

THE GREAT WENCHOSTER BIBLE

Luke 16: 19-31

19. And Jesus spake unto the people saying, Behold, a parable. And they did settle down to listen, for He was an good storyteller. And He said unto them, Once upon a time there was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen with sheer hose and silk underwear, and he fared sumptuously every day on lark's tongues, roast lamb, freshly baked bread, hard-boiled eggs, tomato sandwiches, lemonade, tinned sardines, melt-in-the-mouth shortbread, lettuces, radishes, foaming milk, ginger beer, tins of pineapple chunks, squares of chocolate and diverse sweetmeats, but absolutely no shellfish. Especially crabs, which he had never had. And the people did nod approvingly even after such a long verse, and waited for the balancing exegetical character to appear.

20. And suddenly they were not disappointed, for Jesus continued, And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, though this was not the Lazarus whose sisters I have the pleasure of knowing and who entertain me when I AM in their house, for he would be annoyed if he thought I was spreading rumours about his health which is much restored following his recent sojourn in the tomb. (But, dear Theophilus, that is not in this book.)

21. And Lazarus, this other one, not the Bethany one, (see above) was desiring to be fed with the crumbs and scraps which fell from the rich man's table, even unto the leftovers that were fed to the goats: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores, and other sundry bits. And the crowds did wince exceedingly at this and some did say, Too much information.

22. And lo! Jesus declared, it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. At this some women in the crowd around Jesus did weep, and some did wail, but He ignored them and continued: the rich man also died, and was buried; and at this many of his hearers did chortle, some saying, Yes! Serves him right.

23. But seeing Jesus glance super-witheringly in their direction these people did cease their comments and turn their attention once more unto the tale. And Jesus waved his hands dramatically and said, And in hell the rich man lifteth up his eyes, being in torments with demons pricking his tender parts with little forks, (let the reader understand) and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, though no funny business was going on.

24. 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 please ask him to wash his digit first since the dogs did lick it.

25. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and plenteous foods that are listed above somewhere, and wines and the occasional bottle of great vintage, and likewise Lazarus evil things such as the castings from thy kitchens and the scraps from thy bins: but now he is comforted and wrapped in soft clothing, with clean undergarments even, whilst thou art tormented and have naught but garlic-scented sackcloth for thy vesture. Rough, isn't it?

26. And beside all this, behold. Between us and you there is an great gulf fixed, a valley that smoketh and is filled with fumes and vile putrescence: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, and neither would they seek such passage; and likewise neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence, nor would we wish it, for the smell of garlic and other divers whiffs is overpowering.

27. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house, which is built out in the suburbs and hath a pleasant garden surrounding it with olive trees and beds of hyssop and a nice white fence bordering its lawns and shrubberies. And tell him he can use the pool if he fancies a dip.

28. For my father was blessed in his loins and I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And at this there were murmurings of approval from the scribes and the Pharisees that listeneth unto Our Lord's teaching.

30. And He continueth with his parable saying, But the rich man said, Nay, father Abraham, for though the Law and the Prophets containeth much guidance and teaching they are but words: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will scream at the spookiness, and tear their cloaks and soil themselves, and their neighbour, and immediately repent. Oh yes.

31. And Abraham said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets which be proclaimed every Sabbath in the synagogues, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. And none of His disciples understood this part, though later some remembered and thought, Oh yeah.