



The Rich Man and Lazarus, the Beggar.

The story is of a definite separation after death (Luke 16:19-31) and is a lot like the description Jesus gave of the “Judgement Day at the end of the age.” (See also Matthew.25: 31-46)

There are two meanings to this interesting story, one for then, and one for now.

Jesus told this story; and among His listeners were the Pharisees who were a group of Jews, a club of sorts, who claimed to have the best knowledge of how the ‘Law of Moses’, which includes “The Ten Commandments”, should be known and understood. They felt ‘exclusive’ and claimed to be superior to all others.

The story: ‘There was a certain rich man who lived in a fine house with fine clothes and lots of money. Laughter and mirth filled his house. A poor beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate. He was covered in sores and very sick. He longed to eat the scraps of food that fell from the rich man’s table. The dogs came and licked his open sores.’ The beggar and the rich man died about the same time and Jesus tells of them and where they were.

The beggar was with Abraham in the place of ‘The righteous dead’ - the rich man was in Hades, the place of ‘The unrighteous dead’. The rich man is suffering badly from thirst & he can see Lazarus with Abraham in the far distance – ‘having a good time’ so to speak, with no suffering.

The formerly rich man calls out: “Father Abraham” he shouted loudly. “Have some pity! Send Lazarus over here if only to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in these flames.”(v.24). *What a picture! Abraham to “tell Lazarus” ... who last week was a poor, sick beggar. He could not even say: ‘Please Lazarus, come and give me a little water.’*

Abraham told him that: “In your lifetime you had everything you wanted and Lazarus had nothing and it is impossible for Lazarus to ‘come over to you’, or for you to ‘come over to us’, because a huge chasm separates us.”

Then the now-not-so-rich-man called out: “Then please send him to my house because I have five brothers...and I don’t want them to come to this awful place.” *In his mind Lazarus was still a poor man, there to do his bidding!* Abraham said: “They have the Scriptures to warn them again and again...your brothers can read them anytime they want to.”

Formally rich man: “No Father Abraham - they won’t read them - but if someone comes back from the dead, then they will and turn from their sins.” Abraham said: “If they won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, then they won’t listen even if someone comes back from the dead.” (End of story)

Someone did later come back from the dead - Jesus Christ, God’s Son, who had prophesied that He would ‘Come back from the dead’ and He did. Many still did not/would not, believe in Him. It is still the same now even with now 2,000,000,000 Christian believers: Many people have a Bible - but not all people do – read these stories in the 4 Gospels (Gospel is the Good News) of Jesus and His teachings, and what He did and said. They are The Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.