

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 103 – April 13th – Luke 16:1-18

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Luke

Geldenhuys, Norval	<i>Commentary on the Gospel of Luke</i> , Marshall Morgan and Scott, London, 1950
Marshall, I Howard	<i>The Gospel of Luke</i> , The New International Greek Testament Commentary, Paternoster, Exeter, 1978
Morris, Leon	<i>Luke</i> (Tyndale NT Commentaries), IVP, London 1974

Luke 16:1-9

Chapter 16 is mainly warnings about wealth and commences with the Parable of the Prudent Steward. Marshall outlines the main interpretations of this parable as follows:

"Essentially there are two main interpretations of the steward's action. The traditional interpretation is that he acted corruptly throughout the story: having wasted his master's goods during his stewardship, he finally proceeded to falsify the accounts of his master's debtors by reducing the amounts owed in order to obtain their goodwill..."

The second view originates with Derrett who, "made the suggestion that the steward had included in the original accounts the interest due on the deferred payments. By God's law the charging of interest was strictly illegal, although man's law had found ways of evading God's law. What the steward did was to reduce the debtor's accounts by the amount of interest due, thus pleasing the debtors, acting legally himself and putting his master in a good light. There is then no difficulty about the steward's changed way of life being praised and used as an example to be imitated..."

"A variant view is that adopted by Findlay... and Fitzmyer... who claimed that the 'interest' was actually the steward's 'commission' on the transactions. What happened was simply that the steward forwent his own profit on the debts, and the master suffered no loss. The steward, as it were, paid out of his own pocket by renouncing the profit he hoped to gain, in order to obtain a lasting welcome from the debtors instead..."

"K.E.Bailey, holds that what the steward did was simply to show generosity by reducing the debtors' bills in faith that the master would be unwilling to countermand the changes and thereby lose *his* reputation for generosity." Marshall favours Derrett's interpretation.

Verse 1

Ἐλεγεν δὲ καὶ πρὸς τοὺς μαθητάς· Ἄνθρωπός τις ἦν πλούσιος ὃς εἶχεν οἰκονόμον, καὶ οὗτος διεβλήθη αὐτῷ ὡς διασκορπίζων τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ.

μαθητης, ου m disciple, pupil
πλουσιος, α, ον rich, well-to-do
εἶχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἔχω
οικονομος, ου m steward, manager

The master was probably an absentee landlord.

διεβλήθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s διαβαλλω
bring charges

Here only in NT. The verb often means 'accuse falsely' though here the context makes clear that the accusation has grounds.

διασκορπίζω see 15:13

May imply neglect or misappropriation, "but since there is no suggestion of having to pay compensation, the former is more likely." Marshall.

ὑπαρχω be at one's disposal (τα ὑ. possessions).

τα ὑπαρχοντα see 8:3

Verse 2

καὶ φωνήσας αὐτὸν εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Τί τοῦτο ἀκούω περὶ σοῦ; ἀπόδος τὸν λόγον τῆς οἰκονομίας σου, οὐ γὰρ δύνη ἐτι οἰκονομεῖν.

φωνεω call, call out
ἀπόδος Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s ἀποδιδωμι
give, render

λογον here in sense of 'account'
οικονομια, ας f management of a household, responsibility

δύνη Verb, fut midd dep indic, 2 s δυναμαι
ἐτι still, yet, any longer
οικονομεω be a manager, be a steward

Here alone in NT

Verse 3

εἶπεν δὲ ἐν ἑαυτῷ ὁ οἰκονόμος· Τί ποιήσω ὅτι ὁ κύριός μου ἀφαιρεῖται τὴν οἰκονομίαν ἀπ' ἐμοῦ; σκάπτειν οὐκ ἰσχύω, ἐπαιτεῖν αἰσχύνομαι.

ἀφαιρεω take away

The present tense signifies the process of dismissal which would not be complete until the steward had set down his accounts.

σκαπτω dig
ισχυω be strong, be able, be sufficient
ἐπαίτω beg

Only here and in 18:35 in the NT.

αἰσχυνομαι be ashamed, be made
ashamed

Verse 4

ἔγνων τί ποιήσω, ἵνα ὅταν μετασταθῶ ἐκ τῆς οἰκονομίας δέξωνταί με εἰς τοὺς οἴκους ἑαυτῶν.

ἔγνων Verb, aor act indic, 1 s γινωσκω

Moule explains the aorist as an instantaneous action which is over before it can be commented on. The Greek punctiliar has to be translated on occasions by a simple English form – here, 'I know what I will do'. Plummer thinks it suggests a sudden idea.

ὅταν when
μετασταθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s
μεθιστημι remove
δεχομαι receive, accept, welcome

Verse 5

καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος ἓνα ἕκαστον τῶν χρεοφειλετῶν τοῦ κυρίου ἑαυτοῦ ἔλεγεν τῷ πρώτῳ· Πόσον ὀφείλεις τῷ κυρίῳ μου;

προσκαλεσάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m
nom s προσκαλεομαι call to oneself,
summon, invite

ἓνα ἕκαστον see 4:40
χρεοφειλετης, ου m debtor

"These may have included tenants of the estate who paid their rents in kind or (more probably) merchants who had received goods on credit from the estate and had given promissory notes in their own handwriting (Phm 18) to the steward." Marshall

πρωτος, η, ου first
ποσος, η, ου how much(?), how many(?)
ὀφειλω owe

Verse 6

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· Ἐκατὸν βάτους ἐλαίου· ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Δέξαι σου τὰ γράμματα καὶ καθίσας ταχέως γράψον πενήτηκοντα.

ἑκατον one hundred
βατος, ου m & f bath measure of about 35
litres

Here alone in the NT

ἐλαιον, ου n olive oil, oil
δέξαι Verb, aor midd dep imperat, 2 s take
γραμμα, τος n letter, account

The plural is used here for a single document.

καθίζω sit down, take one's seat
ταχέως adv. (formed from ταχυς) quickly, at
once

γράφον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s γραφω

Either alter the figure or more probably write out a new note.

πεντηκοντα fifty

"On Derrett's view this represents interest at 100%, which seems excessively high, but which is not impossible under oriental conditions. In the case of the wheat the amount of interest is much more realistic." Marshall

Verse 7

ἔπειτα ἑτέρῳ εἶπεν· Σὺ δὲ πόσον ὀφείλεις; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· Ἐκατὸν κόρους σίτου· λέγει αὐτῷ· Δέξαι σου τὰ γράμματα καὶ γράψον ὀγδοήκοντα.

ἔπειτα then, afterwards
ἕτερος, α, ου other, another
κορος, ου m cor, measure

Here alone in the NT. A dry measure equivalent to the *homer*. In OT times it was approximately 220 litres or 48 gallons.

σιτος, ου m grain, wheat
ὀγδοηκοντα eighty

Verse 8

καὶ ἐπήνεσεν ὁ κύριος τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς ἀδικίας ὅτι φρονίμως ἐποίησεν· ὅτι οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου φρονιμώτεροι ὑπὲρ τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ φωτὸς εἰς τὴν γενεὰν τὴν ἑαυτῶν εἰσιν.

Is v.8 a continuation of the parable or comment by Jesus upon the parable? Is ὁ κύριος the master in the story or is it Jesus? Marshall says that the former is preferable and that on Derrett's view, "the master applauded the servant's return to legal dealings and was happy to bask in the undeserved reputation for fair dealing which he himself could now enjoy."

ἐπαινεω commend, praise
οικονομος, ου m steward, manager
ἀδικια, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

τον οικονομον της ἀδικια is a Hebraism meaning "the unrighteous steward". On Derrett's view this would apply to his former conduct.

"A different view is suggested by H Kosmala who argues that ἀδικία denotes the standing characteristic of this world, corrupted as it is by sin. The steward is simply a worldly man who acts in a worldly fashion (i.e. sinfully), and the point of the description is to contrast him with the disciples; understood in this way, the phrase then links closely to v. 8b and v9. Cf. 1 Jn 5:19; Jas 3:16." Marshall

φρονιμως adv wisely

"A word which is often used of the attitude which disciples should adopt in regard to the coming of the Son of man. The steward had seen the urgency of the situation and reacted sensibly towards it; so too, it is implied, should men react to the impending judgment of God." Marshall

The latter part of this verse is clearly comment on the parable and not part of the master's commendation.

"οἱ υἱοὶ with a genitive is a common Semitic phrase to denote people belonging to a particular class (cf. 10:6 note)." Marshall

αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order
φρονιμωτερος, α, ον shrewder, wiser
(comparitive from φρονιμος)
φως, φωτος n light

Cf. Jn 12:36; 1 Thess 5:5 also Eph 5:8.

γενεα, ας f generation, contemporaries,
age

I.e. 'by the standards of their generation'

Verse 9

καὶ ἐγὼ ὑμῖν λέγω, ἑαυτοῖς ποιήσατε φίλους ἐκ τοῦ μαμωνᾶ τῆς ἀδικίας, ἵνα ὅταν ἐκλίπη δέξωνται ὑμᾶς εἰς τὰς αἰωνίους σκηνάς.

φίλος, ου m and φιλη, ης f friend

"No doubt by almsgiving" Marshall

μαμωνας, α m money, wealth, property

Here and 16:11,13; Mt 6:24.

τῆς ἀδικίας because it is the great rival of God for the devotion and service of men. The meaning is *worldly* wealth.

ὅταν when, whenever, as often as

ἐκλείπω fail, give out, end

δέξωνται Verb, aor midd dep subj, 3 pl

δεχομαι receive, welcome

Marshall suggests that the implied subject is the angels.

αἰωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting
σκηνη, ης f tent, dwelling place

Verse 10

Ὁ πιστὸς ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ καὶ ἐν πολλῷ πιστὸς ἐστίν, καὶ ὁ ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ ἀδικὸς καὶ ἐν πολλῷ ἀδικὸς ἐστίν.

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy

"The ... motif is that of faithfulness in stewardship, and in their present context the sayings implicitly draw a contrast between the unfaithfulness of the steward in the parable and the faithfulness required in disciples." Marshall Cf. 12:42; 19:17; 1 Cor 4:2.

Derrett, however, understands 'faithful' to mean faithful to God. The servant in the previous parable was faithful to God in his cancellation of unjust interest.

ἐλαχιστος, η, ον (superl of μικρος) least, smallest, insignificant

This is the value which the Lord assigns to earthly possessions

ἀδικος, ον evil, sinful

The meaning here is 'dishonest, untrustworthy'.

Verse 11

εἰ οὖν ἐν τῷ ἀδίκῳ μαμωνᾷ πιστοὶ οὐκ ἐγένεσθε, τὸ ἀληθινὸν τίς ὑμῖν πιστεύσει;

ἀληθινος, α, ον real, genuine, true

"refers to what is characteristic of the new age (Jn 1:9; 6:32; *et al*; Heb 8:2; 9:24...) and hence has an abiding, permanent quality. It is thus 'real'." Marshall

πιστευω have confidence in, entrust

Cf. 1 Cor 9:7. "The contrast of tenses between the two clauses suggests that the thought is of the bestowal of heavenly treasure in the age to come, rather than of entrusting of the gospel to disciples called to be evangelists." Marshall

Verse 12

καὶ εἰ ἐν τῷ ἄλλοτρίῳ πιστοὶ οὐκ ἐγένεσθε, τὸ ὑμέτερον τίς δώσει ὑμῖν;

ἄλλοτριος, α, ον belonging to another

All earthly things are merely loaned to us – in our trust for a while and then they are gone. Only heavenly possessions are ours permanently.

ὑμετερος, α, ον possessive adj of 2 pl your
δωσει fut. διδομι

Verse 13

οὐδεὶς οἰκέτης δύναται δυοὶ κυρίοις δουλεύειν· ἢ γὰρ τὸν ἓνα μισήσει καὶ τὸν ἕτερον ἀγαπήσει, ἢ ἐνὸς ἀνθέξεται καὶ τοῦ ἑτέρου καταφρονήσει. οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾷ.

οικητης, ου f house servant, servant
δυο gen & acc δυο dat δυοσιν two

ἢ or, (ἢ ... ἢ either ... or)
μισεω hate, despise, be indifferent to
ἕτερος, α, ον other, another, different
ἀγαπαω love, show love for
ἀνθέξεται Verb, fut midd dep indic, 3 s
ἀντεχομαι be loyal to, hold firmly to

Only here and 1 Thess 5:14; Tit 1:9.

καταφρονεω despise, treat with contempt
δουλουειν to serve as a slave.

Signifies complete devotion.

"A slave might work for two or more persons in partnership (Acts 16:10, 19) or for two different masters ... or he even might have been freed by one master while still a slave of another... Hence the point of the saying is that a man cannot render the exclusive loyalty and service which is inherent in the concept of δουλεια to more than one master." Marshall

Verse 14

Ἦκουον δὲ ταῦτα πάντα οἱ Φαρισαῖοι
φιλάργυροι ὑπάρχοντες, καὶ ἐξεμυκτήριζον
αὐτόν.

φιλάργυρος, ον fond of money

Here and 2 Tim 3:2; cf. the noun, 1 Tim 6:10. Montefiore, Easton and Luce say that Luke is wrong in suggesting that the Pharisees were avaricious. However, Strack Billerbeck provides sufficient evidence that they were.

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἰμι), be at one's disposal (τα ὑ. possessions).

ἐκμυκτηρίζω make fun of, ridicule

Only here and 23:35.

Verse 15

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Ὑμεῖς ἐστε οἱ δικαιοῦντες
ἐάντους ἐνώπιον τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὁ δὲ θεὸς
γινώσκει τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν· ὅτι τὸ ἐν
ἀνθρώποις ὑψηλὸν βδέλυγμα ἐνώπιον τοῦ
θεοῦ.

δικαιοω justify, acquit, declare & treat as righteous

"Creed ... suggests that the force is: 'You do indeed give alms, but you only do so to justify yourselves before men' (cf. 18:9, 11f.)... It fits in with the criticism in Mt 6:1-4." Marshall

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before, in the presence of

Cf. 2:35; 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Ch 28:9; Ps 7:10.

ὑψηλος, η, ον high, proud, exalted
βδελυγμα, τος n something detestable

"The saying is a threat of judgment; cf. Is 2:11-19; 5:14-16; Lk 1:51-53; 14:7-11." Marshall

Verse 16

Ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται μέχρι Ἰωάννου· ἀπὸ
τότε ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγελίζεται καὶ
πᾶς εἰς αὐτὴν βιάζεται.

Cf. Mt 11:12f. for a variant form of the same saying.

μεχρι and μεχρις until, to, as far as

It is disputed whether μεχρι here means 'up to and including' or 'up to but not including'. The following ἀπο τότε suggests from the time of John. John marks the transition between the old and the new: he is the last of the prophets who precede Christ's coming but is also the immediate herald of the new era.

τοτε then, at that time

A new era has now dawned.

εὐαγγελίζω act. and midd proclaim the good news

βιαζω exercise force (if midd); suffer violence (if pass); enter by force

The law and the prophets spoke of the kingdom which was yet to come. Since the arrival of John the Baptist, and now with the ministry of Jesus, people are storming into the kingdom, even (as it were) violently pushing past the Pharisees and Jewish leaders to do so. "The saying in both of its forms refers to the efforts men should make in order to get into the kingdom." Marshall

Verse 17

Εὐκοπώτερον δὲ ἐστὶν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν
γῆν παρελθεῖν ἢ τοῦ νόμου μίαν κεραίαν
πεσεῖν.

εὐκοπώτερος, α, ον (comparitive from εὐκοπος easy) easier

γη, γης f earth

παρελθειν Verb, aor act infin παρερχομαι pass, pass away

κεραια, ας f stroke (part of a letter)

πεσειν Verb, aor act infin πιτω fall

Caird regarded this as an ironical attack on the pedantic conservatism of the scribes: "It was easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for the scribes to surrender that scrupulosity which could not see the law for the letters." In this he follows Manson who sees the 'strokes' as scribal additions. The point is that they are unwilling to sacrifice their traditions.

In contrast, Easton says "Christ was hostile to the scribal traditions, but his attitude towards the Old Testament itself was one of unquestioning acceptance; to him this was God's word without qualification. The words of the law, rightly understood, were the sure guide to salvation." Geldenhuys similarly says, "The Saviour's words here are a very natural way of emphasising the absolute authority of the Old Testament." Marshall comments further, "It is however, 'in the demands of the kingdom, not in its own continued existence, that the Law is validated' (R.J.Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition...*), as is seen by the way in which the saying is followed in both Mt. and Lk. by teaching in which the OT law is restated in a new way." (See also the comments of Hagner on Matthew 5:17-20 in these notes.)

Verse 18

Πᾶς ὁ ἀπολύων τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ γαμῶν ἑτέραν μοιχεύει, καὶ ὁ ἀπολελυμένην ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς γαμῶν μοιχεύει.

Cf. Mt. 5:32; Mk 10:11 par Mt 19:9.

ἀπολυω release, dismiss, divorce

γαμεω marry

ἕτερος, α, ον another

μοιχευω commit adultery

ἀπολελυμένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s

ἄνηρ, ἄνδρος m man, husband

Jesus shows that he upholds the law, while the Pharisees, for all their professed adherence to it, undermine it and deny it. The Pharisees permitted *men* to divorce their wives for trifling causes. Jesus also asserts the equality of men and women before the law – a man, just as much as a woman may be guilty of adultery.