

Luke 12:45

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

Analysis

But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming (ἐὰν δὲ εἴπῃ ὁ δοῦλος ἐκεῖνος ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ, Χρονίζει ὁ κύριός μου ἔρχεσθαι, ean de eipē ho doulos ekeinos en tē kardia autou, Chronizei ho kyrios mou erchesthai)—The conditional ean (ἐὰν, if) with subjunctive introduces a real possibility. The evil servant's thinking occurs en tē kardia (ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, in his heart)—internal attitude precedes external action. The verb chronizō (χρονίζω, delay, take time) indicates the servant's assumption that the master's return is distant, not imminent. This false security breeds carelessness and sin.

And shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken (καὶ ἀρξηται τύπτειν τοὺς παῖδας καὶ τὰς παιδίσκας, ἔσθιειν τε καὶ πίνειν καὶ μεθύσκεσθαι, kai arxētai typtein tous paidas kai tas paidiskas, esthiein te kai pinein kai methyskesthai)—The wicked servant's behavior reveals his heart. The verb typtō (τύπτω, beat, strike) indicates abuse of those under his authority—oppressing rather than serving fellow servants. The threefold description esthiein... pinein... methyskesthai (ἔσθιειν... πίνειν... μεθύσκεσθαι, eating... drinking... getting drunk) portrays selfish indulgence and dissipation. Both tyranny over others and self-indulgent excess characterize those who abandon watchfulness. Eschatological forgetfulness produces ethical collapse.

Historical Context

This scenario wasn't hypothetical—abusive, self-serving leaders plagued both ancient Israel (Ezekiel 34:1-10, Jeremiah 23:1-2) and the early church (Acts 20:29-30, 3 John 9-10). Peter warned that false teachers would exploit believers (2 Peter 2:1-3). Paul described end-times apostasy (2 Timothy 3:1-5). The assumption that Christ's return is delayed leads to moral compromise and abuse of position. Church history confirms this pattern: whenever leaders forget accountability to the returning Master, corruption follows—authoritarian abuse of power and hedonistic self-indulgence.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the assumption that Christ's return is delayed lead to spiritual complacency and moral compromise?
2. What does abuse of fellow servants reveal about a leader's heart attitude toward Christ and His coming judgment?
3. In what ways might contemporary Christian leaders exhibit the evil servant's behaviors of tyranny or self-indulgence?

Interlinear Text

ἐὰν δὲ εἴπῃ ὁ δοῦλος ἐκεῖνος ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ
if But and say G3588 servant that in G3588 heart
G1437 G1161 G2036 G1401 G1565 G1722 G2588

αὐτοῦ Χρονίζει ὁ κύριός μου ἔρχεσθαι καὶ ἄρξηται
G846 delayeth G3588 lord My his coming and shall begin
G5549 G2962 G3450 G2064 G2532 G756

τύπτειν τοὺς παῖδας καὶ τὰς παιδίσκας ἐσθίειν τε
to beat G3588 the menservants and G3588 maidens to eat and
G5180 G3816 G2532 G3814 G2068 G5037

καὶ πίνειν καὶ μεθύσκεσθαι
and drink and to be drunken
G2532 G4095 G2532 G3182

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 18:24 (Parallel theme): And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

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