

Luke 12:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

Analysis

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully (Εἶπεν δὲ παραβολὴν πρὸς αὐτοὺς λέγων· Ἄνθρώπου τινὸς πλουσίου εὐφόρησεν ἡ χώρα). Jesus introduces the Parable of the Rich Fool in response to a request for arbitration over inheritance (v. 13), redirecting from legal disputes to eternal priorities. The term parabole (παραβολή, parable) means a comparison or illustration that conveys spiritual truth through earthly story.

The phrase **a certain rich man** (anthropou tinos plousiou, ἀνθρώπου τινός πλουσίου) describes someone already wealthy—his problem is not poverty but prosperity. The verb euphoresen (εὐφόρησεν, brought forth plentifully) combines eu (well, good) and phero (to bear, bring forth), indicating exceptional agricultural abundance. This was blessing from God (Deuteronomy 28:11-12), yet the man's response reveals his spiritual bankruptcy. The ground (chora, χώρα) brought forth—passive voice emphasizing that fertility comes from God, not human effort. The rich man did not create this abundance; he merely received it.

Historical Context

First-century Palestine was primarily agrarian, with wealth measured in land ownership and crop yields. Good harvests were unpredictable, dependent on rainfall, soil quality, and absence of locust plagues. A bumper crop was considered divine blessing and could dramatically increase a farmer's wealth. However,

storage was limited—grain spoiled if not properly kept. The cultural expectation was that the wealthy would share abundance with the community through hospitality, employment, and charity. The rich man's solitary focus on self-preservation violates covenant expectations of generosity toward the poor (Deuteronomy 15:7-11).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does viewing material abundance as God's gift rather than personal achievement change your response to blessing?
2. In what ways do prosperity and success pose spiritual dangers that poverty does not?
3. When has abundance tempted you toward self-sufficiency rather than dependence on God and generosity toward others?

Interlinear Text

Εἶπεν	δὲ	παραβολὴν	πρὸς	αὐτοὺς	λέγων,	Ἀνθρώπου
he spake	And	a parable	unto	them	saying	man
G2036	G1161	G3850	G4314	G846	G3004	G444
τινὸς	πλουσίου	εὐφόρησεν	ἡ	χώρα		
of a certain	rich	brought forth plentifully	G3588	The ground		
G5100	G4145	G2164		G5561		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 73:12 (Parallel theme): Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

Psalms 73:3 (Parallel theme): For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Job 12:6 (Parallel theme): The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.

Hosea 2:8 (Parallel theme): For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.

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