

An orange envelope with the words "Open Invitation" printed in a white, serif font. The envelope is placed on a dark blue folder. A black fountain pen lies diagonally across the folder to the right of the envelope. The entire scene is set against a light-colored, textured background.

Open Invitation

A Great Chasm

¹⁹ "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

²⁵ "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

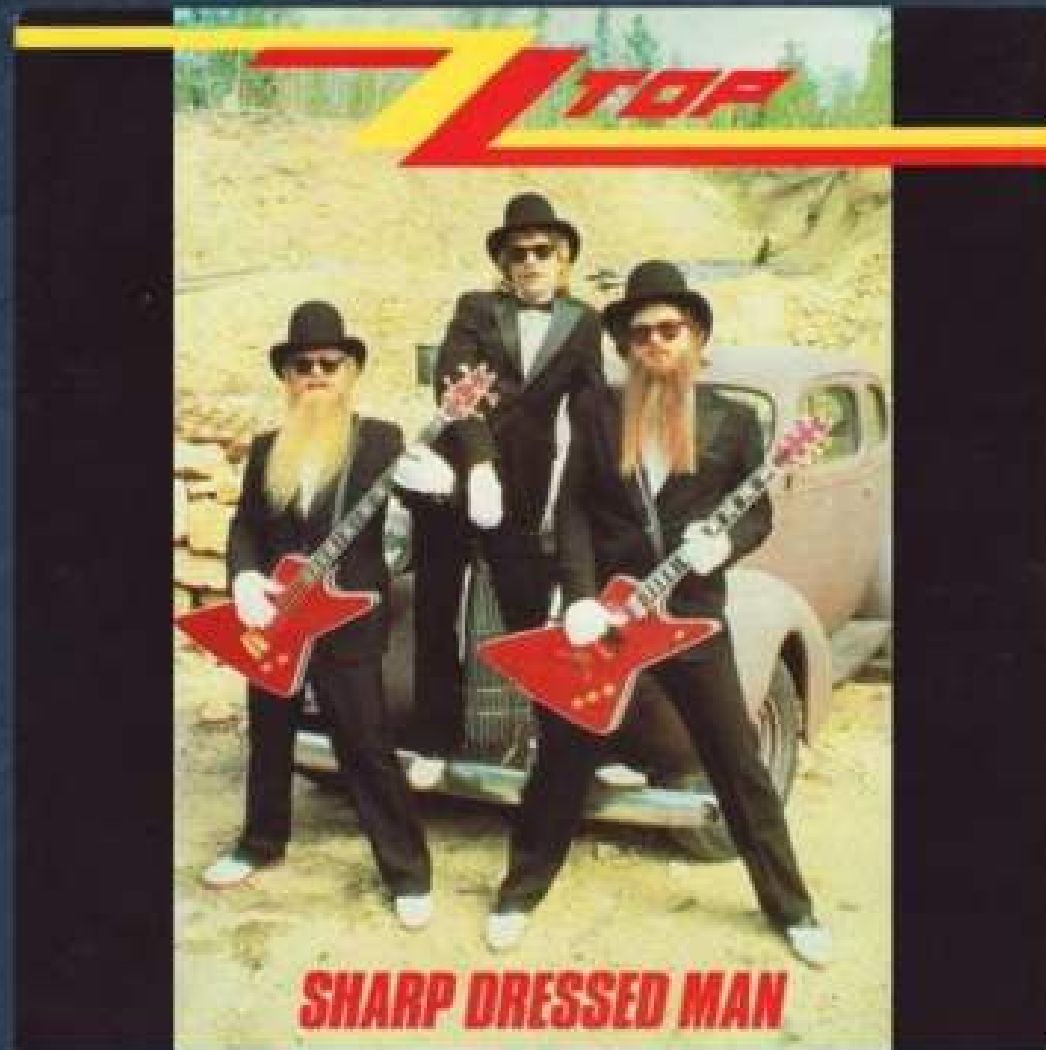
²⁷ "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, ²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' ²⁹ "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

³⁰ “‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ ³¹”He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

The stark contrast between Lazarus and the rich man cannot be overstated.



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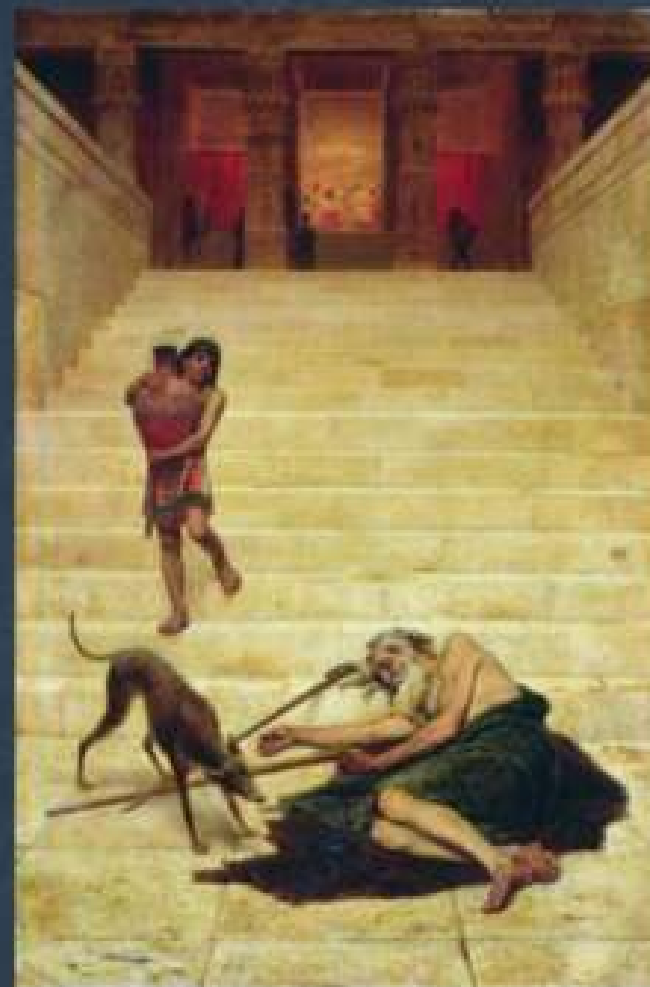


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The mention of “luxury every day” and “what fell from the rich man’s table” suggest that the rich man had a daily feast involving a “fattened calf.”

Lazarus' condition isn't just sad or unfortunate in his ancient world.



Death comes for us all.

Rich or poor.

Powerful or powerless.



Even death can't kill entitlement!!!



Even death can't kill entitlement!!!

"send Lazarus to dip the tip of his
finger in water and cool my
tongue"



After physical death, the situations for the two men are completely reversed.



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"but now he is comforted here"



“Earthly wealth and status can mask spiritual poverty.”

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"The decisive issue is not wickedness, but neglect."

"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

There is a relationship between our current reality and the reality that exists beyond death.

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There is an uncrossable separation on the other side of this life. Temporal choices have eternal consequences.

“What he wants from religion—for himself and his brothers—is not a religion that changes his actions, but one that spares him from the consequences of his actions.”

"If someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent."

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“They will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”

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"They will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead."

"If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." (1 Corinthians 15:14)

How often do you reflect on the inescapability of the conclusion of your physical life? Does considering it now cause you to rethink, or reevaluate, anything?

Invite the Spirit to bring to the surface any hidden entitlement that is affecting how you view yourself and others.

Are you avoiding or neglecting care and active concern for those who live in poverty?

Are you interested in the gospel because you realize that you need ongoing correction for your actions, or merely to save you from the consequences of your actions?

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