

## AF A9 BIBLE STUDY: “When the Lord Returns” Luke 12

Scripture of Lesson: Luke’s Gospel 12: 35-59

### 1. We are God’s servants – good servant and evil servant

A. Most of the Lord’s teachings in Luke 12 were addressed to the crowd who had gathered around Him to hear Him. It is, therefore, notable that He expects all people, whether disciples or not, to be “servants.” He was not particularly addressing the servanthood to His disciples but to all of the crowd. Therefore, His servanthood sermon applies to all humanity even today, whether we are wisely anticipating the Lord’s return or not. God created the human and expects him to fulfill the role as a surrogate/ servant to carry out the entrusted mission of caring for God’s creation, loving the Creator and loving the Creation including fellow humans.

B. Verse 12: 42-48 describe clearly what God’s expectation is toward us:

*And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master’s will and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.*

C. What are God’s expectations and judgments on His servants?

- 1) How can the faithful and wise servant “rule over His household” without being entrusted to do so by the Owner (God) of His household? Lord Jesus makes it apparent the truth that Adam was entrusted to rule over God’s creation. This entrustment given to Adam by God is recorded in Genesis 1: 28:  
*Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*
- 2) God expects the servant to “give them (His household) their portion of food in due season.” This responsibility of feeding God’s household may refer to equitable allocation of resources including food to meet global needs.
- 3) Lord Jesus warns of possible evil acts of the servant such as beating fellow servants, engaging in self-indulgence only without regard to the needs of the household. This may refer to unjustified violence such as making wars against other nations/ peoples and being stingy in wealth sharing with the poor and needy peoples.
- 4) Lord Jesus assigns different levels of rewards and punishments to the servants depending on two factors: whether he knew of the master’s will or not, and whether he fulfilled the will of the master faithfully or not. Christian nations and peoples are more responsible because they have been instructed of God’s will and the entrustment as the caretaker of God’s creation. Non-Christian nations will be punished for their unbelief and refusal of God’s grace and truth.
- 5) There is also an important spiritual lesson to Christian ministers, to whom the truth of God has been revealed and taught. They are more responsible than others to live out God’s will and to care for His flock instead of living a self-indulgent life. A life of dying in self just as a corn of wheat falls into the ground to yield many fruits—that is the kind of life expected of God’s servants.

- 6) There is a serious warning to the Christians – The judgment to the unfaithful Christians will be the same as that to the unbelievers as He warned in verse 46, *“will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.”* Do not rest content that just because you became a Christian, your reward in heaven is secure. Unfaithful Christians with wanton, self-indulgent living will be judged and will be thrown into where the unbelievers will be because you failed to meet God’s expectation and brought disappointment to His heart.

## 2. When will the Lord return?

- A. Lord Jesus mentioned His second coming several times and exhorted His disciples to keep faithful until then. He also gave prophecies about the destruction of Jerusalem [70 AD; Matt 24: 1-2, Mark 13: 1-2; Luke 21: 20-24], the great persecution of the Christians and Jews [Matt 24: 9-10], widespread expansion of the Christendom [Matt 24: 14], restoration of Jerusalem to the Jews [Luke 21: 24], the great tribulation of the Jews [Matt 24: 15-27], all of which must be fulfilled before the Lord’s second coming.
- B. The exact timing is not known even to the Son of God but God the Father only. However, Lord Jesus gave several indications about what to expect before the actual coming. The following are such indications:
- 1) Restoration of Jerusalem to the Jews has been fulfilled as a result of the Six-Day War, in which Israel took control of the City of Jerusalem from Jordan. Lord Jesus prophesied in Luke 21: 24, *“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”* So, as Jerusalem has now been in the hands of Israel, we can understand that “the times of the Gentiles” have been fulfilled.
  - 2) “When you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place” [Matt 24: 15] –This condition has occurred twice historically and each time it preceded a disaster to the Jewish people. The first such event occurred when Antiochus IV Epiphanes set up an altar, probably to Zeus or Baal Shamem, in the Second Temple in Jerusalem and sacrificed swine on it around the year 168 BC. The second event likely refers to the practice of flying the Roman flag at the temple under Emperor Titus in 70 AD. The third event, yet to be fulfilled, based on OT prophecies, will be that the Anti-Christ will seat himself in the Temple, yet to be built in Jerusalem, as the god to be worshipped instead of God Himself.
  - 3) Since the third temple has not been built, many Christians pay close attention to when this new temple will be built and how the site-related conflict with the Dome of the Rock, which is a Moslem shrine, will be resolved.
- C. While we watch the events of the world, particularly in Israel and surrounding region, we need to be keeping faithful by keeping our eternal hope in Heaven and be carrying out God’s entrusted mission of living out His will, caring for the creation and loving God and our neighbors.

### *Discussion topics:*

1. *Let us discuss ways to better fulfill our mission as God’s servants.*
2. *Let us the world events as related to the prophecies on the end times.*