

# When the Rich Man Opened His Eyes – It Was Too Late!

Luke 16:19-31

## Introduction

How we see and hear things is very important and valuable. But there are people who have eye sight but do not see and have ears but do not listen.

Jesus talked about this in Matthew 13:13 when He said, *“Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing they do not understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.’”*

Jesus continues in Matthew 13:15, *“For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.”*

In this context of these verses Jesus is answering His disciples question on why he speaks to the people in parables. His answer is simply

- To reveal to those who receive Him and
- To conceal meaning from those who do not receive Him.

Therefore the eyes and ears of Christ’s followers are able to see and hear, because they believe and receive the message of truth. Only for true believers there is divine illumination.

Jesus also spoke of the problem with people who refuse to believe because they love the darkness rather than the light. In John 3:19 He said, *“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.”* There are people who love the darkness rather than the light of God. In the end they lose their souls.

In Luke 16:19-31 Jesus teaches a story of what happens when a person refuses to believe and accept the light of God. The consequences are horrific and dreadful.

## Luke 16:19-31

In this passage of Luke’s gospel Jesus is giving one of His most important warnings through a parable. Some have interpreted the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus as a true event that happened. But most biblical scholars see it as a parable. I tend to agree that it is a parable.

Also the story’s opening words, *“Now there was a rich man,”* are consistent with the language which Jesus often began His parables (see Luke 10:30; 14:16; 15:11; & 19:12).

### *When the Rich Man opened his eyes . . .*

He saw more than fire and brimstone in Hades. Sometimes Hades is translated as Hell. But Hades is a place where the people who reject God will suffer and wait for the Great White Throne Judgment. We Read in Revelation 20:13-15, *The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15 Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.*

The rich man saw his eternal doom, he saw his lost opportunities and he had many regrets. But it was too late.

The tragic truth is that most people who end up in Hades (the place of torment) will be shocked to find themselves there.

When the Rich Man opened his eyes . . .

### **1. He Saw Nothing As Important As His Soul.**

His riches, luxuries and materialism were not as important.

- 1/ The fine robes and fine jewelry.
- 2/ The size of his castle, and his luxurious furniture.
- 3/ The servants waiting on hand and foot.
- 4/ The banquets of fine foods.
- 5/ The parties of drinking and women, of getting high.

***When the rich man opened his eyes he understood these truths:***

1 Timothy 6:7, “*For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.*”

Matthew 16:26, “*What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?*”

Hebrews 13:5 *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

When the Rich Man opened his eyes . . .

### **2. He Saw the Importance of Showing Mercy & Compassion.**

He did not argue over any injustice of being tormented in Hades.

He did not ask "Why am I here?"

He did not ask "Why is Lazarus there?"

***When the rich man opened his eyes he understood these truths:***

Matthew 5:7, “*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy.*”

Luke 10:36-37 The Story of the Good Samaritan? Jesus asked a teacher of the Law, “*Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?*” The expert in the law replied, “*The one who had mercy on him.*” Jesus told him, “*Go and do likewise.*”

When the Rich Man opened his eyes . . .

### **3. He Saw the Importance of Listening and Obeying the Truth.**

Listening to the truth would have kept him from the place of torment.

The rich wanted father Abraham to warn his 5 brothers of hell. But Abraham said “*Your brothers could listen to God through Moses and the prophets.*”

The sad thing is that the rich man too could have listened, but he didn't. He didn't listen nor obey the truth, the Word of God.

***When the rich man opened his eyes he understood these truths:***

John 8:32 “*You will know the truth and the truth will make you free.*”

John 14:6 Jesus said, “*I am the way, THE TRUTH, and the life, no one comes to the Father, but by me.*”

When the Rich Man opened his eyes . . .

### **4. He Saw The Importance of Evangelism.**

The rich man said to father Abraham, “*Send Lazarus to my brothers!*”

The rich man didn't want his family to go to the place of torment. He wanted Lazarus to be resurrected and warn his family. But it was too late.

***When the rich man opened his eyes he understood these truths:***

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, *Vengeance will be upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.*

Mark 16:15-16, *And Jesus said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*

When the Rich Man opened his eyes . . .

### **5. He Saw the Importance of Prayer**

The rich man called out, '*Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire*' (Luke 16:24).

That's prayer! But it was too late. Prayers are useless in Hades/hell.

When the Rich Man opened his eyes . . .

### **6. He Saw The Weakness of His Excuses.**

But I needed that lifestyle...

But I didn't have time for the things of God...

But I only wanted to have pleasure and fulfill my desires . . .

When the Rich Man opened his eyes . . .

### **7. He Saw That It Was TOO LATE To Change.**

But it is not too late for you...

Don't wait until it is...

***When the rich man opened his eyes he understood these truths:***

Hebrews 3:17, *As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."*

2 Corinthians 6:2, *For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation.*

I would ask you to search your hearts this morning and make sure that you seize this moment to make your life right with God before it's too late. Don't wait like the foolish rich man who in the end perished. Ask Christ into your life and ask Him to forgive your sins.

The tragic truth is that most people who end up in Hades (the place of torment) will be shocked to find themselves there. "I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, now is the day of salvation." Start the New Year with a new life in Christ and He will secure your eternal destiny.