

Luke 16:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Analysis

Abraham's final word: 'And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.' This verse concludes the parable with devastating logic: those who reject Scripture ('Moses and the prophets') 'will not be persuaded' (οὐδὲ... πεισθήσονται, oude... peisthēsontai) even by resurrection. The condition 'if they hear not' (εἰ... οὐκ ἀκούουσιν, ei... ouk akouousin) means more than auditory reception—it means receiving with faith and obedience. The phrase 'though one rose from the dead' (ἐάν τις ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῇ, ean tis ek nekrōn anastē) becomes ironic: Jesus would soon rise from the dead, yet many still refused to believe. This proves Abraham's point: the problem isn't insufficient evidence but hearts hardened against God.

Historical Context

This prophecy was fulfilled immediately after Jesus spoke it. Within months, Jesus would raise Lazarus from the dead (John 11), yet rather than believing, religious leaders plotted to kill both Jesus and Lazarus (John 11:47-53, 12:10-11). Then Jesus Himself rose from the dead, but guards were bribed to spread lies about disciples stealing the body (Matthew 28:11-15). Throughout Acts, resurrection proclamation produced both faith and fierce opposition—the same message resulted in conversion for some, hardened rejection for others. The difference wasn't evidence but the Holy Spirit's work in hearts. This passage teaches that apologetics has limits—intellectual arguments, historical evidences, and even

miracles cannot overcome spiritual blindness. Only the gospel, empowered by the Spirit, can open blind eyes.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How was this prophecy fulfilled in response to Lazarus' raising and Jesus' resurrection?
2. What are the limits of apologetics and evidence in producing genuine faith?
3. How should this shape Christian evangelism—what role do arguments and evidences play?

Interlinear Text

εἶπεν	δὲ	αὐτῷ	Εἰ	Μωσέως	καὶ	τῶν	προφητῶν	οὐκ
he said	And	unto him	If	Moses	and	G3588	the prophets	not
G2036	G1161	G846	G1487	G3475	G2532		G4396	G3756

ἀκούουσιν	οὐδὲ	ἐάν	τις	ἐκ	νεκρῶν	ἀναστῇ
they hear	neither	though	one	from	the dead	rose
G191	G3761	G1437	G5100	G1537	G3498	G450

πεισθήσονται

will they be persuaded

G3982

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 4:3 (Parallel theme): But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

Acts 28:23 (Prophecy): And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

Acts 19:8 (Parallel theme): And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Acts 26:28 (Parallel theme): Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

2 Corinthians 5:11 (Parallel theme): Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.