

Luke 18:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Analysis

For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God—Jesus uses vivid, absurd imagery. Eukopōteron gar estin kamēlon dia trēmatos belonēs eiselthein (εὐκοπώτερον γὰρ ἐστὶν κάμηλον διὰ τρήματος βελόνης εἰσελθεῖν)—'it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye.' Kamēlos (κάμηλος) is the largest animal in Palestine; belonē (βελόνη) is a sewing needle with tiny eye.

This is deliberate hyperbole showing impossibility. Some claim 'needle's eye' was a narrow Jerusalem gate requiring camels to kneel, but this misses the point: Jesus describes the impossible. The disciples correctly respond, 'Who then can be saved?' (v. 26). Jesus answers: 'Things impossible with men are possible with God' (v. 27). Salvation—for rich or poor—requires divine miracle, not human achievement. Wealth simply makes the impossibility more visible.

Historical Context

Jesus's audience, accustomed to viewing wealth as divine blessing, found this teaching devastating. If the rich—seemingly most blessed by God—can barely be saved, who can? Jesus exposes wealth's spiritual danger while pointing to salvation's true source: God's power, not human effort. The rich young ruler exemplified humanity's universal problem: inability to save ourselves. His wealth merely made the diagnosis obvious. All people—rich and poor—need divine grace to enter God's kingdom.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does the camel/needle imagery reveal about salvation as divine miracle rather than human achievement?
2. How do the disciples' question ('Who then can be saved?') and Jesus's answer ('With God all things are possible') transform understanding of salvation?
3. In what ways does wealth make humanity's universal inability to save itself more visible rather than creating a unique problem?

Interlinear Text

εὐκοπώτερον	γάρ	ἐστιν	κάμηλον	διὰ	τρυμαλιᾶς	
easier	For	it is	for a camel	through	eye	
G2123	G1063	G2076	G2574	G1223	G5168	
ῥαφίδος	εἰσελθεῖν	ἢ	πλούσιον	εἰς	τὴν	βασιλείαν τοῦ
a needle's	to enter	than	for a rich man	into	G3588	the kingdom G3588
G4476	G1525	G2228	G4145	G1519		G932
θεοῦ	εἰσελθεῖν					
of God	to enter					
G2316	G1525					