

## LUKE'S MISREADING IN 16:9 OF TWO HEBREW WORDS

©

Thomas F. McDaniel, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus  
Palmer Theological Seminary  
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

### INTRODUCTION

According to Matt 6:19 Jesus said, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,” but in Luke 16:9 Jesus said, “Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.” The two imperatives are inconsistent, if not contradictory. A similar problem appears in Luke 14:26 where Jesus said, “If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” But in Matt 22:39, Mark 12:31, and Luke 10:27 Jesus declared that Lev 19:18, “you shall love your *neighbor* (רֵעִי = kith-and-kin) as yourself,” was the second greatest commandment, exceed only by the commandment to love God. A third problem appears in Matt 10:34–36, where the Prince of Peace—having stated in Matt 5:9, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God”—announced, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” And yet there is no record that Jesus ever touched a sword.

I have already published my interpretation of the difficult sayings in Luke 14:26 and Matt 10:34, in which I conclude that a few statements of Jesus were mistranslated when they went from Hebrew into Greek.<sup>1</sup> The clarity of Hebrew speech can readily be lost when, as was the custom, Hebrew spelling

did not use vowels. In Luke 14:26 the Hebrew word שָׁנָה / שָׁנָה, meaning “to forsake” was misread as the word “to hate.” In Matt 10:34, שָׁלוֹם “end” was misread as “Shalom”; and the word חֶלֶף “change” was misread as “sword.” In this study, using the same philological methodology, I focus on the parable of the unjust steward in Luke 16:1–13, giving primary attention to verses:8 and 9.

Gächter (1950: 121) rightly noted with reference to the parable of the unjust steward (ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς ἀδικίας) in Luke 16:1–13 that “this parable until now is still a *crux interpretum*, and much more a *crux praedificantium*. Twenty-five years later Topel (1975: 216) similarly noted,

The literature dealing with the parable of the unjust steward is staggering, and after all the effort expended, its meaning still eludes us. Indeed, more than any other parable it can be expected to keep its mystery for future generations of exegetes, for it bristles with difficulties.

But a few years earlier Fletcher (1969: 19, 24) rightly narrowed the problems down to just one verse:

V. 9 is the real *crux interpretationis* of the parable. . . The saying is so difficult that there seems to be no disposition on the part of interpreters to question its authenticity; presumably nothing so obscure would have been introduced into the tradition and erroneously attributed to Jesus. It must have been spoken by the Master himself. . . . *Does Jesus actually mean to counsel one to use money<sup>2</sup> to make friends in order in some way to assure one's admission to a heavenly dwelling?* [italics added]

The answer to Fletcher's question is an emphatic “No!” and this study, focusing on Luke 16:8–9, presents the reasons for my coming to this conclusion. First, a look at 16:8.

**Luke 16:8**

καὶ ἐπήνεσεν ὁ κύριος τὸν οἰκονόμον τῆς ἀδικίας  
 ὅτι φρονίμως ἐποίησεν·  
 ὅτι οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου φρονιμώτεροι ὑπὲρ  
 τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ φωτὸς  
 εἰς τὴν γενεάν τὴν ἑαυτῶν εἰσιν.

And the lord commended the unrighteous steward  
 that he did prudently,  
 because the sons of this age are more prudent  
 than the sons of the light,  
 in respect to their generation.

**Vulgate**

*et laudavit dominus vilicum iniquitatis  
 quia prudenter fecisset  
 quia filii huius saeculi prudentiores filiis lucis  
 in generatione sua sunt*

**Peshitta Transliterated**

ושבח מרן לרביתא דעולא דחכימאית  
 עבד בנוהי גיר דעלמא הנא חכימין אנון  
 מן בנוהי דנוהרא בשרבתהון הדא:

**Peshitta**

השבח מרן לרביתא דעולא דחכימאית  
 עבד בנוהי גיר דעלמא הנא חכימין אנון  
 מן בנוהי דנוהרא בשרבתהון הדא:

**Lamsa**

And the lord praised the unjust steward  
because he had done wisely;  
for the children of this world are wiser  
in their generation than the children of light.

Plummer (1922: 380–381) noted with reference to the early contradictory allegorical interpretations (which identified the steward variously with the Jewish hierarchy, publicans, penitents, Paul, Pilate, Judas, Satan, or Jesus) that “A catalogue of even the chief suggestions would serve no useful purpose . . . The literature on the subject is voluminous and unrepaying.” Landry and May (2000: 287–288) expressed a similar sentiment: “This parable has spawned a wide variety of interpretations, although none has produced anything resembling a scholarly consensus. . . it would not be wise to provide a comprehensive review of the literature. . . .”<sup>3</sup> Therefore they discussed only “the most popular and the most recent solutions to the puzzle of the Unjust Steward,” as they presented the following interpretation of Luke 16:1–8a, with no mention of the real *crux interpretationis* in Luke 16:9.

[The unjust steward] tries to get himself out of trouble by restoring his master’s honor and salvaging his reputation as a good, loyal steward. He forgives a portion of the amount owed by his master’s debtors. People would assume that the steward was acting on the master’s orders, so these gestures would make the master look generous and charitable in the eyes of society. The prestige and honor gained by such benefaction would far outweigh the monetary loss to the master. The master hears what the steward has done and praises him for his actions since his honor has been restored. Moreover, the steward is now in a position either to keep his

position with this master or to secure one elsewhere, since his reputation for loyalty and good service has been recovered.

Thus, like the steward of the parable, Landry and May can be praised (ἐπαινέω) for their astuteness (φρόνιμος) in suggesting indirectly that we take our text (γράμματα) of 16:8 and change the negative ἀδικίας to the affirmative δικαίας “faithful.” Thus interpreted, Jesus presented this fictitious character as a model for his disciples to emulate, for through his cleverness he had come up with a win-win solution to his pending unemployment. The steward had been “unrighteous” in the squandering his lord’s possessions; but he had redeemed himself and become praiseworthy through a manipulation of his lord’s assets to his personal advantage and benefit to others.

Mann (1992:34–35), who thought the “lord” in the parable referred to Jesus, suggested that the ΑΔΙΚΙΑΣ “experience/expertise” in the original uncial text of Luke 16:8 was misread as ΑΔΙΚΙΑΣ “unjust.” For Mann Jesus was commending the prudent and experienced manager because he acted wisely in the face of a situation that was beyond his control. (But Matthewson [1995: 34–37] faulted Mann’s “guesswork” as a hypothetical textual error for which there is no evidence.)

### THE REAL *CRUX INTERPRETATIONIS*

#### Luke 16:9

Καὶ ἐγὼ ὑμῖν λέγω, ἑαυτοῖς ποιήσατε φίλους  
ἐκ τοῦ μαμωνᾶ τῆς ἀδικίας, ἵνα ὅταν ἐκλίπη  
δέξωνται ὑμᾶς εἰς τὰς αἰωνίους σκηνάς.

**RSV**

And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal habitations.

**Vulgate**

*et ego vobis dico facite vobis amicos de mamona iniquitatis ut cum defeceritis recipiant vos in aeterna tabernacula*

**DRA**

And I say to you: Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity: that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.

**Peshitta**

אמא אנה אמר אנה לכו דעבדו לחון רחמא  
 מן ממונא הנא דעולא  
 דמא דגמר נקבלונכוון במטליהון דלעלם:

**Peshitta Transliterated and Translated**

ואף אנה אמר אנה לכו דעבדו לחון רחמא  
 מן ממונא הנא דעולא  
 דמא דגמר נקבלונכוון במטליהון דלעלם:

And I also am saying unto you, make for yourselves friends from this unrighteous mammon, so that when it is gone they will receive you into their everlasting tabernacles.

Although Landry and May translated the ὁ μαμωνᾶς τῆς ἀδικίας “the mammon of unrighteousness” in Luke 16:9 as

“dishonest wealth” or “ill-gotten gains,” they omitted the word ἀδικίας in their commentary, stating simply “It is indeed a shrewd use of wealth where everyone wins, and Luke has no problem showing Jesus enjoining his followers to be so clever.” This omission of ἀδικίας followed the same omission by Gätcher (1950: 131) who stated “Jesus brings home to his disciples how they should detach themselves from riches, apply it to their brethren in need, and thus secure for themselves an eternal reward.”

Although Fletcher (1963: 28) had recognized ὁ μαμωνᾶς τῆς ἀδικίας “the mammon of unrighteousness” as a “scornful Semitism,” other authors when commenting on Luke 16:9 interpreted the text as if the τῆς ἀδικίας “the unrighteous” were not there or was not to be taken literally. For example, Fitzmyer (1964: 41) commented on the phrase “make friends with the *wealth of dishonesty*” to mean:

Use prudently the wealth that you have to insure your status when the eschaton arrives. It does not mean that Christians are to make use of ill-gotten gain; the expression is pejorative and expresses only the tendency of wealth as such.”

Topel (1975: 220), in his following statement, appears to be comfortable in making the *mammon of iniquity* the equivalent of “riches” and “money” in general:

Thus Luke means by the parable that the unjust man can show the Christian how to use riches to help the poor and so gain God’s favor. Now this focus on the use of money is probably the reason for the adjoining verses on the mammon of iniquity, and so the proper use of money is an important part of the Lucan version of the parable.

Parrott (1991: 560), citing Jeremias (1963: 46, n. 86), stated:

Unrighteousness mammon presumably does not mean here ill-gotten gains, since it is impossible to believe that thievery is being recommended. More likely the master's goods . . . are interpreted as representing any worldly goods . . . one's possessions.

So also DeSilva (1993: 255) paraphrased ὁ μαμωνᾶς τῆς ἀδικίας as “material wealth” in his introductory statement:

The hermeneutical move, as it were, centers on the expedient use of material wealth, and moves from the steward's context of remitting debts to the context of using wealth to benefit the disenfranchised members of the community and society.

Likewise, Matthewson (1995: 33–34), omitted or paraphrased the τῆς ἀδικίας when he concluded:

Yet the parable as it stands in its present redactional context concerns the wise use of *possessions* . . . the “sons of light reflect prudence in the use of worldly possessions. . . one's use of worldly possessions is an effective test of one's ability to handle eternal reward because it reveals where ultimate loyalties lie (v. 13). A disciple cannot render loyalty to mammon and at the same time give to God the exclusive loyalty that he deserves.

The omissions of the τῆς ἀδικίας or paraphrases of it as “material” or “worldly” (so translated in the NIV and NLT) are indirect responses to questions raised by many, including Gächter (1950:121, 123), who asked, “*How can Jesus make villainy an example for his followers?*” and “*Did Jesus, who otherwise knew so well how to speak to the hearts of men, really propose a parable which necessarily strikes one as touching on what according to all standards of morals is wrong?*” (italics mine)



This is the crux! A straightforward and simple translation of the Greek ἐαυτοῖς ποιήσατε φίλους ἐκ τοῦ μαμωνᾶ τῆς ἀδικίας has Jesus commanding the disciples to make friends for themselves *from*

- the mammon of unrighteousness (KJV, ASV, NAS, YLT)
- unrighteous mammon (RSV)
- mammon of iniquity (DRA)
- wealth of unrighteousness (NAU)
- dishonest wealth (NAB, NRS).

That is what comes from the Greek. But did Jesus teach this parable in Greek? Probably not! Torrey (1933: 157, 311) argued that Jesus spoke in Aramaic and that some of the Aramaic quotations were misunderstood when translated into Greek. Assuming that an initial interrogative particle was lost in translation from Aramaic to Greek, Torrey restored the particle, thereby removing the difficulties in Luke 16:8–9 by making Jesus' *statements* into these *questions*: "Did the lord of the estate praise his faithless manager? . . . and do I say to you . . . ?" The anticipated answer would have been in the negative. Parrott (1991: 513, n. 50) favorably cited Torrey's Aramaic reconstruction, and suggested that parable could have been a "parable of preparation," in which case the proposed question in 16:8a could have been answered in the affirmative. However, most scholars have ignored Torrey's proposals about an Aramaic original having an interrogative particle which was lost in transmission or translation.

Nevertheless, many critics recognize "Semitic" elements in the parable in which the Aramaic מַמּוֹנָא (*mammōnā* = mammon) is the most conspicuous. Fletcher (1963: 28, 30) noted the "scornful Semitism" and a "Semitic aphorism"; Williams (1964: 296) recognized the "Semitic type parable";

Hiers (1972: 32) spoke of the “Semitic genitive construct”; Topel (1975: 218) also recognized a “Semitic construct state”; Ireland (1992: 97) identified the τῆς ἀδικίας “as an instance of the so-called Hebrew genitive”; and DeSilva (1993: 264–265) noted the “Semitic counterparts” and “simple Semitisms.”

But, aside from Torrey’s working with the Aramaic, no one that I am aware of has offered a *reconstruction* of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of Luke 16:9—although the Hebrew translations by Salkinson-Ginsburg,<sup>4</sup> Delitzsch,<sup>5</sup> and others—as well as the Aramaic Peshiṭta cited above—are readily available. Certainly Jesus, as an itinerant teacher (διδάσκαλος), may have taught the multitudes in Aramaic or Greek. But as an honored Rabbi / Rabban (‘Ραββί / Ραββουν = רַבִּי / רַבֵּן) Jesus surely taught his disciples using Hebrew—just as the “Teacher of Righteousness” at Qumran taught the “sons of light” using Hebrew. It is inconceivable that Sadducees, and Pharisees would have taken Jesus seriously if he and his disciples handled *Torah* and *Halakah* only in Aramaic.

The solution to the crux of Luke 16:9 becomes obvious once an unverifiable but logical *reconstruction* of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the verse is made. Thus I offer this *reconstruction* of the Hebrew *Vorlage*—the unvocalized text with ambiguities and a vocalized text which removes of those ambiguities:

ואני אומר לכם התרעו מן הממון העול  
 וכאשר יעזב אז יקבלו אתכם אל משכנות עולם  
 ואני אומר לכם התרעו מן הממון העול  
 וכאשר יעזב אז יקבלו אתכם אל משכנות עולם:

The intensive reflexive *Hithpa<sup>c</sup>el* התרעו matches the ἐαυτοῖς ποιήσατε φίλους “make friends for yourselves,” the

same form found in Prov 22:24, where the negative imperative אַל-תִּתְרַע “do not make companionship” (BDB 945) was translated as μὴ ἴσθι ἑταῖρος “be not a friend.” But the הִתְרַעו (spelled with a *pataḥ* under the ר over against הִתְרַעו spelled with a *qames* under the ר) may have had another meaning.<sup>6</sup> Standard lexicons of Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic list three stems spelled רָעָה :

- Stem I, רָעָה “to pasture, to tend, to graze.” Its Arabic cognate is رعى (*raʿay*).
- Stem II, רָעָה “to associate with, to cherish, to make a friend.” Its Arabic cognates are راعي (*rāʿī*) “master, owner” and مرياع (*miryāʿ*) “companion,” which equals the Hebrew רֵעַ “friend, companion.”
- Stem III, the Aramaic רָעָה “to desire.” Its Arabic cognate is رضى (*raṣay*) and its Hebrew cognate is רָצָה (BDB 945–946; Jastrow 1903: 1486).<sup>7</sup>

A fourth רָעָה needs to be added to the lexicons of Aramaic and Hebrew. It is the רָעָה which is the cognate of the Arabic رعا / رعو [*raʿw / raʿā*] meaning “he refrained from things or affairs, he forebore, or he abstained from bad or foul conduct” (Lane 1867: 1108; Wehr 1979: 401).<sup>8</sup> This cognate was cited by Castell (1669: 3613) as meaning “*abstinuit ab aliqua re*”). This verb, רָעָה stem IV “to abstain from, to refrain from” (not רָעָה stem II “to make friends”) would have been the verb which Jesus used and found its way into the Hebrew *Vorlage* of Luke 16:9. Consequently, the first half of the verse, וַאֲנִי אֹמֵר לָכֶם הִתְרַעוּ מִן הַמָּוֶן הָעוֹל, actually meant:

*“But I say unto you ‘Abstain yourselves from unrighteous mammon!’”*

In the parable the unjust steward was praised by his master for the clever use he made in the acquisition, dispersion, and distribution of unrighteous mammon, even though it was at the master’s own expense. The *first* point Jesus made in the application of the parable was his own recognition that “the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light” (NIB 16:8). The *second* point Jesus made in his application of the parable was his injunction: *“Abstain yourselves from (such) unrighteous mammon!”* Shrewd, clever or crafty acquisition, dispersion, and distribution of *unrighteous mammon* was not to be a practice among the children of light. It was just that simple. For “whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much” and “if then with the unrighteous mammon you have not been faithful, who will trust you with that which is true?” (Luke 16:10–11). Once the imperative הִתְרַעוּ in the *Vorlage* of 16:9a is recognized as הִתְרַעַה stem IV everything in the parable fits together perfectly, even down to the ἐκ in the phrase ἐκ τοῦ μαμωνᾶ τῆς ἀδικίας, “[abstain] *from* unrighteous mammon.”

Luke’s misunderstanding of the proper derivation of the imperative הִתְרַעוּ in the Hebrew source he was using is understandable in light of the fact that הִתְרַעַה stem IV “to abstain from” was as rare as הִתְרַעַה stem II “to make friends” was common. Even if Luke had had access to our current Hebrew lexicons they would have been of no help with this *hapax legomenon*. The notorious ambiguity of Hebrew homographs can be blamed for Luke’s first misreading of what he saw in his unpointed Hebrew source.

This appeal to an Arabic cognate to establish the existence of  $\text{רָעָה}$  stem IV “to abstain” in Jesus’ vocabulary receives indirect support from the way in which the Arabic *صدقة* (*ṣadaqat*) “alms, charity” (Lane 1872 1668) matches the use of  $\text{צַדָקָה}$  “alms, charity” in Hebrew (Jastrow 1903: 1264). In the Shem Tob *Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*  $\text{צַדָקָה}$  translates the  $\epsilon\lambda\eta\mu\sigma\acute{o}\sigma\upsilon\eta$  “alms” in Matt 6:1–4, which matches the Arabic *صدقة* (*ṣadaqat*) “alms.” The opposite of  $\text{מִזְמוֹן עוֹל}$  “unrighteous wealth” would be  $\text{מִזְמוֹן צַדָק}$  “honest wealth.” Changing the masculine  $\text{צַדָק}$  into the feminine changes the phrase into  $\text{מִזְמוֹן צַדָקָה}$  “mammon of charity,” with the  $\text{צַדָקָה}$  meaning “liberality,” especially with reference to alms and almsgiving.<sup>10</sup>

Luke’s second misreading involved Jesus’ use of  $\text{עִזַּב}$  stem I “to forsake, to abandon” which was a homograph  $\text{עִזַּב}$  stem II “to restore, to renew.”<sup>11</sup> The translators of the Septuagint and Vulgate were unaware of  $\text{עִזַּב}$  stem II—just as Luke was unaware of  $\text{רָעָה}$  stem IV, “to abstain.” In the MT of Neh 3:8 is the phrase  $\text{וַיַּעֲזְבוּ יְרוּשָׁלַם}$  meaning “they restored Jerusalem,” which is the translation found in the NIV, NIB, NAS, NAU, NAB, and RSV, with the KJV, NKJ, and ASV having “they fortified Jerusalem.” However, the Septuagint (contrary to historical fact) reads  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\ \kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\iota\pi\omicron\nu\ \text{I}\epsilon\rho\upsilon\sigma\alpha\lambda\eta\mu$  “and they abandoned Jerusalem.” Similarly, the Vulgate reads *et dimiserunt Hierusalem*, which became “and they left Jerusalem” in the Douay Rheims. Jastrow (1903: 1060–1061) does not cite this *hapax legomenon*  $\text{עִזַּב}$  stem II in Neh 3:8, although it was cited by Castell (1669: 2714) and defined by him as *erexerunt, instaurarunt, roborarunt* (erect, restore, reinforce).

But Luke's second misreading had nothing to do with עזב stem I and עזב stem II. Rather it was his misreading in the *Vorlage* the *Niph<sup>c</sup>al* passive יעזב (= יעֲזֹב) "it will be forsaken" as the *Qal* active יעֲזֹב "it will fail" (= ἐκλίπη). Either way, the subject of the verb was the *unrighteous mammon* from which the children of light must abstain.<sup>12</sup>

With Luke's two misreadings now identified, the *Vorlage*,

וכאשר יעזב אז יקבלו אתכם  
אל משכנות עולם<sup>13</sup>

in 16:9b can be translated as "and when [the unrighteous mammon] is forsaken they will welcome you into the eternal tents."

Thus, in Luke 16:9 according to a Hebrew *Vorlage*, Jesus probably said:

*"But I say unto you 'Abstain/restrain yourselves  
from unrighteous mammon!  
And when it is forsaken/abandoned  
they will welcome you into the eternal dwellings."*

These words echo the admonition in I Enoch 104:6, "Now fear not, righteous ones, when you see the sinners waxing strong and prospering; do not be partners with them, but keep far away from all their injustice." The Greek text of Luke 16:9—under the influence רָעָה stem II "to make a friend"—has Jesus repudiating this admonition of I Enoch; whereas the *Vorlage* with its רָעָה stem IV "to abstain, refrain" has Jesus confirming the stated prohibitions.

Those who would *welcome* (δέξωμαι = קבל) those abstaining from unrighteous mammon would be heavenly angels such as those present at the empty tomb upon Jesus resurrection. I Enoch 104:1–2 provides a good commentary for this

identification.

I swear unto you that in heaven the angels will remember you for good before the glory of the Great One; and your names shall be written before the glory of the Great One. . . . But now you shall shine like the lights of heaven, and you shall be seen; and the windows of heaven shall be open to you.

### CONCLUSION

When Luke misread in a Hebrew *Vorlage* of the parable of the unjust steward the passive verb יְעֻזַב “it will be forsaken” as the active verb יְעֻזַב “it will fail” he compounded the problem of his having also misread in the same verse the verb התרעו as if it were from the well attested stem רעה “to be a friend” rather than the *hapax legomenon* of the verb רעה “to abstain.” As a result Jesus is quoted as saying enigmatically “*make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.*” Reconstructing the Hebrew *Vorlage* with these two corrections in mind the text probably read

וְאֵנִי אוֹמֵר לָכֶם הִתְרַעוּ מִן הַמָּמוֹן הָעוֹלָם  
וְכַאֲשֶׁר יְעֻזַב אֵז יִקְבְּלוּ אֶתְכֶם אֶל מְשְׁכַנּוֹת עוֹלָם:

“But I say unto you ‘Abstain yourselves

from unrighteous mammon!

And when it is forsaken

they will welcome you into the eternal dwellings.”

With this reconstruction and interpretation, Jesus’ application of the parable fits perfectly with Luke 16:10–13. The declaration “you cannot serve God and mammon” (οὐ δύνασθε θεῷ δουλεύειν καὶ μαμωνᾶ), read as an injunction, means

“Serve God! Master mammon!” The disciples as children of light are to *repudiate* the מַמּוֹן עוֹל “mammon of unrighteousness.” They are to control their מַמּוֹן צְדָקָה “legitimate wealth, their honest assets” so that their mammon becomes צְדָקָה “charitable resources for alms.” This interpretation resonates well with Matt 6:19–20, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” I Tim 6:9–11 would be an excellent application of this parable if its Hebrew *Vorlage* approximated what has been proposed above,

9 . . . those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs. 11 But as for you, man of God, shun all this; aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called.

### NOTES

1. See Chapter 30 and Chapter 31 in *Clarifying Baffling Biblical Passages* at <http://tmcdaniel.palmerseminary.edu/>
2. Note how Fletcher reduced the τοῦ μαμωνᾶ τῆς ἀδικίας “unrighteous mammon” to the one word “money.” See below pp. 6–8.
3. Kissinger in his *Parables of Jesus* (1979: 398–408) provided a bibliography of one hundred thirty-three titles dealing



directly with just this parable. Ireland has provided the best summary of the varied interpretation in his book entitled *Stewardship and the Kingdom of God: An Historical, Exegetical, and Contextual Study of the Parable of the Unjust Steward in Luke 16:1-13* (Supplements to Novum Testamentum v. 70; Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1992.) He reviewed one hundred fifty studies in preparation for his publication.

4. The Salkinson-Ginsburg translation reads:

וַיִּשְׁבַּח הָאָדוֹן אֶת-בֶּן-הָעוֹלָה אֶת-הַסֵּכֵן  
 אֲשֶׁר שָׂבַל אֶת-מַעֲשָׂהוּ  
 כִּי בָנֵי הָעוֹלָם הֵזָה מְשֻׁכְּלִים הֵם  
 מֵעַל בְּנֵי הָאוֹר בְּדַרְתָּם:

Full text online at [http://dvar-adonai.org/hnt/He\\_pdf/US/HNT.he.US.pdf](http://dvar-adonai.org/hnt/He_pdf/US/HNT.he.US.pdf) .

5. The Delitzsch translation has:

וַיִּשְׁבַּח הָאָדוֹן אֶת-סֵכֵן הָעוֹלָה  
 עַל-אֲשֶׁר הָעֵרִים לַעֲשׂוֹת  
 כִּי בָנֵי הָעוֹלָם הֵזָה עָרוּמִים הֵם בְּדוֹרָם  
 מִבְּנֵי הָאוֹר:

Full text online at <http://www.kirjasilta.net/ha-berit/Luq.16.html>.

6. The imperative הַתְּרַעו can be vocalized in two different ways:

- as הַתְּרַעוּ, with the short *pataḥ* under the ר because the

following ׀ cannot take the *dagesh* which doubles the middle letter of the stem in the *Hithpa<sup>c</sup>el*. (the ׀ of this הִתְרַעֵו would have what the grammarians call an “implicit *dagesh*,” with the *pataḥ* being in a theoretically closed syllable);

- as הִתְרַעֵו, with the long *qameṣ* under the ר for *compensatory lengthening* of the vowel because the following ׀ cannot take the *dagesh* and the vowel under the ר is in an open syllable.

The quantitative length of the vowel in speech (*ā*, *a*, or *ā*) would preclude any ambiguity about the meaning; but once the words were written without vowels unintentional ambiguity was inevitable.

7. Sometimes the verb רָעָה stem I “to be evil, bad,” was confused with the verb רָעָה stem II, as in Prov 18:24, where the MT אִישׁ רַעִים לְהִתְרַעֵעַ became in the KJV “A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly“ (as though the text were the *Hithpa<sup>c</sup>el* infinitive הִתְרַעֵוּת of רָעָה stem II). But by identifying the לְהִתְרַעֵעַ as the *Hithpa<sup>c</sup>el* infinitive of רָעָה stem II “to break” the ASV reads “He that maketh many friends *doeth it* to his own destruction.” The NIV and NIB read similarly, “A man of many companions may come to ruin.”

8. On the relationship of the ל"ו verbs to the ל"ה verbs, see GKC §75<sup>a</sup>.

9. Howard 1995: 22–23.

10. Note that in Arabic *صداقة* (*ṣadâqat*) means “love, affection” and *صديق* (*ṣadîq*) means “a sincere and true friend” (Lane 1872:1668).

11. Compare the difference of the English word *refrain* when it is a noun and when it is a verb.

12. In the Septuagint *λείπειν* translated just two Hebrew words, but *ἐκλείπειν* translated forty-seven different Hebrew words, and *ἐγκαταλείπειν* translated fifteen different words. Given these options for constructing the *Vorlage*, the root **עזב** became the verb of choice in light of the **עֲזַבְתָּ** “was abandoned” (= *ἐγκατελείφθη*) in Jer 4:29 and the **יֵעֲזַב** “it will cease” (= *ἐκλείψουσιν*) in Jer 18:14.

13. The Delitzsch translation of Luke 16:9b reads

וְגַם־אֲנִי אֹמֵר לָכֶם קְנוּ לָכֶם אֲהָבִים  
 בְּמִמּוֹנָה שֶׁל־עוֹלָה  
 לְמַעַן יֶאֱסְפוּ אֶתְכֶם בְּעֵת כְּלִתּוֹ אֶל־מִשְׁכַּנּוֹת עוֹלָם:

The Salkinson-Ginsburg translation of the same text has

וְאֵף־אֲנִי אֹמֵר לָכֶם קְנוּ לָכֶם אֲהָבִים  
 בְּכֶסֶף מִקּוֹר הָעוֹלָה  
 וְכִאֲשֶׁר יִבֹּא עַד־קִצּוֹ אִזּוֹ יֶאֱסְפוּ אֶתְכֶם  
 אֶל־מִשְׁכַּנּוֹת עוֹלָם:

See notes 4 and 5 for the internet addresses for the full text of these translations online.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beavis, Mary Ann. 1992. "Ancient Slavery as an Interpretive Context for the New Testament Servant Parables with Special Reference to the Unjust steward (Luke 16:1–8)." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111: 37–54.
- Brown, F., and S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, editors. 1891. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 2nd ed. 1906; reprint 1962 Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Castell, Edmund. 1669. *Lexicon Heptaglotton. Hebraicum, Chaldaicum, Syricum, Samaritanicum, Æthiopicum, Arabicum, et Persicum Separatim*. 2 volumes. London: Thomas Roycroft.
- Delitzsch, Franz. 1888. *Hebrew New Testament: Sifre haBerit hahadashah, ne'takim mileschon Yavan lileshon 'Ivrit*. Berlin: *Hevrat mefike kitve hakodesh beBritanya*.
- De Silva, David A. 1993. "The Parable of the Prudent Steward and Its Lucan Context." *Criswell Theological Review* 6:255–268.
- Derrett, J. D. M. 1961. "Fresh Light on Luke XVI: The Parable of the Unjust Steward," *New Testament Studies* 7 (1961) 198–219.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. 1964. The Story of the Dishonest Manager (Lk 16:1–13). *Theological Studies* 25: 23–42.
- Fitzmyer, Joseph A. 1985. *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. Anchor Bible 28A. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Fletcher, Donald R. 1963. "Riddle of the Unjust Steward : Is Irony the Key?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 82: 15–30.
- Gächter, Paul. 1950 "Parable of the Dishonest Steward after Oriental Conceptions." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 12:

121–131.

Hauck, F. 1964. “μᾶνονᾶς.” In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Gerhard Kittel, editor. Volume IV: 388–390. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Hiers, Richard H. 1970. “Friends by unrighteous mammon : the eschatological proletariat (Luke 16:9).” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 38: 30–36.

Howard, George. 1987. *The Gospel of Matthew according to a Primitive Hebrew Text*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press. Revised 1995. *The Hebrew Gospel of Matthew*. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press.

Ireland, Dennis J. 1989. “A History of Recent Interpretation of the Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13),” *Westminster Theological Journal* 51 (1989) 293-318.

Ireland, Dennis J. 1992. *Stewardship and the Kingdom of God: An Historical, Exegetical, and Contextual Study of the Parable of the Unjust Steward in Luke 16:1-13*. Supplements to *Novum Testamentum* v. 70. Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1992.

Jastrow, M. 1903. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and the Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*. London: Luzac; New York: G. P. Putnam.

Jeremias, Joachim. 1963. *The Parables of Jesus*. S. H. Hooke, translator. New York: Scribner.

Kautzsch, E., editor. 1910. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Tr. A. E. Cowley. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Second edition. Reprint 1974. (Cited as GKC.)

Kissinger, Warren. 1979. *The Parables of Jesus: A History of Interpretation and Bibliography*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press and American Theological Library Association.

- Koehler, L. and W. Baumgartner. 1994. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Revised by W. Baumgartner, J. Stamm; translated and edited by M. E. J. Richardson, G. J. Jongeling-Vos, and L. J. DeRegt. Leiden: Brill. (Cited as KBS.)
- Lamsa, George. 1933. *The Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts Containing the Old and New Testaments from the Peshitta, The Authorized Bible of the Church of the East*. Philadelphia: A. J. Holman, 1933, 16<sup>th</sup> edition, 1967.
- Landry, David and Ben May. 2000. "Honor Restored: New Light on the Parable of the Prudent Steward (Luke 16:1–8a)." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119: 287–309.
- Lane, E. W. 1863–1893. *Arabic-English Lexicon*. 8 volumes. Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate. Reprinted 1956. New York: Unger.
- Liddell, H. G., and R. Scott. 1940. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. New (ninth) edition revised and augmented by Sir Henry S. Jones and Roderick McKenzie. *Supplement* 1968, edited by E. A. Barber, P. Maas, M. Scheller, and M. L. West. Oxford: Clarendon Press. Reprint 1957.
- Mann, C. S. 1992. "Unjust Steward or Prudent Manager." *Expository Times* 102: 234–235.
- Mathewson, David. 1995. "The Parable of the Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1-13): A Reexamination of the Traditional View in Light of Recent Challenges." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 38: 29–38.
- McDaniel, T. F. 2003. *Clarifying Baffling Biblical Passages*. <http://tmcdaniel.palmerseminary.edu/cbbp-book.pdf>.
- Parrott, D. M. 1991. "The Dishonest Steward (Luke 16:1–8a) and Luke's Special Parable Collection." *New Testament Studies* 37:

499–515.

*Peshitta: The New Testament in Syriac*. 1955. London: The British and Foreign Bible Society.

Plummer, Alfred. 1953. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke*. ICC. First edition 1896. Reprint of the 1922 fifth edition. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

Rahlfs, Alfred. 1950. *Septuaginta id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*. 2 volumes. Fourth edition. Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt.

Salkinson, Isaac and David Ginsburg. 1922. *Hebrew New Testament: haBerit hahadashah: ha 'takah ·hadashah mi-leshon Yavan lelashon Ivrit*. London : Trinitarian Bible Society.

Sellew, Philip. 1992. "Interior Monologue as a Narrative Device in the Parables of Luke." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111: 239–253.

Topel, L John. 1975. "On the Injustice of the Unjust Steward: Lk 16:1–13." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 37: 216–227.

Wehr, H. 1979. *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. J. M. Cowan, editor. Weisbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

Williams, Francis E. 1964. "Is Almsgiving the Point of the 'Unjust Steward'?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 83: 293–297.

16 Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions." (A) 2 So he called him in and asked him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer." 3 The manager said to himself, "What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg." 4 I know what I will do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses." 5 So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, "How much do you owe my master?" Luke 16:6. measures: Or "bath" measures. The Greek word *batos* is equated with the Hebrew bath measure by some scholars. Based on jar fragments bearing the designation "bath" in ancient Hebrew characters, the capacity of the bath measure is reckoned at approximately 22 L (5.81 gal). See Glossary, "Bath," and App. B14. Luke 16:9. friends: That is, friends in heaven, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, the only ones who can receive others into "everlasting dwelling places." the unrighteous riches: Lit., "the mammon of the unrighteousness." The Greek word *ma·mo·nas* (of Semitic origin), traditionally translated "mammon," is generally understood to denote money or riches. (See study note on Mt 6:24.) Luke 9:16. Choose Book Choose Chapter Choose Verse. —. And he took the five cakes of bread and the two fishes and, looking up to heaven, he said words of blessing over them, and when they had been broken, he gave them to the disciples to give to the people. Common New Testament. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. Of unrighteousness - These words are an Hebrew expression for "unrighteous mammon," the noun being used for an adjective, as is common in the New Testament. The word "unrighteous," here, stands opposed to "the true riches" in Luke 16:11, and means "deceitful, false, not to be trusted." It has this meaning often. See 1 Timothy 6:17; Luke 12:33; Matthew 6:19; Matthew 19:21. Luke 16 "Money and Righteousness. A. The story of the dishonest steward. 1. (1-8) What the dishonest steward did. i. "Here are two men, and day after day there is not the space of twenty yards between them, yet a distance like the sea divides the two." (Morrison). ii. Hades is a Greek word, but it seems to carry much the same idea as Sheol, a Hebrew word with the idea of the "place of the dead." Sheol has no direct reference to either torment or eternal happiness. The idea of Sheol is often simply "the grave" and the understanding of the afterlife in the Old Testament is much less clear than in the New Testament. iii. Hades is technically not hell, or what is also known as the Lake of Fire. That place is called Gehenna, a Greek word borrowed from the Hebrew language.