

Luke 16:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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.

The master confronts the steward with the accusation, demanding accountability. The phrase "How is it that I hear this?" (*τί τοῦτο ἀκούω περὶ σοῦ*, *ti touto akouō peri sou*) suggests investigation based on credible reports—the steward's mismanagement has become known. The command "give an account" (*ἀπόδος τὸν λόγον*, *apodos ton logon*) means "render a reckoning" or "present the books"—a financial audit to document the steward's administration.

The declaration "**thou mayest be no longer steward**" (*οὐ γὰρ δύνῃ ἔτι οἰκονομεῖν*, *ou gar dynē eti oikonomein*) announces certain termination—not a threat but a settled decision. The steward has lost his position; only the final accounting remains. This creates the crisis that drives the parable: facing imminent unemployment and lacking manual skills (v. 3), the steward must act decisively to secure his future. The parallel to Christian existence is clear: we are stewards who will give account (Romans 14:12, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Peter 4:5). Our stewardship is temporary—death or Christ's return will end it. How we use present resources determines eternal outcomes. The parable urges urgent, strategic use of earthly wealth for heavenly reward.

Historical Context

Stewards could be dismissed for incompetence, dishonesty, or simply at the master's pleasure. Without modern employment protections or social safety nets, losing such a position meant potential destitution. The steward's dilemma reflects ancient economic realities: unemployment threatened survival. His subsequent scheme (vv. 5-7) exploits his remaining brief window of authority to secure future hospitality from debtors. While ethically questionable, his shrewdness in using present resources for future security illustrates the urgent wisdom Jesus commends—not the dishonesty, but the strategic action in crisis.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the certainty of giving account for our stewardship before God affect the way we use our time, money, and talents today?
2. What does this verse teach about the temporary nature of earthly positions and possessions versus eternal realities?
3. How should awareness of our coming 'audit' before Christ motivate present faithfulness and generosity?

Interlinear Text

καὶ φωνήσας αὐτῷ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Τί τοῦτο ἀκούω
And he called him and said him How this is it that I hear
G2532 G5455 G846 G2036 G846 G5101 G5124 G191

περὶ σου ἀπόδος τὸν λόγον τῆς οἰκονομίας σου οὐ
of of thy give an account stewardship of thy no
G4012 G4675 G591 G3588 G3056 G3588 G3622 G4675 G3756

γὰρ δύνήσῃ ἔτι οἰκονομεῖν
for thou mayest be longer steward
G1063 G1410 G2089 G3621

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 20:12 (Parallel theme): And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Ecclesiastes 12:14 (Parallel theme): For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

1 Timothy 5:24 (Parallel theme): Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.

1 Peter 4:10 (Parallel theme): As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1 Peter 4:5 (Parallel theme): Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.