money** Luke 12:15; 20:47; Isaiah 56:11; Jer 6:13; 8:10; Ezek 22:25-29; 33:31; Mt 23:14
- **were scoffing at Him** Luke 8:53; 23:35; Ps 35:15,16; 119:51; Isaiah 53:3; Jer 20:7,8; Heb 11:36; Heb 12:2,3
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:14-18 Scoffing or Submitting?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:14-15 Why False Teachers Mock the Truth, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:14-16 Why False Teachers Mock the Truth, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

#### Related Passages:

Luke 15:2 Both the Pharisees and the scribes **began to grumble**, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

Luke 8:53 And they began laughing at Him, knowing that she had died.

Luke 23:35 And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One."

Psalm 2:4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs ([ekmukterizo](#)) at them.

Psalm 22:7 All who see me sneer ([ekmukterizo](#)) at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying,

The Worship of Mammon  
[Evelyn De Morgan](#)

### PHARISEES SCOFF AT JESUS' TEACHING ON MONEY AND MASTERS

**Now the Pharisees** ([pharisaiois](#)) , **who were lovers of money** ([philarguros](#)) **were listening to all these things** - They were listening not to learn from Jesus the Master Teacher, not to hear and heed the Word of God, but to ridicule Jesus, the Living Word and Lord of the Universe! The missed Jesus' warning call in Luke 14:35+ and failed to have ears to truly hear! Jesus had just described two masters, God and mammon. He had hit a nerve and pressed a "[Hot Button](#)" of the Pharisees! Since all money in Jesus' day was coinage with no paper money, one could say they were lovers of coins. The Pharisees were the prototypical hypocrite - they pretended to be lovers of God. In fact they were **lovers of money**, who worshiped at the altar of the god **Mammon** depicted above in gold with a firm grip on a gold money bag! One can see them scoffing at Jesus' "exclusive" statement that a person can serve only one master, either God or gold! These "gold-diggers" would definitely be offended by this dogmatic declaration! They were deceived and did not recognize that their love of **mammon** [precluded](#) their love of **Messiah**, and thus shut them out of the Kingdom of God. Beware of the eternal danger inherent in the love of money! This axiomatic truth begs the question - What/Who do you love? John was very clear in his first letter when he issued a strong command

**Do not love** ([present imperative with a negative](#) = stop doing this or don't start loving) the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves ([present tense](#) - continually) the world, the love of the Father is not in him (**ED**: NOTE THE PRINCIPLE - LOVE OF THE WORLD [PRECLUDES](#) LOVE OF GOD, cf Lk 16:13). 16 For ([term of explanation](#)) all that is in the world, the **lust** of the flesh and the **lust** of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and also its **lusts**; but the one who does ([present tense](#) - speaking not of perfection but of the general direction) the will of God lives (abides) forever. (1 John 2:15-17+, cf James 4:4+)

Jesus teaches that one can be "religious" and covetous. In fact, the most covetous men are sometimes the most religious, as were the Pharisees perhaps the most religious sect that ever lived. Paul has an apt description for these religious hypocrites...

For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, **whose god is their appetite**, and **whose glory is in their shame**, who **set their minds on earthly things**. (Php 3:18-19+)

**Steven Cole** introduces his message on Lk 16:14-18 with these comments - A "Frank and Ernest" cartoon shows the perpetual

bumblers standing at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter has a scowl on his face. Ernie is smiling innocently, but he's wearing a T-shirt that says, "Question Authority." Frank is whispering to him, "If I were you, I'd change my shirt, Ernie." ([See cartoon from Bob Thaves, 10/4/95](#) - see another cartoon on [Questioning Authority](#)) Americans generally aren't inclined toward submission to authority, even when that authority is God. Like Ernie, we could easily end up at heaven's gates wearing a "**Question Authority**" T-shirt! But that's not an advisable thing to do! Our text deals with the **authority of Jesus**, although the flow of thought is difficult to track. At first it seems like a disjointed bunch of verses. Lu 16:14 mentions the Pharisees' scoffing at Jesus' teaching about money, but then the rest of the verses don't deal with the subject of money at all. The final verse of the section (Lu 16:18), on divorce, seems totally foreign to the context. Probably what we are looking at is a condensed version of what originally was a longer discourse. The transitions are missing, which makes it more difficult to pick up the flow of thought. **But the overall theme has to do with the authority of Jesus and God's Word versus the self-proclaimed authority of the Pharisees, who are rejecting Jesus and God's Word.** They would have protested that they kept the Law, but Jesus brings in the word about divorce to show them an example of how they only keep the Law when it fits with what they want to do. When it doesn't fit, they invent ways to dodge it. Thus while the outcasts (Lu 15:1-note) are flocking into the kingdom, the Pharisees will be cast out, condemned by the very Law they proclaimed to follow. To paraphrase and give the flow of thought in Lu 16:14-18, Jesus is saying,

*"You Pharisees pride yourselves on keeping the Law, but God knows your hypocritical hearts. What you're missing is that the old dispensation came to a climax in John's ministry, since he introduced the good news of the coming of God's king and kingdom. Ironically, while you are scoffing at Me and My kingdom, the very ones you despise—the poor and the notoriously sinful—are stampeding to get in. When I say that there has been a transition from the Law to the Gospel, I don't mean that the Law is set aside. Rather, it has been fulfilled in Me. For example, I uphold the true intent of God's Law regarding divorce and remarriage, but you Pharisees neatly set it aside with your liberal interpretations."*

So the issue is Jesus' authority versus the self-proclaimed authority of the Pharisees, who were scoffing at Him. The message for us is **Since God's kingdom comes in the person of Jesus, we must submit to His authority, not scoff at it** ([Luke 16:14-18 Scoffing or Submitting?](#)) (Bolding added)

**POSB** - The religionists and others standing before Jesus could not believe what they were hearing.

- ⇒ Jesus was saying that a man's energy and effort in seeking and looking after money was wrong, that a man could not seek money and at the same time keep his mind and thoughts upon God. It was impossible to concentrate on both. Jesus was demanding total allegiance, all of one's mind and thoughts, energy and effort. Those who heard Jesus knew exactly what He was saying.
- ⇒ Jesus was saying that a man must not give himself to seek the comfort and ease and pleasures and possessions of the world.
- ⇒ Jesus was going against the philosophy of the world, a philosophy that had even permeated religious circles: that money and possessions are a sign of the blessings of God. (Borrow [Luke Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** introduces his sermon on this section noting that "One of the real paradoxes of religion is this: that those who are the greatest enemies of God are those who are the most religious. One would assume that the more religious you are the closer to God you are; the more religious you are the more favorable to God you are; the more religious you are the more God would approve of you. But just the opposite is true. The archenemy of God is false religion. The most vile and violent enemies of God are those who reject His truth and substitute anything else. Those who will suffer the severest eternal punishment in hell are those who have rejected the truth and embraced a false religion. It is an ironic reality that those who are the recognized representatives of God are actually filled with the greatest contempt for God and will receive from God the severest judgment. Sad to say, but true, that the religious leaders of Israel fit into this category. The Pharisees were the religious leaders of Israel. They had the people. The temple practices were operated by the Sadducees but they were the religious liberals, and didn't have strong influence with the people. Basically they ran the power structure in Jerusalem, but the leaders of the people in the synagogues scattered throughout the nation of Israel were the Pharisees. It was their system that was basically propagated, believed and embraced by the populace. (They are Jesus') archenemies, the instruments of Satan. ([Why False Teachers Mock the Truth, Part 1](#))

It is notable that the **Pharisees** were of the same ilk as the false disciple Judas who even pilfered the money box (Jn 12:4-5, 6) and then betrayed Christ for 30 silver coins, ironically the price of a slave (Ex 21:32+)!

Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, and said, "What are you willing to give me to deliver Him up to you?" And they weighed out to him **thirty pieces of silver** (argurion). And from then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Him. (Mt 26:14-16)

**MacArthur** explains that Judas "was in it because he thought Jesus would bring the kingdom and he would be wealthy and rich and prominent in it. Pretty typical; he was moved by avarice."



Another reason the **Pharisees** who were **lovers of money** were **scoffing** at Jesus is because He had just taught in Luke 16:9 to "make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings." In other words Jesus was saying invest in God, not in yourself, which clearly would have convicted the greedy Pharisees. They had no interest in or intention of using their money for purposes that Jesus had just brought to their attention. Like they lover of money Judas, they were in religion for the money for themselves, not for God and His Kingdom. And so they were exposed and convicted by Jesus' words which motivated them to mock His words. They were like those people Jesus described in John 3:19-20+ "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 "For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and **does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.**"

Jesus was the Light of the World (Jn 8:12) and His truth stirred up hostility, anger, animosity. In short, as Jesus taught in John 3:20, the Pharisees hated the Light! Why? Because their deeds were evil and they knew it!

**Wayne Barber** defines **lovers of Money** as "prosperity seekers – they pursue and cherish money. A person working overtime to get wealthy qualifies as a lover of money. It doesn't matter if you are wealthy or not. The key is what is your motivation and how you got there. A lover of **self** will love money because money is what does for **self** what humanly speaking nothing else can do. Whereas Christianity seeks to put **self** on the Cross, money builds **self** up in the world's eyes. **Application:** How do you handle money? This will tell you where your heart is "for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21-note) And we can find this in the ministry – "Name it and Claim it", "Get right with God and get rich." This message works in America but try preaching it in Romania. This message is like poison which will start with the dead ones and move eventually into the living ones and paralyze the things that God is wanting to do."

The corresponding noun (**philarguria**) occurs in 1 Ti 6:10, where Paul explains that **"the love of money** is a root of ALL sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." Indeed, the Pharisees wandered from the Truth of God's Word (missing the personification of Truth standing and speaking in their midst warning about money) and ironically would end up piercing their souls with many griefs, even as they cheered on the piercing of the Son of God on the Cross!

## **TURNING UP THEIR NOSE TO JESUS!**

**Were scoffing** ([ekmukterizo](#)) **at Him** - Scoffing is imperfect tense indicating that they were deriding Jesus again and again. One pictures Him declaring profound truths and them scoffing each time. The contempt of the Pharisees for Jesus was visible! Woe! These religious bigots understood full well what Jesus was saying about money. But as with all who are of their "ilk" (lovers of money), they did not appreciate nor appropriate what He was saying. In fact to the contrary they mocked the Son of God! What began in Luke 15:2+ as **grumbling** and complaining had escalated in chapter 16 to open **scoffing** and mocking of God! And clearly their open mocking was intended to deter any of those following in the crowd from accepting that Jesus was the true Messiah.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, every false religion will target Jesus in one way or another. They may not do it openly (e.g., the Mormons claim to believe in Jesus), but their teachings will distort the truth that Jesus is the Son of God and that He Alone is "the way, and the truth, and the life" and absolutely "no one comes to the Father but through" Him. (John 14:6) It is only logical that, like the Pharisees, EVERY false religion must somehow attack the claim that "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) So the next time someone tries to sell you a false religion, press them about what they believe the Bible teaches about Jesus! The Pharisees understood what Jesus was claiming and thus did all they could to invalidate His claims, until finally they were forced to kill Him!

[Bob Utley](#) points out why they were likely scoffing at Jesus' teaching of possessions/money - The Pharisees heard and understood His teachings about money, but rejected them in light of their traditional understanding of money as a sign of divine blessing (cf. Deut. 28+).

**Warren Wiersbe** - They professed to trust God, but they measured life by wealth and possessions, the same as the unbelieving worldly crowd. *Far too many professed Christians today are making the same mistake.* With their lips, they honor the Lord; but with their wealth, they live like the world. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

**Guzik** quips "The derision of the Pharisees was based on their own self-interest. They were lovers of money. Often we reject the message of Jesus because it hits too close to home." ([Luke 16](#))

**Solomon** described men like the Pharisees

Proverbs 13:1 A wise son accepts his father's discipline, But a **scoffer** does not listen to rebuke.

Proverbs 14:6 A **scoffer** seeks wisdom and finds none, But knowledge is easy to one who has understanding.

Proverbs 15:12 A **scoffer** does not love one who reproves him, He will not go to the wise.

**Rod Mattoon** applies this truth - Let me ask, "Do you find yourselves making fun of Bible preaching, godly living, or Christians that desire to walk with God? Do you have the traits of a scorner? Do you turn up your nose about the importance of serving one master in your life? Do you turn up your nose about the importance of making the Lord more important than money?" ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

**Warreniersbe** - The *Wall Street Journal* quoted an anonymous wit who defined *money* as "an article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven, and as a universal provider for everything except happiness." The writer might have added that money is also a provoker of covetousness and competition, a wonderful servant but a terrible master. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

May our hymn to Him and may our prayer to Him be this stanza from [Be Thou My Vision \(Play Fernando Ortega's version\)](#):

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise.  
Thou my inheritance now and always.  
Thou and Thou only first in my heart,  
High king of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

---

**Pharisees** (5330) ([pharisaïos](#)) is transliterated from the Hebrew **parash** (06567 - to separate) from Aramaic word **peras** (06537) ("Peres" in Da 5:28-note), signifying to separate, owing to a different manner of life from that of the general public. They were a small but highly influential group who emphasized meticulous observance the Torah supplemented by their numerous extrabiblical traditions, and they taught that by keeping the Law one could righteousness before God and retains his favor.

Ironically, it was the zeal of the **Pharisees** for the Law that caused them to become focused on rituals and external acts that symbolized in their warped way of thinking that they were keeping of the Law. They abandoned true religion which is **internal** and of the heart and exchanged it for **external** behavior and ritual as their means by which they would achieve (self) righteousness. Thus it is not surprising that they would oppose the authority of Jesus the **Righteous One** the only Source of righteousness acceptable to God. These hypocrites claimed to know the Scriptures but they missed the truth of how one might attain true righteousness which was described very clearly in Genesis 15:6-note when Abraham "**believed** in the LORD; and He **reckoned** it to him ([imputed](#) or placed on his "spiritual account") as **righteousness**." We see this same truth in Isaiah 53:11 "As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the **Righteous One**, My Servant (MESSIAH - JESUS), will **justify** (DECLARE RIGHTEOUS) the many, As He will bear their iniquities (cf 1 Pe 2:24-note, 2 Cor 5:21-note, 1 Cor 1:30). Earlier in Jesus' ministry the Pharisees had invited Him to meals in their homes (Lk 7:36-note, Lk 11:37-note, Lk 14:1-note), but from this time (after Luke 16) until His Crucifixion He was never invited to share a meal with them. Their antagonism and animosity toward Jesus was reaching a "fever pitch" and eventually became a plot to kill Him! It is an amazing thought that the plot to kill Jesus was being orchestrated by the leaders of religion in Israel!

**Pharisaïos in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 5:17; Lk. 5:21; Lk. 5:30; Lk. 5:33; Lk. 6:2; Lk. 6:7; Lk. 7:30; Lk. 7:36; Lk. 7:37; Lk. 7:39; Lk. 11:37; Lk. 11:38; Lk. 11:39; Lk. 11:42; Lk. 11:43; Lk. 11:53; Lk. 12:1; Lk. 13:31; Lk. 14:1; Lk. 14:3; Lk. 15:2; Lk. 16:14; Lk. 17:20; Lk. 18:10; Lk. 18:11; Lk. 19:39; Acts 5:34; Acts 15:5; Acts 23:6; Acts 23:7; Acts 23:8; Acts 23:9; Acts 26:5; Phil. 3:5

**Lovers of money** (5366) [philarguros](#) is from [philos](#) = loving or friend + [arguros](#) = silver, money) is a adjective meaning loving money or covetous. It describes a person obsessed with money, one who is "fond" of money, one who is avaricious (greedy of gain = excessively acquisitive especially in seeking to hoard riches) and implies obsessive acquisitiveness especially of money. This form of covetousness naturally flows out of a selfish heart and is "a root of all kinds of evil." This trait would naturally follow "self love" as it indicates the means for the gratification of self. This adjective describes a person who is fond of money with the connotation of this person having a greedy disposition. The word appears as a proper name in one secular writing! Imagine living with that name! But that is in a sense what the Pharisees did for it is one of several "names" Jesus attached to these evil men!

**Scoffing** (1592) ([ekmukterizo](#) from **ek** = out + [mukterizo](#) = mock from **mukter** = nose, nostril) means literally they were holding up their nose at Jesus! They were [ridiculing](#) Him, [sneering](#) at Him, treating Him with [disdain](#) and [contempt](#). This is [repudiation](#) in the

most severe degree! The [imperfect tense](#) indicates they were manifesting this evil behavior toward Jesus again and again, over and over. One can envision them listening to the His words in Lk 16:1-13 and scoffing over and over, after every sentence He spoke! The Messianic Psalm 22 emphasizes that this scoffing of Jesus will continue for Ps 22:7 says "All who see me **sneer** (Lxx = **ekmukterizo**) at me." But guess what? God gets the last laugh so to speak, for this same verb is used in the Septuagint of Ps 2:4 which says "He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord **scoffs** (Lxx = **ekmukterizo**) at them." The only other use of **ekmukterizo** in the Septuagint is in Ps 35:16.

**Rod Mattoon** makes a play on the meaning of **ekmukterizo** entitling his sermon on Lk 16:14-18 "**Thumbs Up or Thumbed Up Noses!**" ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

The only other NT use of **ekmukterizo** is by Luke describing the mocking attitude of those at the foot of Jesus' cross, indicating that mocking or scoffing at Jesus had become the pattern from Luke 16 to the end of Jesus' life.

And the people stood by, looking on. And **even the rulers** (SURELY INCLUDING THE PHARISEES) were [sneering](#) at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if (SINCE) this is the [Christ](#) (MESSIAH) of God, His Chosen One." (Luke 23:35+)

**Luke 16:15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.**

BGT Luke 16:15 κα ε πεν α το ς· με ς στε ο δικαιο ντες αυτο ς ν πιον τ ν νθρ πων, δ θε ς γιν σκει τ ς καρδ α ς μ ν· τι τ ν νθρ ποι ς ψηλ ν βδ λυγμα ν πιον το θεο .

KJV Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

NET Luke 16:15 But Jesus said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in men's eyes, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly prized among men is utterly detestable in God's sight.

CSB Luke 16:15 And He told them: "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly admired by people is revolting in God's sight.

ESV Luke 16:15 And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

NIV Luke 16:15 He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.

NLT Luke 16:15 Then he said to them, "You like to appear righteous in public, but God knows your hearts. What this world honors is detestable in the sight of God.

NRS Luke 16:15 So he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God.

YLT Luke 16:15 and he said to them, 'Ye are those declaring yourselves righteous before men, but God doth know your hearts; because that which among men is high, is abomination before God;

GWN Luke 16:15 So Jesus said to them, "You try to justify your actions in front of people. But God knows what's in your hearts. What is important to humans is disgusting to God.

NKJ Luke 16:15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

NAB Luke 16:15 And he said to them, "You justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts; for what is of human esteem is an abomination in the sight of God.

MIT Luke 16:15 He said to them, "You are intent on validating yourselves by public opinion, but God detects what is in your hearts. What is held in high regard by human values is repudiated as stench in the presence of God.

NJB Luke 16:15 He said to them, "You are the very ones who pass yourselves off as upright in people's sight, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed in human eyes is loathsome in the sight of God.

ASV Luke 16:15 And he said unto them, Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

DBY Luke 16:15 And he said to them, \*Ye\* are they who justify themselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what amongst men is highly thought of is an abomination before God.

BBE Luke 16:15 And he said, You take care to seem right in the eyes of men, but God sees your hearts: and those things which are important in the opinion of men, are evil in the eyes of God.

NAS Luke 16:15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

NIRV Luke 16:15 Jesus said to them, "You try to make yourselves look good in the eyes of other people. But God knows your hearts. What is worth a great deal among people is hated by God.

RSV Luke 16:15 But he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

- **You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men** Luke 10:29; 11:39; 18:11,21; 20:20,47; Pr 20:6; Mt 6:2,5,16; 23:5,25-27; Ro 3:20; James 2:21-25
- **God knows your hearts** 1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Chr 29:17; 2 Chr 6:30; Ps 7:9; 139:1,2; Jer 17:10; Jn 2:25; Jn 21:17; Acts 1:18; 15:8; 1 Cor 4:5; Rev 2:23
- **or that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God** Ps 10:3; 49:13,18; Pr 16:5; Isaiah 1:10-14; Amos 5:21,22; Mal 3:15; 1 Pe 3:4; 5:5
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:14-18 Scoffing or Submitting?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:14-15 Why False Teachers Mock the Truth, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:14-16 Why False Teachers Mock the Truth, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

## THE DETESTABLE DECEPTION OF PRETENTIOUS PIETY

**And He said to them, "You are those who justify ([dikaioo](#)) yourselves in the sight of men** - NLT = ""You like to appear righteous in public, but God knows your hearts." Jesus is now directly addressing the Pharisees who practiced a religion of outward show before other men. Their religion was false, fake and phony! Here Jesus accuses them of literally "declaring their own righteousness!" Their desire was for the approval of men, not the approval of God. Their self-righteousness produced no transformation in their heart. If they scoffed when Jesus spoke about money, imagine their reaction to His "frontal assault" on the very foundation of their false religion! And He may be speaking of the propensity of men to use their wealth to justify themselves before other men. Have we not all seen wealthy church members who court favor and honor of men with their wealth? They are "justifying" themselves before men. **In the sight of men** literally reads "before men." But not **in the sight of God!** Their thin "veneer" of external righteousness might be enough to fool men, but not God! And why not? As Jesus explains it is because God knows their hearts.

In Matthew 23 addressing the Pharisees Jesus said "So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." (Mt 23:28)

**Bob Utley** on **those who justify themselves in the sight of men** - This could refer to either public, weekly alms-giving or ostentatious giving in the temple (cf. Mark 12:41-44). Luke often records Jesus' teachings about this kind of self righteousness (cf. 10:29; 16:15; 18:9, 14). This was the problem of the Pharisees!

**Mattoon** - These men, are like many today. They were consumed with self-justification, justifying themselves before men. The only problem with that is they will not stand before men one day to give an account of their soul and neither will you. We will all stand before the Lord Jesus Christ (**ED: EITHER AT THE "[BEMA SEAT](#)" JUDGMENT OF BELIEVERS OR THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT OF UNBELIEVERS** - 2 Cor 5:10+, Rev 20:11-15+, [Book of Life](#), [All the Major Judgments in the Bible](#)). The Bible declares the fallacy of self-justification. You are not as good as you think, no matter how religious you think you are.....God's view and man's view of sin are at different ends. Sin is not done by chance, but by choice. Sin is not liberty to do what you want, it is lawlessness. Sin is not weakness, it is willfulness. It is not a disease, it is a decision. Jesus taught the importance of examining yourselves in order to conquer self-justification and having a ministry with other people. Self-righteousness claims to be both lawgiver and judge, claiming authority that belongs only to the Lord. The attitude of "judge" in the self-righteous person creates problems in the area of judging others. The self righteous, judgmental person tends to deny and oppose the Gospel, because the Gospel proclaims man's sinfulness and lostness even as it proclaims God's mercy and grace. The self-righteous person does not want to hear about being a sinner. The result is the rejection of Jesus Christ." ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

**Steven Cole** on **justify yourselves before men** - Outwardly, the Pharisees could compare themselves with others and justify themselves, because they did more and went farther than the average Jew. They were meticulous in keeping all the outward rules, but they were living before men and not before God, who examines our thoughts and motives. They were filled with pride and hypocrisy, which God hates. When they gave alms, they did it to be noticed by men. When they uttered long prayers, it was to impress others with how spiritual they were. Although they may have fooled others, they could never fool God. Jesus rips off their mask of righteousness and exposes them for what they were, detestable in the sight of God. True religion is a matter of the heart before God. The instant you get a glimpse of God in His absolute holiness, the light of His glory also shows you how vile and filthy your own heart is before Him. Rather than boasting in your good deeds and parading your supposed righteousness before others, you shrink back in fear of being instantly consumed. You despair of ever being righteous enough to present yourself before God, because you know how deceitful and desperately wicked your heart is. But that is precisely where the gospel breaks in, because you also realize that if you are to stand before God, you need a Savior and Mediator. You need a righteousness other than your own. Jesus is that Savior; He extends a free pardon to every sinner who repents and trusts in Him. He clothes the believing sinner with His perfect righteousness, reconciling us to God. In that new relationship with God, we then learn to live, not as pleasing men, but God, who examines our hearts (1Th 2:4). Jesus is saying that if you are not living openly before God, judging your sin on the thought level, seeking to please God with your thoughts and attitudes, as well as with your words and deeds, then you are living as a Pharisee, not as His disciple. Christians don't live to impress others with how spiritual they are. Christians live openly in the sight of God, seeking to please Him. Thus the first thing our text proclaims is that God's kingdom comes in the person of Jesus the King. Christianity is not a matter of following a bunch of outward standards. It is a matter of submitting ourselves to His authority, down to the heart level. But, as our text shows, that is not the only possible response. ([Scoffing or Submitting](#))

**MacArthur** comments on the phrase **those who justify yourselves** - "People in false religion that they are self-justifying. This is absolutely unmistakable and is really one of the great definitions of false religion. Pharisaic Judaism is a system of self-justification, making your self-righteous by ritual and by maintaining certain standards and laws and ethical codes and traditions, making yourself acceptable to God by your works. ([Why False Teachers Mock the Truth, Part 1](#))

Self-justification before God is impossible as Jesus taught in the story of the tax collector and the Pharisee:

"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' (NOTICE HIS EMPHASIS ON HIS WORKS = **"THOSE WHO JUSTIFY YOURSELVES"**) 13 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went to his house **justified** ([dikaioo](#)) rather than the other (THE PHARISEE); for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:10-14+)

**THOUGHT** - Let's pause a moment and apply this section which was directed primarily at the Pharisees - Is Jesus' statement not also directed at every soul that seeks to justify himself or herself by their own works? Have you ever asked a person "Where are you going when you die?" And if they respond, as many do, "Well, I think I'm going to heaven." And you follow up with the question of "Why do you think you're going to heaven?" One of the most common replies I hear is "I'm a good person and try to do more good than bad." (Watch this 2 minute video in which men and women on the street were asked "[How does a person get to heaven?](#)") They may even say "I believe in Jesus," but they still place their emphasis on their good works meriting God's favor when they die, which is same approach of the self-justifying Pharisees. Paul addresses this false belief in Romans 10 writing

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them (THE JEWS) is for their salvation. 2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 3 For not knowing about God's righteousness (IN OTHER WORDS THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW HOLY GOD IS AND THAT HE REQUIRES ABSOLUTE PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS IN SINFUL MEN) and seeking to establish their own (LIKE THE PHARISEES IN Lk 16:15), they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes (IN SHORT GOD ACCEPTABLE RIGHTEOUSNESS IS RECKONED ONLY TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST, NOT TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THEIR "RIGHTEOUS" WORKS OR EVEN TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST PLUS THEIR WORKS. SALVATION IS BY BELIEF IN CHRIST ALONE!). (Romans 10:1-4-[note](#))

Jesus speaks to the self-justification of the Pharisees in Matthew 23



"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people (WHY? BECAUSE THEY REJECTED CHRIST AND FAILED TO TEACH THE PEOPLE ABOUT THEIR NEED TO BELIEVE IN HIM - THEY DID NOT HAVE THE "KEY" WHICH IS THE GOSPEL); for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. (Mt 23:13)

**But God knows ([ginosko](#)) your hearts ([kardia](#))** - But is a strategic [term of contrast](#). Whenever you encounter a BUT, consider the "5P's" - Pause to **Ponder** the **Passage** then **Practice** it in the **Power** of the Spirit. What's the clear contrast in this case? The contrast is between outward or external (in the sight of men) and in inward or internal reality (in the sight of God), because God knows what is in every person's heart. What's Jesus saying? While we might see the "religious acts" of the Pharisees as having a form of righteousness (cf 2 Ti 3:5), we cannot see their hearts. We can't know what motivates them. Jesus is saying that God is not fooled by their external acts, for He Alone can judge the motives, thoughts and intentions of a man's heart (see 1 Cor 4:5+, Heb 4:12+). This of course includes Jesus for John 2:25+ says "He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for **He Himself knew what was in man.**"

**Bob Utley** - God knows your hearts" We must remember that God knows the motives of the human heart, which determine the appropriateness or inappropriateness of every action (cf. 1 Sam. 2:7; 16:7; 1 Kgs. 8:39; 1 Chr. 28:9; 2 Chr. 6:30; Ps. 7:9; 44:21; 139:1-4; Prov. 15:11; 21:2; Jer. 11:20; 17:9-10; 20:12; Luke 16:15; Acts 1:24; 15:8; Rom. 8:27).

**Bock** explains the Pharisees "seek to *justify* themselves in the eyes of men. But God knows their hearts. **It is what God thinks that counts. Accountability before the divine is more important than the world's opinion**" ([Luke](#)) (Bolding added)

**Guzik** - It is one thing to justify yourselves before men, because smooth words and a "loving" smile can deceive men. But God knows your hearts—when you serve another master, it is impossible to be justified before God, no matter what men think. For some people the idea God knows your hearts is **comfort**; for others it is a **curse**. ([Luke 16](#))

As **Cole** says the Pharisees "gave a lot to the Temple, but their giving was done to impress men, but it didn't impress God who looks on the heart. They were living for greed, not for God." He adds that "You don't have to be rich to fall into the trap of loving money. Many who lack money love it just as much, if not more, than those who possess a lot....Greed is often mentioned in the Bible in the same breath as sexual immorality (Eph 5:5; Col 3:5), and yet it is far more tolerated in the church than sexual sin is. We tolerate TV preachers who flaunt their wealth and luxurious lifestyles, until they fall into sexual sin. But we should be just as intolerant (how's that for a politically *incorrect* word!) of greed as we are of sexual immorality. As Jesus warns (Lu 12:15), "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions....If you struggle with greed (and most of us do), I'll tell you a simple way to combat it: Give away everything except what you need to live on. That's what Jesus told the rich young ruler (Lu 18:22). Giving is the antidote for greed. So any time you're struggling with a greedy heart, sit down and write out a big check to the Lord's work. Go through all the junk in your house and give it to the church missions yard sale. Try it and you'll feel free inside! ([Scoffing or Submitting?](#))

**Mattoon** - Men's lives would be drastically changed if they would grasp the truth that **God knows and sees everything** (and that HE OWNS EVERYTHING)! ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

We see this truth repeatedly in the Scriptures in 7 (cf 1 Ki 8:39, Acts 1:24)

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but **the LORD looks at the heart.**" (1 Samuel 16:7)

"As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for **the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts.** If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever. (1 Chr 28:9)

"For (THIS [term of explanation](#) EXPLAINS 2 Chr 16:8b) the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support **those whose heart is completely His.** You ([KING ASA](#)) have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars." (2 Chr 16:9)

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good. 11 Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD, How much more **the hearts of men!** (Pr 15:3,11)

And they prayed, and said, "Thou, Lord, **who knowest the hearts of all men**, show which one of these two Thou hast chosen  
(Acts 1:24)

Paul alludes to the human motivation for external religion in Galatians 6:12 writing that...



Those **who desire to make a good showing in the flesh** (THEY WANTED THE APPROVAL OF MEN) try to compel you to be circumcised (JUDAIZERS, WHO LIKE THE PHARISEES TAUGHT A WORKS BASED RIGHTEOUSNESS), simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ

**MacArthur** adds a pithy comment on these men **who desire to make a good showing in the flesh** - They're trying to appear righteous...noble....virtuous. You know that's what is behind all the garb that ministers, priests and sometimes preachers wear? There's no priesthood anymore, for we are all a kingdom of priests (cf 1 Pe 2:9)....None of us needs to go around with funny clothes and weird hats and setting ourselves apart as if we're some kind of transcendent human being....It is all about show...about what people think (about a **desire to make a good showing in the flesh**).

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus was very clear when He warned **'Beware** of practicing your righteousness before men (WHY? WHAT WAS THEIR MOTIVATION?) **to be noticed by them**; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets (AGAIN WHAT IS THEIR MOTIVE?), **so that they may be honored by men**. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.... 5 "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners (MOTIVE?) **so that they may be seen by men**. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full....16 "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance (MOTIVE?) **so that they will be noticed by men** when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. (Mt 6:1-2+, Mt 6:5+, Mt 6:16+)

**For that which is highly esteemed (hupselos) among men is detestable (bdelugma) in the sight of God** - Jesus is God and so He knows their hearts (cf Jn 2:25) and that all of their religious activities were a facade to impress men. **Detestable** is a strong word indicating God's utter hatred of religious hypocrisy, an "art form" which the Pharisees had mastered (before men but not before God!)

**Bob Utley** - Here is the surprising role reversal theme again. The Pharisees were thought of as **the best of the best**, but God judges by a different standard (cf. Matt. 5:20, 48). God Himself is the standard and all fall short (cf. Ro. 3:23). Salvation must be a grace gift because fallen humanity cannot obtain it by merit (cf. Gal. 3). God provided a way through His Messiah; all are welcomed through Him, but they would not come!

**Bob Utley** on **detestable** - In the Septuagint this term (in its various forms) relates to (1) idolatry (idol and its worship) (2) eschatological event or person (Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11) Here it is an idiom of that which pulls fallen humanity away from YHWH. It is worldliness versus spirituality. It is the priority of the immediate versus the eternal. It is humans' desire for independence from God.

**Guzik** - God judges our hearts with a different set of values. Men may honor someone because of their wealth or their public display of spirituality; but God sees who they really are. ([Luke 16](#))

**ESV Study Bible** says **highly esteemed (hupselos) among men** "includes any kind of human achievement not done for the glory of God." ([ESV Study Bible](#) - this resource can be borrowed)

**Robert Stein** on **highly esteemed (hupselos) among men** - This is a proverb that warns us not to conform to the way this world thinks (cf. Ro 12:2). Jesus was not saying that values of the world are not exactly the same as God's or that at times they are different or that frequently they are different. Rather the value system of this world is "detestable," i.e., an abomination to God (cf. 1 Cor 3:19). An example of this is found in Luke 18:9-14. (See [Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**What the Bible Teaches** says that **highly esteemed (hupselos) among men** "takes in a wide scope that includes all of society's values, all that men place value upon in the world of commerce, pleasure and religion. The word "abomination" originally meant that which totally offends the sense of smell. This is one of the most sweeping condemnations of the present evil age (Gal 1:4) to be found in all of Scripture!" ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

**ILLUSTRATION** - Have you checked the labels on your grocery items lately? You may be getting less than you thought. According to U.S. News & World Report, some manufacturers are selling us the same size packages we are accustomed to, but they are putting less of the product in the box. For example, a box of well-known detergent that once held 61 ounces now contains only 55. Same size box, less soap. How something is wrapped doesn't always show us what's on the inside. That's true with people as well. We can wrap ourselves up in the same packaging every day—nice clothes, big smile, friendly demeanor—yet still be less than what we appear to be.

---

**Justify (1344) (dikaioo)** from **dike** = right, expected behavior or conformity) primarily means to make right. Dikaioo is in the [present tense](#) indicating the Pharisees were continually trying to justify themselves before men, to "declare themselves righteous!" In

contrast, when God justifies, He declares a sinner righteous on the ground of the propitiation offered by the Lord Jesus (Ro 3:24-26+) and He does this in moment of time. In other words, at the moment of salvation the saved sinner who is now in Christ by grace through faith is 100% justified in the eyes of God. We call this "[past tense salvation](#)." This is the major difference between *religion* and *salvation*, for the former says "**do**" and the latter says "**done**." (cf Jn 19:30+) In this passage Jesus is saying the Pharisees sought to make themselves right in the eyes of God (cf Lk 10:29+). Stated another way, by their "righteous" deeds ("righteous" in their eyes), the Pharisees sought to save themselves or earn their salvation. We know from Ephesians 2:9+ that salvation is "**not as a result of works, so that no one may boast**." (cf Ro 3:20, 21+, Ro 3:28+, Ro 4:5+, Gal 2:16+, Titus 3:5-6+, 2 Ti 1:9+)

**Dikaioo** - 35v - **acknowledged...justice(1), acquitted(1), freed(3), justified(24), justifier(1), justifies(2), justify(4), vindicated(3)**. Matt. 11:19; Matt. 12:37; Lk. 7:29; Lk. 7:35; Lk. 10:29; Lk. 16:15; Lk. 18:14; Acts 13:39; Rom. 2:13; Rom. 3:4; Rom. 3:20; Rom. 3:24; Rom. 3:26; Rom. 3:28; Rom. 3:30; Rom. 4:2; Rom. 4:5; Rom. 5:1; Rom. 5:9; Rom. 6:7; Rom. 8:30; Rom. 8:33; 1 Co. 4:4; 1 Co. 6:11; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 2:17; Gal. 3:8; Gal. 3:11; Gal. 3:24; Gal. 5:4; 1 Tim. 3:16; Tit. 3:7; Jas. 2:21; Jas. 2:24; Jas. 2:25

**Highly esteemed** (5308)([hupselos](#) from [hupsos/hypsos](#) = height, elevation) literally means high, lofty, raised, elevated. 1. lit. Mt 4:8; Rev 21:10, 12; uplifted Acts 13:17. Comparative Heb 7:26.—2. fig. exalted, proud, haughty Lk 16:15; Ro 11:20; 12:16.

**Hupselos** - 11v - **conceited\*(1), exalted(1), haughty(1), high(6), highly esteemed(1), uplifted(1)**. Matt. 4:8; Matt. 17:1; Mk. 9:2; Lk. 16:15; Acts 13:17; Rom. 11:20; Rom. 12:16; Heb. 1:3; Heb. 7:26; Rev. 21:10; Rev. 21:12

**Detestable** (abomination) (946)([bdelugma](#) from [bdelusso](#) = emit foul odor, turn away from something or someone on account of "stench" from [bdeo](#) = to stink; related - [bdekluktos](#)) describes something foul, that which is extremely hated, disgusted, detested or abhorred. The first NT use of [bdelugma](#) is in Mt 24:15+ which is fitting as it describes the "**Abomination** ([bdelugma](#)) of desolation" (the Antichrist) (cf Mk 13:14+).

**Bdelugma** - 6v - **abomination(3), abominations(2), detestable(1)**. Matt. 24:15; Mk. 13:14; Lk. 16:15; Rev. 17:4; Rev. 17:5; Rev. 21:27

**Luke 16:16 "The Law and the Prophets [were proclaimed] until John; since that time the Gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.**

KJV Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets were until Jn: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

- **The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John** Luke 16:29,31; Mt 11:9-14; Jn 1:45; Acts 3:18,24,25
- **since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached** Luke 9:2; 10:9,11; Mt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mark 1:14
- **and everyone is forcing his way into it.** Luke 7:26-29; Mt 21:32; Mark 1:45; Jn 11:48; 12:19
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:14-18 Scoffing or Submitting?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:14-16 Why False Teachers Mock the Truth, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:16-18 Why False Teachers Mock the Truth, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

## **JESUS AFFIRMS A TRANSITION FROM THE LAW AND PROPHETS TO THE GOSPEL**

**The Law and the Prophets** ([prophetes](#)) - This phrase refers to the Old Testament. The literal Greek reads "the law and the prophets until John." **Were proclaimed** is added by the NAS translators but is not in the Greek. The **ESV** adds the verb "were" and has "**were until John**." The NET has "**were in force**." The NRSV has "**were in effect**." **The Law and the Prophets** alludes to the fact that the Pharisees had access to the truth of **the Law** (of Moses, the [Torah](#) from Genesis to Deuteronomy) and **the Prophets** (standing for the remainder of the OT).

**Steven Cole** - Jesus represents a new phase in God's program. What the Law and the Prophets proclaimed and promised found fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was the transitional figure, with a foot in both eras. He was the messenger, prophesied by Malachi, who prepared the way of the Lord. Jesus is that Lord in human flesh, the long-promised Messiah, born of the seed of the woman, who came to crush the serpent's head (Ge 3:15-note). But Jesus makes it clear that even though a transition has taken place, it did not nullify or set aside the Law. ([Scoffing or Submitting?](#) )

[NET Note](#) adds that "There is no verb in the Greek text; one must be supplied. Some translations (NASB, NIV) supply **"proclaimed"** based on the parallelism with the proclamation of the kingdom."

The **New Jerusalem** paraphrase has "'Up to the time of John it was the Law and the Prophets; from then onwards, the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it." Jesus is not saying that the Law was destroyed, for in Christ Himself the Law was fulfilled (Mt 5:17-[note](#)). In fact the very next passage Luke 16:17 makes it clear that Jesus was not saying the Law was canceled (cf Paul's assessment of the Law **"holy...spiritual...good"** = Ro 7:12, 14, 16-[note](#)).

Jesus made a similar statement about the Law in His **Sermon on the Mount**

**"Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. 18**  
"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished (PARALLELING Lk 16:17). 19 "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 "For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. (Mt 5:17-20+)

**Until John; since that time** - Luke uses similar markers of time "from this time: and "from now on" in Lk 1:48; 5:10; 12:52; 22:18, 69. Notice that here we find two time phrases (**until, since that time** - see importance of querying [expressions of time](#)) which mark "a shift in era, from law to kingdom." ([NET Note](#)) In context **since that time** refers to the time of John the Baptist's ("John the Immerser's") coming. One can look at the ministry of John the Baptist (who prepared the way for Messiah) as the "dividing line" between the Old Testament and the New Testament. To reiterate, this statement DOES NOT mean that the OT ceased with John the Baptist. In fact what Jesus is showing in a sense is the "seamless connection" between the OT and John's ministry which did herald the onset of a new era.

**Guzik** on **since that time** - (the time ending with John ministry) the good news of a new covenant is presented, with an order that is different than the law yet it fulfills the law. ([Luke 16](#))

**MacArthur** explains "The Old Testament era, the era of promise, concluded with the ministry of John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets. **In addition to being the final representative of the Old Testament era of promise, John was also the first representative of the New Testament era of fulfillment; his ministry bridged the two eras.** He not only predicted Messiah's appearance, but also witnessed it. Because of his unique position and his privilege to be Messiah's forerunner, Jesus declared John to have been the greatest person who had ever lived up until his day (Mt. 11:11). In his outpouring of praise to God, John's father, Zacharias, had noted the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises in the coming of the Messiah (Lk 1:67-79). John's ministry reached its climax when he baptized Jesus the Messiah. The transition from John to Jesus, from the Old Testament era of promise to the New Testament era of fulfillment was complete. "He must increase," John said of Jesus, "but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Not long afterward, John was imprisoned and executed by being beheaded (Mt 14:3-12). (See [Luke Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**Leon Morris** adds that "The coming of Jesus marked a watershed. Up till then God's revelation had been made in the law (strictly the books Genesis to Deuteronomy) and the prophets. The combined expression stands for the whole Old Testament. This operated right up to the time of John the Baptist." ([The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

[Life Application Study Bible \(pdf\)](#) – John the Baptist's ministry was the dividing line between the Old and New Testaments (John 1:15-18). With the arrival of Jesus came the realization of all the prophets' hopes. Jesus emphasized that his Kingdom fulfilled the law (the Old Testament); it did not cancel it (Matthew 5:17). His was not a new system but the culmination of the old. The same God who worked through Moses was working through Jesus.

**Darrell Bock** - Here are the two basic eras as far as Luke is concerned. There is the era of promise and the era of preaching of the good news of fulfillment. The dividing line is John. He prepared a people (Lk 1:15–17), and now the new era is being preached. Jesus' arrival means the new era's arrival. The way of God is found in his kingdom preaching. Thus it is not the Pharisees' scoffing that carries authority, but Jesus' exhortations about how to walk with God. ([Responses to the Pharisees' Scoffing 16:14-18](#))

**Holman New Testament Commentary** explains **the Law and the Prophets** "were God's method of revelation for people up until John. John introduced something, or someone, better than the law and the prophets. John introduced Jesus. Jesus introduced the presence of the kingdom of God."

**The Kingdom of God** - One must understand that there are two phases to the **Kingdom of God**. The first phase is the invisible, internal **Kingdom of God** and which He later described as **"in your midst"** (Lk 17:21-note), the Kingdom in which the King reigns in the heart of the person who has accepted Jesus as Messiah. To proclaim the Kingdom of God is to preach the Gospel, to proclaim the good news of salvation, explaining how one can enter the Kingdom of God. When the King returns on **"the day that the Son of**

**Man is revealed,"** (Lk 17:30-[note](#)) the heart of every person will also be revealed as to whether they sought the kingdom of "self" or the kingdom of the Savior! The future phase of the **Kingdom of God** is known as the **Messianic Age** or the **Millennial Kingdom**. (See more detailed explanation of Jesus' meaning of the **Kingdom of God** in [notes](#) on Luke 17:20-21). Jesus knew the Jews were looking for the future aspect of the **Kingdom of God**, but His preaching and that of His disciples was to explain how one could enter the invisible aspect of the **Kingdom of God** in the present and in that way they would be assured of experiencing the visible **Kingdom of God** in the future.

**Since that time the Gospel** ([euaggelion](#)) **of the kingdom of God has been preached** ([euaggelizo/euangelizo](#)) - Since the time of John the Baptist's coming on the scene as the forerunner of the Messiah. Mt 3:1-2 records "Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the **Kingdom of heaven** (= Kingdom of God) is at hand." Keep in mind that the OT (Law and prophets) were like a giant finger (so to speak) pointing toward One Person, the Messiah (e.g., [there were over 330 Messianic prophecies](#)). John the Baptist prepared the way for the Messiah with his proclamation of the Kingdom. When the Messiah came, the King of the Kingdom had arrived and He came preaching the "good news" of the Kingdom of God, the same message all of His disciples have been preaching now for the past 2000 years and are commanded to preach until the King returns and brings in His [Millennial Kingdom](#).

**NET Note** - The **kingdom of God** is a major theme of Jesus. It is a realm in which Jesus rules and to which those who trust him belong. See Luke 6:20+; Luke 11:20+; Luke 17:20–21+.

Luke uses the specific phrase **Kingdom of God** more than any other NT writer. Of course the synonymous phrase **Kingdom of Heaven** is emphasized in Matthew's Gospel. Here are Luke's uses of **Kingdom of God**: Lk. 4:43; Lk. 6:20; Lk. 7:28; Lk. 8:1; Lk. 8:10; Lk. 9:2; Lk. 9:11; Lk. 9:27; Lk. 9:60; Lk. 9:62; Lk. 10:9; Lk. 10:11; Lk. 11:20; Lk. 13:18; Lk. 13:20; Lk. 13:28; Lk. 13:29; Lk. 14:15; Lk. 16:16; Lk. 17:20; Lk. 17:21; Lk. 18:16; Lk. 18:17; Lk. 18:24; Lk. 18:25; Lk. 18:29; Lk. 19:11; Lk. 21:31; Lk. 22:16; Lk. 22:18; Lk. 23:51)

Mark's Gospel in a sense describes this "transition" from the OT and the ministry of John the Baptist to the ministry of Jesus...

Now after John (THE BAPTIST) had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, **preaching the Gospel of God**, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the **kingdom of God** is at hand; **repent and believe in the Gospel**." (Mark 1:14-15+)

**POSB** explains that "Jesus sees the *period of Israel* (the **Law and the prophets**) lasting up to and including the ministry of John the Baptist. As God's Messiah He ushered in a *new period and social order*, that is, the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is presently a spiritual kingdom that occurs within a man and takes effect in the acts and behavior of men. Since Jesus has come, every man is to let God rule and reign in his heart and life. The kingdom is now preached, a message which does not value what a man has, but what a man is—what he is within his heart. The message now centers upon the individual and his eternal potential in God, not upon material and temporal blessings. ([Luke Commentary](#) - borrow)

**Leon Morris** on Luke's first use of **the Kingdom of God** (Lk 4:43+) - Luke's first mention of the kingdom of God, which was the favorite theme in Jesus' teaching. It is a very large subject. Here it must suffice to say that **it is God's rule in action** (It stands for the rule of God in all of life.) The Jews looked forward to a time when God would assert himself as King over the nations. Jesus taught that God's kingdom had already come in him, in the authority with which he combated evil. In a sense the kingdom was a present reality. In another sense it was yet to come in all its fullness. ([The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

**Holman New Testament Commentary** – Jesus introduced the presence of the kingdom of God. It was not enough any more to be an expert in explaining and in obeying God's Word found in the law and the prophets. Now one must answer the call to enter God's kingdom. Pharisees, if you want to keep up to date with God, Jesus declared, then listen to the new Word of God—the Word taught and revealed in the life of Jesus.

The writers of the New Testament adapted the term **Gospel as God's glorious message** of salvation for lost otherwise hopeless, helpless sinners. [Euaggelion](#) is found in several combination phrases, each describing the gospel like a multifaceted jewel in various terms from a different viewpoint (from the NASB, 1977):

1. the gospel of the kingdom (Mt 4:23+, Mt 9:35+, Mt 24:14+)
2. the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mk 1:1+) because it centers in Christ
3. the gospel of God (Mk 1:14+, Ro 15:16+, 2Co 11:7+, 1Th 2:2+, 1Th 2:8,9+, 1Pe 4:17+) because it originates with God and was not invented by man
4. the gospel of the kingdom of God (Lu 16:16+)
5. the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24+, Ro 1:1+),
6. the gospel of His Son (Ro 1:9+)

7. the gospel of Christ (Ro 15:19+, 1Co 1:9+, 2Co 2:12+, 2Co 9:13+, 2Co 10:14+, Gal 1:7+, Phil 1:27+, 1Th 3:2+)
8. the gospel of the glory of Christ (2Co 4:4+)
9. the gospel of your salvation (Eph 1:14+)
10. the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15+)
11. the gospel of our Lord Jesus (2Th 1:8+)
12. the glorious gospel of the blessed God (1Ti 1:11+)
13. In Ro 16:25, 26+ Paul called it **"my Gospel"** indicating that the special emphasis he gave the gospel in his ministry.

For a rewarding study, study the preceding references in context making notation of the truth you observe about the gospel. If you would like a special blessing, take an afternoon to go through all 76 uses of **euaggelion** in context making a list of what you learn about the gospel. The Spirit of God will enlighten your heart and encourage your spirit in a very special way...and you'll want to share the "good news" with someone because of your "discoveries"!

**Euaggelion** - Matt. 4:23; Matt. 9:35; Matt. 24:14; Matt. 26:13; Mk. 1:1; Mk. 1:14; Mk. 1:15; Mk. 8:35; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 13:10; Mk. 14:9; Mk. 16:15; Acts 15:7; Acts 20:24; Rom. 1:1; Rom. 1:9; Rom. 1:16; Rom. 2:16; Rom. 10:16; Rom. 11:28; Rom. 15:16; Rom. 15:19; Rom. 16:25; 1 Co. 4:15; 1 Co. 9:12; 1 Co. 9:14; 1 Co. 9:18; 1 Co. 9:23; 1 Co. 15:1; 2 Co. 2:12; 2 Co. 4:3; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 8:18; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 10:14; 2 Co. 11:4; 2 Co. 11:7; Gal. 1:6; Gal. 1:7; Gal. 1:11; Gal. 2:2; Gal. 2:5; Gal. 2:7; Gal. 2:14; Eph. 1:13; Eph. 3:6; Eph. 6:15; Eph. 6:19; Phil. 1:5; Phil. 1:7; Phil. 1:12; Phil. 1:16; Phil. 1:27; Phil. 2:22; Phil. 4:3; Phil. 4:15; Col. 1:5; Col. 1:23; 1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Thess. 2:2; 1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Thess. 2:8; 1 Thess. 2:9; 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Thess. 1:8; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:8; Phlm. 1:13; 1 Pet. 4:17; Rev. 14:6

**And everyone is forcing ([biazō](#)) his way into it** - The easy part of this phase is identifying the **"It"** of course as the **Kingdom of God**. However there is a difference of opinion on what **everyone is forcing his way into it** means. One can see the interpretative differences even in the translations (which of course always have some element of interpretative bias even those considered more "literal")

Translations #1-3 below interpret the verb **biazō** as **passive voice** (subject is a recipient of the action), whereas the others (the majority) interpret the verb **biazō** as **middle voice** (subject initiates the action and participates in the carrying out of the action).

1. everyone is **urged** to enter it. (Lk 16:16NET)
2. everyone is **eager** to get in. (Lk 16:16NLT)
3. everyone is **strongly urged** to enter it. (Lk 16:16CSB)
4. everyone **forces** his way into it. (Lk 16:16ESV)
5. everyone **is forcing** his way into it. (Lk 16:16NIV)
6. everyone **tries to enter it by force**. (Lk 16:16NRS)
7. everyone **is pressing** into it. (Lk 16:16NKJ)
8. everyone who enters does so **with violence**. (Luk 16:16 NAB)

To summarize these translations, there are basically two ideas - (1) everyone is forcing their way into the Kingdom of God and (2) everyone is strongly urged to enter the Kingdom of God. Of course the problem with a literal adherence to translation #1 is that it might seem to imply that one can work to obtain salvation. If I force myself hard enough by my self-efforts, I can gain entry into the Kingdom of God. Of course we know that Scripture elsewhere clearly teaches that salvation is by grace through faith, not works, lest we would/could boast! (cf Eph 2:8-9+).

**Leon Morris** summarizes the possibilities - There is a problem with **every one enters it violently**. If the verb **biazetai** is middle (**middle voice**) it means 'presses hard', if passive (**passive voice**), 'is pressed hard', 'urged'. Some see the meaning **ED: A THIRD POSSIBILITY**) as 'every one treats it (**ED: THE KINGDOM OF GOD**)violently', but this seems unlikely. There may be the thought of pressing into the kingdom **'with the greatest earnestness, self-denial and determination, as though with spiritual violence'** (Geldenhuys). Or Jesus may mean that those pressing into the kingdom must be at least as much in earnest as the violent men of Palestine who tried to bring it in by force of arms. ([The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

**Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible** has an excellent summary of this difficult section - As for the meaning of **biazō**, the basic sense is "to apply force." Several proposed interpretations for Luke 16:16 bear examination (Leaney 1958, 223-24; BAGD 140-41; BAA 280-81). **First**, the term may be **negative** and in the middle voice: "all act violently against it." On this rendering the kingdom is subject to universal opposition (Ellis 1974, 203, mentions demonic forces). This view presupposes a linkage to Matthew, since in the Matthean passage the force is clearly negative, where the whole world stands opposed to the kingdom. But...the link between Matthew and Luke here is doubtful (**ED: SEE DISCUSSION OF Mt 11:12 BELOW**). **Second**, the term may be **positive** and in the **middle voice**: "everyone tries to force his way into it" (Hendriksen - [Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow 1978, 774;



Manson 1949, 134-35; Schrenk, TDNT 1:612). But does this positive outlook match Jesus' experiences? Far from everyone running to press their way into the kingdom, resistance to Jesus' teachings and claims has been the common theme. **Third** and most probable, the verb may have a softened force and be in the passive voice: "all are urged insistently to come in" (Schweizer 1984, 258; Fitzmyer 1985, 1117). The HCSB adopts this approach. This view fits the context, where Jesus exhorted his opponents constantly in a bid to persuade them to accept Him. Jesus presented the message to all, and all were given the chance to enter and share in the kingdom's benefits (cp. Lk 14:15-24). But if one was to share in the kingdom message, one must respond to Jesus' authority—not scoff at it (Lk 16:14). **This third option** obviously relieves the difficulties raised above in the introductory paragraph. If the image Luke meant to convey is of people being urged to enter the kingdom, there is no question of their entering forcibly, being forced in by another, or working their way to salvation. (See [The Gospels and Acts](#))

**ESV Study Bible** analyzes the ways Lk 16:16 have been interpreted - **'Everyone forces his way into it'** is a puzzling and much debated statement. Greek *biazō* means "to use force," but the verb form here (*biazetai*) could be either in the [middle voice](#) ("everyone is using force" to enter into it) or in the [passive voice](#) ("everyone is being forced [or forcefully urged]" to enter into it). The meaning in the ESV text, "everyone forces his way into it," is possible grammatically and fits the meaning of the same verb when used in Mt 11:12 (**ED: BUT AS NOTED BELOW MATTHEW'S CONTEXT IS NOT IDENTICAL TO Lk 16:16**). By this interpretation, the verse suggests that exercising the faith that brings one into the kingdom and keeps one there involves a kind of holy "*violence*" toward oneself in the form of repentance and self-denial (**ED: THIS IS SIMILAR TO THE INTERPRETATIONS BY HENDRIKSEN, MACARTHUR AND MACDONALD DISCUSSED BELOW**). Some interpreters object, however, that this view does not fit well in the context, for not everyone is forcing their way into the kingdom and in fact many are rejecting it. In addition, there is arguably some tension between forcing one's way into the kingdom (**ED: WHICH SUGGESTS ONE'S "WORKS" ARE IMPORTANT TO BRING ABOUT SALVATION**) and the emphasis throughout the Gospels on entering the Kingdom of God (**ED: I.E., "SALVATION" IS**) by faith. These interpreters have favored the meaning in the **ESV footnote**, "everyone is forcefully urged into it." The verb takes that sense elsewhere (see Ge 33:11; 2 Sa 13:25, 27; *parabiazomai* has this meaning in Lk 24:29-note [*"they urged Him"*]; Acts 16:15 [*"she urged us"*]). This is similar to the idea of Luke 14:23 (*"compel them to come in"*)(see note on Luke 14:21–24). On this view, the meaning of *biazō* would be different from its sense in Matt. 11:12, but the verses appear in different contexts and the meaning may be different as well." ([ESV Study Bible](#) - this resource can be borrowed)

**William Hendriksen** explains **everyone is forcing his way into it** this way (he favors interpreting *biazō* as in the [middle voice](#) = "everyone is forcing his way") - The Pharisees seemed to have been of the opinion that they could enter the kingdom of God by circumventing the Law. The most glaring examples of this are found in Mt 15:1-9; 23:16-26. But what is necessary is that men vigorously press forward into the Kingdom, and this is exactly what since the days of John the Baptist courageous men had been doing. Entrance into the Kingdom requires genuine self-denial, earnest endeavor, untiring energy, utmost exertion (**ED: BUT I WOULD ADD THAT NONE OF THESE ACTIONS/ATTRIBUTES ARE EVEN REMOTELY POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE ENABLING POWER OF THE SPIRIT, WHO IS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE NEW BIRTH OF EVERY SOUL**). ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

**MacArthur** seems to favor interpreting *biazō* as in the middle voice explaining that here in Lk 16:16 Jesus is saying "that people were **forcing** their **way into it** (THE KINGDOM OF GOD WHICH) is another reminder that entering the kingdom is a hard, difficult struggle. While salvation is by no means a purely human effort, true repentance nevertheless involves the will acting in self-denial. "If anyone wishes to come after Me," Jesus solemnly declared, "he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me" (Luke 9:23-note; cf. Lk 14:26-27-note), since "whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it" (Luke 9:24-note). There is a monumental struggle in the sinful human soul to crush pride and self-will and come to total penitence. **\*(ED: AND WHILE WE MUST MAKE THIS CHOICE OF OUR WILLS, IT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO ENABLES US TO MAKE CHOICES THAT DENY OUR SELF AND TAKE UP OUR CROSS - FALLEN FLESH LEFT TO ITSELF WOULD NEVER SEEK TO DENY SELF OR DIE TO SELF!)**(See [Luke 1-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**William MacDonald** has an interesting comment that seems to favor *biazō* in the [middle voice](#) - **"Everyone is pressing into it"** means that those who did respond to the message literally stormed into the kingdom. The tax collectors and sinners, for instance, had to jump over the roadblocks set up by the Pharisees. Others had to deal violently with the love of money in their own hearts. Prejudice had to be overcome." ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#) - borrow)

**Darrell Bock** on the other hand favors the passive voice interpretation of *biazō* explaining that "the voice of the verb is ambiguous in Greek. Is it [middle](#), so the force is applied by everyone? Or is it [passive](#), so force is applied to everyone—and if so, in what sense? I would argue that the term is [passive](#) and thus that Jesus is speaking of the persuasion applied to all through preaching (for details, [Cortés and Gatti 1987](#):247–59). The preaching of the good news offers the opportunity to enter into kingdom benefits. Through this message all are urged to enter in. The time of fulfillment has come, and all are asked to share in its blessing. But to do so one must hear Jesus, not scoff at his authority." ([Responses to the Pharisees' Scoffing 16:14-18](#))

**Steven Cole** - Jesus refers to these as **"forcing"** their way into the kingdom. This is a difficult phrase, in that the Greek verb can be



either middle or passive voice. If it is passive, it could be translated, "**Everyone is urged insistently into it**" (Darrell Bock, *Luke* [Baker], 2:1349-1354, argues for this view). But most commentators argue for the middle voice, which views the subject as participating in the results of the action. Here it means that each person takes the initiative to press his way into the kingdom. I believe that contextually this is the better view. "**Everyone**" does not refer to every single person in Israel, but rather to the great multitude of sinners who were flocking to hear Jesus and respond to His message of grace (Lu 15:1), in contrast to the few Pharisees who were responding. Jesus is saying to the Pharisees, "*While you guys sit around scoffing, the very people whom you despise are stampeding into the kingdom!*" The phrase, "**forcing his way into it**," implies that salvation requires strong desire, firm resolution, and earnest effort and focus to obtain it (Jonathan Edwards develops these points in his sermon, "[Pressing into the Kingdom of God](#)"). You must not be indifferent and passive when the salvation of your soul is at stake! If you are not saved, nothing in life should matter to you more than how you can get saved. You won't accidentally get saved while you devote yourself to everything else under the sun, but never devote any effort to understanding spiritual matters. While we are not saved by our efforts, but only through faith in the blood of Jesus, the mark of a person who has come to genuine saving faith is a subsequent life of increasing submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. ([Scoffing or Submitting?](#)) (Bolding added)

Earlier Jesus had issued a command to strive in the context of salvation and some see it as a parallel to Lk 16:16 which describes everyone forcing their way into the Kingdom of God.

Luke 13:24 (see commentary) "**Strive** to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

**Guzik** has an interesting thought - In Jesus' day, there were hundreds of revolutionaries willing to use violence to bring in the kingdom of God. While we do not imitate their violence, we do imitate their dedication, their willingness to sacrifice, and their passion to see the Messiah reign. In a sense, we are also at war. ([Luke 16](#))

**Let me attempt to summarize** - Regardless of how one interprets **biazō**, it is clear that the Pharisees had missed what was really of value in God's eyes (Lk 16:15) while all around them were those who realized their need (cf Lk 15:1) and they were seeking forcefully (energetically) or being urged to hear and respond to the proclamation of the good news of the Gospel so that they might gain entrance into the Kingdom of God (be justified). I can recall the resistance of my relatives when at age 39 they tried to talk me out of what I perceived as my desperate need for Jesus Christ and my guess is many of you reading experienced similar or even worse resistance including ostracism or physical abuse! Surely those experiences would speak to the difficulty of entering the narrow door and the need to force our way in, of course fully realizing that without the supernatural enabling power of the Holy Spirit none would have entered that narrow door by grace through faith. O great is the unfathomable mystery of God's sovereignty and man's free will!

---

**Prophets** ([4396](#))([prophetes](#) from **próphemi** = literally to tell beforehand in turn from **pró** = before, in front of, forth, on behalf of + **phemí** = speak, tell) is primarily a forth-teller or one who speaks out God's message, primarily to their own generation, usually always calling the people to God's truth for them at that moment, often using the phrase "Thus saith the Lord." In the NT uses, **prophetes** referred usually to a person in the OT who spoke under divine influence and inspiration thus foretelling future events or exhorting, reproving, and threatening of individuals or nations as the ambassador of God and the interpreter of His will to men. Hence the prophet spoke not his own thoughts but what he received from God, retaining, however, his own consciousness and self-possession.

**Gospel** ([2098](#))([euaggelion](#) from **eú** = good + **aggéllo** = proclaim, tell) is literally good news or glad tidings. In the NT **euaggelion** is used only of God's message of salvation in three senses (1) act of proclamation (preaching the gospel) (1 Cor 4:15), (2) the work of evangelization (spread of the gospel) (Phil 4:3), (3) the content of the message as an offer of salvation (good news) (Ro 1:16)

**Preached** (the gospel, good news)([2097](#)) ([euaggelizo/evangelizo](#) from **eu** = good, well + **aggéllo** = proclaim, tell; English = evangelize) means to announce good news and in this context it is the good news that the King has come and died for our sins to provide a way for sinners to enter into the Kingdom of God by grace through faith, not by works of righteousness (Titus 3:5) as emphasized by the Pharisees or in Paul's day by the Judaizers.

**Forcing...way** ([971](#))(**biazō** from **bia** = violence) means to overpower, impel, but also to rush into. To use or apply force, to inflict violence on. As noted above, in the [middle voice](#) the idea is to overpower or apply force and in the [passive voice](#) the idea is to urge, strongly urge or constrain. The only other use of **biazō** is in Mt 11:12 - see discussion below). We see these 2 main senses (apply force versus strongly urge) in the uses in the Septuagint (Ge 33:11; Ex 19:24; Dt. 22:25; 22:28; Jdg. 13:15-16; 19:7; 2 Sa 13:25; 13:27; Est. 7:8)

Genesis 33:11 "Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have plenty." Thus **he urged him** (Lxx = **biazō** - strongly urge) and he took it.

Judges 13:15 Then Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "Please **let us detain** (Lxx = biazō - strongly urge) you so that we may prepare a young goat for you."

Judges 19:7 Then the man arose to go, but his father-in-law **urged** (Lxx = biazō - strongly urge) him so that he spent the night there again. (Jdg 19:7 NAU)

2 Samuel 13:25 But the king (DAVID) said to (HIS SON) Absalom, "No, my son, we should not all go, for we will be burdensome to you." Although he (ABSALOM) **urged** (Lxx = biazō - strongly urged) him, he (KING DAVID) would not go, but blessed him (ABSALOM). 26 Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us." And the king said to him, "Why should he go with you?" 27 But when Absalom **urged** (Lxx = biazō - strongly urged) him (KING DAVID), he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. (DAVID DID NOT KNOW HE WAS CONSPIRING TO KILL AMNON FOR HAVING VIOLATED HIS SISTER TAMAR - 2 Sa 13:28)

Exodus 19:24 Then the LORD said to him, "Go down and come up again, you and Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people **break through** (Lxx = biazō meaning forcefully, with violence) to come up to the LORD, or He will break forth upon them."

Deuteronomy 22:25 "But if in the field the man finds the girl who is engaged, and the man **forces** (Lxx = biazō meaning forcefully, with violence) her and lies with her, then only the man who lies with her shall die.

Esther 7:8 Now when the king returned from the palace garden into the place where they were drinking wine, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, "Will he even **assault** (Lxx = biazō meaning forcefully, with violence) the queen with me in the house?" As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.

The only other use of **biazo** is in Mt 11:12 which will be examined with several comments (with the awareness that Matthew's passage has been subject to a number of different interpretations) because some suggest this is a parallel passage that can help us interpret Jesus' meaning of **biazo** here in Luke 16:16. However, as discussed below, Matthew's use of **biazo** is in a different context so that they are not perfectly parallel passages.

"From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven **suffers violence**, and violent (biastes = one who uses force, impetuous, used only here in NT) men take it by force ([harpazo](#) = seize by force, same word used to describe the "Rapture")."

**Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible** - Another issue is the influence of Matthew 11:12-13 for interpreting Luke 16:16. The passages **have distinct contexts and must be approached individually**. Matthew's wording is different; he also said the kingdom of heaven arrives violently or suffers violence (biazetai) and that men of violence take it by force (biastai). While "**kingdom of heaven**" and the "**kingdom of God**" present the same idea, the rest of the imagery differs significantly. What Matthew attributed specifically to violent men must be attributed to all people in Luke, if indeed Luke and Matthew are taken to be parallel here. It is best to conclude that Matthew is of no value in determining how to handle Luke's wording and that the remarks take place in distinct settings.

**John MacArthur comments** on Matthew's use of **biazo** which as emphasized above is not the same context as Luke's use - The form of **biazō** (from which suffers violence comes) can be read as either a Greek [passive voice](#) or [middle voice](#).

**As a passive voice**, it would carry the idea of being oppressed or treated violently, which would indicate that violence is brought on the kingdom of heaven by those outside of it. The Pharisees and scribes had attacked John verbally, and Herod had attacked him physically. The kingdom was being violently denied and rejected; and because it was being rejected in its spiritual dimension, the kingdom would not come in its earthly, millennial dimension. Soon the enemies of the kingdom would kill not only John but even the Messiah Himself. They would destroy both the herald and the King.

**In the middle voice** the verb carries the **active idea of applying force or of entering forcibly**—in which case the translation would be, "**The kingdom of heaven is vigorously pressing itself forward, and people are forcefully entering it.**" With its focus in John the Baptist, the Kingdom moved relentlessly through the godless, sin-darkened human system that opposed it.

The first (passive voice) of those two interpretations is negative and the second is positive (middle voice); but both are true. As already seen, the negative is illustrated by the persecution of John. The positive is illustrated by the many people that John's preaching led to the Lord, just as the angel predicted: "He will

turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" Lk 1:16-17.

**Although both interpretations are possible and true, the second seems preferable in the context.** Jesus had already taught that the few who enter the kingdom do so by first finding and then entering the narrow gate and walking the narrow way (Mt. 7:13-14). He also said that citizenship in His kingdom requires denying self, taking up one's cross, and following Him (Mt 16:24; cf. Mt 10:38). Following the Lord demands earnest endeavor, untiring energy, and the utmost exertion (**ED: CLEARLY THIS IMPLIES THAT SUCH A PERSON IS ENABLED SUPERNATURALLY BY THE SPIRIT TO CARRY OUT SELF-DENIAL, ETC. IN OTHER WORDS "SELF" IS NOT GOING TO DENY SELF!**). To be a Christian is to swim against the flow of the world, to go against its grain, because the adversary—Satan, his demons, and the world system—are extremely powerful. Those who enter the kingdom of grace through faith in Christ do so with great effort through the sovereign power of the convicting and converting Holy Spirit (**ED: AND SUCH CONVERTS MUST THEREAFTER CONTINUALLY RELY ON THE SPIRIT'S POWER - SEE Galatians 3:3+).** (See [Matthew Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**Luke 16:17 "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail.**

KJV Luke 16:17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

- **But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away** Luke 21:33; Ps 102:25-27; Isaiah 51:6; Mt 5:18; 2 Pe 3:10; Rev 20:11; 21:1,4
- **than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail** Isaiah 40:8; Ro 3:31; 1 Pe 1:25
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:14-18 Scoffing or Submitting?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:16-18 Why False Teachers Mock the Truth, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

## THE DURATION OF GOD'S LAW

Jesus gave a parallel teaching in the **Sermon on the Mount**

"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke (=keraia, the same word used here in Lk 16:17) shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished." (Matthew 5:18-note)

**John MacArthur** explains that "No other statement made by our Lord more clearly states His absolute contention that Scripture is **verbally inerrant, totally without error in the original form** in which God gave it. That is, Scripture is God's own Word not only down to every single written word, but down to every letter and the smallest part of every letter. (MacArthur, J: [Matthew 1-7 Macarthur New Testament Commentary Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**But** - He had just spoken of the coming of the new era of preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The "but" introduces a contrasting thought that the new had come but the old was not thereby invalidated. "His point is that what God spoke through Moses and the prophets will be fulfilled, down to the very minutiae. God's Word, as Jesus says in Jn 5:39, bears witness of Him." (Cole)

**Guzik** adds "As Jesus spoke of a new aspect of God's work beginning after the ministry of John the Baptist, He didn't want any to think that the new aspect of God's work ignored or neglected the Law. But the new order that we must press into is not an order of rebellion; it is a new order of submission and obedience to God; His new order fulfills the Law." As an aside, this reminds me of God's promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:33+ (see also Heb 8:10+) where He says "this is the (NEW) covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, **"I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it;** and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." And in Ezekiel 36:27+ He explains how they will be able to obey the Law promising "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes (GOD'S PROVISION), and you will be careful to observe My ordinances (OUR RESPONSIBILITY)." ([Luke 16](#))

**It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away** - Scripture teaches that **heaven and earth**, the entire created universe, will indeed one day in the future **pass away** (Ps 102:25-26; Isa 51:6; Mt. 24:35; 2Pe 3:7, 10)

Ps 102:25-26 "Of old You (JEHOVAH) founded the **earth**, And the **heavens** are the work of Your hands. **"Even they will perish**, but You endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed.

**Comment** - The Psalmist is saying God Himself will endure, that the Creation will perish but not the Creator!

**Than for one stroke of a letter ([keraia](#)) of the Law to fail ([pipto](#))** - The picture Jesus paints here is graphic. He is saying in essence that not even **one stroke** (see below) will drop out of the Biblical text. Don't miss Jesus' irony in this statement, keeping in mind that He is addressing the legalistic Pharisees! He is saying God would uphold and fulfill the smallest facet of the Law, which is what the strict Pharisees vainly attempted to do in obeying every minute aspect of the Law in their attempts to justify themselves!

**Leon Morris** explains that "It might be thought then that the Law was over and done with. Jesus, however, assures his hearers that it does not lack fulfilment: it outlasts heaven and earth. Jesus never cast doubt on the validity of the Law. It was the way it was interpreted, particularly by the Pharisees, that drew his criticism. The dot was the tittle, a small projection on some Hebrew letters. Its use means that the Law will be fulfilled right down to the minutest particular." ([The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary](#) - borrow)

**A PLUG FOR SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION** - As an aside if heaven and earth will pass away, would it not be reasonable that we now spend more time memorizing the pure Word of God which will not pass away? Are you memorizing Scripture? If you believe it as important as Jesus believed it was (cf Lk 4:4+, Mt 4:4+), you will be memorizing it! Moses said "this word is not an idle/empty/vain word; indeed, **it is your LIFE!**" (Dt 32:47+) If you are not memorizing Words that are "**God Breathed**" ([theopneustos](#) in 2 Ti 3:16+) you are missing out on the opportunity of a lifetime!

#### Related Resources:

- [Memorizing His Word](#)
- [Memory Verses by Topic](#)
- [Primer on Biblical Meditation](#)

**To fail** ([pipto](#)) literally means to fall and in this context means to fail, to come to an end, to cease or to become invalid. [Pipto](#) is used in a similar sense in 1 Cor 13:8 where Paul flatly states "Love never **fails** ([pipto](#))." Jesus' point is that the OT Scriptures will never lose their value. For example, the many Scriptures fulfilled in Messiah's first coming are a guarantee that all the promises of Messiah's Second Coming and His Kingdom will not fail! Contrast this truth with Jesus' earlier statement that mammon of unrighteousness will ultimately fail (a different verb but same sense).

**What the Bible Teaches on stroke** – The "tittle of the law", not one of which could fail until all was fulfilled, was a dot projecting like a tiny horn from certain Hebrew letters to distinguish them from others of similar appearance. How careful we ought to be in the handling of "**every word**" that has proceeded "**out of the mouth of God**" (Matt 4:4)! ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

---

**Stroke** (KJV = tittle) ([2762](#)) ([keraia](#) from **kéras** = a horn) means something horn-like and is specifically the apex, point or extremity of a Hebrew letter, these small marks helping to distinguish one Hebrew letter from another. **Keraia** was a small extension of a letter similar to a serif (any of the short lines stemming from and at an angle to the upper and lower ends of the strokes of a letter) in modern typefaces. The analogy is the small stroke at the bottom of an **R** which serves to distinguish it from a **P**. In the KJV **keraia** is translated "**tittle**". Not one of the innumerable little "serifs" will pass from the Law (which includes the Law and the Prophets) The Lord's point is that every letter of every word of the OT is vital and will be fulfilled. The Jewish teachers (rabbis) had emphasized the importance of retaining every slight stroke and the smallest letter in the written Law of Moses. Jesus made it clear that He completely concurred with the rabbis' respect for the Law. Not even the smallest dot over an "i" would disappear until the Law was fulfilled.

**Fail** ([4098](#))([pipto](#)) means particularly, to fall from a higher to a lower place, spoken of persons and things. Of persons, meaning to fall down or prostrate, used in an absolute sense (Matt. 18:29; Acts 5:5). Joined with *proskunéō*, to prostrate, worship (Matt. 2:11; 4:9; 18:26; Rev. 5:14; 19:4; Sept.: 2 Sam. 1:2; Dan. 3:5, 6). Of edifices, meaning to fall, to fall in ruins (Matt. 7:25, 27; Luke 6:49; 13:4; Heb. 11:30). Figuratively (Luke 11:17; Acts 15:16); in prophetic imagery (Rev. 11:13; 14:8; 16:19; 18:2; Sept.: Is. 21:9). Of a lot, meaning to fall to or upon someone (Acts 1:26) Metaphorically of persons, meaning to fall into or under; with *hupó* (5259), under, meaning under condemnation (James 5:12). Used in an absolute sense, to fall into sin, transgress, to sin (Rom. 11:22; 14:4; 1 Cor. 10:12). Hence, also to fall with the meaning of to be made miserable, to perish (Rom. 11:11; Heb. 4:11; Sept.: Prov. 11:28; 24:16). Of things, meaning to fall to the ground, to fail, become void (Luke 16:17; Sept.: 1 Sam. 3:19). (Preceding from [The Complete Word](#)

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek the basic meaning of *piptō*, “to fall,” develops a manifold range of meaning which includes a simple falling down and falling over of an inanimate object. In addition the term can mean to be slain in battle and to fall under in a financial or legal sense. *Piptō* appears over 400 times in the Septuagint. Although it is used to translate over 20 Hebrew words, it predominantly translates *nāphal*, “to fall.” It exhibits the same wide variety of literal and figurative senses appearing in classical literature: literally, of Abraham falling upon his face (Genesis 17:3); figuratively, of “fallen” Babylon (Isaiah 21:9). In the New Testament *piptō* is used most commonly in its literal sense denoting an unintentional fall. But there are also numerous instances of falling down intentionally, such as persons who throw themselves prostrate in an act of worship before God: “I fell down to worship” (Revelation 22:8; see also Matthew 4:9; Acts 10:25; 1 Corinthians 14:25). There is one New Testament usage that is without precedence in either classical Greek or the Septuagint; namely, *piptō* as a figure of speech for loss of faith and separation from grace, “falling” into disobedience or guilt. First Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 4:11; and Revelation 2:5 show variations on this figurative usage. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Pipto - 85v - beat down(1), fail(1), fails(1), fall(15), fall down(2), fallen(8), falling(3), falls(8), fell(46), fell down(6).** Matt. 2:11; Matt. 4:9; Matt. 7:25; Matt. 7:27; Matt. 10:29; Matt. 13:4; Matt. 13:5; Matt. 13:7; Matt. 13:8; Matt. 15:14; Matt. 15:27; Matt. 17:6; Matt. 17:15; Matt. 18:26; Matt. 18:29; Matt. 21:44; Matt. 24:29; Matt. 26:39; Mk. 4:4; Mk. 4:5; Mk. 4:7; Mk. 4:8; Mk. 5:22; Mk. 9:20; Mk. 13:25; Mk. 14:35; Lk. 5:12; Lk. 8:5; Lk. 8:7; Lk. 8:8; Lk. 8:14; Lk. 8:41; Lk. 10:18; Lk. 11:17; Lk. 13:4; Lk. 14:5; Lk. 16:17; Lk. 16:21; Lk. 17:16; Lk. 20:18; Lk. 21:24; Lk. 23:30; Jn. 11:32; Jn. 12:24; Jn. 18:6; Acts 1:26; Acts 5:5; Acts 5:10; Acts 9:4; Acts 10:25; Acts 13:11; Acts 15:16; Acts 20:9; Acts 22:7; Rom. 11:11; Rom. 11:22; Rom. 14:4; 1 Co. 10:8; 1 Co. 10:12; 1 Co. 13:8; 1 Co. 14:25; Heb. 3:17; Heb. 4:11; Heb. 11:30; Jas. 5:12; Rev. 1:17; Rev. 2:5; Rev. 4:10; Rev. 5:8; Rev. 5:14; Rev. 6:13; Rev. 6:16; Rev. 7:11; Rev. 7:16; Rev. 8:10; Rev. 9:1; Rev. 11:13; Rev. 11:16; Rev. 14:8; Rev. 16:19; Rev. 17:10; Rev. 18:2; Rev. 19:4; Rev. 19:10; Rev. 22:8

Septuagint - over 400x - Gen. 17:3; Gen. 17:17; Gen. 44:14; Gen. 49:17; Exod. 9:19; Exod. 19:21; Exod. 23:5; Exod. 32:28; Lev. 9:24; Lev. 11:33; Lev. 11:35; Lev. 26:7; Lev. 26:8; Lev. 26:17; Lev. 26:36; Num. 14:3; Num. 14:5; Num. 14:29; Num. 14:32; Num. 14:42; Num. 14:43; Num. 16:4; Num. 16:22; Num. 16:45; Num. 20:6; Deut. 21:1; Deut. 22:4; Deut. 22:8; Jos. 5:14; Jos. 6:5; Jos. 6:20; Jos. 7:6; Jos. 7:10; Jos. 8:25; Jos. 17:5; Jdg. 3:25; Jdg. 4:16; Jdg. 5:27; Jdg. 7:13; Jdg. 8:10; Jdg. 9:40; Jdg. 12:6; Jdg. 13:20; Jdg. 16:30; Jdg. 19:26; Jdg. 19:27; Jdg. 20:32; Jdg. 20:39; Jdg. 20:44; Jdg. 20:46; Ruth 2:10; Ruth 3:18; 1 Sam. 2:33; 1 Sam. 3:19; 1 Sam. 4:10; 1 Sam. 4:18; 1 Sam. 5:3; 1 Sam. 5:4; 1 Sam. 14:45; 1 Sam. 17:49; 1 Sam. 17:52; 1 Sam. 19:24; 1 Sam. 20:41; 1 Sam. 21:13; 1 Sam. 25:23; 1 Sam. 26:20; 1 Sam. 28:19; 1 Sam. 28:20; 1 Sam. 31:1; 1 Sam. 31:8; 2 Sam. 1:2; 2 Sam. 1:4; 2 Sam. 1:10; 2 Sam. 1:19; 2 Sam. 1:25; 2 Sam. 1:27; 2 Sam. 2:16; 2 Sam. 2:23; 2 Sam. 3:2; 2 Sam. 3:34; 2 Sam. 3:38; 2 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 9:6; 2 Sam. 11:17; 2 Sam. 14:4; 2 Sam. 14:11; 2 Sam. 14:22; 2 Sam. 14:33; 2 Sam. 17:12; 2 Sam. 19:18; 2 Sam. 20:8; 2 Sam. 21:9; 2 Sam. 21:22; 2 Sam. 22:39; 1 Ki. 1:52; 1 Ki. 18:7; 1 Ki. 18:38; 1 Ki. 18:39; 1 Ki. 20:25; 1 Ki. 20:30; 1 Ki. 22:20; 2 Ki. 1:2; 2 Ki. 2:13; 2 Ki. 2:14; 2 Ki. 4:37; 2 Ki. 6:6; 2 Ki. 10:10; 2 Ki. 14:10; 1 Chr. 5:10; 1 Chr. 5:22; 1 Chr. 10:1; 1 Chr. 10:5; 1 Chr. 10:8; 1 Chr. 20:8; 1 Chr. 21:14; 1 Chr. 21:16; 1 Chr. 26:14; 2 Chr. 6:13; 2 Chr. 7:3; 2 Chr. 13:17; 2 Chr. 14:13; 2 Chr. 18:19; 2 Chr. 20:18; 2 Chr. 20:24; 2 Chr. 25:19; 2 Chr. 29:30; Est. 3:7; Est. 5:1; Est. 5:2; Est. 6:13; Job 1:16; Job 1:19; Job 1:20; Job 12:5; Job 14:10; Job 14:18; Job 15:24; Job 16:9; Job 24:23; Job 33:18; Job 33:24; Ps. 10:9; Ps. 18:38; Ps. 20:8; Ps. 27:2; Ps. 35:8; Ps. 36:12; Ps. 37:24; Ps. 45:5; Ps. 78:64; Ps. 82:7; Ps. 91:7; Ps. 118:13; Ps. 140:10; Ps. 141:10; Prov. 11:14; Prov. 11:28; Prov. 24:16; Prov. 24:17; Prov. 25:26; Prov. 29:16; Eccl. 4:10; Eccl. 11:3; Isa. 2:17; Isa. 3:25; Isa. 8:15; Isa. 9:10; Isa. 10:34; Isa. 13:15; Isa. 16:9; Isa. 21:9; Isa. 21:15; Isa. 22:25; Isa. 23:13; Isa. 24:20; Isa. 24:23; Isa. 25:2; Isa. 26:18; Isa. 26:19; Isa. 27:3; Isa. 28:13; Isa. 30:13; Isa. 30:25; Isa. 31:8; Isa. 34:4; Isa. 37:7; Isa. 46:1; Isa. 49:19; Isa. 59:10; Isa. 65:12; Jer. 6:15; Jer. 8:4; Jer. 16:4; Jer. 18:21; Jer. 20:4; Jer. 23:12; Jer. 25:27; Jer. 25:34; Jer. 36:7; Jer. 37:20; Jer. 39:18; Jer. 42:2; Jer. 44:12; Jer. 46:6; Jer. 46:12; Jer. 46:16; Jer. 49:26; Jer. 50:15; Jer. 50:30; Jer. 50:32; Jer. 51:4; Jer. 51:8; Jer. 51:49; Jer. 51:52; Lam. 1:7; Lam. 5:16; Ezek. 1:28; Ezek. 3:23; Ezek. 5:12; Ezek. 6:7; Ezek. 6:11; Ezek. 6:12; Ezek. 9:8; Ezek. 11:5; Ezek. 11:10; Ezek. 13:10; Ezek. 13:11; Ezek. 13:12; Ezek. 13:14; Ezek. 13:15; Ezek. 17:21; Ezek. 22:28; Ezek. 23:3; Ezek. 24:6; Ezek. 24:21; Ezek. 25:13; Ezek. 27:27; Ezek. 27:34; Ezek. 28:23; Ezek. 29:5; Ezek. 30:4; Ezek. 30:5; Ezek. 30:6; Ezek. 30:17; Ezek. 30:25; Ezek. 31:12; Ezek. 32:20; Ezek. 32:22; Ezek. 32:24; Ezek. 32:27; Ezek. 33:27; Ezek. 35:8; Ezek. 38:20; Ezek. 39:4; Ezek. 39:5; Ezek. 39:23; Ezek. 43:3; Ezek. 44:4; Ezek. 47:14; Dan. 2:46; Dan. 3:5; Dan. 3:6; Dan. 3:7; Dan. 3:10; Dan. 3:11; Dan. 3:15; Dan. 6:10; Dan. 8:17; Dan. 10:9; Dan. 11:14; Dan. 11:19; Dan. 11:26; Hos. 7:7; Hos. 7:16; Hos. 10:8; Hos. 13:16; Joel 2:8; Amos 3:5; Amos 3:14; Amos 5:2; Amos 7:17; Amos 8:3; Amos 8:14; Amos 9:9; Amos 9:11; Jon. 1:7; Mic. 5:7; Mic. 7:8; Nah. 3:12; Zech. 11:2

---

**Rod Mattoon** on the 3 different types of Law in the Old Testament.

### 1. The Moral Law

The Ten Commandments summarized God's moral laws. These commandments are God's blueprint for our relationship with Him and other people. We are still to keep these commandments, not for the purpose of salvation, but for the purpose of pleasing God and other people. What the New Testament never does is to declare an end to God's moral law as the standard for our lives. We are still to observe God's moral commands today. Morals are morals. What was morally bad 4000 years ago is still morally bad today. Adultery, homosexuality, lying, stealing, murder, idolatry are all still wrong today.

### 2. The Civil Law

These were laws that governed the nation of Israel as a nation under God's authority. These included guidelines for waging war, restrictions on land use, regulations for debt, and penalties for specific violations of Israel's legal code. **The civil laws do not apply to believers today because the church is not a state.** We do have a king, Jesus Christ, but His kingdom is spiritual. Therefore, although the civil laws of the Old Testament contain principles that are useful for governing nations today, God's people are no longer bound by their specific regulations.

### 3. The Ceremonial Law

The ceremonial law consisted of regulations for celebrating various religious festivals and for worshiping God in his sanctuary. It included laws for clean and unclean foods, instructions for ritual purity, guidelines for the conduct of priests, and especially instructions for offering sacrifices.



**The ceremonial law is no longer in effect; it has been abolished.** This is because all its regulations pointed forward to Jesus Christ. Now that Christ has offered Himself as the "once-and-for-all atonement for sin," no further sacrifice is needed. To continue to follow the old ceremonies would be to deny the sufficiency of His work on the cross.

**The ceremonial law and the civil law were types and figures pointing forward to the cross and kingdom of Christ. Now that he has come, they have been set aside, which is why the New Testament sometimes seems so dismissive of the law. The ceremonial and civil Law, as a system, came to an end at Calvary with the rending of the temple veil, but the moral Law as a standard for living, still remains.** ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

---

**Steven Cole's thoughts on the Law** - The relationship between the Old Testament law and the present age of grace is complicated and difficult. Some, such as Lewis Sperry Chafer (*Grace* [Dunham]), argue that Paul's pronouncement that we are not under law, but under grace (Ro 6:14), means that no part of the Old Testament law applies directly to believers today. Thus he would not view the Ten Commandments as binding on Christians (p. 105). Others (called Theonomists or Reconstructionists) go to the opposite extreme of saying that we are obligated to live under the law, even those laws that pertained directly to the nation Israel. I think that both of these views are out of balance. I would go along with the general Reformed view ("The Westminster Confession of Faith," Chapter XIX) that the **moral law of God** stems from His holy nature and thus is eternally in force. The **ceremonial aspects** of the Jewish law pointed ahead to Christ, who fulfilled them in His person and work. The **civil aspects** of the law applied specifically to the theocratic nation, Israel. While there may be principles for secular government that can be derived from those laws, they are not binding on nations today. No person in any age could ever be right before God by keeping the Law, since we all have violated God's holy standards in thought and deed. Thus the Law condemns us and should serve as "our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith" (Ga 3:24). By His perfect righteousness, Jesus fulfilled the Law, so that He is "the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Ro 10:4). But even after a person is justified by faith in Christ, the Law continues to show him God's holy standard for life and conduct. The point is, although the Law came to complete fulfillment in Jesus Christ, it is not set aside. Those who are in Christ should delight in God's Law as the expression of His holy nature. Jesus' high view of Scripture should motivate us to be more diligent in searching out the truths God has revealed there. ([Scoffing or Submitting?](#))

---

#### Related Resources:

- [Do Christians have to obey the Old Testament law?](#)
- [What is the difference between the ceremonial law, the moral law, and the judicial law in the Old Testament?](#)
- [What was the purpose of the Levitical Law?](#)
- [What does it mean that Christians are not under the law?](#)
- [What should Christians learn from the Mosaic Law?](#)

**Luke 16:18 "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery."**

KJV Luke 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

- **Everyone who divorces his wife** Mt 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11,12; 1 Cor 7:4,10-12
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:14-18 Scoffing or Submitting?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:16-18 Why False Teachers Mock the Truth, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur

### **JESUS' OFFERS AN EXAMPLE OF THE BINDING NATURE OF THE LAW**

Note that Jesus is not giving us an all inclusive teaching on divorce. For answers to specific questions on divorce and remarriage see the [related resources](#) at the end of this verse note. In context this statement on divorce and remarriage is an example of **one stroke of the Law** which the Pharisees tended to minimize but which was still valid. The fact that the Pharisees misused the OT teaching on divorce is simply another illustration of the hypocrisy of their attention to the most minute details of the Law (to which they added their traditions).

**Brian Bell** says that Lk 16:18 is "Not primarily a teaching on divorce. It is an example demonstrating that the Torah and the Prophets



continue to have authoritative force." ([Highway to Hell](#))

**Mattoon** - Jesus was dealing with the issue of Covetousness in reference to the scribes and Pharisees. He continued to deal with this issue in the matter of coveting after women. In that time, as well as now, men were dumping their wives to marry other women. (Ed: This in essence makes a mockery of God's Law. ) ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

**Leon Morris** adds that "This saying (ON DIVORCE) finds its place here apparently because it helps us see from another angle the place of the Law." (TNTC)

**Guzik** writes that "the law concerning marriage is still binding—no matter how some Rabbis tried to explain it away. Some Rabbis taught that if a woman burned her husband's breakfast, it was grounds for divorce. Others considered finding a prettier woman was an acceptable reason to divorce....Since Jesus also taught that sexual immorality was acceptable grounds for divorce (Matthew 5:31–32, 19:7–9) and later the Apostle Paul added that desertion by an unbelieving spouse was also an acceptable reason (1 Corinthians 7:15). Because of those two clear allowances, we must regard Jesus' command here to refer to the one who divorces his wife **without Biblical cause** and marries another; that **this one** commits adultery. Again, Jesus emphasized the point: Under the new covenant (since the ministry of John the Baptist), God still cares about His law and our obedience." ([Luke 16](#))

**William Heth** - In NT times, and perhaps already by the time the Greek translation (REFERRING TO THE [GREEK SEPTUAGINT](#)) was made, Jewish teachers (INCLUDING THE PHARISEES) had latched on to a potentially ambiguous reading of Dt 24:1 and established a **tradition** of reading it as a command. This is a key aspect of the **Pharisees' marriage and divorce practices that Jesus cannot condone**. ([Divorce and Remarriage: The Search for An Evangelical Hermeneutic](#)) (Although the Pharisees described divorce as something Moses **commanded**, Jesus described it as something Moses merely **permitted**.)

**Judaism 101** (a Jewish website) writes that "Under Jewish law, a man can divorce a woman for any reason or no reason. The [Talmud](#) specifically says that a man can divorce a woman **because she spoiled his dinner** or simply because he finds another woman more attractive, and the woman's consent to the divorce is not required. In fact, Jewish law requires divorce in some circumstances: when the wife commits a sexual transgression, a man must divorce her, even if he is inclined to forgive her." ([Divorce](#))

**Related Resource:** [See entry from the Mishnah](#)

**William Luck** adds "Our Lord's primary teaching on divorce was in His great Sermon preached on a mountain to his disciples (Matthew 5). The focus of that was that men who treacherously divorce their wives in order to marry other woman or who are a party to breaking up someone else's marriage in order to claim the newly released woman are guilty of adultery in the eyes of His father. Subsequent to that He had an interchange with the Pharisees (Luke 16) in which He reaffirmed those teachings in **an illustration showing to the religious leaders that they were poor stewards of God's Law, especially as it related to its divorce teachings**." ([The Teaching of Jesus on Divorce — Matthew 19:3-12, Mark 10:2-12](#))

**Henry Alford** has an interesting thought on why Jesus uses **divorce** and **adultery** as an example to show that the Law was not destroyed - "As early as Tertullian, in the third century, it was remarked, that an allusion was meant here to the adultery of Herod Antipas with his brother Philip's wife, which the Pharisees had tacitly sanctioned, thus allowing an open breach of that law which Christ came to fulfill."

**NET Note** explains that "The examples of marriage and divorce show that the ethical standards of the new era are still faithful to promises made in the presence of God (I.E., THEY HAVE NOT "PASSED AWAY"). To contribute to the breakup of a marriage, which involved a vow before God, is to commit adultery. This works whether one gets a divorce or marries a person who is divorced, thus finalizing the breakup of the marriage. Jesus' point concerns the need for fidelity and ethical integrity in the new era." (ED: SOMETHING THE PHARISEES DID NOT DO ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO DIVORCE TEACHINGS.)

**Steven Cole** - The second sin (of the Pharisees) that Jesus confronts the Pharisees with was *divorce*. God's Word states that He hates divorce (Mal 2:16-note). He declared from the beginning that a man and his wife become one flesh, implying a lifelong union. But because of the hardness of men's hearts, God *permitted* (not mandated) divorce (Dt 24:1-4 - see [What does Deuteronomy 24 teach about divorce?](#)). Many of the Pharisees, however, had taken God's permission for divorce in difficult situations and turned it into virtual approval for divorce for almost any reason. There were two main Pharisaic schools. [Rabbi Shammai](#)'s school held that divorce was allowable only on the grounds of immorality. [Rabbi Hillel's](#) school allowed divorce for many reasons, including something as trivial as a wife burning the meal. Given the hardness of men's hearts, it is not surprising that Hillel's school was quite popular! But Jesus clearly sided with Shammai's school. ([Scoffing or Submitting?](#))

In the **Sermon on the Mount** Jesus declared

"It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY ([apoluo](#)), LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF

DIVORCE' (Jesus is quoting Dt 24:1); 32 but I say to you that everyone who **divorces** ([apoluo](#)) his wife, except for the reason of **unchastity** ([porneia](#)), makes her **commit adultery** ([moicheuo](#)); and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery ([moicheuo](#)). (Mt 5:31-32-[note](#))

**Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery** - Bock emphasizes that "This saying in Luke is not designed to be a detailed presentation of Jesus' view of divorce; it merely sets out the most basic standard as an illustration of the moral tone Jesus desires. More complete biblical statements on divorce come in Deuteronomy 24:1–4, Malachi 2:16, Matthew 5:30–32, 19:1–12, Mark 10:1–12 and 1 Corinthians 7:8–16. Jesus' point here is that he sees the marriage commitment as intended to be permanent."

**Divorces** (630) ([apoluo](#) from [apó](#) = marker of dissociation, implying a rupture from a former association, separation + [luo](#) = loose) means to dismiss or send away from. So the idea of **divorce** is to let a wife go free or release her (Mt 5:31, 32; 19:3; husband in Mk 10:12). **Apoluo** is never used in the marriage context with the meaning of just to separate (as the term is commonly used today) or to break an engagement, but always means full fledged **divorce**.

**Apoluo in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 2:29; Lk. 6:37; Lk. 8:38; Lk. 9:12; Lk. 13:12; Lk. 14:4; Lk. 16:18; Lk. 23:16; Lk. 23:17; Lk. 23:18; Lk. 23:20; Lk. 23:22; Lk. 23:25; Jn. 18:39; Jn. 19:10; Jn. 19:12; Acts 3:13; Acts 4:21; Acts 4:23; Acts 5:40; Acts 13:3; Acts 15:30; Acts 15:33; Acts 16:35; Acts 16:36; Acts 17:9; Acts 19:41; Acts 23:22; Acts 26:32; Acts 28:18; Acts 28:25;

**Commits adultery** (3431) ([moicheuo](#) from [moichós](#) = an adulterer) means to be unfaithful to one's marriage vows speaking of sexual intercourse with someone who is married to another. In some uses [moicheuo](#) can also be a figure of speech (Re 2:22) as in the Old Testament where "adultery" described unfaithfulness to God especially through the practice of idolatry (which in the NT equates with greed and in essence is anything that comes between you and God). **Commits adultery** is in the [present tense](#) in both of the uses in Lk 16:18.

**Moicheuo** - 16x in 13v - Matt. 5:27; Matt. 5:28; Matt. 5:32; Matt. 19:18; Mk. 10:12; Mk. 10:19; Lk. 16:18; Lk. 18:20; Jn. 8:4; Rom. 2:22; Rom. 13:9; Jas. 2:11; Rev. 2:22

**Bob Utley** - This must be understood in the light of the context, as one example of the Jewish leaders trying to circumvent the obvious purpose of the Mosaic Law (cf. vv. 16–17 and the passage in Deut. 24:1–4), with the interpretations of their Talmudic, rabbinical traditions (Hillel, very liberal and Shammai, very conservative).

**Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible on everyone who divorces his wife** - The Matthean parallels (Mt 5:32; Mt 19:9) include an exception clause ("except for sexual immorality") that both Mark 10:11 and Luke 16:18 lack. **Are these texts therefore in conflict?** Luke's remark here is brief and offered as an example of how the Kingdom's coming in Jesus does not mean a shift in ethical commitments. **Luke gave the basic principle rather than the full teaching** (Arndt 1956, 362). Stated most simply, the principle says, "do not divorce." Divorce violates the three-way covenant between God, the husband, and the wife. Jesus' words in Luke are put in absolute terms: divorce leads to adultery because it is presupposed that a person seeks a divorce because they have decided they want to marry someone else, in which case the remarriage itself is an act of unfaithfulness to the original vows (Marshall 1978, 631). Matthew more comprehensively treated divorce and remarriage, and in doing so mentioned that divorce is allowed in cases of [porneia](#), which could be unfaithfulness during betrothal, an inter-family marriage that voids the first marriage (Lev 18:6-19; Lev 20:11-21; Dt 27:20; Ezek 22:10; CD 4.20-5.10), or, far more likely, any kind of sexual immorality (BAGD 693; BAA 1389). The implication of the exception clause seems to be that, if divorce is granted because of adultery, the faithful partner is free to remarry. Paul, who knew Jesus' teaching, added that desertion by an unbeliever also permitted a divorce (1 Cor 7:10-16). (See [The Gospels and Acts](#))

**And he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery** - Jesus is essentially reiterates the same principle He had just stated. First He states that the man who divorces his wife and remarries commits adultery, and here He says so does the man who marries a divorcee. Herod Antipas (to whom Jesus may have been indirectly alluding) had divorced the daughter of Aretas and married the divorcee Herodias, so he was guilty on both counts.

As **Cole** emphasizes "Jesus is not here giving the full biblical teaching on divorce. Rather, He is showing His authority by confronting the Pharisees with an area where they often dodged God's Law through their loopholes, while proclaiming their faithfulness to it. He is saying that by playing loose with God's standard for marriage, they were committing adultery. Even though they could justify themselves before men, claiming that they were under the letter of the Mosaic Law, what they were doing was detestable in the eyes of God." [Scoffing or Submitting?](#)

**Barclay** - In the eyes of Jewish law a woman was a thing. She could divorce her husband only if he became a leper or an apostate or if he sexually assaulted a virgin. Otherwise a woman had no rights whatever and no redress, other than that the marriage dowry

must be repaid if she was divorced. The law said, 'A woman may be divorced with or without her will; a man only with his will.' The Mosaic law (Deuteronomy 24:1) said, 'Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable about her, and so he writes her a certificate of divorce.' The bill of divorce had to be signed before two witnesses and ran, 'Let this be from me thy writ of divorce and letter of dismissal and deed of liberation, that thou mayest marry whatsoever man thou wilt.' Divorce was as simple and easy as that. The matter turned on the interpretation of the phrase *some indecency* in the Mosaic regulation. There were two schools of thought. The school of Shammai said that meant adultery and adultery alone. The school of Hillel said it could mean 'if she spoiled a dish of food; if she spun in the street; if she talked to a strange man; if she was guilty of speaking disrespectfully of her husband's relations in his hearing; if she was a brawling woman', which was defined as a woman whose voice could be heard in the next house. Rabbi Akiba went so far as to say that a man could divorce his wife if he found a woman who was fairer than she. Human nature being what it is, it was the school of Hillel which prevailed, so that in the time of Jesus things were so bad that women were refusing to marry at all and family life was in danger. Jesus here lays down the sanctity of the marriage bond. The saying is repeated in Matthew 5:31-32 where adultery is made the sole exception to the universal rule. We sometimes think our own generation is bad, but Jesus lived in a generation where things were every bit as bad. If we destroy family life, we destroy the very basis of the Christian life, and Jesus here lays down a law which we relax only at our peril. ([Luke 16](#))

---

#### Here is an entry related to the loose rules for divorce from the Mishnah

- 9:10      A      The House of Shammai say, "A man should divorce his wife only because he has found grounds for it in unchastity,
- B      "since it is said, Because he has found in her indecency in anything (Dt. 24:)."
- C      And the House of Hillel say, "Even if she spoiled his dish,
- D      "since it is said, Because he has found in her indecency in anything.
- E      R. Aqiba says, "Even if he found someone else prettier than she,
- F      "since it is said, And it shall be if she find no favor in his eyes (Dt. 24:1)."
- 

**ILLUSTRATION** (Respect for Authority of Jesus) - In 1881, the wild western town of Cranberry Gulch, California needed a teacher for its one-room school. The last three teachers had not been able to deal with the rowdy students. One lay in the graveyard, another lost his eye, and the third left before noon on his first day. A slender-built man named Harry Floto applied for the job. The person doing the hiring doubted that he would fare much better than the others, but there wasn't a flood of applicants, so he got the job. Word spread and the students were relishing how they would get rid of this new victim.

The first day he showed up carrying a traveling bag. One 18-year-old tough joked that he came prepared to take off when he found out that they were too much for him. Ignoring them, Floto went inside. The students followed, curious to see what he'd do next. He opened his bag, took out a belt, and buckled it around his waist. Next, he put three Colt revolvers there, and a Bowie knife. While the students watched, Floto tacked a white card to the wall opposite his desk. Crossing the room, he drew a revolver from his belt and fired six bullets into a spot the size of a silver dollar.

While the pop-eyed students stared, the schoolmaster walked half way across the room, Bowie knife in hand, wheeled, and threw it so that it stuck, quivering, in the center of the card. Leaving it there as a reminder, Floto took two more knives from his bag and stuck them in his belt. He then reloaded his smoking revolver. He then ordered the 18-year-old to ring the bell to signal the start of class; he did so without a word. After the students were all seated, Floto cocked a revolver and announced, "We will arrange the classes." Then he heard a whisper behind him. Whirling, Floto drew his gun and roared, "No whispering allowed in here!" "I'll not do so any more," the boy said. "See that you don't," Floto barked. "I never give a second warning." Within a month, Floto put away his weapons and his pupils learned to love as well as to respect him. He stayed for two years. (Reported in *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 1881.)

Just as those students learned to respect the authority of that teacher, so we need to respect the absolute authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is God's King, and we dare not scoff at Him or His Word that tells us how we should live. There is an entire movement in the evangelical camp devoted to promoting the nonsense that it is possible to accept Jesus as Savior, and yet not live under His lordship. I hope that you see that to question Jesus' authority in any way is a most risky thing to do! He is King; we must submit to Him, even on the thought level. (Steven Cole [Scoffing or Submitting?](#))

---

#### Related Questions on Divorce:

- [What does the Bible say about divorce and remarriage?](#)
- [Is remarriage after divorce always adultery?](#)

- [What does Malachi 2:16 mean when God says, "I hate divorce"?](#)
- [What are biblical grounds for divorce?](#)
- [Is the divorce rate among Christians truly the same as among non-Christians?](#)
- [What does Deuteronomy 24 teach about divorce?](#)
- [Does the Bible say that abandonment is a valid reason for divorce and remarriage?](#)
- [Why does God hate divorce?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about remarriage if a divorce occurred before salvation?](#)
- [Is abuse an acceptable reason for divorce?](#)
- [What does "what God has joined together, let no one separate" mean?](#)
- [What is the exception clause?](#)
- [I am divorced. Can I remarry according to the Bible?](#)
- [Does the Bible support the Catholic practice of a marriage annulment?](#)
- [Questions about Marriage](#)
- [Can a couple who has gotten divorced get remarried?](#)
- [Is a man who divorced and remarried before coming to Christ eligible to pastor a church?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about prenuptial agreements?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about an unhappy marriage?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about a trial separation in a marriage?](#)

**Luke 16:19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.**

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

- **Now there was a rich man** Luke 12:16-21; 18:24,25; James 5:1-5
- **habitually dressed** Luke 16:1; 15:13; Job 21:11-15; Ps 73:3-7; Ezek 16:49; Amos 6:4-6; Rev 17:4; Rev 18:7,16
- **purple and fine linen** Judges 8:26; Esther 8:15; Ezek 16:13; 27:7; Mark 15:17,20
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Jesus' View of Eternal Punishment \(Mt 25:31-46\)](#) - Robert L. Thomas - 31 pp
- [Hell: Never, Forever, or Just for Awhile](#) - Richard Mayhue - 16 pp
- [Paul's Concept Of Eternal Punishment](#) - James Rosscup - 24 pp
- [Eternal Punishment In John's Revelation](#) - Trevor P Craigen, 13 pp
- [A Kinder, Gentler Theology Of Hell?](#) - Larry D. Pettegrew, 17 pp
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur

## LUKE 16:19-31 INTRODUCTION

**PARABLE OR TRUE STORY** - There is debate about whether Luke 16:19-31 is a (true) story or a parable, but most commentators consider this to be a parable even though it is not called a parable by Jesus (as in Lk 8:4; 12:16, 41; 13:6; 15:3; 18:9). The major argument for this not being a parable is that the poor man has a specific name **Lazarus**. Note that the KJV begins this section with "**a certain rich man**" which is also a characteristic way Jesus began his parables - see Lk 10:30, Lk 13:6, Lk 14:16, Lk 15:11, Lk 19:12KJV, as well as other parables outside of the Gospel of Luke. The only problem with that argument regarding the use of "certain man" as a "marker" (or identifier) of a parable is that it also appears in other texts that are clearly actual events and people! For example "a **certain man** suffering from dropsy." (Lk 14:2). John writes "a certain man was there who had been 38 years in his sickness." (Jn 5:5). John even identifies another Lazarus as "a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany." (Jn 11:1+). In Acts Dr Luke uses the phrase certain man in a number of true events - for example, "**a certain man** who had been lame from his mother's womb." (Acts 3:2KJV and NAS77), "**a certain man** named Ananias" (Acts 5:1KJV and NAS77) and "**a certain man** named Simon." (Acts 8:9KJV and NAS77), "**a certain man** named Aeneas" (Acts 9:33KJV and NAS77), "**a certain man** at Caesarea," (Acts

10:1KJV and NAS77), "there was sitting **a certain man**" (Acts 14:8KJV and NAS77), etc. Here is the point - one cannot use the fact that Lk 16:9 begins with the designation "certain man" to prove the argument that Lk 16:19-31 is a parable. The fact is that this same designation is used more often to begin non-parabolic stories! I think **Warren Wiersbe** has one of the more balanced comments writing "Luke did not say that this narrative was a parable; perhaps it was an actual occurrence." ([Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#) - borrow)

Most authorities agree that a **parable** usually has one primary spiritual truth which in this case would probably be the truth that the rich man was surprised to end up in Hell (i.e., many people will be shocked when they take their last breath! cf Mt 7:21-23+) and that **the Law and Prophets** (the Word of God) give us the truth (cf Ge 15:6+) to allow one to escape the horrible shock of hell and eternal punishment. But as you listen to sermons and read commentaries, it is interesting that even those who believe this is a parable (which we emphasize has one main truth and the details of which should not be "pushed" too far) devote considerable attention to the **details** of this story and even use those details to propose "doctrinal" truths about the fate of all souls who are lost because they rejected the free gift of salvation graciously offered by the Lord Jesus Christ (Ro 6:23+). The point is that many say it is a parable, but they exposit it as if it were a true story. Interesting! That said, I will refrain from being dogmatic about whether it is a parable or is a true story about real people.

**William MacDonald** - It should be noted that this is **not spoken of as a parable**. We mention this because some critics seem to explain away the solemn implications of the story by waving it off as a **parable**. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#) - borrow)

In his excellent resource [Basic Bible Interpretation : a Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth](#) Roy Zuck does not list the story in Luke 16:19-31 as a parable, listing only The Shrewd Manager Luke 16:1-9 as a parable in this chapter.

**Wycliffe Bible Commentary** - This is the only **parable** of Jesus in which a proper name is given. ([Luke Comments](#) in the [NT Wycliffe Bible commentary](#))

**Bob Utley** - The account of Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31 is the fifth parable in a series (Luke 15-16)

**David Thompson** says it is a "story" and says "He is obviously known in eternity, but the truth is we don't know his name. He must have been a real amazing man in his time, but we don't know his name." The implication is that Thompson sees it as a **true story** and not a parable.

**John Trapp** is similar to Thompson - (RICH MAN) Not once named, as Lazarus was, though never so little esteemed of men. God knew him by name, as he did Moses; when the rich man's name is written in the earth, rots above ground, is left for a reproach.

Keep in mind the Pharisees "were lovers of money" and they held the false belief that a rich Jew would go to Heaven, so Jesus tells them this story to "rock their world!" **Andrus** says "Jesus' point is to underscore the link between money and spirituality. He indicated that man must love God and use money instead of using God and loving money. But because of His teaching the Pharisees ridiculed him."

The doctrine of **eternal punishment**, though unpopular and frightening, is said to be part of the confession of every branch of the historic Christian church. However in re-reading the ancient Christian Creeds, I was surprised to discover that the **Apostle's Creed** (the "Creed of Creeds") does not actually have the word "hell" but has one line which says of Christ "He descended to the dead." The **Nicene Creed** (325 AD) has "He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end." There is nothing in the Nicene Creed about where the "quick and the dead" go after judgment! The Symbol of Chalcedon, from 451 A.D. has nothing about judgment to come or Hell. The **Athanasian Creed** (450-600 AD) has an interesting section on judgment declaring that Christ "suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead; He ascended into heaven, He sits on the right hand of the Father, God, Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies; and shall give account of their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting and they that have done evil into **everlasting fire**."

**KJV Commentary** - There are numerous arguments for this account being a real history.

- (1) Parables are hypothetical illustrations and never name specific individuals. Here not only Lazarus is named, but also Abraham (vss. Lk 16:22-25, Lk 16:29-30) and Moses (vs. Lk 16:31).
- (2) Jesus said "there was a certain rich man." Harry Ironside noted, "Was there, or was there not? He definitely declared that there was."
- (3) Moses, Abraham, and the prophets are real people, whereas parables never refer to specific Old Testament saints.
- (4) Luke does not call this a parable as he does in thirteen other clear cases of parable so designated.



(5) It is narrated like a real history.

(6) Parables deal with the commonplace of what is known to be true to illustrate moral lessons, and come from natural life. This does not.

(7) Hades is a reality, not a figure of speech.

(8) There is no reason why Jesus could not have had in mind a particular case. He is describing what took place after death in the cases of two men for the moral profit of His hearers. (9) The conversation between the rich man and Abraham does not seem to lend itself to parabolic format.

(10) Even a case history, as this is, could be used in parabolic fashion to teach a precise moral truth.

#### Middletown Bible Church -

1. It would be the only parable in the Bible that describes certain things that are outside of the realm of human experience. All the other parables talk about things that we are familiar with such as birds, seed, fields, pearls, wheat, barns, leaven, fish, etc. (see Matthew 13, etc.). This passage is different because it talks about what happens to two men after death, and this is a realm where none of us have had any personal experience. A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly or spiritual significance, but Luke 16 transcends the realm of the earthly.

2. It would be the only parable in the Bible that uses a proper name (Lazarus).

3. It would be the only parable in the Bible that makes mention repeatedly of a historical person--Abraham. Moreover, this historical person actually carries on a dialogue with the rich man! Indeed, mention is also made in this parable of Moses, another historical character. What other parable speaks of real, historical persons?

4. It would be the only parable in the Bible that describes the places where the dead go (Hades, Abraham's bosom, a place of torment).

5. It would be the only parable in the Bible that makes mention of angels. Compare Matthew 13 verses 24-30, 36-43, 47-49 where angels are mentioned in the explanation of the parable but not in the parable itself.

6. If Hades is not really a place of torment then this would be the only parable in the Bible where the Lord Jesus taught error instead of truth. GOD FORBID!

The Westminster Shorter Catechism surprisingly has only one answer specifically related to **eternal punishment**: (numbers in brackets are the Scriptures that defend the statement and are at the bottom of the page).

**THOUGHT** - I would propose that the Church of Jesus Christ is most "on fire" with the Gospel, when the Church fully and truly grasps the horror of the unquenchable fire of Hell! Does this thought not make you want to go and share the Gospel today?!

#### **Q. 19. What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?**

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God,[47] are under his wrath[48] and curse,[49] and so made liable to all the miseries of this life,[50] to death[51] itself, and to the pains of hell forever.[52]

**THOUGHT** - Let's all be honest, we hate the thought that hell is a reality and even the preceding great doctrinal declarations tend to refrain from mentioning the subject to any degree, as if it were a "taboo" subject! And yet Jesus spoke frequently about Hell because He wanted men to escape its horrors by repenting and believing in Him. When we as believers get a sense of the reality of hell for the lost souls around us, this truth can serve as a powerful motivator for us to share the Gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24+ - **NB**: "testify solemnly", Ro 1:1+). It is my sincere prayer that God might make all of us more aware of the horrors of hell, for the express purpose of making each Christ follower more fervent and bold in the proclamation of the Gospel to all who are in imminent danger of waking up in shock like the rich man in this story! Indeed one of the greatest impacts of the truth about the eternal fire of hell, is that it should break our hearts, fill our eyes with tears and set our hearts aflame to passionately persistently proclaim the Gospel to the lost, even as the Spirit emboldens us and gives us each those precious opportunities! (Acts 4:31+, cf Paul's prison prayer - Eph 6:19-20+) I can attest to this in my own experience, for after spending many hours studying and writing notes on Lk 16:19-31 (and eternal punishment), the effect on my heart has been to cause me to have a greater desire than ever to share the good news in time to those otherwise destined to experience the bad news in eternity unless they receive by grace through faith the Gospel of peace (Eph 6:15+).

Erwin Lutzer begins his book ["One Minute After You Die" \(borrow a copy\)](#) with this quote **"Hell disappeared. And no one noticed."**



With that terse observation, American church historian Martin Marty summarized our attitude toward a vanishing doctrine that received careful attention in previous generations. If you are a churchgoer, ask yourself when you last heard an entire sermon or Sunday school lesson on the topic. An article in Newsweek said, "Today, hell is theology's H-word, a subject too trite for serious scholarship." Gordon Kaufman of Harvard Divinity School believes we have gone through a transformation of ideas, and he says, "I don't think there can be any future for heaven and hell." Admittedly, hell is an unpleasant topic. **Unbelievers disbelieve in it; most Christians ignore it** (ED: SAD BUT TRUE!). Even the staunchly biblical diehards are often silent out of embarrassment. **Hell, more than any doctrine of the Bible, seems to be out of step with our times.**" ([One Minute After You Die" borrow a copy](#)) (Bold added)

Despite that fact, Hell is under fire, pun intended! As we begin this section, we need to understand that preaching on hell is not a popular topic but it is one that is sorely needed in the modern evangelical church (See [John Blanchard's discussion below](#)). As Buis writes "The masses of Christians in the early Church certainly believed in the doctrine of eternal punishment. Gibbon (ED: NOT A CHRISTIAN AS FAR AS I CAN DETERMINE - [SEE NOTE BELOW](#)) considered this to be **one of the five most important reasons why the Gospel spread in such amazing fashion.**" ([The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment](#)) While Luke 16 is just a story, Jesus told it to emphasize truth and one truth that comes out is that the rich man in Hades is now motivated by his suffering to act in a sense as an evangelist to his brothers. I would submit that one of the greatest impacts of the truth about eternal fire of hell, is that one's heart is set on fire to proclaim the Gospel to the lost! I can attest to this in my own experience for spent many hours studying and writing on Lk 16:19-31 and the effect on my heart has been to cause me to have a greater desire than ever before to share the good news in time to those otherwise destined for bad news in eternity. So let me ask you, have you ever heard a sermon series or even one sermon on hell? Have you really studied this doctrine which Jesus spoke more than any other person?

**THOUGHT** - I would propose that the Church of Jesus Christ is most "on fire" with the Gospel, when the Church fully and truly grasps the horror of the unquenchable fire of Hell! Does this thought not make you want to go and share the Gospel today?! Given the fact that America is in desperate need of a God given, Word centered, Spirit empowered, Christ exalting revival, what would be the impact in our land if there was more emphasis on the doctrine of Hell preached by pastors whose hearts were filled with compassion and whose eyes were filled with tears? What was the effect of Jonathan Edwards's ([biography - go to page 30](#)) famous sermon "[Sinners in the Hand of an Angry God](#)"? This sermon on hell was used by the Holy Spirit to set ablaze the fire of revival which is known as the [First Great Awakening](#)! Read about the impact of Edwards's sermon on his congregation ([click here](#)). As an aside Edwards in that sermon said "*There is nothing that keeps wicked Men at any one Moment, out of Hell, but the meer Pleasure of GOD!*"

**R. A. Torrey** was correct when he said "If you in any way [abate](#) the doctrine of hell, it will abate your zeal!"

**J C Ryle** wrote "God knows that I never speak of hell without (myself experiencing) pain and sorrow. I would gladly offer the salvation of the Gospel to the very chief of sinners. I would willingly say to the vilest and most profligate of mankind on his deathbed, "Repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be save." But God forbid that I should ever keep back from mortal man that Scripture reveals a **hell** as well as **heaven**...that men may be lost as well as saved." (Luke 16 Commentary)

The question arises as to why has **hell** suffered such a decline in "popularity?"

(1) **Of course, the most obvious answer is that hell is not a fun subject on which to preach or teach.** There is a natural aversion all of us to this doctrine and so it not surprising that Hell is not a popular preaching or teaching topic.

**Rick Holland** - In Sunday sermons, preachers must not neglect preaching on the horrors of hell and the catastrophic consequence of rejecting Christ. When you abandon preaching on hell, you ignore the accent in the Epistles on the coming judgment, you will need to skip large portions of Jesus' teaching in the Gospels, and you might as well rip Revelation out of your Bible. Some neglect to teach on hell, while others minimize the torments of hell. Underestimating the reality of hell leads to a belief in a kind of [purgatory](#) where a second chance after death is expected, thereby making people think that there is plenty of time to "get right with God." Hell is physical pain, loneliness, darkness that accentuates fear, regret, separation from God, and the absence of a second chance. God sends us as His ambassadors to beg people to be reconciled to Him. Do not be misled; the reality of hell is essential to preaching the gospel message. (Evangelism: How to Share the Gospel Faithfully).

(2) **Another answer is that some of the decline in preaching and teaching on hell reflects the horrible non-Biblical descriptions by some writers and preachers.** For example, Venerable Bede described a man in hell with "flames of fire gushed out from his ears and eyes and nostrils and at every pore."

(3) **The doctrine of Hell is often neglected because it is difficult to reconcile hell with the love of God.** As one liberal theologian writes "In a universe of love there can be no heaven that tolerates a chamber of

horrors; no hell for any which does not at the same time make it hell for God." One man said that he would not want to be in heaven with a God who sends people to hell. His preference was to be in hell so that he could live in defiance of such a God. In other words many feel that the punishment of hell does not fit the crime.

**(4) Attacks on the historic doctrine of hell that used to come from outside the church are now coming from within, from such well known evangelical theologians as [Clark Pinnock](#), Philip Edgcombe Hughes, John Wenham, Basil Atkinson.** In 1988, the prominent evangelical **John Stott** constructed an argument for annihilationism. (Richard Mayhue's rebuttal - [Hell: Never, Forever, or Just for Awhile](#))

It is interesting that the secular world pays far more attention to **hell** than does the church! So while sermons and teaching on **hell** have declined over the past 100 years ([see note below](#)), the use of the word **hell** itself has significantly increased as shown below in the Google chart of the frequency of usage of **hell** over time. And keep in mind that the higher usages in the 1800's reflect a greater usage in a religious compared to our day. I was very surprised to see the rather striking increase in popularity of the word **hell**, but then I began to understand that clearly this reflects a major decline in the morals of Americans, so that **hell** is used glibly and tritely on shows and literature, and even by a President of the United States who sadly uses the word **Hell** with regularity and seemingly without a hint of [compunction](#)! (cf the effect of "*leaders*" in Jdg 5:2NLT-note) Woe!

**MacArthur** adds that 'Unbelievers [flippantly](#) (idea of inappropriate levity) and frequently tell people **to go to hell**. Unbelievers don not seem to have any hesitation to talk about **hell** and to verbally threaten people with it, but on the other hand the church is reluctant to warn people **NOT to go to hell!** The church avoids **hell** [ostensibly](#) out of love, compassion, concern and a desire to be accepted by unbelievers. So while unbelievers frequently have the word **hell** on their lips, believers rarely have it on theirs, but it is the fearfulness and horror of hell that is exactly the point of its Biblical revelation. God's purpose in telling us about **hell** with such detail and repetition is to produce in sinners a sense of fear, terror, and even panic. In other words, the truth of **hell** is taught in Scripture to frighten and horrify unbelievers, so as to produce in them a fear of spending forever in hell (cf Jesus' words in Mt 10:28), a fear which in turn drives them in the direction of repentance and faith in the Gospel. ([A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#))

**Homer Simpson** said, "I'm not a bad guy! I work hard, and I love my kids. So why should I spend half my Sunday hearing about how I'm going to hell?" (One wonders which church he is referring to as few churches preach on this topic!) [See the Simpson's absurd trivialization of Hell](#) where he says "I'd sell my soul for a donut!" Is it any wonder that our culture laughs away the doctrine of Hell as if it were a joke!

**MacArthur** - Most people, certainly most people in the Western world who've had any exposure to Christianity whatsoever, think they're going to heaven; and that is largely affirmed by clergymen and religious leaders. Ninety percent of Americans believe in God; 85 percent say they believe in Jesus. Certainly, these people all think they're headed for heaven. I'm quite sure that hell is populated mostly with people who are shocked to find themselves there. People typically answer the question, "Are you going to heaven?" with, "Well, I'm a good person. I'm a religious person. I believe in God. I believe in Jesus. I'm going to heaven. God certainly wouldn't send me to hell." Hell is full of surprised people. That's really what this story is about — a man who was shocked to find himself in hell. Equally shocking to those who listen to the story was the idea that the other man was in heaven. This was contrary to all of their expectations. ([Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#))

**John Lennon** was sadly mistaken when he wrote a popular song in the 1970's called "[Imagine](#)". What if the Biblical pictures of hell as a place of endless punishment and suffering are true? Sadly I don't think John Lennon has to **imagine** today!

Imagine there's no heaven  
It's easy if you try  
No hell below us  
Above us only sky  
Imagine all the people living for today.

#### USAGE OF THE WORD "HELL" OVER TIME

Our society is now using the word "**Hell**" so frequently and flippantly that the majority of people (even believers) have in effect become "[desensitized](#)" to the true meaning of the word as used in the Bible! The [subterfuge](#) of Satan surely has some part in this "cover up!"

An old Puritan writer had a good antidote for modern malaise concerning hell

**"Meditate** much on hell. Let us go into hell by **contemplation** that we may not go into hell by

**condemnation!** (see [complete devotional](#))

**George Sweeting** writes that "One of the greatest paintings of all time is Michelangelo's [The Last Judgment](#). The action of the painting centers on Christ as He raises His arm in a gesture of damnation ([see picture](#)). Though some elements of the painting appear unbiblical, at that time its message reminded people of God's holy presence, which had been forgotten in the humanism of the day. The painting pictures the dead as they are resurrected to be judged (Rev 20:12). As hell releases its captives, the Judge of Heaven reviews their works (Rev 20:13). The entire painting reflects the despair of that generation. When the painting was unveiled, a storm of conviction fell upon the viewers. **All Europe trembled as the story of the power of The Last Judgment traveled from city to city.** (Great Quotes & Illustrations)

We need to be sure to understand the cultural [context](#) of the Jews in Jesus' day to really be able to fully understand the impact of Jesus' words. In other words we don't want to read this story with "modern eyes" in an attempt to make it relevant to modern life. The Bible is always relevant to all of life. So it behooves us to "put on our toga and sandals" and go back to the cultural [context](#) of Jesus' day. Remember that [context](#) is **always king in interpretation** and in this case we need to set the **CULTURAL context**. Toward that end many of the notes that follow will give the cultural background to aid your understanding.

As you begin this section remember that Jesus is directing this parable about **a poor man (Lazarus)** and a **rich man** (unnamed) to the Pharisees (cf Lk 17:1 where He turns to address His disciples) who were **lovers of money** (Luke 16:14). The Pharisees had a theology which accommodated their [health and wealth](#) doctrines, for they believed (as did most of the Jews of that time) that the more wealth one possessed, the greater he was blessed by God! If the Pharisees were alive today they would undoubtedly be adherents of the modern "[prosperity Gospel](#)" propounded by the false teachers on television! In short, the Pharisees had the contorted belief that loving and pursuing money was equivalent to loving God and pursuing blessing. It follows that the Pharisees would (at least initially) readily identify with the **rich man**, who to them was a symbol of a life richly blessed by God! They would see the **poor man** as one who was in his condition (to which they were indifferent and uncaring, cf Lk 15:1-2-note), because he was not blessed by God.

To establish the [context](#) which will help us grasp the truth of this parable, remember that the theology of the Pharisees included a belief the following: life after death, a divine judgment, a place called Heaven and a place called Hell. And of course because of their external "devotion" and works based righteousness, NO GOOD PHARISEE would have expected there was even the slightest chance they would end up in Hell! And so while they would have identified with the **rich man** in this story, you can imagine their shock when the **rich man** ended up in hell! One the major points of Jesus' parable is that many who think they are on the road to heaven, will tragically find themselves in hell when they die! And so while some readers might react negatively to Jesus' words in this parable, the truth is that this parable reflects Jesus' great mercy and compassion. Why? Because Jesus is clearly warning people who hold to a deceptive, dangerous doctrine that they will go to heaven when they die based solely on their "good" life. In stark contrast Jesus is saying that when they die, they will be shocked, because they will find themselves in hell! The rich man no more expected to find himself in eternal torment than the Pharisees who were lovers of money. They were among those who gained the world and lost their soul. This recalls Jesus' piercing question in Lk 9:25-note "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world (LIKE THE RICH MAN OR THE PHARISEES), and loses or forfeits himself (HIS SOUL - Mt 16:26, Mk 8:36)?"

Jesus gave a similar warning about one's eternal destiny in Lk 13 when He commanded His listeners (and all men) to

**"Strive** ([present imperative](#) - command to continually strive) to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up to us!' then He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know where you are from.' 26 "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; 27 and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; **DEPART** ([aorist imperative](#) - command to do this immediately) FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS (**ED**: THIS IS THE KEY - THEIR LIFESTYLE WAS ONE OF EVIL. THEY HAD NEVER EXPERIENCED INNER TRANSFORMATION THAT COMES BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH).' 28 (NOW JESUS PROCEEDS TO GIVE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ETERNAL TORMENTS OF HELL) "In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out. 29 "And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. 30 "And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last." (Lk 13:24-30-note)

**Comment:** Notice that in this passage Jesus is giving the same warning as in Lk 16:19-31. Clearly those who said "We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets" assumed that they would find themselves in the Kingdom of God at the great banquet with the Patriarchs when they died, but in fact they would be shocked to find themselves outside the glorious Kingdom of God!

**THOUGHT** - How should we as followers of Christ react to Jesus' words of sober warning? Clearly, we who are [stewards](#) of the Gospel of Christ and filled with His Spirit (and supernatural boldness - Acts 4:31) must "**be found trustworthy**" (1 Cor 4:1-2+, cf 1 Pe 4:10+ = "stewards of the manifold grace of God." = YOU HAVE A STEWARDSHIP WHETHER YOU KNOW IT OR NOT!) and must not shy away from warning others about the unimaginable terrors of hell, for that is the most loving, compassionate, gracious and Christ-like thing we can do during our short stay on earth. Imagine those who have lived next to as our neighbors for years, those who have been our close associates at work or business for years, those special folks we went to school with and still celebrate reunions with (Suggestion - send your testimony to your high school reunion email list which is what I did several months ago but got not a single response!) and then they die without repenting and believing in Christ and find themselves in shock and in hell, wondering "Why didn't my Christian neighbor/associate even warn me about the divine, righteous wrath to come?"

**ILLUSTRATION** - Many years ago the great Southern evangelist [John R. Rice](#) preached in Waxahachie, Texas, just south of Dallas. As was his custom, Dr. Rice preached hard against sin and hell (see Dr Rice's excellent, Biblically based 36 page pamphlet entitled "[Hell What the Bible says About It](#)" - see [reviews](#)), especially against the bootleggers bringing illegal liquor into that small Texas town. Eventually the powers that be decided that this pesky evangelist must be silenced. They sent a message to stop preaching or they would kill him. "You can't threaten me with heaven," he replied. (And all God's people said "Amen!") (**ED: RICE ONCE PREACHED A SERMON ENTITLED "Diseased, Decaying Bodies with Undying Maggots and Unquenched Fire in Hell"! WOE! THAT MAY BE A BIT TOO HARSH! I AM NOT SURE BODIES DECAY IN HELL AND SEE NO PASSAGES ON MAGGOTS - WE NEED TO REMEMBER TO BE BIBLICAL IF IT IS TO BE BELIEVABLE!**)

**Related Resources from Radio Bible Class** to encourage you to be a Spirit-filled, faithful, bold witness of Christ (Acts 1:8<sup>note</sup>):

- [Truth with Love- Sharing the Story of Jesus](#)
- [How Can I Break The Silence? - Strategies for sharing faith in Christ](#)
- [How Can I Share My Faith Without An Argument? - Letting God do the work of evangelism](#) ([Or here](#))
- [What If It's True? Examining Four Important Spiritual Questions](#)
- [Life to Come](#) ([Or here](#))
- [Beyond Reasonable Doubt: The Truth About the Bible](#) ([Or here](#))
- [Why Does It Make Sense To Believe In Christ? - Evidence for the reasonableness of Christian faith](#) ([Or here](#))
- [What Is A Personal Relationship With God? - Conditions for knowing God](#)
- [What About Those Who Have Never Heard? - The plight of those without the gospel](#)
- [Why We Believe - Evidences for Christian Faith](#)
- [What Does The Bible Say About Hell?](#)

---

### **Rescue the Perishing**

**-- Fanny Crosby**

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,  
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;  
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,  
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.

#### **Refrain**

***Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,  
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.***

Though they are slighting Him, still He is waiting,  
Waiting the penitent child to receive;  
Plead with them earnestly, plead with them gently;  
He will forgive if they only believe.

#### **Refrain**

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,  
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;  
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,

Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.

**Refrain**

Rescue the perishing, duty demands it;  
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;  
Back to the narrow way patiently win them;  
Tell the poor wand'rer a Savior has died.

**Refrain**

**Fanny Crosby** tells the story of how she came to write **Rescue the Perishing**...

It was written in the year 1869, when I was forty-nine years old. Many of my hymns were written after experiences in New York mission work. This one was thus written. I was addressing a large company of working men one hot summer evening, when the thought kept forcing itself on my mind that some mother's boy must be rescued that night or not at all. So I made a pressing plea that if there was a boy present who had wandered from his mother's home and teaching, he would come to me at the close of the service. A young man of eighteen came forward and said, 'Did you mean me? I promised my mother to meet her in heaven, but as I am now living that will be impossible.' We prayed for him and he finally arose with a new light in his eyes and exclaimed in triumph, 'Now I can meet my mother in heaven, for I have found God!' (**Ed:** He had entered through the strait gate that leads to heaven. Hallelujah! May his tribe increase. Amen)

A few days before, Mr. Doane had sent me the subject "Rescue the Perishing," and while I sat there that evening the line came to me, "Rescue the perishing, care for the dying." I could think of nothing else that night. When I arrived at my home I went to work on it at once; and before I retired the entire hymn was ready for a melody. The next day my words were written and forwarded to Mr. Doane, who wrote the beautiful and touching music as it now stands.

In November, 1903 (**Ed:** year hymn written = 1869), I went to Lynn, Massachusetts, to speak before the Young Men's Christian Association. I told them the incident that led me to write "Rescue the Perishing," as I have just related it. After the meeting a large number of men shook hands with me, and among them was a man, who seemed to be deeply moved. You may imagine my surprise when he said, "Miss Crosby, I was the boy, who told you more than thirty-five years ago that I had wandered from my mother's God. The evening that you spoke at the mission I sought and found peace, and I have tried to live a consistent Christian life ever since. If we never meet again on earth, we will meet up yonder." As he said this, he raised my hand to his lips (**Ed:** as you doubtless know Fanny was blind); and before I had recovered from my surprise he had gone; and remains to this day a nameless friend, who touched a deep chord of sympathy in my heart. It is these notes of sympathy that vibrate when a voice calls them forth from the dim memories of the past, and the music is celestial. (**Fanny Crosby's personal testimony**)

**Comment:** Please take a moment to watch and listen to the vocal rendition of [Rescue The Perishing](#) based largely on Fanny Crosby's famous hymn (**Hint:** Select Full Screen view for maximum impact). **Beloved I will be amazed if you can watch and listen to this youtube video of Fanny Crosby's classic hymn without weeping.**

May our hearts break for what breaks our Father's heart and may His Spirit so fill us that His Good News "becomes like a burning fire" (Jer 20:9 23:29) in our bosom and we cannot hold it in for the sake of Jesus Who is [Mighty To Save](#). ([Hillsong version](#)) Amen

---

In his book [The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment](#), Harry Buis writes "That keen European thinker Berdyaev says, "It is remarkable how little people think about hell or trouble about it. This is the most striking evidence of human frivolity." Schilder makes a similar and more detailed analysis of the situation when he says, "What is hell? When you place this question before the modern cosmopolitan man of our day, who is satiated with hyper-culture, then his answer is ready: Hell is a figment of the imagination! Hell? Well, this shadowy frightfulness which is implied in the word, as man says, can't be anything other than a notion of founders of religions and of priests and lying prophets, wherewith they deceive the masses, and the world which wants to be deluded, in order to fill their empty pockets in this life with the preaching of the total emptying of the sinner in the hereafter...they tell you bluntly, that the world doesn't believe any more in hell." ([Preface](#))

Keep in mind that Jesus, Who we are called to imitate (1 Cor 11:1, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 Jn 2:6, etc), repeatedly warned about Hell. In fact, because of His infinite love and boundless compassion for mankind, He spoke more about the horrors of Hell than any other person in Scripture! God's primary desire is **not to destroy us** but to **save us** as the Scriptures clearly attest...

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing ([boulomai](#) in [present tense](#) = continually not desiring) for any to perish ([apollumi](#)) but for **ALL** to come to



repentance ([metanoia](#)). (2 Peter 3:9-[note](#))

(God our Savior) who desires ([thelo](#) in [present tense](#) = continually desires) **ALL** men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Ti 2:4)

To summarize, this parable is about 2 men, a **poor man** who goes to heaven and a **rich man** who goes to hell. And note that most of the text in Lk 16:19-31 focuses on the fate of the **rich man** with only minimal attention being given to the **poor man**. Clearly, the purpose of this parable is to serve as a warning to the rich Pharisees and all of their [ilk](#) who also are deceived and hold the false belief that they are going to heaven when they die but instead will find themselves in hell! Jesus knows this is not a comfortable subject to address, but He also knows it is absolutely necessary so that men might understand the grave danger they are in when they reject Him and refuse to believe His Gospel. As horrible as this subject is to talk about, it is sorely needed that it might cause all readers to contemplate their eternal destiny and to repent and believe in Jesus while today is still called today (cf Heb 3:13). It is only fitting that the Lord Jesus Christ Who is the Judge of the living (born again believers) and the dead (unregenerate) (2 Ti 4:1), is the One Who to give this parable two men and two destinies.

Jesus employed the most graphic language to describe what hell is like: fire (Mt 5:22; Mt 18:9); eternal fire (Mt 18:8); destruction (Mt 7:13); away from his presence (Mt 7:23); thrown outside (Mt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30); blazing furnace (Mt 13:42); darkness (Mt 22:13; 25:30); eternal punishment (Mt 25:46); weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt 8:12; 13:42; 13:50; 22:13; 24:51). Jesus twice used the word eternal (Mt 18:8; 25:46) to convey that the punishment of nonbelievers would continue forever.

**John MacArthur** says that this parable "Could be called **"The Great Reversal"**, **"A Reluctant Witness From Hell,"** **"How to Think You're Going to Heaven and End Up In Hell."** Most people in the Western world who have had exposure to Christianity, think they are going to Heaven; and that is largely affirmed by clergymen and religious leaders. **(A recent survey revealed that virtually all the people who believe in heaven also believe they will go there** - Gallup poll survey, 10-13 May 2007) I'm quite sure that hell is populated mostly with people who are shocked to find themselves there. People typically answer the question, "Are you going to Heaven?" with, "Well, I'm a good person. I'm a religious person. I believe in God. I believe in Jesus. I'm going to Heaven. God certainly wouldn't send me to hell." Hell is full of surprised people. That's really what this story is about—a rich man who was shocked to find himself in hell. Equally shocking to those who listened to the story was the idea that the poor man was in Heaven. This was contrary to all expectations.

#### Related Resources:

- [Pie Chart surveys on "Who Can Go to Heaven,"](#)
- [Another survey;](#)
- [Survey of belief in God;](#)
- [Heaven and hell;](#)
- [2014 Pew poll on heaven/hell](#)
- [Why is the idea of eternal damnation so repulsive to many people?](#)

**MacArthur** goes on to give a **description of hell** - To live life without this hope would make life excruciating and unbearable. But what if everything in your life was as bad as it could be. Take everything bad that has ever happened in your life, roll it all into one experience, and make it permanent. All the pain, all the disappointment, all the failure, all the hatred, all the bitterness, all the fear, all the anxiety, and experience that to the full, and then add the fact that you have no hope. It will never get better. Such knowledge would compound and exacerbate your suffering exponentially. If you were in the severest torture and the most profound, relentless torment physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally, and you were suffering in all those things at the same time and knew there would never be one moment of relief, and that nothing would ever change....I just described hell. It is the place of the most profound suffering, compounded infinitely by the realization that it lasts forever, and nothing will ever change. ([A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#))

As **Rod Mattoon** says Jesus' "story provides great comfort for those who know Christ as their Savior. It should instill terror in your heart if you have never put your faith in Christ because it describes what will happen to you after your death." ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

**A recent survey revealed that virtually all the people who believe in heaven also believe they will go there** (Gallup poll survey, 10-13 May 2007). Such was the case with the rich man in this story. Both to himself and to others, he would have seemed like a lock for heaven. The Jews believed that riches were a sure sign of God's blessing. Therefore the more money a man had the greater his blessing from God. When Jesus said to the disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23), "the disciples were amazed at His words" (Mk 10:24). And when the Lord "answered again and said to them, 'Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to



enter the kingdom of God” (Mk 10:24-25) “they were even more astonished and said to Him, ‘Then who can be saved?’” (Mk 10:26), if not the rich. The disciples’ response reflected the common belief of the Jewish people—especially the money-loving (Luke 16:14) Pharisees to whom Jesus directed this story. The rich man symbolizes them, both in their love of money, and in their assumption that their wealth was a sign of God’s favor. Like him (vv. 27-30), the Pharisees demanded signs from Jesus before they would believe. And like him, they would one day be shocked to find themselves in hell. They are tragic examples of those who gained the world, but lost their souls (Mark 8:36). (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Luke)

**W H Griffith-Thomas** calls this a parable and says it is “intended to be a searching application of all the preceding section to the callous Pharisees in their indifference to the poor and outcasts (as shown in their reaction in Lk 15:1-2) Let us be careful that we apprehend Christ’s primary object -- not to teach the details of the future life, but to drive home the awful danger of making wrong use of this life, thus leading to eternal misery.” (Outline Studies in the Gospel of Luke, page 255).

**Brian Bill** - Jesus pulls back the curtain to help us catch a glimpse of life on the other side of death. This story is unique to the Gospel of Luke and is the only one to name any of its characters. Some commentators believe that this is not a true parable but rather a specific story much like the account of the Good Samaritan. ([What Happens When You Die?](#))

**Gene Brooks** - While Luke 15:1-32 focused on God’s love for the lost and the poor, Jesus turns in Luke 16 to the spiritual dangers of the wealthy and powerful. Jesus tells two parables directed against the Pharisees’ love of money. The first, traditionally called the Parable of the Unjust Steward, makes the simple point that the value of money in this world is to make preparation for the next (Luke 16:1-12). Jesus’ second parable draws back the veil for the sneering Pharisees to see the seriousness of the issue. In the hereafter, the roles the rich man and the beggar play in this life mean nothing. What means something is repentance and faith, and only those who respond to God’s Word will be blessed (Luke 16:19-31). With the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, we see two persons (Luke 16:19-21), two different places (Luke 16:22-23), and two prayers (Luke 16:24-31).... Jesus is issuing a warning to these wealthy and powerful, self-righteous, self-fulfilled, self-centered religious people. He warns them of a great reversal if they are not careful for themselves. God designed hell to be sufficiently frightening to motivate the worst sinner (and the most self-righteous hypocrite) to flee to the grace of Christ and live with him in heaven eternally. ([The Rich Man and Lazarus](#))

**Ray Stedman** - There are two frequent reactions to this story of the rich man and Lazarus. **The first one** is that it rather pleases the old Adam in us to see this bloated rich man get his comeuppance in the next life. We feel it is rather fitting that he is in torment while his magnificent funeral is going on on earth. This is what our Lord suggests by stating that the rich man was buried. He doubtless had a magnificent funeral, but there is nothing said of the burial of the poor man. His body was probably thrown out on the city dump, outside the city walls, as the bodies of beggars customarily were. But in the next life Lazarus is comforted and finds relief, while the rich man is in pain and anguish. Often people react to this by feeling, “That’s the way it should be.” Many feel that this is what heaven and hell are for, to compensate for what happens in this present life, to square accounts for what we have to go through down here. But if that is the way we feel about it, then, of course, we are quite wrong. If that were true, then the Communists are right when they say that religion is the opiate of the people. It is merely designed to keep the poor happy until they get to the next life, and to look for recompense only in the life to come. This is what Communism teaches: The whole purpose of religion is to keep the poor from rebelling against their lot. But we must understand that the rich man was not in hell because he was rich any more than that Lazarus was in heaven because he was poor. Heaven and hell are not a compensation for what you go through here. The principle that determines who goes where is quite different, as we shall see as the story unfolds. **The second reaction to this story** is to recoil from this picture of the afterlife especially from the thought of hell, with its flames and its torments. Many are offended by this story and feel that it belongs to a category of Christian literature which has been appended to the record, that it could not really be what Jesus would teach. Once again that view is wrong. There is absolutely no question but that these words came from the lips of the Lord Jesus himself. ([The Main Thing](#))

**Gotquestions** - The doctrine of eternal death is not a popular doctrine to teach or proclaim. To do so often opens one up to scorn and ridicule. However, we must not let that detract us from what the Bible so clearly teaches; namely, that due to our being born in sin and trespasses, we are under the just condemnation of God for our sin. If we do not embrace the saving message of Jesus Christ, we will perish in our sin and trespasses and be under God’s just judgment for our sin—eternal death. This is a sobering doctrine and requires the utmost care and compassion in its presentation. ([What is Eternal Death?](#))

In a [Sermon from Hell](#) - It may be said here is the toughest doctrine of them all—**hell**. One may misunderstand tongues, or the timing of the Rapture and not be harmed. But this truth has eternal consequences attached to it. A belief in a literal hell seems to have fallen on hard times. A poll taken in the United States in 1978 revealed that more than 70% of those interviewed said they believed in hell. However 11 years later, a Newsweek Magazine survey produced a figure of just 58%. A poll conducted in Australia in 1988 indicated that only 39% believed in hell, while in 1989 a Gallup Poll taken in Britain revealed that no more than 24% of those questioned believed in hell. (Blanchard, 1995, 15)

**James Mason** said “The reason why so many fall into hell is because so few think of it.” (or think so lightly and [tritely](#) of it!)

Below is **Gustave Dore's** famous woodcut of the **Rich Man and Lazarus**, but notice that it is not actually reflective of the description of Jesus in the parable. Why? Because Jesus never mentions that the **rich man** even gave a moment's notice of Lazarus. Of course, the **rich man** could surely hardly help see this despicable man as he went in and out of his estate, but there is no suggestion of his ever demonstrating compassion or kindness. In truth, the rich man's attitude is surely part of Jesus' point regarding many of the "rich" of this world who disregard the "poor" and outcasts of this world (e.g., think of the horrible [caste system in India](#))!

Dore's Woodcut  
Rich Man and Lazarus

## TWO MEN, TWO DESTINIES: DIVES AND LAZARUS

**Now there was a rich (plousios) man** - While he is nameless, many have referred to him as **'Dives'** which derives from the Latin word for "rich" ([Latin Vulgate](#) reads "*homo quidam erat dives*"). Notice that there is no suggestion that he had obtained his wealth in an unrighteous manner as the unrighteous manager discussed earlier in this chapter. There is no "vulgar" sin in his life. He was simply a **rich man**, self-centered, self-indulgent and continually displaying his wealth [ostentatiously](#). It is interesting that living ostentatiously is considered a vice by such major religious groups as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Note however that the Bible does not teach that wealth per se is evil, but to use it only for self-gratification without a genuine, practical concern for the needs of others is evil. As Christians we need to constantly remember that it all belongs to God and we are temporary stewards of His wealth.

**THOUGHT** - It is notable that this rich man's entire temporal life on earth is summed up in a single sentence! Fittingly, most of the description of the rich man deals with his eternal life in hell! How would Jesus sum up your (my) very short life on earth?

In the ancient Jewish culture, if one was rich, he was viewed as being **blessed by God** and thus he was envied and honored by those who were not rich. Clearly this man is portrayed as not just rich, but extravagantly rich, "[filthy rich](#)" as we would say today, and thus he would be seen by the populace as a man who was **extravagantly blessed by God. God's hand was surely on this man's life for good not bad!** The Pharisees who were lovers of money would view this man as a "hero," as one "touched by God!"

**Wiersbe** asks "Why is one man wealthy and another man poor? Had the Jewish people obeyed God's commandments concerning the Sabbatical Year and the Year of Jubilee, there would have been little or no poverty in the land, for the wealth and real estate could not have fallen into the hands of a few wealthy people (see Lev. 25, and note Ex. 23:11; Deut. 14:28-29). The Old Testament prophets denounced the rich for amassing great estates and exploiting the widows and the poor (Isa. 3:15; 10:2; Amos 2:6; 4:1; 5:11-12; 8:4-6; Hab. 2:9-13). In Jesus' day, Palestine was under the rule of Rome, and life was very difficult for the common people." (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

**POSB** on fact that **rich man (plousios)** was unnamed - The rich man did not know God; therefore, he was unknown to God and God was not able to honor him. He was nameless to God. **Lazarus** knew God and was known by God. His very name, **Lazarus**, means God is my Help or Helper. Paul wrote "if anyone loves God, he is known by Him." (1Co 8:3, cf Gal 4:8-9, Jn 10:14, 27)....He was complacent, hoarding and **allowing money to lie around** making more and more for himself and his estate while **needs lay all around him**—right at his gate (cf Mt 25:43, 1Jn 3:17, Mk 4:19, 1Ti 6:9, Zech 7:6, Dt 15:7). (Borrow [Luke Commentary](#))

While in the world's eyes this man was "[filthy rich](#)," in fact he was spiritually poor! As Jesus warned earlier "that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God." (Lk 16:15+) Everyday that he lived brought him closer to losing everything he had, including his eternal soul. This rich man's wretched, miserable, poor and blind spiritual condition reminds me of Jesus' [solemn](#) warning to the church at Laodicea

'Because you say, **"I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,"** and you do not know that you are **wretched** and **miserable** and **poor** and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 20 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.(Rev 3:17-20+)

The words of Jehovah in Jeremiah's prophecy are apropos to this rich man who glorified in the praise of men rather than God...

Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, **let not a rich man boast of his riches**; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that **he understands and knows Me**, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight

in these things," declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

**He habitually dressed in purple ([porphura](#)) and fine linen ([bussos/byssos](#))** - **Habitually dressed** is the [imperfect tense](#) pictures him day after day clothing himself with incredibly luxurious garb. Even on his "routine days" he still clothed himself in incredibly luxurious clothes. **Purple ([porphura](#))** was cloth dyed with a very costly dye obtained from the [shellfish murex](#). It would be used for the outer garment and the fine linen for the undergarment. In the Septuagint it was the material used to construct God's Tabernacle and the garments of the priests. The combination of **purple and fine linen** stands for the ultimate in luxury (both were used to construct God's Tabernacle!) This man would have been on the front cover of the Hebrew edition of [GQ](#) ("Gentlemen's Quarterly")!

**Pulpit Commentary** - The words which describe the life of [Dives](#) were chosen with rare skill; they are few, but enough to show us that the worldly hero of the story lived a life of royal magnificence and boundless luxury. His ordinary apparel seems to have been **purple and fine linen**. This **purple**, the [true sea purple](#), was a most precious and rare dye, and the **purple** garment so dyed was a royal gift, and was scarcely used save by princes and nobles of very high degree. **In it the idol-images were sometimes arrayed**. The fine **linen** (byssus) was worth twice its weight in gold. It was in hue dazzlingly white. And fared sumptuously every day. With this princely rich man banquets were a matter of daily occurrence. Luther renders the Greek here, "lebte herrlich und in Freuden." Thus with all the accompaniments of grandeur this nameless mighty one lived, his halls ever filled with noble guests, his antechambers with servants. Everything with him that could make life splendid and joyous was in profusion. Some have suspected that our Lord took, as the model for his picture here, the life of the tetrarch Herod Antipas. The court of that magnificent and luxurious prince would certainly have well served as the original of the picture; but Herod was still living, and it is more likely that Jesus was describing the earth-life of one who had already been "dismissed" from his earthly stewardship, and who, when he spoke the parable, was in the world to come. (**ED: THAT IS AN INTERESTING COMMENT - THE IMPLICATION IS THERE WAS A REAL RICH MAN, BUT IT IS STILL CALLED A PARABLE!**).

**John MacArthur** gives some background, which while not stated directly, is certainly implied - The outer garment that the people wore in those days if they were wealthy enough was made out of...[fulled wool](#). It was placed into a basin, and then it was mingled with clay (**Ed:** And urine!!! [See note](#)), and the time consuming, laborious, hands-on process produced a kind of white that was almost blazing, brilliant, shining white. It was a very expensive process done for the elite who alone could afford it. They had whiter clothes than everybody else, and it wasn't because of their detergent. It was because of this process ([fulling](#)). And if you wanted to really make the outer garment especially luxurious, you would dye it with [Tyrian purple](#). ([A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#))

**Gene Brooks** - The **fine linen ([bussos/byssos](#))** refers to his undergarments. He had the best underwear money could buy. (**Ed:** No [humdrum](#) "Fruit of the Loom" for this rich man!)

**Brian Bill** on **fine linen ([bussos/byssos](#))** - He was not a "Fruit of the Loom" kind of guy! This linen was produced from the flax that grew on the banks of the Nile River. It was white, very soft, and kept him cool in the warm weather. Because it was so expensive, it was only worn by those who were really rich. Often it was just kings and queens who could afford it. This guy had it all and lived in dazzling splendor every day. While some people are quiet about their wealth, this man strutted around like a peacock. While some are able to splurge once in awhile, he lived in opulence every day. He wanted everyone to know how rich he was. He was in love with himself. He had servants galore, bountiful food, and a gorgeous home. ([What Happens When You Die?](#))

**Joyously ([euphraino](#)) living in splendor ([lampros](#)) every day** ("who feasted sumptuously every day" = NET; Lit., making merry in splendor.) - Not only is he living in luxury but **every day** is a day of lavish celebration. Wycliffe, he ate, each day, shiningly. He was flamboyant in his materialistic lifestyle. Do you know anyone who calls themselves Christian who lives this way? Woe! **NIDNTT** says that "such joy stems largely from those events and situations which give rise to [communal](#) rejoicing, such as a banquet." It is as if every day was a grand party for this man and his many guests! Think of the best, most costly celebration you might have perhaps one time in your life (e.g., a 50th wedding anniversary), and then picture this man having an even more costly celebration **EVERY DAY** of his life! Jesus is making the point that not only is he wealthy, but he "enjoyed" his wealth daily. As the commercial says "You only go around once. Grab for all the gusto you can!" To accomplish this goal one needs money, and [Dives](#) had plenty. And so Dives daily dived into decadence with delight! Sadly, like so many souls (contrast "many" in Mt 7:13+ and "few" in Mt 7:14+),

**THOUGHT-** [Dives](#) traded temporal [GUSTO](#) for eternal [GEHENNA](#)! That's a very bad deal and surely those haunting memories (including "What if I had only....." Fill in blank - "listened," "believed," etc) will be part of the "torment" and "agony" every lost soul experiences in hell.

---

**Joyously (2165)**([euphraino](#) from **eu** = well, good + **phren** = mind, intellect, disposition) means in active voice to make someone glad, to cheer someone up, but here it is in the passive voice mean to be glad, to be joyful, to celebrate or be jubilant. Luke uses euphraino 4 times with this sense in story of Prodigal son where it means to celebrate or to feast in token of joy (Lk 15:23, 24, 29, 32).

Luke used **euphraino** to describe another rich man who suffered the same fate as this rich man 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and **be merry** ([euphraino](#))."' "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night **your soul is required of you**; and now who will own what you have prepared?' (Lk 12:19-20-note)

**Splendor** (only used here) ([2988](#)) (an adverb **lampros** from the noun **lampros** = shining, radiant resplendent, of Herod's robe - Lk 23:11, of angel's shining garment - Acts 10:30) means splendidly, in a sumptuous or opulent manner. It pertains to living in ostentatious luxury, with a desire to show off.

**Purple** ([4209](#)) (**porphura**) is strictly speaking the [purple mussel](#), a type of shellfish found on the coasts of the Mediterranean which was the source of a reddish-purple dye highly valued in the ancient world and in the last of the last days (cf Rev 18:12). When this shellfish was crushed, it would give off yellow fluid which would turn to a purple or blue color based on the exposure to sunlight. If it was a cloudy day, it would turn purple. If it was a clear, sunny day, it would turn blue.

In the NT **porphura** is used of expensive garments made from cloth dyed purple. Twice used of the purple robe placed on Jesus to mock His royalty (Mk 15:17, 20), once for the rich man (Lk 16:19) and once for the ostentation in the last days, specifically describing the destruction of the great wealth of Babylon and the mourning and lamenting of the world's merchants over their loss! (Rev 18:11-12). Note that in Mt. 27:28, the same robe used to mock the King of kings was described as **scarlet** ([kokkinos](#) - also used in Rev 18:12) derived from a worm whose fluids were the sources of the scarlet dye. See how this ties in with the incredible statement of our Lord in Psalm 22:6 "**I Am a Worm!**"

**NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible** - Although imitation purple dye existed, the dominant source of the dye came from crushing murex shellfish around Tyre. It was necessarily expensive; one source estimates 10,000 shellfish to produce a single gram of the dye (**Ed**: Some write this made the dye more valuable than gold!). Robes so dyed not surprisingly carried a strong odor, but purple's expense made it a status symbol.

**Wikipedia** - The word '**purple**' comes from the [Old English](#) word *purpul* which derives from [Latin](#) *purpura*, in turn from the [Greek](#) *porphura*, name of the [Tyrian purple dye](#) manufactured in classical antiquity from a mucus secreted by the [spiny dye-murex](#) snail. This dye was very costly and was used for the upper (outer) garment by the wealthy and princes (royal purple). They had three shades of purple (deep violet, deep scarlet or crimson, deep blue).

**Porphuria** - 4 uses in the NT (cf the derivative word "porphuropolis" used to describe Lydia "a seller of purple fabrics" - Acts 16:14)

Mark 15:17 They \*dressed Him up in purple, and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him;

Mark 15:20 After they had mocked Him, they took the purple robe off Him and put His own garments on Him. And they \*led Him out to crucify Him.

Luke 16:19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

Revelation 18:12-note (Context - the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with Babylon, will weep and lament over her fall and the merchants will mourn over the fact that their business is forever gone!) cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and **purple** and silk and scarlet ([kokkinos](#)), and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble

**Comment:** The adjective form of porphura, **porphurous**, is used in Rev 18:16-17a " 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in **fine linen** (bussinous adjective form of **bussos** -see below) and **purple** and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!'" Just as the great Dives died in one hour, so too did Babylon the great! And such will be the case with all of the world's rich and riches! As John says the world is "passing away" (1 Jn 2:17).

**THOUGHT** - The question is this - Are you banking on the world or you believing in the Messiah? It will determine your destiny just as it did for Dives and Lazarus!

**Porphura** - 48x in 48v in the Septuagint - Used especially in the construction of God's Holy Tabernacle and the Holy Garments of the priests.

Exod. 25:4; 26:1,31,36; 27:16; 28:5,8,15,33; 31:4; 35:6,25; 36:35,37; 38:18; 39:1-3,5,8,24,29; 2 Chr. 2:7,14; 3:14; Prov. 31:22; Song. 7:5; Jer. 10:9; Ezek. 27:7; Dan. 5:7,16,29; 6:3;

Ex 25:4 (DESCRIBING THE CONTRIBUTION FROM THE PEOPLE FOR BUILDING GOD'S

TABERNACLE) blue, purple and scarlet material, fine linen, goat hair,

Ex 26:1 “Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet material; you shall make them with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman.

Ex 39:1-3 Moreover, from the blue and purple and scarlet material, they made finely woven garments for ministering in the holy place as well as the holy garments which were for Aaron, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 2He made the ephod of gold, and of blue and purple and scarlet material, and fine twisted linen. 3Then they hammered out gold sheets and cut them into threads to be woven in with the blue and the purple and the scarlet material, and the fine linen, the work of a skillful workman.

**Fine linen** (only here in NT)(1040)(bussos/byssos from Hebrew word **byssus** = linen) is a shiny white cloth made from bleached flax. Linen was laborious to manufacture, but the fiber was very absorbent and garments made of linen were valued for their exceptional coolness and freshness in the hot weather of Palestine. Linen was so valuable that it was sometimes used as a form of currency in ancient Egypt. Egyptian mummies were wrapped in linen as a symbol of light and purity, and as a display of wealth. Today, linen is usually an expensive textile produced in relatively small quantities. The fine line would have been underneath the outer robe.

**Bussos** - 40x in 38v in the Septuagint - Most often describing the fabrics used to construct God's Holy Tabernacle! That tells you how costly is this material! Ex 25:4; Ex 26:1; Ex 26:31; Ex 26:36; Ex 27:9; Ex 27:16; Ex 27:18; Ex 28:5; Ex 28:6; Ex 28:8; Ex 28:15; Ex 28:33; Ex 28:39; Ex 31:4; Ex 35:6; Ex 35:23; Ex 35:25; Ex 35:35; Ex 36:35; Ex 36:37; Ex 38:9; Ex 38:16; Ex 38:18; Ex 38:23; Ex 39:2; Ex 39:3; Ex 39:5; Ex 39:8; Ex 39:24; Ex 39:28; Ex 39:29; 2 Chr. 2:14; 3:14; Pr. 31:22; Isa. 3:23; 19:9; Ezek. 16:10; 27:7

**Vincent on fine linen (bussos)** - A yellowish flax, and the linen made from it. Herodotus says it was used for enveloping mummies (2:86), a statement confirmed by microscopic examinations. He also speaks of it as a bandage for a wound (7:181). It is the word used by the Septuagint for linen (Ex 25:4; 28:5; 35:6, etc.). Some of the Egyptian linen was so fine that it was called **woven air**. Sir Gardner Wilkinson says that some in his possession was, to the touch, comparable to silk, and not inferior in texture to the finest [cambric](#). It was often as transparent as lawn, a fact illustrated by the painted sculptures, where the entire form is often made distinctly visible through the outer garment. Later Greek writers used the word for cotton and for silk. See Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians," first series, iii., 114 sq., and Rawlinson's "History of Ancient Egypt," i., 487, 512. A yellow byssus was used by the Greeks, the material for which grew around Elis, and which was enormously costly. See Aeschylus, "Persae," 127.

---

## Croft Pentz - HEAVEN AND HELL Luke 16:19–31

There are only two places one can go after death—heaven or hell. We have a choice as to which place we will go. Some people say this is only a parable. However, in parables Jesus never mentioned the names of people. In this story He did! Jesus taught more about hell than about heaven. Look at some of the Scriptures about hell. (1) The wicked shall be turned into hell (Ps. 9:17). (2) Punishment is everlasting (Dan. 12:2). (3) The people who will be in hell are described (Rev. 21:8). There will be no rest in hell (Rev. 14:11, 20:10). There are many more.

### I. THE PERSONS—vv. 19–21

1. Man of wealth—v. 19. “There was a certain rich man,” Jesus said, “who was splendidly clothed and lived each day in mirth and luxury” (LB). Sometimes he is called “Dives,” the Latin word for “rich.”
2. Man of want—v. 20–21 “One day Lazarus, a diseased beggar, was laid at his door. As he lay there longing for scraps from the rich man’s table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores” (LB).

### II. THE PARTICULARS—vv. 22–26

1. Heaven—v. 22. “Finally the beggar died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham in the place of the righteous dead. The rich man also died and was buried” (LB).
2. Hell—v. 23. “And his soul went to hell. There, in torment, he saw Lazarus in the far distance with Abraham” (LB).
3. Help—v. 24. The rich man cries out for water to cool his tongue, because he is tormented in hell.
4. Helpless—v. 25. It is too late to change now. He had had the opportunity while he was alive; after death it is too late (Heb. 9:27).
5. Horror—v. 26. Once a person enters hell, they never get out! The rich man did not go to hell because of his riches, but because he lived for himself and not for God.

### III. THE PLEA—vv. 27–31

1. The Plain—vv. 27–28. “Then the rich man said, ‘O Father Abraham, then please send him to my father’s home—For I have



five brothers—to warn them about this place of torment lest they come here when they die’ ” (LB; compare with Rev. 20:10; 14:11).

2. The Prophets—v. 29. “But Abraham said, ‘The Scriptures have warned them again and again. Your brothers can read them any time they want to’ ” (LB). There is no excuse for man to be lost.

3. The Proposal—v. 30. The rich man thought if someone arose from the dead and went back to earth, then his brothers would believe and repent of their sins.

4. The Problem—v. 31. If the brothers did not believe Moses and the other prophets, neither would they believe if someone arose from the dead and went to them. The Pharisees did not believe Jesus when He arose from the dead.

Besides a real hell, there is also a real heaven. Notice some of the verses from the Bible: (1) The words of Jesus (John 14:1–6). (2) Second Corinthians 5:1 tells of a home not made with human hands. (3) Abraham looked for a city made by God (Heb. 11:10). (4) Paul told of being with Christ after death—(2 Cor. 5:8). (5) The Bible tells of the new heaven (Rev. 22:1–7). There are only two places—heaven and hell. Which place will you be after you die? What you do with Christ decides where you will be! ([Expository Outlines from Luke](#))

---

**ILLUSTRATION OF THE RICH MAN'S INDIFFERENCE TO ETERNAL MATTERS** - When Henry David Thoreau was on his deathbed, he was visited by a minister who urged his dying friend to be ready for death: “Do you know where you’re going in the next world?” Thoreau waved him away with the words, “One world at a time.” His attitude has caused humanists to uphold him as a man of moral courage, resisting a cowardly flight to religion. He was, in fact, the model of a fool. Imagine a man in Florida boarding a plane to Alaska in mid-winter with no baggage, who answers the question, “Do you know where you’re going?” with “One city at a time, my friend.” Only a fool fails to plan ahead for the inevitable.

---

**ILLUSTRATION** There was a cover article in U.S. News and World Report some seven years ago entitled, **Farewell to the Rich, the Famous, and the Unforgettable**. The article concerned the key obituaries of 1997: Princess Diana, Mother Teresa, James Michener, Gianni Versace, Paul Tsongas, John Denver, Jacques Cousteau, William Brennan, Ben Hogan, Charles Kuralt, and many others. Following a relatively short time on earth, all of these people tasted death, but all of them are still living somewhere in eternity. The question is, “where?” and how is that destination determined? The author of the article wrestled with these questions as he continued his obituaries for that year of ‘97: “*Red Skelton, who used to end his radio and television shows with the sign-off ‘God bless,’ must by now know if he really does. Allen Ginsberg, similarly, must by now know if Buddha is prepared to take a profane Jewish poet to his ample bosom. . . . For Jimmy Stewart, it was a wonderful life, and let’s hope that what he found after death compares well with it.*” He then concluded with this comment: “*But too lengthy contemplation of the fragility of life cannot be good, either for the complexion or for the appetite. It can only turn us, as we consider the past year’s deaths into the spiritual equivalent of the Chicago Cubs fans, saying, ‘Wait until next year,’ not with hope but with a slight shudder.*”

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - In 1923 a group of the world’s most successful financiers met at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Collectively, these tycoons controlled more wealth than there was in the United States Treasury, and for years newspapers and magazines had been printing their success stories and urging the youth of the nation to follow their examples.

Twenty-seven years later, let’s see what happened to them.

- (1) [CHARLES SCHWAB](#)—the president of the largest independent steel company—lived on borrowed money the last five years of his life, and died penniless.
- (2) [ARTHUR CUTTEN](#)—the greatest wheat speculator—died abroad insolvent.
- (3) [RICHARD WHITNEY](#)—the president of the New York Stock Exchange—was released some time ago from Sing Sing.
- (4) [ALBERT FALL](#)—the member of the President’s Cabinet—was pardoned from prison so he could die at home.
- (5) [JESSE LIVERMORE](#)—the greatest bear in Wall Street—committed suicide.
- (6) [LEON FRASER](#)—the president of the Bank of International Settlement—committed suicide.
- (7) [IVAR KREUGER](#)—the head of the world’s greatest monopoly—committed suicide.

All of these men had learned how to make money, but not one of them had learned how to live.

---

The late Robert Horton once said the greatest lesson he learned from life was that people who set their minds and hearts on money are equally disappointed whether they get it or whether they don’t.



---

Upon the statue of Joseph Brotherton, the English church reformer and political activist of the early 1800's, is the inscription, "A man's riches consist not in the amount of his wealth, but in the fewness of his wants."

---

### **Hell Is for Real Luke 16:19–31 - John Phillips**

Jesus spoke more about hell than He did about heaven. Indeed, it was because He knew so well the reality of that dreadful place that He came down here to warn and woo the sons of men. This passage is a statement of fact, not a parable. It records an incident torn from real life. The language may well be figurative, although some, perhaps, would question that, but hell is real. He who said "I am ... the truth" and who loved men enough to die for them confronts us with this solemn scene.

1. We Do Not Know Who This Man Was:

There is no record of his name. It is not in the book of life.

2. We Do Know Where This Man Went:

He went to a place of conscious torment.

3. We Also Know What This Man Wanted:

Too late—

a. He wanted to pray.

("Father Abraham")

b. He wanted to preach.

("I have five brethren")

Note: Here are the verses in which Jesus referred to heaven: Matthew 5:12; 6:20; 7:14; 13:33; 19:17, 21; 25:26; Mark 10:21, 30; Luke 6:23; 10:20; 12:33; 16:22, 25; 18:22; John 3:13; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54; 10:28; 12:25; 14:2–3; 17:2–3.

Here are the verses in which He referred to hell: Matthew 5:22, 29–30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:15, 28; 11:22–24; 12:36, 41–42; 13:40, 42, 50; 16:18; 18:8–9; 22:13; Mark 3:29; 9:43, 45, 47; 12:40; Luke 10:14–15; 11:31–32; 12:5; 16:23–25, 28; 20:47; John 5:22, 24, 27, 29–30; 9:39; 12:31; 16:8, 11; 17:12. (100 NT Sermon Outlines)

### **A FEW "RICHISM'S"**

Naismith has written, "Where is happiness found? John D. Rockefeller, a Christian millionaire, said, "I have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness. I would barter them all for the days I sat on an office stool in Cleveland and counted myself rich on three dollars a week." Broken in health, he employed an armed guard.

There are two ways in which a Christian may view his money—"How much of my money shall I use for God?" or "How much of God's money shall I use for myself?" W. Graham Scroggie

Money, in truth, is one of the most unsatisfying of possessions. It takes away some cares, no doubt; but it brings with it quite as many cares as it takes away. There is the trouble in the getting of it. There is anxiety in the keeping of it. There are temptations in the use of it. There is guilt in the abuse of it. There is sorrow in the losing of it. There is perplexity in the disposing of it. J. C. Ryle

Two-thirds of all the strifes, quarrels and lawsuits in the world arise from one simple cause—money! J. C. Ryle

How we use our money demonstrates the reality of our love for God. In some ways it proves our love more conclusively than depth of knowledge, length of prayers or prominence of service. Charles Caldwell Ryrie

W. H. Vanderbilt said, "The care of 200 million dollars is too great a load for any brain or back to bear. It is enough to kill anyone. There is no pleasure in it."

When I have any money I get rid of it as quickly as possible, least it find a way into my heart. John Wesley

John Jacob Astor left five million, but had been martyr to dyspepsia and melancholy. He said, "I am the most miserable man on earth."

Henry Ford, the automobile king, said, "Work is the only pleasure. It is only work that keeps me alive and makes life worth living. I was happier when doing a mechanic's job."

Andrew Carnegie, the multi-millionaire, said, "Millionaires seldom smile."

The two great tests of character are wealth and poverty.

Wealth can do us no good unless it help us toward heaven. Thomas Adams

The greater our wealth, the greater our dangers. Aristotle

Whenever wealth keeps a man from thinking about God it is not a blessing but a curse. John Blanchard

Worldlings make gold their god; saints make God their gold. Matthew Henry

Gold will be slave or master. Horace

The real measure of our wealth is how much we'd be worth if we lost all our money. John Henry Jowett

Few people have the spiritual resources to be both wealthy and godly. Erwin W. Lutzer

God gave us wealth, not that we should be hoarders but dispensers. Thomas Manton

Wealth often ends in pride. Thomas Manton

Wealth is no mark of God's favour. Poverty is no mark of God's displeasure. J. C. Ryle

Wealth ruins far more souls than poverty. J. C. Ryle

The wealthiest man is he who is contented with least. Socrates

Many a man's gold has lost him his God. George Swinnock

The streets of gold do not have too great an appeal for those who pile up gold here on earth. A. W. Tozer

Money is like sea-water; the more a man drinks, the more thirsty he becomes

Money often unmakes the man who makes it.

There are no pockets in a shroud.

You can blot out the sun if you hold a penny close enough to your eye.

Money is like muck, no good unless it is spread. Francis Bacon

Nearly half the parables Jesus told have the use of money as their main subject. It is sometimes said that we should give until it hurts. But Jesus teaches that it should hurt when we cease to give! Ian Barclay

Few things test a person's spirituality more accurately than the way he uses money. John Blanchard

We cannot serve God and mammon, for as the thoughts of the one rise up, the other goes down. Donald Cargill

Lust and lucre follow one another as closely akin, both seducing the heart from the Creator to the creature. A. R. Fausset

Make money your god, it will plague you like the devil. Henry Fielding

Time and money are the heaviest burdens of life, and the unhappiest of all mortals are those who have more of either than they know how to use. Samuel Johnson

If a man's religion does not affect his use of money, that man's religion is vain. Hugh Martin

The poorest man I know is the man who has nothing but money. John D. Rockefeller

By doing good with his money a man, as it were, stamps the image of God upon it, and makes it pass current for the merchandise of heaven. John Rutledge

It is possible to love money without having it, and it is possible to have it without loving it. J. C. Ryle

## **POOR MAN-RICH MAN THE STRIKING CONTRASTS**

**John MacArthur** summarizes fourteen striking contrasts between the **poor man** and the **rich man** in Luke 16:19-31:

1. The poor man then becomes rich; and the rich man becomes poor; and the poor man becomes richer than the rich man ever was; and the rich man becomes poorer than the poor man ever was.
2. You have a poor man on the outside of the house, and you have a rich man on the inside. Then comes death, and you have a poor man on the inside and rich man on the outside.
3. You have a poor man with no food, and a rich man with all the food he can possibly need; and then you have a poor man at the great heavenly banquet, and a rich man with absolutely nothing.
4. You have a poor man with needs, and a rich man with no needs; and then you have a poor man with no needs, and a rich man with needs.
5. You have a poor man who desires everything. You have a rich man who desires nothing, and then you have a rich man who will never have his desires fulfilled, and a poor man who has all his desires fulfilled.
6. You have a poor man who suffers, and a rich man who is satisfied; and then you have a rich man who suffers, and a poor man who's satisfied.
7. You have a poor man who's tormented, and a rich man who's happy; and then you have a poor man who's happy, and a rich man who's tormented.
8. You have a poor man who is humiliated, a rich man who's honored. Then you have a rich man who is humiliated, and a poor man who is honored.
9. You have a poor man who wants a crumb, a rich man who feasts; and then you have a poor man who's at a feast, and a rich man who wants a drop of water.
10. You have a poor man who seeks help, a rich man who gives none. Then you have a rich man who seeks help, and a poor man who gives none.
11. You have a poor man who is a nobody, a rich man who is well-known; and then you have a poor man who has a name, and a rich man who has none.
12. You have a poor man who has no dignity in death, not even a burial. You have a rich man who has dignity in death.
13. Then you have a poor man who has dignity after death, and a rich man who has no dignity after death, not even a name.
14. You have a poor man with no hope, and a rich man with all hope. Then you have a rich man with no hope, and a poor man who is hope realized. ([A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#))

SUMMARY OF LUKE 16:19-31 THE GREAT REVERSAL	
RICH MAN	LAZARUS
IN LIFE AND IN DEATH	
Nameless	Named Lazarus
Rich	Poor
Healthy	Disabled
Lived in luxury	Lived as a beggar
Clothed in purple	Covered with sores
Died and was buried	Died and escorted to Paradise
His misery just begins	His misery ends forever
LIFE AFTER DEATH IN ETERNITY	
In Hell	In Paradise

<b>Saw glory</b>	<b>Was in glory</b>
<b>Alone</b>	<b>Had fellowship</b>
<b>Burning sensation</b>	<b>Had water</b>
<b>Tormented</b>	<b>Comforted</b>
<b>Remembered former life</b>	<b>Was silent</b>
<b>Was fixed in hell</b>	<b>Was fixed in Paradise</b>
<b>Agonized for loved ones</b>	<b>Was settled in eternity</b>
<b>Begged for another chance</b>	<b>Was silently at peace</b>
<b>Unable to intercede for his family</b>	<b>At rest in God's promises</b>

**John Blanchard** in his fascinating book [Whatever Happened to Hell?](#) writes "Hell seems to have fallen on hard times. A poll taken in the United States in 1978 revealed that over seventy per cent of those interviewed said they believed in hell. Eleven years later a Newsweek survey, again taken in the United States, produced a figure of just fifty-eight per cent. A poll conducted in Australia in 1988 indicated that only thirty-nine per cent believed in hell, while in 1989 a Gallup Poll taken in Britain for the Sunday Telegraph revealed that no more than twenty-four per cent of those questioned did so...When the American church historian Martin Marty, a professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School, was preparing a Harvard lecture on the subject, he consulted the indexes of several scholarly journals dating back over a period of a hundred years to 1889, and failed to find a single entry. His conclusion was that 'Hell disappeared and no one noticed.' (Cited in Newsweek, 27 March 1989.) Gordon Kaufman, a professor at Harvard Divinity School, says that hell has been in decline for 400 years and is now so diminished that the process is irreversible: 'I don't think there can be any future for hell.' Another theologian says, 'Talk of hell started to fall off in western countries about the same time science began to make an impact, about the late nineteenth century.' (The Bulletin, 24 May 1988.) Speaking on BBC television, Richard Cavendish, author of Visions of Heaven and Hell, commented, 'In our century there has been a kind of double development. We have created hells on earth on a bigger scale and perhaps of a more horrible kind than any previous century has done. Yet there has been a very general retreat from the idea of hell.' This retreat is reflected in theological literature. One volume of Christian doctrine, with nearly 800 pages, and edited by three highly respected Christian leaders, has only eight lines on hell; yet even this is eight lines more than in another major work entitled Hand-book of Contemporary Theology. In 1957, an American religious writer researching the subject had difficulty getting hold of a particularly important book published towards the end of the nineteenth century. When he eventually found one in a seminary library he discovered that it had been loaned out only twice in fifty years! In the course of preparing this present book I asked the manager of a large Christian bookshop in Australia how many titles he stocked on the subject of hell. He replied, 'None. We had only one, but nobody wanted to buy it, so we had to give it away.' On another occasion I asked a minister with several thousand books in his library how many he had on hell and was told, 'I did have one, but I seem to have mislaid it.' Yet if hell no longer exists, or is on its deathbed, the word 'hell' may never have been more active or popular; it is certainly in no danger of becoming unemployed. It is often used to convey images of violence or aggression. In the Second World War, the United States 2nd Armour Division, led by General George Patten, was nicknamed 'hell on wheels' because of the havoc it caused on its way to becoming the first American unit to enter Berlin. During the popular revolution against Communism in Romania in December 1989 there was a last-ditch battle on the streets of Bucharest between the Securitate Secret Police and units of the Romanian army. One observer said, 'All hell has broken loose.' When fifteen people were killed and 186 injured in a collision involving seventy-five vehicles near Chattanooga, Tennessee in December 1990, a fireman described the scene as 'three miles of hell'. On the first night of the war in the Persian Gulf in 1991, Cable Network News reporter Bernard Shaw described the American bombing of Baghdad by telling viewers, 'This feels like we're in the centre of hell.' Later in that extraordinary year, when there was a coup d' é tat in the USSR, the British politician Paddy Ashdown said, 'The gates of hell are going to open on the Soviet Union.' People also use the word 'hell' to speak of a particularly painful experience. The British comic actor Terry Thomas was once a millionaire, yet died in sad and lonely poverty after contracting Parkinson's Disease, something he described as 'hell to live with'. Another millionaire, the Marquess of Bristol, was jailed for a year in 1988 for smuggling cocaine into Jersey aboard his private helicopter. Asked what it was like for a man of his social standing to live in a prison cell smaller than any room in his own palatial home, he said, 'It was sheer hell.' Talking of the effects of taking cocaine, disgraced American football star Dexter Manley confessed, 'I went through hell.'<sup>19</sup> Sometimes, the word is used in situations not nearly so serious, yet in a way that expresses very strong emotions. When the England team reached the semi-finals of soccer's World Cup competition in Italy in July 1990, millions in Britain watched the match on television. There was chaos around London as hordes of people left work early to be home in time for

the kick-off. In the words of one reporter, 'Heaven was anywhere there was a screen. Hell was a faulty fuse.' Earlier in the same competition, England's captain had to return home because of an injured Achilles tendon, and the team manager commented, 'We miss him like hell.'<sup>21</sup> Then there are times when the word is used to mean a great deal of power or effort. When England's cricketers were being humiliated during the 1990–1991 tour of Australia, the Chairman of Selectors defended them by saying, 'They are all trying like hell.' In his book *How to play your best golf all the time*, Tommy Armour, the famous Scottish golfer and teacher, advised his readers to 'whack the hell out of the ball with the right hand'. The word is also used to mean something difficult or dangerous. When my stepmother faced critical surgery in July 1990 the surgeon warned me, 'It's a hell of an operation.' About the same time, the Church of England asked advertising company Cogent Elliott to come up with slogans for a campaign to recruit new clergy. One of the proposed posters read, 'The money's diabolical. The hours are ungodly. It's a miracle anybody does it. C of E clergy. It's a hell of a job.' At other times those who use the word seem to be coming at it from two different angles at once. In 1990 an Australian newspaper carried an article on the holiday resort of Pattaya, in Thailand, where 'foreign tourists can stagger from go-go bar to brothel in a drugged stupor for as little as ten dollars a day'. The story was carried under the heading 'A Holiday in Hell'. The word 'hell' can also mean something good, enjoyable or exciting. In December 1990, Iraq's President Saddam Hussein suddenly announced the release of all foreigners held against their will since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait four months earlier. When hostage David Dorrington telephoned his wife in Britain to ask whether she had heard the good news, her reply was, 'Yes, all hell's breaking loose over here.' On another page, the same newspaper reported that Durham County Cricket Club had been granted County Championship status by the Test and County Cricket Board. The club's treasurer told a reporter that it was strange to feel so calm because 'I thought I'd be as excited as hell.'<sup>27</sup> At a funeral service for the extravagant American millionaire Malcolm Forbes, held in March 1990 and attended by 2,000 mourners, his son Robert addressed his dead father with the words, 'It's been a hell of a party—thanks for the trip.'....Yet even with all these illustrations we have hardly dented the mass of idioms which make use of the word 'hell'. To move 'like a bat out of hell' is to move very quickly; to go 'hell for leather' means much the same thing; to have 'a snowball's chance in hell' is to have no chance at all; to 'raise hell' is to cause trouble; to say, 'There will be hell to pay' means that there will be serious trouble later on; to be 'as angry as hell' is to be furious; to give a person 'merry hell' is to make things unpleasant for him.

[\(Whatever Happened to Hell?\)](#)

## MULTIPLE ARTICLES RELATED TO HELL

Journal articles, sermons, books

1. [How can I not go to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#) (THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION TO ANSWER!)
2. Eternal Punishment - In depth article on site
3. [Jesus' View of Eternal Punishment \(Mt 25:31-46\)](#) - Robert L. Thomas - 31 pp
4. [Hell: Never, Forever, or Just for Awhile](#) - Richard Mayhue - 16 pp
5. [Paul's Concept Of Eternal Punishment](#) - James Rosscup - 24 pp
6. [Eternal Punishment In John's Revelation](#) - Trevor P Craigen, 13 pp
7. [A Kinder, Gentler Theology Of Hell?](#) - Larry D. Pettegrew, 17 pp
8. [Wrath That Endures Forever](#) William V. Crockett - JETS 34.2 (1991): 195-202
9. [The Horrors and Habitat of Hell](#) - Chris Gee (short, pithy, painful read)
10. [What Does The Bible Say About Hell?](#) - Booklet from Discovery House Publishing
11. [A Horrible Place Called Hell](#) - Alan Carr
12. [One Hour After Death](#) - James Smith
13. [Eternal Punishment](#) - Eryl Davies, Foundations 13 (Autumn 1984): 34-44
14. [Jonathan Edwards & Hell](#) - Christopher W. Morgan - 180 page book, can be borrowed
15. [The Eternity of Hell Torments, by the late Rev. Jonathan Edwards - Revised and corrected by the Rev. C.E. De Coetlogon, A.M. 1788](#)
16. [Whatever Happened to Hell?](#) - John Blanchard - 340 page book, can be borrowed
17. [Whatever Happened to Hell?](#) - Jon E Braun - 216 page book, can be borrowed [5 ratings](#)
18. [The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment](#) - Harry Buis
19. [One Minute After You Die](#) - Erwin Lutzer - 148 page book, can be borrowed
20. [One Minute After You Die - A Preview of Your final destination](#) - 28 minute video by Dr Erwin Lutzer
21. [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
22. [Eight Myths about Hell](#) Sam Storms (very interesting)
23. [Who will go to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
24. [Does hell exist? | GotQuestions.org](#)



25. [Is hell real? Is hell eternal? | GotQuestions.org](#)
26. [Where is hell? What is the location of hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
27. [What does hell look like? How hot is hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
28. [Are there different levels of punishment in hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
29. [What kind of bodies will people have in hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
30. [Did God create hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
31. [How is eternity in hell a fair punishment for sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
32. [How is an eternity in hell a just punishment for only a human lifetime of sin? | GotQuestions.org](#)
33. [How can a loving God send someone to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
34. [Is hell literally a place of fire and brimstone? | GotQuestions.org](#)
35. [What does it mean that hell is referred to as a lake of fire? | GotQuestions.org](#)
36. [Does God love the people who are in hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
37. [Why does God send people to hell? | GotQuestions.org](#)
38. [Questions about Heaven, Hell, and Eternity \(All\) | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Luke 16:20 "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,**

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

- **And a poor man** Luke 18:35-43; 1 Samuel 2:8; James 1:9; 2:5
- **named Lazarus** Jn 11:1
- **was laid at his gate** laid Acts 3:2
- **covered with sores**, Luke 16:21; Job 2:7; Ps 34:19; 73:14; Isaiah 1:6; Jer 8:22
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hell in W G T Shedd's Dogmatic Theology](#) - one of the best on the subject of Hell
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur

**And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores-** How ironic and fascinating that in life only a relatively "thin" gate separated these two men, the richest of the rich from the poorest of the poor, but in death they were separated by a **great** gulf or **chasm** which could not be traversed (Lk 16:26-note!) What would you do if a poor man were laid at your front door? Or on the corner of your street or cul-de-sac? Notice that the **poor man** never speaks. Jesus uses him to present the striking contrasts to the main character, the rich man. In other words, this story is not so much about the poor man's experience in Heaven but about the rich man's experience in Hell. The rich man is the one who speaks but not until he has arrived at his eternal destination in Hell. In fact in his speaking the rich man gives us the only testimony from Hell in all of the Bible which is why this story is so important. **This is the only warning from an occupant of Hell in all of Scripture and it needs to be carefully heard and heeded!**

**Poor** (4434) (**ptochos** from **ptosso** = crouch, cringe, cower down or hide oneself for fear, a picture of one crouching and cowering like a beggar with a tin cup to receive the pennies dropped in!) is an adjective which describes one who crouches and cowers and is used as a noun to mean **beggar**. These poor were unable to meet their basic needs and so were forced to depend on others for daily sustenance. Classical Greek used the **ptochos** to refer to a person reduced to total destitution, who crouched in a corner begging. As he held out one hand for alms he often hid his face with the other hand, because he was ashamed of being recognized.

**Lazarus** (2976) (**Lazaros**) from Hebrew **elazar** from **el** = God + **'azar** = help) means "helped of God," "God helps," "whom God helps," "assistance of God." In fact God helped him so much in Luke 16 that He gave this poor man the help every soul needs, eternal life! The Greek is *Lázaros* is an abridged form of the Hebrew name Eleazar, with a Greek termination. In the Septuagint and Josephus we find the forms *Eleazár*, and *Eleázaros*. The name was common among the Jews. Two men are so named in the New Testament. One is the poor beggar in the parable (Luke 16:19ff.), and the other is the citizen of Bethany residing with his two sisters, Mary and Martha, where Christ frequently visited. He was the one whom Jesus raised from the dead (John 11:1ff.).

**MacArthur** comments that "He was the no-name as far as the rich man was concerned; but as far as God was concerned, he had a

name; and the rich man had no name. You have to have a name in Heaven. Nobody needs a name in hell."

**Lazarus** - 15x in 15v - not found in the Septuagint. Lk. 16:20; Lk. 16:23; Lk. 16:24; Lk. 16:25; Jn. 11:1; Jn. 11:2; Jn. 11:5; Jn. 11:11; Jn. 11:14; Jn. 11:43; Jn. 12:1; Jn. 12:2; Jn. 12:9; Jn. 12:10; Jn. 12:17

[The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#) has an interesting note on **Lazarus** commenting that "since in Christ's kingdom of truth names indicate realities, this (name) was probably given because of its significance (**Ed**: Helped of God), suggesting the beggar's faith in God and patient dependence upon Him. It was this faith and not his poverty which at last brought him into Abraham's bosom. Not one word does Lazarus speak in the parable, and this may also be suggestive of patient submission. He does not murmur at his hard lot, nor rail at the rich man, nor after death triumph over him. The parable is related to that of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16-21-note). This latter draws the veil over the worldling at death; the other lifts it. It is also a counterpart of that of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13-note), **which shows how wealth may wisely be used to our advantage**, while this parable **shows what calamities result from failing to make such wise use of riches**. The great lesson is that our condition in Hades depends upon our conduct here (**ED**: CAUTION! OUR CONDUCT PER SE DOES NOT DETERMINE OUR DESTINY. FAITH IN CHRIST DOES. OF COURSE FAITH THAT IS GENUINE AND SAVING SHOWS IT'S "COLORS" BY ONE'S GENERAL CONDUCT - "TOWARD HEAVEN RATHER THAN TOWARD HELL" SO TO SPEAK - SANCTIFICATION IS ABOUT DIRECTION, NOT PERFECTION. WE ARE CREDITED WITH THE PERFECTION OF JESUS AT JUSTIFICATION WHICH IS REALIZED AT OUR GLORIFICATION. IN THE MEANTIME, PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION FOLLOWS HIS EXAMPLE, ALBEIT WITH SLIP-UPS, FOR ALL OF US BECAUSE OUR BODIES STILL HARBOR THAT OLD ADAMIC "REBEL" THE SIN NATURE)....Thus, Lazarus represents the pious indigent who stood at the opposite extreme from the proud, covetous, and luxury-loving Pharisee (JESUS NEVER CALLS HIM A PHARISEE, BUT HE IS SPEAKING TO THE PHARISEES AND SO CLEARLY THESE LOVERS OF MONEY WERE IN VIEW IN THIS STORY). The parable made a deep impression on the mind of the church, so that the term "lazar," no longer a proper name, has passed into many languages, as in lazar house, lazaretto, also lazzarone, applied to the mendicants of Italian towns. There was even an order, half-military, half-monastic, called the Knights of Lazarus, whose special duty it was to minister to lepers.

**Lazarus** is the name of two men in the NT and both received **help** from God for both received life from Jesus - The poor man in Lk. 16:20,23-25; Mary and Martha's brother who was brought back to life by Jesus in Jn. 11:1-2,5,11,14,43; 12:1-2,9-10,17.

How interesting that the same adjective [ptochos](#) is used to describe the first beatitude in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount - clearly not only was Lazarus physically poor but he was **poor** in spirit and thus became far richer in death than the rich man was in life!

"Blessed are the **poor** ([ptochos](#)) in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Mt 5:3-note)

**Was laid** (better = "was thrown"!)([906](#))([ballo](#) - English "ballistics") in all its applications retains the idea of impulse (the idea of force and/or effort). Ballo is in the "Past perfect passive of the common verb ballō. He had been flung there and was still there, "as if contemptuous roughness is implied" (Plummer)" ([Robertson](#)) **Marvin Vincent** adds he was "cast carelessly down by his bearers and left there."

The verb [ballo](#) signifies that Lazarus was not gently laid down but was thrown down! Marvin Vincent agrees that he was "cast carelessly down by his bearers and left there." It was as if someone were casting off someone who was disgusting.

[Robertson](#) adds that the tense of the verb ballo is important because it is "Past perfect passive of the common verb ballō" signifying that "He had been flung there and was still there, "as if contemptuous roughness is implied" (Plummer)!"

**At his gate** - As [Robertson](#) says this pictures him "Right in front of the large portico or gateway, not necessarily a part of the grand house, porch in Matt. 26:71."

It seems clear that the poor man was dumped at the rich man's gate (where it would be impossible to see his horrible condition) for the express purpose of being seen by the rich man, so that he could have his needs met. As we see this is not come to pass. The rich man inside the gate has everything, while the poor man on the outside has nothing. These "tables" would soon be turned!

It was a large **gate** indicating he had a large house/mansion. However his mansion on earth would pale in comparison with the poor man's mansion in heaven for Jesus said "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:2-3, cf Rev 21:10-27). As an aside **Heaven** is described as a kingdom (2Pe 1:11), an inheritance (1Pe 1:4), a country (Heb 11:16), a city (Heb 11:16), and a home (Jn 14:2).

**Gate** (4440)(**pulon** from **pule** = gate as in the narrow gate in Mt 7:13+) is not just any gate but means a gate (or door) marked by impressive construction and stature. **Pulon** as also a gateway, portal, vestibule, the deep arch under which a gate opens (Mt. 26:71; Luke 16:20; Sept.: Jdg. 18:16, 17). In the Septuagint of Ge 43:19 **pulon** describes the gate that enters into Joseph's house, recalling that he was second only to the Pharaoh, so it would have been a magnificent gateway. Thus it is not surprising that **pulon** is used repeatedly in the description of the glorious gates that lead into the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-note. **Pulon** is distinct from **thura** which is a common door. Ancient cities often had **gate** towers as part of their walled defenses. This was a conspicuous feature in the design of Solomon's fortress cities such as Megiddo and Hazor.

**Marvin Vincent** - The gateway, often separated from the house or temple. In Matt. 26:71, it is rendered porch.

**Louw-Nida** - doors or gates used to close off entrance ways—'door, gate.' πύλη and πυλῶνα may refer to house doors and gates or to large doors and gates such as were used in a palace, temple, or in a city wall.

**BDAG** - 1. an entrance that contains a gate or gates, gateway, entrance, gate esp. of the large, impressive gateways at the entrance of temples and palaces (in contrast to **pule**); of Herod's temple=each gateway had two doors) of the entrances of the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 21-note); of the magnificent city gates of Babylon (see [picture of the magnificent Ishtar Gate](#)); of Thebes its entrances shall never be shut Rev 21:25; Of the gates of a temple or of a city Acts 14:13. At the palace of the rich man Lk 16:20; at the apparently elegant residence of Mary the mother of John Mark Acts 12:13: p. (cp. Jos., 5, 202 s. above). Cp. vs. 14ab; also of Simon's house 10:17. The choice of diction contributes to the picture of Mary's and Simon's social status. Of prison gates AcPI Ha 3, 22 and 24 (text restored). 2. a gateway consisting of a forecourt, gateway, entrance separated fr. the house by a court Peter leaves the court (vs. 69) and enters Mt 26:71, and finally leaves it (Mt 26:75)

**How ironic** that poor Lazarus sits covered with sores by an impressive **gate** and could not enter into the celebration inside those gates, and yet he had spiritually entered through narrow **gate** (the **pule**), while the rich man failed to humble himself and enter the humble **gate** described by Jesus in Mt 7:13+!

**THOUGHT** - Dear reader, you may have a magnificent entrance to your home, but have you bowed down and entered the narrow gate or have you entered the rich man's gate, the gate that "is wide and the way (that) is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it?"

**Pulon** - 18x in 12v - Mt. 26:71; Lk. 16:20; Acts 10:17; Acts 12:13; Acts 12:14; Acts 14:13; Rev. 21:12; Rev. 21:13; Rev. 21:15; Rev. 21:21; Rev. 21:25; Rev. 22:14

In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its **gates** will never be closed (Rev 21:25)

**Pulon** - 25x in 22v in the Septuagint -

Ge. 43:19; Jdg. 18:16; Jdg. 18:17; Jdg. 19:26; 1 Ki. 6:8; 1 Ki. 6:33; 1 Ki. 14:27; 1 Ki. 17:10; 2 Ki. 10:9; 2 Ki. 11:5; 1 Chr. 19:9; 1 Chr. 26:13; 2 Chr. 3:7; 2 Chr. 12:10; Ezek. 33:30; Ezek. 40:9; Ezek. 40:11; Ezek. 41:2; Zeph. 2:14

**MacArthur** - Now, the Pharisees would treat that poor man the same way the rich man treated him, which is another indictment of them; and that's the point of this story. The rich man is wicked, because he is so self-indulgent. He has no love, sympathy, interest, or compassion toward this suffering man. How religious are you if you do not **love your neighbor as yourself**? (Lev 19:18-note, Mt 19:19, 22:39, Mk 12:31, 33, Lk 10:27-note, Ro 13:9, Gal 5:14, James 2:8) He is like the priest in the Levite in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:32-note). Do you remember, the man was all beat up on the road; and the priest came by? Never did a thing for him. Then the Levite came by. Never did a thing for him (see Lk 10:30-37-note). This is another indictment of religious people who are indifferent to those in need, because their hearts have never been transformed by grace. Phony religion is detestable to God. The Pharisees were really into unrighteous mammon (Lk 16:9-note). When you go back into the earlier part of the chapter, at the end of Lk 16:13-note, Jesus said, "You cannot serve God in money." The Pharisees were serving money, not God; and the rich man provides a representative picture of these religious phonies. And so the rich gave Lazarus no help, even though he had to be aware of his suffering.

**Covered with sores** (only used here in Scripture)(1669)(**helkoo** from **helkos** = ulcer, sore in Lk 16:21) means to be afflicted with ulcers and sores. This verb which means to be ulcerated is common in the writings of [Hippocrates](#) and other ancient Greek medical writers.

The [perfect tense](#) signifies that at a point in time he had become afflicted with these ulcerating sores and that this was his present, permanent condition!

How did he become covered with sores? While we cannot be absolutely certain, the fact that he had been thrown there suggests he

was paralyzed (see same verb *ballo* in Mt 8:6 describing the paralyzed servant) and unable to move. This state would have predisposed him to the horrible [decubitus ulcers \("bed sores"\)](#) I remember seeing when I did my Physical Medicine rotation. I saw sores the likes of which I have never seen since!

Did you notice the dramatic contrast? The rich man was "covered" in purple, while the poor man was covered with oozing ulcers! The former is oblivious to the latter who is lying in the very shadow of his fine estate. The implication is that surely the rich man must have seen Lazarus (and we know he did because he uses his name in Lk 16:23-24), but he was simply without any compassion. This reminds me of the famous passage in Micah 6:8-note (Note - These characteristics do not "earn" salvation which no one could do, but they should characterize all who have been saved through faith in Christ.)

He has told you, O man, what is good;  
And what does the LORD require of you  
But to do justice, to love kindness,  
And to walk humbly with your God?

**Luke 16:21 and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.**

KJV Luke 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.

- **longing to be fed** 1 Cor 4:11; 2 Cor 11:27
- **with the crumbs** Mt 15:27; Mark 7:28; Jn 6:12
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hell in W G T Shedd's Dogmatic Theology](#) - one of the best on the subject of Hell
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur

#### Related Passage:

Luke 15:16+ "And he would have **gladly** ([epithumeo](#)) filled his stomach with the **pods** that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him.

### LAZARUS LONGING DOGS LICKING!

**And longing** ([epithumeo](#)) **to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table**- **Longing** ([epithumeo](#)) is a strong impulse toward something so that one's passions (desire, even desperation) are directed toward that object, thing or person, in this case **crumbs**. The [present tense](#) indicates that Lazarus was continually in a state of **longing**, continually sensing an gnawing emptiness in his stomach. We see this same verb used in the story of the prodigal where Jesus says "he **would have gladly** ([epithumeo](#)) filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. (Lk 15:16+) "but the pods did not satisfy his hunger." (Vincent) **Crumbs** is added as there is no Greek word for "**crumbs**" but it is implied. The Greek literally reads "**the things falling**." So it refers to whatever fell off of the rich man's table. He was **longing to be fed** with what fell from the rich man's table, but the text does not tell us whether or not he actually received the **crumbs**—only that he **longed** for them. In fact other than the poor man being laid (thrown) at the rich man's gate, the only help described for this man was from the dogs licking his sores!

**MacArthur** "sets the table" for us giving us some **cultural context** - Now, remember, the ancient world was not a sanitized world. The historian Jeremias writes "Guests at a meal used pieces of bread to clean their hands." In those days they ate with their hands, as most of the world has done for most of its history; and, typically, you took bread and you dipped it in some kind of stew or thick soup and you ate that way. It is a little messy; and they didn't have paper napkins so they used bread that was stale...So they would use the bread to clean their hands and then throw it under the table. You say, "Not at my house, they wouldn't."...They also had a built-in cleanup crew. Mt 15:26, Jesus says this, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." What did

Jesus mean "Throw it to the dogs"? In Mt 15:27 "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Who's the cleanup crew? Dogs. ([A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#))

[Beggars can't be choosers](#) is the old saying that was literally true for Lazarus!

**Even the dogs** ([kuon](#)) **were coming and licking his sores** ([helkos](#)) - **Even** (alla kai) is literally "but even." Vincent says "**But** (instead of finding compassion), **even** the dogs," etc." Note the pathetic paradox that the dogs outside showed more compassion for Lazarus than did the rich man inside! Woe! **Licking his sores** ([helkos](#)) is in the [imperfect tense](#) meaning over and over. You can see the group of dogs licking the **surface** of his **sores** again and again. What a picture! [Robertson](#) notes that "it is not clear whether the licking of the sores by the dogs added to the misery of Lazarus or gave a measure of comfort, as he lay in his helpless condition. **Bruce** writes "Furrer speaks of witnessing dogs and lepers waiting together for the refuse". **Vincent** adds "The only attention, and, so to speak, medical dressing, which his sores received, was from the dogs who came and licked them!"

[Brian Bell](#) says "Listen to the Lord's [pathos](#) here: beggar, full of sores, laid at the gate, crumbs, top it off with dogs licking sores

**Craig Keener** - The **dogs** here appear to be the usual kind Palestinian Jews knew: scavengers, viewed as if they were rats or other unhealthy creatures (also in the Old Testament, e.g., 1Ki 14:11; 16:4; 21:24; 22:38). They were unclean, and their tongues would have stung his sores. (See [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#))

**MacArthur on the dogs** - the rich man has this big feast. The people are eating, taking the bread they needed to cleaning, throwing it under there. The dogs were coming and eating it; and the **poor man** would have given anything if he could have moved himself under the table with the dogs ... to get some of that dirty bread. That's how desperate this man was ... Dogs are always pictured as dirty. 2 Pe 2:22 says, "The dogs lick up their own vomit." He wanted to get down there with the dogs and eat the dirty bread. It reminds me of another man in the Luke 15:16, the prodigal son, who ended up eating with pigs. Such a humiliating and destitute situation. The poor man "road kill" so to speak. He's being treated as if he's dead by the rich man. That's how the Pharisees would treat him also. ([Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#))

[Michael Andrus](#) makes a pithy point regarding the promoters of the prosperity gospel - By the way, this story alone should be sufficient to dispel the heresy that has captured so many today known as health-wealth theology. Here's a man who had neither health nor wealth, but he clearly enjoyed God's blessing in eternity.

---

**Longing** (1937) ([epithumeo](#) from **epí** = upon, used intensively + **thumós** = passion; cf [epithumia](#)) the preposition **epi** expresses motion toward or upon and thus means to set one's heart upon an object, either good (Mt 13:17, Lk 22:15 used of Jesus) or bad (1 Cor 10:6).

Epithumeo - Matt. 5:28; Matt. 13:17; Lk. 15:16; Lk. 16:21; Lk. 17:22; Lk. 22:15; Acts 20:33; Rom. 7:7; Rom. 13:9; 1 Co. 10:6; Gal. 5:17; 1 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 6:11; Jas. 4:2; 1 Pet. 1:12; Rev. 9:6

**Dogs** (2965) ([kuon](#)) ([See dictionary articles](#)) in the ancient word **dogs** here were non-domesticated, semi-wild, mangy, flea-bitten, vicious, starved scavengers, that tended to run in packs, dig through garbage and occasionally even attack humans. [NET Note](#) - The term **kunes** (plural of [kuon](#)) refers to "wild" dogs (either "street" dogs or watchdogs), not house pets. When the dogs came and licked his sores it meant that he was unclean. See the negative image of Rev 22:15+ that draws on this picture.

**Sores** (1668) ([helkos](#)) strictly means a wound but by [metonymy](#) it can refer to an ulcer or an abscess. In the Septuagint **helkos** of sores in God's plague in Egypt (Ex 9:9-11, God's prophetic punishment on disobedient Israel - Dt 28:27, 35), of boils some related to leprosy (Lev 13:18-20, 22-23) which would be God's judgment. In Job 2:7 "Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore **boils** from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head."

The only other uses describe the punishment of God to those who worship the [Antichrist](#) during the [Great Tribulation](#) and those who steadfastly refuse to repent even in the face of clear judgment.

Rev 16:2+ So the first angel went and poured out his bowl (FIRST OF THE HORRIBLE FINAL BOWL JUDGMENTS) on the earth; and it became a [loathsome](#) and [malignant sore](#) ([helkos](#)) on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

Rev 16:11+ and they [blasphemed](#) the God of heaven because of their pains and their **sores** ([helkos](#)); and they did not [repent](#) of ([active voice](#) = by an act of their will they refused to turn from) their (EVIL) deeds.

**Comment:** Note that (1) they recognized God, (2) they rightly knew He was in heaven, (3) they have a golden opportunity to repent (cf Rev 14:6-7+) and yet (4) they refused to repent. Their necks were stiff and their hearts were callous, like stone, and they made a conscious choice ([active voice](#) = a choice of their will!) to blaspheme God instead of turning from their sin and to God. The pain should have driven them to



God but they steadfastly refused to turn to Him. Their choice would gain them not just temporal torment they experienced on earth, but eternal torment in hell away from the presence of the One they blasphemed, the very One Who created them in His image. Amazing! And amazingly tragic!

**Helkos** - 14x in 13v in the Septuagint - Ex 9:9; 9:10; 9:11; Lev. 13:18; 13:19; 13:20; 13:22; 13:23; 13:27; Dt. 28:27; 28:35; 2 Ki. 20:7; Job 2:7

**Luke 16:22 "Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.**

BGT Luke 16:22 γνετο ὁ ποθάνειν τὴν πτωχὸν καὶ πνευθεῖν αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν γγλῶν ἐς τὸν κλῖπον βράμ·  
π θανεν ὁ κα πλο σιος κα τ φη.

KJV 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;

NET Luke 16:22 "Now the poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

CSB Luke 16:22 One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

ESV Luke 16:22 The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried,

NIV Luke 16:22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried.

NLT Luke 16:22 "Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried,

NRS Luke 16:22 The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

YLT Luke 16:22 'And it came to pass, that the poor man died, and that he was carried away by the messengers to the bosom of Abraham -- and the rich man also died, and was buried;

GWN Luke 16:22 "One day the beggar died, and the angels carried him to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

NKJ Luke 16:22 "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.

NAB Luke 16:22 When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried,

MIT Luke 16:22 The poor man died and he was transported by the angels to a place where he could be hugged by Abraham. The rich man also died and was entombed.

NJB Luke 16:22 Now it happened that the poor man died and was carried away by the angels into Abraham's embrace. The rich man also died and was buried.

- **the poor man died** Job 3:13-19; Isaiah 57:1,2; Rev 14:13
- **was carried away by the angels** Ps 91:11,12; Mt 13:38-43; 24:31; Heb 2:14
- **Abraham's bosom** Mt 8:11; Jn 13:23; 21:20
- **the rich man also died** Luke 12:20; Job 21:13,30-32; Ps 49:6-12,16-19; 73:18-20; Pr 14:32; Mark 8:36; James 1:11; 1 Pe 2:24
- **and was buried** 2 Kings 9:34,35; Ecclesiastes 8:10; Isaiah 14:18; 22:16
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hell in W G T Shedd's Dogmatic Theology](#) - one of the best on the subject of Hell
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#)- John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#)- John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#)- John MacArthur

## TWO DEATHS, TWO DESTINIES: PARADISE OR PEDITION

**William Barclay** entitles this section "The Punishment of the Man Who Never Noticed."

**Now the poor man died... and the rich man ([plousios](#)) also died and was buried** - This is the beginning of **the great reversal!** Poor man becomes eternally rich and temporally rich man becomes eternally poor (see [Real life Illustration](#))! And it is a permanent reversal for where death *finds* you, eternity *binds* you, putting every man in his proper place forever and ever. Amen! The poor man is now in Abraham's bosom (paradise, bliss, blessing). There is no record of poor man being buried. As a beggar he probably did not have a decent burial but his body may well have been tossed into the Valley of Hinnon where perpetual fire burned the garbage of Jerusalem and anything deemed unclean including the bodies of executed criminals as well as individuals denied a proper burial. On the other hand, the **rich man** was buried. One has to wonder what the rich man's burial cost? And notice the other contrast that Jesus begins to develop - when the poor man died, his suffering was forever finished, but when the rich man died, his torment was just beginning and would last forever! Woe!

This life is as bad as it will ever be for a believer.

This life is as good as it will ever be for an unbeliever!

[Andrus](#) adds "First, the poor man dies. Nothing is said about his being buried, so perhaps his body is simply dumped with the refuse into the landfill outside of Jerusalem known as Gehenna. That's where the unclaimed bodies of the poor and homeless were thrown. Because the garbage was burned, the Jews borrowed the term Gehenna to refer to hell itself." (**ED: IF INDEED HIS BODY WAS THROWN INTO THE GARBAGE OF "GEHENNA," THE NT NAME FOR ETERNAL HELL, THAT ADDS TO THE IRONIC REVERSAL, FOR HIS SPIRIT/SOUL IS IN HEAVEN!**)..."Both men are conscious in the after-life. Is there life after death? You bet there is! Jesus indicates in the story that there are feelings; there are thoughts; there are hopes and aspirations; there is the ability to communicate; and for some there is the bitterest of disappointments."

**Robert Morey** on **Abraham's bosom** - "During the intertestamental period, the Jewish concept of Sheol had progressed to the stage where it was believed that Sheol had two distinct compartments, or sections. One section was a place of torment to which the wicked went while the other was a place of conscious bliss, often called "**Abraham's bosom**" or "paradise," to which the righteous were carried by angels. The rabbis even discussed how many angels it took to carry the righteous to **Abraham's bosom** (Sources: A. Edersheim, *The Life and Time of Jesus the Messiah* Vol. II, pp. 279–281, 791–796. For further sources in rabbinic literature, see: Midrash: Gen. 68; Ex. 48; Lev. 405; 55:80; Ecc. 197. Bab. Tal.: Ber. 173; Shah. 589; ER 129.). The rabbinic understanding of Sheol is (**ED: PROBABLY**) the basis for Christ's illustration in Luke 16:19–31. While only the rich man was directly said to be "in Hades" ([hades](#)) (Lk 16:23), the phrase "**Abraham's bosom**" to which the angels carried Lazarus (vv. 22, 23) must be interpreted as the section of Hades reserved for the righteous. The dialogue between the rich man and Lazarus is an echo of multiple stories in which such dialogues were described. Thus, initially, the first occurrence of Hades ([hades](#)) in the New Testament refers to a concept of an afterlife which had evolved beyond the Old Testament concept of Sheol and reflected, the progress of understanding which had been accomplished during the period between Malachi and Matthew. (Borrow [Death and the afterlife](#))

**Was carried away by the angels ([angelos](#))** - Was he carried in bodily form? We cannot say although even an excellent detailed expositor like John MacArthur thinks he was even though the Biblical text does not make that statement. Remember that one has be cautious in interpreting every detail of a story like this which many consider a parable. In any event he was carried away to paradise (Abraham's bosom).

**MacArthur** goes on to add that there is "nothing in the Bible says that angels carry our bodies to Heaven. This is just the story Jesus tells. In fact, when believers die, their spirit goes to Heaven, and their body goes in the ground or into the crematorium. We don't go to Heaven intact, body, soul, and spirit, but in the story, that's what happened for the sake of the point (**ED: NOTE THAT ACTUALLY THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY LAZARUS WENT BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT**). This man is gathered by the angels and lifted into Heaven to the side of Abraham. There's no Biblical precedent for that being a normal kind of experience. This is Jesus using a story to convey a point."

This passage is where we get the idea that when any person dies the angels transport them through the so-called "pearly gates" (cf Rev 21:21-see interesting note on the possible symbolism of the pearls) and into the presence of the Lord.

Paul teaches that when we fall asleep in Jesus we are absent from the body and present with the Lord writing that "we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be **absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord**" (2 Cor 5:8+)

While there is no other Scripture that describes angels carrying believers to heaven, remember that clearly angels help men as shown in the following passages

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you, that **their angels** in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven. (Mt 18:10)

**MacArthur** - the angels that are serving God in the care of believers, always look at the face of God, so they can read His concern for His own children and be dispatched to their aid when necessary.

Are **they** (ANGELS) not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service ([diakonia](#)) for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? (Heb 1:14)

Imagine the shock of the Pharisees as Jesus described this beggar instead of having his body picked up by the the garbage collectors and thrown into the Valley of Hinnom, (1) was transported by angels (2) to Abraham's bosom! These two things would be unthinkable in their mind, for as noted they considered the poor to cursed by God, not blessed (see the question from His own disciples as they passed a man blind from birth - Jn 9:1-2 - they ascribed his condition to sin which is what the Pharisees surely thought explained Lazarus' condition)!

Notice how Jesus does not yet reveal the fate of the **rich man** immediately but simply states **and he was buried** (so far so good). It is as if He is letting the Pharisees be shocked by degrees, so to speak. He knew the next statement would illicit an even greater degree of shock from the Pharisees.

**Keener** writes that "Jewish lore often speaks of the righteous being carried away by angels; Jesus spares his hearers the traditional corresponding image of the wicked being carried away by demons. Every person, no matter how poor, was to receive a burial, and not to be buried was seen as terrible (e.g., 1 Kings 14:13). But Lazarus, having neither relatives nor charitable patron, did not receive one, whereas the rich man would have received great eulogies. True Israelites and especially martyrs were expected to share with Abraham in the world to come." (IVP Background Commentary)

**To Abraham's bosom** - This is the only use of this phrase in the Bible. Some interpret this a figurative language which speaks of where Abraham the believer went after he died. MacArthur on the other hand explains that Jesus is "saying that when this despicable outcast died, he went immediately to the side of Abraham; and Abraham, in the Jewish thinking, was the most elevated person who'd ever lived. The father of the entire Jewish race, and the father of faith and the faithful, the greatest hero in Judaism."

The words of Bliss' hymn "I Will Sing of My Redeemer" ([Play Fernando Ortega's beautiful vocal version](#)) would be apropos to Lazarus...

I will praise my dear Redeemer,  
His triumphant power I'll tell,  
How the victory He giveth  
Over sin and death and hell.

**Vincent on Abraham's bosom** - A Rabbinical phrase, equivalent to being with Abraham in Paradise. "To the Israelite Abraham seems the personal centre and meeting-point of Paradise" (Goebel).

**Brian Bill on Abraham's bosom** - True Israelites were expected to share with Abraham in the world to come ( The Jewish people believed that they were saved by virtue of their descent from Abraham, which constituted them the chosen people.). Abraham is regarded in Scripture as being not only the great patriarch (Hebrews 7:4) but also the father of all believers (Romans 4:11). To be considered a friend of Abraham was the highest honor possible and true happiness would be to spend eternity at his side. Some of your Bibles indicate that he went to "**Abraham's bosom**." In that culture the most honored seat in a banquet would be nearest to the host, reclining in such a way that one's head was near his chest. The one who had yearned to receive crumbs and scraps is now feasting at Heaven's table. ([What Happens When We Die?](#))

**Gotquestions** says that **Abraham's bosom** means "that Lazarus went to a place of rest, contentment, and peace." ([What is Abraham's Bosom?](#))

**Gary Inrig on Abraham's bosom** - the expression is a vivid way of saying that Lazarus is exalted to a position of the highest honor and intimacy in the heavenly fellowship of the saints. No greater reversal of fortunes can be imagined. Lazarus has been transported from the gutter to heaven's head table. Marvelous as this description is, it pales alongside later revelations about the destiny of believers. We do not depart to be with Abraham and the righteous saints, but to be with the Lord Jesus (Philippians 1:23). We do not

enter the home of Abraham, but rather are “at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8) in the Father’s house (John 14:2). We share the very highest place a creature can experience

**Bosom** (lap) ([2859](#))([kolpos](#)) refers to the front of the body between the arms and so the bosom, breast, or chest (Jn 13:23 = a place of honor and close fellowship at a meal. cf Lk 16:22-23 = a place of honor among the righteous dead and Jn 1:18 = close beside the Father). **Abraham’s bosom** is an expression Jews used to refer to God’s presence, where the privileged enjoyed God’s feast with Abraham. The image also refers to the Jewish custom of reclining at a banquet on couches. Lazarus finally got to enjoy that meal that he had longed for so long (Luke 16:21; John 13:23). Lazarus is next to the host, the place of honor.

**Steven Cole** - Jesus makes it plain that there are two eternal destinies, heaven and hell. Heaven is pictured in the parable in the common Jewish symbolism as a Messianic banquet (Lu 13:28-29). At a banquet in that culture, the guests reclined at the table in such a manner that you could lean back upon the breast of the one near you to engage in intimate conversation. Lazarus is pictured at the banquet next to Abraham, the father of the faith, enjoying rest, comfort, and fellowship, delivered from the trials he had known in this life. While we won’t be eating perpetually throughout eternity (although that might be heaven for some!), that is the picture here to show us that it will be a place of eternal rest and enjoyment. Whatever heaven is like, you can be sure that it will not be boring! The idea of sitting on a cloud strumming a harp forever and ever doesn’t sound very exciting! But Paul says that we will judge angels (1Co 6:3). While we don’t know all that God has prepared for those who love Him, we do know that He will give us meaningful and fulfilling activity. I believe that God has given us the most enjoyable activities on this earth as a little foretaste of what heaven will be like. We will be free from all sin and the devastating consequences of sin, both our own sins and the sins of others against us. God Himself will dwell among us and there will be no mourning or crying or pain (Rev 21:3-4). Heaven will be infinitely better than the best life that you can imagine on this fallen earth!

**Ray Stedman** - There are symbols in this story. “**Abraham’s bosom**” is one. Obviously we cannot take that literally. The righteous dead do not go and rest upon Abraham’s bosom: There simply is not room for them all there. But the phrase indicates that where Abraham, the father of the faithful, is, there these righteous dead are also.

**Brian Bell** describes **Abraham’s bosom** - where there’s no more begging, no more sores, no more outside the gate, no more crumbs to fend for, no more hunger! 3.16.1. Note my view! Paradise, Abraham’s bosom, heaven, God’s throne are all synonymous. “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in **Paradise**.” (Luke 23:43 ) Paul was “caught up into Paradise” (2 Cor 12:4). “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” (Rev 2:7)

**The rich man also died and was buried** - The rich received lavish burials. This man would have undoubtedly had long eulogies lauding his “blessed” life at the very time he had passed into his forever cursed life! But he dies as he lived, with no provision for his soul. Money and luxury did not follow him past the grave.

As **Brian Bill** says “When the rich man died he had a fantastic funeral. In that culture, when wealthy people passed away, the family hired mourners, purchased costly spices for the body and used an elaborate tomb for the burial. The whole town turned out for the funeral and listened to the shrieks and lamentations of the professional weepers and the litany of praise heaped upon the rich man by countless eulogies. He learned too late that “he who dies with the most toys...still dies.” ([What Happens When We Die?](#))

---

**Died** ([599](#))([apothnesko](#) from **apo** = marker of dissociation implying a rupture from a former association, separation, departure, cessation + **thnesko** = die) literally means to die off (that is, to die and thus be *away from* this earthly realm). Apothnesko speaks of literal physical death (Ro 6:9+)

---

Listen to **Steven Curtis Chapman’s** ([read the moving Wikipedia biography about the tragic loss of his daughter](#)) song “**That’s Paradise!**”

Jimmy and Mary were quite a pair back in their younger days  
They met a married in six weeks time and  
That was sixty years ago this May  
Four kids made a house a home and a love for Jesus kept them strong  
Now every morning at eight A.M. Jimmy takes a drive through town  
He spends his days at Mary’s side In a home for the old and broken down  
With a cane in his lap and a Bible in his hand He reads her stories about the promised land  
And with tears in their eyes they dream of a place  
Where everything changes in the light of Jesus’ face  
and

**That’s paradise...**

**Hey, that's paradise...**

**When the life breaks through and the old's made new**

**And the joy will never die, that's paradise**

In another corner of this world, met another man named Jim

Told me how twenty years of running from God Had finally gotten the best of him

He said all hope was gone and he wanted to die 'Cause what could God do with such a messed up guy

So we talked about Jesus, God's love and His plan And when Jim walked away he was a brand new man

Now listen, Well I know the best remains to be seen

In a place that's far beyond our wildest dreams

But until we see heaven we've got Jesus' world

That He'll never leave us and each prayer will be heard

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - A dying man once gathered his four children around him. To each of the first three he simply said, "Good night." But then he turned to his fourth child and said, "Good-bye, Son."

The young man said, "Dad, you told the others good night. Why did you tell me good-bye?"

The dying man answered, "Because they are Christians, and I'll see them in the morning in heaven. But you have not come to Christ, and unless you do I'll never see you again."

---

### **Are You Ready?**

Read: Luke 16:19-31

**Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**—2 Corinthians 6:2

My daughter Julie was home from college and working at her summer job at RBC Ministries. One day as she was cutting the lawn with a riding mower she noticed some movement in the grass. Hopping down, she discovered a couple of baby rabbits scampering away from her noisy machine. She shooed them out of the path of her tractor to what she thought was sure safety, then out of the sky swooped a hawk. In a second he had one of the bunnies in his talons and was gone.

Julie felt bad. While she was helping the little guys avoid one danger, she had made them vulnerable to another. Despite her efforts, that bunny met his demise. As she told me about it, she said, "It made me think of my own mortality."

That's not something college students think much about. But they should, and so should all of us. Many people do not want to admit that life tomorrow is not guaranteed. We don't know if we'll live until tomorrow, or for 50 more years.

So, why think about this? Simply because we must be prepared to meet the Lord. The Bible says, "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). If you have never done so, today by faith receive Christ as your Savior. Make sure you are ready. By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Oh, why not turn while still you may;

Too late it soon will be—

A glorious life you can possess

Throughout eternity.

—Anon.

**Death could come at any time—  
so we must be ready all the time.**

---

### **A Great Mystery**

Read: Luke 16:19-31

We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. —2 Corinthians 5:8

Many people love mysteries. It's exciting to put ourselves in the shoes of a detective and try to figure out "whodunit" as we turn the



pages of a mystery novel. But there's a cliffhanger that we'll never resolve—until we experience it ourselves.

Those of us who have watched in sadness as someone close to us has died may wonder about their new existence. Our hearts ache to know what they are doing or where they are. If they had trusted Jesus Christ as Savior, we know they are in heaven. But, for now, a veil separates us from our loved ones and we cannot see behind it.

We do have a few clues about this mystery, though. We know that our departed loved ones are enjoying God's presence (2 Corinthians 5:8). We also know that they are recognizable and conscious of their surroundings—just like the rich man and the beggar Jesus spoke of in Luke 16:22-23. And we know that they haven't yet received the perfect body that will be theirs when Christ returns (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

Beyond that, we are left with this truth: God, in His matchless love and power, is planning a glorious reunion. Then, our eternal rejoicing will begin. The last page of this great mystery has a happy ending. By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Lord has promised to prepare  
A place in heaven above—  
A home where we will always be  
With Him and those we love.  
—Sper

God's people never say goodbye for the last time.

---

## Don't Go There!

Read: Luke 16:19-31

Fear Him who . . . has power to cast into hell. —Luke 12:5

Though it's a frequently used word in the English language, it's one of the least talked about. It's used as an exclamation, an interjection, and a noun. What word is it? Hell.

Pollsters tell us that most people who use the word don't believe in the existence of hell. While 90 percent of Americans said they believe in heaven, only 25 percent indicated that they believe in hell. That's because hell is not a nice place. In his book *Inferno*, Dante depicted hell as a place of torment for sin. Above its gate he imagined a sign that said, "Abandon hope all ye who enter here."

The truth about hell is found in the Bible. Jesus described it as a lake of fire, which was prepared for the devil and his helpers (Mt. 25:41). Christ also told about a rich man who was being tormented in hell and who asked a beggar to come and cool his tongue (Lk. 16:19-31). Hell is a place where God demonstrates His justice in dealing with all those who have rebelled against Him.

Hell is real. If you have trusted in Christ, your sins are forgiven and you are headed for heaven. But if you do not believe in Jesus, you are headed for hell. It's a terrible place. You don't want to go there! By David C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God is so holy, so pure, and so right  
That hell will be justice for sin;  
Yet pardon is found by trusting in Christ,  
And heaven's great joys will begin.  
—K. De Haan

To believe in heaven without hell is like believing in good without evil.

---

## Final Appointment

Read: Luke 16:19-31

It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment. —Hebrews 9:27

The driver of a hearse foolishly tried to warm himself on a rainy Saturday morning by drinking on the job. He didn't get warm (alcohol actually lowers body temperature), but he did get lost on the way to the cemetery. The funeral procession waited in vain at the grave for hours.

Later that evening, police found the driver asleep in the hearse by the side of the road. By then it was too late for burial, and the

cemetery wouldn't accept the casket on Sunday.

On Monday, the newspaper reported that the body of the 62-year-old man "was finally laid to rest—2 days late for his final appointment."

Actually, his final appointment was kept right on time. His tardy burial in no way altered the fact that his conscious soul had passed into eternity precisely at God's appointed time.

Until Christ returns, this will be true for every one of us. For the child of God, death immediately lifts the spirit into the presence of the Savior (2 Cor. 5:8). But for the one who rejects Christ (Jn. 3:18), death instantly closes the door to heaven and opens another to a Christless eternity. By Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We all have an appointment with our Maker.

Whether we're ready for it or not depends on what we do with Jesus now.

Are you ready for your final appointment?

At the moment of death, we step into eternal delight or everlasting doom.

---

**Tony Evans** defines **Hell** - Hell is the place of eternal exile where the ungodly will experience God's righteous retribution against sin forever....Someone has said that hell is the answer to the sinner's prayer. Jesus taught us to pray to God, "Thy will be done." But a rebellious sinner says to God, "My will be done." And God grants that person's request.

---

**Looking Out for Number One** - Several years ago a book was published entitled "Looking Out for Number One." On the dedication page the author wrote, "Dedicated to the hope that somewhere in our universe there exists a civilization where the inhabitants possess sole dominion over their own lives." There is such a place. **It's called Hell.**

---

**M. F. Rich**, an atheist, cried, "I would rather lie on a stove and broil for a million years than go into eternity with the eternal horrors that hang over my soul! I have given my immortality for gold, and its weight sinks me into an endless, hopeless, helpless Hell."

---

The pastor was talking with the custodian prior to the morning service on a hot Sunday morning. He was preaching a rather unusual sermon for these days in which he was going to bring before his people the terrors of Hell. So he gave the custodian these instructions: "When I get to the part about [hellfire and brimstone](#), shut off the air conditioning."

---

The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions.  
- A.W. Tozer

---

On an American troopship, the soldiers crowded around their chaplain asking, "Do you believe in hell?" "I do not." "Well, then, will you please resign, for if there is no hell, we do not need you, and if there is a hell, we do not wish to be led astray."

---

Some time ago, a man brought forward his strong argument against the Bible, declaring, "I am seventy years of age, and have never seen such a place as hell, after all that has been said about it." His little grandson, of about seven years of age, who was all the while listening, asked him, "Granddaddy, have you ever been dead yet?"

---

In The Inferno, Part I of Dante's Divine Comedy ("comedy" here indicates a narrative with a happy ending), Dante and his guide, the Latin poet Virgil, descend into hell. In each of the nine circles of hell, they see sinners being punished for sins they committed during their lives on earth. For example, the second circle contains lustful people, the fifth circle wrathful people, and the eighth circle fraudulent people such as flatterers and hypocrites. While it is a dark journey filled with horrifying scenes and spiritual warnings for the reader, remember that Dante is not always Biblical! Our main source of information about Hell must be the Bible, especially the teaching from the lips of our Lord, Who spoke more about Hell than any other person.

---

Sometimes it seems that sin's ignored  
And evil has it's way;  
But don't be fooled,  
God's eye's aren't closed;  
He'll judge us all someday.

-Sper

God's judgment may not be immediate, but it is inevitable.  
Sooner or later you'll have to face God.

---

**Bertrand Russell** became an atheist after he read the words of Jesus about hell. He apparently wanted a God who would never become angry or punish anyone.

Russell wrote, "There is one very serious defect to my mind in Christ's moral character, and that is that He believed in hell. I do not myself feel that any person who is really profoundly humane can believe in everlasting punishment."

---

#### **'I Didn't Witness!' By Dave Branon**

For three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. —Acts 20:31

When my daughter Lisa arrived for another day of teaching her high school music classes, she found that the students and faculty were grieving. A senior boy had died in a car accident the afternoon before. As Lisa made her way toward her classroom, she saw a student she knew was a Christian, sitting in the cafeteria, crying. When Lisa reached her, the student hugged her and said between her sobs, "Oh, Mrs. Spangler, he's in hell, and I didn't witness to him." She knew that the young man had clearly spoken out about his professed atheism—and she hadn't told him about Jesus. That girl may have been a better witness for the Lord than she realized in the way she lived. Nonetheless, she understood an important concept: It is our job to tell the world about the saving power of Jesus. We see Paul as an example of one who carried out this mission (Acts 20:17-31).

Life seems so comfortable at times—so certain—that we move along each day without thinking of the eternal implications for others. And sometimes we bask in the assurance of our own salvation, forgetting that most people we meet do not have the same hope that we have in Christ Jesus.

Is there anyone you need to talk to about Jesus today—before it's too late? —JDB [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Wanted: Messengers to deliver the good news.

---

**Embraced by the Light** - The idea of hell and judgment are nowhere to be found [in Betty Eadie's bestseller, *Embraced By The Light*, on the N.Y. Times bestseller list for more than 40 weeks, including 5 weeks as #1]. In November 1973 Eadie allegedly died after undergoing a hysterectomy, and returned five hours later with the secrets of heaven revealed by Jesus. Eadie says that Jesus "never wanted to do or say anything that would offend me" while she visited heaven. Indeed, Jesus seems to be relegated to the role of a happy tour guide in heaven, not the Savior of the world who died on the cross. (Richard Abanes, in *Christianity Today*)

---

**President Coolidge** - One day, when Vice President Calvin Coolidge was presiding over the Senate, one Senator angrily told another to go "straight to hell." The offended Senator complained to Coolidge as presiding officer, and Cal looked up from the book he had been leafing through while listening to the debate. "I've been looking through the rule book," he said. "you don't have to go."

---

**R.W. Dale**, in his day Britain's leading Congregationalist minister, did not believe in eternal punishment. Yet, before he died, Dale sighed and said, "No one fears God nowadays."

---

**Hell is Necessary** - Non-Christians often ask the Christian, "But how can the God of love allow any of his creatures to suffer unending misery?" The question is, how can he not? The fact that God is love makes hell necessary. "Hell," as E. L. Mascall once said, "is not compatible with God's love; it is a direct consequence of it." That was his way of stressing the fact that the very God who loves us is the one who respects our decisions. He loves us, but he does not force his love on us. To force love is to commit assault. He allows us to decide. He loves us, he encourages our response, he woos us, he pursues us, he urges us, but he does not force us, because he respects us. - *Christian Theology in Plain Language*

---

#### **"Fire!" - Richard Baxter**

"Fire is evidently the only word in human language which can suggest the anguish of perdition. It is the only word in the parable of the wheat and the tares which our Lord did not interpret (Matt. 13:36–43)...The only reasonable explanation is that fire is not a symbol. It perfectly describes the reality of the eternal burnings.

As we paid nothing for God's eternal love and nothing for the Son of His love, and nothing for His Spirit and our grace and faith, and nothing for our eternal rest...What an astonishing thought it will be to think of the unmeasurable difference between our deservings and our receivings.

O, how free was all this love, and how free is this enjoyed glory...So then let "Deserved" be written on the floor of hell but on the door of heaven and life, "The Free Gift"

---

**Accidental Deaths** - Many accidental deaths result from taking risks. That's the conclusion of an organization in Canada that is seeking to decrease accidents between cars and trains. Roger Cyr, national director of Operation Lifesaver, puts most of the blame for fatalities on drivers who are risk-takers. "Studies have shown that when people hear a train whistle their minds tell them to accelerate their speed," says Cyr. About 43 percent of the accidents occur at crossings equipped with flashing lights and bells or gates. Cyr also said that many drivers "even have the audacity to drive around or under gates." They take the risk, thinking they can beat the train and somehow miss the collision—but with tragic consequences! Our Daily Bread

---

### Charles Spurgeon

"Those who choose evil shall have their choice. Men who hate divine mercy shall not have it forced upon them, but (unless sovereign grace interpose) shall be left to themselves to aggravate their guilt and ensure their doom.

"They have loved darkness rather than light, and in darkness they shall abide. Eyes which see no beauty in the Lord Jesus, but flash wrath upon Him, may well grow yet more dim, till death which is spiritual leads to death which is eternal.

"What can be too severe a penalty for those who reject the incarnate God, and refuse to obey the commands of His mercy? They deserve to be flooded with wrath, and they shall be; for upon all who rebel against the Savior, 'wrath has come upon them to the uttermost' (1 Thessalonians 2:16).

God's indignation is no trifle. The anger of a holy, just, omnipotent, and infinite Being is above all things to be dreaded; even a drop of it consumes, but to have it poured upon us is inconceivably dreadful."

---

### Pondering Perpetual Needs

Before British actor Robert Morley died two weeks ago, he asked that his credit cards be buried with him. Since his funeral, the London Times' letters pages have been filled with the thoughts of readers pondering their perpetual needs.

- Wrote M. L. Evans of Chester "In the unfortunate event of the miscarriage of justice and several thousand years ensuing before my sentence is quashed, I will take a fire extinguisher."
- Heather Tanner of Woodbridge specified a good map. "I have immense trouble finding my way in this life," she said, "so am extremely worried about the next."
- A pair of earplugs would accompany Sir David Wilcocks of Cambridge "in case the heavenly choirs, singing everlastingly, are not in tune."
- Maurice Godbold of Hindhead would take a crowbar, "in case the affair proved premature."

Even in the hereafter, there will always be an England.

U. S. News & World Report, June 22, 1992, p. 26.

---

**J I Packer** - We are told in the parable of the sheep and goats (Matt. 25:31–46) that those whom the judge rejects go away into Kolasis (punishment) aionios (a final state). The phrase is balanced by the reference to zoe aionios (eternal life) which is also a fixed and final state. Even if this word aionios is believed to mean only "belonging to the coming aion," and not to imply endlessness in the sense of perpetual continuity, the thought of endlessness is certainly bound up in the phrase "eternal life," and can hardly therefore be excluded from the corresponding and balancing phrase "eternal punishment." The idea that in this text aionios as applied to kolasis must imply everlastingness seems to be unbreakable. The New testament always conceives of this eternal punishment as consisting of an agonizing knowledge of one's own ill desert, of God's displeasure, of the good that one has lost, and of the irrevocable fixed state in which one now finds oneself. The doctrine of eternal punishment was taught in the synagogue even before our Lord took it up and enforced it in the Gospels. All the language that strikes terror into our hearts—weeping and gnashing of teeth, outer darkness, the worm, the fire, gehenna, the great gulf fixed—is all directly taken from our Lord's teaching. It is from Jesus Christ that we learn the doctrine of eternal punishment. Study the following Bible passages and any other relevant ones on this topic, and reach your own conclusions, prayerfully: Luke 16:26; John 3:18–19, 36; 5:29; 12:32; Acts 3:21, 23; Rom. 1:16, 5:18–21; 1 Cor. 15:25–28; 2 Cor. 5:10, 19; 6:2; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:25; Phil. 2:9–11; 1 Tim. 2:4; Titus 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 9:27; 1 Pet. 3:19; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 John 1:5; 2:2; 4:8. - Your Father Loves You by James Packer

---

**C S Lewis** - The safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts. (Lewis, C S, The Screwtape Letters)

---

**A W Tozer** -The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions.

---

**Spurgeon** - Absence from Christ is hell; but the presence of Jesus is heaven.

---

If these truths or the doctrine of hell are troubling you, consider doing additional Bible study on these topics. You might also read one of the books by C. S. Lewis mentioned above. [The Screwtape Letters \(borrow this classic\)](#) offer "advice" from a senior devil to a junior one, while [The Great Divorce \(borrow this book\)](#) narrates a "bus tour" from hell to the edges of heaven.

---

### Bad Choice

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. -DANIEL 12:2

An elderly TV star was asked by talk-show host Larry King about heaven. King prefaced his question by referring to Billy Graham, who had told King he "knew what would be ahead. It would be paradise. He was going to heaven." King then asked his guest, "What do you believe?" The man replied, **"I'd like a lot of activity. Heaven sounds too placid for me. There's a lot to do in hell"**

Sadly, this man is not alone in thinking that an existence in Satan's realm is a preferred destination. I've heard people say that they'd rather be in hell because all their friends will be there. One person wrote, "If hell was real, I don't think it would be bad. There would be a lot of interesting people."

How can we convince folks who are **deceived** in this way that **hell and its horrors** are to be avoided? Perhaps by telling them of the **realities of hell that are presented in the Scripture**. In Daniel 12:2 hell is described as a place of **'shame and everlasting contempt.'** Luke 16:23 talks about **'torments.'** Matthew 8:12 describes **"weeping and gnashing of teeth."** And Revelation 14:11 says there will be **"no rest."** Biblical truth doesn't allow anyone to think that hell might be a good place to be. Clearly, rejecting Jesus and facing an eternity in Satan's kingdom is a bad choice.—Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Don't choose to spend eternity  
Where pain will never dim;  
Instead decide to trust in Christ  
And choose to follow Him.  
—Sper

**The same Christ who talks about the glories of heaven  
also describes the horrors of hell.**

---

If a person sees a house on fire and does everything he can to rescue the occupants, he is heralded as a hero. And that's the way it should be. Why is it, then, that a Christian who accepts what God says in the Bible about hell and tries to warn people is ridiculed as an alarmist?

---

**DAISY CHAINS** - I was an adult when I made my first daisy chain. Seated in a meadow with a friend, we crafted delicate necklaces by joining daisies together. It was so absorbing that we momentarily forgot about life's pressing needs. Afterward, however, those needs were still there, urgent as ever. That experience reminded me of a story I read about a woman who dreamed that she saw a meadow next to a precipice that dropped hundreds of feet to the rocks below. Scores of blind people were walking toward the edge. She tried to warn them, but there were too many. Then she noticed others in the meadow who could see. But instead of warning the crowd, they sat on the grass making daisy chains. There's certainly nothing wrong with harmless pursuits and times of leisure. But are we so absorbed with our own interests that we forget the countless people who are stumbling blindly into hell? Paul understood the urgency of such a situation. His constant focus was Christ. "Him we preach," he wrote, "warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28). What are you absorbed with? Making daisy chains? Or making disciples? — J E Yoder

---

Many years ago in Waterbury, Connecticut, a black evangelist wanted to emphasize the truth that men are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). The overflow crowd at the African Methodist Church one Sunday morning was shocked to see a casket covered with flow-ers in front of the pulpit. They were even more amazed when the evangelist gave a graphic description of hell and all of its horrors. As he dwelt on the darkness, isolation, pain, and remorse experienced by the soul that is eternally separated from God, **some in the congregation began to weep and tremble**. The preacher said he found it impossible to eulogize the dead person, for he had committed grievous sins that deserved only God's wrath. "The one you will soon view is justly condemned to eternal torment," he said. At the end of his sermon the flowers were removed from the coffin and the audience was asked to walk past the



casket, keeping about 10 feet apart. **They were to look once at this horrible sinner and then return to their seats in silence. Each person peered fearfully into the casket, but found it empty. However, a full-length mirror in the bottom reflected his own face as he stared in amazement.** In the closing moments of the service, the solemn and convicted audience was reminded that although sin brings the penalty of death, the gift of God through Christ provides a way of escape.

---

**Jennifer Benson Schuldts** writes "My friend was having a conversation with a man who didn't have much good to say about the Christian faith. My friend knew that if he were to sound too "religious," he would jeopardize any chance to witness. So, in the middle of their discussion, he said, "Hey, Bob, do you know where sinners go?" "That's easy," he replied. "You're going to tell me they go to hell." "No," my friend responded. "They go to church." Bob was speechless. That wasn't what he expected. He wasn't ready to hear from a Christian who realized he wasn't perfect. My friend had a chance to share that Christians understand their sinfulness and their need for continual spiritual restoration. He was able to explain grace—the unmerited favor we have with God despite our sinfulness (Rom. 5:8-9; Eph. 2:8-9)

---

**Lecture on Hell** - On one occasion Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, the agnostic lecturer of the last century, was announced to give an address on hell. He declared he would prove conclusively that hell was a wild dream of some scheming theologians who invented it to terrify credulous people. As he was launching into his subject, a half-drunken man arose in the audience and exclaimed, "Make it strong, Bob. There's a lot of us poor fellows depending on you. If you are wrong, we are all lost. So be sure you prove it clear and plain." No amount of reasoning can nullify God's sure Word. He has spoken as plainly of a hell for the finally impenitent as of a heaven for those who are saved. Illustrations of Bible Truth by H.A. Ironside,

---

**J I Packer on preaching hell** - To announce the reality of hell is a testing and grueling task. The compassion and fellow-feeling that should mark all Christian communicators require us to do it, not with gloating and contempt, but **with tears**, if not in our eyes, then in our hearts. Any appearance of off-handness in our manner will surely discredit our matter, just because it discredits us as human beings. It is hard to take seriously a message from a messenger who does not appear to take it seriously himself, or at any rate not to feel about it as a good man should. R. W. Dale once said that D. L. Moody had a right to preach about hell because he so clearly did so from a weeping heart.

---

**Alistair Cooke...**The time was the 19th of May 1780. The place was Hartford, Connecticut. The day has gone down in New England history as a terrible foretaste of Judgment Day. For at noon the skies turned from blue to grey and by mid-afternoon had blackened over so densely that, in that religious age, men fell on their knees and begged a final blessing before the end came. The Connecticut House of Representatives was in session. And as some of the men fell down and others clamored for an immediate adjournment, the speaker of the House, one Colonel Davenport, came to his feet. He silenced them and said these words: "The day of judgment is either approaching or it is not. If it is not, there is no cause for adjournment. If it is, I choose to be found doing my duty. I wish therefore that candles may be brought."

---

**C S Lewis** - There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this (hell) if it lay in my power. But it has the full support of Scripture and, especially, of our Lord's own words; it has always been held by Christendom; and has the support of reason.

---

**J I Packer** - Wisdom directs us to admit that there is no biblical alternative to the biblical doctrine of eternal punishment.

---

**C H Spurgeon** - As the Lord liveth, sinner, thou standest on a single plank over the mouth of hell, and that plank is rotten. Thou hangest over the pit by a solitary rope, and the strands of that rope are breaking.

---

**John Thomas** - A hard look at this doctrine should first change our view of sin. Most believers do not take sin as seriously as God does.

---

**Billy Graham** - As hell was becoming for many no more than a swear word, sin was also an accepted way of life. . . . If people can ignore what the Bible calls sin, then they can quite logically discount what it says about the reality of hell.

---

**Vance Havner** - Long ago a man said to me, "I don't like sermons on hell. Tell me more about the meek and lowly Jesus." It is the meek and lowly Jesus who gave us most of our information about hell. He took the last verse of Isaiah and the Valley of Hinnom and compounded them into the most fearful picture of future punishment to be found in the Bible.

---

Time/CNN Polling Data from a telephone poll of 1,018 American adults, conducted by Time/CNN by Yankelovich Partners, Inc., asked these questions:

Do you believe in hell, where people are punished forever after they die?

Yes: 63%

No: 30%

Do people get into heaven based mostly on the good things they do or on their faith of God, or both (asked of 809 who believe in heaven):

Good things they do: 6%

Faith in God: 34%

Both: 57%

Immediately after death, which of the following do you think will happen to you? (asked of 809 who believe in heaven):

Go directly to heaven: 61%

Go to purgatory: 15%

Go to hell: 1%

Be reincarnated: 5%

End of existence: 4%

---

### **J C Ryle - False Doctrine**

A flood of false doctrine has lately broken in upon us. Men are beginning to tell us "that God is too merciful to punish souls for ever...that all mankind, however wicked and ungodly...will sooner or later be saved." We are to embrace what is called "kinder theology," and treat hell as a pagan fable...This question lies at the very foundation of the whole Gospel. The moral attributes of God, His justice, His holiness, His purity, are all involved in it. The Scripture has spoken plainly and fully on the subject of hell... If words mean anything, there is such a place as hell. If texts are to be interpreted fairly, there are those who will be cast into it...The same Bible which teaches that God in mercy and compassion sent Christ to die for sinners, does also teach that God hates sin, and must from His very nature punish all who cleave to sin or refuse the salvation He has provided.

God knows that I never speak of hell without pain and sorrow. I would gladly offer the salvation of the Gospel to the very chief of sinners. I would willingly say to the vilest and most profligate of mankind on his deathbed, "Repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But God forbid that I should ever keep back from mortal man that scripture reveals a hell as well as heaven...that men may be lost as well as saved.

---

Tozer wrote, "Death fixes the status of the man who loved his sins and he is sent to the place of the rejected where there is for him no further hope. That is hell, and it may be well we know so little about it. What we do know is sufficiently terrifying."

---

Aaron Burr, the third Vice President of the United States, was reared in a godly home and admonished to accept Christ by his grandfather Jonathan Edwards. But he refused to listen. Instead, he declared that he wanted nothing to do with God and said he wished the Lord would leave him alone. He achieved a measure of political success in spite of repeated disappointments. But he was also involved in continuous strife. When he was forty-eight years old, he killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. He lived for thirty-two more years, but was unhappy and unproductive. During this sad chapter in his life he declared to a group of friends,

"Sixty years ago I told God that if He would let me alone, I would let Him alone, and God has not bothered about me since."

Aaron Burr got what he wanted. —H. V. Lunt

There is a way to stay out of hell, but no way to get out.

---

**D L Moody - Nearer than he Thought** - I was reading, some time ago, of a young man who had just come out of a saloon, and had mounted his horse. As a certain deacon passed on his way to church, he followed and said: "Deacon, can you tell me how far it is to hell?" The deacon's heart was pained to think that a young man like that should talk so lightly; but he passed on and said nothing. When he came round the corner to the church, he found that the horse had thrown that young man, and he was dead. You, too, may be nearer the judgment than you think.

---

**Charles Spurgeon** - 'Shun all views of future punishment that would make it appear less terrible'

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - A man on an ocean liner was leaning over the ship's rail, tossing something in the air and catching it. An onlooker asked, "What are you tossing?" "A diamond of great value," the man said. "It is all that I have in this world." "Aren't you afraid of losing it, tossing it over the water like that?" "No, I've been doing it for the past half hour, and I've caught it every time," the man casually replied. "But there might come a last time," remarked the onlooker. The man laughed and tossed it again—but this time he missed. For a moment he stood aghast. Then he cried out, "Lost! Lost! Lost!" You say, "That story is not true." But, it is true of many people! The ocean is eternity. They are on the vessel of life. That diamond is their soul. If they do not know Christ as their Savior, they are taking great risk that every day will be their last on this earth. If they should die without Him, they would be eternally lost. How can people be so careless about their eternal destiny? One answer is that they get so caught up with the good things of this life that they neglect thinking about the life to come. The great deceiver, Satan, gets them focused on the here and now. Every once in a while—when a friend dies or when a major catastrophe claims many lives—they think briefly about death. But they figure, "I'm a basically good person. God is loving; He wouldn't condemn a decent person like me." And, they put it out of their minds and get on with pursuing the good life.

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - A business was opening a new store, and a friend of the owner sent flowers for the occasion. The flowers arrived at the new business site, and the owner read the card, inscribed "Rest in Peace." The angry owner called the florist to complain. After he told the florist of the obvious mistake and how angry he was, the florist said, "Sir, I'm really sorry for the mistake, but rather than getting angry, you should imagine this: Somewhere there is a funeral taking place today, and they have flowers with a note that reads, "Congratulations on your new location."

---

## DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

**Steven Cole** on the doctrine of eternal punishment - Scholars debate whether **Hades** ([hades](#)) (and the Hebrew **Sheol**) was the abode of all the dead, with separate compartments for the righteous and the wicked, or whether it refers only to the place for the wicked dead. We can't be dogmatic about such specifics, but we can say with certainty that hell is a real place and that you don't want to spend eternity there! Sometimes cartoons picture hell as a place where the wicked party throughout eternity, while the righteous sit around bored on a cloud in heaven. Mark Twain said, "I'll take Heaven for the climate and Hell for society." But there won't be any society in hell!

Jesus uses awful word pictures to teach us that it isn't going to be a fun place. He refers to it as the **outer darkness**, where there is **weeping and gnashing of teeth** (Mt 25:30). He cites Is 66:24, describing hell as a place "**where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched**" (Mk 9:48-[note](#)). He says that it would be better to have a millstone hung around your neck and be thrown into the sea than to go into **the unquenchable** (Greek = [asbestos](#) = inextinguishable - used 4x = Mt 3:12 Mk 9:43 9:45 Lu 3:17; no uses in [Septuagint](#)) **fire** (Mk 9:43) (See ISBE entry [unquenchable fire](#)). The flames of hell may, like the golden streets of heaven, be symbolic. But if so, they are a most frightening symbol to warn us that hell will be a place of awful torment. The rich man in the parable says, "I am in agony in this flame" (Lu 16:24). If it were a fun place, he would want his brothers to join him for the party. But he doesn't want them to "come to this place of torment" (Lu 16:28).

The doctrine of eternal punishment in hell is not pleasant, but you cannot accept Jesus and reject hell, because He taught it so plainly and frequently. R. C. Sproul wrote ("Tabletalk [11/90]),

The fact is, however, that virtually every statement in the Bible concerning hell comes from the lips of Jesus Christ. We cannot take Jesus seriously without also taking seriously what He said regarding eternal punishment. There is very little about hell in the Old Testament, and very little in the epistles. It is almost as if God decided that a teaching this frightening would not be received from any lesser authority than that of His own Son.

There are primarily two popular views that we must reject. One, [universalism](#) takes the forever out of hell; the other, [annihilationism](#) takes the hell out of forever. A third false view is [purgatory](#) which also to some degree also takes the forever out of hell.

The first is [universalism](#), the view that everyone will eventually be saved. The universalist says, "A good and loving God could not condemn anyone to hell. There is some good in even the worst of people. God will take that into account, so that no one will be condemned." But the universalist underestimates both the awful sinfulness of the human heart and the absolute holiness of God. The rich man in the parable was not an evil man in human terms. He wasn't a mass murderer or child molester. He wasn't deliberately hurting people. He was a just living for himself, oblivious to the poor man at his gate. And yet here he is in the place of eternal

torment! Clearly, Jesus did not teach that everyone, let alone everyone who isn't terribly evil, would be in heaven. Universalism has never been widely accepted by those who take the Scriptures seriously. Obviously if this teaching were true, there would be no pressing reason to fulfill the Great Commission or to urge unbelievers to accept Christ in this life.

The second popular view we must reject is [annihilationism](#). This is the view that God will destroy the unrepentant sinner, so that he ceases to exist. In other words, the soul is not immortal. Perhaps God will punish the person for a time, proportionate to his sin. But at some point, God will say, "That's enough," and the person will not suffer eternally. God will annihilate the person's soul. Several professing evangelicals, most notably John Stott, have suggested if not embraced this idea. The Seventh Day Adventists teach this doctrine. Frankly, the idea sounds humane and appealing. But I cannot dodge Mt 25:46, where Jesus uses the same word "eternal" in the same verse to refer to eternal punishment and eternal life. If life is eternal, then so is punishment. Also, Rev 20:10 states that the devil, the beast, and the false prophet will be tormented in the [lake of fire and brimstone](#) "day and night forever and ever." Then, just a few verses later (Re 20:15), it states that all of those whose names are not found written in the book of life are also thrown into the lake of fire. "Day and night forever and ever" sure sounds eternal! The best defense of eternal punishment that I've read is Jonathan Edwards' sermon, "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners." He argues that since any sin is against the infinite God, it is worthy of infinite punishment.

The third popular view that this parable refutes is the doctrine of [purgatory](#). Both the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church teach that when a believer dies, unless he has attained a state of moral perfection on earth, he goes to an intermediate place where he suffers until all sin is purged away. The sufferings vary according to the guilt and impenitence of the sufferer. Gifts and services to the church, prayers on behalf of the deceased, and Masses provided by friends or loved ones, can all shorten the amount of time the person spends in Purgatory. If anyone was a candidate for Purgatory, this rich man was. As I said, he was not a bad man. He called Abraham his father, showing his devotion to the Jewish faith. He had a concern for his five brothers' eternal destiny. But he wasn't in Purgatory, with a chance to get into heaven after he had suffered a while. He was in hell and there was a great chasm fixed so that he could never cross over. The doctrine of Purgatory is not taught in Scripture (it is based on the apocryphal 2Ma 12:39-45). It undermines the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone. It adds human works to His finished work on the cross.

**So while it is a hard doctrine to fathom, both intellectually and emotionally, we cannot say that we believe in Jesus and the Bible and at the same time reject the doctrine of eternal hell. There are two and only two eternal destinies.**

**Related Resources to help you defend the faith to those who hold to false teaching on hell:**

- Denials and Their Answers - 10 pages on Universalism, 4 pages on Annihilationism - in Buis' book [The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment](#)
- [Is annihilationism biblical?](#)
- [Is universalism / universal salvation biblical?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about Purgatory?](#)

---

**Larry D. Pettegrew** has an excellent article on **annihilationism** entitled [A Kinder, Gentler Theology Of Hell?](#). Below are quotes from the introduction and the conclusion. If you are someone to whom you are ministering is enraptured by this dangerous, deceptive doctrine, this article is highly recommended:

**INTRODUCTION** - Annihilationism has, as the Niagara Creed of 1878 foresaw, become a doctrine that plagues the evangelical church of the late twentieth century. It comprises a multifaceted compromise of biblical systematic theology, affecting most major doctrines of the Christian faith, not just the area of eschatology. Its compromise stems from the influence of postmodernism as proponents of annihilationism bring to the text unwarranted theological preunderstandings. Their emphasis on God's nature to love disregards His many other attributes such as holiness, justice, truth, grace, and omnipotence and thereby sentimentalize God's love. Further, their preunderstandings distort biblical teaching about man's immortality of the soul that is derived from God. A third affected area is the doctrine of sin when they assert that God would be vindictive to mete out eternal punishment for finite sin. In addition, the system of annihilationism undervalues Christ's atonement for sin by claiming that His death only paid the price for man's temporary rather than our eternal punishment.....

**CONCLUSION** - It has been the purpose of this essay to demonstrate by a survey of the doctrinal categories that the doctrine of annihilationism as taught by a few contemporary evangelicals is a significant part of a multifaceted compromise of a biblical

systematic theology. I have also suggested that annihilationists often come to the Scriptures with cultural and theological preunderstandings that negate the historical-grammatical meaning of the passages. **Carson** is right in his observation:

Despite the sincerity of their motives, one wonders more than a little to what extent the growing popularity of various forms of annihilationism and conditional immortality are a reflection of this age of pluralism. It is getting harder and harder to be faithful to the "hard" lines of Scripture. And in this way, evangelicalism itself may contribute to the gagging of God by silencing the severity of his warnings and by minimizing the awfulness of the punishment that justly awaits those untouched by his redeeming grace. (D A Carson - [The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism](#) - borrow this book)

Moreover, the doctrinal compromises of annihilationism have serious consequences. **J. I. Packer** concludes this study with this penetrating question:

Does it matter whether an evangelical is a conditionalist or not? I think it does: for a conditionalist's idea of God will miss out on the glory of divine justice, and his idea of worship will miss out on praise for God's judgments, and his idea of heaven will miss out on the thought that praise for God's judgments goes on (cf. Rev. 16:5–7, 19:1–5), and his idea of man will miss out on the awesome dignity of our having been made to last for eternity, and in his preaching of the gospel he will miss out on telling the unconverted that their prospects without Christ are as bad as they possibly could be—for on the conditionalist view they aren't! These, surely, are sad losses. Conditionalism, logically thought through, cannot but impoverish a Christian man, and limit his usefulness to the Lord. That is why I am concerned about the current trend towards conditionalism. I hope it may soon be reversed. (J I Packer - [The Problem of Eternal Punishment](#) - Evangel 10/2 - Summer, 1992) (from [A Kinder, Gentler Theology Of Hell?](#))

## Denial of the Doctrine of Hell By The Cults

by [Harry Buis](#)

One of the common characteristics of the modern cults is their denial of the doctrine of eternal punishment. This is obviously one of the reasons for their popular appeal. Their success is a witness to the dislike of this doctrine on the part of the natural man. Since in the main section of our study we have limited ourselves to beliefs within the main stream of the Christian Church, we here briefly present the viewpoints of the modern cults.

**1. Christian Science.** There is no hell in the traditional sense. Rather hell is "mortal belief; error; lust; remorse; hatred; revenge; sin, sickness, death, suffering, and self-imposed agony, effects of sin, that which worketh abomination or maketh a lie." <sup>1</sup> (NOTE: [CLICK HERE FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY - SCROLL TO BOTTOM OF PAGE](#)) There is no such thing as annihilation, but at death, man passes to another plane of existence where there is further opportunity to overcome erroneous thinking, and thus attain salvation.

**2. Jehovah's Witnesses.** In his early youth Charles Taze Russell was nurtured in the Presbyterian Church. The traditional belief in hell was one reason why he turned against historic Christianity. He became a skeptic, but was later deeply influenced by Seventh-Day Adventism, from which he borrowed the doctrines of soul sleep and the annihilation of the wicked. Russell spoke very strongly against what he called "the nightmare of eternal torture."

Russell's successor, Joseph Franklin Rutherford, was equally vehement in his opposition to hell. "It was written of him that he went to hell. 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell' (Psalm 16:10). If hell is a place of endless torment and Jesus went there, he could not have been released. The fact that he did not remain in hell is proof conclusive that hell is not a place of eternal torment."<sup>2</sup> "Eternal torture is void of the principle of love. 'God is love.' A Creator that would torture his creatures eternally would be a fiend, and not a God of love."<sup>3</sup>

**3. Mormonism.** Mormons believe in hell, but they do not believe that it is everlasting. Braden, who has made a careful study of the cults, says, "Mormonism believes that salvation is universal and that there is still a chance beyond the grave . . . . To the many who have died, having deliberately refused to accept the gospel, must be added innumerable others who died never having heard the gospel. What provision is there for them? The former are not to be punished 'beyond the time requisite to work the needed reformation and to vindicate justice, for which ends alone punishment is imposed.' And it would be blasphemous, Talmadge asserts, to believe that God would condemn a soul under any law not known to him. It becomes plain, then that the gospel must be preached in the spirit world where these dead dwell."<sup>4</sup>

**4. New Thought.** Hell is "the torment of experiencing that which contradicts the truth."<sup>5</sup> Says Braden, "What is perfectly clear is that the older stress upon another worldly heaven and hell of eternal reward or punishment is rejected and this is a pleasing thought to

many who grew up under the older orthodoxy, but no longer find it possible to believe it, for many reasons."**6**

**5. Spiritualism.** Braden says, "The Spiritualists completely repudiate the traditional concepts of heaven and hell, and of course all idea of 'everlasting' punishment or reward. In the literature there is frequent report of the surprise of those who have recently passed over at not finding themselves in heaven or hell. Yet there is something approximating the idea of both heaven and hell of a temporary nature. The lower spheres to which those of evil character and a low state of development go at death constitute a sort of purgatory, at least, where they must remain until they have developed to a higher degree. If not punitive it is at least purgative, and the soul remains at this level until it merits promotion to a higher sphere."**7**

The following statements from outstanding spokesmen for Spiritualism give us further understanding of their position.

A. Conan Doyle says, "Hell, I may say, drops out altogether, as it has long dropped out of the thoughts of every reasonable man. This odious conception, so blasphemous in its view of the Creator, arose from the exaggeration of Oriental phrases, and may perhaps have been of service in a coarse age when men were frightened by fires, as wild beasts are scared by the travelers. Hell as a permanent place does not exist. But the idea of punishment, of purifying chastisement, in fact of Purgatory, is justified by the reports from the other side."**8**

Colville says, "It (the ancient Egyptian view of trans-migration) is immeasurably superior to any view of endless useless torment such as many benighted Christian theologians have proclaimed — a conception for which there is neither rational explanation nor apology."**9**

Sir Oliver Lodge says, "There is nothing that can properly be called Hell in the medieval sense of eternal hopelessness; but yet Hell is very truth in so far as they suffer the pangs of remorse when their rebellious spirit is broken, and when in their felt poverty of soul they begin to long to return to the Father."**10**

**6. Theosophy.** This cult also denies eternal punishment. Annie Besant, one of the leaders of the movement, says, "If this (Luke 13:23-24) be applied in the ordinary protestant way to salvation from everlasting hell-fire, the statement becomes incredible, shocking. No Savior of the world can be supposed to assert that many will seek to avoid hell and enter heaven, but will not be able to do so. But as applied to the narrow gateway of Initiation and to salvation from rebirth, it is perfectly true and natural."**11**

Leadbeater, another leader of the movement, says that the astral life "corresponds to what Christians (Catholic) call purgatory; the lower mental life, which is always entirely happy, is what is called heaven" . . . Hell is "only a figment of the theological imagination."**12**

**7. Unity.** Speaking of Fillmore, the founder of Unity, Braden says, "Nowhere that the writer has discovered, does he enlarge extensively on the idea of heaven, and it will be noted that here only by silent inference is there any reference to any opposite state, corresponding to the distressing dreams of the anxious, troubled sleeper."**13**

Speaking of the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Fillmore himself says, "The material avenues are lost to the outer, and the soul finds itself in a hell of desires without the flesh sensations with which to express itself . . . the body consciousness, the peace of union for all the attributes of man, has been removed, producing in the life consciousness a great gulf or chasm that cannot be crossed, except by incarnation in another body."**14** Unity's official "creed" says, "We believe that the dissolution of spirit, soul and body, caused by death, is annulled by rebirth of the same spirit and soul in another body here on earth. We believe the repeated incarnations of man to be a merciful provision of our loving Father to the end that all may have opportunity to attain immortality through regeneration, as did Jesus."**15**

Thus we see that the cults, in one way or another, deny the doctrine of eternal punishment. Could it be that if all who held the orthodox position had been more careful in their statement of the doctrine, avoiding the excesses which we have noted to have been all too prevalent in past ages, then some of these cults would never have arisen? Certainly if all who propounded the doctrine had not gone beyond a sane interpretation of the Scripture many who have done so would not have turned from orthodox Christianity to the cults. (NOTE: [CLICK HERE FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY - SCROLL TO BOTTOM OF PAGE](#)) ([Denial by the Cults](#))

**Luke 16:23 "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom .**

BGT Luke 16:23 καὶ ἐν τῷ ᾧ πρὸς τοὺς φθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ, πρὸς τοὺς βραχίονας αὐτοῦ, ἵδεν Ἀβραάμ μακρὰν καὶ Λαζάρου ἐν τοῦ κοινοῦ αὐτοῦ.

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



NET Luke 16:23 And in hell, as he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far off with Lazarus at his side.

CSB Luke 16:23 And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side.

ESV Luke 16:23 and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

NIV Luke 16:23 In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.

NLT Luke 16:23 and his soul went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side.

NRS Luke 16:23 In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side.

YLT Luke 16:23 and in the hades having lifted up his eyes, being in torments, he doth see Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom,

GWN Luke 16:23 He went to hell, where he was constantly tortured. As he looked up, in the distance he saw Abraham and Lazarus.

NKJ Luke 16:23 "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

NAB Luke 16:23 and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

MIT Luke 16:23 In the grave he lifted his eyes upward—while he experienced great agony—and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus right next to him.

- **In Hades he lifted up his eyes** Ps 9:17; 16:10; 49:15; 86:13; Pr 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:24; Isaiah 14:9,15; Mt 5:22,29; 18:9; 23:33; 1 Cor 15:55; \*marg.; 2 Pe 2:4; Rev 20:13,14
- **being in torment** Luke 16:28; 8:28; Mt 8:29; Rev 14:10,11; 20:10
- **saw Abraham far away** Luke 13:28,29; Mt 8:11,12
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hell in W G T Shedd's Dogmatic Theology](#) - one of the best on the subject of Hell
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur

## SHOCK AND SURPRISE UPON FINDING ONESELF IN HELL

**In Hades ([hades](#)) he lifted up his eyes, being in torment ([basanos](#)), and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom ([kolpos](#))** - Death is the door into eternity for every soul - either into heaven or hell. As someone has said "Hell is truth seen too late!" **Hades ([hades](#))** is like a "holding cell" for unbelievers until their final judgment at the Great White Throne. That's why in Revelation 20:14+, **Hades** is said to be thrown into the lake of fire, gehenna, the final Hell. **He lifted his eyes** does not indicate a geographic location for Hades. In other words, this statement does not mean that Hades is in the heart of the earth and Abraham's bosom is up in the clouds! We simply cannot say from the text. The rich man died physically but now saw truth that he was clearly alive in Hades. He was conscious, conscious of self, able to see, to feel, to speak, to remember, with immediate awareness of where he was. There is no Biblical basis for the notion that death is an unconscious state. There is no such thing as **soul sleep** ([see note](#)). In hell there will be immediate and continued consciousness and awareness of where one is. He was **intorment ([basanos](#))** and **being ([huparcho](#))** means literally to begin under and then to exist and here in the present tense signifies he would exist in this state of **torment** forever!

**THOUGHT** - This is a story about a **rich man** who thought he was going to Heaven and ended up in hell. And tragically, this will be the common experience of many if not most of the occupants of hell who find that "Too

Late" is written on the gates of Hell! As noted earlier most surveys show that the large majority of people polled think they will go to heaven when they die. As John Blanchard says "To believe in Heaven but not in Hell is to declare that there were times when Jesus was telling the truth and times when He was lying."

**Erwin Lutzer** comments on the phrase **in Hades** ([hades](#)) and points out that we need to understand that "the rich man of Luke 16 was not yet in **hell**, but **hades**. Because the King James Version often translated both [sheol](#) and [hades](#) as **hell**, this has needlessly confused two different kinds of regions. The Bible seems clear that **no one is yet in** (eternal) **hell today**. Someday, **hades** will be thrown into hell, but that has as yet not happened (Revelation 20:14+). What about the believer, Lazarus? He was in that region of sheol, or **hades**, which is called here "Abraham's bosom." But after the Ascension of Christ believers are said to go directly into heaven. In other words, the two regions of **hades** no longer exist side by side; there is reason to believe that Abraham's bosom is in heaven today. **So if you die and your spirit goes to heaven, I believe you will not be able to see those who are suffering in **hades** as Lazarus did.** Perhaps at the ascension, Christ took those who were in Abraham's bosom (located near those who suffered in **hades**) to heaven with him....**Hades**, as far as we know, now has only one region, and that is where unbelievers enter. I believe it is still an abode for departed spirits, a temporary intermediate state where those who have not received God's forgiveness must wait until further notice. When they hear their names called, the news that awaits them will not be encouraging." (Borrow Lutzer's book - [One Minute After You Die](#)) **Watch Lutzer's message** - you might let some of your skeptical friends listen to Dr Lutzer's message! [One Minute After You Die - A Preview of Your final destination](#)

**Warren Wiersbe** - Death takes place when the spirit leaves the body (James 2:26). But death is not the end; it is the beginning of a whole new existence in another world. For the Christian, death means to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:21). For the unbeliever, death means to be away from God's presence and in torment. The King James Version uses the word hell in Luke 16:23, but the Greek word is not "hell" but "[hades](#)." It is the temporary realm of the dead as they await the judgment. The permanent place of punishment for the lost is "hell," the lake of fire. One day, death will give up the bodies and **hades** will give up the souls (Rev. 20:13, where "hell" should be "**hades**"), and the lost will stand before Christ in judgment (Rev. 20:10-15). From our Lord's description, we learn that **hades** had two sections: a paradise portion called "Abraham's bosom," and a punishment portion. It is believed by many theologians that our Lord emptied the paradise part of **hades** when He arose from the dead and returned to the Father (John 20:17; Eph. 4:8-10). We know that today "paradise" is in heaven, where Jesus reigns in glory (Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 12:1-4). There is no indication in Scripture that souls in heaven can communicate with people in **hades** or with people on earth. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

As stated at the beginning, some think this is a true story but others think it is a story which Jesus used to teach a spiritual truth. And so **John MacArthur** teaches that there is nothing in the Bible "to indicate that somebody in hell could look into Heaven (**ED**: BUT WHAT ABOUT JESUS' WORDS IN Lk 13:28+ WHICH WOULD SEEM TO ARGUE AGAINST THIS STATEMENT? IT IS NOTABLE THAT MACARTHUR HAS NO COMMENT [IN COMMENTARY, [STUDY BIBLE](#), OR [SERMON](#)] ON THE PHRASE "**when you see** [LOOKS LIKE LITERAL SIGHT IN CONTEXT] *Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God*". Lk 13:28+ INTERESTING!), find father Abraham, stop him from walking down the golden streets, and ask him a question....No one in hell is omniscient, so they would not be able to see into Heaven and look around until they found Abraham. They would not know who Abraham was. No one in hell can have a conversation with somebody in Heaven. Everything in the experience of a person in hell is confined to hell. Everything in the experience of a person in Heaven is confined to Heaven...But for the sake of the story, Jesus says the rich man sees Abraham; and he knows it is Abraham; and he sees Lazarus beside him." (Sermon [A Testimony of One Surprised to Be in Hell, Part 1](#))

As the rich man (and all who refuse to repent) discovered "It does not require a decision to go to hell."

**Mark Hitchcock** rightly states that "Hell is what we earn. "For the wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23a). Heaven is what God gives us as a free gift by His grace. "But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23b). Our admission price to heaven was paid in full by the blood of Jesus Christ. Make sure you have accepted it before it's too late. (55 Questions to Life after Death)

As **John Hannah** says "No one who is ever in hell will be able to say to God, "You put me here," And no one who is in heaven will ever be able to say, "I put myself here."

**Gene Brooks** - Jesus reverses what the Pharisees taught that the rich were loved by God and the poor hated.

**Tony Evans** - Notice that this man's thoughts were clear, his emotions were intact, and his mind was fully functional. The idea of hell as a place where people are out of their minds, screaming insanely with fire bursting out of them, is more of a medieval teaching than an accurate biblical understanding.

**Brian Bell** on **Hades** ([hades](#)) - The other place, the bad place, "H. E. double toothpicks", Hell, Hades, the underworld, place of punishment, place of perdition." (**NOTE**: BELL OBSCURES THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TEMPORARY ABODE '**HADES**' AND THE PERMANENT ABODE '**HELL**..")

**C.S. Lewis** was told about a gravestone inscription that read: "Here lies an atheist— all dressed up and no place to go." Lewis quietly replied, "I bet he wishes that were so!" Lewis added "The safest road to hell is the gradual one - the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts."

**Henry Alford** - The most dreadful torment of the lost, in fact that which constitutes their state of torment, will be this coming to themselves, when too late for repentance. (**ED**: AND I WOULD ADD THE DREADFUL REALITY THAT THEY ARE FOREVER SEPARATED FROM THE ONE WHO CREATED THEM!)

In Luke 13 Jesus describes those separated from God as able to **see** all of the Jewish Patriarchs...

"In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out. (Lk 13:28+)

Undoubtedly a major component of the torment is the awareness of separation from the presence of God. Paul alludes to this in Second Thessalonians

"For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to **those who do not know God** and to those **who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus**. 9 **These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.** (2 Th 1:6-9+)

**Scott Ardavanis** - We have so trivialized the word (HELL) that we have stripped hell of its Biblical meaning. John Blanchard states, "When fifteen people were killed and 186 injured in a collision involving 75 vehicles in Tennessee, a fireman described the scene as 'three miles of *hell*.' During the Persian Gulf War in 1991, CNN reporter Bernard Shaw described the bombing of Baghdad by saying, 'This feels like we're in the center of *hell*.' At a funeral service for millionaire Malcolm Forbes, his son Robert addressed his dead father with the words, 'It's been a *hell* of a party-thanks for the trip.'" (Blanchard, 16-17) However, others have become exaggerated in their efforts to describe hell's horror. One preacher speaks of the "wicked hanging by their tongues by hooks while the flaming fire torments them from beneath." Another says, "The flames of fire gush from ears, eyes and nostrils and out of every pore"—ridiculous! These kinds of statements go beyond a sobered, Biblical approach. This is a more vivid imagination than what is revealed in Scripture. (Donnelly 1987) ([A Sermon from Hell](#))

**MacArthur** - How do you describe hell? Conscious torment. A believer who dies is immediately in the conscious fellowship and joys of the heavenly experience. The damned are immediately in the conscious experience of pain, torment, torture. That the rich and Lazarus are where they are and experiencing what they are is a major point of Jesus' story. This is how it really is! (**ED**: THIS IS AN INTERESTING COMMENT BECAUSE MACARTHUR THINKS IT IS JUST A STORY). (Sermon - [A Testimony of One Surprised to Be in Hell, Part 2](#))

**Wiersbe** - The word **torment** is used four times in this account, and it speaks of definite pain. This is the same word that is used for the doom feared by the evil spirits (Mark 5:7) and the judgments God will send on an unrepentant world (Rev. 9:5; 11:10; 20:10). If hell is the permanent prison of the damned, then [hades](#) is the temporary jail, and the suffering in both is very real. People ask, **"How can a loving God even permit such a place as hell to exist, let alone send people there?"** But in asking that question, they reveal that they do not understand either the love of God or the wickedness of sin. God's love is a *holy* love ("God is light," 1 John 1:5), not a shallow sentiment, and sin is rebellion against a holy and loving God. God does not "send people to hell." They send themselves there by refusing to heed His call and believe on His Son. The "unbelieving" are named second on the list of the people who go to hell, even before the murderers and the liars (Rev. 21:8; also see John 3:18-21, 36). (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

Specific torments in the Luke passage (Lk 16:19-31) are the flame (whether literal or figurative), in agony, the sight of the righteous, the sensation of unquenchable thirst, the remembrance of one's previous life, and the worst of all the realization that they are in a hopeless situation for all of eternity!

Meditate much on hell.

Let us go into hell by contemplation

that we may not go into hell by condemnation.

-- A Puritan Musing

**MacArthur on Lazarus in his bosom** ([kolpos](#)) - the shock (to the Pharisees listening to this parable) is this man is in Heaven. The next shock is he's not just in Heaven, he's taken by the angels to Heaven. The next shock is he's not just taken by the angels to Heaven, but he's not on the periphery. He's not at the back of the room or the back of the crowd looking over everybody's head and

between their heads to see who's sitting up at the main table. He's sitting next to Abraham. Wow ... This is just way out there. A broadside on their theological assumptions! The Pharisees knew where Abraham was, because he was the father of the faithful. They knew Genesis 15:6-note says, "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned (imputed) it to him as righteousness." That truth establishes Abraham, not only as the father of the race physically, but the father of the faithful spiritually. He is the first one of whom it is said he received an imputed righteousness by faith, which is the way salvation always comes. And so Abraham was their hero racially and spiritually; and here goes Lazarus right into the presence of Abraham. The Jews believed then and believe today that Abraham is in Heaven; that if there's a hierarchy in Heaven, then Abraham's at the top. If there's a chief seat at the [great Messianic banquet](#) in the glories of Heaven (**Ed**: See Lk 14:15ff-note), Abraham is in that seat. He is the most honored of all people, of all Jews; and the Jews are most honored in their minds of all people. And to take this wretched, stinking, foul beggar and place him at the table beside Abraham is way beyond comprehension for them. He would've been refused fellowship with any Pharisee. No Pharisee would've gone near that man under any circumstance whatsoever. He was refused even minimal fellowship, even the minutest attention of giving him some crumbs to eat. The religious elite passed by him and never even saw him; and now he is in close, intimate fellowship with the greatest of all Jews, Abraham. One of the tortures of hell is everybody knows they're not in the Kingdom of God.

[See above](#) for similar picture in Luke 13:26-30

**Bosom** is depicted by John at the Last Supper "There was reclining on Jesus' **bosom** ([kolpos](#)) one of His disciples (John), whom Jesus loved." (Jn 13:23)

Thomas Watson described the divergent perspectives of the Rich Man and Lazarus noting that "What a wicked man fears, a godly man hopes for."

As **MacArthur** says "Close to the host is the place of honor. They all knew it. They all sought the chief seats (**Ed**: See Lk 14:7-11-note). They knew what that was about. Close to the host is where you want to be; and when the Pharisee threw a dinner, the closer you were to the Pharisee who threw the dinner, the more the honored person you were; and, here, when you go to Heaven, you can't get more honored than to be next to Abraham....Shut out from every table on earth, Lazarus is the guest of honor in the table of God."

Jesus is making the contrast between the rich man's eternal fate and the poor man's eternal fate as striking as possible in an attempt to arrest the attention of His hearers and all who read this parable! He does not want anyone to suffer the fate of the rich man! He knows that worldly wealth can deceive a man to such an extent that he fails to sense his desperate need for repentance and belief. The rich man thinks he has heaven on earth and surely will have heaven in heaven, but he will die and immediately realize his tragic mistake. But then it is too late. Paul citing Isaiah 49:8 applies the passage to stress the urgency of accepting God's grace and salvation in Christ without delay (cf Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13,14).

He (God) says, "AT THE [ACCEPTABLE](#) TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED ([boetheo](#)) YOU." **Behold**, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," **Behold**, now is "THE DAY OF [SALVATION](#)". (2 Cor 6:2)

**Comment:** Dear reader, if you have not accepted Christ as your Savior, do so **TODAY**, for you may not have a tomorrow (James 4:14). How tragic for you to read these fearful words of warning and yet still stubbornly refuse to repent and believe! To do so is to be foolish like the rich man in this parable! And you will be tormented in your conscience forever for having made such a foolish choice!

**Life has many choices,  
but eternity has only two!  
Choose wisely!**

---

**Hades** (86)([hades](#)) is the transliteration of the Greek word **Hades** (from **a** = negative + **eido** = to see) literally means "not seen" or "unseen". The understanding of Hades is somewhat confusing, as it changes meaning somewhat from as one moves from the uses in the Old Testament into the uses in the New Testament .

That said, in the OT **Hades** was used most often to describe the region of ALL departed souls. Everyone who die, whether righteous or unrighteous, is described as departing to **Hades**. But as we move into the NT, we see the progressive revelation of the term, so that **Hades** gains a more restricted sense and refers not to the place of ALL who die (believers and unbelievers as in the OT) but only to the abode of unbelievers. In other words, in the NT **Hades** comes to be synonymous with what we refer to as Hell. But to confuse the picture a little, you must realize that even in this sense of meaning "Hell" **Hades** is only a "temporary holding tank" so to speak, because as shown in Rev 20:14 (see below) **Hades** ceases to exist for it is thrown into the Lake of fire. Don't be confused. Hell is permanent and in Scripture is clearly described as such. The unrighteous dead will be resurrected in their bodies (The

"Second Resurrection" - see Births, Deaths, and Resurrections.) at the Great White Throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15-note and after being judged for their deeds in the body (to determine the degree of punishment in Hell), they are thrown into the Lake of fire which is synonymous with [Gehenna](#). And as discussed below, **Hades** is also thrown into the Lake of fire (thus the reason it is referred to as temporary) and is never again described in Scripture.

Other thoughts on Hades - In Homer **hades** is spelled **Haides** and means obscure, dark, invisible. **Hades** is used in the Septuagint where it translates the Hebrew words for **Sheol** and for **death**, once for silence (Ps 94:17, 115:17). **Hades** was the name of Greek god of underworld and then the term for the underworld itself. **Hades** is pictured as a prison for which Jesus holds the keys (Rev 1:18-+).

Many interpret Luke 16 as supporting the teaching that there are 2 compartments to Hades/Sheol. This may have been the arrangement before the time of the Cross, but note that if that is so in this verse we read "**in Hades**" contrasted with "**far away**". The question is this - is "**far away**" another side of Hades? It could mean that, but one wonders why the Spirit did not inspire Luke to record something like "**far away... on the other side of Hades**"? In other words, the location of "**far away**" is not unequivocally stated. And this is one reason many writers are not dogmatic about the compartmentalization of Hades. See note above for interesting OT uses of **Hades** for Sheol - the question is do these passages suggest that there were 2 compartments to Sheol/Hades? After considerable study on this subject, I cannot offer a dogmatic statement, which can be supported from Scripture.

**Hades** - 10x in 10v - Every use of **Hades** in the Gospels is by Jesus. All 10 NT uses of **Hades** refer to the abode of the damned with the **EXCEPTION** of the the two uses in Acts 2:27 and Acts 2:31 which are quotes from the OT. These two uses in Acts use **Hades** in the same sense as it was most commonly used in the OT. In other words in Acts 2:27, 31 **Hades** refers to the "grave," or to the abode of the departed dead, not the abode of the damned.

Note that if you read the **King James Version**, you may become confused because this version translates all the uses of **hades** as "**Hell**" with one exception (which it translates "grave" - 1 Cor 15:55KJV - but the Greek word Hades is not found in the more modern Greek manuscripts which have "O death" [Greek = thanatos] in place of "O grave" - 1Cor 15:55). So the **KJV** confuses the temporary location of the damned in **Hades** with the permanent location [gehenna](#) which is synonymous with the **Lake of fire**.

Matt. 11:23; Matt. 16:18; Lk. 10:15; Lk. 16:23; Acts 2:27; Acts 2:31; Rev. 1:18; Rev. 6:8; Rev. 20:13; Rev. 20:14

Revelation 20:14-[note](#) Then death and **Hades** were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

This verse makes it clear that Hades is temporary and is separate and distinct from the Lake of fire which is described as eternal as "**forever and ever**" in Rev 20:10.

**Tony Garland - Death** (representing the bodies of the dead which had lain in the earth and sea) and **Hades** (the place of torment for soul and spirit of the unrighteous dead between death and the judgment) will be destroyed. Their physical reality vanishes in the fleeing of the earth and heaven—the destruction of the old order: Death and Hades, here viewed as if they were personal beings, share the same fate. They, of course, cease to be. There is nothing more of temporal death or of the place of departed spirits after this. They are not personal beings, hence their casting into "the lake of fire" is the end of them; but, conceived of as persons, they are consigned to exactly the same eternal punishment with the other wicked.

**MacArthur** on **Hades** and **Gehenna** - **Hades** is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word sheol. Both words describe the realm of the dead. Sheol, used sixty-seven times in the Old Testament, describes the realm of the dead in general. **Hades** is used ten times in the New Testament, always in reference to the place of punishment (cf. Luke 16:23) where the unrighteous dead are kept pending their sentencing to hell. In this incredible scene (Great White Throne), **Hades** is emptied of its captive (unrighteous) spirits, who are reunited with resurrection bodies before the bar of God's justice. Unbelievers, fitted with resurrection bodies suited for hell, will then be ready for their sentencing to the lake of fire where their punishment, unlike that in **Hades**, will last forever....The clearest and most vivid of the New Testament terms used to describe the final hell, the lake of fire, is [gehenna](#) ([Gehenna](#)). [Gehenna](#) is the New Testament word for the valley of Ben-Hinnom (also called Topheth; 2 Kings 23:10; Isa. 30:33; Jer. 7:31–32; 19:6), located southwest of Jerusalem. In Old Testament times, idolatrous Israelites burned their children in the fire there as sacrifices to false gods (Jer. 19:2–6). In Jesus' day, it was the site of Jerusalem's garbage dump. The fires kept constantly burning there gave off foul-smelling smoke, and the dump was infested with maggots. Sometimes the bodies of criminals were dumped there. The valley of Ben-Hinnom was thus an apt picture of eternal hell, one used repeatedly by Jesus (Matt. 5:22, 29, 30;



10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5). Hell will be God's eternal cosmic dump; its inmates will be burning as garbage forever. (MacArthur NT Commentary - Revelation)

See summary of Births, Deaths, and Resurrections.

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the difference between Sheol, Hades, Hell, the lake of fire, Paradise, and Abraham's bosom?](#)
- [Did Jesus go to hell between His death and resurrection?](#)
- [What are the gates of hell?](#)
- [Where did Old Testament believers/saints go when they died?](#)
- [Did God create hell?](#)
- [Where was Jesus for the three days between His death and resurrection?](#)
- [What is Tartarus?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about soul sleep?](#)
- [What is Abraham's bosom?](#)
- [What are the keys of death \(Revelation 1:18\)?](#)

**Torment** (931) (**basanos** cp "touchstone" - basanite, Latin = lapis Lydius) is used only 3x in the NT (Mt 4:24 = "pains" [NAS]; Lk 16:23 16:28) and originally referred to a stone used for testing gold and other metals, and then came to mean applying torture (e.g., [the torture-rack](#)) to question and extort prisoners' confessions. Therefore **"basanos"** must refer to **a most extreme form or degree of human suffering - severe pain associated with torture and torment!** See also discussion of the verb form [basanizo](#)

**BDAG** describes **basanos** as "severe pain occasioned by punitive torture" and records an ancient writing from Herodas describing torture ordered by a court to exhort a confession. Specific torments in the Luke passage (Lk 16:19-31) are the flame, in agony, the sight of the righteous, thirst, the victims' memories of their previous lives, and the realization that they are in a hopeless situation. (Borrow [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament, and other early Christian literature](#))

**NIDNTT** on **basanos** - The noun βάσανος, attested as early as the 6th cent. BC in the poetry of Theognis, is thought to be a loanword (poss. from Egypt. bḥn, "basalt"). It orig. referred to a touchstone, i.e., a hard black stone used to test the quality of gold or silver by inspecting the streak left on the stone surface (Pindar Pyth. 10.67, πειρ ντι δ κα χρυσος ν βασάν πρέπει κα νόος ρθός, "gold shows itself [genuine] when tried by a touchstone, and [so does] a right mind"). By metonymy, the word itself came to mean "test, trial," and was used esp. of "questioning, inquiry" (Hdt. 8.110.2, Themistocles sent some men τοσι πίστευε σιγ νς πσαν βάσανον, "whom he trusted to remain silent in all interrogation"); and because of the usual procedures in such questioning, it further developed the sense "torture," and thence more generally "torment." The derived vb. βασανίζω ("to test, examine, question by torture, torture"), attested early as well, occurs freq. (for its use with ref. to illness see G. H. R. Horsley, NewDocs 4 [1987]: 142). The noun βασανιστής ("examiner, torturer") is found fewer than 10x in the class. period (only Antiphon, Isocr., Demosth.) 1 In the LXX the noun βάσανος occurs c. 60x, but more than 40 of the occurrences are found in 4 Maccabees, in connection with the **torments** suffered by the Jewish martyrs under the Seleucids (e.g., 4 Macc 4:26; 5:6; cf. 2 Macc 7:8)....The combined uses of βασανισμός and βασανίζω in the book of Revelation account for half of the NT occurrences of the word group and thus call for special comment. In Rev 9:5, the noun is used twice and the vb. once when describing the torments that were brought about by the locusts after the fifth angel sounded his trumpet (here the sense of the noun may be act., "the act of inflicting torment," but elsewhere pass., "the experience of suffering torment"; cf. BDAG 168). The vb. is used of the torment that the two witnesses or prophets brought on the earth (Rev 11:10), of the pain experienced by the "woman clothed with the sun" when she gave birth (Rev 12:2), and of the eternal torment that comes upon the devil, the beast, the false prophet, and those who worship the beast (Rev 14:10 [with the noun in v. 11, "the smoke of their torment will rise forever"]; Rev 20:10). Finally, βασανισμός is applied to the punishment for which Babylon the Great is destined (Rev 18:7, 10, 15). (See [The Concise New International Dictionary of New Testament](#))

**TDNT** on **basanos** - The βάσανος originally belongs to the calling of the inspector of coins. It is linked with the Heb. root בחן ("to test") and the Egyptian bḥn; ("basalt"). According to K. Sethe. bhn is the word which underlies the Heb. בחן and the Gk. βάσανος. βάσανος is generally accepted to be a loan word. βασανίτης is most closely related to it. Βασανίτου λίθου ποσ is the mountain of the bḥn stone. R. Herzog thinks that he may deduce from the etymological development that the ars spectandi, the testing of gold and silver as media of exchange by the proving stone, was first developed by the Babylonians, then came to the Aramaeans and



Hebrews by way of Lydia (Λυδίαλιθος [Bacchyl. Fr., 14, 1, Blass]; βάσανος, Bacchyl., 8, 58), and from them to the Gks. In non-biblical Gk. βάσανος is a commercial expression, or is used in relation to government. It then acquires the meaning of the checking of calculations, which develops naturally out of the basic sense of βάσανος, βασιανίζειν (P. Oxy., 58, 25 [288 A.D.]). In the spiritual sphere it has the figur., sense, which is closely related to the original concrete meaning, of a means of testing (Anth. Pal., VII, 54: νδρ ν κρινομένων ν βασάν σοφίης). The word then undergoes a change in meaning. The original sense fades into the background. βάσανος now comes to denote “torture” or “the rack,” espec. used with slaves (P. Lille, I, 29, 22; Ditt. Syll.3, 356, 12). βάσανος occurs in the sense of “torment” in Theocr. Idyll., 13, p. 13, 5, Meineke; Thom. Mag., p. 94, 4, Ritschl; Demetr. Eloc., 201, 4. An inscription from Cyprus (Salamis), BCH, 51 (1927), 148, 18, contains the malediction: ν βασάνοις πόλοιο. Vet. Val., IV, 13, p. 182, 19, Kroll has a reference to torments of soul (ψυχικ ς βασάνους). **The change in meaning is best explained if we begin with the object of treatment. If we put men instead of metal or a coin, the stone of testing become torture or the rack.** The metal which has survived the testing stone is subjected to harsher treatment. Man is in the same position when severely tested by torture. In the testing of metal an essential role was played by the thought of testing and proving genuineness. The rack is a means of showing the true state of affairs. In its proper sense it is a means of testing and proving, though also of punishment. Finally, even this special meaning was weakened and only the general element of torment remained. ([Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament : abridged in one volume](#) )

---

**ILLUSTRATION** (a little humor on a not too humorous topic) - A little girl was standing outside her Sunday School classroom when the pastor noticed she was holding a big storybook entitled, “Jonah and the Whale.” The pastor wanted to have some fun with her so he asked her, “Do you really believe that Jonah was swallowed by a whale?” The little girl frowned and declared, “Of course I do!” The pastor pushed her a bit and said, “You really believe that a man can be swallowed by a big whale, stay inside for three days and then come out and still be alive?” The little girl said, “Absolutely. The story is in the Bible and we studied it in Sunday School today.” Then the pastor asked, “Can you prove to me that the story is true?” She thought for a moment and then said, “Well, when I get to Heaven, I’ll ask Jonah.” The pastor was on a roll and asked, “Well, what if Jonah’s not in Heaven?” She then put her hands on her little hips and sternly declared, “Then you can ask him!”

---

Duke of Willington - Godfrey Davis, who wrote a biography about the Duke of Willington, said, “I found an old account ledger that showed how the Duke spent his money. It was a far better clue to what he thought was really important than the reading of his letters or speeches.” How we handle money reveals much about the depth of our commitment to Christ. That’s why Jesus often talked about money. One-sixth of the gospels, including one out of every three parables, touches on stewardship. Jesus wasn’t a fundraiser. He dealt with money matters because money matters. For some of us, though, it matters too much.

How we handle money reveals much about our priorities. That’s why Jesus often talked about money. One-sixth of the Gospels’ content, including one out of every three parables, touches on stewardship. Jesus wasn’t a fundraiser. He dealt with money matters because money matters. For some of us, though, it matters too much.

Jesus warned that we can become slaves to money. We may not think that money means more to us than God does. But Jesus did not say we must serve God more than we serve money. The issue isn’t what occupies first place in our life, but whether we serve money at all. Pastor and author George Buttrick said, “Of all the masters the soul can choose, there are at last only two—God and money. All choices, however small, however the alternatives may be disguised, are but variants of this choice.”

Does your checkbook show that Jesus is the Master in your life? ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If we pursue mere earthly gain,  
We choose a path that ends in pain;  
But joy and peace are in our soul  
When we pursue a heavenly goal.  
—D. De Haan

For a quick heart check up,  
check out your checkbook!

---

#### Related Resources from Gotquestions.org

1. [Questions about Heaven, Hell, and Eternity](#) - a long list of questions w

2. [Where is hell? What is the location of hell?](#)
3. [Does hell exist?](#)
4. [Is hell literally a place of fire and brimstone?](#)
5. [How is eternity in hell a fair punishment for sin?](#)
6. [How is an eternity in hell a just punishment for only a human lifetime of sin?](#)
7. [Who will go to hell?](#)
8. [Why does God send people to hell?](#)
9. [How can a loving God send someone to hell?](#)
10. [What does it mean that hell is eternal separation from God?](#)
11. [Why is the idea of eternal damnation so repulsive to many people?](#)
12. [Does heaven exist?](#)
13. [What does hell look like? How hot is hell?](#)
14. [Is hell real? Is hell eternal?](#)
15. [How can I not go to hell?](#)
16. [Is Satan the master of hell? Do Satan and his demons punish people in hell?](#)

---

**Puritan Daily Readings - December 28** - Luke 16:23 - **Meditate much on hell. Let us go into hell by contemplation that we may not go into hell by condemnation.** How restless and hopeless, is the condition of the damned! The ancients feign of [Endymion](#), that he got permission from Jupiter always to sleep. What would the damned in hell give for such a license! In their pains is neither intermission, nor [mitigation](#). The serious meditation on hell, would make us fear sin as hell. Sin is hell's fuel! Sin, like Samson's foxes, carries devouring fire in its tail. Meditation on hell will cause rejoicing in a child of God. The saint's fear of hell is like the two Marys' fear: "They departed from the sepulchre with fear and great joy" (Matt. 28:8). A believer may fear to think of the place of torment—but rejoice to think he shall never come into that place. When a man stands upon a high rock, he trembles to look down into the sea, yet he rejoices that he is not there struggling with the waves. A child of God, when he thinks of hell, he rejoices with trembling. A prison is not made for the king's son to be put in. **A great naturalist observes that nothing will so soon quench fire as salt and blood; but I am sure of this—the salt brinish tears of repentance, and the blood of Christ will quench the fire of hell to a believer. Christ Himself has felt the pains of hell for you. The Lamb of God being roasted in the fire of God's wrath—by this burnt offering the Lord is now appeased towards His people. O how may the godly rejoice! "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ"** (Romans 8:1).

---

[David Thompson](#) summarizes Luke 16:23-31 - Jesus gives a description of what the rich man experienced in hell. Luke 16:23-31 The rich man went to "Hades." Hades is a hellish place of fire where unbelievers go when they die until they are sentenced to the eternal Lake of Fire at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:14). When Jesus Christ speaks of hell, you better take it seriously because He speaks of a literal hell more than any other Person in the Bible (Matt. 5:22, 29-30; 7:19; 8:12; 10:15, 28; 11:22, 24; 13:40-42, 50; 18:7-9; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30, 46; Mark 9:42-49; Luke 12:46-47; 13:28-30; 16:23-31; 17:26-29; John 15:6). There are five facts Jesus Christ brings out about hell:

**Fact #1 - Hell is a place of horrible fire torment. Luke 16:23, 24, 28**

The words "torment" (16:23, 28) and "agony" (16:25) are scary. If ever there are two words that should scare people to believe in Jesus Christ and escape hell, it is these two words. The word "torment" describes a pain that is torturous. The word "agony" describes a pain that is at a deep, suffering level. Combined, these two words describe hell as a horrible place of eternal burning pain and suffering. This is excruciating pain that never ends. Hades is a place where the burning never ceases. It is a torturous pain. The fire never burns a person up because it is a place where "the worm does not die" (Mark 9:47-48).

**Fact #2 - Hell is a place of total consciousness. Luke 16:23b**

There is a very real consciousness for one who is in hell. There is no such thing as soul sleep. The rich man was very much aware of his presence and pain. He was well aware that he was being tormented and Lazarus was not. What irony. In life, he saw Lazarus, who needed his help, and in eternity, he sees Lazarus, and he needs his help.

**Fact #3 - Hell is a place of no mercy. Luke 16:24**

Hell is a place of no mercy. Once one is in hell, there is no chance of experiencing the grace or mercy of God. Crying out to God for grace and mercy will not work and will be of no avail. What good was the money this rich man had now? He would trade all the money he had for one drop of water on the tip of someone's finger. In hell, you do not even mercifully get one drop or drip of water. The irony is that one drop of living water can

keep you out of hell. One drink of living water will guarantee you will never burn in the fires of hell. Invite Jesus Christ into your life and you will escape forever the eternal fire of hell (John 4:10). Now is the time to experience God's grace because there will be no grace or mercy in hell.

#### **Fact #4 - Hell is a place of complete memory. Luke 16:25, 27-31**

A person in hell has a very real and vivid memory. There is no such thing as Dementia or Alzheimer's in hell. Every person's memory will be as sharp as a tack. There are three memories this rich man had:

**(Memory #1) - He remembered his previous life.** Lk 16:25 A person in hell will be able to remember all of the good things he had in life. He will remember his home, wealth and success. He can remember but he can't shake the pain of the fire. The pain of the fire in hell is so intense that he was not focused on the good life he had, so Abraham reminded him.

**(Memory #2) - He remembered his lost family.** Lk 16:27-28 Every unbeliever in hell remembers his relatives and he never wants any of them to end up where he is. This man had five brothers and he begged Abraham to send someone back to tell them to believe so they would not come there to the place of torment. Now you would think that if Lazarus went back from the dead the brothers would believe. But there was a Lazarus who did come back from the dead and instead of the people believing in Christ, they wanted to kill Him (John 11:43-53).

**(Memory #3) - He remembered God's word.** Lk 16:29, 31 People burning in hell will not be laughing or scoffing at the Bible. They will be fully aware of the fact that God's word was written and God's word was in existence.

#### **Fact #5 - Hell is a place of no possible escape. Luke 16:26**

A person who goes to hell will never get out. There is no such thing as purgatory or second chances. A person's destiny at the moment of death is irreversible. No one can call a person out of hell; no one can pray him out; no candles will get him out. One in hell burns there forever. Now one liberal theologian asked what kind of God would put people into a place of endless fiery torture. The same God who put His Son on the cross to die, so you don't have to go there. One who ends up in hell refuses to trust Jesus Christ. In fact, the Pharisees trusted their money and would not trust Jesus Christ or the word of God.

This rich man had a lot of money but he did not have a relationship with Jesus Christ and he ended up in hell. Jesus Christ does not even name him. Wicked people aren't remembered in eternity; they are forgotten (Ps. 9:5; Eccl. 8:10). Verses 29-31 make it very, very clear that the key to staying out of hell is what is found in the writings of Moses and the writings of the Prophets. In the writings of Moses is the law of God that condemns every single person on this earth. In the prophets is a description of one who would come that would be wounded for our transgressions and would be led like a lamb to slaughter so that we might be saved. You either respond to Moses and the prophets, and believe in Jesus Christ, or you will end up in hell like this rich man. We have said many times in this church that when a person dies, the Bible does not teach annihilation, oblivion or reincarnation. **The Bible teaches instant relocation. When you die you will go to one of two places immediately. There are no in-betweens and there are no second chances.** You will either die or go to hell or you will die and go to heaven. If you will take one drink of the living water found by faith in Jesus Christ, when you die the angels of God will escort you into heaven. That is what Jesus taught in Luke 16.

**Luke 16:24 "And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.'**

BGT Luke 16:24 κα α τ ς φων σας επεν· πτερ βρα μ, λ η σ ν με κα π μ ψ ο ν Λ ζ α ρ ο ν ν α β ψ τ κ ρ ο ν τ ο δ α κ τ λ ο υ α τ ο δ α ο ς κα κα τ α ψ ξ τ ν γ λ σ σ ν μ ο υ, τ ι δ υ ν μ α ι ν τ φ λ ο γ τ α τ .

KJV 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.

NET Luke 16:24 So he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this fire.'

CSB Luke 16:24 'Father Abraham!' he called out, 'Have mercy 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 flame!'

ESV Luke 16:24 And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of

his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'

NIV Luke 16:24 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.'

NLT Luke 16:24 "The rich man shouted, 'Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.'

NRS Luke 16:24 He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.'

YLT Luke 16:24 and having cried, he said, Father Abraham, deal kindly with me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and may cool my tongue, because I am distressed in this flame.

GWN Luke 16:24 He yelled, 'Father Abraham! Have mercy on me! Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool off my tongue. I am suffering in this fire.'

NKJ Luke 16:24 "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.'

NAB Luke 16:24 And he cried out, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.'

MIT Luke 16:24 So he called out, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus so he might dip the tip of his finger in water and cool down my tongue because I am in severe pain in this flame."

- **Father Abraham** Luke 16:30; 3:8; Mt 3:9; Jn 8:33-39,53-56; Ro 4:12; 9:7,8
- **have mercy on me** 1 Samuel 28:16; Isaiah 27:11; James 2:13
- **so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water** Isaiah 41:17,18; 65:13,14; Jn 4:10,14; 7:37; Rev 7:16,17; 22:1
- **cool off my tongue** Zechariah 14:12; James 3:6
- **for I am in agony in this flame** Isaiah 66:24; Mt 25:41; Mark 9:43-49; 2 Th 1:8; Rev 14:10,11; 19:20; 20:15
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hell in W G T Shedd's Dogmatic Theology](#) - one of the best on the subject of Hell
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur

## **ABANDON ALL HOPE ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE**

The title is from Dante's **Inferno** has these words in the sign over Dante's entrance to Hell. Dante's "theology" is surprisingly relatively Biblical at least in the following lines (albeit not always as Biblical in some other lines)...

Through me you pass into the city of woe:  
Through me you pass into eternal pain:  
Through me among the people lost for aye.

Justice the founder of my fabric mov'd:  
To rear me was the task of power divine,  
Supremest wisdom, and primeval love.

Before me things create were none, save things  
Eternal, and eternal I endure.

**All hope abandon ye who enter here.**

Such characters in colour dim I mark'd  
Over a portal's lofty arch inscrib'd:  
Whereat I thus: Master, these words import.

**And he cried out ([phroneo](#)) and said** - The laughter and ribaldry of wealth had turned to a cry for mercy. The rich man ironically was now the beggar! This is the first of two "prayers" by the rich man. He is **pleading for relief for his body** here. In his second prayer (Lk 16:27-31) he **pleads for redemption for his brothers!** Clearly the belief by some that hell is a party is completely false. Only a fool would be so self-deceived.

The irony is that one drop of living water can keep you out of hell!  
-- David Thompson

**Father Abraham, [have mercy \(eleeo\)](#) on me, and **send Lazarus**** - **Father Abraham** indicates that the rich man is pleading as a Jew. What tragic irony that the merciless rich man now sought an act of mercy from the very one he ignored during life. As Jesus has already alluded to in Luke 6:24-25, the rich man would not receive mercy, for the day of grace ended when his life ended! Woe! (cf Lk 12:20, 39-40, 58; 13:8-9). In hell the tormented will experience their great need for God's **mercy**, but throughout eternity they will receive no divine **mercy!** Woe! This was sadly probably the first time in his life that the rich man asked for mercy. He was a perfect picture of the self-righteous Pharisees (cf contrast in Lk 18:10-15+) who felt that they works merited their righteous standing before God. They, like all who refuse to repent and believe in Messiah, would find themselves utterly and forever shocked when they passed from this life to the next! **Send** (like have mercy) is in the [aorist imperative](#), a command, but it falls on "deaf ears." Notice there is no apology to Lazarus for his neglect. He is still making demands or commands, "**Send Lazarus,**" but it would be to no avail. It is worth noting that the rich man does not say "Why am I here? This horrible punishment of this place is unfair. I don't deserve to be here. This punishment is too extreme." No, all the rich man says is **have mercy**.

**MacArthur** adds that the **rich man** "knows that his lineage is from **Abraham**. The Jews celebrated their lineage (Lk 1:55+, cf Lk 1:73+, Lk 13:16+, Lk 19:9+). They were the (physical) children of Abraham (**ED**: "We are Abraham's offspring" - Jn 8:33, 37, 39, 40, 52, 53, 56, 57, 58, 59) They claimed their lineage over and over, and they used that as an argument against Jesus to validate their supposed legitimacy before God (Mt 3:9, Lk 3:8-note, Jn 8:33). But Jesus countered by saying, "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see **Abraham** and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out." (Lk 13:28+)

**Father Abraham** - Abraham was the father of the Jewish people (Lk 3:8; 13:16; 19:9; Ge 12:1-3). This phrase is found 12x in Scripture - Ge. 26:3; 26:18; 26:24; 28:13; 32:9; Jos. 24:3; Lk. 16:24; 30; Jn. 8:53, 56; Acts 7:2; Ro 4:12.

**Andrus** writes - He calls to **Father Abraham** because he believes, as all Jews did, that being Jewish gave him automatic access to the father of the Jewish faith. Not so, says the Apostle Paul. "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham." (Gal. 3:7-note)

**Shedd** writes that "The principal deviation from the doctrine of endless retribution was in the Alexandrine school, founded by Clement and Origen. The position taken by them was that "the punishments of the condemned are not eternal, but only [remedial](#), the devil himself being capable of amelioration...The strongest support of the doctrine of endless punishment is the teaching of Christ, the Redeemer of man....He took it upon himself to sound the note of warning. He, the judge of quick and dead, assumed the responsibility of teaching the doctrine of endless retribution: "But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him (**ED**: WHO? HIM WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY = JESUS HIMSELF. THE IRONY IS THE JUDGE WARNS OF THE HORRIBLE PENALTY. READ John 5:26-27)!." (Lk 12:5-note) "Nothing," says Dr. Arnold, "is more striking to me than our Lord's own description of the judgment. It is so inexpressibly forcible, coming from His very own lips, as descriptive of what He Himself would do" Christ could not have warned men so frequently and earnestly as he did against "the fire that never shall be quenched" and "the worm that dies not" (Mk 9:48-note) had he known that there is no future peril fully corresponding to them. That omniscient being who made the statements respecting the day of judgment and the final sentence that are recorded in Matt. 25:31-46 could neither have believed nor expected that all men without exception will eventually be holy and happy." ([Systematic Theology](#))

**MacArthur** makes the point that "Hell is not [remedial](#). (**Ed**: Think "remedy") It's [punitive](#). (**Ed**: Think "punishment") Hell does not fix anybody. It doesn't purge anybody. It doesn't make anybody better. It has no [remedial](#) function. It is pure punishment....The **rich man** is not asking anything from God. Sometimes people think that when you got to hell, all of a sudden you want to love and serve God. No, there's no interest in God, no interest in Christ. The merciless one now wants mercy, and he wants the mercy at the hands of the one to whom he was merciless! (**ED**: IN OTHER WORDS HE STILL VIEWS THINGS AS HE DID DURING LIFE. LAZARUS WAS HIS SERVANT...EVEN THOUGH HE IS IN HELL! TALK ABOUT SELF-DECEPTION!)...There's no remorse in hell. There's no humility in hell. There's no brokenness in hell. All he wants is one thing. He's not even asking to get out. His conscience would never release him from that. He knows he cannot. He knows he doesn't deserve it. He only wants one thing. "Send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame. Couldn't you send him to give me just a little relief?"...He wouldn't give Lazarus a crumb, but he wants Lazarus to give him a drip....The souls of the damned know they're



doomed to suffer. They know they are suffering justly. All they ask for in the lips of this man are small moments of relief in this eternal, unending horror.... Real water is not going to soothe an eternally tortured soul. That is not the point. The message is the desperation of the damned for just the smallest moment of [relief](#). This is the image of hell." ([A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#))

This rich man was the same wretched, sinful man in hell that he had been during life! He had definitely not been [remediated](#)!

**So that** (purpose clause) **he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue**([glossa](#)), **for** (term of explanation) **I am in agony** ([odunao](#)) **in this flame** - So the rich man knew Lazarus as did his brothers. Note the dramatic shift regarding the way the rich lived during his life and now lived after his death (but still "alive", still conscious)! During life he could have anything he wanted to eat or drink but now he says he would be satisfied with just a single drop of water! I would call that a major shift in his perspective! But isn't that what death does to every soul? It forces us to shift our perspective from the temporal to the eternal, for all are either eternally in hell or eternally in heaven. There is no in between. There is no such thing as "Purgatory." ([see note](#)) Notice also how the rich man who had disregarded and failed to help Lazarus in life, now confined to hell sought Lazarus' help (recall his name means "God helps")! Since the rich man knew Lazarus' name, it implies he was aware of his plight. **For I am in agony** ([odunao](#)) **in this flame** indicates the rich man was in real torment even though he was dead. While it is not likely that his cry for water refers to a literal drop of water, Jesus' use of this figure of speech does point to the reality that the horror of hell is so terrible that this portrayal of even licking water from a fingertip would bring some relief. This is not about a real drop of water, but is about real relief. There will be no relief from the eternal torment of Hell! That's a horrible thought! Not even one drip from a fingertip of relief will ever hit the tongue of a soul eternally tormented in hell.

While some interpret **flame** as literal, most commentators take it as a figure of speech. They reason how can Jesus say there is "**outer darkness**" in this place that also has fire which would suggest it has light? Another question is can a flame burn without consuming? Moses writes "the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with **fire**, yet the bush was not consumed." (Ex 3:2+, cf the 3 Jewish boys where "the **fire** had no effect on the bodies" - Da 3:27+) Of course in this context, even a "figurative flame" speaks of intense suffering and pain for those who refuse to repent and believe in Jesus! And so we can argue over literal or non-literal fire and totally miss Jesus' main point here and that is that Hell is a place of torment. And if the symbol (fire, darkness, etc) is so terrible, how awful must be the real thing?

**Stedman** on **water and cool off my tongue** - The **water**, of course, is a symbol of relief. His desiring to have Lazarus touch the tip of his tongue with a finger dipped in water is a symbol of some kind of relief for which he hopes. ([The Main Thing](#)) But in hell all hope is lost, for hope speaks of a present assurance that God will do good to one in the future. That will not come to pass in hell where their torment is forever and ever.

**Fire** is frequently associated with final judgment of the unsaved

Isaiah 66:24 "Then they will go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die And their **fire** will not be quenched (Lxx = [geenna](#)); And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind."

**Tony Garland:** Isaiah speaks of a time when all flesh shall come to worship before the LORD, but also go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who transgressed against God. Somehow, these who are "**cast into outer darkness**" (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30) are visible to the redeemed throughout eternity (Isa. 66:24). (ED: NOT EVERYONE WOULD AGREE WITH THIS INTERPRETATION - SEE GARY SMITH BELOW)

**Thomas Constable:** The worshippers would be able to view the corpses of those whom the Lord will judge. This probably includes those killed in the battle of Armageddon and those sentenced to eternal damnation. The picture is of Jerusalem dwellers going outside the city to the Hinnom Valley where garbage and corpses burned constantly, where worms (corruption) and fire (holy wrath) were always working (cf. Matt. 5:22; Mark 9:43; Luke 12:5). As those who worship God rejoice before Him perpetually, so those who rebel against Him will die perpetually (cf. Matt. 25:46).

**John MacArthur:** In referring to this verse, Jesus referred to the Valley of Hinnom—i.e., Gehenna—where a continually burning trash-heap pictured the never-ending pain of the lost (Mk 9:47, 48). (Borrow [The MacArthur study Bible](#) )

**Gary Smith:** The servants of God will know "what has happened" to the wicked, but there is no morbid fascination with those who suffer God's severe judgment. **The text does not say that the righteous will repeatedly watch these people suffer or laugh and mock them.** Neither would the righteous Israelite of Isaiah's day go down to look at or mock the dead bodies of the children sacrificed to the pagan gods



Baal or Molech in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, but they knew what had happened to those who rebelled against God and followed these pagan practices. Even today many churches have cemeteries beside them which function as a silent reminder that every individual needs to make the right choices before their end comes. This final verse has the rhetorical effect of causing the readers, who may be enthralled with the glorious thoughts of being in the new earth where God will dwell among his servants, to focus their attention on the diametrically opposite destinies that God has prepared for the evil people on this earth. Every reader must decide what destiny is most desired: (a) the joy of living in the wonderful kingdom of God before the very presence of his glory or (b) enduring the sword, fire, and worm of God's judgment. The first choice comes with life-changing challenges and requires a complete commitment to trust God. Only those who love and serve God are able to enter his kingdom. (New American Commentary)

Matthew 5:22 "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the **fiery** hell ([geenna](#)).

Matthew 18:8-9 "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be cast into the eternal **fire**. 9 "If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the **fiery** hell ([geenna](#)).

Matthew 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal **fire** which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;

**Comment:** Note that God did not originally prepare Hell for mankind but for the fallen angels.

Mark 9:48+ where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE **FIRE** IS NOT QUENCHED ([sbennumi](#)).

Luke 3:17+ "His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with **unquenchable** ([asbestos](#)) **fire**."

Revelation 14:9-11+ Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented ([basanizo](#)) with **fire and brimstone** in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 "And the smoke of their torment ([basanos](#)) goes up forever and ever; **they have no rest day and night**, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

**Keener** - Jewish literature often portrayed hell as involving burning. The formerly rich man hopes for mercy because he is a descendant of Abraham, but the judgment here is based on a future inversion of status. Jewish people expected an inversion of status, where the oppressed righteous (especially Israel) would be exalted above the oppressing wicked (especially the Gentiles), and also believed that charitable persons would be greatly rewarded in the world to come. But this parable specifies only economic inversion, and its starkness would have been as offensive to most first-century hearers of means as it would be to most middle-class Western Christians today if they heard it in its original force. (See [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#))

Hell is presented as a place of endless torment, agony, separation, with no hope and no relief.

While there is **agony** in hell, the question arises as to what is the nature of the **agony**? **Daniel Wallace** writes "On the one hand, I would emphatically insist that the fundamental nature of hell is separation from God and his goodness. 2 Thessalonians 1:9 refers to it as "exclusion from the face of God." It is as if God turned his back on non-believers. Just as we only know about God on earth by what he reveals, hell makes a theological statement: only the justice of God is revealed there. That is its fundamental nature....Although it is an intriguing notion to think that hell is a place merely of spiritual separation from God, we must reckon with the biblical teaching that this is the fundamental nature of hell, but that such a description does not account for all the particulars. Further, one has to answer the question: Why, then, are non-believers resurrected if hell is only spiritual? The whole point of the resurrection is to reunite body and soul. God could easily send souls directly to hell. But he does not. He raises all people from the dead and then sends that person to hell." ([Hell: Spiritual or Physical or Both?](#))

**THOUGHT** - What this truth should do to Spirit filled believers is not cause us to minimize it, but to motivate us to passionately share the Gospel! Does this horrible truth not make you want to tell everyone you know about Jesus?!

The great dividing line in life  
Is what we do with Christ, God's Son;

Rejecting Him will lead to hell--  
Receiving Him is heaven begun.  
--Hess

What you decide about Christ determines your destiny.

**Spurgeon** - Heaven is rest, perfect rest—but there is no rest in hell; it is labour in the fire, but no ease, no peace, no sleep, no calm, no quiet; everlasting storm; eternal hurricane; unceasing tempest. In the worst disease, there are some respites: spasms of agony, but then pauses of repose. There is no pause in hell's torments. The dreadful music of the eternal miserere has not so much as a single stop in it. It is on, on, on, with crash of battle, and dust and blood, and fire and vapour of smoke. Heaven, too, is a place of joy; there happy fingers sweep celestial chords; there joyous spirits sing hosannahs day without night; but there is no joy in hell; for music there is the groan; for joy there is the pang; for sweet fellowship there is the binding up in bundles; for everything that is blissful there is everything that is dolorous. No, I could not exaggerate, that were impossible; I cannot come up to the doleful facts, therefore there I leave them. Nothing of the joy of heaven can ever come to hell. Heaven is the place of sweet communion with God

---

'There they behold his face,  
And never, never sin;  
There from the rivers of his grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in.'

There is no communion with God in hell. There are prayers, but they are unheard; there are tears, but they are unaccepted; there are cries for pity, but they are all an abomination unto the Lord. God wills not the death of any; he had rather that he should turn unto him and live, but if that grace be refused, then eternal vengeance is his portion.

**Brian Bell** has an interesting note on **flame** (fire) as to whether or not it is real flames - Well, it seems it is **areal** torment, thus a **real** thirst, which desires **real** water, from a **real** finger, to touch his **real** tongue. So I believe **real** flames. Is the fire spoken of literal fire? It is an accepted law of language that a figure of speech is less intense than the reality. If "**fire**" is merely a figurative expression, it must stand for some great reality, and if the reality is more intense than the figure, what an awful thing the punishment symbolized by fire must be. (William Evans)

On the other hand **Ray Stedman** takes the position that **flame** is symbolic but quickly agrees that "We must face it that these symbols mean something. They are not mere empty expressions, mere words used only for effect, but they convey a deeper reality. The **flames**, though they do not mean literal flames, do refer to something that is *like literal flames*, perhaps a consuming, burning experience -- probably that of memory or of desire unfulfilled (**ED**: THESE COMMENTS OF COURSE ARE **SUPPOSITIONAL**, SOMETHING THAT IS **SUPPOSED**). We all know that in our inner life we can have a sense of being burned, consumed by some burning passion within. The only thing we can compare it to is being burned with physical flames, but, though it is not the same thing, it is often more real....**Many people say they are going to go to hell because their friends are all there. They will never see one if they do. Hell is a lonely place, a place of utter aloneness. There is no one in view here but the rich man. He sees no one but himself.** ([The Main Thing](#))

---

**Cried out** (5455)(**phoneo** from **phone** = voice) means to utter in a loud voice (with considerable volume) - cry out, shout, call out, speak loudly.

**Have mercy** (cf Lk 17:13; 18:38–39)(**arist imperative**)(1653)(**eleeo** from **eleos**) means "to feel sympathy with the misery of another, especially such sympathy which manifests itself in action, less frequently in word." It describes the general sense of one who has compassion or person on someone in need.

**Tongue** (100)(**glossa**) means the literal tongue, the organ of the body. While we recognize that this is a parable and one must be cautious interpreting details, the fact that Jesus describes the rich man's **tongue** supports the idea that the lost in hell will present in bodily form and will have full sensation, for otherwise how could they perceive torment and agony. We know that at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev 20:11-15)

**I am in agony** (torment) (3600)(**odunao** from **odune** = sorrow, torment, grief, pain) means actively to cause intense pain but is used only in the passive in the NT meaning to be in severe or great pain. The other meaning is to experience mental and/or spiritual pain manifest by being grieved, anxious, very worried, deeply distressed). (Lk 2:48)

**TDNT** on the root noun **odune** - a. of "physical pain," Hom. Od.,9, 440; common in Il.: 11, 268, 398, esp. of severe sudden pains due to a wound or fracture, and felt as stabbing, piercing, or cutting.<sup>2</sup> δὕνη is common in the plur., since pains of this kind are often felt individually, Il., 5, 397, 399; 4, 117. The physical sensation then affects the soul and fills it with great anguish, Il., 15, 60,

hence b. "mental distress," "grief" etc., Hom. Od., 1, 242; 2, 79, esp. in the plur., which is also common after Hom.

**Friberg** says **odunao** has two main senses (1) of violent physical torment feel pain, suffer torment, be in agony ( Lk 16.24); (2) of spiritual or mental distress be grieved, be pained, be anxious, be very worried (Lk 2.48)

**Odunao** was used particularly to describe the pain inflicted by the ancients in order to induce men to make confession of their crimes. These torments or tortures were the keenest that they could inflict, such as the rack, scourging, or burning. The [present tense](#) depicts agony is his continual state. This could be physical and/or mental suffering but either way it is unrelenting for all of eternity! No wonder some evangelical theologians try to do away with the Biblical concept of hell!

---

**D L Moody** - O THAT we would wake up to the thought of what it is to be lost! The world has been rocked to sleep by Satan, who is going up and down telling people that it doesn't mean anything. I believe in the old-fashioned heaven and hell. Christ came down to save us from a terrible hell, and any man who is cast down to hell from here must go in the full blaze of the gospel, and over the mangled body of the Son of God. We hear of a man who has lost his health, and we sympathize with him, and we say it is very sad. Our hearts are drawn out to sympathy. Here is another man who has lost his wealth, and we say, "That is very sad." Here is another man who has lost his reputation, his standing among men. "That is sadder still," we say. We know what it is to lose health and wealth and reputation, but what is the loss of all these things compared with the loss of the soul?

---

[Stedman](#) - You have heard of the epitaph that was written on one tombstone:

Remember, Friend, as you pass by,  
As you are now, so once was I.  
As I am now, soon you shall be  
Prepare for Death, and follow me.

Some wag had added the words:

To follow you, I'm not content  
Until I know which way you went!

---

**THE POWER OF "HELL FIRE"** - An old Scottish preacher had to go past a glass factory each day on his way to the church. On one occasion he had a little extra time, and since the factory door was open, he decided to look inside. There before him was a large, blazing furnace. The minister gazed into the white, blue, and purple mass of liquid flame, and the intense heat almost seared his face. As he turned to leave, a workman standing in the shadows nearby over-heard him exclaim, "Ho, mon! What shall hell be like!" Several days later, the man came to the pastor at the church. "You don't know me," he said, "but the other day when you stepped into the furnace room I heard what you said. Now every time I open that hot door to stoke the fire, the words ring in my mind, 'What shall hell be like!' I have come to you, sir, to find out how to be saved. I don't ever want to know the reality of that place."

---

**Deuteronomy 32:35 AWAKENED BY VISIONS OF HELL** - America's greatest theologian is often identified as Jonathan Edwards, a New England pastor of the 1700s. Edwards was brilliant. At age six he studied Latin. He entered Yale when not quite thirteen and graduated when barely fifteen. He was ordained at age nineteen, taught at Yale by twenty, and later became president of Princeton. Harvard granted him both a bachelor's and a master's degree on the same day. But he is best known for [Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God](#)—the most famous sermon in American history.

He preached it on Sunday, July 8, 1741, while ministering in tiny Enfield, Connecticut. A group of women had spent the previous night praying for revival. When Edwards rose to speak, he quietly announced that his text was Deuteronomy 32:35, "**their foot shall slide in due time.**" This "[hellfire and brimstone](#)" approach was somewhat a departure for Edwards. Of his one thousand written sermons, less than a dozen are of this type. Edwards neither gestured nor raised his voice. He spoke softly and simply, warning the unconverted that they were dangling over hell like a spider over the fire. O sinner! consider the fearful danger. The unconverted are now walking over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that it will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen.

Edwards' voice was suddenly lost amid cries and commotion from the crowd. He paused, appealing for calm. Then he concluded: Let everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom. Strong men held to pews and posts, feeling they were sliding into hell. Others shook uncontrollably and rolled on the floor. Throughout the night cries of men and women were heard throughout the village, begging God to save them. Five hundred were converted that evening, sparking a revival that swept thousands into the kingdom. The [Great Awakening](#) had come. (Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, and Quotes. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

---

A church was looking for a pastor, so they invited several candidates to come and preach for them. One minister spoke on the text, "The wicked shall be turned into hell." The head elder was not in favor of him. A few weeks later, another preacher came and used the same Scripture for his sermon. This time the head elder said, "He's good! Let's call him." The other board members were surprised, and one of them asked, "Why did you like him? He used the same text as the other minister." "True," replied the chairman, "but when the second man emphasized that the lost will be turned into hell, he said it with tears in his eyes and with concern in his voice. The first preacher almost seemed to gloat over it."

Recently I heard about a company that had decided to open their stores on Sunday. Because they were located in an area with many churches, the corporation received scores of condemning letters from angry Christians. Some even said they were glad there was an eternal hell for those who had made this decision. Christian and non-Christian employees were offended and embarrassed. Lack of gentleness had harmed Christ's cause.

---

**LIFTED OUT OF SIN AND HELL** - In the early days of the American frontier, an Indian chief heard the message of the gospel and was gloriously saved. Such an indescribable peace flooded his soul that he couldn't keep from talking about the Lord. Another chief visited him and wanted to know who this Jesus was, what He had done, and where He lived. The convert took some chips of wood, made a small circle on the ground, and put a worm in the center. Then he set the wood on fire. The little creature tried to get out of the ring of flame, vainly seeking a way of escape. The converted Indian suddenly lifted the worm out of the place of ever-increasing danger, saying, "That prison of flame is this world, and I was like that worm. The powers of sin and evil surrounded me, and I was helpless to save myself. Then the Great Chief, the Lord Jesus Christ, came down from heaven right into this circle of death, lifted me out of the fire of sin and hell, and made me His child."

---

Grace is receiving what we do not deserve. Mercy is not receiving what we do deserve. We deserve to go to **hell**, but by His mercy we shall never go there. We do not deserve to go to heaven, but by grace we'll spend eternity there. Grace justifies. Mercy pardons. Grace admits us to heaven. Mercy saves us from **hell**. The death of Christ was enough to pardon us in mercy, but it took the resurrection to effect our justification.

---

**John Flavel** wrote, "Conscience becomes the whip that must lash the sinner's soul in hell, the seat and center of all torments." Flavel's point is that the conscience, fully informed, fully activated, fully aware of sin will release its relentless power to condemn on the sinner, who will be tortured endlessly by guilt.

---

Matthew 10:28 All sorts of fears obsess believers. Although some may be legitimate, most are vague, nameless feelings of apprehension. They rob us of confidence and joy, and keep us from spiritual health and effectiveness. The Bible has the solution to this problem. When we learn the fear of God, we will not be controlled by earthly terrors. A young boy living in Holland when it was occupied by the Nazis during World War II, wrote the following in his journal: "Last week three German officers stopped my dad in the hallway. They held him at gunpoint and forced him to open the steel door leading to the basement. One of them ordered Dad to show the crawl space under the hallways. He said if he didn't tell where the hidden weapons are, he will be shot. Dad usually is not a great hero. He's even afraid of the dentist. But this time he is not afraid at all. One of them cocked his Luger and held it against my Dad's temple. Dad recited the Bible verse that was on his mind, **'And fear not them who kill the body, . . . but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.'** The Germans looked at each other, shrugged their shoulders, and then left. The steel heels of their boots made a clanging noise on the iron stairway." This boy's father feared God more than he did the enemy. Having that kind of attitude will help us put all our fears in perspective. —D. C. Egner

We need not fear the darkness of Hell, for we have Christ the light.

---

A recent survey by the Barna Research Group found that 76 percent of Americans believe in heaven, and nearly the same number believe in hell. Only five percent said there was no life after death. **But while 64 percent believe they will go to heaven after they die, only one half of one percent think they are headed for hell.** That seems optimistic! Yet it's in line with our human desire to believe only the best about ourselves. A Gallup Poll showed most Europeans believe in heaven but not in hell.

---

**Matthew 13:36-43 PUNISHMENT FOR DISOBEYING GOSPEL** - During the Franco-German War of 1870-71, a homeowner found two unexploded shells near his house. He cleaned them up and put them on display near his fireplace. A few weeks later he showed them to a visitor. His friend, an expert in munitions, had a horrible thought. "What if they're still loaded?" After examining the shells, he ex-claimed, "Get them away from the fire immediately! They're as deadly as the day they were made!" Without realizing it, the homeowner had been living in peril.

Likewise, many people unknowingly live in constant jeopardy of something far worse—a Christ-less eternity in hell. Failing to recognize the consequences of unbelief, they risk sealing their doom at any moment. We cannot exaggerate the danger of rejecting Christ and living in unbelief, for what we do with Him and His offer of salvation determines where we will spend eternity.

The words of our text are among the most chilling found in the Bible. They emphasize the truth of Hebrews 10:31 : that it is "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Our Lord describes hell as a terrible place of outer darkness (Matt. 22:13 ) and eternal hopelessness (Matt. 18:8-9) . —H. G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When it comes to salvation, he who hesitates may be lost!

---

**Commenting on Barabbas, Donald Grey Barnhouse** wrote, "He was the only man in the world who could say that Jesus Christ took his physical place. But I can say that Jesus Christ took my spiritual place. For it was I who deserved to die. It was I who deserved that the wrath of God should be poured on me. I deserved the eternal punishment of the lake of fire. He was delivered up for my offenses. He was handed over to judgment because of my sins. Christ was my substitute. He was satisfying the debt of divine justice and holiness. That is why I say that Christianity can be expressed in the three phrases: **I deserved hell; Jesus took my hell; there is nothing left for me but His heaven.**"

---

**J C Ryle** - The parable we have now read, in one respect stands alone in the Bible. **It is the only passage of Scripture which describes the feelings of the unconverted after death. For this reason, as well as for many others, the parable deserves especial attention.**

(1) We learn, firstly, from this parable, that **a man's worldly condition is no test of his state in the sight of God.**

The Lord Jesus describes to us two men, of whom one was very rich, and the other very poor. The one "fared sumptuously every day." The other was a mere "beggar," who had nothing that he could call his own. And yet of these two the poor man had grace, and the rich had none. The poor man lived by faith, and walked in the steps of Abraham. The rich man was a thoughtless, selfish worldling, dead in trespasses and sins.

Let us never give way to the common idea that men are to be valued according to their income, and that the man who has most money is the one who ought to be the most highly esteemed. There is no authority for this notion in the Bible. The general teaching of Scripture is flatly opposed to it. "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble are called." (1 Cor. 1:26.) "Let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glories glory in this, that he knows and understands me." (Jer. 9:24.) *Wealth is no mark of God's favor. Poverty is no mark of God's displeasure.* Those whom God justifies and glorifies are seldom the rich of this world. If we would measure men as God measures them, we must value them according to their grace.

(2) We learn, secondly, from this parable, **that death is the common end to which all classes of mankind must come.**

The trials of the "beggar," and the sumptuous faring of the "rich man," alike ceased at last. There came a time when both of them died. "All go to one place." (Eccles. 3:20.) Death is a great fact that all acknowledge, but very few seem to realize. Most men eat, and drink, and talk, and plan, as if they were going to live upon earth forever. The true Christian must be on his guard against this spirit. "He that would live well," said a great divine, "should often think of his last day, and make it his company-keeper." Against murmuring, and discontent, and envy, in the state of poverty — against pride, and self-sufficiency, and arrogance, in the possession of wealth, there are few better antidotes than the remembrance of death. "The beggar died," and his bodily wants were at an end. "The rich man died," and his feasting was stopped for evermore.

(3) We learn, thirdly, from this parable, **that the souls of believers are specially cared for by God in the hour of death.**

The Lord Jesus tells us that when the beggar died he "was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom." There is something very comforting in this expression. We know little or nothing of the state and feelings of the dead. When our own last hour comes, and we lie down to die, we shall be like those who journey into an unknown country. But it may satisfy us to know that all who fall asleep in Jesus are in good keeping. They are not houseless, homeless wanderers between the hour of death and the day of resurrection. They are at rest in the midst of friends, with all who have had like faith with Abraham. They have no lack of anything. And, best of all, Paul tells us they are "with Christ." (Phil. 1:23.)

(4) We learn, fourthly, from this parable, **the reality and eternity of hell.**

The Lord Jesus tells us plainly, that after death the rich man was "in hell — tormented with fire." He gives us a

fearful picture of his longing for a drop of "water to cool his tongue," and of "the gulf" between him and Abraham, which could not be passed. **There are few more dreadful passages perhaps in the whole Bible than this.** And He from whose lips it came, be it remembered, was one who delighted in mercy!

The certainty and endlessness of the future punishment of the wicked, are truths which we must hold fast and never let go. From the day when Satan said to Eve, "You shall not surely die," there never have been lacking men who have denied them. Let us not be deceived. There is a hell for the impenitent, as well as a heaven for believers. There is a wrath to come for all who "obey not the Gospel of Christ." (2 Thess. 1:8.) From that wrath let us flee betimes to the great hiding-place, Jesus Christ the Lord. If men find themselves "in torment" at last, it will not be because there was no way to escape.

(5) We learn, fifthly, from this parable, that **unconverted men find out the value of a soul, after death, when it is too late.**

We read that the rich man desired Lazarus might be sent to his five brethren who were yet alive, "lest they also should come to the place of torment." While he lived he had never done anything for their spiritual good. They had probably been his companions in worldliness, and, like him, had neglected their souls entirely. When he is dead he finds out too late the folly of which they had all been guilty, and desires that, if possible, they might be called to repentance.

The change that will come over the minds of unconverted men after death is one of the most fearful points in their future condition. They will see, and know, and understand a hundred things to which they were obstinately blind while they were alive. They will discover that, like Esau, they have bartered away eternal happiness for a mere mess of pottage. **There is no infidelity, or skepticism, or unbelief after death. It is a wise saying of an old divine, that "hell is nothing more than truth known too late."**

(6) We learn, lastly, from this parable, that **the greatest miracles would have no effect on men's hearts, if they will not believe God's Word.**

The rich man thought that "if one went to his brethren from the dead they would repent." He argued that the sight of one who came from another world must surely make them feel, though the old familiar words of Moses and the prophets had been heard in vain. The reply of Abraham is solemn and instructive — "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

The principle laid down in these words is of deep importance. **The Scriptures contain all that we need to know in order to be saved, and a messenger from the world beyond the grave could add nothing to them. It is not 'more evidence' that is needed in order to make men repent, but more heart and will to make use of what they already know.**

The 'dead' could tell us nothing more than the Bible contains, if they rose from their graves to instruct us. After the first novelty of their testimony was worn away, we would care no more for their words than the words of any other.

This wretched waiting for something which we have not, and neglect of what we already have, is the ruin of thousands of souls. Faith, simple faith in the Scriptures which we already possess, is the first thing needful to salvation. The man who has the Bible, and can read it, and yet waits for more evidence before he becomes a decided Christian, is deceiving himself. Except he awakens from his delusion he will die in his sins. (Luke 16 Commentary)

---

**Vance Havner** - Jesus said that it is better to enter into life crippled than to go to hell whole. Such radical procedure is seldom preached these days and in a very low key if at all. Consequently, we have the frightful tragedy of those who lose everything rather than give up anything, losing all to keep a part.

---

**Ian Paisley** in "A Text a Day Keeps the Devil Away" - Mt 5:22 "Hell Fire"

### **The Danger of Hell Fire**

Hell is real. Its reality rests on the absolute authority of the Word of God and the absolute infallibility of our Lord Jesus Christ. It rests on the same foundation as the reality of heaven. If you don't believe in hell you can't believe in heaven. All of us, born of Adam's race are in danger of hell fire.

### **The Damnation of Hell Fire**

"how shall ye escape the damnation of hell" (Matthew 23:33)



How awful is the damnation of hell fire. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard neither hath it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who spurn His Beloved Son.

### The Duration of Hell Fire

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:40)

Hell is forever. Its fires cannot be quenched nor its torments abated. Once in hell the damned soul is in hell forever.

### The Deliverance From Hell Fire

Christ endured hell for us that we might escape its fires. Hell's bitter cup, He drank it up. Take now the cup of His salvation and you will be delivered from hell forever.

---

**C. S. Lewis** in his book, *The Problem of Pain* describes hell

The answer to all those who object to the doctrine of hell is a question. "What would you like for God to do?" To wipe out their past sins and, at all costs, to give them a fresh start, smoothing every difficulty and offering every miraculous help? But He has done so, on Calvary. To forgive them? They refuse to be forgiven. To leave them alone? That is hell. For to be in hell simply means to be utterly separated from God, but in such a way that one is compelled to see him, that one must see him as a thirsty man sees a silvery spring from which he dare not drink. This is hell; to be forced to see the glory of God and have no access to it. The opposite of the peace of God is not the silence of extinction . . . but being compelled to endure that state in which everything is forfeited forever, in which the splendor of the eternal majesty no longer lights and warms us, but consumes us. iii

---

**ILLUSTRATION** (a little humor on a not too humorous topic!) - A politician awoke after an operation and found the curtains in his hospital room drawn. "Why are the curtains closed?" he asked the nurse. "Is it night time already?" - "No," the nurse replied, "But there's a fire across the street, and we didn't want you to wake and think the operation was unsuccessful."

---

**Dennis Rainey** - Charles Spurgeon, the famous evangelist and theologian, was teaching young men in seminary how to preach. He told them, "Gentlemen, when you speak of heaven, let your face be all aglow and smiling and lifted up and brilliant and let it be unashamed when you speak of heaven. But when you speak of hell, any old face will do." He was on target. It's too bad we don't have one of the great, old Puritan preachers to come visit our churches more often to present some fiery sermons about hell. Here's what one of them wrote about hell:

There is no way to describe hell. Nothing on earth can compare to it. No living person has any real idea of it. No mad man in the wildest flights of insanity ever beheld its horror. No man in delirium ever pictured a place so utterly terrible as this. No nightmare racing across a fevered mind ever produced a terror to match that of the mildest hell. Let the most gifted writer exhaust his skill in describing the roaring caverns of unending flame and he would not even come close to the nearest edge of hell. Hell was originally created for the devil and his demons, not for...man. Little wonder there is great joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. He is saved, redeemed, rescued. It makes the hearts of heaven glad.

I wonder what would happen if we could visit hell for just 10 seconds? I think it would change our perceptions of life, sin and evil. And I think it might just motivate us to share the good news about Jesus Christ's redeeming work on the cross with anyone who would listen.

---

**Billy Graham** - It isn't fashionable today to talk about Hell—but the Bible is clear: God created us with a soul or a spirit that will live forever—and when we die, we will continue to exist—either in the place the Bible calls Heaven or in the place it calls Hell.

Hell, the Bible says, is reserved for those who reject God and turn their backs on Him. If you want nothing to do with Him in this life, then you will have nothing to do with Him in the next life.

And let me be as clear as possible: you don't want to go to Hell. The Bible speaks of Hell as a place of "darkness [where] there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30). Hell is a place of absolute loneliness and hopelessness.

But the good news is that God doesn't want you to go there! Jesus paid the price for your sins; He took upon Himself the death and Hell we deserve, through His death on the cross. Trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and thank Him that you will spend all eternity with Him in Heaven.

---

## 2 Peter 2:4 Hell's Horrors by Melvin Worthington

Introduction: The doctrine of eternal punishment remains one of the strongest incentives for coming to Christ for salvation. Jesus spoke more about hell than about heaven.

- 1. A Place.** The Bible identifies hell as a place (Luke 16:27–28; 2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 20:13–15). Hell is a place of punishment, partition, and permanence.
- 2. A Population.** A comprehensive list of the inhabitants in hell is found in 1 Corinthians 6:9–12 and Revelation 21:8.
- 3. A Portrait.** Luke 16:19–31 provides a detailed account of a man in hell. Careful attention should be given to his dying moment, described misery, desired mercy, disturbing memory, deadly mistake, and the divine message.

**Conclusion:** What about you? Are you a believer? Have you placed your faith in the finished work of Christ for salvation? God has given His Son, the Scriptures, and His Spirit to bring men to Christ. He will give nothing else. (Morgan, R. J. Nelson's complete book of stories, illustrations, and quotes Page 97. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

---

**Erwin Lutzer** - One day I received a call from a distraught family who wanted a minister to do a quick funeral. I say "quick" because they asked me to speak for only a few minutes. "We don't want anything religious," the son told me, "and nothing you do will be too short." I asked him why it was so important for the funeral to be brief. He told me his family was not religious; his father, who had died suddenly, had never attended church. They did not even believe in God; the only reason I was called was because a relative thought a minister should be present. I made a deal with him. Yes, I would be brief; but I would have to tell the guests what I believed about death in general and Christ in particular. He reluctantly agreed. If there is one word that characterized that funeral, it was hopelessness. Here was a man who had apparently made millions of dollars in the shipping industry, but now he was dead, and his body was to be cremated on that very day, after a rather long eulogy but a very short sermon....the shipping magnate at whose funeral I spoke in Chicago (was like) the rich man in the parable—and millions like them—have discovered too late that their worldly influence could not save them; nor could their wealth and reputation extricate them from this bind. Instead of victors, they were now victims; rather than bragging about their freedom, they now had to confess their enslavement. (Borrow Lutzer's book - [One Minute After You Die](#)).

---

**Tony Evans** on the **physical, mental and spiritual torment of Hell** - Hell involves horrible **physical torment**...I would compare this to a person trapped in a burning desert with the sun beating down unmercifully twenty-four hours a day with no relief at all—not even a drop of water or an aspirin to dull the pain. The sufferer can't just lie down and die, and there's no escape from the desert. The only choice is to keep on going and functioning every day, despite the agonizing suffering and hopelessness of the situation. Imagine being in that environment, without one second's relief from the sun, never any water or a breeze to cool you off, and the knowledge that it will be like this forever. And what's worse, you still have all your faculties working all the time so you can't even "tune out," or just quit thinking about it, and perhaps gain one second's worth of peace. Make no mistake. The rich man was in immediate, intense, and unrelieved torment from the fire of God's wrath the moment he opened his eyes in hell. We have a hard time imagining this because we have never seen the fullness of God's wrath unleashed on sin. Here on earth, His wrath is tempered by His mercy. But there is nothing to protect or insulate people in hell from the fierce, unrestrained judgment of God against sin. The Bible teaches that the suffering of hell will also include the **mental torment of memory and regret**. When the rich man of Luke 16 asked for a drop of water to cool his tongue, Abraham gave him this answer. "Child, remember that during your life you received your good things" (v. 25, italics added). Much of the agony of hell will be the remorse of knowing things could have been different, because people in hell will have perfect memories. All of us know the tremendous power of regret. Some people allow themselves to be eaten up by the mental anguish of what might have been if only they had or hadn't done this or that. John Greenleaf Whittier wrote that the saddest of all human words are "**It might have been.**" In hell, every regret will be eternally remembered. Jesus said hell is a place where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48-note). What did He mean by the worm that doesn't die? This was a reference to gehenna, the smoldering garbage dump outside Jerusalem that became a synonym for hell. We said earlier that this place constantly bred worms because new garbage was always being dumped there. So the worms never died. How does this apply to hell? Notice that Jesus used the pronoun "their" in identifying the worm. In other words, this worm belongs to somebody. We might call it a "personalized worm." Jesus also used the singular word worm, not worms. Just as worms or maggots on earth gnaw away on a dead body until it is gone, so the worm of hell gnaws away at the life of the condemned person. But the difference is that this gnawing never stops because the life it is gnawing on is never consumed. And the gnawing is highly personalized, "their worm," because each person's level of regret will be unique to that person's life. This is the unending mental torment of hell—the churning of regret over lost opportunities for salvation, poor choices made in life, and the condemnation of others whom the lost person loved. The rich man agonized for his brothers. I believe the mental suffering of hell will be so intense

the person will be able to recall specific occasions when he or she heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and rejected it. Those times will not only be vivid, but it will seem like it all happened yesterday. It's impossible to imagine having eternity to remember the things you would give anything to forget. When Abraham told the rich man to remember the way life was for him, nothing more needed to be said. For Lazarus and the rich man, hell was the great reversal (Luke 16:25). This suggests another element to the **mental suffering of hell**. Presumably, the rich man had the same rich tastes and desires, but he would never be able to satisfy them. Part of the suffering of hell will be the eternal desire for sin without any possibility of fulfillment. For instance, a drug addict or sex addict in hell will experience intense, burning desires for illicit drugs and illicit sex that can never be met. Why is this so? Because the Bible indicates that when Jesus returns, not only will righteous people be confirmed in their righteousness, wicked people will be confirmed in their wickedness (see Revelation 22:11). So a morally filthy person on earth will be morally filthy for eternity in hell....The angry person who could not control his anger on earth will be an eternally angry person in hell. Hell will be the full expression of the sin nature that corrupted the human race and caused mankind to become alienated from God. The sin nature of those in hell will cry out eternally for fulfillment—only there will be none. The worm will not die....**the worst suffering in hell is the knowledge that the lost person is cut off from God forever, with no hope of forgiveness or restoration**....People in hell will not find any solace from other sufferers. All the jokes people make about wanting to go to hell to be with their friends and enjoy the parties are just so much foolishness. **There will be lots of people in hell, but they won't be any company to anyone** (See [Eternity: Understanding Life After Death](#))

**Luke 16:25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.**

BGT Luke 16:25 ε πεν ὁ βραμ· τ κνον, μν σθητι τι π λαβεσ τ γαθ σου ν τ ζω σου, κα λ ζαρος μο ως τ κακ · ν ν ὁ δε παρακαλε ται, σ ὁ δυν σαι.

KJV 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.

NET Luke 16:25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things and Lazarus likewise bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in anguish.

CSB Luke 16:25 " 'Son,' Abraham said, 'remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony.

ESV Luke 16:25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.

NIV Luke 16:25 "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.

NLT Luke 16:25 "But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish.

NRS Luke 16:25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony.

YLT Luke 16:25 'And Abraham said, Child, remember that thou did receive -- thou -- thy good things in thy life, and Lazarus in like manner the evil things, and now he is comforted, and thou art distressed;

GWN Luke 16:25 "Abraham replied, 'Remember, my child, that you had a life filled with good times, while Lazarus' life was filled with misery. Now he has peace here, while you suffer.

NKJ Luke 16:25 "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.

NAB Luke 16:25 Abraham replied, 'My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented.

MIT Luke 16:25 Abraham said, "Descendent, remember you received your good times during your life, and conversely, Lazarus had a rough time. Now he is soothed here and you suffer pain.

- **Child, remember** Luke 16:23; Lamentations 1:7; Daniel 5:22,23,30; Mark 9:46
- **your good things** Luke 6:24; Job 21:13,14; 22:18; Ps 17:14; 37:35,36; 49:11; 73:7,12-19; Ro 8:7; Philippians 3:19; 1 Jn 2:15
- **likewise Lazarus bad things** Luke 16:20; Jn 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Th 3:3; Heb 11:25; Rev 7:14

- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hell in W G T Shedd's Dogmatic Theology](#) - one of the best on the subject of Hell
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur

## THE TABLES ARE TURNED!

**But Abraham said, `Child, remember that during your life** - Notice he does not say "because during your life" but "that during your life." So what? If he had said "because" it would have implied he was in Hades BECAUSE he was rich, which is categorically not the case! Indeed, one might think that he wound up in hell because he was selfish, utterly lacking compassion, and concern for the poor Lazarus who lay at his gate. But had he even been compassionate and generous during life that would not have saved him. Salvation has always been by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone! There is no other way into the Father's presence (Jn 14:6).

**Andrus** adds "On the other hand, to say that a person's economic station in life is totally unrelated to his eternal destiny would not be quite right either, for this parable does appear in a chapter devoted to a discussion of riches—and the man's riches do seem to have something to do with his predicament, namely the fact that his attention to wealth seems to have kept him from giving attention to God and to his fellow man." (Ibid)

**Child** (5043)(**teknon** from **tikto** = bring forth, bear children, be born) is strictly a child produced, male or female, son or daughter. **Teknon** is thus a child as viewed in relation to his family. In this context it can only be speaking of racial relationship, a physical son of Abraham, a Jew by descent. There is a touch of compassion in this answer, but there is no evidence that any in heaven will experience compassion. Remember this is a parable and some of the details are not literally true.

Abraham's response reminds us of the loving response of the prodigal's father to his elder son when he declared "**Son**, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours." (Lk 15:31-note)

**James Smith** - In Greek mythology we read of a river in hell called **lethe**. Its waters were said to cause forgetfulness of the past to all who drank. The rich man in Luke 16 would have been glad to have drunk such water. The river of forgetfulness is not in hell, but in Heaven. It comes from the very heart of God. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10:17). Blessed lethe!

**Remember that during your life** - This speaks of hell as a place of remembrance, a place where the lost person has memory of events during their life. In fact we see that the rich man remembered **Lazarus**. (cf **send Lazarus** in Lk 16:24) So clearly during life the **rich man** was aware of this **poor man** and yet he failed to help him in his suffering.

**Remember** (aorist imperative)(3403)(**mimnesko**) means to bring to mind or think of again. It means to keep in mind for attention or consideration. Most of the NT uses convey this sense of recalling information from memory.

**Wiersbe** - Abraham gave two reasons why Lazarus could not bring the comfort that was requested: the character of the rich man and the character of the eternal state. The rich man had lived for the "good things" of earth, and had experienced abundant temporal blessings. He had his reward (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16). He had determined his own destiny by leaving God out of his life, and now neither his character nor his destiny could be changed. Lazarus could not leave his place of comfort and make even a brief visit to the place of torment. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

**You received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony** - The point is that the fortunes of the two are inverted. Life for the rich man was as good as it would ever get. Life for Lazarus was as bad as it would ever be! And if you are a believer going through great trials or afflictions, know that this is as bad as it gets for you! The best is yet to come!

**You received** (618) (**apolambano** from **apo** = from + **lambáno** = to receive, take) means to receive fully, receive in full what is one's due, get back, recover fully what is promised or even to receive by way of retribution.

This radical reversal of the fates of Lazarus and the rich man is a fulfillment of Jesus' words in Lk 13:30-note "And behold, some are last (Lazarus) who will be first and some are first (rich man) who will be last."

**Good things** (18)(**agathos**) means intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable,

useful. Sadly the rich man did not use his good things to aid the poor man.

**Bad things** (2556) (**kakos**) is a word which basically denotes a lack of something so that it is "bad" or "not as it ought to be. **Kakos** means not meeting accepted standards of behavior, and thus worthless, bad or inferior.

**Being comforted** (3870) (**parakaleo** from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = call) means literally to call one alongside, and includes the idea of giving help or aid or relieving sorrow or distress. The **present tense** is used for **being comforted** and **are in agony** - both are eternal states! This is the **great reversal** Jesus described in Luke 6:20-25

(**Lazarus**) And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, "Blessed are you who are **poor**, for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 "Blessed are you who **hunger now**, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who **weep now**, for you shall laugh. 22 "Blessed are you when men **hate** you, and **ostracize** you, and **insult** you, and **scorn** your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. (Lk 6:20-22-note)

(**Rich Man**) "But woe to you who are **rich**, for you are receiving your comfort in full. 25 "Woe to you who are **well-fed** now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who **laugh** now, for you shall mourn and weep." (Lk 6:24-25-note)

**MacArthur** - Lazarus is being comforted in the presence of God, and you are in agony, a fire that burns forever, but never consumes. A fire that burns forever, but never purifies. A fire that burns forever in an everlasting darkness that only punishes. What Lazarus was, you are, miserable. What you did not provide Lazarus, he cannot provide you—relief.

Don't choose to spend eternity  
Where pain will never dim;  
Instead decide to trust in Christ  
And choose to follow Him.  
—Sper

**You are in agony** (torment) (3600) see discussion on **odunao** . To be in severe or great pain, suffer greatly, suffer anguish

As **John Blanchard** says "It is never true to say that something 'hurts like hell'. Nothing hurts like hell." And this "hurt" is forever!

**Thomas Brooks** - The damned in hell may weep their eyes out of their heads, but they can never weep sin out of their souls....Could every damned sinner weep a whole ocean, yet all those oceans together would never extinguish one spark of eternal fire.

**Vance Havner** - The most gruesome details about the future state of the wicked come from the lips of our Lord Himself. Call it imagery, symbolism, what you will, it is a fearful picture and we dare not tone it down or call it an accommodation to the prevailing ideas of the time. Dives in hell was a personality in torment and anguish with memory intact. The word lost has almost disappeared from our vocabulary and any mention of eternal punishment is smiled away as a leftover from a dark theological past. There will be tears throughout eternity in remorse and regret for the lost opportunity to have been in heaven instead of hell.

**Brian Bell** - The world measures people by how much they get, but God measures them by how much they give. The rich man didn't go to Hades because he was rich; he went there because riches were his god. Abraham was a wealthy man, yet he was in paradise. What was this man's sin? – It's clear; he was selfish with his wealth. Origen said, "in fullness of bread and overflowing of abundance he had not pity for the man who lay at this gate wasted by sores." "He never took account of either the suffering of his inferiors or the common rights of humanity."

**Brian Bill** - Abraham tells this rich guy to remember how he lived his life. His mind fills with images of poor Lazarus lying by his door with stray dogs licking his wounds. He remembers those who tried to tell him about God. He recalls sermons he heard. He remembers those who warned him about the coming judgment. Memories come swimming out of the oblivion. There is no torment greater than an accusing memory. It is impossible to forget when you're in Hell. The rich man could not take his money, but he did take his memory. (What Happens When You Die?)

**Brian Bell's** lessons on this section -

- Money can help send people to heaven (cf Lk 16:9-note) or it can help send people to hell.
  - Money and possessions are gifts and trusts from God. God loans us these with the expectation that we'll use them to help others.
  - Again, Jesus teaches us about important principles on Stewardship. As Christians, we are stewards, not owners responsible to God for what we do with His gifts put in our charge!
-

**Luke 16:26** `And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.'

BGT Luke 16:26 καὶ νῦν πρὸς τοὺς μεταξὺ μὴ νῦν ἵσχυμα μὴ γὰρ στρίβεται, πῶς οἱ θέλοντες διαβῆναι νῦν ἐκ τῆς μέρους μὴ δύνανται, μηδὲν ἐκ τῆς μέρους διαπερῶσιν.

KJV 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.

NET Luke 16:26 Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us, so that those who want to cross over from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.'

CSB Luke 16:26 Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.'

ESV Luke 16:26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.'

NIV Luke 16:26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

NLT Luke 16:26 And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.'

NRS Luke 16:26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.'

YLT Luke 16:26 and besides all these things, between us and you a great chasm is fixed, so that they who are willing to go over from hence unto you are not able, nor do they from thence to us pass through.

- **between** 1 Samuel 25:36; Ps 49:14; Ezek 28:24; Mal 3:18; 2 Th 1:4-10; James 1:11,12; James 5:1-7
- **pass** Luke 12:59; Ps 50:22; Mt 25:46; Jn 3:36; 2 Th 1:9; Rev 20:10; 22:11
- [Hell in W G T Shedd's Dogmatic Theology](#) - one of the best on the subject of Hell
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur
- In Depth Study of Eternal Punishment - on site

## FATES FIXED FOREVER!

**And besides all this** - literally "and in all these things." In other words, not only was the rich man's request in Lk 16:24 not granted, Lazarus could not have carried it out because of the great chasm.

"Exit is not a word found in the vocabulary of hell."

-- Robert E Lee

**There is a great chasm** ([chasma](#)) **fixed** (sterizo - perfect tense = fixed forever!)- Sadly, there are no "exit signs" in Hell! Or as R E Lee said "Exit is not a word found in the vocabulary of hell." There is no escape hatches, no second chances! There is gulf that is fixed forever and separates unregenerate rebels from the regenerate redeemed. As **John Blanchard** says "In hell, the sinner's situation is quite literally hopeless. As one writer (John Donne) has put it, 'Despair is the [damp](#) of hell, as joy is the serenity of heaven.'" ([Whatever Happened to Hell?](#))

**Andrus** writes 'The message here is clear: one's eternal destiny is established at the time of death and there is no possibility of change. The notion is pure fiction that after death one can negotiate with St. Peter to get into heaven. It can't be done.' ([Sermon](#))

Although Jesus does not use the word **'eternal'** in the description of this great chasm, the word fixed (as noted below) clearly points to the fact that this is a permanent state, indeed a state that endure eternally. There are many voices today (even some in the



evangelical church) who say that eternity does not mean eternity! Jesus used **eternal** ([aionios](#)) to describe the duration of the fire in hell (Mt 18:8-9, Mt 25:41). In Mt 25:41 *aionos* is used to describe the duration of one's existence either in hell and heaven...

"These will go away into **eternal** ([aionios](#)) punishment, but the righteous into **eternal** ([aionios](#)) life." (Mt 25:46)

Passages such as Mt 25:46 from the lips of our Lord Jesus, make it crystal clear that hell is eternal. Jesus directly refute those who falsely teach that Hell is not eternal (especially those who hold to some form of [annihilationism](#), including men like John Stott). It is interesting that most of Jesus' uses of eternal (*aionios*) refer to **eternal life** rather than **eternal death** (see below). Clearly our Lord desires that His hearers attain the former state rather than the latter (2 Pe 3:9, 1 Ti 2:4).

**MacArthur** adds that you say **hell** is not **eternal** "you have just done it with Heaven, because the same word is used to describe that state! If there is not an everlasting hell, then there is not an everlasting Heaven! The same word **eternal** ([aionios](#)) is used to describe God; and so if there is not an everlasting hell, then there is not an everlasting Heaven, nor is there an everlasting God. It is clear that God is eternal; and, therefore, that Heaven is eternal, and so is hell. This is what is on the heart of the Lord Jesus when He talks to the Pharisees."

**Eternal fire** - 3x - Matt. 18:8; Matt. 25:41; Jude 1:7

**Eternal life** - 41x in the NT Matt. 19:16; Matt. 19:29; Matt. 25:46; Mk. 10:17; Mk. 10:30; Lk. 10:25; Lk. 18:18; Lk. 18:30; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:14; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:54; Jn. 6:68; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 12:50; Jn. 17:2; Jn. 17:3; Acts 13:46; Acts 13:48; Rom. 2:7; Rom. 5:21; Rom. 6:22; Rom. 6:23; Gal. 6:8; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Tim. 6:12; Tit. 1:2; Tit. 3:7; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 5:11; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:20; Jude 1:21

#### **Hell is described as:**

- Everlasting punishment Matthew 25:46
- Everlasting fire Matthew 25:41
- Everlasting burning Isaiah 33:14
- A furnace of fire Matthew 13:42,50
- A lake of fire Revelation 20:15
- [Fire and brimstone](#) Revelation 14:10
- Unquenchable fire Matthew 3:12
- Devouring fire Isaiah 33:14

This passage teaches that Hell is one's eternal abode and is literally inescapable. No one leaves. The only ones who enter are the unrepentant unbelievers.

**Crawford** - The great gulf formed in Eden that separated man from God because of sin, and bridged at Calvary (1 Tim 2:5, 6) is here eternally fixed so that it can never be bridged or crossed. The soul in hell is beyond salvation, beyond mercy; there is no second chance; no verse in the Bible makes this more clear. ([What the Bible teaches – Luke](#))

**NET Note** - The great chasm between heaven and hell is impassable forever. The rich man's former status meant nothing now. (**ED:** Dear reader if you have never truly placed your faith in Christ as your Substitute, to pay your sin debt, then all of your wealth and status will come to naught as you will be forced to "pay your sin debt" for eternity, because you can never fully pay it off! Only Christ can do that for you! It sounds so simple, but it is supremely profound! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ today and experience heaven with Him forever!)

**Chasm** (5490) (**chasma** from **chasko** = to yawn) is literally a yawning, hence a gaping opening, a chasm, a gulf, a deep open pit, a ravine, an unbridgeable space between two parts of a place, in this case between Abraham and the place of eternal torture. In English a [chasm](#) is a deep opening in the earth's surface. There is a single use of *chasma* in the Septuagint in 2 Sa 18:17 where two words are used with reference to Absalom's body - "cast him into a great cavern (*chasma*) in the wood, into a deep pit (*bothynos* as in Mt 12:11)." (English Translation of Septuagint)

**Fixed** (4741) (**sterizo** from **histemi** = to stand) means to fix firmly in place and in the [perfect tense](#) signifies this **chasm** is a permanent "fix" which will last forever! There are no "Exit" signs in Hell. No one in hell will ever go to Heaven, and no one in Heaven will ever visit hell. A chasm is set fast for the very purpose of keeping the tormented in the place of torment, and keeping the blessed in the place of blessing. It can never change. No relief will ever be sent to assuage the ongoing, everlasting torment! No escape! No relief! Fixed forever! Woe! If this horrible picture does not motivate you to preach and share the Gospel with the lost, then I don't know what will! There should be a deep soberness in our soul, a gnawing ache in our heart, as we encounter people every day who are headed for this horrible destiny! And then to realize that hell will people most of whom did not think that they would end up there!

**Stedman on chasm** - The **chasm** indicates the impossibility of change. It is not a literal chasm or a great gulf fixed. We make a mistake in trying to visualize hell as a place where all the lost are in flames below, while above, in heaven, are the redeemed and there is a great gulf between them. The chasm simply indicates the impossibility of a change in either condition. No one can pass from the one to the other. If we recoil from this, then let us remember that we do not recoil any more than God does. This is not what God wills for human beings. This is what the prophet Isaiah refers to as "To do His task, His **peculiar** task, and to work His work, His **strange** work." (Isaiah 28:21NET = "God's judgment of His own people is called '**His peculiar work**' and '**His strange task**,' because he must deal with them the way he treated their enemies in the past."). **It is necessary because of human choice, but it is unwanted by God and veiled in mystery.** ([The Main Thing](#)) (Bolding added)

As **John Blanchard** rightly remarked "After death, all men are **eternally secure**—the righteous in heaven and the unrighteous in hell!" (cf Mt 25:46).

When Jesus described this great chasm undoubtedly many in his audience were reminded of the literal picture of the many great, yawning [wadis](#) ([see picture](#)) in Palestine that were virtually impossible to cross! A picture is worth a thousand words!

**So that** (hopos) ([term of purpose or result](#)) This introduces the result and the purpose of the fixed chasm.

**Those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able**- Interesting word "those who wish to come over," implies in that horrible day when these sinners take their last breath and step into eternal punishment, they will then wish to come over to the "light" but alas, it is too late!

**Wish** (2309)([thelo](#)) refers to the lost as exercising of their will (THEY STILL HAVE A WILL!) and in this context with the underlying sense of their desire. The verb is tragically in the [present tense](#) (continually wishing) and in the [active voice](#) indicating this is their volitional choice, the choice of their will, a wish they will NEVER EVER see granted throughout all eternity! Oh my, dear brother or sister in Christ, if this does not break your heart and make you grieve for the lost, then you need a spiritual "heart checkup!". Beloved, this is a horrible thought and ought to drive us to share the Gospel with Spirit enabled boldness (cf Acts 4:31+) with all souls with whom God has given us an opportunity to speak!

#### **Related Resource:**

- Eternal Punishment

**Will (not) be able** (1410)([dunamai](#)) speaks of the inherent ability to accomplish a task, and in this context crossing over is not within the power of those who are eternally lost!

**Come over** (1224)([diabaino](#) from **dia** = through + **baino** = to step) means to step across, to pass through or over as for example, a body of water, a chasm, a valley, etc. (cf uses in Lxx - Ge 31:21; 1 Sa 13:7). BDAG - "to proceed from one side to another over a geographical area."

**Gilbrant on diabaino** - is used extensively in classical Greek and appears over 120 times in the Septuagint to translate different forms of the Hebrew term 'āvar, meaning "pass over, through, by." ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

Liddell-Scott on diabaino - I. to make a stride, walk or stand with the legs apart, of a man planting himself firmly for fighting, II. With accusative - to step across, passive - over a ditch or river, lb. 2. absol. to cross over, Lat. trajicere, Hdt., etc.

**Diabaino** - 3 uses in the NT - Lk. 16:26; Acts 16:9; Heb. 11:29

Heb 11:29 By faith they **passed through** the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

**And that none may cross over from there to us -**

---

**Steven Cole** - The basis for a person's eternal destiny is fixed in the present life. The fact of a fixed destiny: A great chasm fixed (Lk 16:26).

Abraham says to the rich man in hell that there is a **great chasm fixed** between those in heaven and those in hell, so that none can cross from one side to the other. Not only does this mean that there is **no Purgatory** (See [What does the Bible say about Purgatory?](#)), it also means that there is **no second chance** after death. Heb 9:27-[note](#) states, "**It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.**" (ED: THIS VERSE ALSO RULES OUT THE POPULAR TEACHING OF [REINCARNATION](#)) As someone has said, **there are no unbelievers in hell**. They just believed too late! In the parable, Lazarus died and the angels carried him to heaven. The rich man died, was buried, and was in hell in the flames. Since it was a parable, designed to illustrate a central truth, Jesus pictures the final outcome without spelling out details about future resurrections of the body. Paul says (2Cor

5:8-note) that for believers, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. There is no such thing as **"soul sleep"** while we wait for the resurrection of our bodies at His second coming. The souls of unbelievers go immediately at death into a place of conscious torment to await the Great White Throne judgment when their bodies are raised (John 5:29, cf Da 12:2-note) and thrown into the **Lake of Fire** (Rev 20:11-15-note). Before death, a person can move from spiritual death to eternal life. But once a person dies, his eternal destiny is fixed. He goes either to heaven or to hell and there is no crossing over from one place to the other after that. **There is a great chasm fixed.** (Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed) (Bolding added)

## What Is Hell Like?

### Rod Mattoon

**1. Hell Is a Place of Consciousness**- People in Hell are very aware of what is happening to them. Luke 16:23, 24.

**EDITORIAL COMMENT** - MATTHEW 5:29— Is hell the grave or a place of conscious torment? **PROBLEM:** Jesus refers here to the "body" being "cast into hell," and the psalmist speaks of "bones" being "scattered at the mouth of hell [sheol]" (Ps. 141:7KJV). Jacob talked about his "gray hairs" being brought down to hell (Ge 42:38KJV; cf. Ge 44:29, 31). However, Jesus referred to hell as a place where the soul goes after one dies and is in conscious torment (Luke 16:22–23). Is "hell" just the grave, as the Jehovah's Witnesses and some other cults claim? **SOLUTION:** The Hebrew word translated **"hell"** (sheol) is also translated **"grave"** or **"pit."** It simply means **"unseen world,"** and can refer either to the grave, where the body is unseen after burial, or to the spirit world, which is invisible to mortal eyes. In the OT, sheol often means **grave**, as indicated by the fact that it is a place where "bones" (Ps. 141:7) and "gray hairs" (Ge 42:38) go at death. Even the resurrection of Jesus' body is said to be from "hell" (i.e., the grave) where it did not see corruption (Acts 2:30–31). While there may be some allusions to "hell" as a spirit world in the OT (cf. Pr. 9:18; Isa. 14:9), "hell" (Gk., hades) is clearly described as a place of departed spirits (souls) in the NT. Angels are there and they have no bodies (2 Peter 2:4). **Unrepentant human beings are in conscious torment there after they die and their bodies are buried** (Luke 16:22–25). In the end those in hell will be cast into the lake of fire with the devil where they will be "tormented day and night forever" (Rev. 20:10, 14–15). **Jesus spoke many times of hell as a place of conscious and eternal suffering** (cf. Matt. 10:28; 11:23; 18:9; 23:15; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; 16:23). (Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask)

**2. Hell Is a Place of Torment and No Rest or Peace at All**- There will be no parties in Hell. It will not be fun at all. Luke 16:23, 28, Rev 14:11, Rev 20:10

**3. Hell Is a Place of Darkness**- Matthew 8:12, 22:13, 25:30; Jude 1:13

**EDITORIAL COMMENT** - MATTHEW 8:12—Is hell a place of darkness, or is there light there? **PROBLEM:** Jesus described hell as a place of "outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12; cf. 22:13 and 25:30). By contrast, the Bible says hell is a place of "fire" (Rev. 20:14) and "unquenchable flames" (Mark 9:48-note). But, fire and flames give off light. How can hell be utterly dark when there is light there? **SOLUTION:** Both **"fire"** and **"darkness"** are powerful figures of speech which appropriately describe the unthinkable reality of hell. It is **like fire** because it is a place of destruction and torment. Yet, it is **like outer darkness** because people are lost there forever. **While hell is a literal place, not every description of it should be taken literally** Some powerful figures of speech are used to portray this literal place. **Its horrible reality, wherein body and soul will suffer forever, goes far beyond any mere figure of speech that may be used to describe it.** But, it is a serious mistake to take a figure of speech literally. By doing so, one can conclude that God has feathers, since He is described as having wings (Ps. 91:4)! There are other figures of speech used to describe the eternal destiny of the lost that, if taken literally, contradict each other. For example, hell is depicted as an eternal garbage dump (Mark 9:43–48), which has a bottom. But, it is also portrayed as a bottomless pit (Rev. 20:3). Each is a vivid depiction of a place of everlasting punishment. (Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask)

**COMMENT:** Outer darkness means (1) a place removed and (2) a place that is dark. This is a frightening picture! Some assume that **darkness** is a metaphor for the utter isolation and loneliness of hell. Whether metaphor or literal reality, the use of darkness to describe hell conveys a powerful truth. If you have ever been in a large cavern when the guide turned off the lights, you have a sense of the total isolation that complete darkness brings. A person who is utterly alone needs companionship more than anything else. Mental health professionals call this sense of abandonment **"cosmic loneliness"** and give it serious attention. **Jesus' picture of hell suggests that part of its suffering is total, eternal isolation from God and man--a sense**

of utter hopelessness that will cause great ""weeping and gnashing of teeth"" (Mt 25:30).

**GOTQUESTIONS:** The outer darkness of judgment is accompanied by “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The “weeping” describes an inner pain of the heart, mind, and soul. The word in the original denotes a bewailing or lamentation by beating the breast in an expression of immense sorrow. The “gnashing of teeth” describes an outward pain of the body. Taken together, the weeping and gnashing of teeth says hell is a place of indescribable spiritual agony and unending physical pain (see Luke 16:23-28). The outer darkness is a place of anguish, heartache, grief, and unspeakable suffering. Such will be the lot of all who reject Christ (John 3:18, 36). Christ is the Light of the World (John 8:12). When one rejects the Light, he will be cast into eternal darkness. Just like the man in the parable, the one who rejects Christ will lose his chance for joy, blessing and fellowship and will be left with nothing but darkness and eternal regret. ([What is the Outer Darkness?](#))

See also discussion of "[Outer Darkness](#)" below

**Note on fire that cannot be seen** - (In discussion of a "black hole") "This temperature is on the order of billionths of a kelvin for black holes of stellar mass, **making it essentially impossible to observe.**" ([Black Hole](#))

**4. Hell Is a Place of Sorrow and Eternal Separation From Loved Ones-** Luke 13:28-note; 2 Sa 22:6

**5. Hell Is a Place of Hopelessness with No Way of Escape-** Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:26

**6. Hell Is a Place of Tormenting Memories-** Luke 16:27, 28

**7. Hell Is a Place of Unfulfilled Desires-** Let the evildoer still do evil Rev 22:11-[note](#)

**8. Hell Is a Place of Fire-** Rev 20:14-15; Rev 21:8; Matthew 13:50

**9. Hell Is a Place of Worms** - Mark 9:48 (ED: MOST WRITERS INTERPRET THIS AS FIGURATIVE, NOT LITERAL WORMS).

**EDITORIAL COMMENT ON MARK 9:48**—Why did Jesus say worms would not die in hell? PROBLEM: Jesus said that hell is a place “where `their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched’ ” (Mark 9:48). But what do everlasting worms have to do with hell? SOLUTION: Jesus is not speaking of earthworms, nor any other kind of animal here. He is speaking about the human body. Notice, He did not say “where the worm does not die” but, rather, “where *their* worm does not die.” The antecedent of “*their*” is a human being who sins and dies without repentance (cf. Mk 9:42–47). “**Worm**” is simply a way to refer to the human “**worm**,” or shell known as the body. This fits with the context where He is speaking of the parts of the body, such as, “hands” and the “foot” (Mk 9:43–45). Jesus said here that we should not fear the one (man) who could destroy our body, but not our soul, but, rather, to fear the One (God) who could send soul and body into the everlasting flames (Luke 12:4–5; cf. Mark 9:43–48). (Norman Geisler - When Critics Ask)

**GOTQUESTIONS ON MARK 9:48**—**Taken at face value, this text is one of the most horrific descriptions of what hell is like.** The thought of eternal torment, likened to maggots eating away at a rotting corpse, is undoubtedly ghastly. Hell is so awful that Christ said, figuratively speaking, it's better to cut off the hand that causes you to sin than to end up in hell (Matthew 5:30). Mark 9:48 does not mean that there are literal worms in hell or that there are worms that live forever; rather, Jesus is teaching the fact of unending suffering in hell—the “worm” never stops causing torment. Notice that the worm is personal. Both Isaiah 66:24 and Mark 9:48 use the word *their* to identify the worm's owner. The sources of torment are attached each to its own host. Some Bible scholars believe the “**worm**” refers to a man's conscience. Those in hell, being completely cut off from God, exist with a nagging, guilty conscience that, like a persistent worm, gnaws away at its victim with a remorse that can never be mitigated. No matter what the word **worm** refers to, the most important thing to be gained from these words of Christ is that we should do everything in our power to escape the horrors of hell, and there is only one thing to that end—receiving Jesus as the Lord of our lives (John 3:16). ([What is the Worm that Will not Die in Mark 9:48?](#))

**10. Hell Is a Place of Unanswered Prayers** - 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.

**11. Hell Is a Place of Everlasting Destruction** - 2 Thessalonians 1:9

**What does a person do to go to Hell? Nothing!** You are condemned already because you are a sinner. John 3:18—"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Your only hope is the Sun of Righteousness, the Son of God. This is the message we are to spread across the world. ([Treasures from the Scriptures](#))

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - Peter Cartwright, a nineteenth-century circuit-riding Methodist preacher, was an uncompromising man. One Sunday morning when he was to preach, he was told that General Andrew Jackson was in the congregation, and warned not to say anything out of line. When Cartwright stood to preach, he said, "I understand that Andrew Jackson is here. I have been requested to be guarded in my remarks. Andrew Jackson will go to Hell if he doesn't repent." The congregation was shocked and wondered how the General would respond. He was known for being a hot-tempered man. After the service, General Jackson shook hands with Peter Cartwright and said, "Sir, if I had a regiment of men like you, I could whip the world." (Commentary on Malachi)

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - In Warren Wierbe's "Meet Yourself in the Psalms," he tells about a frontier town where a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon carrying a little boy. Seeing the child in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop the wagon.

The child who was saved grew up to become a lawless man, and one day he stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge as the man who, years before, had saved his life; so he pled for mercy on the basis of that experience. But the words from the bench silenced his plea: "Young man, then I was your savior; today I am your judge, and I must sentence you to be hanged."

One day Jesus Christ will say to rebellious sinners, "During that long day of grace, I was your Savior, and I would have forgiven you. But today I am your judge. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!"

**Luke 16:27 "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house--**

BGT Luke 16:27 ε πεν δ · ρωτ σε ο ν, π τερ, να π μψ ζ α τ ν ε ζ τ ν ο κον το πατρ ζ μου,

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

NET Luke 16:27 So the rich man said, 'Then I beg you, father-- send Lazarus to my father's house

CSB Luke 16:27 " 'Father,' he said, 'then I beg you to send him to my father's house--

ESV Luke 16:27 And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house--

NIV Luke 16:27 "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house,

NLT Luke 16:27 "Then the rich man said, 'Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father's home.

NRS Luke 16:27 He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house--

YLT Luke 16:27 'And he said, I pray thee, then, father, that thou mayest send him to the house of my father,

GWN Luke 16:27 "The rich man responded, 'Then I ask you, Father, to send Lazarus back to my father's home.

NKJ Luke 16:27 "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,

NAB Luke 16:27 He said, 'Then I beg you, father, send him to my father's house,

MIT Luke 16:27 He said, "I ask you then, father, to send him to my father's house,

- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur
- In Depth Study of Eternal Punishment- on site



## THE SECOND "PRAYER" FROM HADES

**And he said, 'Then I beg ([erotao](#)) you, father ([pater](#))** - When is **then**? When Abraham had just declared there was a great divide across which no one could traverse. This stimulates his second petition. Calling Abraham **father** indicates the **rich man** is pleading on the basis of his Jewish heritage. **Father ([pater](#))** is one who imparts life, bringing into being to pass on the potential for likeness. Sadly, the rich man was only alike Abraham in physical origin (Abraham being the father of the Jews), but in his unrepentant, unregenerate state he was unlike him spiritually and thus unlike him in eternal destinies. Notice that the rich man refers to Abraham 3 times as **father** (Lk 16:24, 27, 30), emphasizing his Jewish ancestry. The point is that being a Jew doesn't guarantee Heaven anymore than being a non-Jew guarantees hell.

**Wiersbe** - Then the rich man *prayed* for his brothers (Luke 16:27-31). He did not say, "I'm glad my brothers will also come here. We'll have a wonderful time together!" Occasionally you hear a lost person say, "Well, I don't mind if I go to hell. I'll have a lot of company!" *But there is no friendship or "company" in hell!* Hell is a place of torment and loneliness. It is not an eternal New Year's Eve party at which sinners have a good time doing what they used to do on earth. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

People in hades have a concern for the lost,  
but they cannot do anything about it!

**That you send him to my father's house--** The rich man now is heaven became interested in evangelism and missions (so to speak)! It was as if he had not had a fair warning and ample opportunity to warn his brothers on earth! But sadly he was too focused on earthly matters to consider heavenly things.

**THOUGHT-** One wonders how many believers have a similar vertically oriented (earthly) rather than horizontal (heavenly) mindset and are content to see souls of those they have met, are related to or work with drop off interminably into eternal torment? If we as believers had a more vivid picture of the eternal tortures of the damned, would it not serve to motivate a more urgent style of evangelism? I think it would and can attest that is what has happened to me as I compose these notes on hell. We must remember that once we get to heaven there is no more evangelism. Today is our opportunity of this one lifetime! Are you redeeming the time? **Beg the Father** to fill you with Holy Spirit boldness so that you let the Bad News motivate you to begin to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with many people with you have never had a spiritual conversation! Amen!

**Robertson** on **send him** - The Roman Catholics probably justify prayer to saints from this petition from the Rich Man to Abraham, but both are in Hades (the other world). It is to be observed besides, that Abraham makes no effort to communicate with the five brothers. But heavenly recognition is clearly assumed. Dante has a famous description of his visit to the damned (Purg. iii, 114).

**MacArthur** makes the point that "This is both a complaint and a request (**ED: THE REQUEST IS OBVIOUS** - "SEND LAZARUS"). The complaint is, "You know, the reason I came here, and the reason my brothers are going to come here, is because we have insufficient data. If someone had come back from the dead to warn us, if I had had a sufficient sign, if somebody had come who has been on the other side of death, this would have been sufficient. I wouldn't be here, and my brothers won't come."

**Erwin Lutzer** writes - We might think this man would have preferred to have his brothers join him in hades for the sake of the companionship. But he was more than willing to never see them again if he only knew that they would be on the other side of the gulf where Lazarus and Abraham were meeting for the first time. Apparently, even in Hades there is compassion, a natural human concern about the fate of those who are loved! (Borrow Lutzer's book - [One Minute After You Die](#)).

**Stedman** - Here in hell, for the first time, this rich man feels something akin to love: concern for his brothers. Yet it only adds to his torment for he can do nothing about it. Some of you have seen the [musical Carousel \(see this unbiblical scene at time = 1:38:47\)](#). Its theme is that a father returns from heaven to warn his daughter who has grown to teenage since he was killed. But this can never be. Much as we would like to have it happen, the dead do not come back to warn us. In reading Dr. Helmut Thielicke's commentary on this parable, I was struck by one sentence. He says "**The torment of the dead is that they cannot warn the living, just as it is the torment of the mature that the erring young will not listen to them.**" If you have felt that torment then you know something of what the torment of the dead is -- **a desire to warn but an inability to do so** There are many who in reading this story feel this is quite unfair. Why should God not grant this man his request to warn his brothers: If God really does not want men to go to hell, then why does he not allow the utmost of warning in order that any might be kept from hell? But if that is the way we feel then we have missed the point of Abraham's words. This rich man is not denied his request because God is unwilling to give as much opportunity as possible; he is denied it because it is useless, **because it will not work**. As Abraham points out, if they do not hear Moses and the prophets neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead. ([The Main Thing](#))



**Brian Bill** - The rich guy then tries one more plea. This time he begs Abraham to send Lazarus to his family members. He's beginning to understand the mission of the church. He didn't want any company in Hell and especially did not want his brothers to join him there. He now knows the absolute critical importance of repentance before its too late. He's hoping that if Lazarus could just go back and warn them that they would change. **If his brothers, who no doubt had seen Lazarus by the front gate on many occasions, would suddenly reappear they would change their ways and get right with God.** Abraham tells him that his brothers have everything they need. They have their Bibles. They can listen to believers who can explain the way to Heaven. The rich man doesn't like this answer because he knows his brothers. He knows they've just tuned out God and are chasing materialism just like he was. He says if someone would come back from the dead then they would repent. Abraham responds by saying that even a resurrection will not convince them. They are not open to spiritual matters. (Sermon)

**I beg** (2065)(**erotao** from **éromai** = ask, inquire) means to ask for, usually with implication of an underlying question. The verb does not carry the note of an authoritative command but rather that of a friend making an urgent appeal to a friend. The term suggests that those making the request stand in a position of familiarity with those being entreated. **Erotao** has the added nuance of "to plead," "implore," or "to beg." To beg means to ask for as charity or as a gift. It was too late for such a request as we shall see.

**Erotao - 62v - ask(15), ask a question(1), asked(14), asking(11), asks(3), beg(1), begging(1), implored(1), imploring(1), make request(1), please(2), question(5), questioned(2), request(4), requesting(1), urging(1).** Matt. 15:23; Matt. 16:13; Matt. 19:17; Matt. 21:24; Mk. 4:10; Mk. 7:26; Mk. 8:5; Lk. 4:38; Lk. 5:3; Lk. 7:3; Lk. 7:36; Lk. 8:37; Lk. 9:45; Lk. 11:37; Lk. 14:18; Lk. 14:19; Lk. 14:32; Lk. 16:27; Lk. 19:31; Lk. 20:3; Lk. 22:68; Lk. 23:3; Jn. 1:19; Jn. 1:21; Jn. 1:25; Jn. 4:31; Jn. 4:40; Jn. 4:47; Jn. 5:12; Jn. 8:7; Jn. 9:2; Jn. 9:15; Jn. 9:19; Jn. 9:21; Jn. 9:23; Jn. 12:21; Jn. 14:16; Jn. 16:5; Jn. 16:19; Jn. 16:23; Jn. 16:26; Jn. 16:30; Jn. 17:9; Jn. 17:15; Jn. 17:20; Jn. 18:19; Jn. 18:21; Jn. 19:31; Jn. 19:38; Acts 1:6; Acts 3:3; Acts 10:48; Acts 16:39; Acts 18:20; Acts 23:18; Acts 23:20; Phil. 4:3; 1 Thess. 4:1; 1 Thess. 5:12; 2 Thess. 2:1; 1 Jn. 5:16; 2 Jn. 1:5

**Luke 16:28 for I have five brothers--in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'**

BGT Luke 16:28 χω γ ρ π ντε δελφο ς, πως διαμαρτ ρηται α το ς, να μ κα α το λθωσιν ε ς τ ν τ πο ν το τον τ ς βασ νου.

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

NET Luke 16:28 (for I have five brothers) to warn them so that they don't come into this place of torment.'

CSB Luke 16:28 because I have five brothers-- to warn them, so they won't also come to this place of torment.'

ESV Luke 16:28 for I have five brothers-- so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'

NIV Luke 16:28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

NLT Luke 16:28 For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don't end up in this place of torment.'

NRS Luke 16:28 for I have five brothers-- that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.'

YLT Luke 16:28 for I have five brothers, so that he may thoroughly testify to them, that they also may not come to this place of torment.

GWN Luke 16:28 I have five brothers. He can warn them so that they won't end up in this place of torture.'

NKJ Luke 16:28 `for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'

NAB Luke 16:28 for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.'

MIT Luke 16:28 for I have five brothers. Send him that he might give an eyewitness account to them, lest they

come to this place of anguish."

- Ps 49:12,13
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur
- In Depth Study of Eternal Punishment - on site

## REDEMPTION FOR HIS BROTHERS

**For ( [term of explanation](#) ) I have five brothers** - He is explaining why he wants Lazarus to be sent to his father's house. While we are not to judge the hearts of others regarding the state of their salvation, apparently the rich man reasoned that the brothers were like him in life (focused on the things of the passing world rather than what would happen when they "passed") and also destined to be sent to Hades when they died.

**In order that He may warn ( [diamarturomai](#) ) them** - **In order that** is a [term of purpose or result](#) indicating the purpose for sending Lazarus to his five brothers. To him Lazarus is still a slave. He is still as depraved in death as he was in life! That is a frightening thought! The irony is that the despised, lowly Lazarus is sent on a missionary journey to the rich man's brothers! It is as if even in Hades, this rich man sees Lazarus as his servant. There is an additional thought that if Lazarus went, that would essentially be exhibiting to his brothers that there is life after death as Lazarus was now alive. The nature of the warning is not stated. In other words he does not say "Tell them to believe in Jesus." He might mean simply warn them about a hot, lonely place of torment.

**Hendriksen** - note that even now he is not asking that anything be done for people in general, only for *his* five brothers. And even now he seems not to be able to get rid of the notion that Lazarus is his messenger boy! ([Exposition of the Gospel of Luke](#) - borrow)

**Robertson** writes that "The Rich Man labours under the delusion that his five brothers will believe the testimony of Lazarus as a man from the dead."

**So that they will not also come this place of torment ( [basanos](#) )** - **So that** is a [term of purpose or result](#) which explains the purpose of the warning he hopes can be given. He is deceived in believing that just a warning (even a man returning from the dead) would impede his brothers arrival in Hell when they died. How many times I have clearly warned people and their reaction has been to ignore, scoff at or disbelieve the message. **Place of torment** is now the rich man's name for "Hades." Notice also that Hell is a **place** and not a figment of his imagination! The rich man was now a believer in the truth of the Gospel! As **Brownlow North** said "You will be a believer some day. If you never believe on earth, you will believe in hell." To state it another way, there are no agnostics in hell!

---

**He may warn ( [present tense](#) ) (1263) ( [diamarturomai](#) )** from **diá** = intensifies meaning conveying idea of "thoroughly" + **marturomai** = witness, bear witness) means to bear witness, testify earnestly or repeatedly, to charge as it if before witnesses, to exhort earnestly and with authority in matters of extraordinary importance. It carries the idea of giving a forceful order or directive.

**THOUGHT** - The implication is clear that in all our witnessing, there is also an element of warning to the hearers. In other words, when we speak of the Good News to others, it is implicit that they comprehend the bad news (Hades/Hell is coming for unrepentant sinners). When I speak the Gospel, I like to explain that sinners will be forever separated from God (which is the ultimate "hell" of course). Without hearing the bad news, why would they need to hear the Good News? And so in our "witnessing" it is good to in some way include some form of "warning."

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - JOSEPH BELLAMY (1719-1790), who received his theological training from Jonathan Edwards and who became lifelong pastor of the Congregational Church in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, at the age of 21, was a man of commanding presence and remarkable preaching ability. When dying, he was somewhat depressed, and a friend visiting him said, "If God should send you to hell, what would you do there?" Bellamy replied "I will tell them there forever Jesus is precious."

BGT Luke 16:29 λ γει δ βρα μ· χουσι Μωϋσ α κα το ς προφ τας· κουσ τωσαν α τ ν.

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

NET Luke 16:29 But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they must respond to them.'

CSB Luke 16:29 "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.'

ESV Luke 16:29 But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'

NIV Luke 16:29 "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

NLT Luke 16:29 "But Abraham said, 'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.'

NRS Luke 16:29 Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.'

YLT Luke 16:29 'Abraham saith to him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them;

GWN Luke 16:29 "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses' Teachings and the Prophets. Your brothers should listen to them!'

NKJ Luke 16:29 "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'

NAB Luke 16:29 But Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.'

MIT Luke 16:29 But Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets. They must listen to them."

- Luke 16:16; Isaiah 8:20; 34:16; Mal 4:2-4; Jn 5:39-45; Acts 15:21; 17:11,12; 2 Ti 3:15-17; 2 Pe 1:19-21
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur
- In Depth Study of Eternal Punishment- on site

## **A COMMAND TO HEAR AND HEED THE "GOSPEL"**

**But** ([term of contrast](#)) **Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'** - **Let them hear** is a command in the [aorist imperative](#) which calls for a sense of urgency! Let them hear clearly! But as the saying goes **"too little, too late!"** Dear reader, if you are equivocating about Jesus as the Redeemer of your soul, then you need to repent and believe in Him today for now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION" (2 Cor 6:2+ cf Heb 3:7-8+)! Don't delay (tomorrow may be too late! cf James 4:14+, Ps 144:4). The rich man was in Hades because he did not hear (in the sense of hear and obey) the Word of God in the Old Testament, which did contain the Gospel (cf Gal 3:8+).

**Gary Inrig** - God needs to do nothing greater than He has done in giving men written Scripture. His Word is clear, sufficient, and powerful. The brothers' need is not to hear a messenger risen from the grave, but to listen to the Word of God given from heaven. They do not require an added experience to validate Scripture or to demonstrate God's veracity. They need to listen to the Word. ([The Parables : Understanding What Jesus Meant](#) - Borrow)

**Stein** adds that **hear** "carries the sense of [heed](#). (Luke 8:8; 9:35; 10:16; 14:35; 16:31)"

Notice the verb **"they have"** (have at their disposal) which is in the [present tense](#) signifying the brothers continually had access to the Old Testament Scriptures (**Moses and the Prophets**). They are without **"excuse"** (Ro 2:1-[note](#)) They were like the other Jews who thought **"lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance."** (Ro 2:4-[note](#)) They could not claim that they did not have enough revelation from God to be saved! The NLT paraphrases it "'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.'" Their problem was not in not having the truth but of having a **stubborn and unrepentant heart** (Ro 2:5-[note](#)). They had access to the Word but refused to humble themselves and **"receive the Word implanted, which is able to save** (their) **souls.:** (James 1:21-[note](#)).

**Moses and the Prophets** - This phrase refers to the 39 OT books of the OT, the Scriptures written and "**inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness**" (2 Ti 3:16-note, where "**Scriptures**" refers especially to the Old Testament.). **Moses** is synonymous with the Law about which Jesus spoke in Lk 16:16-note declaring that "**The Law and the Prophets** were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it." **The Law and the Prophets** are a description of the Old Testament Scriptures. Abraham is saying that to hear and heed the message of the OT is all they need to receive salvation. In fact Abraham spoke from personal experience for he himself "**he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness**" (Ge 15:6-note) Not only that but Paul teaches that what Abraham believed was the Gospel writing that

The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, **preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham**, saying, "ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU." (Gal 3:8-note)

Even as far back as the original sin of Adam in Genesis 3 we see that God provided a way of escaping Hell in giving a promise that would be fulfilled by the Messiah...

And I will put enmity Between you (Satan) and the woman, And between your seed and her seed (Messiah); He (Messiah) shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." (Ge 3:15-note; see [the protoevangelium](#))

In short, Abraham is calling the rich man's brothers (and all who read these words of warning from Hell) not to procrastinate, but to believe in the Gospel! And I can testify that the Good News is present in the Old Testament for I was born again some 30+ years ago in a study of the Minor Prophets in [Bible Study Fellowship](#) (See [My Personal Testimony of God's Grace](#)).

#### Related Resource:

- [Messianic Prophecies in the Old Testament](#)

**Andrus** writes "There was not a Jewish family anywhere without access to the Torah, just as there is no one in our country who does not have access to a Bible. The message of salvation is clear in the OT and in the NT. It's clear in the Catholic Bible and the Protestant Bible. It's clear in the KJV and the NIV. It's clear in the Greek and the English and the native language spoken by 99% of the people on earth." ([Sermon](#))

**Luke 16:30 "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!'"**

BGT Luke 16:30 ὁ εἰπὼν οὗτος, πρὸς τὸν πατέρα Ἀβραάμ, ἀλλὰ ἐάν τις πρὸς τοὺς νεκροὺς πορεύθῃ πρὸς αὐτοὺς μετανοήσουσιν.

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

NET Luke 16:30 Then the rich man said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

CSB Luke 16:30 " 'No, father Abraham,' he said. 'But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

ESV Luke 16:30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

NIV Luke 16:30 " 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

NLT Luke 16:30 "The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.'

NRS Luke 16:30 He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

YLT Luke 16:30 and he said, No, father Abraham, but if any one from the dead may go unto them, they will reform.

GWN Luke 16:30 "The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham! If someone comes back to them from the dead, they will turn to God and change the way they think and act.'

NKJ Luke 16:30 "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'

NAB Luke 16:30 He said, 'Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will

repent.'

MIT Luke 16:30 He replied, "Oh no, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will change their mind."

- Luke 13:3,5; Rev 16:9-11
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur
- In Depth Study of Eternal Punishment - on site

## THE RICH MAN'S WARNING FROM HELL FOR ALL WHO HAVE EARS TO HEAR!

**But () He said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead** - The rich man is not satisfied. A voice from the grave will make all the difference. He puts faith in the signs (dead man resurrected) not the Scriptures (which describe the dead Man Who was resurrected). In a sense this rich man was a "prophet" for in fact 2 men did rise from the dead and still the majority of those is Israel did not repent. Lazarus rose from the dead (John 11:43-44) and the sought to kill him (John 12:10) to obliterate the evidence of his resurrection from the dead. Jesus rose from the dead and they bribed the soldier to cover it up by spreading the lie that Jesus' disciples had stolen His body (Mt 28:12-15).

What is the rich man doing by asking Abraham to send Lazarus (from the dead, from Heaven)? Clearly he is asking for a sign just as the religious leaders had asked of Jesus "Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him **a sign from heaven.**" (Lk 11:16) Now put this in perspective - all the miracles Jesus had already performed were not enough to convince them. The **rich man** was representative of the Jewish religious leaders who asked for another sign from heaven. Ultimately, Jesus did give the religious leaders **the sign of Jonah the prophet** (Mt 12:39-41) which was the sign of His own death and resurrection. And yet they rejected this greatest of all signs!

**Marshall** notes that "Miracles will not convince those whose hearts are morally blind and unrepentant." (NIGTC)

**MacArthur** adds that "The implication is that he and his brothers had insufficient data; that they lacked a sufficiently convincing sign. The Pharisees did exactly that: they repeatedly demanded a sign from the Lord (Matt. 12:38; 16:1; Luke 11:16; John 2:18), which He refused to give them (Matt. 12:39; 16:4)."

**NET Note** - The irony and joy of the story is that what is denied the rich man's brothers, a word of warning from beyond the grave, is given to the reader of the Gospel in this exchange.

The rich man has sinned according to Isaiah 58:6-7 "Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke? "Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"

**Gary Inrig** writes "His sin is clear. But ultimately the rich man is in hell because he has not listened to the Word of God and repented before it. He has not believed God's truth. It is not wealth that excludes from heaven, but unbelief. And, although we are not explicitly told so here, it is not Lazarus's poverty that has qualified him for "Abraham's side." The clear, consistent witness of Scripture is that salvation is by faith alone." ([The Parables : Understanding What Jesus Meant](#) - Borrow)

**They will repent! (metanoeo)** - It is passages like this which literally demolish the arguments of some evangelical writers who claim that repentance is not an integral part of salvation.

**A T Robertson on repentance** - The **Rich Man** had failed to do this and he now sees that it is the one thing lacking. It is not wealth, not poverty, not alms, not influence, but repentance that is needed. He had thought repentance was for others, not for all.

**Garry Inrig** - There are millions who are imitators of the rich man at this point. "I'll believe, if God makes it clear enough. If I don't believe, that's God's fault." Such an attitude betrays profound ignorance about ourselves and deep blasphemy against God. In one of his movies, Woody Allen has his character say to his beloved Laura, "If only God would speak to me—just once. If he would only cough. If I could just see a miracle. If I could see a burning bush or the seas part. Or my uncle Sasha pick up the check." The humor is typical of Allen; so is the unbelief. God has spoken in His creation. He has spoken in history. He has spoken in His Word. Above

all, He has spoken in His Son, and no one is without responsibility or has a valid excuse. ([The Parables : Understanding What Jesus Meant](#) - Borrow)

**Wayne Grudem** comments on the [strange interpretations of Zane Hodges](#) - **Hodges** is not willing to say that repentance is necessary for salvation, but this verse provides a difficulty for his view, because it implies that the brothers need to repent in order to be saved. Hodges's solution is that this verse teaches incorrect doctrine: "We are certainly not to infer that he awakened in hell with a clear-cut theology of salvation by grace through faith!" But that understanding of the verse is certainly wrong, for in the next verse Jesus himself assumes that the brothers need repentance, when he has Abraham say that they would not even be convinced "if someone should rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31). Jesus's argument about their culpability would not be persuasive unless the reader assumes that they needed to be "convinced" of the thing that has just been mentioned, the need to repent. ([Free Grace Theology: Five Ways It Diminishes the Gospel](#) - highly recommended if you have been taught some of the doctrines of the "Free Grace" movement - Grudem is very gracious in his refutation of many of their teachings.) (See also [What is free grace?](#); [What is cheap grace?](#); [What is easy believism?](#))

**Repent** (3340) ([metanoeo](#) from **meta** = with, among + **noeo** = to think, exercise the mind <> from **nous** = mind - see study = [metanoia](#)) means to have another mind. **Metanoeo** means to change one's mind in respect to sin, God, and self. To turn to God and from sin (Luke 15:7-note = "one sinner who **repents**", 10, cf 1Th 1:9-note). Beware that repentance is not an intellectual decision but a change of mind that results in a clear change of behavior (cf "bear fruits in keeping with repentance" Lk 3:8-note). If there is no change in behavior, there is no genuine repentance and there is no salvation.

**Luke 16:31 "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"**

BGT Luke 16:31 ε πεν ὁ α τ · ε Μωϋσ ως κα τ ν προφητ ν ο κ κο ουσιν, ο ὃ ν τις κ νεκρ ν ναστ πεισθ σονται.

KJV Luke 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.

NET Luke 16:31 He replied to him, 'If they do not respond to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'

CSB Luke 16:31 "But he told him, 'If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'"

ESV Luke 16:31 He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'

NIV Luke 16:31 "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.'"

NLT Luke 16:31 "But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even if someone rises from the dead.'"

NRS Luke 16:31 He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'

YLT Luke 16:31 And he said to him, If Moses and the prophets they do not hear, neither if one may rise out of the dead will they be persuaded.'

GWN Luke 16:31 "Abraham answered him, 'If they won't listen to Moses' Teachings and the Prophets, they won't be persuaded even if someone comes back to life.'"

NKJ Luke 16:31 "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.'"

NAB Luke 16:31 Then Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.'

MIT Luke 16:31 He said to him, "If they do not pay attention to Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded if someone would be raised from the dead."



- **they will not** Jn 11:43-53; 12:10,11; 2 Cor 4:3
- **be persuaded** Ge 9:27; Acts 19:8; 26:28; 28:23; 2 Cor 5:11
- Luke 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#) - Steven Cole
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 3](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 4](#) - John MacArthur
- [Luke 16:19-31 A Testimony of One Surprised to be in Hell, Part 5](#) - John MacArthur
- In Depth Study of Eternal Punishment - on site

## SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE FOR SALVATION!

**But** ([term of contrast](#)) **He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead** - Notice that Abraham speaks of **Moses and the Prophets** as if they were living voices. Indeed, they are for they are the Word of God and "the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." (Heb 4:12-13<sup>+</sup>).

**Not listen** - The negative "ouk" signifies absolute negation. They absolutely will not listen! This picture reminds me of the response of the Jews to Stephen's sermon when he declared of them "You men who are stiff-necked and **uncircumcised in heart and ears** are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did." (Acts 7:51). And when Stephen said "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."...they cried out with a loud voice, and **covered their ears** and rushed at him with one impulse." (Acts 7:56-57) Not only did they not listen, but they stoned Stephen to death!

**They will not be persuaded** ([peitho](#)) means literally to persuade or induce by words to believe (Acts 19:26, Mt 27:20, Ro 14:14). In Greek the negative "not" is **ouk** which signifies absolute negation. The point is clear, if they don't believe the witness of the Word, they absolutely won't believe a witness who rises from the dead.

The cross of Christ—  
the crossroads to heaven or hell.

**Inrig** writes that "People who are not changed by Scripture will not be changed by a miracle. That is why Abraham refuses the request—not because he does not care about the fate of the rich man's brothers, but because the request is futile. It does not address the need. Miracles do not melt stony hearts. This fact is demonstrated consistently through the Scriptures.

- At the Exodus, Israel is miraculously delivered from Egypt, sees God's power in the desert, and yet persists in unbelief, so that God asks, "How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them?" (Numbers 14:11).
- Elijah and Elisha perform undeniable and evident miracles, yet the northern kingdom persists in its rebellion, resulting in God's exile of the nation (cf. 1 Kings 18:16-46; 2 Kings 2:19-22).
- The Lord's miracles are met by unbelief and blasphemous denial of who He is (e.g., Matthew 11:20-24).
- The raising of Lazarus from the dead results in some believing (John 11:45), but only intensifies the unbelief and antagonism of the Jewish leaders (John 11:46-53; 12:10-11).
- When the Jewish leaders admit that the apostles "have done an outstanding miracle" (Acts 4:16), they intensify their persecution.
- The empty tomb does not lead the unbelieving to come in faith, but to concoct a false story, to explain away the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 28:11-15). ([The Parables : Understanding What Jesus Meant](#) - Borrow)

**Jonathan Edwards** writes "The warnings of God's Word are more fitted to obtain the ends of awakening sinners, and bringing them to repentance, than the rising of one from the dead to warn them. In this passage, Moses and the prophets seem not only to be equalized to the warnings of one from the invisible world, but to be preferred before them. They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. They have already those means which God in his infinite wisdom hath seen to be fittest for them, and more suitable to their nature and circumstances, than the rising of one from the dead. — But whether there can be any more than an equality necessarily inferred or not; yet if only the warnings of the Old Testament have an equal tendency to bring men to repentance, as the rising of one from the dead; then surely these, together with the much clearer revelation under the gospel-dispensation by Christ and

his apostles — wherein we are abundantly more plainly told of another world, and wherein life and immortality are brought to light — must have a much greater tendency and fitness to obtain these ends." (See his full sermon on [Luke 16:31 The Warnings of Scripture are in the Best Manner Adapted to the Awakening and Conversion of Sinners](#))

All this confirms the Lord's words. The primary use of miracles in Scripture was not to convince people of the truth by replacing the Bible, but rather to confirm the truth of Scripture. People are responsible for hearing and repenting before what God has said in the Word. The Lord's story warns us about two destinies—heaven and hell. It also reminds us of the one great, inescapable responsibility—to take God at His word. **The parable of the rich man and Lazarus forces us to think seriously about our eternal destiny.** There is no immortality that comes by "not dying." Rich or poor, powerful or powerless, healthy or ill, we will all face not only death but eternal destiny. The grave works no miracles. Our present relation to God through His Word determines our eternal relationship with Him. **This parable also clarifies our present responsibility if we are believers.** It is to make it clear to all that God has spoken in His Word and calls everyone to hear and repent. Some Christians have suggested that true evangelism is "power evangelism," in which resistance to the gospel is overcome by the demonstration of God's power in supernatural events. This, we are told, makes "receptivity to Christ's claims very high." In fact, it has even been suggested that people who do not experience such power are less likely not only to believe but to move on to a mature faith. But the Lord's words suggest something very different. True power evangelism involves not the doing of miracles but the proclamation of God's truth in Scripture, which is able to make people "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). **The power that is needed is the power of Spirit-filled people sharing the Spirit-given truths of Scripture.** (See [A Spirit Filled Church](#); [Ephesians 5:18 Commentary](#), [Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells](#)) God's Word is sufficient not only to meet believers' needs, but also to meet the needs of unbelievers. As we are confident in the inherent truth and power of Scripture, we will bring to the "rich men" of our time that which they need most, and to the hurting Lazaruses that which will help them longest. We must not leave the Lazaruses of our time needy and helpless at the gate, but, in our concern to minister to their desperate present needs, we must not neglect their deepest, eternal needs (The Parables)

**Warren Wiersbe - Moses and the Prophets** tell sinners how to repent and be saved, and the Jews heard them read every Sabbath in the synagogue. Though miracles can attest to the authority of the preacher, they cannot produce either conviction or conversion in the hearts of the lost. Faith that is based solely on miracles is not saving faith (John 2:23-25). A man named Lazarus did come back from the dead, and some of the people wanted to kill him! (see John 11:43-57; 12:10) Those who claim that there can be no effective evangelism without "signs and wonders" need to ponder this passage and also John 10:41-42. In the rich man's lifetime, God had spoken to him in many ways. God had permitted him to have riches, yet he did not repent (Ro 2:4-5). Lazarus had witnessed to the rich man, and so had the Old Testament Scriptures that were familiar to the Jews, but his heart remained unbelieving. The fact that Lazarus died first was a strong witness to the rich man, a reminder that one day he would also die, but even a death at his very doorstep did not melt the man's heart. In spite of the fact that he was in torment in hades, the rich man did not change; he was still self-centered. He prayed, but it was for his comfort and the safety of his family. He was not concerned about other lost sinners; his only concern was his five brothers. He argued with God instead of submitting to His will. This indicates that the punishment of lost sinners is not remedial; it does not improve them. Hades and hell are not hospitals for the sick; they are prisons for the condemned. Dr. Luke does not tell us how the covetous Pharisees responded to this account. They certainly knew Moses and the Prophets, and this meant even greater responsibility—and greater condemnation (John 12:35-41). We must remind ourselves that the rich man was not condemned because he was rich, nor was Lazarus saved because he was poor. Abraham was a very wealthy man, yet he was not in torment in hades. The rich man trusted in his riches and did not trust in the Lord. (Borrow [Be courageous](#) Luke 14-24)

**MacArthur** writes "I hear it frequently said, "You can't just preach the Bible. You can't just explain the Bible. You can't just do expositional preaching. You can't just go verse by verse through Scripture. People don't understand that. They don't live in a paradigm to apprehend that. We've got to get beyond that. We are not going to reach them. We have to figure out ways to get to their felt needs. We've got to come up with other methodologies." The Bible knows nothing of any methodologies. All the Bible knows about is the message." ([A Testimony of One Surprised to Be in Hell, Part 5](#))

Don't miss what Jesus is teaching in this parable. The reason people go to hell is because they do not listen to the Scripture! Scripture alone tells us the way to Heaven. What sends people to hell? How they respond to Scripture. Heaven is for those who believe the Gospel, who believe the Good News that Jesus saves penitent sinners who believe in Him. That is why it is so important to preach the **Word of God**. As Paul explains "**faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ**." (Ro 10:17-note). Peter explains "you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the **living and enduring Word of God**." (1 Pe 1:23-note) James adds that "**In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the Word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures**." (James 1:18-note)

**Erwin Lutzer** on **if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets** - How true! When Christ told this story, He had not yet been put to death and resurrected. Yet He taught that His resurrection was the only sign that He would give to the world. But today, even though the evidence for His resurrection is overwhelming, many men and women still do not believe. As the saying goes, "A man

convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." (Borrow Lutzer's book - [One Minute After You Die](#)).

**MacArthur** explains that "Since unbelief is at heart a moral, not an intellectual issue, no amount of evidence alone can turn unbelief to faith. The Word of God has the power to do so (Heb. 4:12<sup>+</sup>; 1 Peter 1:23<sup>+</sup>, cf "The Gospel is the **power** of God for salvation" = Ro 1:16<sup>+</sup>)....Like the rich man, as noted above, the Jews demanded signs from the Lord. But they rejected the convincing signs that they did receive (John 12:37)—including the resurrection of a dead person...For the rich man, Israel, and all who arrive in hell, the issue is not lack of information, but rejection of the truth: "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).(See [The MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#))

**ESV Study Bible** - the refusal to repent and the corresponding refusal to believe the Gospel is not primarily due to lack of evidence but to a hardened heart (cf. Mark 8:17; John 11:37–40; Heb. 3:7–11, 15; 4:7). ([ESV Study Bible](#) - this resource can be borrowed)

**Brian Bell** on **they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead**- Life which is not affected by moral considerations will not be affected by the miraculous. A little later another Lazarus died, and Jesus raised him from the dead, and we are told specifically that these same men tried to kill him. Then came the day when they put Jesus to death, and He rose from the dead, but His resurrection from the dead made no appeal to men who lacked moral sense which puts God

Acts 10:40,41+ "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead."

**If someone rises from the dead** - Abraham is referring to Lazarus who would return from the dead. If the living Word did not convince them, neither would a living being!

**Arises** (450)(**anistemi** from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = stand, to cause to stand) means literally to get up, to stand up, to stand again, to cause to rise (thus "to raise"). The most important use of **anistemi** is to raise up from the dead or to bring back to life. Here are Luke's uses of **anistemi** that refer to **resurrection** - Lk 9:8, 19, 16:31, 18:33, Lk 24:7, 46, Acts 2:24, 32, Acts 9:40, 9:41, 10:41, 13:16, 34, Acts 13:33.

**J C Ryle said** "The saddest road to hell is that which runs under the pulpit, past the Bible and through the midst of warnings and invitations." (Luke 16 Commentary)

**Ian Paisley - The saddest road to Hell is to pass by the Word of God.**The saddest road to Hell is to close your ears to the warning of the blessed Holy Spirit, your eyes to the Son of God, and pass from the Gospel message to the blackness of darkness forever. It will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for a man or a woman who reads this Gospel tract and said, "NO" to Jesus Christ. These are my final words to you, and I say to you, as we gaze out into the darkness of Hell, into the loneliness of Hell, into the restlessness of Hell, and into the endlessness of Hell, "Make haste to Calvary, wash in the Saviour's Blood, come this night to the Saviour and in God's Name be in time."

**Michael Andrus** - this parable teaches that everyone has had sufficient revelation and sufficient evidence to make a responsible decision about his or her relationship to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ. I won't address this morning the case of the pagan who has never heard the name of Jesus (ED: SEE RELATED RESOURCES BELOW); clearly no one in this story or in this room fits that category. The rich man had been exposed to Scripture; his predicament was due to his neglect of God's Word. And everyone in this room has heard enough to be held accountable. And Jesus seems to imply that anyone who does not respond to the truth he has will not be convinced even by a miracle. Sometimes we tend to think, "If only they could prove that Noah's ark is really on Ararat, or the Shroud of Turin was the actual burial cloth of Jesus, then people would flock to church." Hogwash! Jesus says it wouldn't make a hill of beans difference. ([Sermon](#))

#### **Related Resources:**

- [What happens to those who have never heard about Jesus?](#)
- [Can a person be saved through general revelation?](#)

**I Howard Marshall** - the law and the prophets are insufficient to call the rich to repentance, even the return of someone resurrected from the dead will not achieve the desired effect. Miracles in themselves cannot melt stony hearts. Here again there is a link with the earlier part of the chapter in which the validity of the law and the prophets during the era of the gospel is upheld. (NIGTC)

**Michael Andrus** - The rich man is not denied his request because God is unwilling to give his brothers as much opportunity as possible. The request is denied because it will not work. You want proof? Not long after Jesus told this story the other Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, died, and Jesus raised him from the dead. Did the religious leaders of Israel fall on their faces in repentance? No, they renewed their conspiracy to kill Jesus. A very short time later Jesus Himself died for the sins of the world, was

buried in a guarded tomb, but was raised by God, appearing to hundreds in His resurrection body. Did the religious leaders of Israel, or even the common people, fall on their faces in repentance? No. Oh a few did. But most went right along with their everyday lives ignoring the clear message that what we do with Christ in this life determines where and how we spend the next. ([Sermon](#))

**Ray Stedman** - How accurately this parable portrays our human desire for the spectacular, the dramatic, the shocking to occur! We have all felt this way at times. We ask, "Why is it so hard to believe? Why doesn't God do more? Why doesn't he open the heavens and speak to us? Why doesn't he perform miracles again, as in the days of our Lord, or send an angel to speak to us?" Many feel that if they could only see a miracle, or be spoken to by an angel, then they would believe. But we need to ask ourselves: How many who saw the miracles in our Lord's day still believed in him at the end of his life? How many stayed with him who believed because of the miracles? We know there were very few. Only a handful of people stood around the cross. And what did men do when, shortly after this, another man named Lazarus was actually raised from the dead? What did men do? Did they believe? According to the record, they simply took counsel together to put him to death again! Even when Jesus himself returned from the dead (and that story has been flung around the world since) men do not believe. No, Abraham is right. The most convincing proof is **"Moses and the prophets,"** the Word of God, especially that Word made flesh (John 1:14), come to dwell among us. **The rich man was in hell because he refused to heed Moses and the prophets, not because he was rich.** His activities as a rich man grew out of his refusal to hear Moses and the prophets. His self-centered, self-indulgent life is a reflection of that refusal, but he is not in hell because he was rich. **Lazarus, on the other hand, is in heaven because he believed Moses and the prophets, because he believed them he made God his helper and trusted in him.** He is not in heaven merely to give him compensation for what he went through on earth. There will be many a poor man in hell, as there will be rich men in heaven. No, he is there simply because he believed **Moses and the prophets.** So, what our Lord is saying here is: **The main thing in life is to give heed to what God has said, to heed Moses and the prophets. The point of this story is that you and I are the five brothers that are left behind. This is the whole point. You may be young, sauntering your way through life with life all ahead of you, thinking, as these five brothers undoubtedly thought, "I'll take one world at a time. I'll enjoy life now, and when the next life comes along I'll handle it then."** But the point of this whole story is that **THEN** is determined by **NOW.** That is the whole issue. You are put here **NOW** to learn reality, to distinguish good and evil, and to appropriate God's method of deliverance. That is why you are here. **Unless you learn these things now, there will not be any glorious life to come.** (cf Acts 16:31) Thus the main thing is **Moses and the prophets,** especially this last and greatest of the prophets, the One who tells us this story (cf Dt 18:15)! What do you know about him? What do you know about the death of the Lord Jesus, and what that death meant in relation to your sin? What do you know about what he plans to do as a result of your acceptance of that death on your behalf, of his ability to come and live within you (by His Spirit), and to impart to you all the glory of his own life that you might live, not in your own strength, but in the power and strength which He gives (through His Spirit), living through you in this 20th century hour, in the midst of the pressure and excitement of these days -- to re-live again the life that He once lived 1900 years ago (cf 1 Cor 11:1, 1 Pe 2:21, 1 Jn 2:6). What do you know about that? That is the point to life. That is what our Lord is saying. Anything that misses **THAT** is a purposeless, pointless, meaningless life. The important thing is to begin now, while you are young. "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come" (Ecclesiastes 12:1), says the book of Ecclesiastes. To learn to fear God and to walk in obedience to his commandments -- this is the whole of man. I know the text reads, "This is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13), but in the Hebrew the word **DUTY** does not occur. What it says is, **"This is the wholeness of man."** This is what makes man **whole:** To fear God and to walk in fellowship with Him, in obedience to His commandments and especially those commandments that bring one into the knowledge of and relationship to the Son of God, that His life may be in you to change your whole life (cf Col 1:27b, Col 3:4), from beginning to end and from inside out. That is living. That is what God intends. That is the purpose of this story. See how our Lord brings it right to the point? **The reason for your earthly existence is that you might learn, through Moses and the prophets, the realities of life: What it is all about, and the realities which lie beyond, what this life is heading toward, what its final expression will be.** Everything else must relate, somehow, to that to have any meaning at all. ([The Main Thing](#))

**Brian Bell** sums up Luke 16:19-31 - Jesus drew the curtain back where we were permitted to look behind the veil, past **he died** to see, some are **"carried by angels"**, others **"awaking** in anguish". Which will be yours? A life that constantly keeps God in view or one that doesn't? Is your motive in doing things the sight of man, or for God? (**ILLUSTRATION**) One day, when Vice President Calvin Coolidge was presiding over the Senate, one Senator angrily told another to go "straight to hell." The offended Senator complained to Coolidge as presiding officer, and Coolidge looked up from the book he had been leafing through while listening to the debate. "I've been looking through the rule book," he said. "you don't have to go." 3.35.1. Good News...You don't either!

When all is said and done, the question that needed to be pondered and answered by the Pharisees who were lovers of money and by every rich man (and every poor beggar) is the question from the lips of our loving Lord Jesus in Mark 8:36...

"For what does it profit a man  
to gain the whole world,  
and forfeit his soul?"

---

**Michael Andrus** - In conclusion I would share with you that perhaps the most important concept conveyed in this parable is the tremendous seriousness of life on this side of the grave. If you are one of the five brothers, sauntering down life's road with great plans and prospects, do not expect that God will send you a messenger from the other side. Nor is He likely to perform some miracle to bring you to your knees. He is no shock therapist. You have the Word of God in which Jesus says, "I am the way, the Truth and the Life. No man comes to the Father except through me." You see, the Great Chasm is still there. The world's religions are all designed to help you build a bridge across that Chasm. It may be a bridge of good works or one of religious ritual. But there's no way you can build a bridge across. The good news is that God has already done it. It's a narrow bridge. It's as narrow as a cross, and only those who come by way of the Cross can come to the Father. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Those who are born twice only have to die once. But those born only once have to die twice. If your only birth is a physical birth you will someday die physically and also spiritually, as the rich man did. But if you are born twice—physically and spiritually—the only death you will ever die is, like Lazarus, physical death. Eternal life has been offered to you. Don't neglect it. Don't delay. ([Sermon](#))

---

**Our Daily Bread Devotional** - I saw a sign that said, "The more Son you get, the less likely you are to burn." The person who created the clever message may have meant well, but the statement is a subtle lie. It suggests that the more we believe in Jesus, the less likely we'll go to hell.

The Bible, though, repeatedly states that when a person believes in Christ, he possesses eternal life from that point onward. Jesus described salvation in terms of being "born again" by the Spirit of God (Jn. 3:3-9). He said that whoever believes in Him has everlasting life (v.16). It is not a matter of what is likely but what is assured.

We do not gain deliverance from hell by degrees. When we first trusted Christ as our Savior, He came into our lives and saved us completely. We'll never be further removed from hell than we are right now. Yes, we will grow in our likeness to Jesus as we live in humble gratitude and submission to Him. But growing in grace adds nothing to our salvation that wasn't ours the moment we believed.

Many Christians today are longing for some secret formula or exciting experience to make them feel more sure of their eternal destination. But Jesus has provided a full and complete salvation. Our part is to rest in the adequacy of His death on the cross and to live for Him. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I need no other argument,  
I need no other plea;  
It is enough that Jesus died,  
And that He died for me.  
—Edmunds

We are saved by Christ's dying, not by our doing.

---

**Steven Cole** - The basis of a fixed destiny: Repentance and faith in the testimony of God's Word. A superficial reading of the story might lead you to conclude that a person who is rich and comfortable in this life goes to hell, while a person who is poor and miserable goes to heaven, to even things out. But that would contradict other Scriptures, and even in the story itself, the wealthy Abraham is in heaven. The rich man's problem was not that he was rich, but that he did not repent of his sin of squandering his riches on himself and begin to use them as God would have him to do, to make friends for eternity.

The rich man knew that his brothers needed to do what he had not done, namely, to repent and to be persuaded to believe the message of Moses and the Prophets (= Scripture; Lu 16:30-31). The apostle Paul summarized his preaching as "solemnly testifying both to Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ac 20:21). Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin. You cannot have one without the other. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a turning of the whole person from sin to God. Saving faith is to trust the testimony that God has borne concerning His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who offered Himself as the penalty for our sins. A person who has truly believed in Christ as Savior will live a life of repentance and growth in godliness. The fact that this rich man never showed concern for Lazarus, even though he had to walk past him every day, is ample evidence that his faith was an empty profession. He had never repented of his selfishness.

The rich man may have protested: "How was I to know that I should take care of this poor man at my gate?"

**(1). God's Word is a sufficient witness to lead a person to repentance.**

When the rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, Abraham replies that they have what they need to repent, namely, Moses and the Prophets. But the rich man protests, saying in effect, "That's not enough. They need something more



spectacular, something miraculous. Send them a man risen from the dead to preach to them and then they will repent.” But Abraham insists that Scripture is a sufficient witness. If they won’t believe Scripture, they won’t believe if someone rises from the dead.

Sometimes when you’re witnessing, the person will say, “If I could just see a miracle, I’d believe.” That is just a smokescreen. The Bible bears witness of many miracles, first and foremost the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. There is sufficient evidence to believe the apostolic witness of the resurrection. If a person won’t read and believe the Bible, then he has a deeper problem, namely, a moral problem.

## **(2). Repentance is a moral issue, not an intellectual one.**

The rich man had known what God’s Word says about concern for the poor and needy. But he chose to ignore this hurting man on his doorstep. In effect, he is blaming God for not giving him sufficient witness: “If You had just sent someone from the dead to warn me, I wouldn’t be in this place!” But the fact is, he did not want to inconvenience his comfortable lifestyle in order to care about this poor man.

Invariably, when you’re sharing the gospel and a person raises an intellectual problem, it is not the true problem. One way I deal with this is to ask the person, “Are you saying that if I can provide a reasonable answer to that problem, you will repent of your sins and trust in Christ as Savior and Lord?” The answer almost always is, “Well, there are other issues, too.” I’ll say, “Great, make me a list and I’ll see if I can find reasonable answers. Then will you become a Christian?” Repentance isn’t the result of having all your intellectual questions answered. Repentance and faith in Christ hinge on the recognition that you are a sinner and that you need a Savior. We need to make it clear to people that if they die without repenting of their sins and trusting in Christ, they are fixing their eternal destiny in hell, not in heaven.

Thus, there are two and only two eternal destinies. The basis for a person’s eternal destiny is fixed by his choices in this life.

## **3. It is possible to be deceived about our eternal destiny by present outward appearances.**

One key to understanding this parable is Lu 16:15, “that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.” In the eyes of men, the rich man was successful and Lazarus was a loser. The rich man lived well and enjoyed the finest things in life. Lazarus was a miserable wretch, with the dogs licking his sores. But the irony is, Lazarus was eternally rich and the rich man was eternally bankrupt.

It is interesting that the rich man is left unnamed (sometimes he is called [Dives](#),” but that is the Latin word for rich man). In this world, he was probably well-known, renowned for his wealth like the Kennedy family or Bill Gates. But nobody would have known the poor man’s name, much less cared about it. But in God’s sight, the rich man is left unnamed and the poor beggar is named. Lazarus means, “God has helped,” and truly God had helped him because he had come to salvation.

The point is, it’s easy to be deceived by present outward appearances into thinking that you or someone else is well-off because of career success. But if you are not rich before God, laying up eternal riches in heaven, you are really bankrupt in the worst sense of the word. Don’t be deceived into pursuing financial success at the expense of your soul! Those who believe God’s Word live in light of eternity as stewards who will give account to God, using the wealth God provides to make friends for eternity.

**Conclusion** A Sunday school teacher told his class the story of the rich man and Lazarus and then asked, “Now, which would you rather be, boys—the rich man or Lazarus?” One boy replied, “I’d like to be the rich man while I’m living and Lazarus when I die.” Wouldn’t we all! But, of course, it doesn’t work that way. You can’t live for selfish pleasure in this life, disobeying God’s Word, and expect to live with God in heaven when you die. But, the good news is, when you repent of your sins and live in obedience to Jesus Christ, you find great pleasure, both for time and eternity, no matter what your earthly circumstances. As Jesus said, “Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it” (Lu 9:25). Two very different destinies lie before you, with a great chasm fixed between them. I urge you, choose life by choosing to follow Jesus Christ.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Have we reacted against hellfire preachers by under-emphasizing the terrors of hell?
2. How would you refute biblically: Universalism? Annihilationism? Purgatory?
3. How would you answer a person who said, “I think that God is cruel if He torments people for eternity in hell”?
4. A person might argue that Jesus is teaching here that we are saved by our good deeds. How would you refute this biblically?
5. What are the implications for witnessing of the fact that repentance is a moral issue, not an intellectual one?

[Luke 16:19-31 A Great Chasm Fixed](#)



A recent poll reveals that 89% of Americans believe in Heaven while 73% believe in Hell. When asked where they think they will go when they die, 3 out of 4 think they will go to Heaven while only 2% believe they will end up in Hell. Why is it that most of us think we'll go to Heaven when we die? The rich man was surprised and shocked that he ended up in a place of torment. I'm afraid that he won't be alone.

Let me summarize what we can learn about the afterlife from Luke 16.

**1. The dead are still alive.** Both Lazarus and the rich man survived their own funerals. We think this is the land of the living but it's really not. This is the land of the dying. When we die, we wake up to spend eternity in either Heaven or Hell.

**2. The dead retain their personalities and their essential character.** Lazarus is still Lazarus and the rich man is still the rich man. Even in Hell the rich man could see, hear, feel, recognize, remember, speak, reflect, plead, suffer, and think ahead. There was only one thing he couldn't do. He couldn't get out.

**3. Death marks the final separation between the saved and the lost.** Once in Heaven, always in Heaven; once in Hell, always in Hell. No one can pass from one place to another.

**4. Hell is a place of personal suffering.** Three times Jesus mentions the torment, suffering, and agony of the rich man. Hell is where God's wrath is poured out. The Bible speaks of a fire that never burns out, a place where the worm does not die, a place of darkness and gloom where there is continual weeping and gnashing of teeth. That reminds me of the evangelist who was exhorting people to flee from the wrath to come. "I warn you," he thundered, "that there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth!" Suddenly an old woman in the gallery stood up and said, "Sir," she shouted, "I have no teeth!" To which he replied, "Madam, teeth will be provided!"

**5. Those in Hell cry out for help that will never come** Contrary to popular opinion, Hell is not a place of one big long party with all of your buddies. None of the rich man's "prayers" were answered nor could they be. The rich man who is still in Hell today knows at least three things:

- There is no way out for him.
- People can avoid Hell if they put their faith in Jesus.
- Someone needs to warn people about the danger they are in.

If what I have just said is true, then you must do whatever it takes to make sure you go to Heaven and you must make sure at all costs that you do not go to Hell. I should go to Hell because that is where I belong. But, I am going to Heaven because Jesus Christ died on a cross for me. He took my punishment so that I could go free. Friend, God has done everything necessary for you go to Heaven. His creation reflects His handiwork. He's given you the Bible, Christian friends, and multiple opportunities to get on the road to Heaven. God has posted an enormous stop sign on the road to Hell and the sign is in the shape of a cross. If the road to Hell is paved with good intentions, the road to Heaven is paved with the blood of Christ. Let me say it clearly. You don't have to go to Hell. God has provided a way of escape for you. But even God's way of escape will do you no good unless you reach out and take it. If you ignore Jesus, there is no hope for you. God doesn't have a Plan B for those who reject his Son.

### **The Road to Heaven Illustrated**

In a recent interview with Fidel Castro, he was asked if he spends time pondering his own death. Here's how he answered that question: "I have never thought much about that because I don't attach much importance to what happens after I die" (WORLD, 3/31/01). This sounds exactly like something the rich man would have said before he died.

In an effort to be as clear as I possibly can be, I want to conclude this morning by walking you through some action steps from Luke 16.

I've always liked new inventions. I read about a new product recently that sounds fascinating. The LifeClock ticks off your remaining time on earth in hours, minutes, seconds -- and even tenths of seconds. All you have to do is enter in some data and the clock begins the countdown. I went on their web site this week and found out that based on my age and lifestyle, I'm going to live until I'm 84! I don't think this invention will be a best-seller because most of us don't want to be reminded of how much time we have left. It's even hard for us to say the word, "death" or "dead." Have you ever noticed that instead we use phrases like "passed away," "departed," "no longer with us," or "passed on"? Death is an ugly word, isn't it? I know some of you have experienced death recently. Perhaps someone close to you has died and you're still reeling from the impact. Like an unwelcome intruder, death has made a rude entrance into your family or friendships. I hurt with you this morning -- and God certainly feels your pain. The problem with death is that it's almost always unexpected. Even when a doctor says that someone is about to die, death still has a way of ambushing us. I've been in a few hospital rooms when someone has died -- and it's always abrupt, even when a family is somewhat prepared for it.

Death was certainly a surprise for those 25 people who were dancing at a wedding reception in Jerusalem when the floor suddenly gave way and they all died.

Job 18:14 refers to death as the “king of terrors.” I don’t think the rich man in our story thought much about dying. He was too busy with life, too caught up in this world to even think about the next one. Lazarus, on the other hand, probably thought about death every day. He wondered if he would even wake up the next morning. The clock was ticking for both of them. Even though only one of them was cognizant of the seconds slipping away, they both were moving closer to eternity each day. I’ve been to quite a few funerals in my life – in fact, I’m doing one this afternoon. It might surprise you to know that the Bible says that it’s actually a good thing to go to a funeral. Ecclesiastes 7:2 says, “It’s better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of every man; the living should take this to heart.” In other words, it’s more profitable to go to a funeral than to go to a party. At least when we’re at a funeral, we’re forced to think about what will happen to us when we die. If the truth were known, many of us unconsciously think that we can beat the odds. **This verse is teaching that it’s better to read the Obituary section of the paper than it is to read the Sports page. God says that it’s more profitable to be reminded of death’s reality than it is to just fill our lives with entertainment.** I don’t know about you, but I now read the Obituary page. My dad always says that he reads it to see if his picture is there! I sometimes read about people to see what they accomplished in life. Now that I’m middle aged, I always look to see how old people are when they died.

There are a lot of people on this page who were over the age of 70 when they died. Others died in the prime of their life. Man, I wonder if they were ready to go... As I’ve talked to people, I’ve discovered that most of us have different ideas -- or different plans we’re following that we think will get us to Heaven. The first plan is the Good Works plan. If you just do a lot of good things, if you help enough people, then God will let you into Heaven, right?

The problem with this approach is that it’s never good enough. No matter how hard you try, you’re still going to come up short. It’s important to try to live a good life, but God says that it’s not enough. Even when we try to do good, Isaiah 64:6 says, “all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.” Being good is never good enough.

The other plan is called the “Why Worry?” plan. I know that some of you believe that everyone goes to Heaven when they die. I’ve heard it at almost every funeral I’ve been to. It goes something like this: “Well, this was too bad but at least we know she’s in a better place now.” I certainly understand the sentiment and can appreciate the grief that people experience, but this statement reveals an underlying belief that many of us have -- that when people die, they just go to Heaven. Let me ask you a question: how do you know someone goes to Heaven when they die?

Jesus made it very clear that there is a place called Heaven and a place called Hell. And, most people avoid the narrow road that leads to Heaven. Matthew 7:13-14: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

Many are on the road that leads to destruction. After we die we’ll have to give an account for our life. When we stand before God, there will be no secrets. Everything will be made known. Those who have lived only for themselves, and had no room for God in their life will be like the rich man who is in torment in Hell. Only those who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ will go to Heaven when they die.

A payment has to be made for sin. A sentence must be carried out. Because of our sins we all deserve to go to Hell. But, Jesus died in our place on the Cross. He died to bridge the gap between a holy God and sinful people. Those who admit their sinfulness and transfer their trust to Christ by receiving Him into their life, will go to Heaven. Those who do not, will spend eternity in torment.

The Bible is clear. Hebrews 9:27 says that, “...Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.” There’s no getting around the fact that judgment follows death.

Friends, the “Why Worry?” plan and the “Good Works” plan are both fraught with problems. There will be a time of judgment [hold up gavel]. And because of this, some of you do need to worry because your good works aren’t good enough.

The rich man was not only suffering the pain of Hell, he was devastated by the fact that his family members were going to end up in the same place. He wanted the former beggar to go and warn his loved ones about the reality of Hell.

What the Bible is saying is that there are no free rides to Heaven. You don’t get there automatically or by cashing in your frequent flyer miles. It’s not easy to get into Heaven because you need to have the right paperwork.

When we first went to Mexico five years ago we had to have our passports or a valid birth certificate to cross the border. We needed proof of our nationality and of our birth. In order to get into heaven, we need a certificate that declares that we’ve been born...again.

Jesus has already filled out the paperwork when He died on the cross as payment for your sins. In order to have your certificate validated you need to receive what Jesus has done on your behalf.

Don't be like the family of this rich man. They were busy with their lives and their own concerns. They were too wound up to slow down and listen to what God has to say in the Bible. They were too preoccupied to receive their birth certificate to Heaven.

When Beethoven was on his deathbed, he shook his fist at Heaven and reportedly said, "I need more time. I need more time!" Friend, when it's time to go, it's time to go.

Let me ask you a personal question. What will happen to you when you die? You only have two options -- if you have a second birth, you'll go to Heaven. If you don't, you'll have to face the judgment of God, and you'll then spend eternity in Hell. There's no halfway house. No second chances. If you don't take steps in this life to get ready to die, it will be too late once you die.

I remember seeing a tract once with the title, "What you have to do to go to Hell." When you open it up, the inside was totally blank. You don't have to do anything to go to Hell...just continue as you are.

What must I do to go to Heaven? Acts 16:31 is clear: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." Do nothing and be lost. Trust Christ and be saved.

Once you receive your birth certificate, your name will be recorded in God's book of life. Then, you can await that glorious day when your name will be called -- and you'll cross the border to Heaven.

### **In the Twinkling of an Eye – Jeff Williams**

Three weeks ago I was invited to go to the hospital and talk to a man who wanted to get himself ready to die. He had been fighting some serious health problems and he knew that he was at the end of his life. He wanted to get right with God before it was too late.

As I sat next to him I shared the story of the two thieves on the cross. When they were first hung on the cross the Bible says that they both were hurling insults and blasphemies at Jesus. As the day went on however, one of them stopped and began to talk to Jesus. He recognized that Jesus had done nothing wrong and he wanted Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. Jesus then spoke words of grace and love to this criminal when he tenderly replied, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

I told my friend that it didn't matter how he had been living. It didn't matter how many times he had been to church. What mattered was what he was going to do with Jesus. I then explained how I became a Christian and then walked him through what he needed to do if he wanted to be cross the border into heaven.

With tears in his eyes he prayed and asked Jesus to save him from his sins as he put his faith and trust in Him for salvation. By the time he was done, we were both crying. I'll never forget what happened next. After I shared some Scripture with him to let him know that he was now ready to die and gave him assurance that he would be in Heaven, I went out into the hallway to talk to his daughter.

While we were talking a lullaby starting playing over the hospital sound system. They do that whenever a baby is born to let everyone know that a new life has come into the world. I turned to this man's daughter and said, "They're playing that song for your dad in celebration of his new birth!"

My friend died early Thursday morning and I can tell you with full assurance today that he's now in heaven with Abraham and Lazarus, worshipping the one who alone is worthy of our praise.

### **[What Will Happen When You Die?](#)**

## **SOME LAST WORDS FROM SAINTS AND SINNERS**

- Borrow Lockyer's book - [Last words of saints and sinners](#) - THIS IS A FASCINATING BOOK TO READ!

**ALTAMONT**, renowned writer and agnostic of a past century, was an ingenious and accomplished infidel whose fascinating brilliance captivated the youth of his time and destroyed any religious faith they had. At his end, his smitten conscience cried:

"It is fit Thou shouldst thus strike this murderer to the heart. As for a Deity, nothing less than an Almighty could inflict what I now feel. Remorse for the past throws my thoughts on the future; worse dread of the future strikes them back on the past. I turn and turn, and find no ray. Didst Thou fell half the mountain that is on me, Thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flame that is not an ever-lasting flame,

that is not an unquenchable fire. My principles have poisoned my friends; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife!; And is there an-other hell? Thou blasphemed yet indulgent God, hell is a refuge if it hide me from Thy frown."

**ANTITHEUS**, another infidel whose last words were so laden with remorse and despair, gave this despairing, final cry:

"You must not let me die! I dare not die! Oh, doctor, save me if you can! My mind is full of horror, and I am incapable of preparing for death. As I was lying sleepless in my bed this night, the apparition of my friend presented itself before me, and unfolding the curtain of my bed, stood at my feet looking earnestly upon me for a considerable space of time. My heart sank within me, for his face was ghastly, full of horror, with an expression of such anguish as I can never describe. His eyes were fixed upon me, and at length, with a mournful motion of his head, 'Alas! Alas!' he cried, 'we are in a fatal error,' and taking hold of the curtain with his hand shook them violently and disappeared. This, I protest to you, I both saw and heard. And look! Where the print of his hand is left is blood upon the curtains."

**EDWARD GIBBON** (1737-1794), the noted English historian whose *Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire* remains the greatest history of all times, was unfortunately another infidel who died without the consolations of the Gospel. What a bleak end was his as he said to those at his bedside:

"This day may be my last. I will agree that the immortality of the soul is at times a very comfortable doctrine. All this is now lost, finally, irrevocably lost. All is dark and doubtful."

**THOMAS HOBBS** (1588-1674), was a noted English political philosopher whose most famous work was *Leviathan*. This cultured, clever skeptic corrupted many of the great men of his time. But what regret was his at the end of the road! What hopelessness permeated his last word:

"If I had the whole world, I would give it to live one day. I shall be glad to find a hole to creep out of the world at. About to take a leap in the dark!"

**CAPTAIN JOHN LEE**, who was executed for forgery, was an-other who sought to do away with God, yet in death longed for the assurance and hope of faith:

"I leave to the world this mournful memento, that however much a man may be favored by personal qualifications or distinguished mental endowments, genius will be useless, and abilities avail little, unless accompanied by religion and at-tended by virtue. Oh, that I had possession of the meanest place in heaven, and could but creep into one corner of it."

**OLIVER**, a doctor of philosophy, lived the life of an infidel but **shortly before his death repented and turned to the Saviour**. His final word was one of deep regret:

"Would that I could undo the mischief I have done! I was more ardent to poison men with infidel principles than any Christian is to spread the doctrines of Christ." (ED: ARE YOU AS CONVICTED AS I AM?)

**THOMAS PAINE**, the renowned American author and infidel, exerted considerable influence against belief in God and in the Scriptures. He came to his last hour in 1809, a most disillusioned and unhappy man. During his final moments on earth he said:

"I would give worlds, if I had them, that Age of Reason had not been published. O Lord, help me! Christ, help me! O God what have I done to suffer so much? But there is no God! But if there should be, what will become of me hereafter? Stay with me, for God's sake! Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone. If ever the devil had an agent, I have been that one."

**WILLIAM POPE**, who died in 1797, is said to have been the leader of a company of infidels who ridiculed everything religious. One of their exercises was to kick the Bible about the floor or tear it up. Friends who were present in his death-chamber spoke of it as a scene of terror as he died crying:

"I have no contrition. I cannot repent. God will damn me. I know the day of grace is past . . . You see one who is damned forever . . . Oh, Eternity! Eternity! . . . Nothing for me but hell. Come, eternal torments . . . I hate everything God has made, only I have no hatred for the devil — I wish to be with him (ED: THERE IS NO PARTY WITH THE DEVIL, NO SENSE OF COMPANIONSHIP! HE IS AS DECEIVED IN DEATH AS HE WAS IN LIFE!). I long to be in hell. Do you not see? Do you not see him? He is coming for me."

**ANOTHER VERSION ON WILLIAM POPE:**

William Pope was a member of the Methodist Church in England for most of his life. He made a pretense of

knowing Christ and served in many capacities. Meanwhile, his wife died a genuine believer. Soon, however, he began to drift from Christ. He had companions who believed in the redemption of demons. He began going with them to a house of prostitution. In time he became a drunkard. He admired the skeptic Thomas Paine, and on Sundays he and his friends assembled to confirm one another in their infidelity. They amused themselves by throwing the Bible on the floor and kicking it around. Eventually Pope contracted tuberculosis. Someone visited him and told him of the great Redeemer. He told Pope he could be saved from being punished for his sins. But Pope replied, "I have no contrition; I cannot repent. God will damn me! I know the day of grace is lost. God has said to such as me, 'I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.' I have denied Him; my heart is hardened." Then he cried, "Oh, the hell, the pain I feel! I have chosen my way. I have done the horrible damnable deed: I have crucified the Son of God afresh; I have counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing! Oh that wicked and horrible thing of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, which I know that I have committed; I want nothing but hell! Come, oh devil and take me!" (recounted in *Voices from the Edge of Eternity*, John Myers, ed. [Old Tappan, N.J.: Spire, 1972], pp. 147–49) He spent most of his life in the church, but his end was infinitely worse than his beginning. Every man and woman has the same choice. You can abide in the vine and receive all of God's blessings, or you can be burned. It doesn't seem like a difficult choice, does it? Yet millions of people resist God's gift of salvation, preferring the superficial relationship of the false branch. (MacArthur: *Saved Beyond a Doubt*)

**PERIGOOD-TALLEYRAND** (1754-1838), the renowned French statesman, best remembered as Foreign Minister under Napoleon and later Foreign Minister to Louis XVIII, was likewise known for his infidel leanings. At his deathbed, King Louis asked Talleyrand how he felt and he replied:

"I am suffering, Sire, the pangs of the damned."

**VOLTAIRE**, the noted French infidel and one of the most fertile and talented writers of his time, used his pen to retard and demolish Christianity. Of Christ, Voltaire said: "Curse the wretch!" He once boasted, "In twenty years Christianity will be no more. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to rear." Shortly after his death the very house in which he printed his foul literature became the depot of the Geneva Bible Society. The nurse who attended Voltaire said: "For all the wealth in Europe I would not see another infidel die." The physician, Trochim, waiting up with Voltaire at his death said that he cried out most desperately: "I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life. Then I shall go to hell; and you will go with me. O Christ! O Jesus Christ!"

**ROBERT GREEN INGERSOLL** (1833-1899), famous American lawyer and prominent agnostic, lectured on Biblical inaccuracies and contradictions. His famed lecture *The Mistakes Of Moses* led one defender of the Bible to say that he would like to hear Moses speak for five minutes on *The Mistakes Of Ingersoll*. Standing by his graveside, his brother exclaimed:

"Life is a narrow vale between the narrow peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailings."

**JOHN WILHOT**, who became the second Earl of Rochester, lived a life of sin and infidelity. But God met and saved him from his sin and skepticism. When he came to die in 1680, he laid his hand upon the Bible and said with solemnity and earnestness:

"The only objection against this Book is a bad life! I shall die now, but oh what unspeakable glories do I see! What joys beyond thought or expression am I sensible of! I am assured of God's mercy to me through Jesus Christ. Oh, how I long to die!"

**COLONEL CHARTERIS**, another infidel who at the end was not so blatant in his denial of an after life, said as he died,

"I would gladly give £30,000 to have it proved to my satisfaction that there is no such place as hell."

**KAY**, the infidel was the one who cried at the end: "Hell! Hell! Hell!" His family could not stand his groans and oaths and fled from the room until he was dead.

**CASANOVA**, renowned for his self-indulgence, ended his life in self-deception. On his death bed at the age of 73, he said: "I have lived as a philosopher and die as a Christian."

- Borrow Lockyer's book - [Last words of saints and sinners](#) - THIS IS A FASCINATING BOOK TO READ!

## There's No Place Like Hell!

### A Sermon by Ian Paisley

**A SERMON PREACHED IN 1988 IN THE MARTYRS MEMORIAL CHURCH ON THE OCCASION OF THE RESURGENCE OF THE "NO HELL THEOLOGY" AMONGST SO-CALLED EVANGELICALS. THE TEXT WAS LUKE 16:24 "AND IN HELL HE LIFT UP HIS EYES."**

**ILLUSTRATION** - ON AN AMERICAN TROOPSHIP during World War II a new Chaplain came aboard. The rank and file of the sailors met him and they put to him this question, "Do you believe in Hell?" The Chaplain was a modernist and an unbeliever, and he said, "Men, certainly not." The men looked at him and said, "Sir, we would like you to resign as Chaplain of this troopship. If there is no Hell we do not require your services, but if there is a Hell we are not going to be deceived by the like of you."

Those sailors were speaking solemn truth. If there is no Hell, then there is no need for you to come to the House of God, there is no need for you to read the Bible, there is no need for you to be concerned about your soul's Eternity. But if there is a Hell then you need to ask yourself one solemn question, "Is that where I am going to be forever? How can I escape from its worm which never dieth, and its fire which is never quenched?"

#### Five Lies About Hell

In Luke's Gospel chapter sixteen, I want you to notice how in a few short sentences the Lord Jesus Christ demolished the devil's lies and man's falsehoods concerning Hell.

**(1) The first great lie and the first great falsehood that the devil propagates and man accepts is this, that Hell is what you make of life down here.** Hell is in this life. The Lord Jesus demolished that lie, for He said, (and look carefully at it,) "The rich man" verse 22, "also died and was buried, and in Hell he lifted up his eyes..." So Hell is not what you make in this life. It is the after-life.

**(2) The second lie of the devil and the second falsehood that men embrace is, "Hell is annihilation. When you die that is the finish."**

I remember hearing the late Lord Brookeborough interviewed about his beliefs, and he said, "When I die that is the end." What a fool he was! When he died he unlearned that lie very speedily in Eternity. God says in His Book that After death in Hell the rich man lifted up his eyes, being in torments. Hell is not annihilation.

**(3) The third lie of the devil and the third falsehood men embrace is, "Hell is soul-sleep in absolute unconsciousness."**

The Lord Jesus Christ demolished that lie as well, for He shewed the consciousness of the rich man in Hell. He said he was in torments. He was totally and absolutely conscious.

**(4) The fourth lie of the devil and the fifth falsehood believed by men is, "Hell is a purgatory that fits the soul for Heaven."**

The Lord Jesus demolished that lie. He said that between Heaven and Hell there is a great gulf fixed, and no one ever passed from Hell to Heaven.

The unbridgeable gulf between Heaven and Hell! So Hell is not a purgatory from which sin is cleansed from the soul, and the soul is prepared for Heaven.

**(5) The fifth lie of the devil and the fifth falsehood believed by man is, "Hell is a place where departed souls can communicate with their loved ones on earth."**

In the rising tide of demonism and witchcraft today we are told by so-called spiritualists, who are not spiritual at all but are spiritists, that the dead can communicate with the living. If this rich man could have communicated with his living brethren then he would not have asked Abraham to send Lazarus to talk to them.

The Lord demolished those five colossal lies propagated by the devil and accepted by men, and those five lies form the basis of all anti-Hell theology and the beliefs of all those who oppose the plain teaching of the Bible about the doctrine of Hell.

#### There's No Place Like Hell... For There Is No Darkness Like the Darkness of Hell

Firstly, there is no place like Hell, for there is no darkness like the darkness of Hell. Hear it, there is no place like Hell, for there is no darkness like the darkness of Hell. The Lord Jesus Christ issued three solemn warnings about the darkness of Hell.

He spoke, first of all, in Matthew 8:12 and said, "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." Notice the words, "outer darkness".

In Matthew 22:13 he said, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away and cast him into outer darkness." In Matthew 25:30 He said, "Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness."



It is darkness which is completely beyond any ray of light. Outer darkness! It is outside all light, all natural light, all man-made light, all spiritual light, all God-given light, all the light of the gospel, all the light of hope, all the light of peace and all the light of pardon. It is outer darkness. It is outside all light.

In Jude 13 we read of the "blackness of darkness forever". That is where the ungodly go. Not only into outer darkness but into the blackness of darkness forever.

As I sat in my study I thought of the darkness into which my readers would most certainly go if they died outside Jesus Christ. I said to myself, "Did the shadow of that darkness ever fall upon this world? Did ever the darkness of Hell overshadow this world?"

As the darkness of Hell is the result of God's inflexible and God's unchangeable and God's Holy judgment, I thought upon judgment days.

If you go back to a time of judgments in the Book of Exodus you will remember that one of the judgments in Egypt was **darkness**. For three days, God decided to allow the darkness of Hell to rest upon Egypt. In Exodus 10:20 we read of that darkness "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days, but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." **It was a darkness that could be felt.** It was such a blanket of intense outer black darkness that they could see absolutely nothing. All they could do was lie in terror upon their beds for nothing could be seen. God permitted the darkness of Hell for three days to settle upon Egypt.

Then I thought of that place called Calvary. I thought of that day when God judged His Well Beloved Son. Luke records it in his Gospel Lk 23:44, "And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a **darkness** over all the earth until the ninth hour." The darkness of Hell into which Jesus went at Calvary, was so intense and widespread that it spread over all the world. There was not a country, there was not a village, there was not a people not overshadowed in that terrible darkness. It was a warning to the world and it was a warning to sinners that there is no darkness like the darkness of Hell, for there's no place like Hell.

Your unsaved soul will be cut off from light forever, never again to see anything. You will be in a blind darkness, wrapped up in the impenetrable folds of God's doom and damnation forever. There is no darkness like the darkness of Hell.

### **There Is No Place Like Hell... For There Is No Loneliness Like the Loneliness of Hell**

Secondly, there is no place like Hell for there is no loneliness like the loneliness of Hell. The lost soul, Christ says, will be bound hand and foot, and then cast into the outer darkness, the blackness of darkness in his lonely eternal prison cell forever.

**Hell is a place of eternal isolation.**

**Hell is a place of everlasting separation.**

**Hell is a place of never ending unrelieved and unrelievable loneliness.**

The fool laughs and says, "Oh, I will have plenty of good company in Hell. All my sinful companions will be there. All the people I have lived in sin with and enjoyed the pleasures of earth with, preacher, will all be there. So I will have plenty of company in Hell." Friend, Hell does not want you, and Hell will not welcome you. There will be no reception committee of your old companions at Hell's gates to welcome you when you arrive in the place of the damned. Every damned soul is so tormented in the flames of Hell and in the agony of the torments of eternal doom, that he or she cannot spare a moment to think of others in Hell, to speak to others in Hell, or to communicate with others in Hell. Like in the darkness of Egypt the lost cannot see one solitary thing. Every cell in Hell is built for eternal solitary confinement. Just think about that. The bars on the cell of Hell shut out all prisoners and the prisoner does his eternal sentence alone, alone, alone! The only thought for others which enters the mind, the memory and the heart of the damned is a cry for their loved one still on earth. Who did that damned rich man cry for? He cried for his brothers at home. He cried for his family. He cried for his relations that they would not come to this place of torment. He had not one word to speak of any who were already in Hell, for Hell is a place of loneliness.

We do not like to be alone. There are some things that cheer our hearts. There is nothing so happy as to take a little one upon your knees and hear the childish prattle and the childish talk. There are no children in Hell for you to talk to, for Hell is a place of loneliness. The only children in Hell are the children of the devil and the children of everlasting wrath. When we want to tell someone we are thinking about them to cheer them in their loneliness, we send them flowers. Flowers are beautiful things. We live in a day of imitation. Men try to make flowers. Did you ever put a man-made rose beside the real thing? You take an imitation rose, anoint it with the scent or perfume of the rose and then take the real thing and smell the scent of that beautiful rose, and you will exclaim, How poor and hopeless the imitation is! The only flowers in Hell are the ashes of lost hope, lost joy and lost opportunities of Gospel pardon. The only flowers you will have in Hell, will be such ashes. There is loneliness in Hell. There is nothing relieves loneliness like music. We all have our choices in music. To hear someone sing or to hear some particular instrument chases away loneliness and

brings back thoughts of society and friends, and pleasantly stirs the memory. There is no music in Hell. The only thing you will hear in Hell will be the signs and the groans of damned souls (**ED: I DO NOT KNOW OF A REFERENCE THAT SUPPORTS THIS STATEMENT**). There is loneliness in Hell.

I like the mountains. I like the valleys. I like the rivers. I like the lakes and the seas and the oceans. The only mountains in Hell are mountains of everlasting flames. The only valleys in Hell are the troughs of the [brimstone fire](#). The only lake is Hell itself for Hell is a lake of fire. The only sea in Hell is the sea of the everlasting burning. In Hell there is not one drop of water. It is a place of intense loneliness, and all they have to drink is the wine of God's wrath.

To that Loneliness unconverted one, you are most certainly headed. "Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men," II Cor. 5:11.

### **There Is No Place Like Hell... For There Is No Restlessness Like the Restlessness of Hell**

Thirdly, there is no place like Hell, for there is no restlessness like the restlessness of Hell. Hell is a place of darkness, yes, of loneliness, yes, and of restlessness.

Revelation 14:10-11 is a solemn word. It is the Word of the Living God. We read there "The same 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. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night."

Young people do not appreciate what a wonderful thing it is to rest. Young people never want to go to bed, and then when they go to bed they never want to get up. They do not appreciate rest. But when you are busy, especially in the service of God, you thank God for the blessing of rest.

Jesus said to His hard worked disciples, "Come ye apart and rest awhile." "He giveth His beloved sleep."

Oh, how sweet is the rest of God! Heaven is described in the words, "There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God."

The great Puritan Richard Baxter wrote about this and called it "[The Saints' Everlasting Rest](#)."

**There is no rest in Hell.** You know why there is no rest in Hell?

### **Because Hell is the place of Separation from God, and the only place man can find rest is in God.**

As David Brainerd rode the bridle trails of the forest seeking the Indians to whom God had called him to preach the Gospel, he used to cry as he rode his horse, "There is no rest but in God." What a message! Thank God there is rest in Him. Hell is the place of separation from God, and there cannot be any rest. The only Person that can give you rest is Christ. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." If you have not got rest in Christ, some day you will witness and experience the restlessness of Hell.

**There is no rest in Hell because of the Sin in Hell, and sin breeds restlessness** Where sin is there is no peace. Where sin is there is no rest. Where sin is there cannot be any stillness. There cannot be any rest where sin is. Isaiah verses 20 and 21, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, There is no peace," saith my God, "to the wicked." Over Hell God has said, There is no peace to the wicked.

There is no rest in Hell because of the Shame of Hell. In Revelation chapter 21 and verse 8 we read of the Shame of Hell. Hell is a shameful place, "The fearful, the unbelieving the abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with [fire and brimstone](#), which is the second death."

**There is no rest in Hell because of the Sufferings of Hell.** You say to me, "Do you believe in literal fire in Hell?" Yes, I do! "Why do you believe that?" Because that is exactly what Jesus Christ taught, and He is the only One that knew and could tell us. In Matthew 13:3-23, He told the story of the tares of the field and He gave the interpretation thereof.

He interpreted who the sower was and What the field was, "the field is the world".

What the good seed were, "the children of the kingdom".

Who the tares were, "the children of the wicked one."

Who the enemy was, "the enemy was the devil."

When the harvest was, "it is the end of the world."

Who the reapers were, "they were the angels."

Then He said, "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world."

My friend, if that fire was not fire, Jesus was duty bound to have finished the interpretation and told us what it was. But there is fire in Hell, and forever, lost soul, you will be tormented in that flame. You ask, "How could there be darkness in Hell if there is a flame of fire?" The hottest flame known to man, scientifically, is a flame that is dark. How dark is that flame that will scourge lost souls and take away their rest in Hell.

### **There Is No Place Like Hell... For There Is No Endlessness Like the Endlessness of Hell**

We sing the hymn concerning grace,

"When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise,  
Than when we first begun!"

**What is true of Heaven is true of Hell. When you have been in Hell ten trillion years in the darkness, the torments will have just begun. There is endlessness in Hell. It never ends.**

If we could say to the damned, "After ten million, trillion years these doors will open, this burning and this darkness will give place to light, this loneliness to society, this endlessness will have its end," then hope would spring eternal even in the breast of the damned. But there is no such thing as this torment having an end.

Every century there is always controversy about Hell. In the last century the controversy was in Scotland about the doctrine of Hell. At that time there was a great scholar and a great Evangelical minister called Dr James Morison. He said, "I'm going to find out, I'm going to find out if there is any hope for a soul who goes to Hell." He made a thorough study from Matthew to Revelation, and one day he got up and closed his Greek Testament, and said, "There is no hope, for Hell has no ending."

**The saddest road to Hell is to pass by the Word of God.** The saddest road to Hell is to close your ears to the warning of the blessed Holy Spirit, your eyes to the Son of God, and pass from the Gospel message to the blackness of darkness forever. It will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than it will be for a man or a woman who reads this Gospel tract and said, "NO" to Jesus Christ. These are my final words to you, and I say to you, as we gaze out into the darkness of Hell, into the loneliness of Hell, into the restlessness of Hell, and into the endlessness of Hell, "Make haste to Calvary, wash in the Saviour's Blood, come this night to the Saviour and in God's Name be in time."