

Luke 12:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

Analysis

And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. The decision is made: touto poieso (τοῦτο ποιήσω, "This will I do"). Seven first-person references saturate this verse—a relentless drumbeat of self-focus. The verb kathaireo (καθελῶ, I will pull down) means to demolish, destroy, or tear down—he will destroy functional buildings to construct monuments to his abundance.

The phrase **build greater** (oikodomeso meizonas, οἰκοδομήσω μείζονας) reveals expansionist thinking—bigger is better, more provides security. This quest for self-sufficiency through accumulation directly contradicts Jesus' teaching that life does not consist in abundance of possessions (v. 15). The repetition **all my fruits and my goods** (panta ton siton kai ta agatha mou, πάντα τὸν σῖτον καὶ τὰ ἀγαθά μου) emphasizes totalistic hoarding—every bit belongs to him and will be stored for him.

Theologically, this verse exposes the idolatry of wealth. The rich man trusts apothēkai (ἀποθήκαι, barns/storehouses) rather than God. His building project mirrors Babel (Genesis 11:4)—human effort to secure the future apart from divine providence. He says psyche (ψυχή, soul) to his goods (v. 19), addressing his immortal soul as if material things could satisfy spiritual hunger. This is the essence of covetousness (pleonexia, πλεονεξία, v. 15)—the belief that more possessions equal more life.

Historical Context

In the ancient Near East, granaries symbolized wealth, power, and security. Egyptian pharaohs and Mesopotamian kings built massive storehouses as monuments to prosperity. Joseph's storage program saved Egypt during famine (Genesis 41:47-49), but he did so under divine direction for the sake of many nations. By contrast, this rich man builds solely for self-preservation with no thought of divine purpose or communal benefit. First-century listeners would recognize this as violating Torah principles of generosity—Proverbs 11:24-26 warns that hoarding leads to poverty while generosity brings blessing. The man's demolition of existing barns to build bigger ones shows wealth's insatiable nature.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. In what areas of life do you pursue 'bigger and better' rather than asking what God desires you to do with His blessings?
2. How does the endless quest for security through accumulation reveal lack of trust in God's ongoing provision?
3. What possessions or achievements have you addressed as if they could satisfy your soul's deepest needs?

Interlinear Text

καὶ εἶπεν Τοῦτο ποιήσω καθελῶ μου τὰς ἀποθήκας

And he said This will I do I will pull down my barns

G2532 G2036 G5124 G4160 G2507 G3450 G3588 G596

καὶ μείζονας οἰκοδομήσω καὶ συνάξω ἐκεῖ πάντα τὰ

And G3173 build And will I bestow there all G3588

G2532 G3618 G2532 G4863 G1563 G3956

γενήματά μου καὶ τὰ ἀγαθά μου

fruits my And goods my

G1081 G3450 G2532 G18 G3450

Additional Cross-References

James 3:15 (Parallel theme): This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

Luke 18:6 (Parallel theme): And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

James 4:15 (Parallel theme): For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

Luke 12:21 (Parallel theme): So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Psalms 17:14 (Parallel theme): From men which are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.

Luke 18:4 (Parallel theme): And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;