

Luke 16:29-31. Abraham's Reply to the Rich Man.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The Lord's method of dealing with men, through the written word and living preachers, is the most excellent way to save souls and avoid eternal consequences.

Scripture: John 20:29, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:17, 1 Corinthians 1:21, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Salvation Through Faith", "Power Of Scripture"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer emphasizes that God's method of reaching souls is through His written word and appointed messengers, rather than through supernatural appearances of departed spirits. The rich man in the story imagined that a warning from a departed soul would lead his brothers to repentance, but God's plan involves believers sharing His message with others. Just as Jesus did not appear to His enemies after His resurrection, God calls us to believe in His word and appointed messengers for salvation. The word of God has the power to awaken the hearts of the thoughtless and save them from eternal torment, leading them to the abode of bliss through faith.

Transcript

It is natural to suppose that the sight of a departed spirit would awaken a thoughtless soul. The rich man imagined that his brethren would turn from sin if Lazarus were to appear to them in the midst of their luxury and their gaiety, and to say, "I am the beggar that once languished at the gate--I am now an inhabitant of heaven--I partake of the immortal feast--I sit with the saints, and behold the face of God--I have seen your brother--he is not with us--I heard a doleful cry--it was his voice--he was burning in the flames of hell--he entreated that I might moisten his tongue with the tip of my finger, but the request could not be granted. He has remembered you. He once lived (as you do now) a worldly, thoughtless life--he knows how your lives will end--he dreads lest you should join him in the place of torment."

The rich man supposed that such a warning voice would alarm his brethren, stop them in their sinful career, and turn them to God. But the Lord has not appointed this mode of dealing with men. He might have made the departed, the ministers of the living. Every dead relative might have appeared again; the happy ones to tell of their happiness; the miserable ones to tell of their misery. But God devised another method. He spoke to holy men of old, and taught them to write the words he dictated. He appointed living men to speak of those holy words to their fellow-creatures. This is God's method. Thousands and tens of

thousands have been saved by these means. They have believed the written message, and the living preacher, and have fled from the threatened wrath. God continues to pursue this plan of dealing with men. He requires us to believe what we do not see, only because HE says it. The Lord Jesus well knew that if he had appeared to his enemies when he rose again from the dead, he would not have overcome their enmity; therefore he did not appear to them. He appeared to his friends for their comfort, but not to his enemies for their conversion.

The Lord's method must be the most excellent way. If we would save the souls of men, we must let them hear the word of God, which he spoke by Moses, by the prophets, by his own Son, and by his apostles. That word has awakened whole families, who were as thoughtless as the rich man's brothers, and has saved them from the place of torment. Every soul that reaches the abode of bliss, will trace his coming there to his having heard the word of God. Some will speak of one part of that blessed word, and some will speak of another, and all will bless the Holy Spirit who opened their hearts to receive the truth. We shall not need the Bible in heaven, because we shall be with Him who wrote it; but surely it will not be forgotten there. Neither will it be forgotten in hell. It will add to the fierceness of the flames to remember the slighted warnings, the despised promises, the rejected invitations of the word of God.

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