

## **THE STORY OF LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN (LUKE 16:19-31) RETOLD IN A NIGERIAN CONTEXT**

**John Arierhi Ottuh, Ph.D**

Vicar, Winners Baptist Church, Box 1214 Effurun, Delta State

**ABSTRACT:** *Poverty with its concomitant effects of alienation, marginalization and dependency posed serious challenge to the church and society in Nigeria. Both the Old and New Testaments condemned the dehumanization and neglect of the poor in the church community. Using the methodology of the popular reading paradigm to read Luke 16:19-31, the paper aimed at discouraging the dehumanization of the poor in the church and in the society. The study showed that both in the immediate and contemporary milieus of interpretation, the poor were ill-treated by some few rich persons in the society. Moreover, giving the poor a more human face can reshape the economic and psychological disposition of the poor when they come around the rich. Some theological lessons derived from the study of Luke 16:19-31 showed that ungenerosity towards the poor is a sin, status in God's view is immaterial when dealing with others, dehumanization of poor people in the society is inhuman, a rich Christian must care for the less-privileged in the Church and society, a juxtaposition of the present and the afterlife gives the true picture of real life. This study was concluded on the presupposition that poverty alleviation in the Nigeria is possible if the church and the society (government) can do drastic poverty alleviation programme that can adequately address the economic situation of the poor beyond just feeding them.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Story of Lazarus, Rich Man, Nigerian Context*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The dehumanization of the poor in the Nigerian society by the rich folks is not a strange story to us. The poor in the society suffers several degrees of humiliation in the hands of some rich persons in the society. This paper uses the story of Lazarus as retold in the Nigerian Nollywood Love story to draw out the plight of the poor in the hand of some few rich men in the society. They suffer untold hardship in the midst of wealth. Some times, it is erroneously assumed that the poor in Nigeria are lazy people but their toiling under inclement weather and conditions is enough evidence to dispute such assumptions. The rich in Nigeria are not the most hardworking people but such rich men were some few privileged people who were given the needed economic empowerment due to one connection or the other. One can imagine seeing his classmate gaining employment due to more connection and even acting superior during interactions.

The propelling factor for the choice of this research topic is the ill-treatment given to the poor in Nigeria. Therefore, the focus of this work is how the poor are being treated in the society as lesser human beings and how the rich can be encouraged to give the poor a more human face in Nigeria. This work intends to show through the examination of the story of Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-31), how the poor are being dehumanized in the society just because they are

poor. The methodology to be explored for this work is the popular reading paradigm. The popular reading paradigm also address issues from inculturation and liberation points of view.

## THE BIBLE TEXT

### *The Greek Version of Luke 16:19-31*

<sup>19</sup> Ἄνθρωπος δέ τις ἦν πλούσιος, καὶ ἐνεδιδύσκετο πορφύραν καὶ βύσσον εὐφραινόμενος καθ' ἡμέραν λαμπρῶς. <sup>20</sup> πτωχὸς δέ τις ὀνόματι Λάζαρος ἐβέβλητο πρὸς τὸν πυλῶνα αὐτοῦ εἰλκωμένος <sup>21</sup> καὶ ἐπιθυμῶν χορτασθῆναι ἀπὸ τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τοῦ πλουσίου· ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ κύνες ἐρχόμενοι ἐπέλειχον τὰ ἔλκη αὐτοῦ. <sup>22</sup> ἐγένετο δὲ ἀποθανεῖν τὸν πτωχὸν καὶ ἀπενεχθῆναι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἰς τὸν κόλπον Ἀβραάμ· ἀπέθανεν δὲ καὶ ὁ πλούσιος καὶ ἐτάφη. <sup>23</sup> καὶ ἐν τῷ ᾧδῃ ἐπάρας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ, ὑπάρχων ἐν βασάνοις, ὄρᾳ Ἀβραάμ ἀπὸ μακρόθεν καὶ Λάζαρον ἐν τοῖς κόλποις αὐτοῦ. <sup>24</sup> καὶ αὐτὸς φωνήσας εἶπεν· πάτερ Ἀβραάμ, ἐλέησόν με καὶ πέμψον Λάζαρον ἵνα βᾶψῃ τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ δακτύλου αὐτοῦ ὕδατος καὶ καταψύξῃ τὴν γλῶσσάν μου, ὅτι ὀδυνῶμαι ἐν τῇ φλογὶ ταύτῃ. <sup>25</sup> εἶπεν δὲ Ἀβραάμ· τέκνον, μνήσθητι ὅτι ἀπέλαβες τὰ ἀγαθὰ σου ἐν τῇ ζωῇ σου, καὶ Λάζαρος ὁμοίως τὰ κακά· νῦν δὲ ὧδε παρακαλεῖται, σὺ δὲ ὀδυνᾷσαι. <sup>26</sup> καὶ ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις μεταξὺ ἡμῶν καὶ ὑμῶν χάσμα μέγα ἐστήρικται, ὅπως οἱ θέλοντες διαβῆναι ἐνθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς μὴ δύνωνται, μηδὲ ἐκεῖθεν πρὸς ἡμᾶς διαπερῶσιν. <sup>27</sup> εἶπεν δὲ· ἐρωτῶ σε οὖν, πάτερ, ἵνα πέμψῃς αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρός μου, <sup>28</sup> ἔχω γὰρ πέντε ἀδελφοὺς, ὅπως διαμαρτύρηται αὐτοῖς, ἵνα μὴ καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔλθωσιν εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦτον τῆς βασάνου. <sup>29</sup> λέγει δὲ Ἀβραάμ· ἔχουσι Μωϋσέα καὶ τοὺς προφῆτας· ἀκουσάτωσαν αὐτῶν. <sup>30</sup> ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐχί, πάτερ Ἀβραάμ, ἀλλ' ἐάν τις ἀπὸ νεκρῶν πορευθῆ πρὸς αὐτοὺς μετανοήσουσιν. <sup>31</sup> εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ· εἰ Μωϋσέως καὶ τῶν προφητῶν οὐκ ἀκούουσιν, οὐδ' ἐάν τις ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ πεισθήσονται. (BNT Biblework NT).

### *The English Version of Luke 16:19-31*

<sup>19</sup> "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, <sup>21</sup> who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. <sup>22</sup> The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; <sup>23</sup> and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. <sup>24</sup> And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon 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.' <sup>25</sup> But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. <sup>26</sup> 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.' <sup>27</sup> And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, <sup>28</sup> for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' <sup>29</sup> But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' <sup>30</sup> And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' <sup>31</sup> He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead (RSV,1952).

### **CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF INTERPRETATION OF LUKE 16:19-31**

The Contemporary Context of the interpretation of the story of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19-31 is the Nigerian Nollywood love story in which a Pastor and a Divisional Police Officer who were rich and highly placed in the society were involved in the dehumanization of a poor orphan Etche (Dominic, Duru, Ekwueme, et al, 2005). Etche was a poor fisherman who had no big brother nor sister, nor a friend or helper. This pastor was transferred to the village Church with his beautiful daughter Betty. Betty fell in love with the poor orphan Etche. On the other hand, Elder Nze the community Divisional Police Officer (DPO) was nursing love for Betty in his heart and as a result, he became cruel to poor Etche. Moreover, the pastor did not want his daughter to fall in love with Etche because Etche has no pedigree. Both Elder Nze and Etche were members of the pastor's Church.

Nze the D.P.O just like the pastor used his position to dehumanize and oppress Etche by harassing him and arresting him whenever he sees Betty and Etche together. Nze tried to use his position and intrigues to remove Etche from his way. He did this by telling lies and spoiling the mind of the pastor against Etche. Moreover, in one of the arrests, he flogged poor Etche and even intends to kill him just to remove him from the way. He did this to Etche because he was highly placed and he felt that Etche has no one to fight for him but little did Nze know that some upright elders in the village can fight for the poor to get justice.

The pastor who is also highly placed in the church community who is expected to manifest the love of God for the poor and protect the poor from being oppressed became a collaborator with Nze the DPO to mete out cruelty on poor Etche. The pastor and elder Nze planned to eliminate Etche but he managed to escape. Nze tried all he could to marry Betty but she did not choose him, rather she insisted on marrying poor Etche.

It appears, it is a sin to be poor in the pastor's and Nze's community. The poor in this context was treated as being less human. The poor, especially orphans were being treated in this community as if they have no freedom of loving and being loved. Being that Betty was consistent in her expression of love for Etche, Nze became violent and extended his violence to Betty and kidnapped her. Instead of loving the poor, the pastor and Nze inflicted the poor with hatred and violence. Betty was inflicted with cruelty because she loved the poor man Etche. Etche was maltreated for not giving up from loving Betty.

It is a common place to see some police and highly placed people in Nigeria harassing and arresting some innocent citizens with frivolous charges that have being doctored by conspiracy and hatred. The pastor in this case probably did not want the poor Etche to marry his daughter because he felt Etche does not have enough resources to care for his daughter. In as much as this fear can be considered genuine, using violence and intrigues to express it is oppression against the poor man. Some times in Nigeria, rich people use the police under the disguise of the law to molest, intimidate and even keep them in the cell after receiving bribes from their rich collaborators.

At last in the case of Etche and Betty the community elders who believed in justice came into the matter and they were temporarily freed from the hands of the tyrant Divisional Police Officer and pastor. The violence of the oppressors at last brought a serious frustration on Etche and Bettie and sent the duo oblivion as both of them drawn and died in the village river.

Reading this contemporary story of love in the context of the story of the rich man and Lazarus, the Pastor and elder Nze (the DPO) who did not care about the poor could be seen as a prototype of the rich man in Luke 16:19-31. Also, the poor man Etche can be seen as a prototype of Lazarus in this same story in Luke 16:19-31. This situation is familiar to the reader of the story in Nigeria. If the contemporary reader of the stories critically reads the stories, he will see the resonance of hate, deprivation and dehumanization in Nigeria. Both Lazarus and Etche can be seen as victims of poverty in the rich people's world. Both Lazarus and Etche were denied love and care in their various milieus. This is the line of thought this work intends to explore.

### LITERARY CONTEXT OF LUKE 16:19-31

Luke's literary expression is very unique among the New Testament writers. He expressed himself in the most grammatically correct and polished *Koine* Greek of all the New Testament writers, with the possible exception of the author of Hebrews (Utley 2013,1-2). Luke uses familiar scenarios and imageries to present situations in his writing. In chapter 16 of Luke's Gospel, he used the allegory of a rich man who is living in Luxuries and a suffering poor man who needs help. Luke also, used the imagery of Luxury which he depicted by Purple Linen and that of penury which he also depicted with hunger and sickness as could be seen in verses 19-21 (Scott 1989, 148).

One of the literary figures of speech used by Luke in this narrative was the paradox of the possibility of being rich on earth and being poor in the world beyond; the possibility of being poor on earth and been rich in the world beyond; the possibility of being a rich man and a master to a poor man and the poor man later becoming a master to the rich man. Like some other parallel readings in Luke's Gospel, Luke used the imagery of the poor (cf. Luke 6:20; 16:19-3); the socially, racially, and religiously ostracized; Samaritans (cf. Luke 9:51-56; 10:29-37; 17:11-16); lepers (cf. Luke 17:11-19); and Gentiles (cf. Luke 13:29; 14:23) to depict hate, dehumanization and oppression. He also used the picture of women (e.g. Mary, Elizabeth, Anna, Mary and Martha, etc.) to emphasize love and care.

Finkbeiner (2004,1-2) identifies Luke 16:19-31 as a genre which is put in a narrative form. Finkbeiner (2004) quoting Bock (1363-1364) outlined the pericope as follows: the rich man and Lazarus in this life (16:19-21); The rich man's wealth (16:19); Lazarus' poverty (16:20-21); Lazarus never speaks in the story (cf. 7:37-50 and 10:38-42); the rich man and Lazarus in the next life (16:22-23); Lazarus at Abraham's bosom (16:22a); the rich man tormented in Hades (16:22b-23); the rich man's pleas to Abraham (16:24-31); the appeal for water (16:24-26); request (16:24); reversal (16:25); unbridgeable chasm in the afterlife (16:26); the appeal for Lazarus to be sent to the family (16:27-29); request (16:27-28); reply-scripture is enough (16:29); the appeal for a message from the dead (16:30-31); request (16:30) reply- to refuse scripture is to refuse the sign (16:31).

If this story is considered as a parable, it can be considered as short stories with two levels of meaning which combine the qualities of narrative, metaphor, and brevity. Notably, both the Greco-Roman and rabbinic literary traditions, parable has a broader meaning and is not limited to narrative and may also include riddle, comparison, proverb and allegory (Snodgrass 2000, 591; Wenham 1989, 12). Jesus frequently used parables in his teachings about the coming of the kingdom of God which was a central theme in His ministry. Against the backdrop of literarily embellishment some scholars called the narrative, the *crux interpretum* among the parables and it portrays the problem child and puzzle of modern literary structure of exegesis-*Schwerzenskind der Parabelexegese* (Julicher 1910, 495; Rucker 1912, 1; Stoll 1941, 17; Lunt 1954, 335). Luke 16 is metaphorically and ironically structured within a Hellenistic literary narrative style. Looking at it from Luke's literary style of writing it is characterized by literary excellence, historical details and classical in Greek vocabulary (Foster 1995,1530).

Both the preceding and postlude story to Luke 16:19-31 were stories and parables illustrating God's love for sinners (Luke 15) and man's love for riches (Luke 16:1-18). While the preceding stories and parables were structured within the *didache* (teaching) of *agape* (love), the postlude is structured within the loggia of forgiveness (Luke 17:1-4), faith (Luke 17:5-10), care for outcast (lepers-Luke 17:11-14), thanksgiving (Luke 17:15-19), the coming of the kingdom of God and followed by the parable of illustrating persistence and humility in prayers (Luke 18). All of these when put together, are interconnected with the illustration of the present and eschatological view of the Kingdom of God. Luke 16 is neatly structured as; two parables with identical opening lines bracketing Jesus' teaching concerning the Kingdom and the men living in it. Its structure as follows in Myers (2012, 58) view:

16:1-8	there was a rich man who... (16: 1). Parable of the unfaithful <i>oikonomos</i>
16: 9-13	Teaching on God and Mammon
16:14-18	Attack on Pharisees as lovers of money
16: 19-31	There was a rich man who ... (16:19) Parable of Lazarus and the rich man

Luke 16 as a whole is clearly a literary unit, though also firmly linked to the previous and subsequent narratives. The first parable has several links to the immediate preceding parable of the prodigal son (15:1-32), notably the fact that the later is also about a rescue by the household love economy and use of the verb *diakorpizon* (15: 13; 16:1). Lazarus and the rich man story is structured in between love and hates; riches and poverty; and the kingdom present and eschatological.

### **POLITICO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF LUKE 16:19-31**

The contemporary situation of our society can challenge a biblical scholar to take a closer look at the historical context behind the text of the New Testament. Numerous students of the Bible are discovering that the Roman Empire had a major influence on the characters and writers of the gospels, Acts, the epistles, and the Apocalypse. In the Gospel of Luke in particular, there are

some obvious references to the Roman Empire and its interaction with Jesus (Pantheos 2013). The demand for tribute to Rome and taxes to Herod in addition to the tithes and offerings to the Temple and priesthood dramatically escalated the economic pressures on peasant producers, whose livelihood was perennially marginal at best. After decades of multiple demands from multiple layers of rulers many village families fell increasingly into debt and were faced with loss of their family inheritance of land. The impoverishment of families led to the disintegration of village communities and the fundamental social form of such an agrarian society. These are precisely the deteriorating conditions that Jesus addressed in the Gospels: impoverishment, hunger, and debt (Crossan 2008, 80). Probably, this harsh economic situation could have affected Lazarus to the extent that he could not even take care of his deteriorating health condition. In regard to the New Testament, the story of early Christianity finds its setting under the shadow of a meta-narrative that dominated most of the Mediterranean world and even beyond (Bryan 2005). Although, the name of the rich man was not mentioned in the narrative, the Vulgate (Latin translation of the Bible) which called the rich man Dives suggest that the rich man in question could probably be a Roman official. Although, Dives is not actually a name, but a typical representation of a rich Roman official in Lukan world (Hultgren 2002, 110). The characteristics of allowing domesticated wild animals to harass or kill a slave or prisoner is common to the Romans hence, the rich man allowing dog to lick and injure Lazarus' wounds is a portrait of a Roman official who enjoys human-animal sports as pleasure.

Another portrait of Romanism of the rich man is the element of slavery that was shown in the story. The Roman empire institutionalized slavery before and during the early church era (McCain 2010, 62). Therefore, Luke's church community is familiar with how a slave is treated as a lesser human being in the society. Harrill (2000, 1125-1126) argues that slaves were well treated by the Roman. If this was the situation why do slaves buy their freedom and why is it that slaves did not have equal human rights like other Roman and Jewish freeborn in the Greeco-Roman world of Jesus' time? Watson (2002, 999-1000) says that the Greeco-Roman society was categorized into strata: Upper class which consisted of the aristocrats, the merchants and the lower class which consisted the peasants and the poor. The upper class in the society were few but were in control of the vast majority of the properties, wealth and power. While the rich people have more than enough to eat and drink, the poor on the other hand go hungry and have no assurance of the next meal.

Luke 16:19-31 could be understood from the Old Testament Deuteronomic and Levitical background of the obligation of the rich towards the poor in the Jewish society (Deut.15:4-16; Lev. 25:8-38). The Jews had it as an obligation to care for the poor among them. The rich and highly placed people in the society were instructed to care and protect the right and dignity of the poor among them as could be seen in Isaiah 10:1-4; 58:67 (Ottuh 2013, 9). The Church community of Luke was not expected to do less. Therefore, this story was told to redress the relationship between the poor and the rich in the church community and beyond.

In the Jewish community where this story was transmitted, most people were poor. The society had a few self-sufficient people, but these belonged to the aristocrats. The overwhelming number of the people of Jesus' community were labourers, tenant farmers, and stewards (Crossan 2002, 251). A few of them were traders. The elites such as landowner, priests and scribes engaged

either directly or indirectly in business activities and in politics (Folarin 2006, 24-29). They allied with the Roman authorities to protect their mutual interests at the expense of other members of the society. During this period, the priests and scribes provided theological justifications for the exploitation and oppression of the poor (Carter 2002, 261-262). Tax collectors inflated their taxes. Stewards increased the cost of their master's goods.

The social-economic situation in which Jesus told this story benefited the small ruling elites. It was a system that concentrated wealth in a few hands, a society where the poor became poorer, and the rich became richer. Even though poor Jews hated exploiters, since financial profit was attached to being a rich man's steward, many accepted to serve rich people, and some even aligned with these exploiters (Folarin 2006, 24-29). In this case, the poor in Luke's church community includes the sick, beggars (Luke 16:20), lepers-the outcast (Luke 17:12ff), widows (Acts 6:1) and the likes of them. These categories of people rely on the mercies of the rich. Luke 16 is situated in the above socio-economic background and such situation is not far fetched in Nigeria especially when we look at it from the view point of the dehumanized citizens of Nigeria who are suffering in the midst of plenty and in the hands of some rich oppressors.

### **THE STORY OF LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN (LUKE 16:19-31): A CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATION IN NIGERIA**

In the New Testament world where both Lazarus and the rich man lived, the *Koine* Greek was used in writing hence in the New Testament, the Greek word used as poor is *ptochois*. *Ptochois* means poor or destitute and it implies a continuous state of inadequate or insufficient value. It also implies beggars who have lost their properties and wonder about in great unhappiness (Ukpong, 1995, 32-34). The LXX (Septuagint), uses the Greek term *ptwcoi/j* (poor) to translate six different Hebrew words in the Old Testament (Bammel 1968). The most common of these is *ynl* (*ani* Ps.14:6 and the plural form is *~yYlnl*[-*aniyyim*, Ps.12:6) which means afflicted, oppressed, poor, humble. Primarily it refers to a person suffering from some kind of disability or distress. Financially the *~yYlnl* (*aniyyim*) lives from day to day and have to satisfy the necessities of life through begging from others; socially they are dependent and subject to oppression. Generally they are wrongfully dispossessed of their rights. Being that the poor person knows that he has only God as his defense, he puts all hope and trust in God. Hence the word also has the religious sense of "pious", "humble" (Ps. 18:22). In this sense it is synonymous with *wln* (*anayw* and the plural form is *~ywln*[-*anaywim*,Ps.69:33) which also comes from the same root and means poor, humble, weak. It is this religious component that dominates the concept of *~ywln* (*anaywim* the humble pious ones) in the Old Testament (Merklein 1991). In Israel at that time, poor people were not to be discriminated against; rather the community was to deal justly with them (Isaiah 10:2) and the king had a special charge to protect their rights (Psalm 82:3). The next word that the LXX translated for *ptwcoi/j* is *lD* (*dal*, 1 Samuel 2:8) which means weak, lowly, poor, needy, haggard and scrawny (Strong, 2001). It refers to physical weakness whereby a person cannot challenge his opponents. It refers also to those in a socially weak position who do not have the power or authority to defend themselves when attacked. Such people are poor in that they have no strength and nobody. The third Hebrew word translated with *ptwcoi/j* (*ptochois*) in the LXX is *ebiyon* which means one who seeks alms, a beggar; in a general sense, a poor person. These are the people who need material help from

others to be able to exist. The fourth Hebrew word translated with *ptwcoi/j* (*ptochois*) is *vr'* (*rash*, Proverbs 29:13) which means poor, famished and oppressed. The fifth Hebrew word that is also translated with *ptwcoi/j* (*ptochois*) is *rAsx.m;* (*mahsor*, Proverbs 21:17) which means a dependant, one who is socially poor, penury, scarcity, want and lack. The sixth word that the LXX translates with *ptwcoi/j* (*ptochois*) is *hk'l,x* (*helkah*). This is a Hebrew word of uncertain origin and it is found only in Psalm 9:35; 10:14. It means poor, or afflicted. The above shows that the range of meanings contained in the term *ptwcoi/j* (*ptochois*) covers economic, social and religious dimensions because the term embraces the materially poor, the socially alienated, the physically weak and the psychologically afflicted who then become pious and humble placing all their hope in God (Ukpong, 1995). It is against this background that the beatitude: “blessed are the poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3), “blessed are you poor” (Luke 6:20) is to be understood. The difference between the two is that while Matthew’s text makes explicit the spiritual dimension of the concept of the poor, Luke’s text expresses it only thematically; and because the poor are those who have been dehumanized and who thereby place their trust in God, Jesus’ mission is to restore their full humanity and make them share in the blessings of the kingdom. Their blessedness consists in the restoration of their dehumanized humanity that the proclamation of the kingdom was to bring about. Thus to say that the poor are blessed does not mean that economic poverty is a blessing, rather it is to affirm the poor as persons, and by implication subvert poverty that makes the poor non-persons. The story of Lazarus and the rich man as recorded in Luke 16:19-31 and the Nigerian Nollywood Love story movie reminds us of how the poor is being treated in Nigeria today. The Nigerian Lazarus and Etche as encapsulated in poverty and lack are a typical imagery of a destitute in a modern day Nigerian society. The Nigerian Lazarus consist of the school drop outs who dropped out of school due to incessant increment of school fees in government Universities which their parents or sponsors could not afford; the unemployed who room the street with his degree certificate; the under-paid employee who generates huge amount of money for his employer yet under-paid; the orphans, widows and widowers whose’ benefactors left some resources for but such resources have been taken away from them by the highly placed in the family but cannot afford justice; the retrenched and out of job persons who go hungry without any hope of one meal a day; the lowly placed person who does not have any godfather at the top and thereby having no hope of gaining any access to resources that can better his lot; the sick and physically challenged who struggle for survival through begging for alms; the brilliant child of the poor parents whose child cannot gain access to scholarship to fulfill his academic and professional dreams; the child who has become a street and high way vendor of commodities due to lack of free education; those who cannot access the best health facilities due to lack of standard government hospitals; and the likes who are suffering from the dehumanization of poverty in Nigeria. These categories of poor people are trying to work hard to make ends meet yet they get it very difficult to get out of poverty due to lack of enabling environment. Many of such people suffer in the hand of the rich.

On the other hand, in the New Testament world of Luke, the Greek adjective used for rich is *πλούσιος* (*plousios*) and it means possession of resources, wealth, etc. When used in the aorist tense it reads *plouteo* (Vine 1996, 533). The general rendition of wealth or riches in the Old Testament is *hayil* (Genesis 34:29) and else where in the New Testament it is being referred to as *euporia* (Acts 19:25). In both the Old and New Testament renditions, the idea expressed feeling of well-being and self-sufficiency (Schultz, 2004:550). Riches even though given by God was



not to determine a man's life. The wealthy were saddled with the responsibility of caring for the poor in the Jewish Christian society. Jesus' attitude towards riches showed that wealth is good but all rich people will be held accountable for how the wealth was used while on earth. The rich in Luke's world at that time consisted of some insignificantly few rich persons who were highly placed in the society due to their wealth (Davids 1992, 701-710). The rich man in the story is a prototype of some Nigerian rich and highly placed people. The rich in the Nigerian context are those who own conglomerates but pay workers peanuts as salaries; those who are in the seat of political and economic powers but do not care about how the resources of the nation can be used in such a way that the poor can benefit; those who increase school fees indiscriminately thereby depriving the poor from attaining education; and those who monopolize all businesses living no room for the poor to gain access to any meaningful business to better their lots. Many Nigerian youths are very brilliant and willingly to learn a trade in case they cannot go to conventional schools but such poor Nigerian youths could not fulfill their academic or vocational dreams due to an un-enabling environment which has been hijacked by the rich and highly placed people in the society. Our technical schools in Nigeria where there poor could have learnt some kinds of trades have been mortgaged for University degree and anticipation for white collar jobs. The rich people in Nigeria are a prototypes of the rich man in Luke 16:19-31, rich pastor and Nze who did not give a little opportunity for poor Lazarus and Etche respectively to enjoy a little comfort of life. The story in Luke 16:19-31 is not only about the eschatological enjoyment of the poor Christians in heaven and the suffering of the unrepentant rich in hell but a lesson that calls attention of Christians to put into cognizance, the need for the *plousios* in the society to care for the *ptochois* in the society especially those of their Christian and biological relations.

Luke 16:19-21 paints a picture of a very wide gap between the rich and the poor in Luke's community. This understanding is further deepened by the imageries that were used to depict the condition of the rich man and the poor man. These imageries include: πορφύραν (*porphuran*-a purple robe), βύσσον (*bussion*-fine linen) and εὐφραϊνόμενος (*euphrainomenos*-meriment and splendor) describing the condition of the rich man; and πύλωνα (*pulona*-gate, barricade, barrier, etc), εἰλκωμένος (*eilkomenos*-housed with sores or covered with sores), ἐπιθυμῶν χορτασθῆναι (*epithumon chortasthenan*- hungry and desiring to be satisfied) and πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης (*piptonton apo tes trapezen*- crump that fall from the table). Purple and fine linen were the dress code of the man and this exemplifies his richness and his position in society. Purple and fine linen clothing is a sign of wealth and the colour purple also implies royalty or official power. According to Scott (1989, 148), purple and fine linen place the man among the elites and among the top of the social scale. In stark contrast to the rich man's costume is Lazarus' sores, although there is no mention of Lazarus' articles of clothing, it is submitted that the skin acquires the role of costume in this context in order to contribute to the character contrasts (Marshall 1998, 310; Tsao 2011, 7). The usage of gate did not give the description of the rich man's house but it showed the rich architectural masterpiece of a wealthy man's house. While the rich man was inside merrying the poor man was outside hungry. The poor man, Lazarus was famished and even longed to eat crump that fell from the rich man's table. The gate showed that there was a barricade that hindered Lazarus from entering to eat from the rich man's table. Crumbs from the table like the gate, the crumbs could be seen as hope for the poor man. In Keener (1993, 236) view, the crumbs here may be regarded as regular crumbs or the pieces of bread used to sop up the table and these crumbs which fell from the rich man's table would have been sufficient to

sustain Lazarus if he was allowed to eat them. The crumbs contribute to the mood of the story, the reader's sympathy is aroused for Lazarus did not expect much from the rich man but only crumbs for mere survival. The rich man's table where Lazarus had no fellowship could be contrasted with God's table in the kingdom of God as could be seen in Luke 22:30 (Tsao, 2011). This image of a table where bread's crumbs fall is set in contrast with God's banquet as depicted by the use of the term 'Abraham's bosom' later on in the text. The expression that the rich man feasted sumptuously every day is a typical image of the Nigerian pedigree dinner which does not make provision for a poor man. According to Resseguie (2005, 110-111), the meal is one of the most common and important settings in the New Testament. Furthermore, table fellowship not only shapes community identity but also creates social boundaries. Here, the social status between the rich man and Lazarus is further contrasted. The boundary created by the gate in the architectural setting is elaborated by the boundary in the social setting of table fellowship. The social annihilation of the poor in both the church and human society in the Bible certain and the Nigerian contemporary milieu is a form of dehumanization of the poor. Some rich people in Nigeria create a picture of superiority over the poor hence they give the poor some menial jobs in domestic and cooperate environment and treat them as lesser human beings. When the rich man allowed the dog to lick Lazarus's sore and did not open his gate for him to come in and eat, it shows dehumanization of and uncaring attitude for the poor. What is wrong inviting the poor man to his house to feed him every day and treat his wounds? This question should be answered by every rich man in Nigeria. Those at the corridor of power in Nigeria must not forget that they must make good policies that can better the lots of the poor.

Luke 22-31 addressed the issues of death (*thanatos*) and the afterlife. Theologically, verses 22-31 is eschatological in projection. It is eschatological in the sense that it speaks about what happened to both Lazarus and the rich man after death. Meeting the Jewish patriarch Abraham as painted in the story in the afterlife event of Lazarus and the rich man form a Judaistic cultural backdrop to the conversation between the rich man and Abraham. The conversation between Abraham and the rich man is set in a distinctively Jewish perspective. From the dialogue, it appears that there is a special relationship between them as they addressed each other as father and son. Lehtipuu (2004, 99-100) suggests that the roles of Abraham in the afterlife as pictured in this narrative serves as a fitting spokesman for God and a companion and consoler to Lazarus. Moreover, being a child of Abraham means belonging to God's family and Abraham could be seen as an authoritative voice in the story who mediates God's judgment. It is submitted that Abraham's primary role serves as a rhetoric device to explain God's point of view and Jesus' point of view, which is what the implied reader should understand and hence a key to the interpretation of the narrative (Tsao 2011, 8). The rich man is a descendant of Abraham who is a respected figure representing the historic basis of the Jews and it is a privilege to be called the son of Abraham. However, to the disappointment of the Jewish audience, calling Abraham a father seemingly does not help the rich man. In this line of thought, Lehtipuu (2004, 98) further opined that it was meant to point out that the rich man's address of father to Abraham is a reminder of the words of John the Baptist in Luke 3:8: "Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham." Lazarus at last was a great person in heaven and the rich a suffering person in hell not because he was rich but because riches was his god while on earth. Like the rich man, there is eternal irreversible suffering for those whose idolatrous

materialism manifests itself in the neglect of the needy (Finkbeiner 2005, 5). The character of the rich man is a replica of some Nigerian greedy and money thirsty frisks. This get rich and remain rich minded people can do any thing to get rich and remain rich without thinking about the afterlife of man. The lesson every rich man in Nigeria must learn here is that no matter how rich one might be, the value of such riches is how such riches was able to put smiles in the faces of the poor and suffering humanity in the society. Whatever wealth man acquires, cannot secure heaven for such rich person. God wants every man to be rich but such riches must be used to bless humanity not to be used to dehumanize the poor. Also, poverty is not a guarantee for heaven but whatever situation man finds himself, he must live in accordance with the rules of God on earth. Of course, the observation of the rule of God on earth is called: “*βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ-basileia tou Theou*, meaning the kingdom of God.” Nigeria and all living in it are part of God’s kingdom. The rich must treat the poor in Nigeria as God’s fellow image (*Imago Dei*). All the poor Lazarus and Etche of the present day Nigeria must be given a more human face and should be given a better economic spate to survive. The poor in Nigeria should not be allowed to wait for the crump that falls from the rich man’s table any longer and they should not be given fish to eat either, rather, they should be taught and empowered to fish and fed for themselves. This is what *basileia tou Theou* requires from every rich person and nation. The eschatological picture of Lazarus being in Heaven with Abraham enjoying his life and the rich man suffering in hell is a proof that the poor could have been given the opportunity to enjoy life like any other person on earth. It also shows that live does not just end with death.

## **THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LUKE 16:19-31 FOR NIGERIAN CHRISTIANS**

### ***Un-generosity towards the Poor is a Sin***

The use of wealth is the major topic of Luke 16. Wealth can be a blessing or a curse, depending on whether it is used as a means to exercise power, a tool of self-indulgence or a resource to serve others. Wealth's danger is that it can turn our focus toward our own enjoyment, as the rich fool showed in 12:13-21 and the rich man showed in 16:19-31. Money is a tool. It is an excellent resource when put to the right use. It can help to build many things of use to others. But to possess money is also to hold a sacred stewardship. Our resources are not to be privately held and consumed but are to be used as a means of generosity, as a way of showing care for our neighbor, as the good Samaritan showed in Luke 10:25-37 and as a restored Zacchaeus showed in 19:1-10 (Evans 2013).

The narrative told us that the rich man faced the judgment of God when he died and Lazarus entered heaven when he died. This does not mean that poverty is a prerequisite to make heaven. The sin of the rich man was selfish use of wealth. He refused to treat Lazarus sore even though he has the resources to do so. Lazarus was a righteous man irrespective of his poverty. The rich man was not punished for being rich but he was punished for not using his riches to bless the poor around him. This a lesson every rich Christian must learn. Rich Christians should not neglect the plight of the poor who need their helps. This resonates with the Nollywood movie titled: “Love Story.” The pastor and Nze were guilty of looking down on Etche just because he was poor. He looked down on Etche and denied him of Love and care because Etche was not in their pedigree. This is how many rich men treat the poor in Nigeria. This story is speaking to the rich not to dehumanize the poor but to use their wealth to bless them.

***Status in God's View is Immaterial when Dealing With Others***

After a brief note about kingdom values, Jesus turns back to the use of resources. Raising a negative example, he discusses kingdom ethics and values in caring for others. God's concern for people also becomes evident. As Jesus showed in the story, wealth is not always what it is assumed to be neither is poverty. The rich men in the Nigerian society today like the one in the narrative are being referred to as successful people who have reached the top. Some of them live in a penthouse. In short, the very rich person "has arrived." For many, wealth is the essence of life. It means self-sufficiency, independence and plenty of opportunity to enjoy material pleasures. Though few people attain such wealth, many strive for it. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is not really about money. It is about much more than the money in whatever denomination.

This story can be seen as an apologetics against the dehumanization of the poor in the society. It also appeals against greed and the desire for self-indulgence. Jesus wants Christians to see the great spiritual danger in that path. God's judgment against the rich man showed that worldly status does not matter in our dealing with one another rather humans should see fellow human as co-image of God (*Imago Dei*). Rich or poor does not matter but what we do to others with our status is what matters. The rich man was highly placed in the society like Nze (the D.P.O) and the Pastor but they used their wealth and position to dehumanize the poor. This is a lesson every pastor and public office holders must also learn. They must use their position to help and protect the poor and the sick people around them. In this context, God does not judge the rich based on their personalities but on their relationship with other people, especially the poor.

***Dehumanization of Poor People in the Society is Inhuman***

The rich man allowed dogs to lick Lazarus' wounds. It would not have taken much from the rich man to take Lazarus to a hospital. History has it that rich people in Jesus' time have physicians as their slaves. Being that the man in this story was rich, it is possible he even had a household physician yet he left Lazarus' wounds untreated. In the midst of much food, Lazarus was reduced to eat the crumbs that falls from the rich man's table if he was given the opportunity to enter the rich man's house. It was even possible that if he allowed he would have been allowed to drag the crump with the rich man's dog under the table. This is a pure picture of dehumanization and reckless abandonment of the poor in Nigeria. Even though the poor in Nigeria does not literally go under the table of the rich to eat crump but the way some rich and highly placed persons in the Nigerian society treat the poor and deprive them access to wealth is a typical picture of oppression and dehumanization.

The gap between the haves and the have not is very wide like ratio (10:1,000,000). Some rich people even refuse to pay their poor workers thereby reducing them to face untold hardship and as a result, they and their families have turned beggars over night. Some of their children have become school drop outs due to lack of prompt money for school fees and street vendors of commodities and miscreants. Some workers are even being under paid in Nigeria hence they are poor. While they work and generate great wealth for their employers, the employee goes home with a take home pay that can take him home at the end of the month. All of these constitute inhumanity to fellow humans. Although, we were not told in the story in Luke 16:19-31 that

Lazarus is an employee of the rich man, the dehumanizing treatment meted to the poor man is similar in our contemporary economic situation in Nigeria as replicated in the Nigerian Nollywood love story. The rich and highly placed persons in Nigeria especially those who are Christians should give a human face to fellow human beings especially those who are having affinities with them in one way or the other. Jesus even mentioned that whatever we do to fellow humans is being done for God. Jesus admonishes his disciples that refusal to feed the thirsty and hungry who came to beg for food and water is a sin before God and it is capable of taking one to hell (Matt.25:34-46).

### ***A Rich Christian Must Care for the Less-privileged in the Church and Society***

The contrast is set up from the opening of the account. The rich man is finely clothed and eats well. Fresh linen and clothes of purple dye indicate his wealth, as do his daily feasts inside his mansion with its own gate. The imagery of purple cloth here was used to describe flamboyant, very expensive dresses and splendor (Strack and Billerbeck 1926, 2, 20). Linen may allude to expensive undergarments; the two terms together suggest a "power dresser" (Fitzmyer 1985, 1130-1131). This man lives like a king (Prov 31:22; 1 Maccabees 8:14; 1Qap Gen 20:31). While some people eat heartily and can afford expensive underwear, others have nothing. So we meet Lazarus. He is very poor and probably crippled, since he lies down at the gate. If he is not crippled, he is very sick. He is looking for food. Even crumbs will do. His hope of sustenance is alms from the offerings of those who have something. His skin is a snack to lick for the wild dogs that roam the streets. These dogs were considered unclean, because it was likely that they had previously licked animal corpses. The image is purposefully gruesome: they lick his sores and render him unclean as could be seen in 1 Kings 14:11; 16:4; 21:19, 23-24; 22:38; 1 Enoch 89:42-43, 47, 49) (Michel 1965, 1103; Danker 1988, 283). Lazarus wears his poverty's pain on his ulcerated skin—a graphic contrast to the rich man's soft clothes. If the panhandlers of our cities' streets look bad, Lazarus would serve as a worthy ancestor. Later rabbis would have seen Lazarus's life as no life at all, since they had a saying that three situations resulted in no life: depending on food from another, being ruled by one's wife and having a body covered with sores (Besa [Yom Tob] 32b). According to this saying, Lazarus is doubly deprived.

The story's initial impression is clear: the rich man has a great life, while the poor man does not. The rich man throws away food; the poor man must scrounge for it. Some people have nothing, while others have expensive underwear. Observing this scene, it appears as if God has blessed the rich man and the poor man an object of God's judgment. This type of poverty raises the notion that Lazarus must be lazy or sinful and as such paying for his depravity with his destitution. Deeper observation of the narrative showed that Lazarus was incapacitated by sickness and poverty. It means Lazarus cannot even work to earn money to feed for himself. We were not told if he had a family of his own and even if he had, he cannot take care of them. In this story Lazarus did not speak. His situation is so pathetic that no one would likely hear him if he had spoken. Here is dire need that the rich man could easily meet, even with leftovers. The rich man simply saw Lazarus as a no body and as such he did not care for the poor man even he had much.

This type of situation is not far fetched in Nigeria as it is a common place to see some rich Christians feel offended when the poor come around them to beg for alms. Some times the poor

receive demeanable looks from the rich brethren instead of alms and looks of love. Jesus' teaching in this parable showed that God wants rich Christians to care for the less-privileged in the church and in the society at large. Just as the rich man treated Lazarus so did the Pastor and Elder Nze (the DPO) who had more than enough to care and economically raise up poor Etche who they eventually led to early grave as a result of the frustration of his oppressors. This is a challenge every rich Christian must not neglect in Nigeria. We should not be selfish with our wealth. We must learn to care for those who are poor in the family, church and the society at large.

***A juxtaposition of the Present and the Afterlife Gives the True Picture of Real Life***

Nigerian Christians must look at life side by side with the consciousness of the present and eschatological aspects of life. People who rely on their earthly wealth are living in the shadows of real life. In as much as God wants us to be rich, He also wants us not to see wealth as the basis of life. The story in question exposes our values as it now considers Lazarus from an eternal perspective. Both the rich man and Lazarus answered the call of death without any regard to their status. Each has a ticket for a permanent destination, one that money cannot buy. Money cannot guarantee one's status in the afterlife. Here, a remarkable reversal has taken place. Now Lazarus is in and the rich man is out. This is known as an eschatological reversal. It is a true rags-to-riches story, only eternal destinies are the prize. Lazarus is by Abraham's side, while the rich man is in dire need of relief, living in torment. The term for torment here, *basanos*, was often used for the kind of punishment meted out to a slave to elicit a confession of wrongdoing (Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-10; 4 Maccabees 13:15; Schneider 1964, 563). The mood of the periscope is set by the distance and difference between the two figures. Everything is reversed, and the changes are all very permanent.

Lazarus is next to Abraham, the figure of promise, sharing in blessing (Schweizer 1974, 647 and 182). This is another way to say that he has been "gathered to the fathers" (Gen 15:15; 47:30; Deut 31:16). The angels carried him to Abraham's side, to heaven, in one of the greatest funeral processions of all time. Here as elsewhere, Luke emphasizes that sometimes the poor are headed for glory. One's social status on earth need not dictate one's spiritual status before God. On the other hand, the rich man's new address reads "Hades" (Greek; NIV has hell). A selfish life is a rootless life, for everything it yields withers and fades. Interestingly, however, the rich man still sees Lazarus as his pawn, his social inferior. Having learned nothing in his new situation, he begins trying to negotiate his way to relief. There is now no drop of water for him, just as there had been no food for Lazarus before. The measure by which the rich man had lived was now being measured to him. Irony abounds here. The wealthy man had not even acknowledged Lazarus in his earthly circumstances, but here he knows his name. Maybe he had seen the poor man all along and had ignored him. Lazarus had been good for nothing to him, only the object of a casual uncaring glance. God sees the potential of the poor very differently (James 2:5). Divine riches do not take notice of earthly wealth or social status. The rich man's chance to use his wealth in a way that pleases God had passed. Now he is outside the gate of the mansion of eternal blessing (see 6:20-26; Jas 5:1-6).

## CONCLUSION

The issue of the poor will continue to be in human society but we have also been told in the Bible as to how to treat them. This work has shown that the story of Lazarus and the rich man is a prototype of the Nigerian Nollywood love story which was replicated in the harsh treatment meted to poor people by some rich persons in the society. It is against this backdrop that the story of Lazarus and the rich man was retold in a Nigerian context.

The text (Luke 16:19-31) unveiled to us some theological lesson that the church and the society must learn as to the issue of the poor people living around us. Such lessons showed that ungenerosity towards the poor is a sin, status in God's view is immaterial when dealing with others, dehumanization of poor people in the society is inhuman, a rich Christian must care for the less-privileged in the Church and society, a juxtaposition of the present and the afterlife gives the true picture of real life. When the church and the society especially the rich among us put these lessons into cognizance, their attitude towards the poor around them will change and as such they will give a more human face to the poor.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Having considered the treatment of the rich, the church and even the society to the poor, there is the need to recommend the following in addition to what has been discussed above.

- i. The church should formulate a more drastic economic measures to empower the poor in the church and those around them. Such economic measures can include free skill acquisition scheme and when such trainee completes the prescribed training, he can be financially empowered with capital to practice the learnt trade.
- ii. A more viable charity ministry should be operated by the church to care for the immediate hunger of the poor before and during their empowerment process. For those who are irredeemably incapacitated, the church should see it as a point of duty to feed them incase they are abandoned by their families.
- iii. The government should as a matter of all seriousness front a more viable poverty alleviation programme that is devoid of political intrigues. This programme should be carried out in the Federal and replicated in the state levels to rapidly address the spate of poverty in Nigeria. In order to do this the government can establish more federal and state skill acquisition centers in addition to the ones already on ground.
- iv. As part of more effective poverty alleviation scheme in Nigeria, the government should revamp all the malfunctioning technical schools and factories.
- v. Rich people in the church in Nigeria should be given a more biblical reorientation through Bible studies to help them know and see the value of wealth as the sum total of smiles put on the faces of the poor and needy in the church and the society.

**REFERENCES**

- Behind Luke's Gospel: The Roman Empire During the Time of Jesus in [http://www.patheos.com/blogs/thepangeablog/articles/unpublished-papers/behind-lukes-gospel-the-roman-empire-during-the-time-of-jesus/#\\_ftn1](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/thepangeablog/articles/unpublished-papers/behind-lukes-gospel-the-roman-empire-during-the-time-of-jesus/#_ftn1). Retrieved in 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2013.
- Bryan, Christopher. 2005. *Render to Caesar: Jesus, the Early Church, and the Roman Superpower*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Crossan, John D. 2008. "Roman Imperial Theology." In *The Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance*, edited by Richard A. Horsley and Richard A., 68-80. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Dauids, P.H. 1992. "Rich and Poor." In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel*, edited by Green, J.B.; McKnight, S.; Marshall, I.H., 701-710. Downer Groves: InterVarsity Press.
- Dominic, Rita.; Duru, Francis.; Ekwueme, Laz.; Asiegbu, Ejike.; Ajubuigbo, Martins and Eze, Rickky N (2005). *Love Story. Nollywood Movies*. Produced by Oakfil Movies International Limited.
- Evans, M. 2013. Luke 16 - IVP *New Testament Commentaries* <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Luke/Generosity-Handling-Money>. Retrieved on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2013.
- Finkbeiner, D. 2004. "Interpreting Luke 16: Abraham, Lazarus, and the Rich Man-Parable or History?" *Workshop Session 3*(15): 1-6.
- Foster, L.1995. "Luke." In: *The NIV Study Bible*, edited by Barker, K.L. Burdick, D.W. Stek, J.H. Wessel, W.W. and Youngblood, R., 1529-1587. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.
- Harrill, J.A. 2000. "Slavery." In *Dictionary of the New Testament Background*, edited by Evans, C.A. and Porter, S.E., 1124-1127. Downer Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.
- Hultgren, Arland J. 2002. *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 110-118.
- Joseph A. Fitzmyer, J.A. 1985. *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- Julicher, A. 1910. *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*. Tubingen: Mohr, 2:495.
- Keener, Craig S.1993. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Illinois: IVP,.
- Lehtipuu, O. 2004. "Characterization and Persuasion: The Rich Man and the Poor Man in Luke 16.19-31." In *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism*, edited by Rhoads, D. and Syreeni, K., 98-100. Edinburgh: T&T Clark International.
- Lunt, R.G. 1954. "Towards an Interpretation of the Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke xvi.1-18)." *ExpTim* 66:335.
- Marshall, Alfred. Tr. 1998. *The Interlinear NIV New Testament in Greek and English*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.
- McCain, Danny. 2010. *Notes on New Testament Introduction*. Bukuru: African Christian Textbooks, 320pp.
- Merklein, H. 1991. "Ptochos." In *Exegetical Dictionary of New Testament (EDNT)*, edited by Balz, H. and Schneider, G., 3:194-104. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans.
- Myers, C. 2012. "From Capital to Community: Discipleship as Defection in Jesus' Parable about a Manager of Injustice (Luke 16:1-13)." In *Radical Christian Voices and Practice:Essays*



- in Honour of Christopher Roland*, edited by Bannett, Z. and Gowler, D.B. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Ottuh, J.A. 2013. "Poverty and the Oppression of the Poor in Niger Delta (Isaiah 10:1-4): A Theological Approach." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 10 (3):1-19.
- Resseguie, James L. 2005. *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Rucker, A. 1912. *Uber das Gleichnis vom ungerechten Verwalter*, Lc 16:1-13. BibS(F) 17:1.
- Schultz, Arnold C. 2004. "Wealth." In *Wycliffe Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Harrison, E. F.; Bromiley, G. W. and Henry C. F., 550-551. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.
- Schweizer, E. 1974. *The Good News According to Mark*. Westminster: John Knox Press, 395pp.
- Scott, B.B. 1989. *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 148-151.
- Snodgrass, K.R. 2000. "Parable." In *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel*, edited by Green, J.B.; McKnight, S.; Marshall, I.H., 591-601. Downer Groves: InterVarsity Press.
- Stoll, R. 1941. "The Unjust Steward-A Problem in Interpretation." *Ecclesiastical Review* 105:17.
- Strong, J. 2001. *The Strongest Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Grad Rapids: Zondervan, NT GK,4990-4993: 5036.
- Tsao, Ivan. 2011. "The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) - A Narrative Criticism." MCS1.  
[http://www.cgst.edu/Publication/TheologyStudent/Journal21/Article\\_B01.pdf](http://www.cgst.edu/Publication/TheologyStudent/Journal21/Article_B01.pdf). Retrieved 17th June, 2013.
- Ukpong, J. S. 1995. "The Poor and the Mission of the Church in Africa." In *New Testament Essays*, edited by Ukpong, S. Justin, 31-43. Lagos: Campbell Publishers.
- Utey, Bob. 2013. Introduction to Luke. *The Study Bible Commentary Series, New Testament Printer-friendly Version*. Bible Lessons International in <http://bible.org/seriespage/introduction-Luke>. Retrieved 10th June, 2013.
- Vine, W. E. 1996. *Vine's Concise Dictionary of the Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 755pp.
- Watson, D.F. 2002. "Roman Social Class." In *Dictionary of the New Testament Background*, edited by Evans, C.A. and Porter, S.E., 999-1004. Downer Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press.
- Wenham, David. 1989. *The Parables of Jesus: Pictures of Revolution*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 12.