

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 (ἀνθρωπος 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, ἑκάστῳ τῷ ἔργῳ αὐτοῦ) emphasizes individual accountability. The thyrōros (θυρωρός, doorkeeper/porter) has special responsibility to watch (grēgorē, γρηγορῆ). 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

ώς	ἄνθρωπος	ἀπόδημος	ἀφεὶς	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 αὐτοῦ τὴν					
house	and	gave	servants	G846	G3588
G3614	G2532	G1325	G1401		
ἐξουσίαν καὶ ἐκάστῳ τῷ ἔργον αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ					
authority	and	to every man	work	G846	G3588
G1849	G2532	G1538	G2041		
θυρωρῷ ἐνετείλατο ἵνα γρηγορῇ					
the porter	commanded	to	watch		
G2377	G1781	G2443	G1127		

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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