

he was there in order to see his own brethren were in danger of suffering the same fate. Trying to get Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, the rich man is denied the request, because it was the Word of God that would convert them, not a miracle (cf. Psalm 19:7). Even burning in torments, he neglects the thing that can bring them salvation! So many in Jesus day lived with such a prideful attitude (Matthew 12:22-24) and it was Paul who preached to people who rejected the Gospel (Acts 13:44-46). The Word is the saving power (Romans 1:16; James 1:21), not a miracle. The rich man was concerned for his brethren and did not want them to come with him. Those whose parents have died in a lost condition make the same plea today, hoping that their children and family members would not make the same mistake that they did. Misery does not love the company of family here.

We can know that fate is sealed after death (Luke 16:26).

The Hebrews' writer said, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgement" (Hebrews 9:27). After death, there are no second chances or baptisms for the dead. Instead, fate is sealed and destination eternal. The rich man desired Lazarus to come over and give him a drop of water, but Abraham says such was impossible. A great gulf (to yawn...a gaping opening[10]) fixed shows that something immovable and forever standing, stood between the two of them. Truly, it was impossible for Lazarus to go into torments and the rich man to come over into paradise. Too Universalism is denied by this verse. Albert Barnes said, "Universalists hold that hell will yet be vacated of its guilty millions, and that all its miserable inhabitants will be received to heaven! Who shall conduct them across this gulf, when Jesus Christ says it cannot be passed? Who shall build a bridge over that yawning chasm which he says is 'fixed?' No: if there is anything certain from the Scripture, it is that they who enter hell return no more; they who sink there sink forever." [11] The righteous and the unrighteous stay in their eternal abodes and will never leave. To some that will be the greatest enjoyment, but to others it will be the worse punishment.

Such a study of an important topic prepares us for death and the coming judgement. It is not out of excitement that Jesus discussed such topics of torments and punishment, but so that man could escape it. "I heard a story about a man who invited his neighbor to attend church with him On the way home, the neighbor said, 'I noticed you have a new preacher.' 'Yes,' said his friend, 'We fired the old one He was always telling us unless we repented, we were going to hell.' 'But,' the neighbor replied, 'your new preacher said the very same thing this morning.' 'True,' was the reply, 'but our old preacher acted like he was happy about the situation When our new preacher says this, it seems to break his heart.' [12] Dear reader, are you ready? Are you prepared, so that you may hear "Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant," (Matthew 25:21) instead of "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity," (Matthew 7:21)?

Endnotes

- [1]<https://answersforeveryone.com/4-people-who-have-been-to-heaven-and-their-stories/>
- [2]Ibid.
- [3]B.W. Johnson, *Luke 16:19*, eSWORD Module.
- [4]A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures of the New Testament*, "Luke 16:20," eSWORD Module.
- [5]Vincent word studies, eSWORD Module.
- [6]Boles, H. Leo. A Commentary on The Gospel by Luke. 1958, p. 321
- [7]Albert Barnes, *Luke 16:25*, eSWORD Module.
- [8]Mosher, Keith. Sermon Outline, "Will We Know One Another in Heaven?"
- [9]Ibid.
- [10]A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Luke 16:26, eSWORD Module.
- [11]Albert Barnes, *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Luke 16:26, eSWORD Module.
- [12]Unknown from Studylight.org.

For more tracts call: 816-508-8904 or go to wordswrittenontheheart.org



What Do We KNOW About Life AFTER THE



Noah Olson

When it comes to the concept of death, many have recorded instances where they have “died” and then returned to earth.

- Anita Moorjani said that she when she went into a coma, she felt that she was above her body and “beyond the room.” Then after a while she decided to return to earth.[1]
- Four year old Annabel Beam after hitting her head three times said, “It was really bright, and I sat on Jesus’ lap and he told me, ‘Whenever the firefighters get you out, there will be nothing wrong with you.’” She regained her consciousness later on.[2]
- “Heaven is for a Real” is a book about a young boy’s trek to heaven and back.

Although these sound interesting and perhaps even convincing, there is no valid proof for such occurrences. Instead, hallucinations are a part of life that happen before death or as someone is dying. Truly, these are not actual glimpses of the life after death, but what if there was a way to peer into eternity for a moment? What if we could actually understand the life after death with certainty? Unfortunately, some do not care about eternity. Fidel Castro said, “I have never thought much about that because I don’t attach much importance to what happens after I die.” Ronald Regan’s son (Ron) was blasphemous when he said that he is a “Life-long atheist, not afraid of burning in hell.” Fortunately, we can examine life beyond the grave from Jesus’ discourse on the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). What can we know will happen after we take our final breath?

We know that life on earth determines life after death (Luke 16:20-23). This life now is a test for our place in the life to come. God has given man a choice (Joshua 24:15) and one can either choose to live faithfully or unfaithfully. Jesus describes two men in the passage. First the rich man (Luke 16:19) was clothed in purple, denoting royalty. He also lived a life of pleasure, “Enjoying not only the most sumptuous fare on the table every day, but (perhaps-NO) every sensual enjoyment.”[3] This was something he did “every day;” much like the many today who cannot get enough of sin and reveling. Some are engulfed in sin to the brim. Second, was a beggar (Luke 16:20-21). Full of sores,

which the dogs licked, he was thrown down[4] and was left to eat the crumbs that fell from the table of the rich man. The rich man is not shown to aid him in his wants, much less his needs.

Because of the life of the two men, there were two different destinations (Luke 16:22-23). One, a place called “Abraham’s Bosom,” also known as paradise (Luke 23:43). All the saved reside here and Lazarus became one of the many there! His poorness did not matter in paradise. He was now in a place of comfort, unlike the rich man. Conversely, the rich man was buried and taken to “torments.” Despite receiving proper burial on earth, he continued to suffer in torments because of his uncompassionate and sinful heart (cf. Matthew 25:41-46). His riches mattered very little in eternity for he could not take ONE single penny (cf. 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19). The first thing we learn about the life after death is that there are two destinations that souls will go to based on their determination to serve God.

We can know that one is alive and conscious after death (Luke 16:23-24). Soul-sleeping is not Biblical (Ecclesiastes 12:7). While the Bible does liken death to sleep, the term is poetic.[5] Annihilation is also false, for would not it be a cop out for those who lived unfaithfully? Instead, Jesus shows that punishment is given to those who chose ungodliness. The rich man is showed to be conscious and active in torments. He “lift up his eyes,” “seeth Abraham,” “he cried,” and was “tormented.” Various examples in Scripture show that the dead speak (1 Samuel 28:15, 19; Luke 9:28-31). Pain too, is often felt, for the rich man desired that Lazarus would relieve his torment (Luke 16:24-25). It was Boles who said that this pain “is terrible beyond anything we can imagine.”[6] On the other hand, one can be comforted (Luke 16:25). Lazarus was no more inflicted, but was enjoying serenity and bliss. Truly, we can know that eternity does not equal an erasing of existence, instead the soul continues to live on.

We can know that one remembers their previous life after death (Luke 16:25). Jesus says that Abraham tells the rich man to “remember.” We gather two thoughts

from this word: (1) one can recall their life on earth and (2) people know WHY they are in the place they are. Probably one of the punishments of torments (and ultimately Hell) will be a remembering of the life they lived and the chances that they lived. The mental state may be worse for some than others. Like the rich man, some may remember their evil deeds, how they treated others, and even the many opportunities they neglected to obey God. It was Albert Barnes who made this excellent observation: “One of the chief torments of hell will be the “remembrance” of what was enjoyed and of what was done in this world. Nor will it be any mitigation of the suffering to spend an “eternity” where there will be nothing else to do, day or night, but to “remember” what “was” done, and, what “might have been,” if it had been right.”[7]

We can know that recognition is possible after death (Luke 16:23-24). Some believe that after the final breath one enters into a place where they will never recognize anyone. Jesus concludes the opposite. The rich man sees Lazarus and Abraham afar off, so apparently, we will recognize those we knew while we were on the earth. It was David who said that he would see his son again (2 Samuel 12:23) and Paul who perhaps alluded to recognition when writing to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 2:19-20). One concluded that, “The comfort of a reunion would be nonsense without recognition.”[8]

The question is then asked, “will we not be sad that some of our family members or close friends are absent from heaven?” Keith Mosher makes a solid point: “How much are we suffering now knowing so many are lost?”[9] Although it brings us pain, we can still find joy in the world. Perhaps we will be so overwhelmed with joy, God’s glory, and worship, that those absent will not even be a thought for us.

We can know that the lost do not want others to suffer after death (Luke 16:27-31). The rich man in torments knew that he was lost and recognized that his brethren were lost too, which likely overwhelmed him with great concern. The rich man must have known exactly WHY