

Luke 16:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

Analysis

The great reversal begins: 'And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried.' Death equalizes: both men die. But their destinations differ radically. Lazarus 'was carried by the angels' (ἀπενεχθῆναι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων, *apenechthēnai auton hypo tōn angelōn*)—divine escort to 'Abraham's bosom' (εἰς τὸν κόλπον Ἀβραάμ, *eis ton kolpon Abraam*), a Jewish expression for paradise, the righteous's resting place. The rich man 'died, and was buried' (ἀπέθανεν καὶ ἐτάφη, *apethanen kai etaphē*)—probably an elaborate funeral, but nothing about angels or Abraham's welcome. Material wealth provided no advantage at death. Eternity reveals reality: Lazarus was truly rich, the rich man truly poor.

Historical Context

Jewish theology understood 'Abraham's bosom' as the place of honor next to Abraham at the messianic banquet (Matthew 8:11). Being 'in Abraham's bosom' meant intimate fellowship with the patriarch and sharing in covenant blessings. That angels carried Lazarus emphasizes divine care for the righteous poor (Hebrews 1:14). The rich man's burial likely was expensive and well-attended, but Jesus mentions no angels, no Abraham, no heavenly welcome. The parable demolishes the prosperity gospel's claim that earthly wealth indicates God's favor. Often the opposite is true—wealth can spiritually blind and eternally destroy.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Lazarus' angel escort and Abraham's welcome contrast with the rich man's lonely burial?
2. What does this passage teach about the moment of death for believers versus unbelievers?
3. How should belief in immediate conscious existence after death shape Christian living?

Interlinear Text

ἐγένετο δὲ ἀπέθανεν τὸν πτωχὸν καὶ ἀπενεχθῆναι
it came to pass And died that the beggar and was carried
G1096 G1161 G599 G3588 G4434 G2532 G667

αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Αβραάμ·
G846 by G3588 the angels into G3588 bosom G3588 Abraham's
G5259 G32 G1519 G2859 G11

ἀπέθανεν δὲ καὶ ὁ πλούσιος καὶ ἐτάφη
died And and G3588 the rich man and was buried
G599 G1161 G2532 G4145 G2532 G2290

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:24 (Parallel theme): Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Revelation 14:13 (Parallel theme): And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Proverbs 14:32 (Parallel theme): The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.

James 1:11 (Parallel theme): For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

Mark 8:36 (Parallel theme): For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

Ecclesiastes 8:10 (Parallel theme): And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity.

John 13:23 (Parallel theme): Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

Hebrews 1:14 (Parallel theme): Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Job 21:13 (Parallel theme): They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

Matthew 24:31 (Parallel theme): And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.