

Lazarus Was In A Place Of Rest



Foundations (Day 281)
by Derek Prince

Let us now turn to the New Testament and see what further light this sheds upon the destiny of man's spiritual part at death.

The first New Testament passage that we shall consider is the well- known story of the beggar Lazarus who was laid daily at the rich man's gate (see Luke 16:19-31). There is no suggestion that this story is a mere parable. It is related by Christ Himself as an actual historical incident that had taken place at some time prior to that point in Christ's earthly ministry – that is, in the dispensational period prior to Christ's death and resurrection. Following is Christ's description of the destinies of Lazarus and the rich man after their deaths.

> "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then 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 tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'" (Luke 16:22-26)

There is much in this passage that confirms the conclusions we had already formed from the Old Testament. At death the body by burial is returned to the earth, but the spirit moves out into a new kind of existence. In this existence after death there is persistence of personality; there is recognition of one person by another; there is consciousness of present conditions. There is also some recollection of the previous life on earth. This is brought out by the words of Abraham to the rich man: "Son, remember..."

All this agrees with the picture given in the Old Testament. However, this account in Luke adds one further, very important fact. After death the destiny of the spirits of the

righteous is quite different from that of the spirits of the wicked.

Both Lazarus and the rich man found themselves within the realm of departed spirits called in Hebrew “Sheol” and in Greek “Hades,” but their destinies there were quite different. The rich man’s spirit was in a place of torment; the spirit of Lazarus was in a place of rest. Between these two places was fixed an impassable gulf that could not be crossed from either side.

The place of rest, set apart for the departed spirits of the righteous, is here called “Abraham’s bosom.” This title would indicate that this place is ordained for the spirits of all those who in their earthly pilgrimage followed in the footsteps of faith and obedience marked out by Abraham, who for this reason is called “the father of all those who believe.”

Devotional

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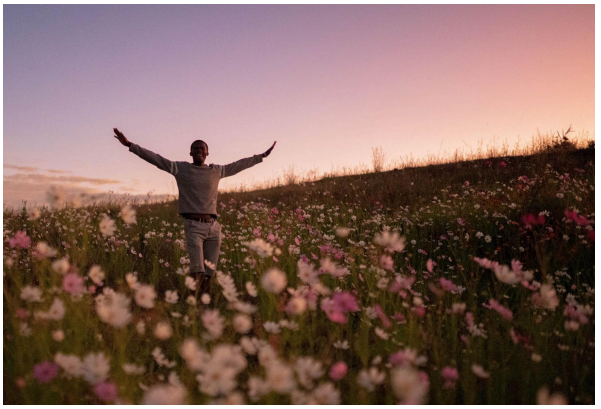

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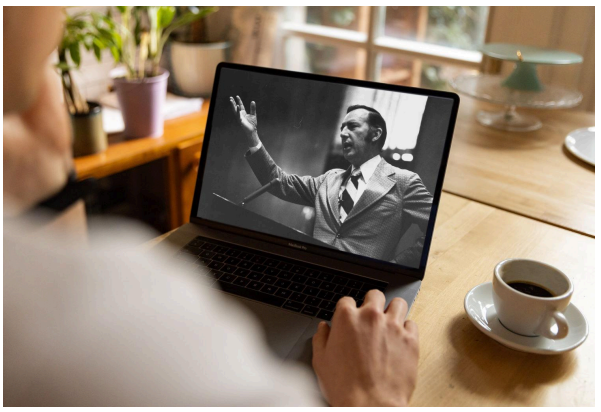

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