



A Great Chasm

Luke 16

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Overview: In this section of Luke's gospel, Jesus tells two parables that connect the present life with the afterlife. The parable of the dishonest manager centers upon a man whose shady business practices result both in dismissal and praise by his employer. Jesus uses this parable to encourage his disciples to give serious thought as to how their daily living will have eternal ramifications. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus demonstrates a reversal of fortunes occurring after the death of each man. Jesus uses this parable to warn the Pharisees about placing value on things that God Himself despises. Taken together, these parables underscore important truths for all to consider regarding living and dying, and heaven and hell.

01. There is a day coming in which all people will give an account to God for how they have lived their lives; therefore the most prudent response is to serve God now according to his terms.

02. Those who do not serve God according to his terms will be tormented in hell, punished for their sins, banished from the presence of God, and unable to reverse their situation.

03. Those who do serve God according to his terms will be received into the eternal dwellings of heaven, comforted in the afterlife, welcomed in the presence of God, and rewarded with true riches.

1. What situations in your life have required immediate attention? What might the outcome have been if you had put off dealing with the issue? Why do you suppose people refuse to prepare adequately for the afterlife?

2. The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone; and yet, the way that we live our lives depicts whether our faith is genuine or not. Are you faithful in the little things that God has entrusted to you? In what ways are you using money to advance God's kingdom? How are you using the many gifts and opportunities that God has given you to make friends who will receive you in eternal dwellings?

3. Though many deny the existence of hell, the Bible teaches it as a reality (see Mark 9:42-48; Matthew 5:20-30; 24:25; Luke 16:19-31; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Hebrews 10:27-31; James 4:12, 5:1-5; 2 Peter 2:4-17; Jude 13-23; and Revelation 20:10-15). How does the existence of hell assure us that the human longing for justice is meaningful?

4. How would you respond to the objection that a loving God would never send anyone to hell? What is missing when we discuss the love of God without recognizing the holiness of God? How does the nature and gravity of our sin against a holy God underscore the reality of hell and its eternal consequence?

5. Why is the rich man's attempt to reach out to his brothers denied (verse 27-31)? How does this reality point to the sufficiency of Scripture in pointing people to Christ? How would you respond to those who say that they would believe if they had seen the miracles or resurrection of Christ?

For Further Reading: Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson, eds. *Hell Under Fire* (Zondervan, 2007).