

Mark 13:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

Analysis

The Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants—Jesus shifts to parabolic warning. The Greek *anthrōpos apodēmos* (ἄνθρωπος ἀπόδημος, 'a man abroad/away') represents Christ in his ascension (Acts 1:9-11). The phrase *dous tois doulois autou tēn exousian* (δοὺς τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐξουσίαν, 'giving to his servants the authority') indicates delegated responsibility during the master's absence—paralleling the Great Commission's authority (Matthew 28:18-20).

To every man his work (*hekastō to ergon autou*, ἐκάστω τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ) emphasizes individual accountability. The *thyrōros* (θυρωρός, doorkeeper/porter) has special responsibility to watch (*grēgorē*, γρηγορῇ). This parable assumes Christ's return is delayed (cf. Luke 12:45, 'My lord delays his coming') but certain, requiring faithful stewardship meanwhile. The household imagery recalls Ephesians 2:19, believers as God's household, each with assigned kingdom tasks.

Historical Context

First-century masters often traveled abroad for extended periods (trade, military service, administration), leaving trusted stewards to manage estates. Mismanagement meant severe punishment; faithful service brought reward. Jesus uses this social reality to teach about his ascension and return. Early Christians

lived with imminent expectation (1 Thessalonians 4:17, 'we who are alive') balanced with patient perseverance when Christ 'delayed' (2 Peter 3:9).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What specific 'work' has Christ assigned you during his absence, and are you faithful in it?
2. How does knowing you'll give account to the returning Master affect your use of time, gifts, and resources?
3. In what ways might you be tempted to act as if the Master isn't returning, and how can you guard against that?

Interlinear Text

ὥς	ἄνθρωπος	ἀπόδημος	ἄφεις	τὴν	
For the Son of man is as	a man	taking a far journey	who left		G3588
G5613	G444	G590	G863		
οἰκίαν	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	δοὺς	τοῖς	δούλοις
house		and	gave		servants
G3614	G846	G2532	G1325	G3588	G1401
ἐξουσίαν	καὶ	ἐκάστω	τὸ	ἔργον	αὐτοῦ
authority	and	to every man		work	
G1849	G2532	G1538	G3588	G2041	G846
θυρωρῶ	ἐνετείλατο	ἵνα	γρηγορῇ	καὶ	τῷ
the porter	commanded	to	watch	and	
G2377	G1781	G2443	G1127	G2532	G3588

Additional Cross-References

John 10:3 (Parallel theme): To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

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