A PARABLE FOR SPIRITUAL LEADERS

Matthew 24:43 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his house hold to give them their food at the proper time?"

Peter's Question

Luke 12:39-41 "But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"

To Whom Is the Parable Addressed?

Luke 12:42-44 The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions." This is almost identical in every detail with Matthew 24:45-47.

The parable is addressed to those servants (Matthew) the master "puts in charge of," literally "appoints over" other servants "to give them their food at the proper time." They will be "put in charge of all his possessions" when the master returns. They are called "managers" in Luke, using the word used to describe Elders and Overseers in Titus 1:7, where it says(NLT), "A church leader is a manager of God's household."

John 21:15d Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

John 21:16c Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

John 21:17d Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Acts 6:4(NASB) "But we will devote ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the

word."

Ephesians 4:11&12(NASB) And he gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

Summation: the parable is addressed to spiritual leaders whose job is to make sure the flock is properly fed.

The Reward for Faithful Obedience

Matthew 24:46&47 "It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions." (Luke 12:43&44 is almost identical.)

Matthew 25:21&23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' "

The Punishment for Wicked Disobedience

Matthew 24:48&49 "But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards."

Luke 12:45 "But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and to get drunk."

Notice it is the fact that the master's return is seen as not imminent that leads to the evil behavior.

The Master's Unexpected Return

Luke 12:46&47 "The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers."

Matthew 24:50&51 "The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The master's return will be unexpected.

Matthew 13:41&42 "The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The wicked servant (manager) will be punished and sent to hell ("where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth") along with other unbelievers and hypocrites.

Jesus' Commentary in Luke

Luke 12:47&48 "The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

James 3:1 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

Punishment in hell is based on what a person actually did: Revelation 20:13c Each person was judged according to what they had done.

Punishment in hell is also based on whether the person knew what he was doing was wrong. (Luke 12:47&4)

Since the judgment of believers includes the judgment of motives, the judgment of unbeliever will also probably include the judgment of motives. I Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

And judgment will also be based on whether or not the individual held a position of responsibility.

Things to Remember

The primary responsibility of a spiritual leader is to make sure those he is in charge of a spiritually fed.

Faithful obedience by spiritual leaders will be rewarded.

There will be unbelievers who manage to get into positions of spiritual leadership and use their positions to abuse those they are in charge of. Such people will be judged very severely.

Both believers and unbelievers will be judged for what they have done based one:

What they actually did. (John 19:11 all sin is serious, some sin is greater.)

Whether they knew it was wrong.

What their motives were for doing it.

Whether or not they were in a leadership/teaching position.

The belief that our Master could return at any moment is strong motivation for godly living.