

“They Have Moses and the Prophets”

Read: Luke 16:19-28

Intro: Here’s a family with 6 grown brothers (:28), one very well to do; a typical, worldly family, self-centered rather than God-centered, hell-bound (:28) and needing to repent. (:30)

Read Luke 16:22-28

What will it take to turn them to God and away from eternal destruction?

A Miracle?

Ah, so you’re demanding a sign, eh? *1 Corinthians 1:22* – “For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom.”

But **miracles are no guarantee. They don’t automatically persuade people!**

Witness: **Egypt** (10 plagues); **Israel** (daily bread from heaven; water from a rock; etc.)

And what about when Peter and John healed a lame man? The Jewish leaders said, ¹⁶ That a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name." – Acts 4:16-17

You say, “No,” (not just “any old miracle”) “but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!” (:30)

Okay, so what about when Jesus raised Lazarus?

¹⁰ The chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. – John 12:10-11

And what about when Jesus arose from the dead?

¹¹ Some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. ¹² And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers ¹³ and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' ¹⁴ And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." ¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day. – Matthew 28:11-15

So you see why Abraham said, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.” (:29) and, “If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.” (:31)

“They have Moses and the Prophets”

Q: Who are “they”?

A: The 5 brothers

Q: In what sense did they “have” Moses and the Prophets?

A: They had their teachings and prophecies *written down*.

The brothers – and, in fact, **all the Jews** – had the Old Testament Scriptures. The writings extended 1,500 years back to Moses; 1,000 years to David; 700 years back to Isaiah and Joel, etc.

They had an Old Book!

Reliance on old sacred writings was not a new idea.

- **An Old Book moved Josiah.** The reforms of Josiah in 2 Kings 22-23/2 Chron. 34-35 were started because of a love for the Lord and were accelerated and focused based on the discovery of an old book. He....
 - Tore his clothes in fear of wrath to come
 - Wept over sin
 - Sought out a prophet of God
 - Read the Law to the people
 - “Made” the people “serve the Lord their God”
 - Re-established the keeping of the Passover....
 - And he was told, “Because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words....” he would be spared from God’s coming punishment against the disobedient.
- **An Old Book persuaded people.**
 - **Enlightened two disciples on the road.** Luke 24:27 Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.
 - **Converted many people (See all 10 examples of conversion in the book of Acts!):** Act 17:2-4 [In Thessalonica] Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ. ⁴ And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.”
- **Q: Why do you believe in George Washington? A: An old book**
- **How new (or old!) does a book have to be in order to satisfy you that it’s true?**
 - What about a book only 50 years old? Still before my lifetime! Could I trust it?
 - I don’t even trust half of what today’s newspaper says!
 - The age of a writing is not what makes it reliable or unreliable; it’s the source!

Remember who is speaking in Luke 16. The fact that Abraham (who is mentioned some 75 times in the NT) is SPEAKING in the NT, some 2,000 years after his death, reminds me of Jesus quoting, "I AM the God of Abraham...."

God had been saying that ever since Abraham died!

To Isaac: "I am the God of Abraham your father." **Gen. 26:24**

To Jacob: "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac." **Gen. 28:13**

Jesus drove home the point of the verb tense in Matthew 22:32/Mark 12:26:

"As for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?"

Jesus made an argument based on the tense of a verb in a single verse ... that had been written 1,500 years before in *AN OLD BOOK!* He showed that when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush He stated that "I am" the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (**Exodus 3:6**) – men who had been dead for hundreds of years. Not WAS, but AM! God "is not the God of the dead, but of the living!" (Tim Smith, Daily Bible Reading Commentary, 9-8-2009) Jesus uses this to prove that those *men* still exist after death!

That same passage says,

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

So we also see the eternal nature of God – "I AM" – existing across the life spans of many people and in all eternity.

Our book is old, but our God is eternal!

So, what do WE have?

1. Moses and the Prophets [See SLIDES]

2. Jesus' Miracles [See SLIDES]

AND....

3. The Apostles and The Prophets [See SLIDES]

Homer wrote 1) *The Iliad*, an epic tale of the mythological hero, Achilles, and the Trojan War, and 2) *The Odyssey*, with the Greek hero, Odysseus (Greek, or "Ulysses," Roman), King of Ithaca, a small island in the Ionian Sea, who emerged from the Trojan Horse and had many adventures while making his way home.

"Both books are considered landmarks in human literature and Homer is therefore often cited as the starting point of Western literary and historical tradition. The details of Homer's life are a mystery; some scholars believe that no such man ever existed, and that the works credited to him were actually told and gathered by many people over many centuries. Other stories give various birthplaces and ages for Homer...."

<http://www.answers.com/topic/homer>, downloaded 9/13/09.

The Mahabharata ... is one of the two major Sanskrit epics of ancient India.... The epic is part of the Hindu ... "history", and forms an important part of Hindu mythology ... and is a major text of Hinduism. Its discussion of human goals ... takes place in a long-standing tradition, attempting to explain the relationship of the individual to society and the world ... and the workings of karma.

... Traditionally, the authorship of the Mahabharata is attributed to Vyasa. There have been many attempts to unravel its historical growth and composition layers. ... The state of the text has been described by some early 20th century Indologists as unstructured and ... as a "horrible chaos."

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahabharata>, downloaded 9/13/2009

The N.T. has been written down by inspired eyewitnesses; God doesn't have to keep sending prophets to speak it!

READ Eph. 2:18 – 3:3-5

Through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

3:1 For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles-- ² assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. ⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

Invitation: "Let them hear them!"

Do like Josiah and let the old, written word move you ... to tears, to repentance, and to action!

The written word has the power to save us from hell and get us carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom.

They "had it" – but did they hear it?

The rich man didn't.

His brothers weren't.

The Jews, generally – and especially their leaders – didn't, and still aren't.

What about us?

You can pretend that God has not communicated with us or even that there is no God.

You can pick a different book or even write your own.

You can relegate it to the category of "nice" or even "interesting."

But you will be judged by *that old book!*

It's the only book that reveals the gospel of Jesus Christ and the way to the Father through Him!