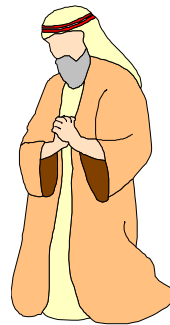


THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS



The parable, or allegory, of the Rich Man and Lazarus is found in Luke 16:19-31. Verse 19 reads: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." The rich man of this parable represents the nation of Israel, who were the chosen people of God, which was represented by the clothing of purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously, or abundantly, every day. Israel had all the oracles of God; and when this was written, even Jesus, the very Son of God, was among them feeding them the spiritual bread of God every day. Let Paul explain it in Romans 9:1-5: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: WHO ARE ISRAELITES; TO WHOM PERTAINETH THE ADOPTION, AND THE GLORY, AND THE COVENANTS, AND THE GIVING OF THE LAW, AND THE SERVICE OF GOD, AND THE PROMISES; WHOSE ARE THE FATHERS, AND OF WHOM AS CONCERNING THE FLESH

CHRIST CAME, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

We shall now read verses 20-21 of Luke 16: "And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his (the rich man's) gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." The beggar of the parable represents the Gentile peoples. They desired to have the spiritual food of the rich man, or Israel, and like dogs were even glad to get a crumb that fell from the table. We shall now go to certain texts to prove these statements.

Let us read first Ephesians 2:11-12: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; THAT AT THAT TIME YE WERE WITHOUT CHRIST, BEING ALIENS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH (NATION) OF ISRAEL, AND STRANGERS FROM THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE, HAVING NO HOPE, AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD."

To show that the Gentiles tried to get spiritual relief by worshipping idols, let us turn to Acts 17:22-23:

"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ingnorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

Because Gentiles were not of Israel, were not circumcised, ate unclean things, worshipped idols, etc., they were counted as dogs by Israel. Let us read a text that emphasizes this. Mark 7:25-28: "For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." The Syrophenician woman was not going to be denied, and if you read the next two verses, you will see that the woman's daughter was made whole. Christ did not use the expression "dogs" because He himself felt that

Gentiles were dogs, but this was the feeling of the Jewish nation. So beyond any shadow of a doubt, the Bible proves that the rich man of this parable is the nation of Israel; the beggar, Lazarus, is the people of the Gentile nation.

Continuing on now with Luke 16:22 we read: "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." Let us take the events in their order. The beggar died. Take note, however, that he was not buried; he was carried into Abraham's bosom. Up to the death of Christ, no Gentile had the right to call himself part of the seed of Abraham. The Israelite nation was the seed of Abraham by the fleshly line. However, after Christ came and was crucified, both Jew and Gentile, by accepting Christ, became the spiritual seed of Abraham. Here, in verse 22, where it is mentioned that both the rich man and Lazarus died, it means that a change came to the two. Lazarus, or the people of the Gentile nations, could become a part of the seed of Abraham and in this sense be taken into his bosom. Also take note that nothing is said about Lazarus' being carried by the angels to heaven, but rather into Abraham's

bosom. Nowhere in the Bible is heaven ever called Abraham's bosom. Furthermore, if this is a reality, Abraham must have a very large bosom to be able to hold a full-grown man. Of course, it is not an actual event that happened, as we will continue to prove as we go on with the parable. Turn in your Bible to Galatians 3:7-9, 13-14, 16, 26-29: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on

Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Dear reader, it takes a death to become Abraham's seed or to become a part of his spiritual bosom. That death is performed at baptism when we go down into the water and come up out of the water. Let us read about this by turning to Romans 6:1-8: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if

we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." Lazarus had to die before he could become a part of Abraham's bosom. Before we can be called the seed of Abraham, we must also die. We must die to sin and be baptized to bury the old man of sin. Christ died and rose again that we all might become the spiritual seed of Abraham.

Turn to Luke 16:22-23: "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; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

Previously we described how Lazarus, who represents the Gentiles, became a part of Abraham's bosom. We shall now dwell on the rich man. The above text says he died and went to hell, or at least he was in hell. Here is where so many go astray. They take this hell to mean the real hell fire that many teach is eternal. However, this hell in which the rich man found himself was a time of persecution and torment for the nation of Israel.

In A.D. 70, Israel was scattered into all nations because of the Roman hordes. The Bible had predicted this scattering millenniums before it hap-

pened. Let us read the prophecy concerning the conditions that existed during the Roman siege and the torment that Israel would be in after that. We read this in Deuteronomy 28:45-67. The reason I am quoting this verbatim is that no one could picture it more graphically. "Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shall thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron (Roman power) upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to

the young: (This was not the Babylonian invasion because Nebuchadnezzar did the opposite of this prophecy. He showed favor to the young men of Israel, of whom Daniel was one. This is a definite prophecy of Rome.) And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee (this Titus did) in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat of the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eyes shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because he hath nothing left

him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter. And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates. If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou was afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed. And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye

were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God. And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."

We have outlined to you the prophecy of the siege of Titus and its aftermath. The Israelites were scattered into every nation under heaven.

They were off their land for nearly two thousand years. They had no rest while they were off their land, and those who are still off do not have rest yet. Their lives hang in doubt day by day. Do not think that anti-Semitism is dead even here in the U.S.A. If you wish to read the fulfillment of the outstanding prophecy we have quoted, go to any good library and do research on the Roman siege of Palestine in A.D. 70.

Turn now to Jeremiah 30:4-10: "And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's (Israel's) trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid."

It should be plain enough that the Israelites have been in their time of trouble since they were scattered into all nations during the Roman invasion of A.D. 70. Israel is returning to their own land, and they will not have peace until God raises up their king unto them, David, or the Son of David, which is Jesus Christ the Lord; and He shall sit and rule upon the throne, or over the kingdom of His father David. But not only will Christ reign over Israel but over all the nations of the world. Many people think that the church must go through the time of Jacob's trouble, which they believe will come upon the church just before the coming of the Lord. But we have shown that Jacob's trouble, or the time that the rich man is in torment, is upon Israel and has been since A.D. 70.

We outlined from Scripture the hell into which the Rich Man (Israel) was cast and his trials and tribulations. We shall now pick up the story

as found in Luke 16:23: "And in hell (torment) he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Here was a complete change. No longer was Israel counted as the children of Abraham because they had rejected Christ, and now God had rejected them as His spiritual seed. The Gentiles, or Lazarus, now had become the children of Abraham through Jesus Christ. Israel was far off from God, and therefore Abraham was far off from Israel.

Turning now to verse 24 we read: "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." You can see how Jesus took the popular heathen belief of hell to illustrate a truth. The Rich Man, Israel, was tormented in the flames of his persecution. He asked Abraham to send Lazarus, or converted Christianity, to him with water, or the living water, which represented Christ. This could not be the hell and heaven that most people talk about. If this were so, hell and heaven are not far from each other. Those in heaven can visit those in hell. No, this is not what Christ is saying at all. This is spiri-

tuallly lost Israel crying out for the salvation they have lost, which God has now granted to the Gentiles. This condition will exist for Israel until the Messiah comes again.

Let us prove that Jesus is the living water by reading John 4:9-15: "Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither

come hither to draw."

It should be easy to see that the water the Rich Man wanted was the spiritual water. However, it was too late. Let us listen to Abraham's answer in Luke 16:25-26: "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. 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." How much clearer could it be? Salvation had been taken from the Jew and given to the Gentile. Between the two, Israel and the Gentiles, a gulf had been established so that neither could pass to the other side. Let us now answer the question, Who or what is the gulf? Let us go to John 5:39-40: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. AND YE WILL NOT COME TO ME, THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE." Remember that these were Christ's words of condemnation upon the Jews.

Paul puts it this way in Romans 9:30-33: "What shall we say then?

That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence (Jesus Christ): and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."

It should be very plain, therefore, that the great gulf is Jesus Christ. It takes faith to believe in Christ, and that faith is not a part of the Jewish spiritual life. A Christian would have to give up his faith in Christ to become a Jew, and a Jew must have faith in Christ to become a Christian. Paul said they had stumbled over that stumblingstone.

How long did Paul say they would be in this condition? Romans 11:25 reads, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part (the spiritual part) is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." This means until

Jesus returns the second time. Will salvation then return to Israel? Let us read verse 26: "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written. (How is it written?) There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer (return of Jesus), and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Israel)."

How does Zechariah describe it in Zechariah 13:1? "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." The great gulf exists until the return of Jesus when the fountain of His cleansing blood will be open again to the house of Israel. If you are a Gentile, that fountain is open to you today. Have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb?

We shall return to Luke 16 and read verses 27-29: "Then he (the rich man) said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he (Lazarus, the Gentiles) may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Jesus was talking to the sects of the Pharisees. Read verses 14 and 15. There were six sects of the Jewish religion in the time of Christ.

Here Jesus shows that not only would this rejection of the Jews come on the Pharisees but upon all the sects of Israel, which He calls five brethren. Those sects, or brothers, were Zealots, Essenes, Nazarites, Herodians, and Sadducees. Also, Christ is showing that no amount of missionary work by converted Gentiles will be able to take the blindness from Israel until God, who placed it upon them, is ready to take it off Himself. He tells them to read Moses and the prophets. The Scriptures testify of Jesus. They will not accept them.

Let us read verses 30-31: "And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." As we pointed out before, it takes a spiritual death on our part to belong to Christ. Here Christ is saying, however, that a Gentile who has had a spiritual birth cannot take salvation to the Jew because this blindness is not self-inflicted. It has been placed there by God. Remember that Jesus literally rose from the dead. Yet if the Israelites will not believe Moses and their own prophets and will not believe the one who literally rose

from the dead among them, do you believe they will believe you because you have accepted Jesus whom they have rejected?

Let us hear Paul's final conclusion of the matter in Acts 28:25-28: "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." So after Israel turned from God, He turned from them and took salvation from them. They will remain in this condition until Jesus comes again. The Deliverer will come out of Sion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob. Let us believe the Bible.

Remember, this is not an illustration to teach that people go to heaven or hell. The word heaven does not

appear in the parable or story. Man has invented that. It is an allegory to teach the turning of God from the salvation of Israel to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ our Lord.

