

Parables of the Kingdom

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

The story of Lazarus and the rich man is not a lesson about the righteous going to heaven and bad people going to hell. Rather, these verses are a parable about the kingdom of God. It was addressed to the Pharisees of Jesus' time and gives an explanation of Christ's prophecy:

"Therefore say I unto you: The kingdom of God shall be taken from you [the Jews], and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." MATT 21:43

In order to understand the story, let us recapitulate the following fact: after the reign of Solomon, God's people were split into two kingdoms (1.KIN 12). Since then, God has dealt with two different houses: *"The two families which the LORD hath chosen..."* (JER 33:24). Both families, Ephraim-Israel and Judah, had their own distinct destiny. Many parables in the Old and New Testament refer to God's people being two: two sticks (EZEK 37), two pots (JER 18&19), two women (JER 3:10-11) and two sons (LK 15). The key to a proper understanding of the parable in Luke 16:19-31 is to identify the rich man as Judah (the Jews) and poor Lazarus as Ephraim-Israel (the Lost Tribes). All the details in this story support this view and it seems best to go through the parable verse by verse.

¹⁹ *There was a certain rich man*, (The House of Judah which had retained the scriptures, the temple and the Hebrew traditions) *which was clothed in purple* (stands for the royal line of Judah – MK 15:17) *and fine linen*, (symbol of the priests and Levites who were part of the House of Judah – EX 28:38-39) *and fared sumptuously every day*: (After the division the Jews were still well set up, self-contained, enjoyed God's blessings and the ministry of the temple in Jerusalem).

²⁰ *And there was a certain beggar* (Ephraim-Israel, having lost land, nationality, identity and a place to worship God) *named Lazarus*, (means, according to Young's Concordance, "without help" – HOS 1:6) *which was laid at his gate, full of sores*, (The House of Israel was taken captive and then dispersed among ungodly nations, branded with "sores" of idolatry).

²¹ *And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table*: (God-fearing Israelites of the lost tribes who longed for spiritual food had to go to Jerusalem looking for the "crumbs" of the Jews) *moreover the dogs came and licked his sores*. (The "dogs" symbolise Gentile nations – MATT 15:26 – which treated the Israelites more kindly than the Jews did).

²² *And it came to pass, that the beggar died*, (The House of Israel had been judged first and died nationally with Assyrian deportations from 721 B.C. onwards) *and was carried by the angels* (miraculously, with "wings of a great eagle" – REV 12:14) *into Abraham's bosom*: (Into the fulfilment of the Divine promises for Abraham's seed to become a "great and mighty nation" – GEN 18:18. HEB 11:13 shows that Abraham's "bosom" symbolises those covenant-promises) *the rich man also died, and was buried*; (The Jews not only lost their nationality but were also "buried" when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., a "broken potter's vessel" that "cannot be made whole again" – JER 19:11).

23 *And in hell he lift up his eyes*, (The Greek word for hell in this case is "Hades", referring to national and spiritual "death": the Southern kingdom of the Jews was to die, according to Christ's prophecies in MATT 23:34-39 and LK 21:20-23) *being in torments*, (Since rejecting Christ the Jews were cursed and in "torments" – MATT 27:25) *and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom*. (The Jews realised that the promises of the Abrahamic covenant were worked out in another nation – MATT 21:43).

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*; (Lazarus – representing Ephraim-Israel – is in the position to ease the desolate situation of the Jews) *for I am tormented in this flame*. (The "flame" of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. and further persecutions of the Jews ever since).

25 *But Abraham said, Son*, (Judah, as one of the tribes of Israel, was also Abraham's "Son") *remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things*, ("I will have mercy upon the house of Judah" – HOS 1:7) *and likewise Lazarus evil things*: ("I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel" – HOS 1:6) *but now he is comforted*, ("Comfort ye my people" in "the isles" – ISA 40:1) *and thou art tormented*. ("His blood be on us and on our children..." – MATT 27:25).

26 *And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed*: ("that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel" – ZECH 11:14: Ephraim-Israel willingly accepted the New Covenant whereas the Jews rejected Jesus Christ) *so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence*. (The rejection of Christ through the Jews and the conversion of Ephraim-Israel to Christianity form a great, unbridgeable "gulf").

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*; (Judah was the son of Leah, he had 5 brothers: GEN 35:23) *that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment*. (Any nation rejecting Jesus Christ will be tormented and judged – MATT 25:31-46).

29 *Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them*. (This is especially true for the Jews, who have the Law of Moses but are spiritually deaf: "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word" – JN 8:43).

30 *And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent*. (Lazarus representing Ephraim-Israel, arose to "national life" again, likewise was Christ Himself resurrected).

31 *And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead*. (The Jews did not and do not properly understand the Old Testament and even the resurrection of Jesus Christ did not cause the Jews to turn to God).

All the details in this parable prove that the rich man is Judah (the Pharisees instantly knew who Jesus was referring to when they heard about wealth, linen and purple and the 5 brothers) and that Lazarus stands for the ten tribes which split away (full of sores and helped by the "dogs", after their death being exalted into "Abraham's bosom"). Nowadays these verses are spiritualised because preachers are not aware of the national and historical identity of God's kingdom.

To this very day, the lost tribes of Ephraim-Israel live in "Abraham's bosom", the fulfilled promises of national prosperity, world-dominion and of being a multitude of nations. The British people were the first to accept Christianity as a nation and – with a delay of 2520 years (seven "times" of punishment, LEV 26:18) – developed into a Commonwealth of Nations. As Jesus had prophesied – the kingdom of God was transferred to Ephraim-Israel. None of those Abrahamic promises have ever been fulfilled in the Jews, who lost the kingdom and lived in torment well into this century. They are separated from God's blessings due to their vehement rejection of Jesus Christ. In plain words, the parable shows what Jesus said elsewhere, that *"the kingdom of God shall be taken from you [the Jews], and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof..."* (MATT 21:43). The people of Jesus' time knew who the parables pointed to, for:

"...when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."

MATT 21:45

Jesus chose to teach in parables, in fact *"without a parable spake he not unto them..."* (MK 4:34). Christians need to gain understanding for all parables and should strive to belong to the first group of people Christ addresses in Luke 8:10:

"And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."

Source unknown

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