

# Zechariah & Luke: The Returning King

## Lesson 10: The Shepherd King

**Key Verse:** *Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. ~Luke 15.10*

On August 8, 2023, the residents of the Hawaiian island of Lāhainā experienced the closest reality of **hell** on earth. This podcast [“How Paradise Became a Death Trap”](#)<sup>1</sup> is a sobering account of this harrowing event. Our **Good Shepherd** was in control of this apocalyptic-like disaster. That truth includes all those who He saved from earthly death, and those He didn't. We are wise to be cautious to interpret God's intention in this disaster. In fact, in these chapters, Jesus cautions against doing so because we lose sight of the work God has called us to do and ask the wrong questions (Luke 13.1-5). We begrudge His inheritance to us when we spend time sinfully judging rather than loving and rejoicing in the hope of salvation (Luke 14.24, 31-32; 15.6,10). We are assured that those who called on His name to save them have been given a chance at salvation. Let us pray for their continued pursuit of Him as He has already proven Himself personally and intimately as their Good Shepherd.

*Your teachings this week are so forceful and difficult, Lord! We need them and know your Spirit living in us longs for us to learn and listen as one sitting in each of these crowds. Yet the convictions and hard truths make us squirm and are devastating. Please increase our belief in all Your care for us as our **Good Shepherd** who has laid us upon your shoulders, rejoicing (15.5). Increase our courage to compassionately call out to all those who are destined for **hell**. Keep us humble, bathing in Your mercy and grace rather than our pride and self-righteous judgments. Oh Lord, give us hearts that are brave, bold, and compassionate. We want to REJOICE alongside You when we hear You say “She was lost, but now is found! She was dead, but now has been made alive!”*

**Luke 14.1-16.31 CH 14** One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. **2** And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. **3** And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” **4** But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. **5** And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?” **6** And they could not reply to these things.

**7** Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, **8** “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, **9** and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. **10** But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. **11** For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

**12** He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. **13** But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, **14** and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

**15** When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” **16** But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. **17** And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ **18** But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ **19** And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ **20** And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’

**21** So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ **22** And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ **23** And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. **24** For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’”

**25** Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, **26** “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. **27** Whoever does not

<sup>1</sup>Podcast: *The Daily*, August 18, 2023. I suggest you listen to the first 31 minutes. It is NOT appropriate for younger ears. Therefore, I highly recommend listening using ear buds.

bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. **28** For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? **29** Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, **30** saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' **31** Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? **32** And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. **33** So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. **34** "Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? **35** It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

**CH 15** Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. **2** And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." **3** So he told them this parable: **4** "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? **5** And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. **6** And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' **7** Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."

**8** "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? **9** And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' **10** Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

**11** And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. **12** And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. **13** Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. **14** And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. **15** So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. **16** And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything."

**17** "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! **18** I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. **19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" **20** And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. **21** And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' **22** But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. **23** And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. **24** For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate."

**25** "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. **26** And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. **27** And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' **28** But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, **29** but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. **30** But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him! **31** And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. **32** It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"

**CH 16** He also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. **2** And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' **3** And the manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. **4** I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.'"

**5** So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' **6** He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' **7** Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' **8** The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. **9** And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings."

**10** "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. **11** If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? **12** And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? **13** No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." **14** The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. **15** And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

**16** "The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone forces his way into it. **17** But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void. **18** "Everyone who divorces

his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

**19** “There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. **20** And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, **21** who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. **22** The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried, **23** and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

**24** And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ **25** But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. **26** And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’

**27** And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— **28** for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ **29** But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ **30** And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ **31** He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’”

**Diamonds:** As I was studying this passage of Luke, I asked myself, “If Jesus were alive today, would we be friends?” There was much debate about this in my home. I wanted to say, “Of course!” But in my heart I know better. I know my drive to be personable, well-liked, easy to be around, honest, yet with a grasp towards seeking my comfort and pleasure. Finally, one of my sons said, “Mom, if I could time travel, I would go see Jesus, see how He is, and then come back and tell you if you would be friends!”

Oh, if only it were so! In truth, our rejection of God and His Son as Savior has less to do with our ability to see ourselves as His friend or to time travel. Every flowering weed growing in the cracks along major highways testifies to the truth of a sustaining Creator. Every screen saver of the planets or countryside escapes or crystal clear oceans lined with diamond white sand screams of Him. And we have even more in His Word.

As you study the parables in these passages (stories that illustrate a spiritual lesson), challenge yourself to listen as if you were standing in the crowd listening or reclining as a guest of the dinner party. Would you stick around to listen to His next lesson?

1. How do you respond to a difficult teaching found in scripture? How do you respond when the weight of a truth revealed in God's Word is too difficult to bear? What are appropriate actions you take, or can take, when confused about God's teaching or the life of Jesus as found in scripture?

Jesus remains unaffected by the Pharisees' criticism, hypocrisy, irritated, and self-righteous responses to His every action and teaching (Luke 14.1-6; 15.1-2; 16.14). He knew they were agents of His Father's will which leads to salvation. However, they could have responded differently (and some do, as we will discover in this study)!

Just as today, it was a common practice to invite a visiting rabbi to dinner, allowing opportunity for open visitation and fellowship, for listening and learning, and perhaps even to indulge in an existential debate! However, it is evident that this dinner for Jesus was a set up (Luke 14.1). In addition, such Sabbath dinner parties were an opportunity for the Pharisees to display their wealthy and social status.

2. Jesus is people-watching in Luke 14.7. What lesson does He teach “to those who were invited” in Luke 14.7-11? (Remember to explore and mine these passages with the help of additional translations!)
3. Far from ingratiating Himself to the guests, Jesus then teaches the “man who had invited him” a similar lesson in humility. What lesson does Jesus teach him in Luke 14.12-14?

Jesus rounds out His teachings at this contentious dinner with the parable of “a great banquet” in Luke 14.15-24. It seems that at least one of the guests was listening but not learning! Rather, he butts into Jesus’s direct teaching of the host with a self-righteous statement implying that he himself will “eat bread in the kingdom of God” (V 15).

To fully understand why Jesus responds to this man’s blurring statement with a parable, we first must understand God’s purpose for the Sabbath. More than a day of physical rest, it was meant as a day of offering His eternal rest through God-given service and acts of mercy to the marginalized and neglected.<sup>2</sup> Rather than nap-taking and throwing fancy dinner parties to flaunt social status and religiosity, the Sabbath God desires is that all His people celebrate their eternal security and rest in His Son by showing His mercy in providing for the lowly, “the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind”, those in the “streets and lanes of the city”, those found on “the highways and hedges” (V 12, 21, 23).

In 2023 terms, the purpose of the Sabbath is to provide for those who are marginalized and outcast in our society, thus living out the gospel by serving with mercy to expand His Kingdom. This is what Jesus did on the Sabbath. What a contradiction to our understanding and desire for the Sabbath day! (We will study the finer details of the Sabbath in Lesson 19.)

4. List the excuses offered to the man who was giving a great banquet (14.16-20):

The man in Jesus’s parable is angered by the flimsy excuses offered by his VIP dinner party guests. Instantly, he demands that his servants literally beat the bushes, walk along the highways, doing what it takes to bring in the marginalized, the homeless, the poor, the societal outcast, all who are broken (V 21-24). Doesn’t this remind us of the expansive and impartial measuring line of God’s kingdom in Zechariah 2.1-5? What a beautiful picture of the mercy of God.

5. As a fellow dinner guest, what message did you receive from Jesus at this dinner party? Imagine your best friend wasn’t present but heard all about the drama at this party. What would you say happened?

Jesus defines being His disciple as requiring the hatred of one’s parents, siblings, and self (14.26). This is a direct contradiction to His Father’s command to honor our parents (Exodus 20.12). There is no more clear illustration of the importance of knowing all of God’s teachings in all of scripture, as well as seeking wise instruction so that we may “have certainty concerning the things [we] have been taught” (Luke 1.4). First, the term “hate” is not defined as we do in modern America. Rather, it suggests a degree of preference or importance, like an order of priority on a “to-do” list.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, Jesus’s overall message in this section of scripture is that we must count the cost of following, serving, and living as He did. It’s not easy and it’s not cheap!

6. In Lesson 6, “The Servant King”, we studied the doctrine of being a disciple. Review your notes from that doctrine. What does it cost you to be His disciple? What does it cost for you to be a part of His discipleship, or the gathering of His disciples as you come together weekly in small groups?

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<sup>2</sup> Ryken, p.66-67

<sup>3</sup> Ryken, p.90-91

**Deity: Good Shepherd**<sup>4</sup>~(Luke 15) "...Jesus...proves Himself to be the true Shepherd with sheep that will hear His voice and follow without hesitation (John 10.1-5).

The fourth "I AM" saying that we find in the gospel of John is found in John 10.11 where Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd." ...sheep and shepherds were metaphors for Israel and her leaders in the Old Testament. Before the Incarnation, one of the most important shepherds Israel ever had was the shepherd-king David who became the paradigm for Israel's king par excellence: Jesus of Nazareth.

David's own writings in Psalm 23 reflect his background as a shepherd of sheep. He likens himself to a lamb walking through the valley of the shadow of death and yet having no fear because of the good shepherd who is with him. He speaks of being guided and comforted by the rod and staff of this Good Shepherd who was none other than the Lord Himself.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd of Psalm 23 and does much more than even David described in his writing. Not only is He constantly present with us, leading us and comforting us, He also gives His life for the sake of His sheep (Psalm 28.8-9; John 10:11) ...The Good Shepherd...will defend His own, even unto death. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, does this for us on the cross (John 10.14-18). This death is a sovereign, willing death, entered into only when the proper time had come.

Jesus continues to reveal the price His disciples pay even as they are under the care of the Good Shepherd. Each of the three parables found in Luke 15 fully illustrate a life that is disrupted by significant loss and hardship, even as the resolution in the parables is filled with joy. Using rhetorical questions aimed at the "grumbling" Pharisees, Jesus sears their hearts with His pointed revelation of their self-righteousness and loss of love for God (15.7, 10).

7. Create a social media post (Facebook, Nextdoor, Instagram, etc.) on behalf of the man who has lost one of his one hundred sheep (estimated cost of one lamb is \$350), and/or, the woman who has lost one of her ten silver coins (estimated cost of 10-ounce silver bar is \$231.50):

Sheep graze in idyllic pastures but also in steep, rocky hillsides. When one runs off, it is not uncommon for others to join them in getting lost. Imagine his panic over having lost one! Likewise, imagine the Be Reel<sup>5</sup> picture post of the frenetic woman who has turned her home upside down and inside out to find her coin?

8. What did it cost the man and woman in these two parables to find what was lost? How does this define the value of what was lost?

The parable of the prodigal son is a rich story that could be mined for hidden treasure in a lesson (or two) alone! In this story there are two prodigals: the younger son who chooses to leave home so he may live indulgently and recklessly, and the father who divides his inheritance to his younger son's benefit and at significant financial cost to his older son's inheritance and to his own retirement assets and account.

9. Using any dictionary, define "prodigal":

10. Describe the attributes, characteristics, and nature of the prodigal *father* (15.11-32):

<sup>4</sup> [The Good Shepherd | Reformed Bible Studies & Devotionals at Ligonier.org](http://TheGoodShepherd.com)

<sup>5</sup> Be Reel is a social media app that randomly notifies users to take an unfiltered photo of what they are doing at any time. I am suggesting that if she had the app and it notified her that is was "Time to BeReal", her picture would have been of a frantic woman in a disheveled home!

11. Why was the oldest son upset (Luke 15.25-32)? What cost did he pay for the prodigal nature of both his father and his brother?

It is easy to indict the bad attitude of the older son in this parable. While a worthy indictment, the truth is that this older son, who was positionally privileged by birth order and by his father's prodigal nature was missing the blessing and abundance of a life filled with profound privilege.

12. Write out Luke 15.31, replacing the word "Son" with "Daughter", or even your name. How does embracing this truth stir an eagerness to enter into the lavish, or prodigal, party thrown in celebration of the salvation of others?

**Doctrine: Hell**<sup>6</sup>~(Luke 16) "The place of future punishment of wicked or unbelieving persons; it is a place of great anguish from which God is absent to bless and is present only to bring judgment."

13. From Luke 3.7-9, 17 and 13.27-28, what has Jesus already taught about hell prior to the two parables in Luke 16?

"The Bible presents the eternal reality of hell. Hell is a real place of fiery torment for the unrepentant that lasts forever. Of the twelve references to "hell" in the Bible, the vast majority come from Jesus's own mouth (Matthew 5.22, 10.28, 23.22; Mark 9.43)."

In Luke 16, Jesus builds His warning and teaching about hell with the parable of the dishonest manager, or trustee of the wealthy man's estate. Because this parable is tricky to understand in the way it is directly translated (Luke 16.1-13), we strongly encourage you to read this parable using several translations. In verses 8-10, we discover Jesus's warning in this parable: everyone will be subject to judgment for their management of their God-given portion of "unrighteous wealth", or "worldly resources". Far from endorsing theft and illegal fortune in verse 8, Jesus is exhorting His disciples to be clever and strategic "stewards for their worldly goods"<sup>7</sup>. By contrasting the shrewd strategy of the ungodly with "the sons of light", or His disciples, Jesus is saying, "You people should be like this crooked steward, not by being crooked, but by being strategic (or shrewd) in what you do."<sup>8</sup>

14. What strategy does the shrewd wealth manager employ to save himself from the consequences of his fraud and theft (16.3-7)?

15. Why does he choose this strategy (16.3)? What does this imply about the condition of his heart, and the way he views his life's purpose and the purpose of money?

<sup>6</sup> MacArthur & Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Biblical Truth*, pg. 344-348, 930

<sup>7</sup> Sproul, p. 424-425

<sup>8</sup> Sproul, p.424

Jesus laid the foundation of an eternal reality: God will hold us to account for the earthly resources He has provided for His eternal use. Because He will hold us accountable for how we steward those resources, Jesus adds a layer of reality that shapes everyone's eternal destination: the Law. This spills from His final point in this parable where He exposes the Pharisees for their love of money and hatred of God (16.13-14). Jesus cautions them in V 15 that "God knows your hearts". He then immediately addresses justification, or the necessity of being legally righteous before God. Jesus contrasts the Pharisees justifying themselves "before men" with unclean sinners and deplorable tax collectors who He says are forcing their way into, or willfully humiliating themselves for access to, "the good news of the kingdom of God" (V 16).

Additionally, Jesus reminds them that the Law will never become void, not even at judgment (V 17). There is a legal truth no one can run from or avoid, even as the Pharisees conjured new laws to justify their sins (V 15-18). He illustrates His point by directly addressing an egregious violation to His daughters that leaves His daughters disgraced and vulnerable: trivial divorce. Jesus says that their treatment of His daughters is "an abomination in the sight of God" (V 15). The Pharisees allowed men to divorce their wives over matters such as spoiling dinner or finding a prettier woman. They denied the wife the right to divorce even when she was unjustly or cruelly treated by her husband. Having directly addressed their destruction of His law by "finding a way to lower God's standard" Jesus immediately moves into His parable illustrating the reality awaiting them.

16. Using the chart, contrast the earthly and eternal lifestyle of Lazarus and uber-rich man (16.19-31):

Lifestyles	Uber-rich man	Lazarus
Earthly Lifestyle		
Eternal Lifestyle		

"The Greek translation of the term 'hell' (Gehenna) was a literal place where children were sacrificed in a fire to the god Molech (2 Kings 23.10; Jeremiah 7.31-32). It was also likely where dead bodies of criminals and animals were burned. As such, it symbolizes the future place of punishment for the wicked. Other passages of scripture do not use the word 'hell' but describe 'the eternal fire awaiting the wicked' (Matthew 25.41; Revelation 14.9-11; Revelation 20.15). The fiery torment of hell is unending".

"Hell is associated with three everlasting negative consequences":

1. Punishment – the wicked are punished and receive retribution for their deeds (Luke 12.47-48). God's punishment is not vindictive but a righteous retribution for wrongs committed.
2. Destruction – synonymous with ruin and waste (2 Thessalonians 1.9); "Those who die in unbelief have squandered opportunities to live a life that mattered for God. They are enemies of God, and loss and ruin are their fate (Matthew 7.19)"
3. Banishment – The wicked are "banished from the blessings of the kingdom of God and are denied access to the glories of the new earth. As King, God has removed them with no hope of entering his presence" (Revelation 22.14-15).

Additional Biblical terms associated with hell that offer a multifaceted understanding of hell:

- Sheol – found 65 times in the Old Testament; "Depending on context, the term is translated as 'grave', 'pit', or 'hell'. In general, sheol refers to the abode of the dead (Psalm 88.3). Being in sheol means one is cut off from the living with no access to matters on earth. Yet sheol does not mean escape from God's presence (Psalm 139.8)."
- Tartarus – A Greek term derived from, *tartaroō*, translated "cast them into hell" (2 Peter 2.4). "In Greek mythology, Tartarus was a subterranean realm, even lower than Hades, where the wicked were punished. According to Roman mythology, Tartarus was the place where the enemies of the gods were banished. The Jews eventually came to use this term to describe the place where fallen angels were sent. It was the lowest hell, the deepest pit, and the most terrible place of torture."
- Abyss – "a prison for fallen angels that halts them from having any access to or influence on the earth. The demons feared the Abyss since it would mean the total cessation of their activities on earth (Luke

8.31).” According to Revelation, the Abyss “functions as a prison to hold the person of Satan” (Revelation 9.1-2 and 20.1-3).

The fixed chasm Jesus references is an intriguing detail (Luke 16.26). This is another place where we must be cautious with our accuracy of scripture. Jesus’s prior teachings as well as the teachings in the book of Revelation caution us against suggesting Jesus uses this parable to teach about the architecture of heaven and hell. And truthfully, every attribute we have studied this year alone is strong evidence to suggest that the “fixed chasm” between heaven and hell is Jesus Himself (Zechariah 2.5; 9.8-9)!

The focus of this parable must remain on the truth of hell, validating there will be real suffering with no relief and no end for those in hell.<sup>9</sup> Remember, we are to join the crowds, listening to Jesus’s teachings. If you were standing next to another disciple in this moment, what emotions would this parable stir within the pit of your belly, and in your heart?

Through this difficult parable, Jesus is sounding an alarm for the Pharisees against the incorrect theology of their legacies admission to heaven through their father, Abraham (see Romans 4 for Paul’s thorough clarification of this bad theology). Simultaneously, He is also calling His disciples to His same mercy and compassion for all people (recall His expectations of His disciples in Lesson 6, “The Servant King”). Just as Jesus, we too must willingly, freely and boldly call all to salvation BEFORE He returns as Judge (John 3.17; 12.47). Through this parable Jesus teaches the difficult truth that there will be a time when His compassion and mercy end.

17. What thoughts and emotions does this parable stir in you? How does this influence your compassion for every person you interact with while on earth? Can you bear to see them in hell?

### **Your Scripture-Soaked Prayer:**

### **Lecture Outline:**

**Aim:** Jesus, the Good Shepherd, leads us from hell’s condemnation to heaven’s celebration.

- I. The Truth About Heaven (Luke 14.1-35) T1: Heaven celebrates humble, salty disciples.
  - a. In our study thus far, what has Jesus taught you about being His disciple?
  - b. How are you applying what He has taught you?
- II. Tales of Hilarity (Luke 15.1-32) T2: Heaven celebrates when lost sinners repent.
  - a. What is your response when someone who has hurt you deeply repents?
  - b. How quickly do you celebrate and restore fellowship with a repentant family member or friend?
- III. The Truth About Hell (Luke 16.1-30) T3: Hell celebrates godless living that keeps sinners hell bound.
  - a. Who do you know that is a hell bound sinner?
  - b. Which truth about hell do you need to share with them?
  - c. How might the truths you have learned about hell light a fire under you to share the gospel?

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<sup>9</sup> Ryken, p.201-204