

## Restoration of the Kingdom of God – 21

Last time we saw how the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus was based on the current Pharisee beliefs concerning “**the bosom of Abraham**” in the afterlife.

- As earlier suggested, this parable was a warning by Jesus of God’s coming judgement on the religious leaders. Their persistence in the love of riches, causing them to reject the One whom God had sent, would result in their rejection by God. The “*certain rich man*” - **Luke 16:19** would call attention to a particular member of that body of men, many of them rich, which largely composed the council or Sanhedrin, the supreme court in Jerusalem.

Its members included the **high priests** (the then current **Caiaphas** and former priests), members of the privileged families, Sadducees, from which the high priests were taken. Many of the other members were Pharisees. Josephus wrote in his *Antiquities*, “Annas...had **five sons**, who had all performed the office of a high priest to God.” Caiaphas was **son-in-law** to Annas - **John 18:13**.

- Jesus continued his parable in **Luke 16:20** “*But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table.*” The name of **Lazarus** became widely known after his resurrection by Jesus. “*So it was,*” continued Jesus in **Luke 16:22** “*that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom...*”

Flavius Josephus described this Pharisee belief: “Now as to **Hades**, wherein the souls of...the **righteous and unrighteous** are detained...This region is allotted as a place of custody for souls, in which angels...distribute to them **temporary punishments**, agreeable to every one’s behaviour and manners...the just...are now indeed confined in Hades...are guided to the right hand...unto a region of light...while they wait for that rest and eternal new life **in heaven** (Jesus said they sleep), which is to succeed this region. This place we call **The Bosom of Abraham**” - *Discourse to the Greeks Concerning Hades*.

- Jesus continued, **22** “*...The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me... for I am tormented in this flame’.*” Josephus wrote, “Now those angels that are set over these souls drag them into the neighbourhood of hell itself...of a terrible...prospect of fire.” The superstition was that Abraham could intercede for people there, who might cross over the river in a boat to be with Abraham.

But Jesus had Abraham saying, **26** “*between us - he and Lazarus - and you - the rich man - 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.*” **27** “*Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, 28 for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment’,*” thus identifying the rich man as Caiaphas - **John 11:49**.

- **Luke 16:29** “*Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ 30 And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31 But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead’.*” In fact, Lazarus did rise from the dead - and their response was **John 11:47** “*then the chief priests and the Pharisees... 53 ...plotted to put Him - Jesus - to death.*” **12:10** “*the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death.*”