

Luke 16:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

Analysis

Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. The steward continues his strategy with a second debtor, who owes "a hundred measures" (ἐκατὸν κόρους, hekaton korous) of wheat—approximately 1,000 bushels or 10-12 tons, representing the yield of about 100 acres. This reduction is smaller proportionally—from 100 to 80, a 20% decrease versus the 50% oil reduction—possibly reflecting different commission structures on different commodities or the relative values of oil versus grain. Regardless, both reductions represent substantial debt forgiveness creating grateful beneficiaries.

The pattern is identical: the debtor himself rewrites the contract (γράψον, grapson, "write!"), ensuring legal validity and personal complicity. The steward multiplies his future security by creating multiple grateful debtors who will feel honor-bound to provide hospitality when he's unemployed. Jesus' application (v. 8) commends not the steward's ethics but his shrewdness (φρονίμως, phronimōs, "wisely" or "prudently")—he used earthly resources to secure future benefit. **Believers should show similar wisdom: use money, time, and influence not merely for temporal comfort but to create eternal relationships and rewards** (v. 9: "make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations").

Historical Context

Wheat was the primary grain crop in Palestine, more valuable than barley but less expensive than olive oil. The amounts mentioned indicate major agricultural debt—tenant farmers might accumulate such obligations over multiple growing seasons. The 20% reduction on wheat versus 50% on oil may reflect actual first-century lending practices where different commodities had different built-in commission rates. The cultural principle remains: the steward creates beneficiaries who owe him gratitude, ensuring his future security through present generosity (albeit with resources not entirely his own—hence the ethical ambiguity Jesus doesn't directly address).

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the steward's creation of multiple grateful beneficiaries illustrate the principle of investing in relationships with eternal significance?
2. What does this parable teach about the strategic use of earthly resources for heavenly outcomes rather than merely temporal accumulation?
3. In practical terms, how can Christians use their wealth to 'make friends' who will 'receive them into everlasting habitations' (v. 9)?

Interlinear Text

ἔπειτα ἐτέρῳ εἴπεν Σὺ δὲ πόσον ὀφείλεις ὁ δὲ
Then to another he said thou And how much owest G3588 And
G1899 G2087 G2036 G4771 G1161 G4214 G3784 G1161

εἴπεν Ἐκατὸν κόρους σίτου καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ Δέξαι
he said An hundred measures of wheat And he said unto him Take
G2036 G1540 G2884 G4621 G2532 G3004 G846 G1209

σου τὸ γράμμα, καὶ γράψον ὄγδοήκοντα
thy G3588 bill And write fourscore
G4675 G1121 G2532 G1125 G3589

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