

Luke 12:48

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Analysis

Jesus teaches: 'For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.' This principle of proportional accountability applies universally. Greater privilege demands greater responsibility; more knowledge requires greater obedience. The Greek 'panti hō edothē poly' (παντὶ ᾧ ἐδόθη πολὺ) emphasizes the giving—gifts are given, not earned, creating obligation. The phrase 'shall be required' (Greek 'zētēthēsetai,' ζητηθήσεται, will be sought) indicates accountability—God will evaluate stewardship of what He entrusted. Those receiving more (revelation, opportunity, gifts) face stricter judgment for unfaithfulness.

Historical Context

This concludes Jesus' parable about faithful and unfaithful servants (vv. 42-48). Peter asked if the teaching applied only to apostles or to all (v. 41). Jesus' response established universal principles—all are stewards of what God gives, but leaders face greater accountability (James 3:1). First-century believers received varied amounts of spiritual gifts, knowledge, and opportunity. This teaching warned against presuming privilege without corresponding responsibility. Church history shows God judges Christian leaders and nations with greater knowledge more

strictly than pagans ignorant of truth (Amos 3:2). Modern Christians in nations with abundant biblical access face greater accountability than those with limited access.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the principle 'to whom much is given, much required' apply to spiritual gifts, knowledge, and opportunities?
2. What does this teaching reveal about the relationship between privilege and accountability in God's kingdom?

Interlinear Text

ὁ G3588	δὲ G1161	μὴ G3361	γνούς G1097	ποιήσας G4160	δὲ G1161	ἄξια G514	πληγῶν G4127
	But	not	he that knew	did commit	But	things worthy	of stripes
δαρήσεται G1194	ὀλίγας G3641	παντὶ G3956	δὲ G1161	ᾧ G3739	ἐδόθη G1325	πολύ G4183	πολύ G4183
	shall be beaten	with few	But	to whom men	is given	much	much
ζητηθήσεται G2212	παρ' G3844	αὐτόν G846	καὶ G2532	ᾧ G3739	παρέθεντο G3908	πολύ G4183	
	required	of	him	and	to whom men	have committed	much
περισσότερον G4053	αἰτήσουσιν G154	αὐτόν G846					
	they will ask	him					

Additional Cross-References

James 3:1 (Parallel theme): My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

Leviticus 5:17 (Parallel theme): And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.

John 15:22 (Parallel theme): If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.

Matthew 13:12 (Parallel theme): For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

1 Timothy 1:13 (Parallel theme): Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

Acts 17:30 (Parallel theme): And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Luke 16:2 (Parallel theme): And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

1 Timothy 6:20 (Parallel theme): O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

1 Timothy 1:11 (Parallel theme): According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

Titus 1:3 (Parallel theme): But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;