

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
SSS. Handling Covetousness As God's Servants
(Luke 12:35-48)

I. Introduction

- A. Covetousness is a form of idolatry (Colossians 3:5b), and it not only flourished in Jesus' day, but it dominates our era where the temptation abounds to replace God with money as one's source of sufficiency.
- B. Believers in God's service often have fewer material goods than what people of this world possess, a situation that can lead God's servants to face a greater temptation to covet than what other people often face.
- C. Jesus addressed this trial in Luke 12:35-48, so we view the passage for our insight and application:

II. Handling Covetousness As God's Servants, Luke 12:35-48.

- A. In dealing with the sin of covetousness in Luke 12:13-34, Jesus ended His teaching by telling His hearers to seek God's kingdom and thus to give of their goods in this life to those in need since their heart would be in heaven where their reward and hence where their treasure would be situated, Luke 12:31-34.
- B. Setting one's heart on heaven and giving of one's wealth to others can lead believers to own less than what others do, opening the door for believers to be tempted to covet, so Jesus addressed this trial in Luke 12:35-48:
 - 1. Believers who live for the Lord and who wait for His Kingdom need to be ready for their Lord's return, for they will give an account to Christ for their earthly lives and ministries at His return, Luke 12:35-40:
 - a. The expression in Luke 12:35a of letting one's loins be girded referred to tucking one's long, flowing outer robe into a belt about his waist before traveling or working. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Luke 12:35) The phrase thus means to "be ready," Ibid.
 - b. Jesus stated the need for one's lights to be burning in Luke 12:35b, what in His day referred to the preparation of a groom's servants planning to meet him when he arrived home. "The groom first had supper with his friends, then went to the house of his bride to claim her, then returned to his own house. Although it might be quite late, he expected his servants to be waiting and ready for him (the second watch was from 9 p.m. to midnight, v. 38)," Ibid., fn. to Luke 12:36. (Luke 12:35-40)
 - c. In this illustration, the Groom represented the Messiah Jesus Christ and His servants believers on earth who waited for His Second Coming to earth at the start of His Millennial Kingdom. Christ's servants would not know the moment when their Lord would arrive, so they were to stay focused in how they lived that they not be found slothful and worldly when He appeared. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 239)
 - d. [For us believers in the Church era, we likewise need to stay alert for Christ and not greedily live for material wealth in this life in view of the unknown moment of our accountability to Christ at the rapture!]
 - 2. Believers whom Christ puts in oversight over other believers are more highly accountable to be ready for their Lord's return versus living for the lusts of materialism and this world, Luke 12:41-48:
 - a. At this point, Peter asked Christ if His recent Luke 12:35-40 teaching was for the crowd or His disciples.
 - b. Jesus then modified His application to fit His disciples who would oversee His people in Luke 12:41-48:
 - i. Faithful and wise stewards who were put over their master's household to give them the master's food portions at the proper time while he was away were to fulfill that assignment in a responsible way if they wanted to be rewarded by their master at His return, Luke 12:41-44.
 - ii. However, if the stewards thought their master delayed his return so that they began to live worldly lives and mistreat their master's other servants under them, the master would greatly discipline the stewards when he returned, Luke 12:45-46. The stewards who knew their master's will but did not do it would be more severely punished than those who did not know his will, Luke 12:47-48.
 - iii. Thus, leaders over God's flock in the Tribulation were to note their accountability to Christ at His Second Coming and not live selfishly in covetousness but serve for the good of those under them.
 - iv. [This instruction also applies in principle to leaders of God's people in today's era of the Church: they are to sense their accountability to treat the Lord's people well as they anticipate the rapture!]

Lesson: *The lure to covet while living for and serving Christ in this life is to be overcome by the believer's sensing his accountability to the Lord at His unknown moment of return, be it at the rapture for Christians or at Christ's Second Coming to earth for Tribulation saints, for Christ will deal with those servants in accord with their works.*

Application: *May we servants of God handle our unique and at times strong temptation to covet this world's wealth by realizing our great accountability to Christ at His unknown time of return, and may we function accordingly.*