



# SERMON SERIES STUDY GUIDE

## Heaven and Hell, The Reality Of Life After Death, Pt. 4 Pastor John Riggs

### Main Scriptures:

- Luke 16:19–28; 23:42–43
- Matthew 12:40; 27:45–54; 12:47–48; 12:5; 28:2; 25:14–30; 11:20–24; 16:27
- Psalm 63:9; 30:1–3
- Genesis 37:35
- 2 Samuel 7:12
- Deuteronomy 31:16
- Daniel 12:13
- Ephesians 4:8–10
- Colossians 2:13–15
- 1 Peter 3:18–20
- Acts 2:25–31
- John 20:17
- 1 Corinthians 15:12–24; 3:10–15
- Revelation 2:7; 20:4–6; 20:11–13; 1:18; 6:8; 20:13–14
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18
- 2 Corinthians 5:10
- 2 Peter 2:20–22; 2:4
- Jude 6–7
- Jeremiah 7:31
- 2 Chronicles 28:3
- Mark 9:43

## Key Points:

- There are two main compartments in the abode of the dead:  
The sermon teaches that sheol/Hades is a single “abode of the dead” but with two vast chambers: one of comfort (Abraham’s side/paradise) for the righteous, and one of torment for the unrighteous, separated by a fixed great chasm (Luke 16:19–26).
- The story of the rich man and Lazarus is taken as a literal picture of afterlife:  
The sermon claims that Jesus’ parable is a real-life-like depiction of conscious life after death, not just a symbolic fable, and should shape our understanding of heaven and hell.
- The righteous dead are now taken to heaven/paradise:  
After Christ’s resurrection and ascension, the blessed side of the abode of the dead (Abraham’s side) was moved into heaven; the O.T. saints and New-Testament believers now go directly into God’s presence (Luke 23:43; Ephesians 4:8–10; Revelation 2:7).
- The unrighteous dead remain in a place of torment until final judgment:  
Hades/sheol still holds the souls of the unrighteous who die; they are in conscious torment awaiting the final resurrection and the great white throne judgment (Luke 16:23–26; Revelation 20:11–13).
- Christ’s death and resurrection changed the location of the righteous dead:  
Before Christ, the righteous went to a blessed compartment within sheol/Hades; after His three days “in the heart of the earth” and His ascension, He led the captives of that blessed side into heaven, leaving the torment-side still in place (Matthew 12:40; Ephesians 4:8–10; 1 Peter 3:18–20).
- There will be degrees of reward and punishment:  
The sermon stresses that Scripture teaches differing rewards for believers (based on faithfulness and works) and differing degrees of punishment for the wicked, not just a flat “one-size” outcome (Matthew 16:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:14–30; Luke 12:47–48).
- Hell is still being populated, and so is heaven:  
Every moment someone dies outside of Christ, they go to the suffering side of the abode of the dead (Hades/hell); every moment a believer dies, they are taken into the presence of God (paradise/heaven).
- Tartarus is the deepest abyss of hell reserved for wicked angels:  
Tartarus (mentioned only in 2 Peter 2:4) is presented as the deepest, darkest prison-chasm of Hades, where certain fallen angels are chained in gloomy darkness until the final judgment (Jude 6–7).
- Gehenna (Valley of Hinnom) illustrates the fiery final judgment:  
Jesus used Gehenna—a literal Jerusalem garbage dump associated with fire and judgment—to symbolize the eternal, unending fire of hell (Mark 9:43; Luke 12:5; Jeremiah 7:31; 2 Chronicles 28:3).





**Question and Answer:** (answers provided on pages 7-8 of the study)

Q: What picture does the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16 give us about the abode of the dead?

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Q: Where do believers go when they die, according to this sermon?

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Q: What happens to the souls of unbelievers after they die?

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Q: What does “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” mean in relation to Christ?

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Q: What is the difference between Hades and the lake of fire?

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Q: What is Tartarus, and who is there?

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Q: Why does the sermon stress that there is a “great chasm” in Luke 16?

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Q: What are rich man's brothers supposed to do instead of seeing someone return from the dead?

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**THERE IS NO TRANSCRIPT FOR THIS SERMON AVAILABLE.**

## Answers to the Study Questions:

Q: What picture does the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16 give us about the abode of the dead?

A: The story shows that the abode of the dead (Hades/sheol) has two main compartments: one of comfort where Lazarus is with Abraham (paradise), and one of torment where the rich man suffers, separated by a fixed great chasm that no one can cross (Luke 16:19–26).

Q: Where do believers go when they die, according to this sermon?

A: Believers go immediately into the presence of God in paradise; after Christ's resurrection and ascension, the blessed side of sheol/Hades was emptied and brought into heaven with Him, so now the righteous who die in Christ are taken to paradise/heaven (Luke 23:43; Ephesians 4:8–10; Revelation 2:7).

Q: What happens to the souls of unbelievers after they die?

A: The sermon teaches that the unrighteous dead remain in the suffering side of Hades/hell in conscious torment, awaiting the final resurrection and the great white throne judgment; that compartment is still being populated by every person who dies outside of Christ (Luke 16:23–26; Revelation 20:11–13).

Q: What does “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” mean in relation to Christ?

A: It means that after His death on the cross, Christ remained in the realm of the dead (the “heart of the earth”) for three days and three nights before His resurrection; during this time He also descended to proclaim victory to the spirits in prison and then ascended above all the heavens (Matthew 12:40; 1 Peter 3:18–20; Ephesians 4:8–10).

Q: What is the difference between Hades and the lake of fire?

A: Hades is the present abode of the dead—both the torment-side for the unrighteous and, before Christ, the blessed compartment for the righteous; at the end, “Death and Hades” are thrown into the lake of fire, which is the second death, the final, eternal place of judgment (Revelation 20:13–14; Revelation 2:7).

Q: What is Tartarus, and who is there?

A: Tartarus is the deepest abyss of Hades, a place of darkness and chains where certain fallen angels are kept in gloomy darkness until the judgment day; it is presented as a special prison-level for the worst angelic rebels (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6–7).

Q: Why does the sermon stress that there is a “great chasm” in Luke 16?

A: The preacher uses the great chasm to teach that there is no second chance after death and no movement between paradise and torment; once a person dies, their eternal destiny is fixed, and there is no crossing over between the two sides (Luke 16:26).

Q: What are rich man's brothers supposed to do instead of seeing someone return from the dead?

A: The sermon emphasizes that Abraham tells the rich man that his brothers already have "Moses and the prophets" (the Scriptures) and should listen to them; God's Word is sufficient warning and no special visitation from the dead is needed, which is why believers are urged to heed Scripture now (Luke 16:29–31).