

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

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LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE HADEAN REALM

On one occasion Jesus gave His audience a glimpse into Hades (sometimes translated as “hell”) – the place where departed spirits reside while awaiting the judgment (**Ax. 2:27, 31; 2 Tim. 4:8**). We have Jesus’ words recorded in **Lk. 16:19-31**. In this article we shall take note of said scripture and then see what lessons we can learn from it. The text reads as follows:

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

There are many lessons to be learned. For instance:

- Man does not cease to exist at the point of physical death. The rich man could see, feel, speak, and remember (**vs. 23-25, 28**). Lazarus was aware in that he was comforted (**vs. 25**). Those who believe that man does not exist beyond this life are at odds with Jesus (**cf. Isa. 14:4-17**).
- Man’s fate is sealed at the point of death. Jesus said a gulf is fixed between those who are comforted and those who are tormented and that no one may cross that gulf and change their location (**vs. 26**). Contrary to what some teach, there is no second chance for those who died in rebellion to the Lord (**cf. Heb. 9:27**).
- Not everyone is going to be saved. The rich man was clearly lost (**vs. 23**). Some teach that all men will be saved. This false doctrine is known as Universalism. Jesus’ words, here in **Lk. 16:19-31**, destroy such an idea (**cf. Mt. 7:13-14, 21-23**).
- Some teach that God unconditionally predestines people to either heaven or hell. That is to say, no matter what some do, they will be lost and no matter what others do, they will be saved – individuals are like puppets, having no say in the matter. This doctrine is false. Jesus taught that man could be persuaded; i.e. man has a choice (**vs. 31; cf. Dt. 30:19; Josh. 24:15**).
- God communicates His saving message through the scriptures. The rich man requested that miracles be preformed for his family still in the flesh so as to get their attention and hasten repentance (**vs. 27-28, 30**). The reply he received was, in essence, “*Let them study the scriptures if they want to be saved*” (**vs. 29, 31; cf. Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17**). The time for direct revelation has long passed (**1 Cor. 13:8-10; Heb. 1:1-2**).
- The time for evangelism is now. It was only once the rich man died and landed in the flames that he became concerned about where his brothers would wind up after they died (**vs. 27-28**). I wonder how many others have, like the rich man, only become soul conscious after death? Quite a few I imagine.
- We must not be apathetic to the needs of the worthy poor. The rich man was content to let Lazarus make meals from the crumbs that fell from his table (**vs. 21**). The rich man never invited Lazarus to eat at his table. The rich man was willing to sit back and watch a worthy man go without daily necessities, a contributing factor to why he landed in a place of torment (**cf. 1 Jn. 3:17; Mt. 25:31-46; Gal. 6:10**).
- Eternal punishment is no joking matter. There is nothing funny about **vs. 23-26**. Moreover, the rich man was not yet in hell. Folks, God’s punishment of the wicked once they leave the flesh is severe indeed. Be sure you’re ready to die (**Rom. 2:5-10**).