

# The Better Way

Volume XXXIX, Issue 32

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## BEYOND DEATH

*Guy N. Woods*

(Text: Luke 16:19-31; *ASV*)

### THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS IN LIFE

**“Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothes in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day.”** No name is assigned him; he is often called *Dives*; but, this is simply the Latin word for a rich man. Perhaps his name was purposely omitted to show how little honor is due those whom men so highly regard because of their riches. God respects no man’s person; whether our names are known in heaven will depend not on whether we are rich or poor, but whether we are faithful.

The **“purple”** with which the rich man was clothed refers to the costly outer robe, being made of silk or wool, and dyed purple. It was worn by kings and thus there was as much pride as luxury in its use. The **“linen”** was the under-garment, made from flax which grew along the banks of the Nile River in Egypt, very soft, and of dazzling whiteness. According to the Historian Pliny it was sold for twice its weight in gold, in ancient times. The rich man lived **“sumptuously,”** (literally, “making merry every day, splendidly”). His days were filled with banqueting and splendor. All of this is penned to show that he had the means to help the needy if he would. The picture so vividly drawn for us here is of a worldly man fully indulging himself in worldly pleasures.

**“And a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores.”** The contrast which this scripture draws between the beggar, and the rich man is great. The former was helpless, destitute, and covered with sores. Because he was unable to walk, Lazarus’ friends brought him daily to the gate of the rich man’s palace where, it was hoped, pity would prompt the rich man and his friends to provide assistance. Lazarus would have been content with the **“crumbs”** (the cast off portions from the table of *Dives*), but even this was denied him. His only companions were dogs, probably animals without owners, which continually roam the streets of eastern cities. **“And at evening let them return, let them howl like a dog, And go round about the city. They shall wander up and down for food, And tarry all night if they be not satisfied”** (Psa. 59:14, 15). Sores, ulcerations, due to poor diet and unsanitary living, covered his body.

### THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS IN DEATH

**“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.”** Lazarus’ death is mentioned first, because it is likely he died first. No mention is made of his burial nor of the disposition of his body. His going attracted little attention; and the grave into which his body was placed would have held little interest for those surviving him. Attention, in the narrative, is given

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### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.  
Worship.....10:00 a.m.  
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.  
(via Zoom Meetings)

#### ELDERS

David P. Brown  
Ken Cohn  
John West

#### DEACONS

Bret Bailey  
J. D. Gunter  
Eric Paluka

#### EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

#### SECRETARY

Sonya West

not to his body, but to his soul. Angels bore it away to **“Abraham’s bosom.”** This is a figurative phrase which the Jews used to denote a place of happiness, enjoyment, and association with the good and great. Abraham was the Father of the Hebrew race. To be a host at his table and to share in the bounties of association with him typified the joys of the blessings of the hereafter. Angels were believed by the Jews, to come for the spirits of the good at death. It is affirmed that such occurred in this instance.

**“And the rich man also died and was buried.”** He **“also died,”** which all men must, at last, do. No angels came for him; he was not borne triumphantly to **“Abraham’s bosom.”** There was, of course, all the pomp and ceremony accorded his passing which the people were accustomed to bestow upon the rich. But here, his worldly pleasures failed him, and all his money could not bring him one moment’s relief from the suffering he experienced.

**“And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”** *Hades* (literally, the unseen), is the realm of departed spirits—the place where the spirit goes when it leaves the body at death. The rich man’s body was in the tomb, his spirit was in Hades. Moreover, he was **“in torments,”** that is, in great pain and suffering. He was, therefore, in that part of Hades where wicked spirits go at death. Lazarus was in that part of Hades, where righteous spirits go at death—variously called, in the Scriptures, paradise or Abraham’s bosom. The rich man saw Abraham (thus establishing recognition after death), and Lazarus in his bosom, and thus in a saved state. The rich man begged for help.

**“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 in anguish in this flame.”** How vastly different the situation now, from what it was on earth. There, the rich man was wholly indifferent to the simplest needs of the poor beggar at his gate; here, he begged from the relief, a drop of water from the finger of Lazarus, would give him. He appealed to Abraham (incidentally, the only instance in the Bible of the prayer to a “saint,” and it failed), to (a) show mercy; to (b) send Lazarus with relief; and this because of the “anguish” (pain) which he was suffering. Brother Elam commented on this:

It does not relieve the anguish of the disobedient to say this is figurative language, because a figure is only used to intensify the fact, and Jesus does not exaggerate this suffering. How terrible, then, must be the fact of which burning in fire and brimstone is but a figure.

**“But Abraham said, Son remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou are in anguish.”** Abraham reminded the rich man of the unvarying rule of compensation. He had received in this life, the things which he regarded as good; Lazarus had been denied the material things in which the rich man found such great pleasure, suffering **“evil things;”** now, their fortunes were reversed; he who agonized here was in comfort; he who revelled in ease in the world now suffered torments beyond death.

The rich man had elected to have his **“good things”** here. He lived largely for this life, thus forfeiting the good things of the next world. The lesson taught here is impressive and is as applicable to us of this day as to that in which it was penned. There was an additional reason why the rich man’s petition was denied:

**“And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.”** This **“great gulf”** is a fixed, impassable chasm, making forevermore impossible another chance for salvation and deliverance after death. It is **“fixed,”** therefore unmoveable and unchangeable. It is a **“great”** gulf; no power of man can eliminate it. There is no passage in either direction; no good can go where the bad are, in the next world. Refuted, in this lesson is (1) the doctrine of the second chance; (2) the doctrine of soul-sleeping—unconsciousness after death; (3) the doctrine of universalism—that all men will ultimately be saved; (4) the Calvinistic doctrine of election and reprobation—that some men are unconditionally chosen to salvation and others to damnation.

#### THE RICH MAN’S PLEA FOR HIS BROTHERS

**“And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into**

**this place of torment.**” Realizing that all hope for him had vanished, the rich man remembered his brothers in the world, all of whom were living as he did—without regard to God or any well-being in the future life; and he urged Abraham to send Lazarus back to the earth and make known to them the situation as he now experienced it. To “testify” unto them was to witness to them of the dread uncertainty which Dives now suffered.

**“But Abraham saith, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.”** The phrase, **“Moses and the prophets,”** is a figure for the Old Testament. It simply means, as used here, they have the Bible, let them listen to its warnings. Compare the following:

**Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph (John 1:45).**

**Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life. I receive not glory from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in yourselves. I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not? Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me (John 5:39-46).**

**And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself (Luke 24:47)**

The scriptures completely furnish us unto every good work, containing all things which pertain unto life and godliness (2 Tim 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:3). Those who have access to the Scriptures and do not live right, fail to do so, not from lack of available knowledge, but from perversity of will. The rich man objected:

**“And he said, Nay, father Abraham; but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent.”** The rich man, in his life had **“Moses and the prophets;”** in the Scriptures were all the warnings necessary to enable people to escape the wrath to come. These warnings he

had ignored, treating them with contempt. He knew his brothers had the same attitude toward the sacred writings. He felt, however, that if one were to return from the dead, and testify to them, they would be sufficiently impressed to repent. This attitude was a wicked and presumptuous one. It said, in effect:

God’s plan is not sufficiently impressive; the mere word is not enough to impress men with the certainty of death and the punishment to follow a wicked life; Abraham, overcome this deficiency, and provide an impressive instance for my brothers.

His attitude was not an unusual one, and has many imitators today. Indeed, the disposition to feel that there are influences wrought upon individuals today, apart from and independent of the Word of God, is a similar impeachment of the sufficiency of the sacred writings. The answer of the illustrious patriarch settles the matter forevermore.

**“And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead.”** This clearly establishes the fact that those who reject the testimony of the Scriptures would not be influenced by any considerations of whatever nature from God. The appearance of Lazarus from the dead would not have motivated the rich man’s brothers. At the time of our lesson, Jesus had raised two people from the dead, and was soon to raise another. As a matter of fact, these same Jewish people rejected the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ Himself from the dead! If men will not believe the testimony of the Holy Word, and yield to the influences which it brings to bear for good, no power in this world, or in the world to come, can do them any good.~

**Deceased**

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Lamentations Daniel  
Isaiah

Sunday Morning Bible Class  
*David P. Brown*

A Study Of  
**1ST JOHN**

Teacher:  
*David P. Brown*

WEDNESDAY NIGHT  
BIBLE CLASS VIA ZOOM

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Sunday, August 25th:** Monthly meal & afternoon singing service.
- **Tuesday, August 27th:** Ladies' Bible Class.
- **Saturday, September 14th:** Baby Girl Shower honoring Devon & Andrew Paluka.
- **Saturday, September 28th:** Fall Fellowship at Walker County Fairgrounds, Huntsville, TX.
- **Saturday, October 26th:** Fish Hatchery Road Lectureship. "James: Practical Christianity Part 3."
- **Saturday, November 23rd:** Chili Cook-off at Burroughs Park.

## THOSE TO SERVE

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 2024**

**Announcements** Eric Paluka  
**Scripture Reading** J.D. Gunter  
Rev. 19:11-16

**Song Leader** Jonathan West  
**Prayer** Eric Paluka/Joshua West (AM)  
Joshua West/Gary Blasingame (PM)

**Speaker** David Brown

**Lord's Table (AM)**  
(Matthew 27:33-38)

J.D. Gunter Andrew Paluka  
Steven Johnson Gary Blasingame

**Lord's Table (PM)**

Joshua West Stephen Cohn

**Audio/Video Monitor** Steven Johnson  
**Camera/Door Monitor** Bret Bailey

**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2024**

*(via Zoom Meetings)*

**Announcements** J.D. Gunter  
**Speaker** Ken Cohn  
**Bible Class Teacher** David Brown

**FOR AUGUST**

**Prepare Communion** L. Paluka  
**Lock Buildings** Bailey  
**Prepare Bulletin Board** N. Cohn

## IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Janie Tatum, Joe Blau, Gayle Barnett, Zack Nero, April McCain, Tim Orbison, Debbie Brannon, Edith Young, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Cynthia Jackson, Elnora Oxendine, Charles & Ann Nero, Nathaniel Rimmer, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

## TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

What father-in-law said to his son-in-law, "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another"?

**Answer to last week's question:**  
Absalom; 2 Samuel 18:18