

Luke 12:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

Analysis

The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware (ἥξει ὁ κύριος τοῦ δούλου ἐκείνου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἣ οὐ προσδοκᾷ καὶ ἐν ὥρᾳ ἣ οὐ γινώσκει, hēxei ho kyrios tou doulou ekeinou en hēmera hē ou prosdoka kai en hōra hē ou ginōskei)—The future tense hēxei (ἥξει, will come) assures the master's certain return despite the servant's presumption of delay. The temporal clauses emphasize unexpectedness: en hēmera hē ou prosdoka (ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἣ οὐ προσδοκᾷ, in a day when he expects not) and en hōra hē ou ginōskei (ἐν ὥρᾳ ἣ οὐ γινώσκει, at an hour when he knows not). The unfaithful servant's ignorance isn't innocent—he willfully abandoned watchfulness.

And will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers (καὶ διχοτομήσει αὐτὸν καὶ τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀπίστων θήσει, kai dichotomēsei auton kai to meros autou meta tōn apistōn thēsei)—The punishment is severe. The verb dichotomeō (διχοτομέω) literally means to cut in two, bisect—capital punishment by cutting apart (used literally or figuratively for severe judgment). The phrase to meros autou meta tōn apistōn (τὸ μέρος αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν ἀπίστων, his portion with the unbelievers) assigns the unfaithful servant to the same destiny as apistoi (ἄπιστοι, unbelievers, unfaithful ones). Despite outward profession and position, the evil servant's actions reveal unregenerate heart, resulting in eternal judgment alongside unbelievers.

Historical Context

This severe language reflects both literal ancient punishments (bisection was practiced in some ancient cultures) and metaphorical description of final judgment's horror. Jesus consistently warned that profession without transformation, position without faithfulness, and knowledge without obedience lead to condemnation (Matthew 7:21-23, 25:30). The early church recognized that apostasy from the faith proves one was never truly regenerated (1 John 2:19). Judas Iscariot exemplified this—close proximity to Jesus, entrusted with position, yet ultimately revealed as unregenerate and condemned.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does the unfaithful servant's unexpected judgment teach about the danger of presuming upon God's patience?
2. How does being assigned a portion with unbelievers demonstrate that outward position doesn't guarantee salvation?
3. In what ways does this warning challenge nominal Christianity and religious profession without genuine transformation?

Interlinear Text

ἔξει	ὁ	κύριος	τοῦ	δούλου	ἐκείνου	ἐν	ἡμέρᾳ	ἣ
will come		The lord		servant	of that	at	a day	when
G2240	G3588	G2962	G3588	G1401	G1565	G1722	G2250	G3739
οὐ	προσδοκᾷ	καὶ	ἐν	ὥρᾳ	ἣ	οὐ	γινώσκει	καὶ
not	for	and	at	an hour	when	not	aware	and
G3756	G4328	G2532	G1722	G5610	G3739	G3756	G1097	G2532
διχοτομήσει	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	τὸ	μέρος	αὐτοῦ	μετὰ	τῶν	
in sunder	him	and		portion	him	with		
G1371	G846	G2532	G3588	G3313	G846	G3326	G3588	
ἀπίστων	θήσει							
the unbelievers	will appoint							
G571	G5087							

Additional Cross-References

Luke 12:40 (Parallel theme): Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Revelation 16:15 (Parallel theme): Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Psalms 94:14 (References Lord): For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.

Psalms 11:5 (References Lord): The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.

Psalms 37:9 (References Lord): For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

Job 20:29 (Parallel theme): This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.

Matthew 24:51 (Parallel theme): And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

