

## Between Death and the Resurrection

### Luke 16:19-31

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. 20 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 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. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

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.' 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. 26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

27 "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' 29 Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 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.'" NKJV

What happens to us when we die? Do we just stop like an old clock that has finally run down? Are like animals, worms and bugs?

The first thing we need to admit is that these questions cannot be answered by science. Since science deals only with the observable it cannot transcend that gulf fixed at the end of life. There are not tests that they can run. There are no experiments that will yield the answer. Science can tell us what happens when the body dies but beyond that they have no answers. They can do no better than the philosophers who can only guess at what the grave holds for its victims.

Now that does not mean that there are not authorities out there who claim to have the answers to those questions. Ever since the beginning there have been those who claimed to be able to communicate with the dead, to see them and describe where they are and what they are doing. All the way from teen-agers holding séances to the so called professional who helps the police solve various missing persons cases or cold case files of those who have been murdered.

Some of these are quite convincing. And some are even authentic in helping to find victims of crimes. I would never deny that. But the question is how do they accomplish these seeming impossible feats of investigative prowess?

I have always been intrigued by the life and Houdini. He was the master of deception, being able to do what seemed impossible. After the death of his mother he sought out mediums to communicate with her. He however found them to be frauds. Let me quote from Wikipedia. "In the 1920s, after the death of his beloved mother, Cecilia, he turned his energies toward debunking self-proclaimed psychics and mediums, a pursuit that would inspire and be followed by later-day conjurers Milbourne Christopher, James Randi, Martin Gardner, P.C. Sorcar, Criss Angel, and Penn and Teller. Houdini's magical training allowed him to expose frauds who had successfully fooled many scientists and academics. He was a member of a Scientific American committee, which offered a cash prize to any medium who could successfully demonstrate supernatural abilities. Thanks to the contributions and skepticism of Houdini and three others (there were five in the committee), the prize was never collected. As his fame as a "ghostbuster" grew, Houdini took to attending séances in disguise, accompanied by a reporter and police officer."

Also Andrew Carnegie, for years, offered a \$1,000,000 reward for anyone who could prove there was life after death that was never collected. Now I think that if it could be done, you could do it for that amount, especially when you realize that he died in 1919. He had a few bucks, with a net worth of 298 billion adjusted to 2007 dollars. But the point is that no one ever collected the money because there is no proof that we have access to by experience.

But still it is a popular subject. A search on Google for "life after death" will produce 2,810,000 hits.

Well then where shall we find the truth on this matter. It is abundant in the Bible. You see, God made us and He knows what lies beyond the grave. One such passage is this one we are looking at this morning. And remember what God says on this nullifies any conflicting statements by others.

- I. God created us not only physical beings but spiritual beings.
  - A. The physical is pretty easy to understand, we deal with it every day.
    1. We can study it, operate on it, find out the most intricate workings of the body.
    2. We soon discover its abilities and its limits.
    3. We have tremendous ability to keep it alive far beyond what God intended.
  - B. The spiritual is quite another thing.
    1. Even the most uneducated people ever found understand the sense of a spiritual part that live beyond this life.

- a. Look at the pharaohs with their elaborate tombs and attendants that were killed with them to go into the next world.
  - b. The North American Indian believed that they went to another hunting ground.
  - c. The reason for this is found in Eccl 3:11 Also He has put eternity in their hearts NKJV
  - d. They have never studied a people anywhere who believed that when they died that they were dead and ceased to exist.
  - e. God has built that into each of us. We have a longing for something beyond this life, something that will bring sense to this tragedy we live out here.
2. But yet we find that these native people have only a corrupted view of life after death.
- a. There seems to be some correct information but there are conflicting stories and ideas.
  - b. That is the reason we cannot put stock in those who do séances or mediums or those who claim to have knowledge
    - 1) Their knowledge is based on these ancient but corrupted accounts of the dead and the after life.
    - 2) That is why in the Old Testament those who performed such acts were to be put to death, which I am not advocating. We don't burn witches any longer, but neither should we give them a hearing, to consider them an authority.

C. What does the Bible say about our Spiritual Nature?

- 1. As we read in our responsive reading, there are a number of passages that clearly tell us that man is not just physical but has an immaterial element we call the soul or spirit.
  - a. There is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. Job 32:8
  - b. The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: Zechariah 12:1

- c. But his flesh will be in pain over it, And his soul will mourn over it. Job 14:22
  - d. For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. I Corinthians 6:20
  - e. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. I Corinthians 2:11
  - f. "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Matthew 10:28
  - g. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. I Thessalonians 5:23
  - h. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12
  - i. 1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
  - j. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 2 Cor 5:1-6
2. So Jesus tells us the same thing in the text this morning.
- a. Lazarus dies and is carried by the angels to be with Abraham.
  - b. It is not his body that is carried but his spirit that has left the body after death.
  - c. The rich man dies and is buried, that is his body.

- d. But his soul is in Hades, that place of the spirits of men after death.
- e. We notice that life after death can experience good things as well as pain.
- f. Each person here has a soul, a spirit that will live on after the body is destroyed.
- g. Each person will go to one of only two places when they die.
- h. Jesus came to make us acceptable to God to save us from sin to take us to heaven.
- i. Jesus said all the instructions are found in His Book the Bible.

Where will you spend eternity? God has provided a way, what is your response.