

Luke 12:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

Analysis

The Rich Fool's Soliloquy: This verse records the climax of the rich man's internal dialogue, revealing his spiritual bankruptcy despite material wealth. The Greek ψυχή (psychē, "soul") appears three times in verses 19-20, but the man addresses his soul as if it were merely his physical appetite. **Materialistic Theology:** His statement "thou hast much goods laid up for many years" reflects the assumption that security comes from accumulation, and that abundant possessions guarantee long life.

The threefold imperative—"take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Greek ἀναπαύου, φάγε, πίε, εὐφραίνου)—echoes the Epicurean philosophy prevalent in the Greco-Roman world: pleasure as life's chief end. **Ironic Reversal:** God's response in verse 20 ("this night thy soul shall be required of thee") shatters the illusion of security. The verb ἀπαιτέω (apaiteō, "require") has commercial overtones—demanding payment of a debt. **Context:** Jesus tells this parable to warn against covetousness (verse 15), showing that life's value is not in possessions.

Historical Context

First-Century Economic Context: In Jesus' time, grain storage was a primary form of wealth preservation. Large landowners built storage facilities to stockpile grain during abundant harvests, enabling them to control prices and increase profits during scarcity. This practice, while economically savvy, often

disadvantaged poor farmers and consumers.

Greco-Roman Philosophy: The phrase "eat, drink, and be merry" reflects hedonistic philosophy common in the Roman world, also quoted in 1 Corinthians 15:32 and echoing Isaiah 22:13. This worldview denied life after death and emphasized present pleasure. Jesus' parable directly challenges this philosophy by asserting that death brings divine judgment and that earthly accumulation provides no eternal security.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does the rich man's conversation with his soul reveal about his understanding of life's meaning and purpose?
2. How does Jesus' parable challenge the assumption that financial security equals life security?
3. What is the difference between wise stewardship and the foolish hoarding depicted in this passage?
4. Why does Jesus identify this man as a "fool" rather than simply misguided or short-sighted?
5. How should believers balance planning for the future with trust in God's providence and awareness of life's brevity?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἔρω τῇ Ψυχή μου Ψυχή ἔχεις πολλά· ἀγαθὰ
And I will say G3588 Soul to my Soul thou hast many goods
G2532 G2046 G5590 G3450 G5590 G2192 G4183 G18

κείμενα εἰς ἔτη πολλά· ἀναπαύου φάγε πίε εύφραίνου
laid up for years many take thine ease eat drink and be merry
G2749 G1519 G2094 G4183 G373 G5315 G4095 G2165

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 27:1 (Parallel theme): Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

1 Corinthians 15:32 (Parallel theme): If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.

Isaiah 5:11 (Parallel theme): Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!

Ecclesiastes 11:9 (Parallel theme): Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

Psalms 62:10 (Parallel theme): Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

Proverbs 18:11 (Parallel theme): The rich man's wealth is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit.

James 5:5 (Parallel theme): Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

Philippians 3:19 (Parallel theme): Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Revelation 18:7 (Parallel theme): How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Isaiah 5:8 (Parallel theme): Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

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