

## ~LAZARUS 2 (123)

(Laz'a-rus) [probably the Greek form of the Hebrew name Eleazar, meaning, God Has Helped]

### .. Jesus Illustration Of The Rich Man And Lazarus

- The name given to the beggar in Jesus illustration commonly known as the parable of the rich man and **Lazarus**.
- But a certain man was rich, and he used to deck himself with purple and linen, enjoying himself from day to day with magnificence. (Luke 16:19)
- But a certain beggar named **Lazarus** used to be put at his gate, full of ulcers. (Luke 16:20)
- And desiring to be filled with the things dropping from the table of the rich man. Yes, too, the dogs would come and lick his ulcers. (Luke 16:21)
- Now in course of time the beggar died and he was carried off by the angels to the bosom position of Abraham. Also, the rich man died and was buried. (Luke 16:22)
- And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, he existing in torments, and he saw Abraham afar off and **Lazarus** in the bosom position with him. (Luke 16:23)
- So he called and said; Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send **Lazarus** to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this blazing fire. (Luke 16:24)
- But Abraham said; Child, remember that you received in full your good things in your lifetime, but **Lazarus** correspondingly the injurious things. Now, however, he is having comfort here but you are in anguish. (Luke 16:25)
- And besides all these things, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you people, so that those wanting to go over from here to you people cannot, neither may people cross over from there to us. (Luke 16:26)

- Then he said; In that event I ask you, father, to send him to the house of my father. (Luke 16:27)
- For I have five brothers, in order, that he may give them a thorough witness, that they also should not get into this place of torment. (Luke 16:28)
- But Abraham said; They have Moses and the Prophets, let them listen to these. (Luke 16:29)
- Then he said; No, indeed, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them they will repent. (Luke 16:30)
- But he said to him, If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead. (Luke 16:31)
- In the Vulgate the word rich has been rendered by the Latin adjective *dives*, which is often mistakenly used as the proper name of the rich man. However, the Jewish name Lazarus itself was common in ancient times, a fact borne out by ossuary inscriptions.
- In the parable, the ulcerous beggar, Lazarus, was put at the gate of the rich man, desiring to be fed with the things that fell from the rich man's sumptuous table. Lazarus subsequently died and was carried off by angels to the bosom position of Abraham, a place comparable to that occupied by a person in ancient times when he reclined in front of another on the same couch during a meal.
- Abraham had a conversation with the rich man, who had also died, was buried, and was in Hades, existing in torments. A great chasm that could not be crossed separated the rich man from Abraham and Lazarus.
- The rich man's request that Abraham send Lazarus to his five brothers to give them a thorough witness, in the hope of sparing them the same experience, met with rejection on the grounds that these had Moses and the Prophets, and, if unwilling to listen to them, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.

**See Also ILLUSTRATIONS**

**.. Jesus Illustration Of The Rich Man And Lazarus**

- Teachers and students of comparative religion have in some cases suggested that in giving this illustration, Jesus Christ drew upon the ancient rabbinic concept and teaching regarding the underworld. Josephus furnishes the following information regarding the then-current view of the Pharisees in this regard:
  - They believe that souls have power to survive death and that there are rewards and punishments under the earth for those who have led lives of virtue or vice: eternal imprisonment is the lot of evil souls, while the good souls receive an easy passage to a new life. [Jewish Antiquities, XVIII, 14, i, 3]
- However, Jesus flatly rejected false teachings, including those of the Pharisees. (Matthew Chapter 23)
- Hence, it would have been inconsistent for him to frame his illustration of the rich man and **Lazarus** according to the outlines of the false rabbinic concept of the underworld.
- Consequently, it must be concluded that Jesus had in mind the fulfillment of the illustration and framed its details and movement in harmony with the facts of the fulfillment rather than according to any unscriptural teaching.
- The context and the wording of the story show clearly that it is a parable and not an actual historical account. Poverty is not being extolled, nor are riches being condemned.
- Rather, conduct, final rewards, and a reversal in the spiritual status, or condition, of those represented by **Lazarus** and by the rich man are evidently indicated.
- The fact that the rich man's brothers rejected Moses and the prophets also shows that the illustration had a deeper meaning and purpose than that of contrasting poverty and the possession of riches.