

What If We Do Not Listen

International Bible Lesson

Luke 16:19-31

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"Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29—KJV).

"Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them'" (Luke 16:29—NRSV).

In Jesus' parable, after Lazarus and the unnamed rich man who ignored Lazarus died, angels came and took Lazarus to live with father Abraham. No angels came for the rich man, and he was simply buried. However, physical death was not the end of life for the selfish rich man, and from his place of torment he begged father Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his five brothers to care for the poor so they would not also come to his place of torment. Abraham refused and in so many words said his brothers had the Bible and they should listen to it. The rich man argued that they would only repent if someone went to them from the dead, but Abraham insisted that if they refused to listen to the Bible now "neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31). Both the rich man and Lazarus believed in God and both knew of father Abraham, but only poor Lazarus went to live with father Abraham. Many people today say they believe in God or a god, and most of them have heard of Abraham and Jesus, but how many of these people are like the rich man and refuse to believe and listen to the Bible? Of those who do read and study the Bible, how many choose to believe only what they want to believe and refuse to believe anything that passes judgment on their behavior or makes them feel uncomfortable? How many choose to believe only what makes them feel good so they will not repent even if they have heard that Jesus rose from the dead?

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Thinking Further

1. Why did the rich man go to Hades after he died?

2. Do you think the rich man's attitude about wealth was the same or similar to everyone else in his family? Give a reason for your answers.

3. Do you think the rich man thought he was religious enough and blessed by God so that he was surprised when he began his existence after death in Hades?

4. Do you think Lazarus went to heaven just because he was poor? Why might someone think that?

5. Why should people repent?