

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #213

Jesus' Ministry in Perea Jesus' Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus Luke 16.19-31

19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 A beggar was laid at his gate named Lazarus, who was covered with sores 21 and longing to eat the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and wet my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received many good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, a great chasm has been placed between us, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

27 "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

29 "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; they should listen to them.'

30 "'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

31 "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded-- even if someone rises from the dead.'"

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	Somewhere in Perea
Timeline	January or February (Months 36 & 37)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	A. Jesus' Ministers Throughout Perea
Title	12. Jesus' Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus

COMMENT:

Jesus told this story of the rich man and Lazarus to illustrate several things he had been telling the Pharisees throughout his ministry. The Lord repeatedly spoke of the folly of stockpiling riches on earth, but ignoring one's eternal relationship with God. Securing one's eternal destiny in the kingdom of God is the most important treasure a person can amass on earth. Failure to do so is to waste one's eternal life, like the rich man.

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Jesus had also taught that man people who are enjoy first class privileges on earth will place themselves in the most horrendous circumstances in eternity, and vice versa. The rich man and lazarus illustrated this truth.

The story also showed the importance of listening to the message of the Moses (the Law) and the Prophets, who prepared the way, and predicted the life and ministry of Jesus as the Messiah.

Even though Jesus would become the "sign of Jonah" by rising from the dead, those who did not listen to the Scriptures that prophesied about him would also not believe the good news of his resurrection. Jesus was referring specifically to the Pharisees in this, but the truth of this declaration applies to all people as well. Saving faith in Jesus is based upon the truthful testimony of the Scriptures--it is impossible to believe in Jesus apart from the Scripture, and vice versa.

While Jesus did not intend for this story to explain the details of life in heaven and hell, it does make clear that eternal life in either heaven or hades--a place of separation from God--is a reality. The chasm between the thoughts of sinful people and God illustrates the gap between those who will live in fellowship with him eternally in the Kingdom, and those who spend their eternal existence separated from God. The chasm of separation is real, and therefore serious indeed.

APPLICATION:

What we do with our life on earth has eternal consequences. This was Jesus' consistent message throughout his ministry. It is likewise the testimony of the prophets in the Old Testament, and the apostles in the New Testament.

Believing in Jesus and adjusting our life to him on this earth is the only way to prepare for eternity in heaven with him. He is the sole source of salvation that comes to us from God. This was Jesus' message.

Are you living each day in a way that will insure maximum eternal benefit to you? Following Jesus with all of your heart is the only way to do that.

What will you do today to adjust yourself to him?