

# CHAPTER 16

## INTRODUCTION TO LUKE 16

**Ver. 1.** *And he said also to his disciples*, etc.] The Syriac version adds, “a parable”, as the following is; and which is directed to the disciples, as those in the preceding chapter are to the Pharisees; and who also are designed in this; though it is particularly spoken to the disciples, because it might be of some use to them, with respect, to the stewardship they were in. The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, “Jesus”, or “the Lord Jesus said”: and which is to be understood, though not expressed; for the parable was delivered by him, and is as follows:

*there was a certain rich man*: by whom God is meant, who is rich in the perfections of his nature, in the works of his hands, in his government, and the administration of it, in providential goodness, and in the large revenues of glory due to him from his creatures; for all temporal riches are from him; and so are all the riches of mercy, grace, and glory:

*which had a steward*; by whom is designed, not all mankind; for though all men are, in a sense, stewards under God, and are entrusted with the good things of life, the gifts of nature, endowments of mind, health, strength of body, time, etc. yet all cannot be meant, because some are distinguished from this steward, (<sup><Q168></sup>Luke 16:5,8) nor are the disciples intended, though the parable is directed to them; and they were stewards of the mysteries and manifold grace of God; and one among them was an unfaithful one, and was turned out of his stewardship; but the character of an unjust man will not suit with them: and besides, this steward was of the children of this world, (<sup><Q168></sup>Luke 16:8) but the Pharisees are meant: for these are taken notice of as gravelled at this parable, (<sup><Q164></sup>Luke 16:14,15) and to them agrees the character of the men of this world, who were worldly wise men; as also that of a steward; these are the tutors and governors mentioned in (<sup><R01E></sup>Galatians 4:2) who had the care of the house of Israel, the family of God, under the legal dispensation; and to whom were committed the oracles of God, the writings of Moses, and the prophets; and whose business it was to open and explain them to the people.

*And the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods;* put false glosses upon the Scriptures; fed the family with bad and unwholesome food, the traditions of the elders, called the leaven of the Pharisees: made havoc of the souls of men; and made the hearts of the righteous sad: and hardened sinners in their wicked ways: and fed themselves, and not the flock; and plundered persons of their temporal substance; of all which they were accused by Moses, in whom they trusted; by his law which they violated; and by their own consciences, which witnessed against them; and by the cries of those whom they abused, which came into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

**Ver. 2.** *And he called him,* etc.] By the prophets, sent one after another; by John the Baptist, by Christ himself, and by his apostles:

*and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee?* of thy corrupting the word; of thy covetousness, rapine, and theft; of thy adultery and idolatry, and sad violation of the law; (see <sup><4121></sup>Romans 2:21-23)

*give an account of thy stewardship:* what improvement is made of thy gifts; what care has been taken of my vineyard, the Jewish church; and where are the fruits that might be expected to have been received at your hands:

*for thou mayest be no longer steward.* This was foretold by the prophets, that God would write a “Loammi” upon the people of the Jews; that he would cut off three shepherds in one month, and particularly lay aside the idol shepherd, by whom the Pharisees may be meant, (<sup><3810></sup>Zechariah 11:8,17) and by John the Baptist, who declared the axe was laid to the root of the tree, and it was just ready to be cut down, (<sup><4180></sup>Matthew 3:10,12) and by Christ, that the kingdom of God should be taken from them, (<sup><4213></sup>Matthew 21:43) and by the apostles, who turned from them to the Gentiles, (<sup><4136></sup>Acts 13:46).

**Ver. 3.** *Then the steward said within himself,* etc.] As the Scribes and Pharisees were wont to do, (<sup><4189></sup>Matthew 3:9 9:3 <sup><4079></sup>Luke 7:39,49)

*what shall I do?* he does not say, what will become of me? I am undone, and what shall I do to be saved? or what shall I do for my Lord and Master I have so much injured? or what shall I do to make up matters with him? or what account shall I give? but what shall I do for a maintenance? how shall I live? what shall I do to please men, and gain their opinion and good will, and so be provided for by them? of this cast were the Pharisees, men pleasers, and self-seekers:

*for my Lord taketh away from me the stewardship*: the priesthood was changed, and there was a change also of the law; the ceremonial law was abrogated, and the ordinances of the former dispensation were shaken and removed; so that these men must of course turn out of their places and offices:

*I cannot dig*; or “plough”, as the Arabic version renders it; or do any part of husbandry, particularly that which lies in manuring and cultivating the earth; not but that he was able to do it; but he could not tell how to submit to such a mean, as well as laborious way of life; for nothing was meaner among the Jews than husbandry: they have a saying, that [qrqh ĩm htwj p twnmwa Æl ĩya, “you have no trade”, or business, “lesser”, or meaner “than husbandry”<sup>f463</sup>:

*and to beg I am ashamed*; for nothing could be more disagreeable, to one who had lived so well in his master's house, and in so much fulness and luxury, as the Scribes and Pharisees did. The Jews have a saying, that<sup>f464</sup>

“want of necessaries, wtl açm bwj , “is better than begging”: (and says one) I have tasted the bitterness of all things, and I have not found any thing more bitter “than begging:””

and which was literally true of the Jews, after the destruction of Jerusalem; when multitudes of them were condemned to work in the mines; and vast numbers were scattered about every where as vagabonds, begging their bread; both which were very irksome to that people: though both these phrases may be mystically understood: and “digging” may intend a laborious searching into the Scriptures, and a diligent performance of good works: neither of which the Pharisees much cared for, though they made large pretensions to both; nor did they dig deep to lay a good foundation whereon to build eternal life and happiness: nor could they attain to the law of righteousness by all their toil and labour, they would be thought to have taken: and for “begging”, they were above that: read the Pharisee's prayer in (~~ORIG~~ Luke 18:11,12) and you will not find one petition in it. To ask any thing at the throne of grace, in a way of mere grace and favour, and not merit: or to beg any thing at the hands of Christ, as life, righteousness, pardon, cleansing, healing, food, etc. they were ashamed of, and cared not for.

**Ver. 4.** *I am resolved what to do*, etc.] Or “I know what to do”; I have a scheme in my head, and I am determined to execute it, which will provide for me, and secure me a maintenance:

*that when I am put out of the stewardship*; drove from Jerusalem, and from the temple and the synagogues:

*they may receive me into their houses*; either Jews or Gentiles, after their dispersion.

**Ver. 5.** *So he called every one of his Lord's debtors*, etc.] Either the Gentiles, who were greatly indebted to God, having sinned against him, and the law, and light of nature, at a great rate; into whose affections, houses, and palaces, the Jews found ways and means to introduce themselves; and, in process of time, got leave to have synagogues built, and their worship set up again: or else the Jews, their countrymen; since these were under those stewards, tutors, and governors, and were debtors to do the whole law; and had, by breaking the law, contracted large debts; and against whom the ceremonial law stood as an handwriting: these the steward called

*unto him, and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my Lord?* and it is observable, that the debts of these men, of the first, lay in oil, and of the other in wheat; things much used in the ceremonial law, in the observance of which they had been, greatly deficient; (see <sup><1290></sup>Exodus 29:40,41 <sup><1450></sup>Numbers 15:4-12 <sup><3613></sup>Ezekiel 45:13,14)

**Ver. 6.** *And he said an hundred measures of oil*, etc.] Or “baths of oil”, the same quantity as in (<sup><1312></sup>Ezra 7:22) where Aben Ezra <sup>f465</sup> calls them, **twdm**, “measures”, as we do here; and Jarchi <sup>f466</sup> observes, that they were, **twj nm l wl bl**, “to mingle with the meal, or flour offerings”; which illustrates the above observation, that they were for the temple service; and the bath was the measure of oil, as the ephah was of wheat <sup>f467</sup>; and they were both of the same quantity, (<sup><3611></sup>Ezekiel 45:11). According to Godwin <sup>f468</sup> it held four gallons and a half; so that a hundred of them contained four hundred and fifty gallons; though some make the measure much larger. Some say the “bath” held six gallons, one pottle, and half a pint; and others, seven gallons, two quarts, and half a pint; and others, nine gallons, and three quarts.

*Take thy bill*, or “writing”; which showed the bargain made for so many measures; and which acknowledged the receipt of them, and promised payment:

*and sit down quickly*; for his case required haste;

*and write fifty*; just half; that it might appear he had bought but fifty, and was accountable for no more.

**Ver. 7.** *Then said he to another, and how much owest thou?* etc.] To my Lord, as before:

*and he said, an hundred measures of wheat*, or “cors of wheat”; the same with “homers”, (<sup>3684</sup>Ezekiel 45:14) the same quantity as in (<sup>3072</sup>Ezra 7:22) where, as here, they are called an hundred measures of wheat; and were, as Jarchi on the place observes, **twj nml** , “for the meal, or flour offerings”: according to the above writer <sup>f469</sup>, this measure held five bushels, and five gallons; so that the whole was five hundred, sixty bushels, and a half: some make the measure to hold eight bushels and a half; and others, fourteen bushels and a pottle, which greatly increases the quantity.

*And he said unto him, take thy bill and write fourscore.* The Persic version reads “seventy”. Inasmuch now as oil and wheat were things expended in the observance of the ceremonial law, and these men's debts lay in them, it may have regard to the deficiency of the Jews in those things: wherefore by “the bill” may be meant the law; and which is sometimes called by the same name as here, **γραμμα**, the “writing”, or “letter”, (<sup>4086</sup>2 Corinthians 3:6 <sup>8129</sup>Romans 2:29 7:6) and is so called, not merely because it was written in letters; but because it is a mere letter, showing only what is to be done and avoided, without giving strength to perform, or pointing where it is to be had; and it is so, as obeyed by an unregenerate man; and as abstracted from the spirituality of it; and as weak, and without efficacy, to quicken, justify, or sanctify: and whereas the steward, the Scribes and Pharisees, ordered the debtors to write a lesser sum; this may regard the lessening, and even laying aside of many things in the law, after the destruction of the temple; as particularly the daily sacrifice, and other things; (see Dan 9:27 <sup>3084</sup>Hosea 3:4) and the doctrine of the Pharisees was always a curtailing of the law, and making less of it than it was; as appears from the glosses they put upon it, refuted by our Lord in (<sup>4081</sup>Matthew 5:1-48). They compounded the matter with the people, as some men do now, and taught them, that an imperfect righteousness would do in the room of a perfect one: a doctrine

very pleasing to men, and which never fails of gaining an access into the hearts and houses of carnal men; though very injurious to God, and to his divine perfections, particularly his justice and holiness; as the methods this steward took were unjust to his Lord, though very agreeable to his debtors, and were well calculated to answer the end he proposed, an after provision for himself. I am much indebted to a learned writer<sup>f470</sup>, whose name is in the margin, for several thoughts and hints in the explanation of this parable; and also of that of the rich man and Lazarus, in the latter part of this chapter.

**Ver. 8.** *And the Lord commended the unjust steward*, etc.] Not the Lord Jesus Christ, who delivered this parable, as the Syriac version seems to suggest, rendering it, “our Lord”; but the Lord of the steward, or “God”, as the Ethiopic version reads: not that he commended him for the fact he did, or the injustice of it for this is contrary to his nature and perfections; but for his craft and cunning in providing himself a maintenance for time to come: for he is on that account branded as an “unjust steward”, as he was, in wasting his Lord's goods; putting false glosses on the Scriptures; doing damage both to the souls and worldly estates of men: and in neglecting and despising lawful and honest ways of living, by digging or begging, asking favours at the hand of God, and doing good works; and in falsifying accounts; breaking the least of the commandments, and teaching men so to do; and in corrupting others, making proselytes twofold more the children of hell than himself; and in being liberal with another's property, to wrong objects, and for a wrong end. It was not therefore because he had done justly to his Lord, or right to others, that he is commended; but

*became he had done wisely* for himself: the wit, and not the goodness of the man is commended; which, in the language and sense of the Jews, may be thus expressed<sup>f471</sup>:

“because a man, *wmx[ I hbwj hçw[*, “does good” for himself with “mammon” which is not his own.”

*For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light*: by “the children of this world” may be meant the Israelites, who belonged to the Jewish nation and church, called the “world”, and “this world”, ([1 Corinthians 10:11 2:6,8](#)) especially the princes of it, the ecclesiastical doctors and rulers: and who also were the men of this present world; in general they were such who were, as they

were born into the world; in their sins, in the pollution, and under the guilt of them; were carnal, in the flesh, or unregenerate, and in darkness and blindness: they were such as were not only in the world, but of it; they belonged to it, having never been called out of it; and were under the influence of the God of it; and were taken with the things of it, its riches, honours, and pleasures; and had their portion in it, and were of worldly spirits; all which agrees with the Scribes and Pharisees; (see <sup><19174></sup>Psalm 17:14) and Aben Ezra on it, who has the very phrase here used: **aml [ d synya**, a “man of the world”, is sometimes <sup>f472</sup> distinguished from a scholar, or a wise man; but **aml [ ynb**, “the children of the world”, as they frequently intend the inhabitants of the world <sup>f473</sup>, are sometimes distinguished from **ytad aml [ ^b**, “a son of the world to come” <sup>f474</sup>; and from “the children of faith” <sup>f475</sup>, the same as “the children of light” here; by whom are meant the children of the Gospel dispensation; or persons enlightened by the Spirit and grace of God, to see the sinfulness of sin, and their wretched state my nature; the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them before God; the way of life, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; who see that the several parts of salvation, and the whole, are of grace; have some light into the Scriptures of truth, and doctrines of the Gospel; and some glimpse of heaven, and the unseen glories of another world, though attended with much darkness in the present state: and who shall enjoy the light of glory. Now, the men of the world, or carnal men, are, generally speaking, wiser than these; not in things spiritual, but in things natural, in the affairs of life, in worldly matters. The phrase seems to answer to **twdl wt**, “generations” used in (<sup><01083></sup>Genesis 6:9 37:2) “these are the generations of Noah”, etc. and “the generations of Jacob”; by which are meant, not the genealogies of them, but their affairs; what befell them in life: as so the Jewish writers <sup>f476</sup> explain the phrase by **twrwqh**, “the things which happened” unto them in this world, in the course of their pilgrimage: or they are wise, **εις την γενεαν την αυτων**, “for their own generation”: for the temporal good of their posterity, than saints are for the spiritual good of theirs: or they are wiser for the time that is to come in this life, than good men are concerning themselves for the time to come in the other world: or they are wiser, and more prudent in disposing of their worldly substance for their own secular good, and that of their offspring, than men of spiritual light and knowledge are, in disposing of their worldly substance for the glory of God, the interest of Christ, the honour of religion, their own spiritual good, and that of their posterity.

**Ver. 9.** *And I say unto you,* etc.] These are the words of Christ, as are also the latter part of the preceding verse, accommodating and applying the parable to his disciples, and for their instruction:

*make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness:* by “mammon” are designed riches, wealth, and substance; (see Gill on <sup><406></sup>Matthew 6:24”) and is called “mammon of unrighteousness”, because such wealth is often unrighteously detained, and is not made use of to right and good purposes, by the owners of it; or because, generally speaking, it is possessed by unrighteous men; and, for the most part, used in an unrighteous manner, in luxury, pride and intemperance, and is the root, instrument, and means of such unrighteousness: or it maybe rendered “mammon of hurt”, or “hurtful mammon”; as it often is to those who are over anxious and desirous of it, or other disuse or misuse of it: or, as best of all, “mammon of falsehood”, or “deceitful mammon”; so in the Targum <sup>f477</sup>, frequent mention is made of **rqcd wmm**, “mammon of falsity”; and stands opposed to “true riches” in (<sup><216></sup>Luke 16:10) for worldly riches are very empty and fallacious; wherefore deceitfulness is ascribed to them; and they are called uncertain riches, which are not to be depended upon. (<sup><412></sup>Matthew 13:22 <sup><517></sup>1 Timothy 6:17) unless it should be rather thought that it is so called, because gotten in an unrighteous way; as it was by Zacchaeus, and might be by Matthew, one of the disciples, Christ now speaks to, and the publicans and sinners, who were lately become his followers, and whom he advises, as the highest piece of wisdom and prudence, to dispose of in such a manner, as of it to “make” themselves “friends”; not God, Father, Son, and Spirit. These indeed are friends to the saints, but they are not made so by money; reconciliation and redemption are not procured this way; nor is the favour of the judge to be got by such means; the only means of reconciliation, are the blood and death of Christ; though indeed acts of beneficence, rightly performed, are well pleasing to God: nor are the angels meant, who are very friendly to all good men; nor rich men, to whom riches are not to be given, (<sup><216></sup>Proverbs 22:16) but rather riches themselves, which, if not rightly used, and so made friends of, will cry, and be a witness against the owners of them, (<sup><511></sup>James 5:1-3) though it may be the poor saints are intended; who by their prayers are capable of doing either a great deal of hurt, or a great deal of good; and it is the interest of rich men to make them their friends:

*that when ye fail:* of money; or “that fails”, as the Ethiopic version reads; or rather, when ye leave that, that is, when ye die; so in (<sup><242></sup>Jeremiah



42:22) “know certainly that ye shall die”; the Septuagint renders it, **ἐκλειθετε**, “ye shall fall by the sword”, etc.

*they may receive you into everlasting habitations*: the mansions of glory, which are many, and of an eternal duration: this is to be understood of their being received thither, not by the poor, to whom they have been benefactors; for though these may now pray for their reception to glory when they die, and will hereafter rejoice at their reception thither; yet they themselves will not be receivers of them, or their introducers into the everlasting tents, or tabernacles: nor are the angels intended, who carry the souls of the righteous into Abraham's bosom, and will gather the elect together at the last day; for not they, but God and Christ, receive the saints to glory: the words may be rendered impersonally, “you may be received”; in a way of welldoing, though not for it; mention is made of the “everlasting tabernacles”, in

“Their glory also will I take unto me, and give these the everlasting tabernacles, which I had prepared for them.” (2 Esdras 2:11)

and so the phrase may be rendered here, as opposed to the earthly and perishable tabernacles of the body (**¶**2 Corinthians 5:1 **¶**2 Peter 1:13,14)

**Ver. 10.** *He that is faithful in that which is least*, etc.] In quantity and quality, especially the latter; in that which is of little value and worth, at least when compared with other things:

*is faithful also in much*: in matters of greater consequence and importance: the sense of the proverb is, that, generally speaking, a man that acts a faithful part in a small trust committed to him, does so likewise in a much larger; and being tried, and found faithful in things of less moment, he is intrusted with things of greater importance; though this is not always the case: for sometimes a man may behave with great integrity in lesser matters, on purpose that he might gain greater confidence, which, when he has obtained, he abuses in the vilest manner; but because it is usually otherwise, our Lord uses the common proverb; and of like sense is the following;

*and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much*: that man that acts the unfaithful part in a small matter, and of little worth, generally does the same, if a greater trust is committed to him.

**Ver. 11.** *If therefore ye have not been faithful*, etc.] This is the application of the above proverbial expressions, and seems to be directed to the disciples of Christ, though not without a view to the covetous Scribes and Pharisees, who were in hearing of it, and were disturbed at it, (Luke 16:14) and the meaning is, that whereas some of them might have been unfaithful, and have acted the unjust part of gathering of riches, as Matthew, and other publicans, that were now become the followers of Christ; if therefore they should be unfaithful

*in the unrighteous mammon*; in the disposing of it to improper uses, which was either unrighteously gotten, and therefore called, as it sometimes was, [ܩܪܕ ܐܡܡܢ, “mammon of ungodliness”, or “ungodly mammon”<sup>f478</sup>; or, which was fallacious, deceitful, vain, and transitory:

*who will commit to your trust the true riches*; or mammon? that is, how should you expect to be intrusted with the riches of grace, as the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace, the graces of the Spirit of God, which truly enrich persons, and are solid and durable? or the riches of glory, the better and more enduring substance in heaven, signified by a kingdom, and an inheritance that fadeth not away? so the Jews call the good things of another world, and say<sup>f479</sup>, that

“all the good things of this world are not *twytma twbwj*, “true good things”, in comparison of the good things of the world to come.”

And they use the same distinction with respect to “mammon”, as here:

“the holy, blessed God, they say<sup>f480</sup>, gives him, *tma l ܩ ܐܡܡܢ*, “mammon of truth”, or true mammon; and he makes it *rܩܩ*, “false”, or deceitful:”

or rather the rich treasure of the Gospel is meant, called a treasure in earthen vessels, and the unsearchable riches of Christ; and is comparable to, and of more worth than gold, silver, and precious stones. And so the Syriac version renders it, “who will trust you with the truth?” with the truth of the Gospel.

**Ver. 12.** *And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's*, etc.] Which is not a man's own, but what is committed to him by another; *ܡܦܪ ܐ ܐܡܡܢܒ*, “with the mammon of others<sup>f481</sup>”, to speak in the language

of the Jews; and of mammon, our Lord is speaking, and here of another man's, of which they were only stewards, as he in the preceding parable was: hence we read <sup>f482</sup> of *ˆwmm yrmwç*, “keepers of mammon”, who were intrusted with another's substance; and such are here supposed, which, if unfaithful in,

*who shall give you that which is your own?* that is, should you unjustly detain, or make an ill use of another man's substance lodged in your hands, how can you expect but that you will be dealt with in like manner by others, who will not pay you yours, they have in their possession, but convert it to their own use? A like distinction of another's and a man's own, may be observed among the Jews:

“there are (say they <sup>f483</sup>),) four sorts of men in respect of giving alms; he that would give, but would not have others give, his eye is evil, *myrj a l çb*, “in that which is other men's” (i.e. as the commentator observes <sup>f484</sup>, lest the goods of others should be increased, and they get a good name); he that would that others should give, but he will not give himself, his eye is evil, *wl çb*, “in that which is his own”; he that gives, and would have others give, he is a “good man”; he that neither gives, nor would have others give, he is an “ungodly man”;

(see <sup><487></sup>Romans 5:7,8). Interpreters generally understand by “that which is another man's”, in the first clause, the things of this world, which men are possessed of, because these are not of themselves, but from another, from God; and they are but stewards, rather than proprietors of them; and they are for the good of others, and not for themselves; and are not lasting, but in a little while will pass from them to others: and by “that which is your own”, they understand the good things of grace and glory, which, when once bestowed on man, are his own property, and for his own use, and will never be alienated from him, but will always abide with him: but if he is unfaithful in the former, how should he expect the latter to be given to him?

**Ver. 13.** *No servant can serve two masters*, etc.] (See Gill on “<sup><405></sup>Matthew 6:24”).

**Ver. 14.** *And the Pharisees also who were covetous*, etc.] Or lovers of money, the love of which is the root of all evil; and that they were, is

evident from their devouring widows' houses, under a pretence of making long prayers for them, (<sup>4234</sup>Matthew 23:14)

*heard all these things*; as well as the disciples, being in company with them, (<sup>4235</sup>Luke 15:2) even the parable concerning the unjust steward, and the application of it; and the directions given about using the things of this world, and the distributing of them to the poor, and showing a greater concern for riches of an higher nature:

*and they derided him*: lift up their nose, or drew it out to him, as the word signifies, in a sneering way; they rejected and despised what he said about their injustice, in their stewardship; the calling of them to an account for it, and the turning of them out of it; and concerning the true use of worldly riches, and the contempt of them; they looked upon themselves safe and secure in the good opinion of the people, and happy in the enjoyment of worldly things; and looked upon him as a weak man, to talk in the manner he did.

**Ver. 15.** *And he said unto them*, etc.] That is, Jesus said unto them, as the Syriac and Persic versions express it: “ye are they which justify yourselves before men”: from the sins of injustice, unfaithfulness, covetousness, and all others; and would be thought, and appear to be righteous; but it is only in the sight of men, who can only see the outside of things, and judge thereby:

*but God knoweth your hearts*; and what is in them, the deceitfulness, hypocrisy, covetousness, and cruelty of them, which are hid from the eyes of men:

*for that which is highly esteemed among men*; or what is high in the account and esteem of men, as the outward appearance of these men for morality, religion, and holiness; their zeal for the ceremonies of the law, and the traditions of the elders:

*is abomination in the sight of God*; who knew full well from what principles, and with what views they acted, to gain popular applause, and amass riches to themselves, without any concern for the glory of God, and the good of men: (see <sup>2365</sup>Isaiah 65:5).

**Ver. 16.** *The law and the prophets were until John*, etc.] Till the time that John the Baptist began his ministry; for till then, the law and the prophets, with the Hagiographa, or holy writings, for into these three parts the Jews

divided the books of the Old Testament, were the only writings they had; and which contained the whole of the revelation granted to them; and which they wrested, and put false glosses on; and therefore it was no wonder that they derided Christ, and despised his ministry: and whereas spiritual things were promised in these writings, under the notion of temporal ones; which they not understanding, might imagine the doctrine of Christ, concerning the contempt of worldly riches, was contrary to: and since they valued themselves on having the law and the prophets, Christ observes, that

*since that time, the kingdom of God is preached*; the Gospel, and the mysteries of relating to the kingdom of the Messiah, his person, office, and grace; and to the kingdom of grace, which lies not in outward, but in inward and spiritual things; and to the kingdom of heaven, or glory hereafter; and which is a superior dispensation to that of the law and the prophets, and sets things in a clearer, plainer, and better light:

*and every man presseth into it*; the Gospel dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah; “that he may enter into it”, as the Syriac and Persic versions add; which the Scribes and Pharisees did all they could to hinder; (see <sup>402B</sup>Matthew 23:13) large multitudes crowded the ministry of John, of Christ, and of his apostles; the people flocked in great numbers to hear the word, and seemed disposed to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; they pressed on one another to hear it, and through many difficulties, discouragements, and obstacles, the Pharisees threw in their way; there was scarce a man but seemed very desirous of attending upon the preaching of it, and pressed hard for it; and with much force and violence, with great eagerness and endeavour broke his way to it; though a different sense is given by others reading the words, and “every one suffers violence to himself for it”, as the Arabic version; or “is oppressed for it”, as the Ethiopic; that is, suffers reproach, contradiction, and persecution, for the sake of hearing it.

**Ver. 17.** *And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass*, etc.] This is said by Christ, lest it should be thought by his saying, that the law and the prophets were until John, that they were no longer, nor of any more use; but were now abrogated and laid aside; whereas heaven and earth might sooner pass away, and the whole frame of nature be dissolved:

*than one tittle of the law to fail*; which, and the prophets, in all the precepts, promises, types, figures, prophecies, etc. thereof, had their full

accomplishment in the person, miracles, obedience, sufferings, and death of Christ; (see <sup><41518></sup>Matthew 5:18).

**Ver. 18.** *Whosoever putteth away his wife*, etc.] For any other cause than for adultery, as the Jews used to do upon every trifling occasion, and for every little disgust: by which instance our Lord shows, how the Jews abused and depraved the law, and as much as in them lay, caused it to fail; and how he, on the other hand, was so far from destroying and making it of none effect, that he maintained the purity and spirituality of it; putting them in mind of what he had formerly said, and of many other things of the like kind along with it; how that if a man divorces his wife, for any thing else but the defiling his bed,

*and marrieth another, committeth adultery*: with her that he marries: because his marriage with the former still continues, and cannot be made void by, such a divorce:

*and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband*; the phrase “from her husband”, is omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions:

*committeth adultery*; with her that he marries, because notwithstanding her husband's divorce of her, and his after marriage with her, she still remains his lawful and proper wife; (see Gill on “<sup><4052></sup>Matthew 5:32”). The Ethiopic version reads this last clause, quite different from all others, thus, “and whosoever puts away her husband, and joins to another, commits adultery”, agreeably to (see Gill on “<sup><41002></sup>Mark 10:12”).

**Ver. 19.** *There was a certain rich man*, etc.] In Beza's most ancient copy, and in another manuscript of his it is read by way of preface, “he said also another parable”: which shows, that this is not a history of matter of fact, or an historical account of two such persons, as the “rich” man and the beggar, who had lately lived at Jerusalem; though the Papists pretend, to this day, to point out the very spot of ground in Jerusalem, where this rich man's house stood: nor is it to be understood parabolically of any particular rich man, or prince; as Saul the first king of Israel; or Herod, who now was reigning, and was clothed in purple, and lived in a sumptuous manner: nor of rich men in general, though it greatly describes the characters of such, at least of many of them; who only take care of their bodies, and neglect their souls; adorn and pamper them, live in pleasure, and grow wanton, and have no regard to the poor saints; and when they die go to hell; for their riches will not profit them in a day of wrath, nor deliver from it, or be regarded by

the Judge, any more than hills and mountains will hide them from his face: but by the rich man are meant, the Jews in general; for that this man is represented, and to be considered as a Jew, is evident from Abraham being his father, and his calling him so, and Abraham again calling him his son, (<sup><0163></sup>Luke 16:24,25) of which relation the Jews much boasted and gloried in; and from his brethren having Moses and the prophets, (<sup><0163></sup>Luke 16:29) which were peculiar to the Jewish people; and from that invincible and incurable infidelity in them, that they would not believe, though one rose from the dead, (<sup><0163></sup>Luke 16:31) as the Jews would not believe in Christ though he himself rose from the dead, which was the sign he gave them of his being the Messiah: and the general design of the parable, is to expose the wickedness and unbelief of the Jews, and to show their danger and misery, for their contempt and rejection of the Messiah; and particularly the Pharisees are designed, who being covetous, had derided Christ for what he had before said; and, who though high in the esteem of men, were an abomination to God, (<sup><0164></sup>Luke 16:14,15). These more especially boasted of Abraham being their father; and of their being the disciples of Moses, and trusted in him, and in his law; and thought they should have eternal life through having and reading the books of Moses and the prophets: these may be called “a man”, because this was the name by which the Jews style themselves, in distinction from the Gentiles, whom they compare to beasts; (see Gill on “<sup><0153></sup>Matthew 15:26”) and this they ground on a passage in (<sup><0161></sup>Ezekiel 34:31) “and ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men”: upon which their note is <sup>f485</sup>,

“ye are called, **pda**, “men”, but the nations of the earth are not called men.”

And they may be called a “certain” man, a famous man, a man of note, as the Jews, and especially the Pharisees, thought themselves to be; and therefore coveted the chief places in the synagogues, and at feasts, and loved salutations and greetings in market places, and to be called of men Rabbi, and master: as also a “rich man”; for the Jews in general were a wealthy people, lived in a very fruitful country, and were greatly indulged with the riches of providential goodness; and particularly the Pharisees, many of whom were of the great sanhedrim, and rulers of synagogues, and elders of the people; and who by various methods, amassed to themselves great riches, and even devoured widows' houses; (see <sup><0163></sup>Luke 6:24 18:18,23 20:47) and they were also rich in outward means and ordinances, having the oracles of God, his word, worship, and service; and as to their

spiritual and eternal estate, in their own esteem; though they were not truly rich in grace, not in faith, nor in spiritual knowledge, nor even in good works, of which they so much boasted; but in appearance, and in their own conceit, they were rich in the knowledge of the law, and in righteousness, which they imagined was perfect, and so stood in need of nothing; no, not of repentance, and especially of Christ, or of any thing from him:

*which was clothed in purple and fine linen*; or “byssus”, which is said to <sup>f486</sup> grow on a tree, in height equal to a poplar, and in leaves like a willow, and was brought out of India into Egypt, and much used there, as it also was among the Jews: hence we often read <sup>f487</sup> of *axwb* or *ubd yqwb* “garments of byssus”, or fine linen: the Jews in general dressed well; their common apparel were fine linen and silk; (see <sup>2660</sup> Ezekiel 16:10,13) and so the Arabic version here renders it, “silk and purple”; and the Persic version, “silks and bombycines”: and the priests particularly, were arrayed in such a habit; the robe of the ephod, and also its curious girdle, were of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen, and at the hem of it were pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, (<sup>1286</sup> Exodus 28:6,8,33). And as for the Pharisees, they loved to go in long robes, and to make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, which were fringes of blue, joined unto them; and which may figuratively express the fine outside show of holiness and righteousness, they made;

*and fared sumptuously every day*. The Jews in common lived well, being in a land that flowed with milk and honey; (see <sup>2663</sup> Ezekiel 16:13) and especially the priests, who offered up lambs every day, besides other offerings, of which they had their part; as also the Pharisees, who were often at feasts, where they loved the chief places: and this may signify the easy and jocund life they lived; knowing no sorrow upon spiritual accounts, having no sense of sin, nor sight of the spirituality of the law, nor view of danger; but at perfect ease, and not emptied from vessel to vessel.

**Ver. 20.** *And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus*, etc.] By whom is designed, not any particular beggar in the times of Christ, that went by this name; though there were such persons in Israel, and in the times of our Lord; as blind Bartimaeus, and others: nor David, in the times of Saul, who was poor and needy; and who sometimes wanted bread, and at a certain time went to Abimelech for some: nor the godly poor in common, though the heirs of the heavenly kingdom are, generally speaking, the poor of this world; these receive Christ and his Gospel, and have their evil things here,



and their good things hereafter; they are now slighted and neglected by men, but shall hereafter have a place in Abraham's bosom, and be for ever with the Lord: nor are the Gentiles intended; though they may be said to be poor and helpless, as they were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, and without hope and God in the world; and were despised and rejected by the Jews, and not suffered to come into their temple, and were called and treated as dogs; though, as the Syrophenician woman pleaded, the dogs might eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table; and who, upon the breaking down of the middle wall of partition, were called by grace, and drawn to Christ, and were blessed with faithful Abraham, and made to sit down with him in the kingdom of heaven: but our Lord Jesus Christ himself is here meant; as appears from the cause and occasion of this parable, which was the derision of Christ by the covetous Pharisees, who, though high in the esteem of men, were an abomination to God; and from the scope and design of it, which is to represent the mean and despicable condition of Christ in this world, whilst the Pharisees, his enemies, lived in great pomp and splendour; and the exaltation of Christ hereafter, when they would be in the utmost distress; and also the infidelity of that people, who continued in their unbelief, notwithstanding the resurrection of Christ from the dead: the name Lazarus well agrees with him. The Syriac version calls him "Loozar", as if it signified one that was helpless, that had no help, but wanted it, and so a fit name for a beggar; and well suits with Christ, who looked, and there was none to help, (<sup>233B</sup> Isaiah 63:5) nor did he receive any help from men; though rather, the word is the contraction of Eleazar, and so the Ethiopic version reads it here; and it is easy to observe, that he who is called R. Eleazar in the Babylonian Talmud, is in the Jerusalem called, times without number, **rz[ l br**, R. Lazar<sup>f488</sup>; and R. Liezer, is put for R. Eliezer: it is a rule given by one of the Jewish writers<sup>f489</sup>, that

"in the Jerusalem Talmud, wherever R. Eleazar is written without an "aleph", R. Lazar ben Azariah is intended."

And Christ may very well be called by this name; since this was the name of one of his types, Eleazer the son of Aaron, and one of his ancestors, who is mentioned in his genealogy, (<sup>401B</sup> Matthew 1:15) and especially as the name signifies, that the Lord was his helper: (see <sup>2180B</sup> Exodus 18:4). Help was promised him by God, and he expected it, and firmly believed he should have it, and accordingly he had it: God did help him in a day of

salvation: and which was no indication of weakness in him, who is the mighty God, and mighty to save; but of the Father's regard to him as man, and mediator; and of the concern that each of the divine persons had for, and in man's salvation: and on account of his circumstances of life, he might be called **πτωχος**, a “poor man”, as he is in (<sup><400></sup>2 Corinthians 8:9) and frequently in prophecy; (see <sup><1946></sup>Psalms 34:6, 40:17, 41:1, 69:29 <sup><1015></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:15 <sup><2410></sup>Isaiah 66:2) (<sup><300></sup>Zechariah 9:9) and though by assuming human nature, he did not cease to be God, or to lose the riches of his divine nature and perfections, yet his divine perfections, and the glory of them, were much hid and covered in his state of humiliation; and he was much the reverse of many of them in his human nature; in which he was exposed to much outward poverty and meanness: he was born of poor parents; had no liberal education; was brought up to a trade: had not a foot of ground to call his own, nor where to lay his head: and lived upon the ministrations of others to him; and when he died, had nothing to bequeath his mother, but left her to the care of a disciple: and he is further described, by his posture and situation,

*which was laid at his gate*; that is, at the “rich man's”, as is expressed in the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions: this was the place where beggars stood, or were laid, and asked alms; hence is that rule with the Jews <sup>f490</sup>, and in many other places the following phrase;

“if a man dies and leaves sons and daughters — -if he leaves but a small substance, the daughters shall be taken care of, and the sons, **uyj tph l [ wl aqy**, “shall beg at the gates.””

This denotes the rejection of Christ by the Jews; he came to them, and they received him not; he had no entrance into their hearts, and was admitted but into few of their houses; they put those that confessed him out of their synagogues; and caused him himself to depart out of some of their cities; they delivered him up unto the Gentiles that were without; and at last led him without the gate of Jerusalem, where he suffered:

*full of sores*; so Nahum Gamzu <sup>f491</sup> is said to have his whole body, **^yj q al m**, “full of ulcers”: sometimes the Jewish phrase, which answers to the word here used, is **^yj q hkwm**, “one plagued with ulcers” <sup>f492</sup>; and this by the commentators <sup>f493</sup>, is explained of a “leprous” person; so one of the names of the Messiah is with the Jews <sup>f494</sup>, **arwyyj**, which signifies “leprous”, in proof of which, they produce (<sup><2534></sup>Isaiah 53:4). “Surely he

hath borne our griefs”, etc. By these “sores” may be meant, sins; (see ~~CHRIS~~ Psalm 38:5,7 ~~CHRIS~~ Isaiah 1:6). Christ was holy and righteous in himself, in his nature, life, and conversation; he was without both original, and actual sins, yet he was in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was reproached and calumniated by men as a sinner; and had really and actually all the sins of his people on him, by imputation; and was made even sin itself, for them; so that in this sense he might be said to be full of them, though in himself he was free from them: they may also intend the temptations of Satan, those fiery darts which were flung at him, and by which he suffered; as also the reproaches and persecutions of men, which attended him more or less, from the cradle to the cross; together with all his other sorrows and sufferings, being scourged, buffeted, and beaten, and wounded for our sins, and bruised for our transgressions; of which wounds and bruises he might be said to be full.

**Ver. 21.** *And desiring to be fed with the crumbs*, etc.] The offal food, broken bread, fragments of meat: that food which falls from the knife, or plate, in eating, and from thence on the ground; and literally understood, may express the low condition Christ was in, in his human nature: he assumed a true body, like to ours, and partook of the same flesh and blood with us, and was liable to the same infirmities as ours, which are sinless; and among the rest, was subject to hunger and thirst, and was obliged to the ministration of others for a subsistence: and it may also express his contentment in such a condition; he never murmured at the providence of God, but was entirely, resigned to his will; he did not desire to live in fulness and affluence, but avoided and shunned every step that led unto it; nor did he envy the plenty of others, and was fully satisfied with his meanness; nor did he ever work a miracle for the sake of feeding himself. Moreover, the words being understood mystically, may design the elect of God among the Jews, who, like crumbs, were few in number, a seed, a remnant, according to the election of grace; there were but few among them that were chosen of God, and effectually called by his grace; and but a little flock to whom he gave the kingdom; and a small number, who entered in at the strait gate, and were saved; and these few were very mean and despicable for their outward poverty; for the poor had the Gospel preached to them, and they received it, when the rich, and the rulers of the people, rejected it: and they were like crumbs their small degree of worldly wisdom and knowledge, being babes, simple, and foolish, who followed Christ, while the learned, wise, and prudent despised him; and for their

sinfulness and vileness, being, generally speaking, notorious sinners, publicans and harlots; and of these it may be said what follows,

*which fell from the rich man's table*; being originally of the Jews, but separated from them by the grace of God, and rejected by them with scorn and contempt. These Christ “desired”; (see <sup><2170></sup>Song of Solomon 7:10) his desire was towards them from everlasting, when he asked them of his Father, and they were given to him; and it was not only after their persons, but after their salvation, and that both in eternity and in time; and which he signified by various words and actions; and it is towards them, while in a state of unregeneracy, that they may be converted, and believe in him; and when they are called, he delights in the grace he puts in them, and in the righteousness he puts upon them; he takes pleasure in their company; he desires them for his habitation; he stands at the door and knocks for admission to them; and nothing is he more earnestly solicitous for, and eager after, than their being with him in glory to all eternity; and his end in all, “is to be fed” or “satisfied with them”; (see <sup><2581></sup>Isaiah 53:11) he came into the world to gather these scattered crumbs and fragments together; it was his meat and drink, to work out their salvation; and it will be his highest joy and pleasure to present them to his Father, and himself, complete and perfect, and introduce them into his kingdom and glory: he will be fully satisfied in them, and they in him, when they shall awake in his likeness. Then will all Christ's desires, prayers, and intercessions, have their full accomplishment. The Vulgate Latin adds, “and no man gave to him”; which seems to be transcribed from (<sup><2156></sup>Luke 15:16) and is not supported by any copy or version.

*Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores*: by the dogs are meant not the Jews, though they are sometimes so called, and especially the Scribes and Pharisees, (<sup><19216></sup>Psalms 22:16,20 <sup><2560></sup>Isaiah 56:10,) (<sup><2561></sup>Isaiah 56:11 <sup><1182></sup>Philippians 3:2) for these made his sores and wounds, or were the authors of his sorrows and sufferings; but rather the Gentiles, who were so called by the Jews; (see Gill on “<sup><4156></sup>Matthew 15:26”) because these creatures were unclean by the law, and had in the greatest contempt by the Jews; and for their barbarity, malice, and cruelty, (<sup><1238></sup>Deuteronomy 23:18 <sup><1244></sup>1 Samuel 24:14 <sup><1182></sup>2 Kings 8:12,13) as the Gentiles were by the Jews esteemed unclean and unfit, either for civil or religious conversation; and were treated as aliens by them; and were indeed in their Heathenish state, barbarous and inhuman, and lived in malice, hateful, and hating one another: these, some of them came to Christ in person, as the centurion,

and Syrophenician woman, many of the Samaritans, who, with the Jews, were all one as Heathens, and several Grecians at the feast; and many of them also came to him by faith, through the ministry of his servants, under the influence of divine grace, and that according to various prophecies in the Old Testament, concerning the calling and gathering of the Gentiles to him: these embraced a crucified Christ; and fed upon the slain Lamb of God; eat his flesh, and drank his blood; stretched forth the hand of faith, and thrust it into his bleeding wounds; and lived by faith on him, who was wounded and bruised for their sins, and whose blood was shed for the remission of them.

**Ver. 22.** *And it came to pass that the beggar died,* etc.] The death of Christ was not a casual thing, a fortuitous event; it was agreed unto, and settled in the covenant of grace; it was spoken of by the prophets of the Old Testament; it was typified by the sacrifices of the law, and other things; it was foretold by Christ himself, and was the end of his coming into this world, wherein the great love, both of him and of his Father, is expressed; and is the main article of the Christian faith; so that this came to pass according to the decrees of God, the counsel, and covenant of peace, the will of Christ, and his predictions, and as the accomplishment of the law, and prophets: it was not a natural, but violent death which Christ died; and yet it was both voluntary and necessary; it was but once, and is of an eternal efficacy, and is a sacrifice acceptable to God; it was not for himself, or any sin of his, who knew none, nor for the angels, and their redemption, whose nature he did not assume; but for men, and for their sins. Christ died not merely as an example to them, or only to confirm his doctrines; but as a substitute, in the room and stead of his people; to atone for their sins, and satisfy divine justice; to procure the pardon of them in a way of justice; to take them away, and utterly abolish them; to bring in an everlasting righteousness; to obtain eternal redemption, and bring such nigh to God who were afar off, and that men might live through him now, and have eternal life by him hereafter:

*and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom:* by Abraham's bosom is meant heaven, a phrase well known to the Jews, by which they commonly expressed the happiness of the future state: of Abraham's happy state they had no doubt; and when they spake of the happiness of another's, they sometimes signified it by going to Abraham; as when the mother of the seven sons, slain by Caesar, saw her youngest going to be sacrificed <sup>f495</sup>

“she fell upon him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and said unto him, my son, **μkyba μhrba l xa Æl** , “go to Abraham, your father”, and tell him, thus saith my mother, etc.”

and sometimes, as here, by being in his bosom. So it is said <sup>f496</sup>, that Eliezer his servant (Abraham's, the same name with Lazarus) **wqyj b hnwm**, “is laid in his bosom”: and which may refer to the account in the Talmud <sup>f497</sup>, that when R. Benaah, the painter of caves, came to the cave of Abraham, he found Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, **hymq yaqd**, “standing before him”. And it is also said <sup>f498</sup> of Rabbi, when he died, **μhrba l ç wqyj b bçwy μwyh**, “this day he sits in the bosom of Abraham”; for as it was usual with them to represent the joys of heaven by a feast, so the partaking of them, by sitting down at a table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; (see <sup><4081></sup>Matthew 8:11) and as their manner at meals was by lying along on couches at eating; he that lay next another might be said to lie, or lean, in his bosom: hence Abraham's bosom came to signify the near and intimate enjoyment of happiness with him in the other world. The ascension of Christ is expressed by a being “carried up into heaven”, (<sup><251></sup>Luke 24:51) and here he is entered, and has been received, and will be retained, until the time of the restitution of all things; here he is glorified in human nature, sits at the right hand of God, and appears in his presence, on the behalf of his people; and indeed, the ends of his going there, were to receive gifts for them, to be their advocate and intercessor, to take possession of heaven in their name, and prepare that for them, and them for that; and hither “he was carried by angels”: these were the chariots in which he rode; and these the guard that attended him, when he was seen, looked upon, and gazed at by them with adoration, faith, and wonder; which shows the ministration of angels to him, and seems to set forth the glory and magnificence in which he ascended; and this agrees with the notions of the Jews, that when good men die, their souls are immediately received by angels, and taken under their care, and carried to heaven. So one of their paraphrasts <sup>f499</sup> having mentioned the garden of Eden, which is but another name for heaven with them, adds,

“into which no man can enter but the righteous, whose souls are “carried” thither, **aykal m dyb**, “in the hand”, or “by the means” of angels.”

And elsewhere they say <sup>f500</sup>,

“with the Shekinah come three ministering angels to receive the soul of a righteous man.”

Particularly it is said of Moses, at the time of his death <sup>f501</sup>, that

“the holy blessed God descended from the highest heavens, to take the soul of Moses, and three ministering angels with him.”

And sometimes they say <sup>f502</sup>, not only three angels, but three companies of angels attend at such a time: their words are these;

“when a righteous man departs out of the world, three companies of ministering angels meet him; one says to him, “come in peace”; and another says, “walking in his uprightness” and the other says, “he shall enter into peace”, etc.”

No mention is made in this parable of the burial of this man, nor any words used expressive of it, or that in the least hint it. The reason is, because Christ lay so short a time in the grave, and he was not left there, nor did he see corruption; but in a very little while was raised from the dead, and delivered from the power of the grave; when, after some stay on earth, he was attended by angels to the highest heavens: for this is to be understood, not of his soul being had to paradise immediately upon his separation from the body; but of his ascension to heaven after his resurrection, when he was escorted by angels thither.

*The rich man also died.* This may be understood both of the natural death of the Scribes and Pharisees; who, though they were dignified persons, were as gods, yet were mortal, and died like men; (see <sup><BIB></sup>Psalm 82:6,7) compared with (<sup><BIB></sup>John 10:34,35) and they died in their sins, in their unbelief of the Messiah, and so were damned; in their impenitence and hardness of heart, for as they thought they needed no repentance, they were not called unto it; and in the sin against the Holy Ghost, blaspheming the miracles of Christ done by him, and which was a sin unto death; and under the power and guilt of all their other sins, and so were lost and perished. And it may also be understood of the political and ecclesiastical death of the Jewish people; which lay in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, and of the temple, and in the abolition of the temple worship, and of the whole ceremonial law; a “Lo-ammi” was written upon their church state, and the covenant between God and them was broken; the Gospel was removed from them, which was as death, as the return of it, and their call by it, will be as life from the dead; as well as their place and

nation, their civil power and authority were taken away from them by the Romans: and a death of afflictions, by captivity and calamities, of every kind, have attended them ever since. And it is to be observed, that Lazarus died before the rich man, as Christ died before the destruction of the Jewish polity and church state: the city and sanctuary were not destroyed, nor the daily sacrifice made to cease, nor the consummation, and that determined, poured upon the desolate, until some time after the Messiah was cut off, according to the prophecy in (<sup>2702b</sup>Daniel 7:26,27). Moreover, no mention is made of the rich man being carried by angels, as Lazarus was; and if he was, he was carried, not by the good, but by the evil angels, and not into Abraham's bosom, but to hell. So the Jews <sup>f503</sup> say,

“if a soul is worthy, how many holy troops, or companies, are ready to join it, and bring it up into paradise? but if not worthy, how many strange troops are ready to bring it in the way of hell? these are the troops of the destroying angels.”

However, this is said of him, as is not of Lazarus,

*and was buried:* as wicked men are, when sometimes the saints are not; (see <sup>2080</sup>Ecclesiastes 8:10 <sup>4990</sup>Psalm 79:2,3). The Scribes and Pharisees, who were so diligent to build and garnish the sepulchres of the prophets, among their other instances of pride and vanity, took care, no doubt, to provide and erect stately monuments for themselves: and who were buried in great pomp and splendour. Though this may respect their church state, service, and ceremonies, which received their death blow at the crucifixion of Christ, but remained for some time unburied, it being with difficulty that these things were got under the feet of the church; and may also refer to the political state of the Jews, who, as a nation, are represented as in their graves, where they are to this day, and will be until they shall be turned unto the Lord, when they shall be brought out of their graves, and shall live and return to their own land, (<sup>457D</sup>Ezekiel 37:12-14). The Vulgate Latin adds, “in hell”; but this belongs to the following verse.

**Ver. 23.** *And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments,* etc.] Which may design the place of torment, and the miserable state the Scribes and Pharisees, as all wicked men, enter immediately into upon death, (<sup>4897</sup>Psalm 9:17) who in their lifetime were blind, and are called blind guides, blind watchmen, blind leaders of the blind, and who were given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; but in hell their eyes are opened, and they see their mistakes about the Messiah, and find themselves in torments,



under dreadful gnawings, and remorse of conscience; and having a terrible sensation of divine wrath, their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched: or this may regard the vengeance of God on the Jews, at the destruction of Jerusalem; when a fire was kindled against their land, and burned to the lowest hell; and consumed the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains; and the whole land became brimstone, salt, and burning; and they were rooted out of it in anger, wrath, and great indignation; (see <sup><4623></sup>Deuteronomy 29:23,27,28 32:22) or rather, the dreadful calamities which came upon them in the times of Adrian at Bithur; when their false Messiah Bar Cochab was taken and slain, and such multitudes of them were destroyed in the most miserable manner <sup>f504</sup>, when that people, who before had their eyes darkened, and a spirit of slumber and stupidity fallen upon them, in those calamities began to be under some convictions:

*and seeth Abraham afar off*: the covenant of circumcision given to him, and to them his natural seed, now of no use to them; their descent from him, of which they boasted, and in which they trusted, now of no avail; and him in the kingdom of heaven, and themselves thrust out; (see <sup><4133></sup>Luke 13:28).

*And Lazarus in his bosom*; they now found the Messiah was come, and was gone to heaven, whither they could not come, (<sup><4173></sup>John 7:33,34). The Jews are convinced that the Messiah is born, though not revealed; and they sometimes confess, that he was born the same day Jerusalem was destroyed; and sometimes they say, he sits at the gates of Rome among the lepers, and at other times, that he is in the walks of paradise <sup>f505</sup>. This is said in agreement with the notions of the Jews, that wicked men will see the righteous in happiness, and themselves in torment; by which the latter will be aggravated, to which the allusion is; for they say <sup>f506</sup>,

“the gates of paradise are fixed over against the gates of hell, so that they can see the righteous in rest, and themselves in distress.”

**Ver. 24.** *And he cried and said, father Abraham*, etc.] The Jews used to call Abraham their father, and were proud of their descent from him, (<sup><4189></sup>Matthew 3:9 <sup><4183></sup>John 8:33,39) and so persons are after death represented by them, as speaking to, and discoursing with him; as in the passage cited in the note (see Gill on “<sup><4162></sup>Luke 16:22”) to which the following may be added <sup>f507</sup>;

“says R. Jonathan, from whence does it appear that the dead discourse with each other? it is said, (<sup>f504</sup>Deuteronomy 34:4) “And the Lord said unto him, this is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying”, etc. what is the meaning of the word “saying?” the holy blessed God said to Moses, “go say to Abraham”, etc.”

And here the Jews, in their distress, are represented as applying to him, saying,

*have mercy on me, and send Lazarus*; which seems to have respect to the mercy promised to Abraham, the covenant made with him, and the oath sworn unto him, to send the Messiah, (<sup>f507</sup>Luke 1:70,73) and which now, too late, these wretched Jews plead, the Messiah being sent already:

*that he may dip the tip of his finger in water*; in allusion to the washings and purifications among the Jews, and the sprinkling of blood by the finger of the high priest; which were typical of cleansing, pardon, comfort, and refreshment, by the grace and blood of Christ:

*and cool my tongue*; which had spoken so many scurrilous and blasphemous things of Christ; saying that he was a sinner, a glutton, and a winebibber, a Samaritan, and had a devil; that he cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils; and that he was a seditious person, and guilty of blasphemy: so the Jews represent persons in hell, desirous of cooling water, and as sometimes favoured with it, and sometimes not: they say <sup>f508</sup>, he that reads “Keriat Shema, (i.e. hear, O Israel”, etc.) and very accurately examines the letters of it, *ynnxm*, “they cool hell for him”, as it is said, (<sup>f504</sup>Psalm 68:14). And elsewhere <sup>f509</sup>, they speak of a disciple, or good man, that was seen after death amidst gardens, and orchards, and fountains of water; and of a publican, or wicked man, seen standing by the bank of a river, seeking *yj m al w aym yj mm*, “to come to the water, but could not come at it”. So Mahomet <sup>f510</sup> has a passage that is somewhat like to this text;

“the inhabitants of hell fire, shall call to the inhabitants of paradise, saying, pour upon us some water, or of those refreshments God hath bestowed on you.”

This man could not so much as get a drop of water to cool his tongue, not the least refreshment, nor mitigation of the anguish of his conscience, for the sins of his tongue:

*for I am tormented in this flame*; in the destruction of Jerusalem, and calamities at Bithur, and other afflictions; together with the wrath of God poured into the conscience, and the bitter remorse of that for speaking against the Messiah; and which are still greater in hell, where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.

**Ver. 25.** *But Abraham said, son*, etc.] He calls him “son”, not in a spiritual sense; he was not one of Abraham's spiritual seed, that trod in the steps of his faith; but because he was so according to the flesh; and in return to his calling him father: good men have not always good children, nor is any trust to be put in birth and parentage:

*remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things*; temporal good things; a land flowing with milk and honey; all the outward blessings of life that could be wished for, the Jews had, whilst they were in their own land; and also ecclesiastical good things, as the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, the fathers, and the Messiah according to the flesh, even all external privileges and ordinances, ( ~~400~~ Romans 9:4,5).

*And likewise Lazarus evil things*; Christ was surrounded with the infirmities of human nature, he assumed; was attended with much outward meanness and poverty; was loaded with calumnies and reproaches; and followed with the wrath, hatred, and persecution of men; and suffered many evil things, as buffetings, scourging, spitting, and cruel mockings, and at last death itself:

*but now he is comforted*; (see ~~409~~ Psalm 16:9-11) compared with ( ~~412~~ Acts 2:25-28). Christ being raised from the dead, and set in human nature at the right hand of God, is comforted with the presence of God, which for a while he was deprived of, when on the cross; and is delighted with the glory that it put upon him as man; and with pleasure sees the travail of his soul continually, his elect and redeemed ones, called and gathered by the grace of God, who are his jewels, his portion, and goodly heritage:

*and thou art tormented*; as were many of the Jews, his implacable enemies and persecutors in hell, and others in captivity, bondage, and distress.

**Ver. 26.** *And besides all this*, etc.] The different circumstances of each, both past and present, which should be observed and considered:

*between us and you there is a great gulf fixed*; as this may regard the state of the Pharisees after death, it intends not the natural distance between heaven and hell; though there may be an allusion to the notions of the Jews concerning that, who on those words in (<sup>2074</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:14). “God hath set the one over against the other”, say <sup>f511</sup>,

“this is hell and paradise, what space is there between them? an hand’s breadth; R. Jochanan says a wall, but the Rabbans say, they are both of them even, so that they may look out of one into another.”

Which passage is cited a little differently <sup>f512</sup>, thus;

“wherefore did the holy blessed God create hell and paradise? that they might be one against another; what space is there between them? R. Jochanan says, a wall, and R. Acha says an hand’s breadth: but the Rabbans say, two fingers.”

And elsewhere it <sup>f513</sup> is said,

“know that hell and paradise are near to one another, and one house separates between them; and paradise is on the north east side — -and hell on the north west.”

Mahomet seems to have borrowed this notion from them, who says <sup>f514</sup>,

“between the blessed and the damned, there shall be a vail; and men shall stand on “Al Araf”, (the name of the wall or partition, that shall separate paradise from hell,) who shall know every one of them by their mouths.”

But not this natural space, be it what it will, but the immutable decree of God is intended here, which has unalterably fixed the state of the damned, and of the blessed:

*so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence*; not that those in heaven can desire to go to those in hell; though those in hell, may wish to be in heaven; but the sense is, that by this irrevocable decree of God, the saints in heaven are eternally happy, and the wicked in hell eternally miserable: and this also

agrees with the notions of the Jews <sup>f515</sup>, who represent it impossible: for a man, after he has descended into hell, to come up from thence any more: but as this may regard the Jews state of captivity and affliction, since the destruction of their city and temple, upon, and for their rejection of the Messiah; it may denote the impossibility of Christ's coming again upon the same errand he came on before, to be a Saviour of sinners, and a sacrifice for sin; and of the Jews believing in him, so long as they lie under the spirit of slumber, and are given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart.

**Ver. 27.** *Then he said, I pray thee therefore father*, etc.] The Cambridge, copy of Beza's, and the Ethiopic version read, "father Abraham"; finding he could have no redress of his misery, nor any relief for himself, he applies for others:

*that thou wouldst send him to my father's house*; the house of Israel and Jacob, the surviving Jews: and this agrees also with a notion of theirs, that the dead seek for mercy for them <sup>f516</sup>. The Persic and Ethiopic versions read, "that thou wouldst send Lazarus", etc. whom the one calls Gazarus, and the other Eleazar.

**Ver. 28.** *For I have five brethren*, etc.] Meaning his brethren and countrymen, according to the flesh; who when he was alive, stood in such a relation to him; said to be "five", in allusion it may be to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt, ϣϚϙμϓ, "by fives", or five in a rank, (<sup><02138></sup>Exodus 13:18) as a learned man <sup>f517</sup> conjectures, to whom I am beholden for several hints, in the explanation of this parable; and certain it is, that these five brethren were Jews, since they had the writings of Moses and the prophets with them, (<sup><02169></sup>Luke 16:29). Wherefore I shall venture to propose another conjecture, though it may be liable to exception, as all conjectures usually are: it is plain that there were "six" brethren in all; let it be observed then, that the Jewish nation were usually divided into "three" parts, "priests, Levites, and Israelites"; of these three the great sanhedrim usually consisted <sup>f518</sup>; and these read the law every sabbath day; first a priest, then a Levite, and then "five Israelites" <sup>f519</sup>; (let that number also be remarked;) now these were again divided into "three" sects, "Pharisees, Sadducees", and "Essenes". The former of these are represented in this parable; this I only propose, I lay no stress on it: it may be, that the twice five, or ten tribes of Israel, which were not known where they were, nor are they to this day, may be designed by a "synechdoche", of a part for the

whole; whose return the Jews are yet expecting, and for whose welfare they are greatly concerned.

*That he may testify unto them:* that is, preach unto them, as the word is used in (<sup>480</sup>Acts 2:40 10:42 20:21,24). Christ, when here on earth, did testify to that people of their sins, showed them the heinousness of them, inveighed against them, and reprov'd for them; and of their righteousness, and showed the hypocrisy, deficiency, and insufficiency of it to justify them; of himself as the Messiah; of truth in general; and of their ruin, temporal and eternal; but he had now finished his testimony, and which, though faithful, was not heard nor received by them; the reason of this request is,

*lest they also come into this place of torment;* as hell is, and which these brethren of his, he left behind, were deserving of, and in danger of coming into; and his concern for them did not arise from any regard to Christ, and the enlargement of his interest; nor from any love to his testimony, the Gospel; nor from any real notion or desire of converting grace for his brethren; nor from true love to them; but from a selfish principle, lest his own torments should be aggravated by their coming: this, as it may regard the Jews in their affliction, and if the ten tribes should be meant by the five brethren, may design the very passionate concern the Jews had, and still have for them, who yet, to this day, hope for the return of them; see Manasseh ben Israel's book, called, "Spes Israelis".

**Ver. 29.** *Abraham said unto him.* etc.] In reply to this his request:

*they have Moses and the prophets;* that is, their writings; which shows this man, and his five brethren, to be Jews; for to them were the oracles of God committed; and these had the writings of Moses and the prophets read to them every sabbath day; and is true, whether the contemporaries and immediate successors of the Pharisees are meant, or the ten tribes: and also shows, that one view of the parable, is to establish the authority of these writings; (see <sup>426</sup>Luke 16:16,17) and that it is a peculiar privilege to have them; and that they ought to be attended to and regarded;

*let them hear them;* for they testified concerning Christ, and concerning the sins of the Jews, and the calamities, both temporal and eternal, that should come upon them; and which, testimony was sufficient to leave them without excuse: and indeed, the word of God, read, explained, and heard,

is the ordinary means of conversion, or of bringing men to faith and repentance.

**Ver. 30.** *And he said, nay, father Abraham,* etc.] He contradicts his father Abraham, or at least desires it might not be so; this way he suggests, was not so right, and would not succeed; for he knew his brethren were a rebellious, and stiffnecked people, and would not hear Moses and the prophets, notwithstanding all their outward boast of them, and pretensions of regard to them:

*but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent;* but alas! repentance is not of man's will, but a gift of God's grace; nor could these men repent, because in a judicial way their eyes were shut, their ears were stopped, and their hearts were hardened; and though Christ came in person to them, and preached, as never man did, with power and authority, and confirmed his doctrine with miracles, yet they repented not, nor did they when he arose from the dead.

**Ver. 31.** *And he said unto him.* etc.] That is, Abraham said unto him, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it:

*if they hear not Moses and the prophets;* as they did not, nor regarded what they said of Christ, but disbelieved both him and them:

*neither will they be persuaded:* or brought to repent and believe;

*though one rose from the dead;* as Christ did; whose resurrection, the truth of it they endeavoured to baffle, stifle, and suppress: this was the sign Christ gave them, of the truth of his Messiahship; and yet they repented not of what they had done to him, that they might believe in him; but remained still in their impenitence and infidelity, and so died. This shows the regard that ought to be had to the written word, as read, or preached; and that it is a sad sign of a desperate condition, when men reject divine revelation. Beza's ancient copy adds, "and should go unto them".