

Luke 12:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

Analysis

And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding (καὶ ὑμεῖς ὅμοιοι ἀνθρώποις προσδεχομένοις τὸν κύριον ἑαυτῶν πότε ἀναλύσῃ ἐκ τῶν γάμων, kai hymeis homoioi anthrōpois prosdechomenois ton kyrion heautōn pote analysē ek tōn gamōn)—The comparison specifies readiness: servants awaiting their master's return from a wedding feast. The verb prosdechomai (προσδέχομαι) means to await expectantly, welcome, or receive. The temporal clause pote (πότε, when) indicates uncertainty—the exact time is unknown, requiring constant vigilance.

That when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately (ἵνα ἐλθόντος καὶ κρούσαντος εὐθέως ἀνοίξωσιν αὐτῷ, hina elthontos kai krousantos eutheōs anoixōsin autō)—The purpose clause hina (ἵνα) expresses intent: readiness enables immediate response. The adverb eutheōs (εὐθέως, immediately) emphasizes urgency—no delay, no scrambling for preparation. The genitive absolute construction (elthontos kai krousantos, when he comes and knocks) portrays the master arriving and knocking. Faithful servants instantly open the door, demonstrating preparedness through immediate obedience. This illustrates eschatological readiness: Christ's return demands present watchfulness.

Historical Context

First-century Jewish and Greco-Roman wedding celebrations typically lasted multiple days (sometimes a full week), with the timing of various events unpredictable. The groom's return to his household could occur at any hour, even late at night. Household servants were expected to maintain readiness despite the uncertainty, keeping lamps lit and staying alert. Falling asleep on watch or being unprepared would bring shame and potentially punishment. This cultural context makes Jesus' parable immediately comprehensible: disciples are servants awaiting their Master's return from the Messianic banquet.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does waiting for the Lord's return from the wedding feast symbolize about the church's eschatological position?
2. How does the uncertainty of the master's return time challenge complacency and presumption in Christian living?
3. What would immediate response to Christ's knock look like in daily faithfulness and spiritual vigilance?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ὕμεῖς	ὅμοιοι	ἄνθρωποις	προσδεχομένοις	τὸν	
And	ye yourselves	like	unto men	that wait		G3588
G2532	G5210	G3664	G444	G4327		
κύριον	ἐαυτῶν	πότε	ἀναλύσει	ἐκ	τῶν	γάμων ἵνα
lord	for their	when	he will return	from	G3588	the wedding that
G2962	G1438	G4219	G360	G1537		G1062 G2443
ἐλθόντος	καὶ	κρούσαντος	εὐθέως	ἀνοίξωσιν	αὐτῷ	
when he cometh	And	knocketh	immediately	they may open	unto him	
G2064	G2532	G2925	G2112	G455	G846	

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 3:20 (Parallel theme): Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.