

# Luke 16:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

## Analysis

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**And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.** The first debtor owes "a hundred measures" (ἐκατὸν βάτους, hekaton batous) of olive oil—approximately 875 gallons, representing the production of about 150 olive trees or substantial commercial quantity. The steward's command is decisive: "Take thy bill" (δέξαι σου τὰ γράμματα, dexai sou ta grammata, literally "receive your contract"), "sit down quickly" (καθίσας ταχέως, kathisas tacheōs, emphasizing speed and urgency), and "write fifty" (γράψον πεντήκοντα, grapson pentēkonta)—a 50% reduction.

The urgency—"quickly" (ταχέως, tacheōs)—reveals the steward's awareness that his window of authority is closing. He must act before his dismissal becomes public and his authority evaporates. The debtor himself rewrites the contract (γράψον, grapson, imperative "write!"), making him complicit and ensuring gratitude. This detail illustrates Jesus' point: **use present resources urgently and strategically before opportunity ends.** For believers, life is brief, death is certain, Christ's return is imminent—we must act now to invest earthly resources for eternal dividends. The steward's shrewdness lies not in his ethics but in his recognition of crisis and decisive action while time remains.

## Historical Context

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Olive oil was a staple commodity in ancient Palestine—used for cooking, lighting, anointing, and religious ritual. The amounts mentioned indicate commercial-scale

debt, likely involving tenant farmers or merchants. Written contracts (γράμματα, grammata) were standard for significant transactions. By having the debtor rewrite the bill himself, the steward creates a legally binding document that reduces the obligation. Whether this represents the steward forgiving his own commission or defrauding his master is debated, but the cultural impact is clear—the debtor receives enormous financial relief and becomes indebted to the steward personally.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does the steward's urgent action 'quickly' challenge believers to act decisively with their resources before opportunity passes?
2. What 'contracts' or commitments might God be calling you to revise in light of eternal priorities?
3. In what ways does this passage illustrate the principle that temporary earthly resources can be converted into eternal spiritual capital?

## Interlinear Text

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ο δὲ εἶπεν Ἐκατὸν βάτους ἔλαίου καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ  
G3588 And he said An hundred measures of oil And he said unto him  
G1161 G2036 G1540 G943 G1637 G2532 G2036 G846

Δέξαι σου τὸ γράμμα, καὶ καθίσας ταχέως γράψον  
Take thy G3588 bill And sit down quickly and write  
G1209 G4675 G1121 G2532 G2523 G5030 G1125

πεντήκοντα

fifty  
G4004

## Additional Cross-References

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**Luke 16:12** (Parallel theme): And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

**Titus 2:10** (Parallel theme): Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.