

Having rebuked the Pharisees and scribes for their condescending attitude toward the publicans and sinners (Luke 15), Jesus turned to teach His disciples the proper use of money, using two parables to teach the lesson.

The Parable of the Unjust Steward (16:1-12)

The parable relates that a certain man had a dishonest man serving as his steward; he heard of his dishonesty and called him to give account (v. 1). The dishonest steward became concerned about his future and plotted what he could do to be received by his friends after he lost his position (vv. 2-4). He called the debtors of his master



Years ago someone hoarded their money, storing it in a pottery jar. For whatever reason, they never came back for it. How are we using our treasures?

and reduced their indebtedness (vv. 5-7). When the lord heard what his dishonest steward had done, he commended him for his foresight and preparation for the future (v. 8).

Jesus did not commend the dishonesty of the steward. Rather, He commended how he used the goods entrusted to him to prepare for the

The Parables of the Unjust Steward and the Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16

time when he lost his position. What this wicked man had enough foresight to see, many children of light do not see (v. 8). Consequently, Jesus exhorted, “Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations” (v. 9). Christians should use the money entrusted to them in such a way that God will receive us into glory.

How we use what God commits to our trust will determine what He entrusts to us in the future (vv. 10-12). The man who is unfaithful in the use of God’s money will not have the true riches (v. 11), that which is your own (v. 12), entrusted to him. The true riches are our spiritual riches, our heavenly treasure, in contrast to that which unspiritual men view as treasures on earth.

The Pharisees Resist Jesus’ Teaching (16:13-18)

In closing this parable, Jesus spoke of the impossibility of serving both God and mammon (16:13). Many Christians have not yet learned the lesson which Jesus taught here, but continue to attempt that which is impossible.

As the Pharisees heard what Jesus taught, they derided Him (16:14). Recognizing that they were covetous men (16:14), Jesus reminded them that, though they might justify themselves before men, God knew their hearts and that which is highly esteemed among men (riches, greed) is an abomination to God (16:15).

What Jesus taught was not a new teaching. It was part of the jot and tittle of the old law. Even though John came preaching that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (v. 16) and many were pressing into it even at that time, the divine word of God would stand, even if the earth should pass away. Their disobedience of the word, as indicated by their deriding comments regarding Jesus’ teaching on greed (v. 14), did not change the law and prophets.

Jesus then cited another example whereby they disregarded the law. “Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery” (16:18). The Jewish practice of divorce for any reason and remarriage was another instance of their rejection of the law of God, just like their rejection of His teaching on covetousness.

The Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31)

(Note: I am aware that many do not consider this a parable because of the personal reference to Lazarus. Some imagine that the teaching of what happens to the soul of man after life is weakened by admitting that this is a parable. I disagree because a parable's teaching is based on things which could

To further emphasize the proper use of money to prepare to be received in the eternal habitations, Jesus told of the rich man and Lazarus. There were two men in the parable. The rich man fared sumptuously in life; the other named Lazarus was a beggar who suffered physically. Both of them died. After death, the rich man was in torment

was laid at his gate and begged for food. In torment, the rich man asked for relief but found none (v. 24). He wanted Lazarus to touch his finger in water and then touch his tongue in order that he might have some relief from the flames. However, he was told that a great gulf separates the wicked from the righteous and that no one could pass from one place to the other (v. 25). He became concerned that his brothers not follow him to this place of torment and asked that Lazarus could be sent to warn them of the place of torment. Father Abraham reminded the rich man that his brethren had the law and prophets and could listen to them (v. 29; cf. vv. 16-17—the very words which the Pharisees were then rejecting). The rich man protested that his brethren would listen to someone risen from the dead when they would not listen to Moses and the prophets. Father Abraham said, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead” (16:31).

Jesus did rise from the dead and warned about the necessity of obeying the word of God. Those who reject Moses and the prophets also reject His words.

The After Life

The story of the Rich Man and Lazarus provides a glimpse into the realm of the dead. The realm of the dead is called *Sheol* in the Old Testament and *Hades* in the New Testament. The story indicates that at death, the wicked, bodiless spirit goes into a place of torment from which he cannot escape. He is held there until judgment. At the resurrection his body will be rejoined with his spirit and he will be punished forever in *Ge-henna* (Hell).

The bodiless spirits of the righteous go to a place called Paradise or Abraham's Bosom where they stay until judgment. At the resurrection, their bodies and spirits will be reunited. At the judgment they will be granted entrance to heaven where they enjoy the blessings of eternal life forever.

actually happen. Hence, if this is a parable, the conditions described in it are as apt to happen as are the circumstances in the parable of the sower [Luke 8].)

and Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom.

The rich man who had plenty of money refused to help Lazarus who

Questions

1. What attributes of the dishonest steward did Jesus commend? _____
2. What attributes of the dishonest steward did Jesus not commend? _____
3. In what respect are the children of the world wiser than the children of light (16:8)? _____
4. What is the proper use of money (16:9)? _____

5. How does one's use of money relate to God granting him an entrance into heaven (16:10-12)? _____

6. Why is it impossible to serve God and mammon (16:13)? _____

7. What conditions might indicate that a man is serving mammon? _____

8. Did Jesus teach that being rich is a sin? _____
9. Why did the Pharisees deride Jesus' teaching (16:14)? _____

10. What is "highly esteemed" among men, but an "abomination" in the sight of God (16:15)? _____

11. What was Jesus telling the Pharisees in 16:16-17? _____

12. What example of violating the law is cited in 16:18? _____
13. Of what sin was the rich man guilty? _____

14. How is the abode of the wicked dead described? _____

15. How is the abode of the righteous dead described? _____

16. In the parable, what indicates that man is conscious after death? _____

17. What indicates that the dead know one another? _____

18. Describe "hell" (hades) of 16:23 (cf. Luke 23:43; Acts 2:27). _____

19. What does God use to keep man from going to torment (16:29)? _____

20. What indicates that one is not given a second chance to be saved after death? _____

21. What confirms the truthfulness of the Lord's statement in 16:31? _____

Answering Denominational Error

1. Many believe that God will ultimately save everyone. What does the Bible say? _____

2. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that man does not have a soul which survives the death of the body. What does the Bible say? _____

3. Seventh Day Adventists teach that the soul sleeps after the death of the body. What does the Bible say? _____

4. Jehovah's Witnesses believe there is no place of eternal torment. What does the Bible say? _____
