

# The Chronicles of Two Rich Men

\* *A word of caution: read carefully, as we will alternate back and forth in our studies of these two men. (Often the same scripture will be applied to both.)*

The two rich men of which we speak are Job and the rich man, the fool, illustrated by our Lord in the parable found in Luke 12.

“There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil” Job 1:1. “And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man . . .” Luke 12:16. There is little to say of this man, save the title given to his epitaph: “Parable of the rich fool.”

Both were exceedingly rich. “this man [Job] was the greatest of all the men of the east” Job 1:3b. “And I [the rich man] will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years” Luke 12:19. We will take his word for it, as there appears to be no other witness in his behalf. ( Job was a man of prayer, but the rich man talked to himself!)

Of Job it is said, “Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land” Job 1:10b. “The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully” Luke 12:16. (No testimony is given as to the Lord having blessed the work of *his* hands. Such testimony would have only brought a sneer from the rich man.)

“And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered *my servant Job?*” Job 1:8. (Satan has taken all of Job’s children, his livelihood; yet he remains the servant of God!) “And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered *my servant Job?*” Job 2:3. In chapter 42, the last chapter in the book, we hear again the testimony of God concerning His servant: “for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as *my servant Job* hath.” There might be a “therefore” entered here: “and go to *my servant Job*, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering; and *my servant Job* shall pray for you” “ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, like *my servant Job*” (vs. 7,8.) If the Lord Himself were to have placed a tombstone at the grave of Job, and the inscription was written with His own finger, I believe it would have said, “My Servant Job.” (There is no statement made in Luke’s gospel of the rich man even recognizing God, much less being a servant. Of course, he is verifying the scripture: “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God!” Psalm 14:1, Psalm 53:1.)

“Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Satan’s theology: Job is not really serving God, he’s serving mammon: remove the mammon and the truth will come out - he will curse God. “But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face” Job 1:11. But no less than ten times does the scripture witness to Job’s integrity. (To view them all, look at the article on “Job.”)

Put forth thine hand, touch all that he hath: he will curse thee to thy face? Satan is flawed in his thinking! But is he not always? What of the rich man? No contest! The rich man would have done just that! It is true that the Lord could have done the opposite from that which he did. He might have taken away all his wealth and left him alive. If he had a wife such as Job’s and she said unto him, “Curse God and die!” Well, that’s most assuredly what he would have done! (Any man who will not serve God is most likely to curse God!)

“And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thy hand” Job 1:12. If Job were dead, there would be no witness, no proof, no

testimony of his integrity before God. Similarly, if God had not tested him, there would have been no witness. But in Job's suffering, God would prove him; the schemes of Satan would be thwarted. (Could it be that Satan had bigger fish to fry; that he sought to cast a shadow upon the greatness, the integrity of God Himself?)

The question is asked in Matthew 16:26: "or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul" Matt. 16:26b. A remarkable statement made by Satan: "Skin for skin, yea, *all that a man hath* will he *give for his life*" Job 2:4. He has just given the answer. But is it in fact, true? Not for the fool. It is an unanswerable question, really, for if a man has given all, he *has* nothing to exchange (barter). He cannot so much as give his soul, for his soul is not his . . . It is in HIM that we breath and have our being!

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Luke 12:20. The rich man died. But was there room for recourse, a way out for his dilemma? What on earth could the rich man have done; what could he "give in exchange for his soul?" If God had taken away all his possessions; had left him in utter poverty, but spared his life, the end results would have been the same: he would have cursed God and died. The door of opportunity was not yet closed. Until it was, there remained a flicker of hope. While the sentence of judgment was pronounced, it was not yet executed. My dear foolish rich man; there stands One who is willing to take your judgment upon Himself; One who will die in your stead; if only you will believe on Him. . . "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" Rom. 6:23. But how can an unchanging God who has declared His judgment on man, seemingly reverse His decision; not only withholding death, but imputing righteousness and life to the guilty? The Old Testament scriptures will lend us further insight.

Though God's laws of governing be established and man is responsible to observe them, though the holiness of God will uphold and not refrain from right judgment, yet ought we to be most thankful that in His Courtroom there may be found Mercy! Jonah was well aware of this when he was called to pronounce God's judgment upon Ninevah. After his three day "submarine" voyage he entered the city proclaiming its doom. "So the people of Ninevah *believed God*, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." Even the king humbled himself before God, urging them to "cry mightily unto God; yea, let them *turn* every one from his evil way." His reasoning: "Who can tell if God will *turn* and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their *works*, that they *turned* from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it *not*." Jonah, in anger "prayed" to God. I just *knew* this would happen! "for I *knew* that Thou art a *gracious* God, and *merciful*, *slow to anger*, and of *great kindness*, and repentest Thee of the evil."

In Jeremiah 18 our Lord plainly makes known His governing of the affairs of men: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in My sight, that it *obey not My voice*, then will I *repent* of the *good*, wherewith I said I would benefit them." Notice that He is said to *repent* of the *evil*, to *repent* of the *good*. The eternal decrees of God remain unaffected. The *repentance* of God is again, *governmental*: when men alter their conduct and the attitude of their heart toward Him, then He likewise *changes* the manner in which He deals with men.

So with the rich man; he had the option: to *believe*; to acknowledge a Holy God; to be obedient

to His command; to repent; to turn from evil. “At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.” If it applies to a nation, then also to man. Ninevah believed that God was going to judge them. They repented, they cried out unto God. The king said, Who can tell if God will *turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?* What the king probably wanted to say but didn’t know how to say, was “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!” Oh foolish rich man! What a lesson is there to be learned from the king of Ninevah! But you will not listen.

“what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” Remembering what Satan said to God during the conversation about Job: “all that a man hath will he give for his life.” Apparently the rich man’s reply was, “I’d rather die than give up the abundance of my riches!” Foolish indeed! In dying, he *is* giving up *all!* Did he think to take it with him?!? (It is interesting that there is repentance on the part of Job, yet no evidence of repentance on the part of the rich fool!) To refuse the offer of God’s mercy; His salvation by grace through faith through the merits of Jesus Christ: wherein is there to be found a greater exhibition of foolishness?

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