

Lucan Studies: Luke 16

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Lucan Themes/Key Concepts

- Reversals
- Possessions

The Shrewd Manager: Details and Commentary (1-13)

- Slave or free man, apparently free man
- Squandering the possessions of another was especially heinous
- Fired but not jailed (not even scolded)
- Mishna—responsible for paying for any loss
- The master was unusually merciful to him
- Digging and begging were undignified—and hard work!
- The debtors do not know of the deception or they would be equally guilty
- The debtors were possibly land tenants
- Possibility: The manager gained favor for himself and for the master as generous benefactor, and punishment would appear unjust with such benevolence. The manager stakes all on the master's generous honor
- Possibility: The manager only cancelled his commissions—the rest of the debt to the master was still due. Thus the master was not cheated by his act but was still owed his due. This helps make the shrewd manager a better example—recognize the advance of giving up a little now to guarantee the future.
- Lesson: praise for foresight, not dishonesty or cleverness.
- Problem: How can dishonesty, or even shrewdness, be praised?
- Is the story about healthy attitudes toward possessions?
- His dishonesty is in the past, not in the events Jesus recounts.
- The use of money consistent with stewardship, service, kindness, and generosity toward others is praised

Jesus and the Pharisees (14-18)

- The attitude of the Pharisees
- Jesus' statement: abomination
- A new era has come: people are diligent in seeking kingdom entry and kingdom things
- The kingdom is a fulfillment of the law
- Possibilities with the divorce illustration (|| in Mt. 19): (1) the importance of the law, high regard for the law, (2) the tendency to demean or belittle the law, Pharisaical gamesmanship, (3) the frequency of hard hearts

Lazarus and the Rich Man (19-31)

- A Parable?
- Spoken to whom?
- Reversals are a part of life, even for the rich; wealth or poverty are not indications of God's blessings
- As much OT as NT
- Foreshadowing the resurrection (continued Jewish denial and rejection?)
- Hades