

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✝ THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

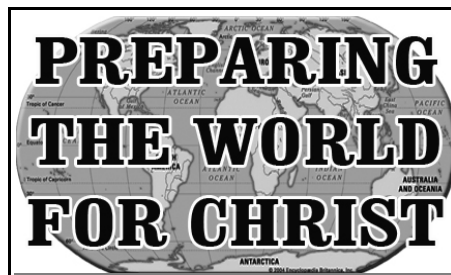
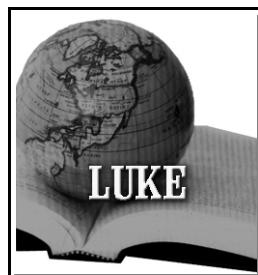
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

LESSON NUMBER 51

COMMENTARY ON: 16:1-18

A STEWARD WHO WASTED HIS MASTER'S GOODS

In this parable the Lord elaborates on the seriousness of handling the goods of another – which is what every person in Christ is doing – handling what belongs to Jesus Himself. This devastates the idea of religious careers, and having institutions that prepare people to do the work of the Lord. He will tell His disciples of a steward who wasted his master's goods, and how it caused an accusation to be registered against him to the one for whom the steward was working. The Lord draws several indispensable conclusions that must be discerned, and upon which every believer must act. This teaches us that life is not and simplistic have some have suggested. We are in a world created and maintained by the Lord, and are taking care of what He Himself has given to us. The perception of this significantly alters the way we live. The saved are not to allow their thinking be directed by their plans, their dreams, their will, and their preferences.



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke, 2/17/17

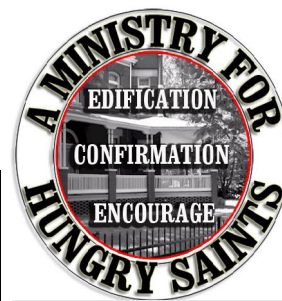
Lesson Number 51

54 VERSIONS OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES

ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005); AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965); ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901); BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949); BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899); EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885); ETH=Etheridge Translation (1849); ETRV=Easy to Read (1999); ESV=English Standard Version (2001); GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599); GNB=Good News (1966); GSNT=Goodspeed (1923); GWN=God's Word (1995); IE=International English (1973); NIRV=New Int'l Readers Version (1998); ISV=International Standard Version (1967); JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917); JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611); LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976); LEW=Lewis Translation (1896); LIVING=Living Bible (1971); MESSAGE=The Message (1993); MGI=Peshitta Translation (2006); MIT=Idiomatic Version; MKJV=Modern KJV (1962); MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001); MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852); NAB=New American Bible (2002); NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977); NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995); NIB=New International Bible; NIV=New International Version (1984); NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985); NKJV=New King James Version (1979); NLT=New Living Translation (1996); NOY=George Noyes Bible (1869); NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989); PHILLIPS=J.B. Phillips New Testament (1962); PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1955); ROT=Rotherham Bible (1999); RPTE=Revised Patriarchal Greek Orthodox New Testament; RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952); TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985); WEB=Webster Bible (1833); WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903); WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937); TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526); WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382); YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

FRIBERG; LOUW-NIDA; LIDDELL SCOTT; THAYER; VGNT GREEK DICTIONARY; GINGRICH, DANKER,



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut out to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

A STEWARD WHO WASTED HIS MASTER'S GOODS

Luke 16:1 "And He said also unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. ² And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. ³ Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. ⁴ I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. ⁵ So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? ⁶ And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. ⁷ Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. ⁸ And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light. ⁹ And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. ¹⁰ He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. ¹¹ If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? ¹² And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall 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 else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. ¹⁴ And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided Him. ¹⁵ And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. ¹⁶ The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. ¹⁷ And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail. ¹⁸ Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." Luke 16:1-18

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

In this parable the Lord elaborates on the seriousness of handling the goods of another – which is what every person in Christ is doing – handling what belongs to Jesus Himself. This

devastates the idea of religious careers, and having institutions that prepare people to do the work of the Lord. He will tell His disciples of a steward who wasted his master's goods, and how it caused an accusation to be registered

against him to the one for whom the steward was working. The Lord draws several indispensable conclusions that must be discerned, and upon which every believer must act. This teaches us that life is not as simplistic have some

JESUS TEACHES HIS DISCIPLES ABOUT HOW TO BE A GOOD STEWARD OF MONEY IN PREPARATION FOR ETERNITY – Given O. Blakely

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have suggested. We are in a world created and maintained by the Lord, and are taking care of what He Himself has given to us. The perception of this significantly alters the way we live. The saved are not to allow their thinking to be directed by their plans, their dreams, their will, and their preferences.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus has already told the people what is involved in following Him, being taught by Him, and being led by Him.

- ⇒ All other relationships are to be strictly secondary: *"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."* (Luke 14:26)

- ⇒ Everyone has a cross to bear, which cross is the result of choosing to be Christ's disciple. Christ must be followed while carrying that cross. *"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."* (Lk 14:27).

- ⇒ Everything must be forsaken in order to follow Christ. There can be no competitive influences embraced. Every facet of life must be subordinate to our quest for glory. *"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple."* (Luke 14:33).

All of Jesus' instruction to His disciples is within the context of those unvarying requirements. All of His promises are within the circumference of real discipleship.

A WORD TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

A classic example of this is found in Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth. *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."* (2 Cor 6:14-18).

TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA

When delivering a word to seven churches in Asia, Jesus preceded seven marvelous promises with the unvarying qualification, *"He that overcometh."*

- ⇒ *"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."*

(Rev 2:7)

- ⇒ *"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."* (Rev 2:11)

- ⇒ *"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."* (Rev 2:17)

- ⇒ *"And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father. And I will give him the Morning Star."* (Rev 2:26-28)

- ⇒ *"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before his angels."* (Rev 3:5)

- ⇒ *"Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name."* (Rev 3:12)

- ⇒ *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."* (Rev 3:21)

In addition, each of these promises included the stipulation, *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."* (Rev 2:7)

The point to be seen is that Jesus addresses special words to His disciples – words that cannot be received by anyone else. The Pharisees lived with the delusion that they needed no word from Jesus. There are still professing Christians who are living as

though they did not require a directive or promissory word from the Lord Jesus Christ.

WHAT JESUS IS DOING IN OUR TEXT

Now, Jesus will relate our faithfulness to Him in this world, with our status in the world to come – a most arresting consideration. Once this is perceived, it will be very clear why

the qualifications for being a disciple is necessary. Our lives are shaped by thinking of the world to come, a world in which we are already citizens.

When the believer speaks of the future, he is not speaking of tomorrow, or the next month or next year. Rather he is speaking of a time that will commence with standing before the Lord and giving an account to him of

our complete lives – words and deeds. Then, for the redeemed, there is the matter of reigning with Christ, and following Him wherever he goes.

It simply is not possible to live for Christ without these things in mind. This is why we read of *"abounding in hope"* (Rom 15:13), and being saved by hope, and being anchored *"by hope"* (Heb 6:19).

HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES

^a Luke 16:1A *And He said also unto His disciples. "*

Other versions read, *"He was also saying to His disciples, "*^{NASB} *"Jesus told His disciples. "*^{NIV} and *"another time He said to the disciples. "*^{BBE}

Jesus had been speaking to the multitude following Him (Luke 15:1-32). Now, however, He directs a special word to His disciples, as distinguished from the criticizing Pharisees and scribes (Luke 15:2).

These were not the *"twelve disciples"* (Matt 10:1; 11:1; 20:17). These were His general disciples (Luke 7:11), many of whom would eventually leave Him – *"From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him"* (John 6:66). Of these we read such things as, *"Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?"* (John 6:60). Before Jesus chose His *"twelve disciples"* (Matt 10:1), He had these general disciples: *"And seeing the*

multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him" (Matt 5:1). One of these disciples is mentioned by Matthew, *"And another of His disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father"* (Matt 8:21). When *"the twelve"* were chosen, they were selected from *"His disciples"* (Lk 6:13).

Now Jesus speaks particularly to these general disciples, which did not include the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and lawyers. They were following them. However, with the exception of *"the twelve,"* they were not committed to follow Him wherever He went.

THERE ARE STILL DIFFERENT KINDS OF DISCIPLES

There are still different kinds of disciples – some are accepted by the Lord, and some are not. Today it is quite common for people to use the word *"Christian"* in the place of disciple. With that in mind, there are some legitimate *"Christians,"* and some

that are not. There are states that cause a professing Christians to be unacceptable to Christ and to God.

- ⇨ Being assessed as *"adulterers and adulteresses"* (James 4:4)
- ⇨ Being *"lukewarm"* (Rev 3:16)
- ⇨ Having a name they are alive when they are really *"dead"* (Rev 3:1).
- ⇨ Leaving one's *"first love"* (Rev 2:4)
- ⇨ Not bearing fruit (John 15:2,6)
- ⇨ Not loving Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:22)
- ⇨ Having a *"form of godliness,"* but rejecting its power (2 Tim 3:1-5).
- ⇨ Preaching *"another gospel"* (Gal 1:8-9).
- ⇨ Not believing the truth (2 Thess 2:12).
- ⇨ Those living in immorality (1 Cor 5:1-5)

Anyone who is acquainted with the Christian world knows that people fitting these descriptions are in nearly every congregation – at least those of any size. Such people would insist they are *"Christians."* But they are really like the disciples that left Jesus after becoming intolerant of what He said (John 6:66).

A CERTAIN RICH MAN HAD A STEWARD

^b *There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. "*

Jesus is now going to disguise the

truth with a parable. It will precisely describe existing situations, but only those who love the truth will see something in it, or desire to know what it means. This is one of Christ's intentional ways of teaching – doing so

to draw out legitimate followers, and ultimately frustrate those who are not.

This reveals how desirous the Lord is to make the truth known. Fundamentally, He does not want truth

to be hidden, but to be known. However, He will not endeavor to make it known to those who have no appetite for it. Nevertheless, the presence of such people, even if they are in large numbers, will not stop Him from speaking it. He is compelled from within to do so, so He does it in parabolic form. He knows what He is saying, and is no doubt refreshed by it.

THE FOCUS IS THE RICH MAN

The focus is not the steward, or what he was given, but it is the *"rich man"* – the one whose goods had been left in charge of the steward, and for which he was accountable, and was handling. The *"rich man"* was the One to whom he was accountable.

A TYPE OF THE LORD

"There was a certain rich man, which had a steward . . ."

It should be apparent that this man was a type of the Lord – the Ultimate Distributor – the One whose goods we are handling.

There are several parabolic descriptions of the Lord's Person. He is

like a *"Rich Man"* (Lk 16:1), a *"King"* (Matt 18:23), a *"Father"* (2 Cor 6:18), a *"Householder"* (Matt 20:1), the *"Creator"* (1 Pet 4:19), a *"Husband"* (Isa 54:5), a *"Master"* (Eph 6:9), a *"Deliverer"* (2 Sam 22:2), a *"Man of War"* (Ex 15:3), a *"Husbandman"* (John 15:1), etc.

God is never likened to a pauper, or a slave, someone in a famine, or someone who has a need to be met by men. There is never a lowly view of God presented – anywhere!

It was not so with the Lord Jesus, who humbled Himself. That humility enabled Him to be likened to a *"Lamb led to the slaughter"* (Isa 53:7), a *"Child"* (Acts 4:27,30), a *"Servant"* (Isa 42:1), *"Adam"* (1 Cor 15:45), *"Apostle"* (Heb 3:1a), *"High Priest"* (Heb 3:1b), *"Branch"* (Jer 33:15), *"Daysman"* (Job 9:33), *"Man Of sorrows"* (Isa 53:3), etc. None of these applied to Jesus prior to Him coming into the world. That is something of what it cost Him to do the will of God – a will He desired to do (Heb 10:9).

Thus in this parable, God is not likened to a steward, but to a man who had a steward, who was strictly accountable to Him.

THE STEWARD WAS ACCUSED

" . . . and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. "

Someone, probably another one of the rich man 's servants, observed the wastefulness of the steward, and reported it to the his master. Here was a case where another person was more aware of the responsibilities of the steward, than the steward himself.

It is written, *"be sure your sin will find you out"* (Num 32:23). Solomon once wrote, *"Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter"* (Eccl 10:20). That is another way of saying, *"your sin will find you out."* There are no exceptions to this rule. If a person desires that his sin not be remembered, it must be confessed.

HOW IS IT THAT I HEAR THIS OF THEE?

"² And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward."

HE CALLED HIM

"And he called him . . ."

Other versions read, *"he summoned him,"*^{NRSV} *"sent for him,"*^{BBE} and *"told him to come in."*^{NIRV}

This is a parabolic way of introducing men to the idea of accountability to God. The ultimate accountability will be the day of judgment, where we all will be required to give an account of how we have handled what He has given us. Men do not, by nature, think of this answerability. They do not reckon on

the reality that they not only have certain aptitudes, but are responsible for handling them correctly.

HOW IS IT I HEAR THIS OF THEE

" . . . and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? . . ."

Other versions read, *"What is it that I hear about you?"*^{NIV} *"What is this which is said about you?"*^{BBE}

At this point, being a parable, the details are not intended to be precise. God, of course, knows all things, and does not need to learn about men from someone else. Notwithstanding, there are angelic hosts going to earth and returning (Gen 28:12). No doubt they are bringing back reports of what they have witnessed, both good and evil – which report brings glory to God, for it

will precisely agree with the Father's assessment of those matters.

Here we see some of the technicalities of Divine judgment. The sin of all men is seen in the fullest sense by God Himself. Yet, in the judgment it will be made known that sin was not only seen by Him. Sinful expressions are seen by men also (Matt 12:42), as well as angels. It will be confirmed that sin cannot be ultimately hidden from men and angels, to say nothing of the God of all the earth. Further, if it can be detected by others, the transgressor will be held accountable for not seeing it himself.

GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THY STEWARDSHIP

" . . . give an account of thy stewardship . . ."

Other versions read, *"give an account of your management,"*^{NIV} *"Give me an accounting of your management,"*^{NRSV} *"give me an account of all you have done,"*^{BBE} *"Give me a report of your administration,"*^{CEB} *"give an account of thy authority,"*^{LEW} *"Tell me exactly how you have handled what I own,"*^{NIRV} and *"Turn in the account of your management [of my affairs]."*^{AMPLIFIED}

This is a point that sectarianism has buried in the rubble of *"the flesh."* The very existence of a large religious institution removes the idea of personal responsibility. Things related to the organization are fulfilled by especially educated and trained experts. The ideas of *"stewards of the grace of God"* (1 Pet 4:10-11), or special *"measures of faith"* (Rom 12:1-6), or *"spiritual gifts"* (1 Cor 12:1-28) are rarely known or expounded. However, *"stewardship, measures of faith, and spiritual gifts are*

very [present realities. With these aptitudes comes the ability to manage them – for that is why they have been given, to be managed.

There is a sense in which whatever you can see, or discern, you can in some way manage. That is the reason God gives you to see it. That management can be by prayer as well as other ordained means.

THOU MAYEST BE NO LONGER A STEWARD

" . . . for thou mayest be no longer steward."

Other versions read, *"you can no longer be steward,"*^{NKJV} *"you cannot be manager any longer,"*^{NIV} *"you cannot be my manager any longer,"*^{NRSV} *"you can no longer serve as my manager,"*^{CEB} and *"you are going to be fired."*^{NLT}

Here *"mayest be no longer"* does not mean *"might not be,"* but *"cannot be."* In the kingdom of God, unfaithfulness disqualifies a person. Jesus spoke of this same kind of thing in another place: *"Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have"* (Luke 8:18). Other versions read, *"what he thinks he has,"*^{NIV} and *"what he thinks and guesses and supposes that he has."*^{AMPLIFIED}

To the unfaithful person, it does not seem as though he has been rejected, and can no longer have his stewardship. Yet, that is really the way it is. A faithful God cannot be joined to an unfaithful person anymore than Christ can be joined to Belial (2 Cor 6:15). Pretension does not reflect reality.

WHAT SHALL I DO?

"³ Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed."

The master has spoken plainly to his steward. There is no ambiguity or doubt about it. At this point he is a steward no longer.

THE STEWARD SAID WITHIN HIMSELF

"Then the steward said within himself . . ."

This whole matter promoted serious introspection – something that should have been done long ago. There are a number of expressions like this in Scripture – men speaking with themselves.

⇒ *"I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."* (Psa 32:5)

⇒ *"I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me."* (Psa 39:1)

⇒ *"And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest."* (Psa 55:6)

⇒ *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."* (Psa 42:5)

⇒ *"In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul."* (Psa 94:19)

⇒ We also read of certain scribes who were *"reasoning in their hearts"* (Mk 2:6).

⇒ The Psalmist said of the wicked, *"They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward thought of every one of*

them, and the heart, is deep" (Psa 64:6).

⇒ The Lord Jesus was aware of the activity of the heart: *"And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart."* (Luke 9:47)

MY LORD TAKETH AWAY FROM ME

"...What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship..."

In this parable, the Lord is going to show the tenacity of wisdom, and the ability of men to make adequate preparation for the life to come. The parable will not be exact in every way, for that is not the purpose of parables.

I CANNOT DIG, AND TO BEG I AM ASHAMED

" . . . I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed."

Other versions read, *"I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg,"*^{NASB} *"I have not strength to dig,"*

ASV *"I have not enough strength for working in the fields, and I would be shamed if I made requests for money from people in the streets,"* ^{BEB} *"I'm not*

strong enough to dig and too proud to beg." ^{CEB}

His inability, coupled with his pride, cast him into a seemingly

impossible situation. If he was going to resolve this dilemma, he would have to do it with his mind. One thing to be noted, he was honest with himself.

I AM RESOLVED WHAT TO DO

"⁴ I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses."

Other versions read, *"I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes,"* ^{NRSV} *"Ah, I know what I will do to make sure that when I am dismissed from office there will be some to welcome me into their homes,"* ^{NJB} *"Ah, I know how to ensure that I'll have plenty of friends who will give me a home when I am fired,"* ^{NLT} and *"I have come to know what I will do, so that they [my master's debtors] may accept and welcome me into their houses when I*

am put out of the management." ^{AMPLIFIED}

As the parable will develop, the "they," or "friends," were those who owed a debt to his master. As a steward, he had charge of ensuring those debts were paid.

The word "resolved" comes from a word that means, *ōto* learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of, *ō* ^{THAYER} *ōcome* to understand, ascertain, *ō* ^{FRIBERG} and *ōlearn* (of), ascertain, find out. *ō* ^{GINGRICH}

The resolution was realized through extended thinking – focused thinking. This is a process that no other living creature possesses. The impersonal creation is moved by

intuition, not contemplation, consideration, or reasoning. This is why they have to be trained in a routine to do particular things, rather than being given an explanation, or pondering a matter. It should not surprise you that a phenomenal amount of professed "Christian" teaching, is really nothing more than training people to go through a particular routine. Jesus will show the folly of such an approach in this parable.

This steward knew he had to think of a way for the debtors, with whom he was obviously familiar, to be pitiful toward him, and give him a place to stay. He saw that it was necessary for kindness to be extended toward him.

HE CALLED HIS LORD'S DEBTORS

"⁵ So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? ⁶ And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. ⁷ Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore."

HE CALLED EVERY ONE OF HIS LORD'S DEBTORS

"So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him . . ."

The debtors, of course, did not know that he had been put out of his stewardship, which had not yet been carried out. Apparently the master had given him time to make an orderly exit

from his responsibilities. The steward, then, begins to work on his strategy.

He would show no favoritism in this matter, for he obviously knew that would be counterproductive. Therefore, he called all of the creditors to come to him. Also, this way they would all see what he did, which is what he desired.

WHAT HE SAID TO THE DEBTORS

" . . . and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore."

I do not doubt that the steward

knew very well how much each person owed his master. That was part of his responsibility. However, he will stage this event to give him the greatest advantage – ensuring that when he was put out of his stewardship, he would have a place to stay.

Each creditor had a bill, or an invoice, showing what was owed to the master. Apparently being asked to produce the bill, the steward was accenting what they still owed.

The first had procured certain measures of oil, and still owed one hundred to the master. The steward told him to take his bill and quickly write down that he owed fifty measured of oil, cutting the due amount by fifty percent.

The second debtor had borrowed

measures of wheat, and still owed one hundred measures. The steward told him to take his bill and quickly write down that he owed eighty measures – cutting the due amount by twenty percent. This appears to be a strategy he struck on that would cause a place for him to stay being more likely.

Now, a legalist would find all manner of flaws in this parable; the man had misused his masters goods, and ought to pay the penalty for doing so. Second, he continued to function just as though he had not been put out of his stewardship. Third, in a sense he

was robbing his master, by reducing the amount his debtors owed to him. However, this is not at all the manner in which the Lord reasoned about this parable. The point He was making demanded this kind of parable.

THE LORD COMMENDED THE UNJUST STEWARD

"⁸ And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

What the Lord teaches here is most marvelous, and is generally unknown among professing Christians. He will show us that those who are in the world tend to handle their worldly resources better than professing believers do. They know how to use worldly resources for their advantage, but He will affirm *"the children of light"* do not employ such wisdom. Jesus will show the uncomeliness of such a situation.

THE LORD COMMENDED THE UNJUST STEWARD

"And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely . . ."

The *"lord"* is the master of the steward, to which the steward is accountable. He does not commend the steward for what he did, but for the wisdom that he employed in the doing of it. He thought of a way to avoid isolation and poverty. This required some extensive thought, and very deliberate action.

THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD ARE WISER IN THEIR GENERATION THAN THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT

" . . . for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

Other versions read, *"the sons of this worlds,"*^{NKJV} *"the sons of this age,"*^{NASB} and *"People who belong to this world."*^{CEB}

These are the people whose lineage and nature are traced back to Adam. They are only suited to live in *"this present evil world."* They are contrasted with those who are *"not of this world"* because Jesus has chosen them *"out of the world"* (John 15:19). Jesus said they *"they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."* (John 17:14,16).

This is a most stern rebuke, and reveals what stereotyped and stagnant religion does to a people.

"The children of this world" are those with whom God is not identified. Their nature is of this world, and they have no conscious dealings with God.

Yet Jesus affirms that *"in their generation"* – i.e., their worldly

generation – they are wiser. Other versions read, *"more shrewd in relation to their own kind,"*^{NASB} *"more shrewd in dealing with their own kind,"*^{NIV} and *"are shrewder and more prudent and wiser [in relation to] their own generation [their own age and kind]."*^{AMPLIFIED}

The comparison is *the handling of earthly goods* by the unconverted people and those of their unconverted generation, with the converted people and those of their converted generation. How do "Christians" do handling their money in this world? That is the question put before Christ's listeners. In principle, it will also apply to the handling of spiritual things – although, in that case, there is no comparison with the unconverted, who have no access to those things.

The Lord will draw a remarkable conclusion from this contrasting comparison. While money, or wealth, cannot be carried into the world to come, how we handle it will have a bearing on our eternal destiny. The people of God are not of this world, but while they are here, they are to conduct themselves and handle their goods in preparation for eternity. Their money belongs to God, not them!

MAKE FRIENDS OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS MAMMON

"⁹ And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail,

they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

MAKE FRIENDS

"And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of

unrighteousness . . .

Other versions read, *"make friends for yourselves,"* ^{NKJV} *"by means of the mammon of unrighteousness,"* ^{NASB} *"use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves,"* ^{NIV} *"make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth,"* ^{NRSV} *"Make friends for yourselves through the wealth of this life,"* ^{BBE} *"Make you friends with the riches of iniquity,"* ^{GENEVA} *"use the riches of this world to help others,"* ^{NIRV} *"use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends,"* ^{NJB} and *"Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends."* ^{NLT}

This perfectly correlates with Paul's word to Timothy concerning what he is to say to wealthy people: *"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate* (1 Tim 6:17-19a).

That is saying precisely the same thing as Jesus is declaring in our text. It is making friends with one's worldly wealth. The thing that is sought, in this case, is not friendship, but the *"crown of life"* (James 1:12; Rev 2:10).

THAT WHEN YE FAIL

" . . . that, when ye fail . . . "

Other versions read, *"when you fail,"* ^{NKJV} *"when it fails,"* ^{NASB} *"when it is gone,"* ^{NIV} *"when it comes to an end,"* ^{BBE} *"that when you shall fail,"* ^{DOUAY} *"that when ye shall want,"* ^{GENEVA} *"when ye shall depart."* ^{TNT}

Most modern versions say that the wealth is what fails. However, the clause that follows confirms that is a foolish way to view it. A quantum leap is made to *"everlasting habitations."* That is not what follows the running out of wealth! Jesus is speaking of when life can no longer be sustained, and death is about to be entered.

THEY MAY RECEIVE YOU

" . . . they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

Other versions read, *"they may receive you into an everlasting home,"* ^{NKJV} *"they may receive you into the eternal dwellings,"* ^{NASB} *"you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings,"* ^{NIV} *"you may be taken into the eternal resting-places."* ^{BBE}

In his word to Timothy concerning those who are wealthy in this world, Paul says they should be *"ready to distribute, willing to communicate,"* Paul continued, *"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life"* (1 Tim 1:18b-19).

This is another example of using the world, as contrasted with abusing it by self indulgence and covetousness (1 Cor 7:31).

This is an area where many professing Christians do not do well. When they have more than enough, it is often difficult for them to even entertain the idea of being *"ready to distribute,"* and thereby lay treasure up in heaven, where moth and rust does not corrupt.

HE THAT IS FAITHFUL IN LEAST

"¹⁰ He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

The Lord now pronounces a Kingdom principle that cannot be violated. Admittedly, it has some rather alarming implications, but it is intended to be the subject of much thought and cogitation.

Keep in mind what He will say later to some Pharisees in the Temple – no doubt many of whom were standing before Him at this time. He addressed the manner in which they had handled money, gaining it by robbery. *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation"* (Matt 23:14). They

violated the word delivered by Isaiah: *"To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!"* (Isa 10:2). And again, the Law said, *"Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry"* (Ex 22:22-23). Rather than using the *"unrighteous mammon"* correctly, they sought to increase their wealth by plundering the widows, and became robbers rather than givers.

Now He will show how, in their character, they were set in opposition to God Himself and His will.

FAITHFULNESS

"He that is faithful in that which is

least is faithful also in much . . . "

The acid test is not how a person handles a lot, but how they handle a small amount. God, who is the One entrusting men with various responsibilities, will not will not give a lot of responsibility to the one who cannot be trusted to handle *"a little"* with faithfulness and benefit.

BEING UNJUST

" . . . and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

God has so created man that he cannot be *"just"* with what is *"much,"* if he is not *"just"* with what is least. In the place of the word *"unjust,"* other versions use the words *"unrighteous."* ^{NASB} *"dishonest,"* ^{NIV} and *"false,"* ^{BBE} *"unfaithful."* ^{TNT}

The word translated *"unjust"* means *ō*descriptive of one who violates or has violated justice; unjust; unrighteous, sinful, *ō* ^{STRONGS} *ō*of one who breaks God's

laws, unrighteous, sinful, *ō* ^{THAYER} *ō*wrong-doing, *ō* ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT} and *ō*dishonest, untrustworthy, *ō* ^{GINGRICH}

This is heaven's view of unfaithful – being sinful wrong, dishonest, and untrustworthy when handling what God has dispensed to them.

FAITHFUL IN THE UNRIGHTEOUS MAMMON

"¹¹ If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? ¹² And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

UNFAITHFUL IN THE UNRIGHTEOUS MAMMON

"If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon . . ."

Other versions read, *"not been faithful in the use of unrighteous mammon,"* ^{NASB} *"not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth,"* ^{NIV} *"have not been true in your use of the wealth of this life,"* ^{BBE} and *"deceitful riches, money, possessions."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

In our country and economy, people do not often think of wealth, in whatever measure, being committed to our trust. But it is!

WHO SHALL GIVE YOU THE TRUE RICHES

" . . . who will commit to your trust the true riches? . . ."

Other versions read, *"trust you with true riches,"* ^{NIV} *"give into your care the true wealth,"* ^{BBE} *"the true treasure,"* ^{GENEVA} *"genuine riches,"* ^{NJB} *"the true riches of heaven."* ^{NLT}

There are spiritual *"treasures"* to be possessed.

- ⇒ *"The good treasure of the heart"* (Matt 12:35).
- ⇒ *"This treasure" of "the knowledge salvation"* (2 Cor 4:7)
- ⇒ *"The treasures of wisdom and knowledge"* (Col 2:3).
- ⇒ *"The riches of His goodness"* (Rom 2:5).
- ⇒ *"The riches of His glory"* (Rom

9:23; Eph 3:16).

- ⇒ *"The riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God"* (Rom 11:33).
- ⇒ *"The riches of His grace"* (Eph 1:7; 2:7).
- ⇒ *"The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints"* (Eph 1:18).
- ⇒ *"The unsearchable riches of Christ"* (Eph 3:8).
- ⇒ *"The riches of the glory of this mystery"* (Col 1:27).
- ⇒ *"All riches of the full assurance of understanding"* (Col 2:22).

There is a sense in which the measure of these treasures and riches that you receive is determined by how you handle your money, and your worldly resources.

WHO SHALL GIVE YOU THAT WHICH IS YOUR OWN

" . . . And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

Remember that our money, or wealth, really does not belong to us. It belongs to God, and He has made us stewards of it. He is the *"another Man"* of reference in this teaching.

Receiving *"that which is your own"* is *"the reward of the inheritance"* that is awaiting us (Col 3:24). It is *"the promise of eternal inheritance"* (Heb 9:15) – *"an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you"* (1 Pet 1:4).

In the glory, you will not be a steward, but a ruler, reigning with Jesus. As it is written, it will be said to the righteous, *"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou*

into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt 25:21).

The *"few things"* over which the righteous were faithful are associated with what they did with what they had on earth.

- ⇒ *"For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat."*
- ⇒ *"I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink."*
- ⇒ *"I was a stranger, and ye took Me in."*
- ⇒ *"I was naked, and ye clothed Me."*
- ⇒ *"I was sick, and ye visited Me."*
- ⇒ *"I was in prison, and ye came unto Me"* (Matt 25:35-36)

MY OWN TESTIMONY

I hesitated to share this with you, but I am counting on the fact that I have lived openly among you, and that my character has been lived out before you.

At the age of fifty-five, I retired from a management position in industry. I had determined, if possible, to move to Joplin, and begin a ministry for discouraged church leaders, and unfed believers. At the time of my retirement, I had amassed a sizeable sum in my retirement account, and through company profit sharing. We invested more than half of those resources in the purchase and restoration of our home at 406 South Sergeant Street, in Joplin. We formally dedicated the house to the Lord, and met there with devoted people for twenty-four years. I also invested a sizeable amount in the college where I worked, supplying them with office equipment that replaced the archaic equipment they were using. We also donated one station wagon, and two sedans to those with the need for an automobile.

The Lord poured out an abundance of riches, wisdom, and understanding upon us, which things we shared in our home, and wherever a door was opened. God put into our

trust things that few souls have apparently seen. The word of Jesus was fulfilled in us, and we are still continuing to lay up treasures in heaven. Not a day passes that the Lord

does not open some of His treasures to us. Without any hesitation, I can testify that God is faithful to do precisely what Jesus taught in this account. I recommend this life to you.

NO SERVANT CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS

"¹³ No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

NO SERVANT CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS

"No servant can serve two masters . . ."

Other versions read, *"No man can serve two lords,"* ^{ETH} *"No household servant can serve two bosses successfully,"* ^{MIT} and *"No servant is able to serve two masters."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

It is not that no man should attempt to serve two masters – no man CAN do so! God has made man so that he cannot do so. Man has been created to have ONE major interest, ONE Lord, ONE full time commitment.

There really is no such thing as a "one-day-a-week Christian." Satan has reared up a substitute-church that has led people to believe they can give God a portion of their life, a segment of their time, and a few of their resources. The Kingdom of God is a "ONE LORD" set-up or building.

⇨ *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart, and with ALL thy soul, and with ALL thy mind."* (Matt 22:37)

⇨ *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* (Rom 12:1)

⇨ *"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Thess 5:23)

⇨ *"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."* (1 Tim 4:15)

⇨ *"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."* (Eph 6:11)

HATING AND LOVING, AND building ORE DESPISING

"...for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. . . ."

Where an attempt is made to serve two masters, the preference will be for only one, and holding, or being

loyal to, will also be to only one of them. Again, this is the way man has been created.

YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Other versions read, *"God and money,"* ^{NIV} *"God and wealth,"* ^{NRSV} *"riches."* ^{GENEVA}

This is now the third time Jesus has used the word "mammon" (Lk 16:9,11,13). Lexically this is a transliterated word (from "mamonas"). It means *ōtreasure,ō* or *ōriches,ō* that are *ōtrusted in,ō* ^{THAYER} *ōproperty, wealth, earthly goods; riches, money,ō* ^{FRIEBERG} *ōwealth and riches, with a strongly negative connotation - 'worldly wealth, riches,ō* ^{LOUW-NIDA} and *ōwealth of various kinds.ō* ^{DANKER}

There are professing Christians who have sold their souls for money, trusting in it just as though there was no God. However, this can only be done at the expense of despising God, and failing to hold on to Him. It is not possible to live deliberately choosing to forget this, without losing one's own soul.

THE PHARISEES DERIDED HIM

"¹⁴ And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided Him."

Jesus spoke these things to all of the people, but especially with the Pharisees in mind. He knew what their response would be, but spoke anyway in order that they might be revealed.

WHO WERE COVETOUS

"And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things . . ."

Other versions read, *"who were lovers of money,"* ^{NKJV} *"who loved money,"* ^{NIV} and *"who were money-lovers."* ^{CEB}

Jesus had just uprooted their entire manner of life. They were the ones who were unfaithful in the handling of wealth. They were the ones who vainly attempted to serve money. Remember, they were religious authorities, not businessmen. Yet, they were using religion to satiate their ungodly appetite for wealth. Their

generation continues to this very day.

THEY DERIDED HIM

" . . . and they derided Him. "

Other versions read, *"were scoffing at Him,"*^{NASB} *"were sneering at Jesus,"*^{NIV} *"They ridiculed Him,"*^{NRSV} *"making sport of Him,"*^{BBE} *"mocking Him,"*^{MGI} *"turning up their noses at*

Him,"^{MIT} *"made fun of him,"*^{NIRV} *"jeered at Him,"*^{NJB} *and "they began to sneer at and ridicule and scoff at Him."*^{AMPLIFIED}

They supposed by deriding Jesus they were turning the attention from themselves. Jesus could have destroyed them right there – but He did not come into the world *"to destroy men's lives, but to save them"* (Lk

9:56). However, and make no mistake about it, on the day of judgment Jesus will face these very men, and say what Nathan said to David: *"Thou art the man!"* (2 Sam 2:7). He will, as it is affirmed, *"be justified"* in all His *"sayings"* (Rom 3:4). Every syllable God has spoken or inspired will be shown to be the absolute truth, and everyone will see and admit it.

THAT WHICH IS HIGHLY ESTEEMED AMONG MEN

"¹⁵ And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

YE JUSTIFY YOURSELVES BEFORE MEN

"And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men . . ."

Other versions read, *"You take care to seem right in the eyes of men,"*^{BBE} *"make yourselves look righteous to others,"*^{CJB} *"validating yourselves by public opinion,"*^{MIT} and *"You are the ones who declare yourselves just and upright before men."*^{AMPLIFIED}

Men would say they blew their own horn, or promoted themselves. Solomon wrote, *"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips"*

(Prov 27:2). Again he wrote, *"It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory"* (Prov 25:27). Paul wrote, *"For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth"* (2 Cor 10:18). Men may testify, but they may not do so to promote themselves or their own interests.

GOD KNOWETH YOUR HEART

" . . . but God knoweth your hearts . . ."

The idea here is that what God sees in men will someday be declared before an assembled universe. All men will be exposed for what they really are, and none can avoid this appointed revelation.

THAT WHICH IS HIGHLY ESTEEMED AMONG MEN

" . . . for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."

Other versions read, *"He said to them, "What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight,"*^{NIV} *"So He said to them, "for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God,"*^{NRSV} *"those things which are important in the opinion of men, are evil in the eyes of God,"*^{BBE} *"What is highly valued by people is deeply offensive to God,"*^{CEB} *"what is highly admired by people is revolting in God's sight,"*^{CSB} and *"what is exalted and highly thought of among men is detestable and abhorrent (an abomination) in the sight of God."*^{AMPLIFIED}

This being true – and it most certainly is – how shall we respond to those who say God wants each of us to realize the fulfillment of our dreams? It is an error of unspeakable magnitude. We have been called to embrace the will of God, and be involved in His purpose –not our own. Men are totally incapable of developing a proper priority for life. This is something God does.

THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS WERE UNTIL JOHN

"¹⁶ The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."

Why did Jesus make this statement at this time – a time when He had been speaking of the handling of riches, money, or wealth and an *"everlasting habitation?"* It is because

His words did not fit into the Law, or the First Covenant. Under the Law, worldly possessions is what the people were promised for their obedience. Here are the First Covenant's promised blessings:

"Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy

kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The LORD shall command the

blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and He shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto Himself, as He hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; IF THOU HEAR KEN UNTO THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD THY GOD, which I command thee this day, TO OBSERVE AND DO them: And thou SHALT NOT GO ASIDE from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them" (Deut 28:2-14).

There are twenty-five promised blessings, all contingent upon perfect obedience to everything the Law required of them. THERE IS NOT A SINGLE WORD ABOUT:

⇒ Stewardship.

- ⇒ Everlasting habitations.
- ⇒ Being forever with the Lord.
- ⇒ Receiving spiritual blessings.
- ⇒ Receiving the rewards of faith.
- ⇒ God enabling them to do what He required.
- ⇒ Being able to give a good account to God.

Jesus had been speaking of a completely different economy – life being lived with eternity in mind. That was a wholly different approach to life. Some of the ancients longed to live under such an economy, but were not enabled to do so. It is said of them all, *"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise"* (Heb 11:39).

The Law and the Prophets were good, but they did not possess the power to change and equip the people. The Law itself proved to be *"the ministry of death"* (2 Cor 3:7), and *"the ministration of condemnation"* (2 Cor 3:9). It was a covenant referred to as a *"letter"* that killed (2 Cor 3:6). It was intended to, as a schoolmaster, bring the people to Christ – aware of their sin, and the desperate need of a Redeemer and Justifier.

UNTIL JOHN

"The law and the prophets were until John . . ."

The Law was officially ended as a means to righteousness (Rom 10:4) when Jesus died. But as a covenant, it began to fade during the enlightening and preparatory ministry of John the Baptist.

The time during which John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus ministered was an interim period – unlike any other period in the history of the world. John prepared the way for Jesus, and Jesus prepared the way for the Holy Spirit.

SINCE THAT TIME

" . . . since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."

The interim period was filled with proclamations of the coming *"Kingdom of God,"* which was nothing less than the administration of the New Covenant. There are ninety-seven references to a *"kingdom"* in Exodus thru Micah. Of those, the only references to the Kingdom being administered by Christ are Daniel 2:44;7:18,22,27. There is a veiled reference found that refers to *"the government"* being placed upon Christ's shoulder (Isa 9:6), and a king reigning *"in righteousness"* (Isa 32:1). But there was no lucid preaching concerning *"the Kingdom of God."*

At the time of our text, the *"Kingdom of God"* was being *"preached."* In the Gospels alone there are eighty-references to *"the kingdom of God"* and *"the kingdom of heaven,"* and fourteen references to *"the Kingdom."*

In the parable of the steward, Jesus was preaching *"the Kingdom of God."* He was delivering a perspective that had never before been expounded as He was doing.

SOMETHING THAT IS EASIER

"¹⁷ And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

To confirm that the Law did not merely pass away, or was thrust into oblivion, Jesus makes this proclamation. *"It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the*

Law," ^{NIV} or *"Yet it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to fail and become void."* ^{AMPLIFIED} What a statement this is! *"One tittle"* is like a dot over an "i", or the horizontal bar over a lower case "t." Jesus does not say a *"tittle"* falling off the page was like the heaven and earth passing away. He unequivocally says it is *"EASIER"* for heaven and earth to pass

away than for that to happen. Those who champion the view that the original text has been changed by men must explain to us how this word of the Lord, in such a case, is not really true.

The Law was ended, ONLY as a means to righteousness (Rom 10:4). It still is heaven's way of defining sin (Rom 3:20), and bringing us to Christ

(Gal 3:24-25).

The New Covenant, for which Jesus was preparing the people, was not merely another Law – as though the First Covenant was one kind of Law, and the New Covenant another. The New Covenant is founded upon the atoning death of Christ, being ratified by His

blood. In the New Covenant, atonement has been made (Rom 5:11), reconciliation has occurred (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18-20), and thorough justification takes place (Acts 13:39). Sin is thoroughly, or “*purely purged*” (Isa 1:25), and the saved receive “*the Spirit of adoption*” (Rom 8:15), and become “*fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the*

“*household of God*” (Eph 2:19).

These are totally new things! Prior to Christ, there was never anything like this – anything that took away sin, reconciling men to God, and writing God’s law upon their hearts. There was no regeneration, new birth, or new creation.

THE ONE WHO COMMITS ADULTERY

“¹⁸ Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.”

Other versions read, “*Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery,*” ^{NIV} and “*Whoever divorces (dismisses and repudiates) his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman who is divorced from her husband commits adultery.*” ^{AMPLIFIED}

WHY DID JESUS MAKE THIS STATEMENT

On the surface, this statement does not seem to fit into what Jesus has been saying – but it does. These Pharisees thought they were strict, and

bound all manner of burdens on the people. They looked at Jesus as a kind of libertine, that refused to adhere to the laws and traditions that had been developed.

However, Jesus was not a libertine, or one that allowed more liberty than Moses. In fact, Jesus was more strict than Moses. Moses gave no rules for discipleship, but Jesus did. He refused to accept any person who loved someone else more than Him. If someone did not pick up their cross, bear it, and follow Him, He would not accept them. If they did not willingly forsake all that they had and follow Him, He would not receive them (Luke 14:26,27,33). Moses had no such requirements. Jesus’ stipulations were more stringent and exacting than those of Moses. You had to have special eyes and ears to follow Him (Matt

13:13 sympathize with; Lk 10:23-24) – Moses had no such requirements.

In Christ more is given, and therefore more is required (Lk 12:48). Requirements are now more difficult. They require faith, the Spirit, and grace to help in the time of need (Heb 4:15-16).

The Pharisees criticized Jesus for sitting with sinners, and His disciples for plucking corn on the Sabbath day. However, Jesus was strict enough that they could not be admitted as one of His disciples.

People will have a great difficulty in properly following Jesus until they see these things. Jesus is not lax, lenient, or tolerant of the flesh. He knows about being tempted, but He does not empathize with sin.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 3/3/17. In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The fifty-first lesson will cover verses 19 thru 31 : “LAZARUS AND THE RICH MAN.” Jesus gives an account of two men who lived, how they lived, how they died, and what happened to them after they died. This is an account concerning which there are significantly differing views. However the nature of this teaching forbids varying views, as it deals with the state of men after they die. No one else could comment so extensively on such a matter We will begin our meeting at 6:30, which will be followed by a time of refreshments and fellowship.