

**Why The  
Rich Man  
Went  
To Hell**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A Righteous Rich Man .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>A Wicked Rich Man .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Contrast Between a Righteous Man and a Wicked Man .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Contrast Between the Rich Man and the Beggar Lazarus .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Propensity of the Rich .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Reflection of the Rich Man .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Sin of the Rich Man .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Warning for Christians .....</b>	<b>26</b>

This study is again taken from two sermons preached on consecutive Sundays. It concerns the teaching from the Bible that apparently discriminates against those who are rich in this world.

Luke 16 shows a rich man who went to hell while the poor man went to paradise. The question as to why the rich man went to hell is a subject of much speculation. The passage from Luke 16 does not appear to fit into the well understood doctrine of salvation by grace through as believe by many Christians. All kinds of fanciful explanations are offered but they do not address the issue on why this rich man went to hell. What sin did the rich man commit that caused his damnation in hell? Why was the poor man spared? Why are there so many warnings to those who are rich in the Holy Bible? What are the lessons for Christians from this passage?

It is only by comparing Scriptures with Scriptures that Christians can appreciate why the Lord has to send this rich man to hell. May the Lord bless the study of His pure, inspired and infallible words!

This passage has been so perverted by Christians and non-Christians alike and it takes great pain to set the record straight. Unbelievers do not believe in hell so they think this is just a fairy tale to frighten others not to do evil but to do good. Some take this passage to mean helping the poor is the way to salvation. So good works indeed save us as taught by many false religions. Some think that this is just a parable as insisted by the Jehovah Witnesses. Some Christians think that the rich man did not believe in Jesus Christ and that was why he went to hell while the poor man Lazarus believed in Christ and received Christ as his Saviour and so he went to paradise. I have personally heard this passage preached this way several times. It is pure unadulterated nonsense. You can search this passage with whatever light and instrument you want, and you will find no such nonsensical teachings there.

Apparently, many Christians are so eager and keen to prove salvation by grace through faith and they become so paranoid that whenever Scriptures did not line up with their theology or beliefs systems, they have to pervert the Scriptures to give you their private interpretation. So they say the Old Testament saints look forward to the cross while the New Testament saints look backward to the cross. Nothing could be more ridiculous than this. The fact is that when the Lord showed up on earth, none of His disciples believed He would go to the cross. When the Lord insisted on going to the cross, Peter rebuked the Lord and the Lord called him Satan.

In fact, the Old Testament saints did not know the Lord's name was Jesus Christ to begin with but only the name Immanuel was prophesied twice in the book of Isaiah. Moreover, even there are saints in the Old Testament who did not know the name of the Lord was Jehovah for the Lord told Moses: **And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. (Exodus 6:3)**

Many Christians do not study the Scriptures and they just repeat what they have heard or what they have been taught and they repeat false teachings to ad nauseam. It is simply amazing how some Christians are so ignorant and they do not search the Scriptures daily to see whether those things were so. They have surrendered their own personal study to the ecclesiastical class of priesthood who went to Bible Colleges. They think the mystery is solved by going back to the original dead languages.

This passage has caused a lot of people to stumble. A very good friend who used to defend the King James Bible has become an apostate when commenting on this passage. He no longer believes this is part of the words of the living God. He is now behaving like an atheist.

In order to provide the foundation from which we build upon to interpret Scriptures with Scriptures, we have to study the acts of rich men who are righteous and wicked from the Old Testament. This will leave no room for conjecture as to why this rich man in Luke 16 went to hell. One of the best contrasts one could find in the Old Testament is the life of two rich men, Boaz and Nabal.

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech. And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens. And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke

**her not. So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. (Ruth 2:1-17)**

“Handfuls of purpose” is an interesting phrase. It is so unique that a book under the title “Handfuls On Purpose” was compiled into 5 volumes. “Handfuls of purpose” is a deliberate act of kindness towards the poor and the destitute. It is a deliberate attempt to help the poor to get food even as Jehovah God has blessed those in material things. The passage here concerns Naomi who returned with Ruth her daughter-in-law after the death of her husband and her two sons. She was indeed very poor and needy in need of pity and help from others. She came back to her own land and property but she needed food on the table. In Israel a law is given to owners of lands not to forbid the poor and needy, including strangers, to help themselves to the harvest that are left over.

**And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God. And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God. (Leviticus 19:9&10; 23:22) When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. (Deuteronomy 24:21)**

So under the law, the owners are to be generous with what the Lord has blessed them with. They have an obligation to take care of the poor in the land. The poor and the needy need food and this is the way the Lord provides for them. The owners are required to leave some harvest behind, especially those that fell to the ground. Those that they fail to harvest are to be left to the poor, widows and the strangers. They are commanded not to oppress the poor and the fatherless including strangers.

**Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it:**



**lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee. (Deuteronomy 24:14&15) Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. (Exodus 22:21; 23:9)**

In the Old Testament, there are laws forbidding the children of Israel to oppress others. Ruth certainly falls under the category of a stranger. She was not a Jew for she was from Moab. But she had faith in the God of Israel and that was why she followed her mother-in-law back to Israel. She trusted Jehovah God to be a just God who would take care of her and her mother-in-law. She had forsaken her country and her pagan gods and had come to trust in the true and living God. It was rather unusual for this woman to trust God for she had personally witnessed how Jehovah God “failed” Naomi by causing her to come to grief with the death of her husband and her two sons. Circumstances were not favourable for Ruth to trust in Jehovah God. How could she trust in a God who did not bless those who trusted Him? However, her unwavering faith led her to cling unto her mother-in-law and returned to Israel with her. Her faith in the true and living God was not based on favourable circumstances.

The children of Israel were supposed to conduct themselves in the right manner to have a good testimony before the other nations so that they might also believe in Jehovah God. Israel was supposed to be a kingdom of priest and a holy nation before God. They were supposed to be a light to the Gentiles so that the Gentiles might also come to know God and come under the commonwealth of Israel. Here was a good opportunity to show how good and gracious Jehovah God was though this was the same God who commanded Israel to exterminate the Canaanites but not everyone else. This man Boaz was indeed one such upright man to show forth the praise of Jehovah God. Boaz was a magnanimous man. He was rich but he had a big heart as well. It was common for rich man to oppress the poor but Boaz was a good man. The poor and needy were usually despised and often taken advantage of. But Boaz not only fulfilled the law by taking care of Ruth, he went over and beyond the law by providing handfuls of purpose for her. He saw her faith in God. He obeyed God by taking care of this pitiful widow from Moab. So he ordered his servants to deliberately help her and not to rebuke her even if she reaped among them, which was not provided for under the law.

In the Old Testament, a good man of faith is always a generous man. This is work of righteousness of a good man according to Isaiah 32:17: **And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.** This work of righteousness will secure for him peace, quietness and assurance forever. A man of faith will trust in the provision of God. He will not be stingy. A good man is a man with a big heart. A good man is a man who will consider the poor. In contrast, a wicked man is a man who will despise the poor and indulge in the flesh.

And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran. And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb. And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep. And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name: And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased. And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be? So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings. And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff. But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them. But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields: They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him. Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two

**bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses. And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal. And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them.**

David and his men were being hunted down by king Saul. They were residing near Nabal's estate and at the same time protecting his sheep and people acting like a wall to them. David and his men were poor and needy. They needed food for survival and not for indulgence. When David sent his men to Nabal, Nabal told them off. His excuse was he did not know David who could be a fraud. This was just an excuse of course for David was famous in Israel.

Notwithstanding, his wife went to David to pacify him who was on murderous mood after being turned away by Nabal. His wife knew about David and his exploits in Israel were famous. The women came dancing and singing Saul had killed his thousands while David killed his ten thousands which got Saul very upset. Here Nabal's servant was wise enough to approach Nabal's wife otherwise all of them would be dead. Nabal was just a wicked man. His other excuse was his food was meant for his shearers which was not entirely true.

**And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light. But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died. (1 Samuel 25:36-38)**

Nabal was a stingy man. He turned away David and his men who were poor and needy while he indulged like a king. He could not be bothered with the poor and needy. He indulged himself like a king, which he was not. He was a stingy man who despised the poor. He was a wicked man who would not obey the law given to him. He had such a bad testimony that his servant had no qualms calling him a son of Belial when seeking help from

his wife, Abigail. Solomon had this to say about such a man: **He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not. (Proverb 21:26)**

We see the contrast between a righteous man and a wicked man who is rich. A wicked man is a covetous man. Covetousness is part of the Ten Commandments that a man must avoid. Solomon also wrote: **He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor. (Proverb 22:9)** This is a good description of Boaz who took notice of the poor and needy. He gave of his bread to the poor and he was blessed. He was blessed tremendously for he became the great grandfather of king David. What an honour and to be the great grandfather of the king after God's own heart!

The promise of blessing to those who take care of the poor is found many times in the Old Testament. **He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse. (Proverb 28:27)** In the gospel, a rich young man came to ask the Lord Jesus Christ how he might inherit eternal life. But this rich man who would not give away his riches to the poor to follow the Lord and was grieved. He did not believe he would have no lack by following the Lord who will give him eternal life.

Nabal was a man who hid his eyes from the poor. As a result, he was cursed and God killed him. Indeed many a curse will come upon those who oppress the poor and needy and neglect them. The psalmist tells us. **For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless. (Psalms 9:18; 10:14)**

Those who oppress the poor are in direct opposition with Almighty God. For God is the helper of the fatherless. The Lord promised to exact vengeance on those who oppress them. **For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. (Psalm 12:5)** Who would want to be on the wrong side fighting the true and living God? This is sure madness! When God arises, who can stand before Him? **This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. (Psalm 34:6)**

David understood what it meant to be poor and needy. He has a God who thinks upon him. **But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my**

**God. (Psalm 40:17) Because of this truth, the psalmist could write. Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners. (Psalm 41:1; 69:33)**

The psalmist offers another promise of those who take care of the poor. **He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour. (Psalm 112:9)** This is a very good description of Boaz, the great grandfather of David. Those who have spiritual eyes to see will understand God is watching the rich how they treat the poor and needy.

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 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; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And 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 thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. (Luke 16:19-31)

Here we are told the rich man had the best clothes he could buy and wear. He had the best food and ate to his heart's content. His life was one of abundance and indulgence. At his gate was a poor man Lazarus. Lazarus was a beggar. He was sick and full of sores. His food was to desire some crumbs from the rich man's table. Whether he got those crumbs from the rich man's table, we could only speculate. Crumbs are meant for dogs. The woman whose daughter needed help from the Lord confirmed this fact in Matthew 15:27: **And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.**

The rich man regarded Lazarus as a dog. Ironically, Lazarus was also associated with dogs. It was not because he loved dogs which were unclean animals. It was dogs were the only animals that took pity on him. These dogs were his comfort and companion. What an affront for a rich Jew to



allow his poor brethren to degenerate to that state! So the poor man had gone to the dogs!

This poor man had no choice. He could not choose his own friends and so dogs were his best friends. It seemed like he had no other friends. Who would want to befriend a beggar lest the beggar becomes a liability to him!

The rich man was careful to avoid this poor man though he sat outside his gate. The rich man wanted nothing to do with Lazarus. He did not want to take care of him like he was commanded under the Law of Moses. Was he unable to take care of this beggar sitting outside his gate? But he was rich! He wore the best clothes he could find and ate the best food he could afford. Lazarus only had crumbs from his table living like a dog. When he was sick, he could not afford to go to a doctor. Only dogs ministered to him. He was really poor beyond measure. The contrast here between the rich and the poor is unmistakable.

Eventually both expired their probation on earth. The rich man was tormented in hell while Lazarus was comforted in Abraham's bosom. Why both went to different places? Why was their destiny so different? Does it mean all rich man will end up in hell and all poor man will go to paradise automatically?

The propensity of the rich to abuse the poor is a matter of fact as confirmed in Scriptures. **But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? (James 2:6)** Here is this very striking condemnation for those who despised the poor. The rich man despised the poor. Which rich man will allow a beggar to marry his daughter? How many rich men will want to associate with the poor? Is there any advantage for a rich man in associating with the poor?

Rich people are very afraid of poor friends and relatives. Those who strike lottery are very afraid to tell others. They are afraid the poor friends and relatives would come and ask them for money or borrow from them. Few years back, the New Paper reported the relatives of this man in Malaysia who had 21 children would avoid him like a plague during Chinese New Year. Oh you talk about the joy of giving out red packets! There goes your joy of giving! You talk about the pinnacle of hypocrisy of the human heart?

The rich will find ways and means to avoid the poor. When they help the poor, they want their contributions to be tax-deductible. But the law required that the rich take care of the poor under the Law of Moses for Israel. Solomon wrote: **The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends. (Proverb 14:20)** Hence the poor man Lazarus had no friends and dogs were his only friends while the rich man had many friends. **He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he. (Proverb 14:21)** So it is a sin to despise the poor and the rich man is guilty. The rich man was actually an unhappy man because he had no mercy on the poor. **He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor. (Proverb 14:31)** The rich man here did not honour the Lord.

So this rich man had not been a keeper of the law? So what is the punishment for breaking the law deliberately? Here the rich man ended up in hell fire. In this life, whether one is rich or poor, it is just a probation for the next to come. The poor may suffer in this life but the chances of them making it to paradise are much higher than the rich.

What is God's attitude towards the rich? **But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. (Luke 6:24&25)** Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for

**your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. (James 5:1&2)** The warnings against the rich are numerous in the Holy Bible. Rich men live in greater danger of hellfire. The desire to be rich often leads to sorrows.

The rich man here is a son of Abraham. So it does not mean that if one is a Jew, he is automatically saved! Unless a Jew is a keeper of the law, he will likewise perish. God is not unfair to the Gentiles by not giving them the Law. This rich man called Abraham his father. He was a descendant of Abraham as acknowledged by Abraham.

This rich man knew the poor man Lazarus as well. He wanted Lazarus to be sent back to his family to warn them not to come to this place of torment. He surely remembered how he had treated Lazarus in the past. He was quite sure Lazarus who was now in paradise had a message for his brethren and would tell them the whole story. His desired was that Lazarus would tell his brethren how to avoid coming to this place of torment. Lazarus would be the best living testimony as far as this rich man was concerned. Lazarus would very likely tell his brethren not to indulge and neglect the poor. Lazarus would tell them to obey the Law of Moses regarding treatment of the poor. The rich man believed that his brethren would repent at the preaching of Lazarus.

This rich man being a son of Abraham, the oracles of God were committed to him. He must know that as an Israelite, he was to observe the whole law and do it. If he failed to keep one law, he was guilty of transgressing the whole law. He surely knew about Moses. Now he knew why he was sent to hell while Lazarus went to paradise. He cannot blame anyone for being rich. His heart was not right and he was covetous. He was a wicked man as far as the Law was concerned. He was like Nabal who would indulge and he turned away the men from David. He was no kin of Boaz. He cannot blame anyone for his misfortune for ending up in hell. He cannot blame Lazarus for showing up at his gate to cause him this misery.

In fact, Lazarus could be his angel had he treated him right. Had he not learned from his ancestors who had entertained angels? **Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (Hebrews 13:2)** Even if Lazarus did not happen to cross his life, this rich man would not help any other poor man either. The status of his heart was fixed. He had an evil heart of unbelief in God's words. God's words told him what to do with the poor. He simply rejected God's words and lived the life the way he wanted. Nobody could tell him what to do and he was a rebel. Be warned, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. The rich man was simply reaping what he sowed.

Abraham denied him his request to send Lazarus back to his brethren. Firstly, it is impossible. The status for the dead is fixed. Warning fallen men to observe God's Law and keep God's words is not the job of those who have died. God gives men His words and they are to observe His words. If fallen men do not believe in God's words, even those who come back from the dead will not be able to convince them. It is how men respond to God's words and by God's words they will be judged.

The rich man's brethren had the Law of Moses. They would be judged on how they responded to the laws given to them. The Law is summarized to just two points. **Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (Matthew 22:37)** Did the rich man love God with all his heart? If he did, then why he did not keep God's commandment? **And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Matthew 22:39)** Did the rich man love his neighbour as himself? This Law is also given in another passage. **And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. (Luke 10:27)**

So generally, the rich man broke the Law. But what specific law did the rich man break that caused him to end up in hell? What did the Law of Moses say?

**And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard. (Exodus 23:10&11)** Did the Jews keep this Law? No. They refused to obey God to let the land rest every seventh year. They refused to let the poor and the beast to eat of the fields in the land. They failed to honour the Lord by having mercy on the poor. So the Lord expelled them from the land for 70 years because for 400 over years they failed to let the land rest. Therefore God proclaimed a rest for the land by forced expulsion.

**And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. (Leviticus 25:35)** Did the rich man relieve this poor man Lazarus? Did the rich man obey this commandment and let the poor man Lazarus live with him? **And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant: (Leviticus 25:39)** Many of the Jews oppressed their own brethren and that was one of the reasons why God expelled them from their land. The rich man here likewise turned a blind eye to the plight of poor Lazarus.

**At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD's release. Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release; Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it: (Deuteronomy 15:1-4)** The Lord was interested in alleviating poverty from among His people. The Lord had a program for them and they were supposed to execute this program but they did not obey God. They were covetous and they did not honour the Lord. **If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. (Deuteronomy 15:7&8)** So the poor man Lazarus showed up at the rich man's gate. What did the rich man do to him? Did the rich man take care of him? Feeding him with crumbs from his table was not compatible with relieving this poor man Lazarus. He could have hired him as one of his servants to feed him but he did not. **Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteth thine hand unto. (Deuteronomy 15:9&10)** So it became sin when a rich man with a wicked heart refused to help a poor brethren or stranger. This rich man was covetous and it would cause him grief should he give to the poor man Lazarus. **For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. (Deuteronomy 15:11)** So this rich man died for his own sin for not keeping the Law of Moses.

The rich man did not go to hell because he was rich. He went there because he did not keep God's Law. He was a transgressor of God's Law. There was no evidence to suggest that he committed adultery. In fact the adulterer David made it to paradise. There was no evidence that he bowed down to idols. Yet he went to hell. It may even seem to all his rich friends

that he was a good man as far as their own standards of measurement were concerned. They might even have a priest and many rich friends to say many good things about this rich man during his funeral. What is the use?

He simply ate too much and not fed this poor man Lazarus. He simply had too much expensive clothes while the poor man at his gate was clothed in rags. His attitude towards the poor was found wanting. He could have nursed Lazarus back to health like the good Samaritan but he did not. But he left his poor Jewish kin to be ministered by dogs. If you were an angel in heaven observing all these, would you spare this rich man? Would you justify this rich man and give him a chance to repent? What is your basis of sparing this rich man?

Had this rich man faith in God's words? Had he obeyed God's words? On what basis would you justify this rich man? If he had faith in God and in His words, he would have works to back up his faith. But there was none. The fiends from hell rejoiced that day for one more captive fallen son of Adam. Heaven frowned and wished this son of Abraham had obeyed God and kept God's commandments. The Lord was gracious to withhold the identity of this rich man but the poor man was named who waited upon God who will take care of him. Perhaps the words of the psalmist kept ringing in his ears during his silent agony.

**For the needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever. Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless. For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God. For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners. (Psalms 9:18; 10:14; 12:5; 40:17; 69:33)**

**This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. (Psalm 34:6)** So the Lord graciously delivered poor Lazarus from his troubles and misery. His sufferings came to an end when he died. Angels ministered to him instead of dogs. Those dogs that guarded him on earth handed over their task and the angels took over. The Lord raised up this poor man from miry clay.



**He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. (Psalms 113:7&8)** Yes, poor Lazarus is now sitting with princes. He is found sitting with Abraham, the friend of God. What a privilege and what an honour! Born poor was not his fault. His poverty and sufferings were for the glory of God. **And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. (John 9:1-3)**

The Lord allows fallen men to be born with infirmity to glorify Him. So do not ever despise the poor and needy and those who are infirmed. You could be found wanting in your attitudes and your work of faith in relation to what God has revealed to you. The poor man Lazarus could turn out to be a blessing for the rich man. He could be like a Ruth to Boaz. This rich man could turn out to be like a Boaz who gave out handfuls of purpose but he was not. He turned out to be a Nabal who was cursed by God.

So this rich man went to hell for his own sin. There was no more atonement for sin in the after life. He could have gone to a priest in a temple and offered sacrifice to atone for his sin before he died. He could have made restitution by taking care of the poor man Lazarus but he did not. For how many years he had neglected poor Lazarus sitting outside his gate begging, God knew. God was waiting for repentance from the rich man but He found none. Perhaps the rich man was waiting for true repentance from heaven! He thought God might have to do the repenting for him like any good Calvinist! He could not help it you see! God in His eternal counsel has already determined all things. True repentance will come and God will overcome the poor deluded man who believes in Calvin by His irresistible grace. What monstrosity and perversion of Scriptures! Irresistible grace is not found in the Holy Bible. The Bible teaches that Christians could resist the Holy Ghost, quench and grieve the Holy Spirit.

The rich man had had his chance. He simply had no appetite for spiritual truth. He lived the life he wanted and no man could tell him what to do. Not even the Law of Moses could move him. He rejected God's Law though he was born a Jew, a descendent of Abraham. He was promised an inheritance but he thought this life was all that he could get. So he ate, drank and be merry and he died. He enjoyed his heaven on earth and he suffered

for all eternity in hell. The poor man Lazarus suffered all the hell on earth and he enjoyed all eternity of bliss in the kingdom of God.

So what is the lesson for us Christians? What is God's attitude towards the rich? **Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. (Revelation 3:17-19) But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. (1 Timothy 6:9-19)**

Giving to the poor will not earn us salvation. We have to believe in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and have a personal relationship with Christ. Our stewardship will be judged one day. Will you inherit the kingdom of God with eternal glory? Take a good look at our own life from above. Do you think God is pleased with us and the way we live our life thus far? Do you think angels observing us would frown with disapproval for the kind of work we are doing? Are there any questionable activities that will cause us to come to grief later on? We may not end up in hell fire but we may not have a chance to make restitution either. We may not have the time for us to invest in eternity.

This King James Bible believing friend who turned apostate did not happen overnight. He used to attack those who pervert the Bible and Catholicism. He also attacked those who preached tithing with such vehemence that it bothers on hatred. Disagreeing with a brother is one thing but hating him is something else. Those who hate their brother abide in death. Could it be he is a stingy belly worshipper who refuses to give and that is why he is against tithing? The New Testament Church does not have a tax regime of tithing like Israel as a nation but giving is found throughout the New Testament. Must he deny the Scriptures in order to refute a false teaching? He ended up rejecting this passage and insinuated that some enemies had slipped this passage in between the parables.

Championing just the King James Bible alone can be turned into a hobbyhorse. Championing liberty alone could turn you into a liberal living a life of lasciviousness. The rich man had all the liberty to obey God but he did not. He abused his liberty. What about us? Is the kind of liberty we cherish so much causing us to obey God and love Him more or is it our weakest link? Are we found to be closeted belly worshipper?

What is the lesson for us from this passage on the rich man and poor Lazarus? Does it strike fear in you? **But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. (Luke 6:24&25)** Are you not afraid of these words pronounced by the Lord Jesus Christ on the rich? Knowing the propensity of the rich to oppress the poor, neglect and ignore them, do you not fear what the Lord will do to us if we are not charitable? The belly worshipper in the Old Testament refused to obey God's Law to take care of the poor saints. God was angry enough to send Nabal and other rich men to hell. What do you think God will do to us if we are like these wicked rich people in the Old Testament? The New Testament belly worshippers who refused to obey God to take care of the poor saints will not be sent to hell but they will come to shame and grief. Ever wonder why some other churches who use the King James Bible but are not King James Bible believers only seem to be prospering well? Perhaps they are still preaching the pure gospel and taking care of the poor saints and God is still please with them.

What about us as a church? We have a stand but do we have works to support our stand? If not we are just standing on hot air. Five to ten years from now, are we still going to be doing the same thing day in and day out? How many years now have we been just paying for rental of premises and nothing else? We used to send Bibles to the saints. What is happening now? Where is our work of faith and labour of love? But we have worship and we worship God in Spirit and in truth you may contend. But where is our work to back up our true worship? If we have no work of faith and labour of love, our faith is false and our worship is just a form.

Has worship become a form? I hope not! What will happen to our children in five to ten years time? Will they believe our faith is real, and heaven and hell are real? Hopefully none of us stumbles them with our indifference. Hopefully none of them end up in hell fire begging for

someone to send a Lazarus to warn their other siblings not to join them in hell.

Taking care of the poor is one of those missions for the church in the New Testament. You will find them taking up collection to relieve the poor saints. **For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. (Romans 15:26)** This law in the Old Testament was not abolished in the New Testament. How often do we as a church make a contribution to the poor saints? As a church, are we charitable? The saints in the New Testament were careful to maintain good works. They used their wealth to glorify God.

**For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)** Christ our Lord was rich and yet He became poor for us sinners. He became poor so that we might become rich. For those of us who believe we have eternal life, we must start to reckon how rich we really are. We are the sons of the living God. The kingdom of God belongs to us. All things are ours. The title deed to the many mansions in heaven has been signed, sealed and delivered to us. We are just waiting to move into our heavenly homes. You do not have to worry about renovation or property tax. All has been paid for by the Lamb of God. You do not have to choose your property fearing living beside some unreasonable neighbours. For all men are perfect and sinless redeemed people of the Lord. There will be no quarrels in heaven. There will be no inconsiderate neighbours to deal with. The streets are paved with pure gold. So we can afford to be generous in this life.

The Jews have very bad reputation in this world. They are known to be stingy and calculative. Many unsaved people in this world have very bad impression on Christians as well. Apart from accountants, some of them think Christians are the stingiest people on earth. They got such impression after interacting with some so called Christians. Personally, I have also come across Christians who are very stingy. It is amazing to see the way they treat others with their money. I supposed false doctrine from the church has caused them to become so deformed in this aspect of stewardship. You will find their church preaching on tithing and giving on a regular basis. They will launch a stewardship month and the preaching for the whole month will be nothing except giving.

We are very privileged that there is no passing the plate or the bag around telling us that giving is part of our worship. Brother Patrick told me the church he attends in Sydney is like ours just having a box that any may give on their own free will. He mentioned that he had heard the best sermon on giving over there when a deacon preached while the pastor was away. The deacon told them that Christians in the New Testament helped one another out in times of need. He said that if anyone came to know of a brother in need, he could put money in an envelope and write a note on the envelope before putting it in the box and so they would know who to give the money to.

But many churches teach their people to give just to the church and be controlled by the church for all their programs. So they have this very warped view of their stewardship. They may appear to be very generous in front of Christians by giving to maintain a spiritual front, but when dealing with the lost or family members, they are as stingy as Nabal. False teachings from the church have caused a lot of hardship to Christians. They make them pledged to give for whatever cause the church could come up with. Brother Patrick told me they were Christians in Auckland having to go to loan sharks to keep up with their pledges. Nevertheless, Christians ought to be generous because we are indeed very rich beyond measure.

Old Testament promise of blessing for those who take care of the poor is quoted by the apostle Paul: **(As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. (2 Corinthians 9:9)** If we want our righteousness to remain forever, we must learn to be like Boaz who gave out handfuls of purpose. Ever given out a meal that you bought for yourself to the poor before giving them the gospel? You cannot imagine the joy the Lord will give you for doing this. Only men of faith will be generous because they believe their God is so big. They do not believe God will shortchange them when they give to the poor.

A man who has no faith will hoard and become stingy. The unsaved will not trust in Christ because of his miserly manner of life. The unsaved will think that his god is so poor and why would he want to worship such a poor god? I have come across a number of unsaved people who have been very generous to me. Have you experienced God touching others who gave out handfuls of purpose to you? Have you experience God loading us daily with benefits we do not deserve? Then we should learn to give out handfuls

of purpose when we see a brother in need. You cannot imagine the joy that will come to you for being generous.

Christians also need to be generous to the lost so that they know how rich our God is. The people in this world often mock churches where Christians give to their church to pay for all their frivolous programs and workers. They often make fun of the ten percent Christians have to pay to attend their weekly entertainment in church. We have no such false teachings and we are in a much better position to give out handfuls of purpose. In fact, the brethren here as individuals are sometimes generous to a fault. One time when we went into a restaurant for lunch, this brother was already having lunch there with someone. We were sitting on different tables. He finished lunch first and when he left, he paid for my lunch as well before I could even stop him. It is God's grace that gives us a generous heart. Old Testament practice of taking care of the poor is a New Testament practice as well. Paul wrote to the Christians in Galatia to tell them this. **Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do. (Galatians 2:10)**

We will never know what kind of blessing will come to us when we obey the commandments of God. We can look out for poor and needy brethren and give out handfuls of purpose when there is opportunity. Giving out handfuls of purpose is especially meaningful when we distribute gospel tracts. There are many poor and needy spiritually blind folks who need the gospel to become rich. We who are beneficiaries of the gospel should not reap the harvest of the benefits to ourselves.

Boaz was a good man of faith who gave out handfuls of purpose. The most generous person is God the Father who gave us not only handfuls of purpose but His only Begotten Son. We should give out these handfuls of purpose to lost sinners so that they might become rich in Christ like all of us and learn to be generous as well. Would you rather be a Boaz or a Nabal? The answer is too obvious. One handed out handfuls of purpose while the other indulged to his own hurt. The church's annual financial report is a good indicator of how generous we have been as a church. Joy and blessing will come for those who would obey God and live according to His will for us. May the Lord teach us and help us as a church to give out handfuls of purpose to glorify our Lord. Let us be a generous people like Boaz and God will recompense us many folds in this life and beyond.

The day of judgment is coming. Judgment must begin from the house of God. Are we ready to face the Lord knowing that we have done our best? Or are we apprehensive not knowing what the Lord thinks of us for the life we have lived so far? Are we truly charitable? May this incident about the rich man and the poor man Lazarus the Lord deliberately gave in Luke 16 cause us to examine our attitudes and our practice towards the poorer brethren. May we truly be a charitable people!

**If you have been blessed with the reading of this book and you wish to contact the author, you may write to him at [charles@kiv-asia.com](mailto:charles@kiv-asia.com).**