

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 ὄμοιοι ἀνθρώποις προσδεχομένοις τὸν κύριον ἔαυτῶν πότε ἀναλύσῃ ἐκ τῶν γάμων, kai hymēis 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 (ἴνα ἐλθόντος καὶ κρούσαντος εὐθέως ἀνοίξωσιν αὐτῷ, hina elthontos kai kroustantos eutheōs anoixōsin autō)—The purpose clause hina (ἴνα) 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 kroustantos, 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 ὑμεῖς ὄμοιοι ἀνθρώποις προσδεχομένοις τὸν
And ye yourselves like unto men that wait G3588
G2532 G5210 G3664 G444 G4327 G2443

κύριον ἐαυτῶν πότε ἀναλύσει ἐκ τῶν γάμων ἵνα
lord for their when he will return from the wedding that
G2962 G1438 G4219 G360 G1537 G3588 G1062 G2443

ἔλθοντος 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.

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