

# SEEKING THE LOST

A Study of the Lord's Parables in Luke 15-16



Class 3    The Unjust Steward    Luke 16:1-15



# CLASS OUTLINE





I - The Literal Story

# CLASS OUTLINE






1 - The Literal Story

2 - Weighing Out Options

# CLASS OUTLINE

A wide-angle photograph of a desert landscape under a dark, overcast sky. The terrain is a mix of sandy dunes and rocky, eroded hills. In the middle ground, a caravan of camels is visible, moving across the desert. The overall color palette is muted, with shades of brown, tan, and grey.




1 - The Literal Story

2 - Weighing Out Options

3 - Matching Up the Symbols

# CLASS OUTLINE

A wide-angle photograph of a desert landscape. In the foreground, there are large, dark, angular rocks. The middle ground shows a sandy, undulating terrain with a caravan of camels moving across it. The background features a vast, flat desert plain under a clear, light blue sky. The overall scene is captured in a warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.



1 - The Literal Story

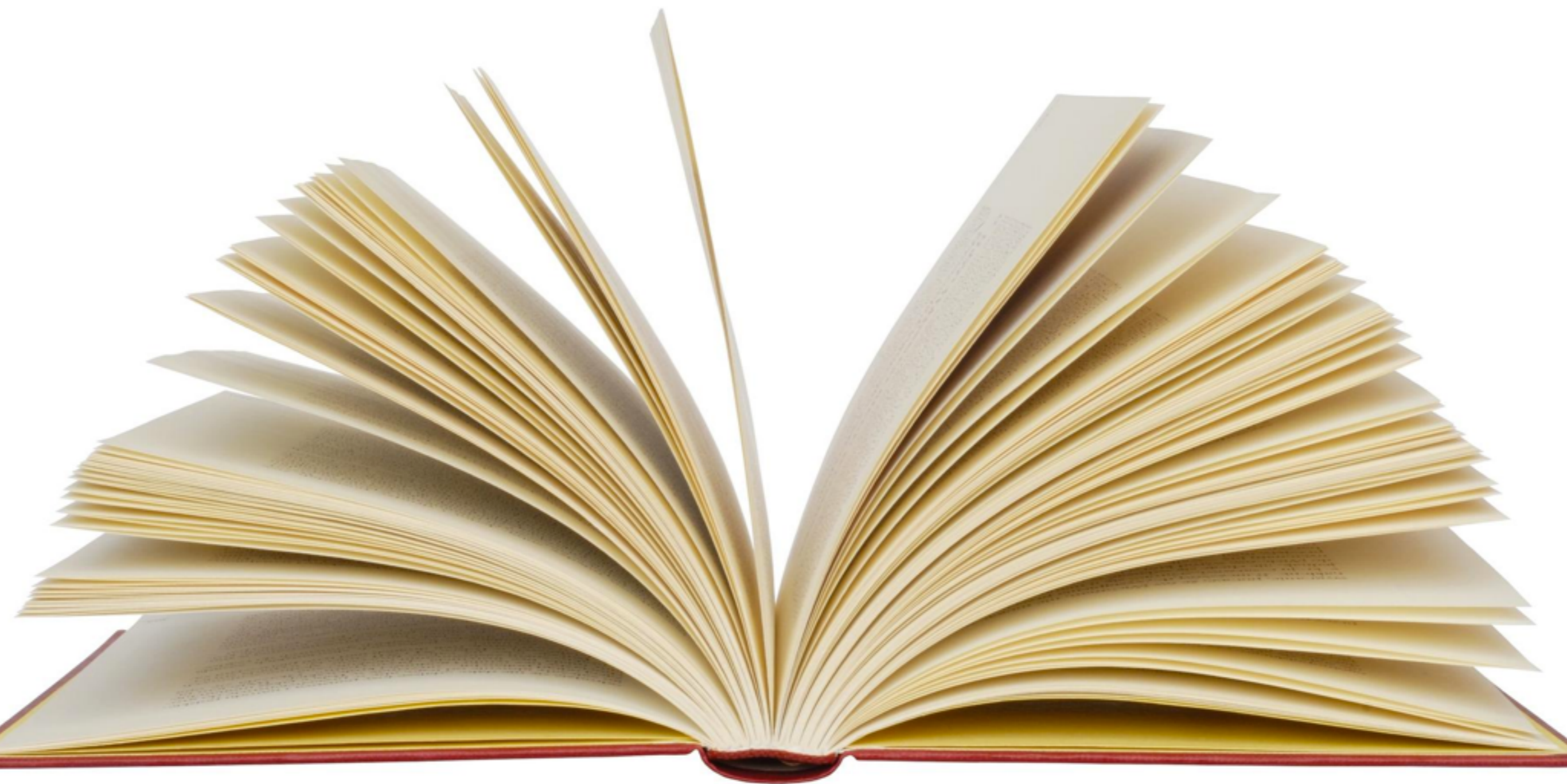
2 - Weighing Out Options

3 - Matching Up the Symbols

# CLASS OUTLINE

Goals: to see the connection of this parable to the parables of the lost and to realize the Lord's emphasis on the sinfulness of a particular group of people.

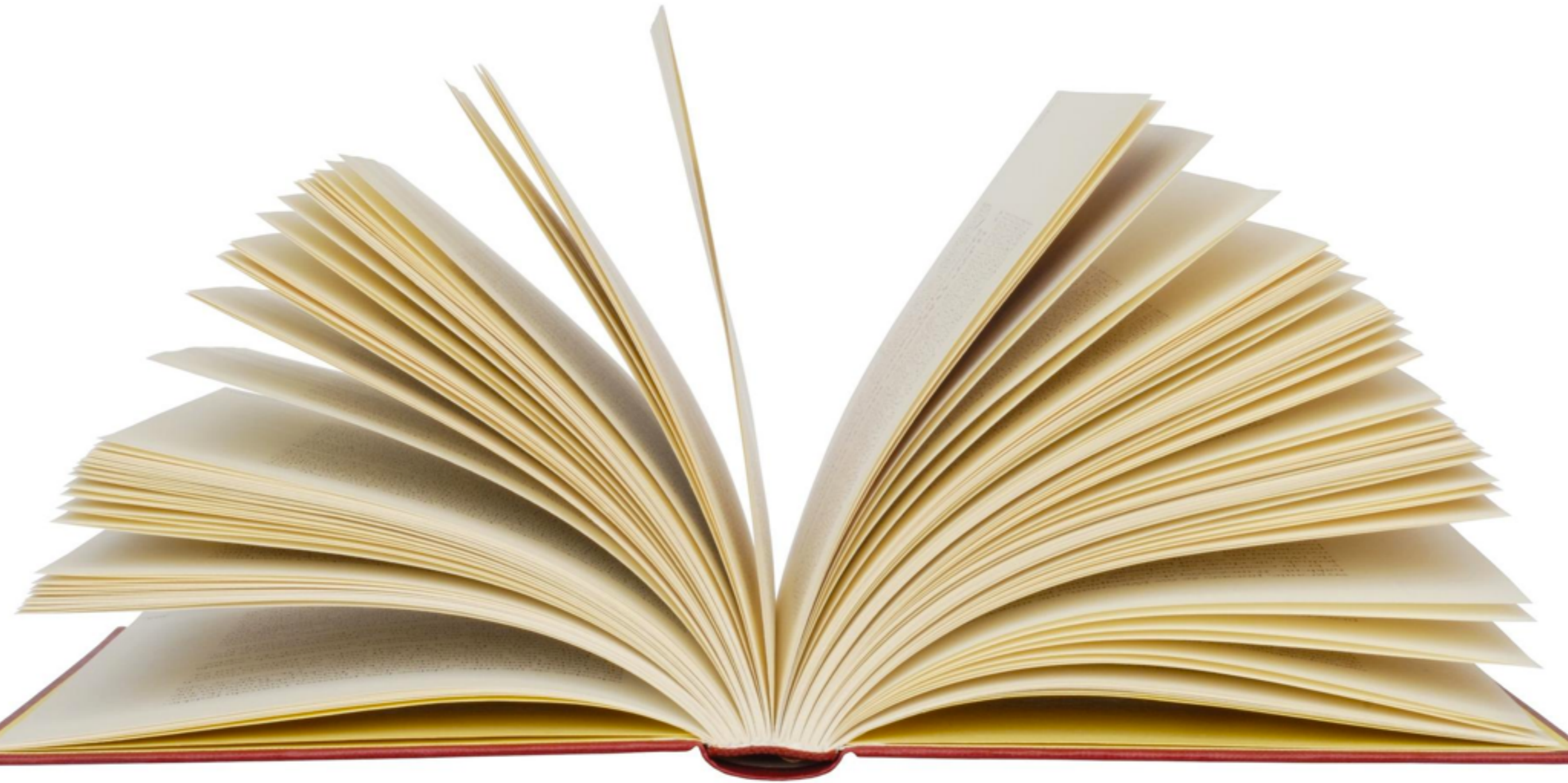




A CONTINUATION



Usually we classify *three* parables as the “parables of the lost”:

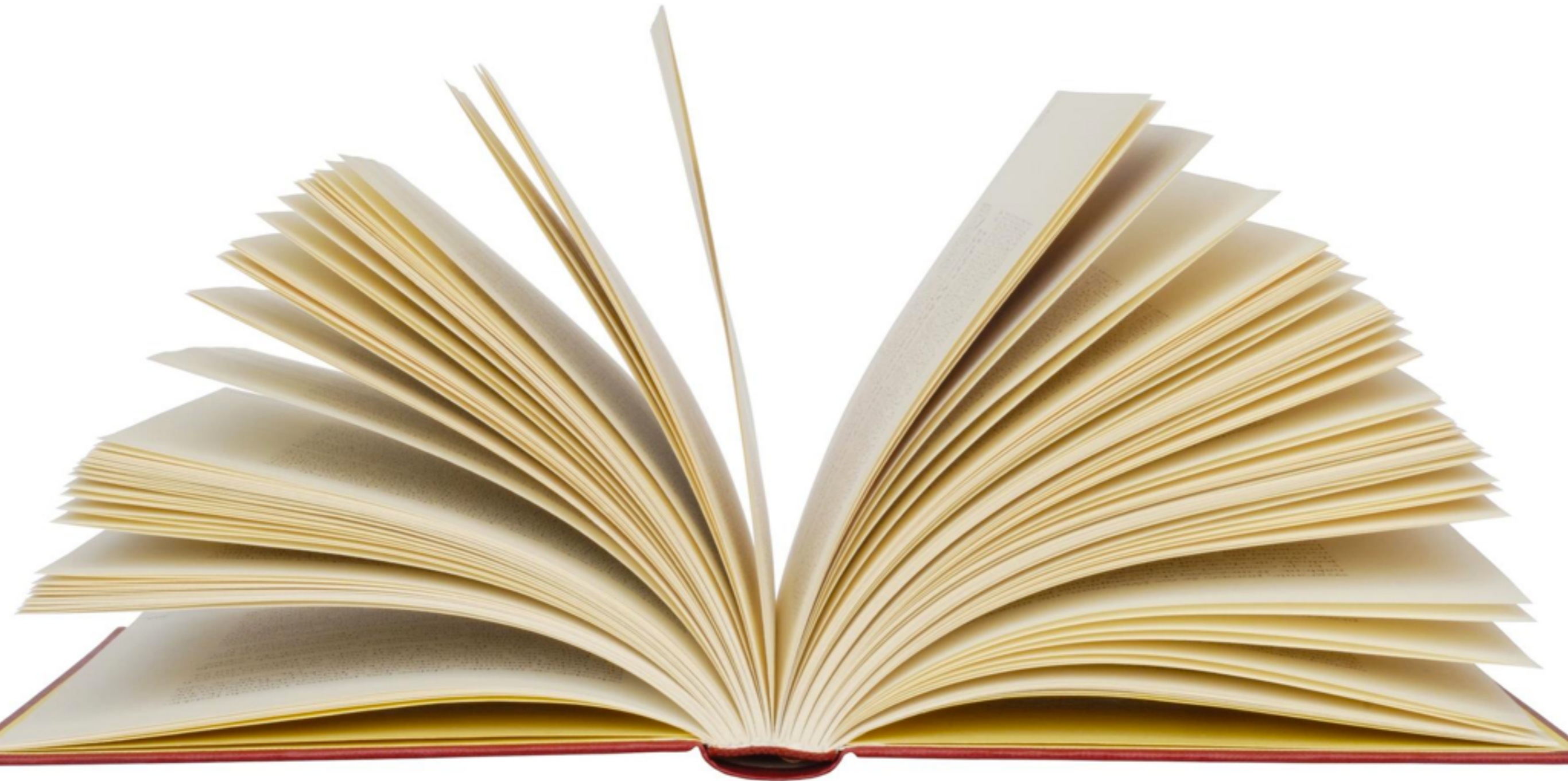


A CONTINUATION



Usually we classify *three* parables as the “parables of the lost”:

I - the lost sheep



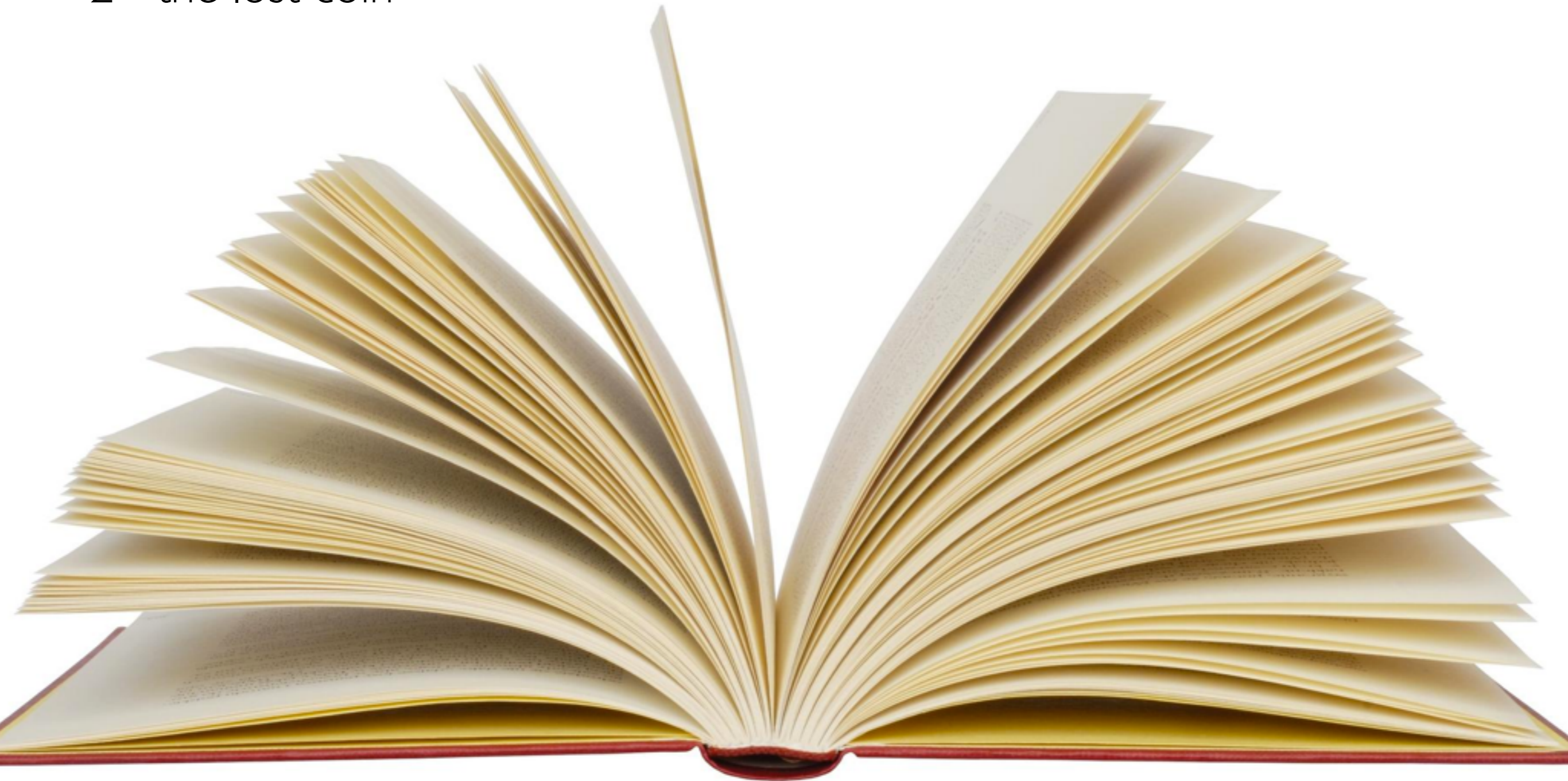
A CONTINUATION



Usually we classify *three* parables as the “parables of the lost”:

1 - the lost sheep

2 - the lost coin



A CONTINUATION

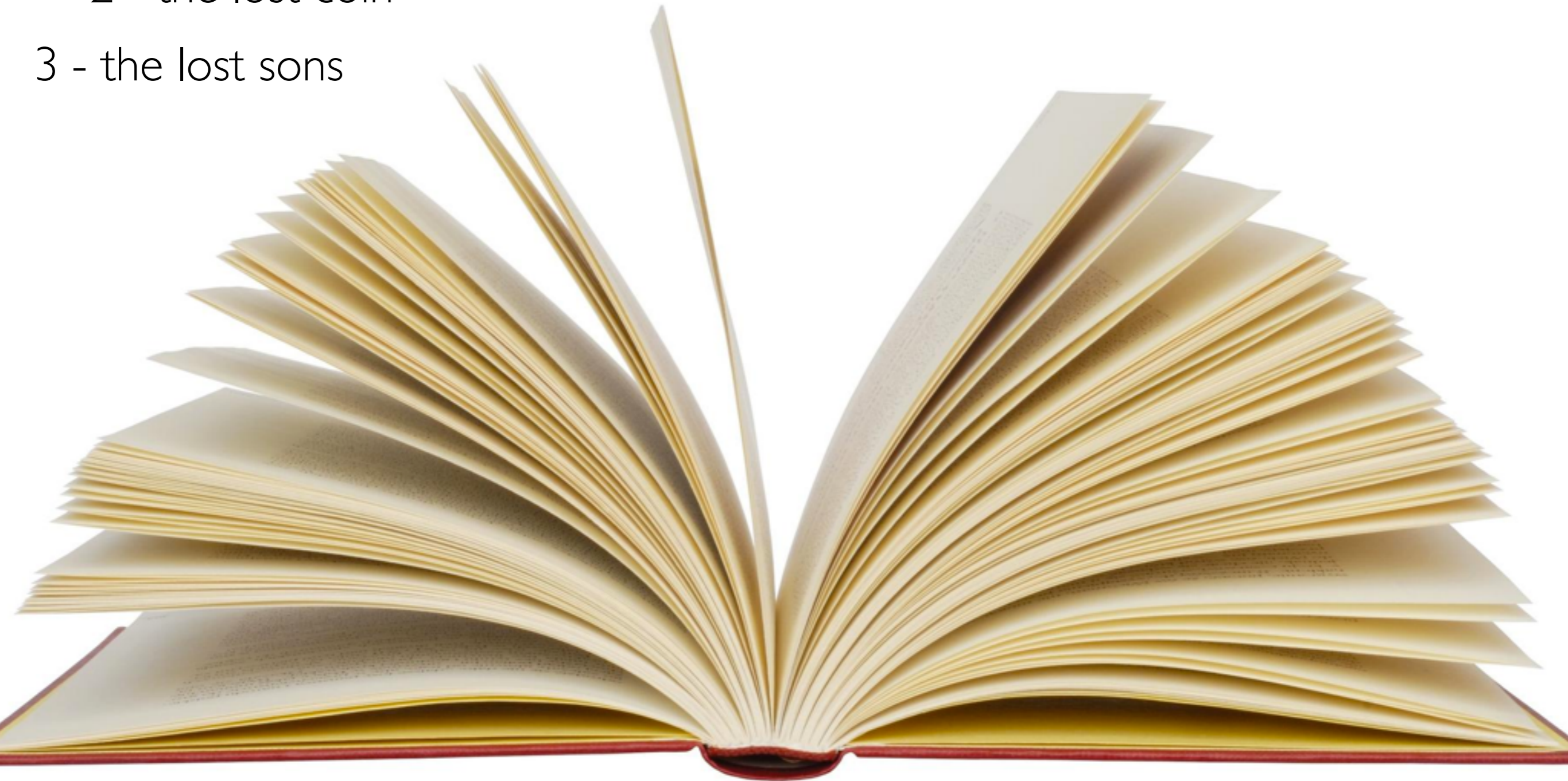


Usually we classify *three* parables as the “parables of the lost”:

1 - the lost sheep

2 - the lost coin

3 - the lost sons



A CONTINUATION

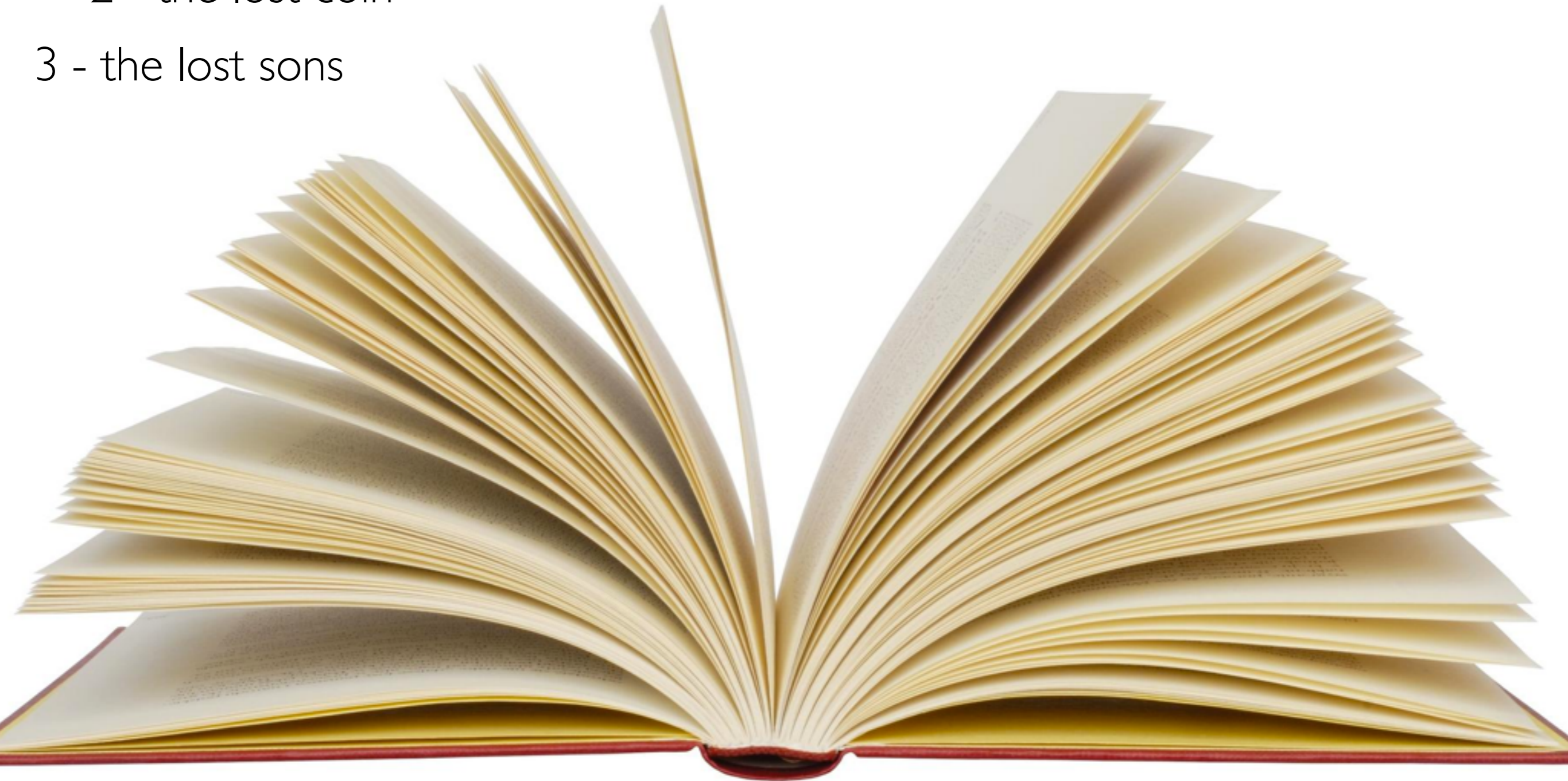


Usually we classify *three* parables as the “parables of the lost”:

1 - the lost sheep      However, it would appear as though there are more.

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Usually we classify *three* parables as the “parables of the lost”:

1 - the lost sheep      However, it would appear as though there are more.

2 - the lost coin

3 - the lost sons

Luke 15:32

It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

# A CONTINUATION



Usually we classify *three* parables as the “parables of the lost”:

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Luke 16:1

And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

# A CONTINUATION



Usually we classify *three* parables as the “parables of the lost”:

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2 - the lost coin

3 - the lost sons

Luke 15:32

It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother

After the parable of the unjust steward, the Lord continued.



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And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

# A CONTINUATION



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Luke 15:32

Luke 16:19

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

Luke 16:1

And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

A CONTINUATION



Usually we classify *three* parables as the “parables of the lost”:

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Put together, there appears to be *five* parables of the lost:

2 - the lost coin

3 - the lost sons  
1 - the lost sheep

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It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.



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And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

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3 - the lost sons

4 - the unjust steward  
It was meant that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.



Luke 16:1

And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

# A CONTINUATION



Usually we classify *three* parables as the “parables of the lost”:

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3 - the lost sons

4 - the unjust steward

5 - the rich man and Lazarus

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In our next two classes, we'll examine the last two parables.

Luke 16:1

And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

A CONTINUATION



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↓

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In our next two classes, we'll examine the last two parables.

And, we'll try to understand *what was lost* in both of them.

A CONTINUATION

A photograph of a cluttered desk in an office. In the background, a computer monitor displays a blue-toned image, and a keyboard is visible. The desk is covered with a large, messy pile of papers, some of which are yellowed and appear to be old documents. A white mug with the 'reStart' logo is on the left side of the desk. In the foreground, a blue mug is partially visible. The overall scene suggests a busy, perhaps disorganized, work environment.

A WASTEFUL STEWARD

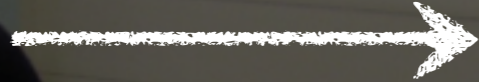


Luke 16:1

A WASTEFUL STEWARD



Luke 16:1

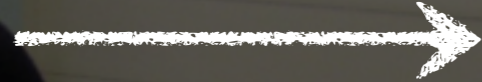


“wasted”

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD

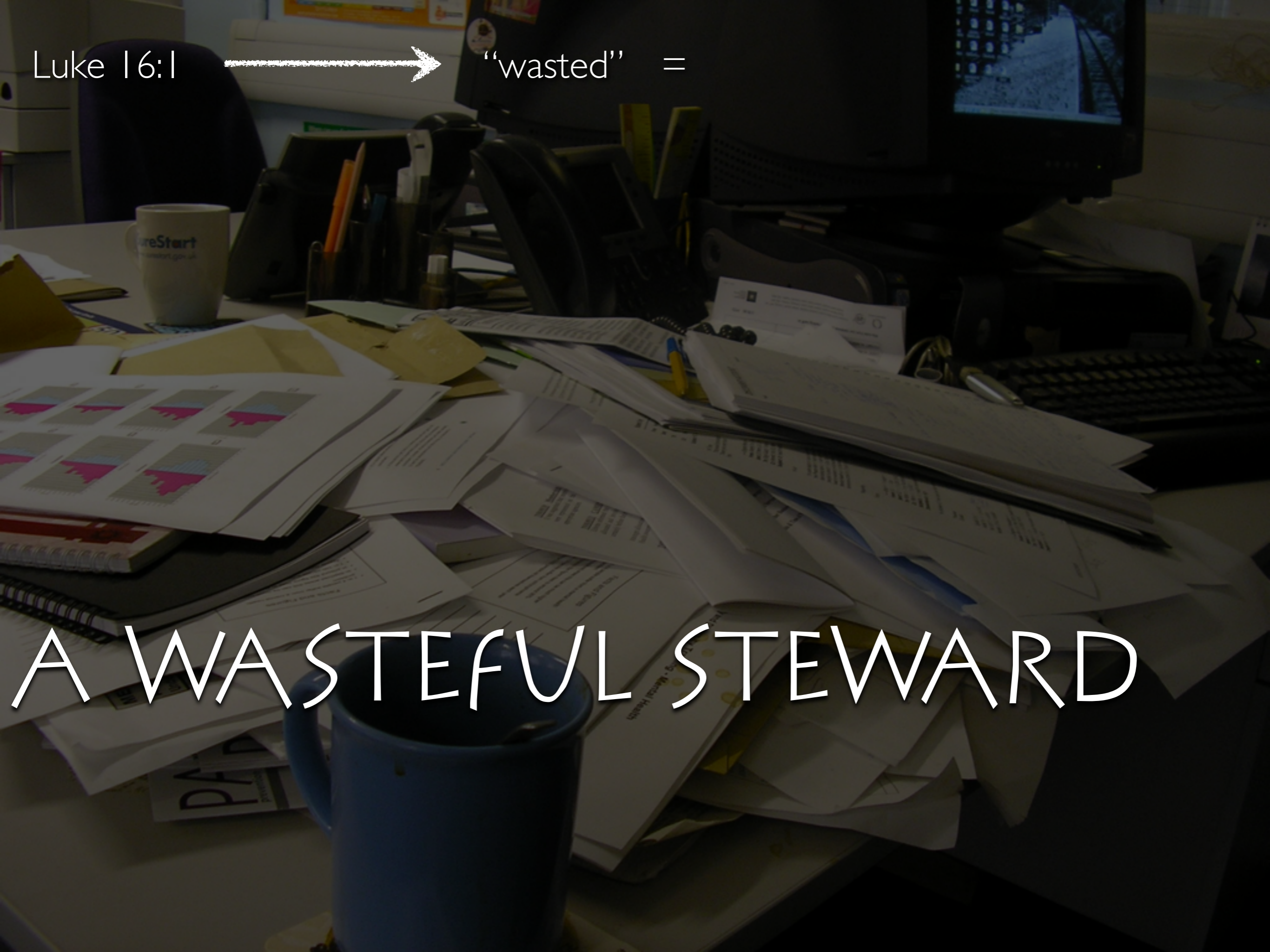


Luke 16:1



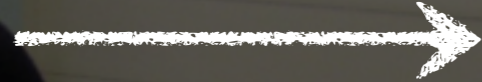
“wasted” =

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD





Luke 16:1

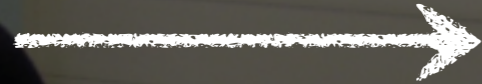


“wasted” = GI287

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD



Luke 16:1

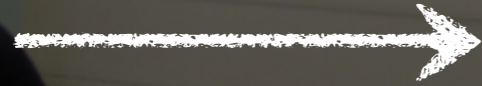


“wasted” = G1287 “to scatter abroad”

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD



Luke 16:1

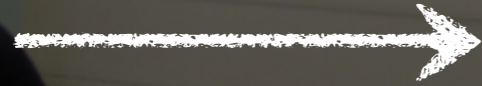


“wasted” = G1287 “to scatter abroad”  
the same term describes the prodigal son!

A WASTEFUL STEWARD



Luke 16:1



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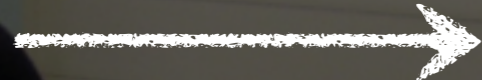
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Luke 16:2

A WASTEFUL STEWARD



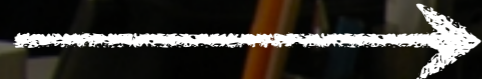
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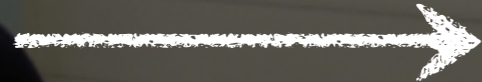


an opportunity to defend himself

A WASTEFUL STEWARD



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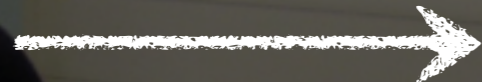
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Luke 16:3-4

A WASTEFUL STEWARD



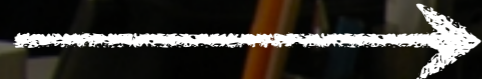
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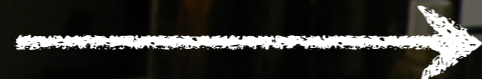
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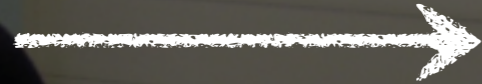


knew that he would lose his job!

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD



Luke 16:1



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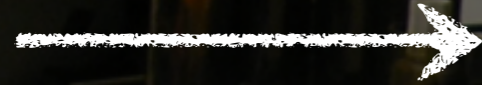
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Luke 16:2



an opportunity to defend himself

Luke 16:3-4



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So what would he do?

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD



Luke 16:1 → “wasted” = G1287 “to scatter abroad”  
the same term describes the prodigal son!

Luke 16:2 → an opportunity to defend himself

Luke 16:3-4 → knew that he would lose his job!

So what would he do?

Luke 16:3 ESV

And the manager said to himself, “What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD



Luke 16:1 → “wasted” = G1287 “to scatter abroad”  
the same term describes the prodigal son!

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So what would he do?

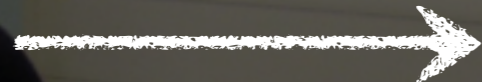
Luke 16:3 NASB

“The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg.’

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD



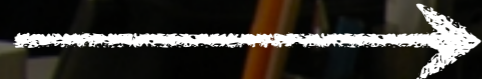
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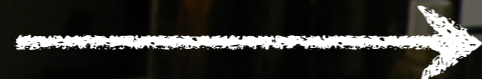
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an opportunity to defend himself

Luke 16:3-4



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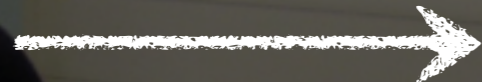
So what would he do?

Then, he had an idea—a deceitful idea, but it fit with his previous actions.

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD



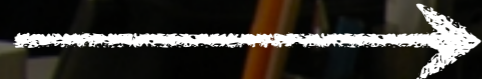
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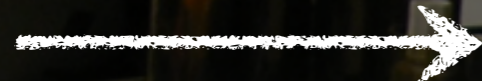
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Luke 16:3-4



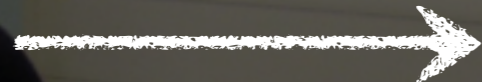
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Luke 16:5-7

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD



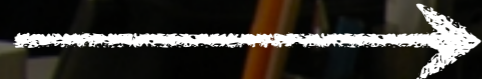
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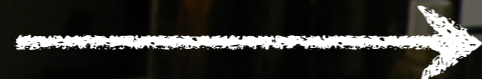
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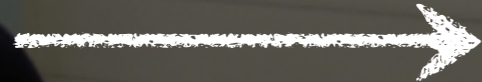


he lowered the accounts receivable

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD



Luke 16:1



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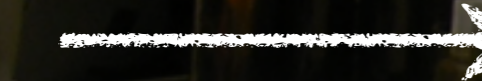
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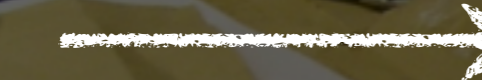
an opportunity to defend himself

Luke 16:3-4



knew that he would lose his job!

Luke 16:5-7



he lowered the accounts receivable

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD

Luke 16:6 NIV

“‘Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied.” The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.’”



Luke 16:1 → “wasted” = G1287 “to scatter abroad”  
the same term describes the prodigal son!

Luke 16:2 → an opportunity to defend himself

Luke 16:3-4 → knew that he would lose his job!

Luke 16:5-7 → he lowered the accounts receivable

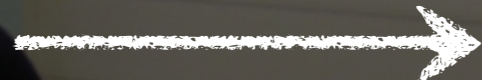
# A WASTEFUL STEWARD

Luke 16:7 NIV

“Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’” “A thousand bushels of wheat,” he replied. “He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’”



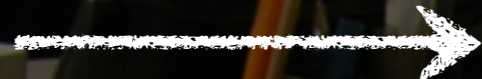
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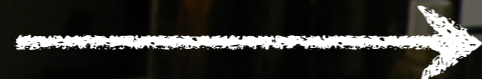
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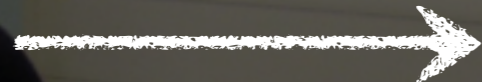
he lowered the accounts receivable

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD

The same amounts are confirmed by footnotes in the ESV, NASB, and NKJV.



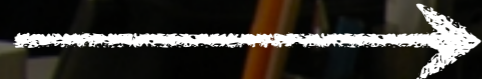
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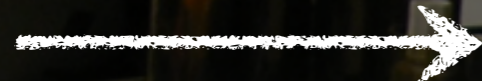
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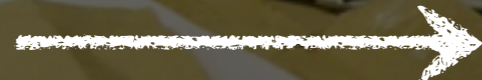
an opportunity to defend himself

Luke 16:3-4



knew that he would lose his job!

Luke 16:5-7



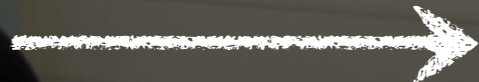
he lowered the accounts receivable

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD

A bushel is about *eight* dry gallons!



Luke 16:1



“wasted” = G1287 “to scatter abroad”

the same term describes the prodigal son!

Luke 16:2



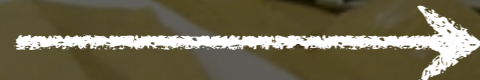
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he lowered the accounts receivable

“everyone of his lord’s debtors”

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“everyone of his lord’s debtors”

This was the kind of thing that could bring bankruptcy!

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD

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“everyone of his lord’s debtors”

This was the kind of thing that could bring bankruptcy!

But the steward didn’t seem to care—this was about him!

# A WASTEFUL STEWARD

A bushel is about *eight* dry gallons!



This man acted in a way that our God *hates*:

A WASTEFUL STEWARD

A blue mug sits on a desk cluttered with papers, a notebook, and other office supplies. The scene is dimly lit, with the mug and the text 'A WASTEFUL STEWARD' being the primary focus.



This man acted in a way that our God *hates*:

Proverbs 6:16-17

These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: a proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.

A WASTEFUL STEWARD

A blue mug sits on a desk cluttered with papers, a notebook, and other office supplies. The scene is dimly lit, with the mug and the text 'A WASTEFUL STEWARD' being the primary focus.



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“I am ashamed to beg” - v. 3 ESV

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*But he isn't.*

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Instead, he is *praised* by the rich man.

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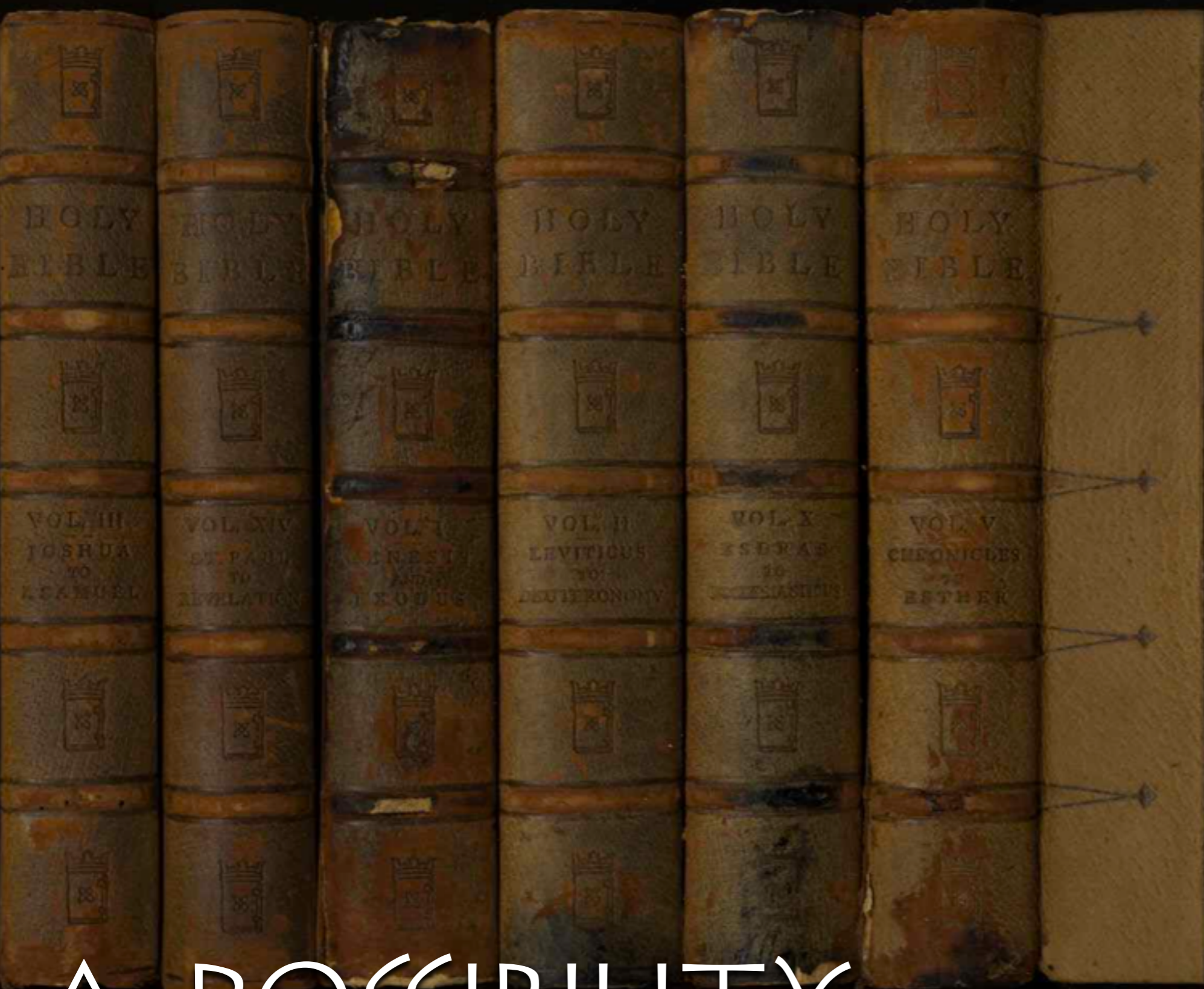
Christ wants his followers to be like the unjust steward.

Luke 16:9



But why would the Lord commend someone like this?

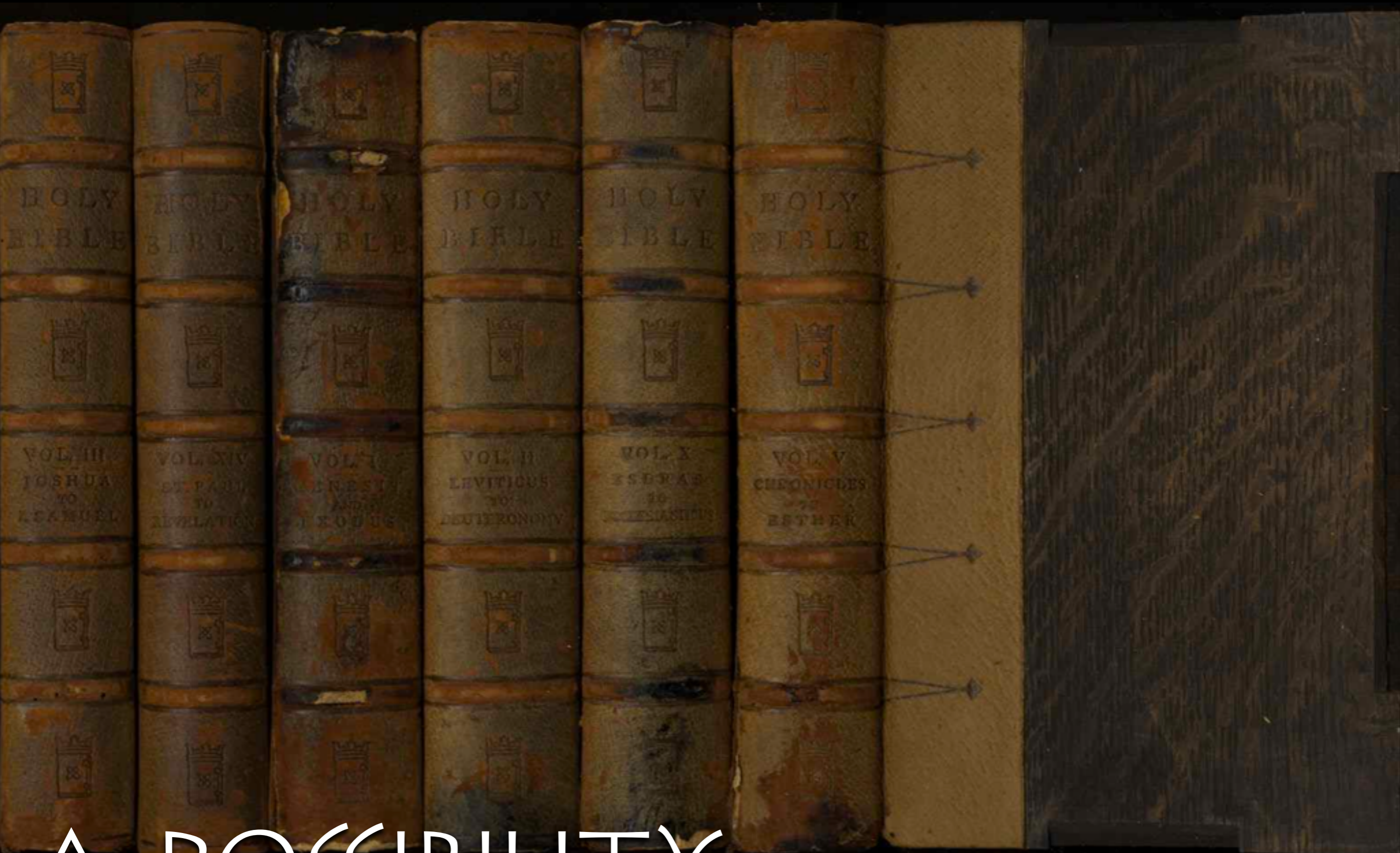




A POSSIBILITY



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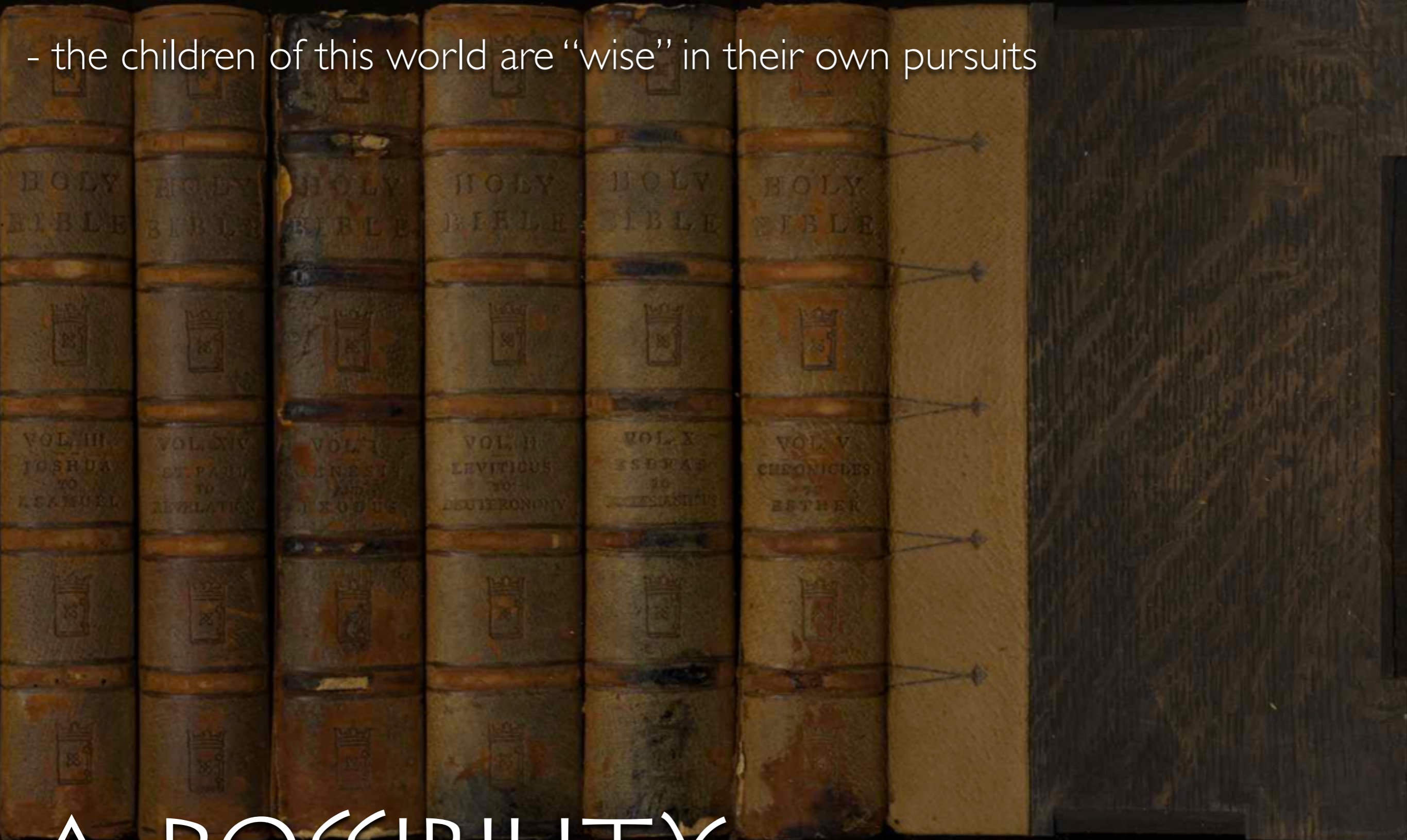


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- as well, the only ones who have control over “everlasting habitations” are God and the Lord Jesus
- thus, when Christ said “make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness,” he meant to use money in righteous way

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But, while they are Scriptural, are they actually principles that are supported by the parable?

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THINGS THAT DON'T FIT



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This happens with each of the different types of ground.

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Consider the parable of the sower:  
So who does the unjust steward represent?

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If he is an example to the believers, does he represent them?

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And if he does, then who is the rich man?

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If he is an example to the believers, does he represent them?

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Unfortunately, the traditional interpretation seems to understand this as of 'the wheat and the tares' more of a *fable* rather than a parable.





MORE PROBLEMS



I - How does the traditional interpretation fit with the context?

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1 - How does the traditional interpretation fit with the context?

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I Corinthians 3:18-20

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.



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So, then, what did all of this mean?

And who did this man represent?

3 - Would the Lord *really* commend the world for being “wise” or subtle?—like the serpent?

4 - At the end of the parable, the Lord explained the importance of *faithfulness or honesty* with the things we have been given.

Luke 16:10-11 → cp. Luke 19:17 “faithful in little”!



1 - How does the traditional interpretation fit with the context?  
Any interpretation should hinge on the context.

2 - While the Lord told his disciples to be “wise as serpents,” he also added that they should be “harmless as doves.”

...But the unjust steward wasn't. Instead, he was simply a *serpent*.

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But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?



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Matthew 23:32-33

Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Luke 16:10-11 → cp. Luke 19:17 “faithful in little”!



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4M

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# THIS MAN REPRESENTED THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES!

"I do I serve..."

do I serve..."

cp. Luke 19:17 'faithful in little'!





UNJUST STEWARDS



Consider how everything fits together.

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When the Lord Jesus came, these men were called to give an account.

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John 9:39-41

And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

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And yet, at the same time, they relaxed God’s requirements!

# UNJUST STEWARDS



Everything they did was for the appreciation of men, just like the steward.

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Matthew 23:5-7

But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

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“All things or persons consecrated (or vowed) for religious purposes became *corban* and fell to the sanctuary.” *Unger's Bible Dictionary*; ed. Harrison, Vos, Barber; “Corban”

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Mark 7:10-13     Matthew 19:3

Matthew 19:3 NKJV

The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

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Mark 7:10-13     Matthew 19:3

Matthew 19:3 NASB

Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?"

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But, if this man represents the scribes and the Pharisees, why is he commended?

And so, in certain cases, they relaxed God's standards.

Mark 7:10-13

Matthew 19:3

Matthew 19:9-10

UNJUST STEWARDS





COMMENDED?



But...was he *actually* commended?



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What about the apostle's words in 1 Corinthians?



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Remember what the Lord had been doing in his parables:

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# COMMENDED?

Remember what the Lord had been doing in his parables:

- 1 - They didn't realize that they were sinners.
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It's almost as though the parable is a *satire*.

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They fully believed that they were righteous.

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They were like a servant who *stole* from their master and who *destroyed* the whole system that he had set up!

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Thus, the parable actually ended with a *condemnation* of the steward.

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Luke 16:10-13

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# A POSSIBILITY





# A POSSIBILITY

The steward's lord





# A POSSIBILITY

The steward's lord =





# A POSSIBILITY

The background of the slide is a photograph of ancient stone ruins. In the foreground, there are several tall, weathered stone columns with decorative capitals. To the right, a stone doorway is visible, leading to another part of the ruins. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy clouds. The overall scene is well-lit, suggesting a sunny day.

The steward's lord = God



# A POSSIBILITY

The background of the slide is a photograph of ancient stone ruins. In the foreground, there are several tall, weathered stone columns with decorative capitals. To the right, there is a stone archway. The ground is paved with large, light-colored stone tiles. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy white clouds. The overall scene is well-lit, suggesting a sunny day.

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The steward



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# A POSSIBILITY

The background of the slide is a photograph of ancient stone ruins. It features several tall, weathered columns with decorative capitals, some of which are partially broken. In the center, there is a stone archway. The ground is paved with large, light-colored stone tiles. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy white clouds. The overall scene is one of historical grandeur and decay.

The steward's lord = God

The steward = scribes and Pharisees



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The steward = scribes and Pharisees

The debtors



# A POSSIBILITY

The background of the slide is a photograph of ancient stone ruins. It features several tall, weathered columns with decorative capitals, some standing and others partially broken. In the center, there is a stone archway. The ground is paved with large, light-colored stone tiles. The sky is a clear, bright blue with a few wispy white clouds. The overall scene is well-lit, suggesting a sunny day.

The steward's lord = God

The steward = scribes and Pharisees

The debtors =



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The steward = scribes and Pharisees

The debtors = the common Israelites



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The steward = scribes and Pharisees

The debtors = the common Israelites

The entire parable is a satire, showing the implausibility of the Pharisees' beliefs!



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The Lord's use of sarcasm:



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The Lord's use of sarcasm: Matthew 12:3



# A POSSIBILITY

The background of the slide is a photograph of ancient stone ruins, likely from a classical or Roman site. The scene features several large, weathered stone columns with decorative capitals, some of which are partially broken or missing. The ground is paved with large, light-colored stone tiles. In the distance, there are more stone structures and a glimpse of a palm tree under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day.

The steward's lord = God

The steward = scribes and Pharisees

The debtors = the common Israelites

The entire parable is a satire, showing the implausibility of the Pharisees' beliefs!

The Lord's use of sarcasm: Matthew 12:3 Matthew 23:31-32



# A POSSIBILITY

The steward's lord = God

The steward = scribes and Pharisees

The debtors = the common Israelites

The entire parable is a satire, showing the implausibility of the Pharisees' beliefs!

The Lord's use of sarcasm: Matthew 12:3 Matthew 23:31-32

And, when we view the parable in this way, many of the old issues disappear.



# A POSSIBILITY

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But even more, consider what happened immediately after this parable.

And, when we view the parable in this way, many of the old issues disappear.





IMMEDIATELY AFTER



Notice what happened *as soon* as the Lord finished:



IMMEDIATELY AFTER



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Luke 16:14



IMMEDIATELY AFTER



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Luke 16:14 → the Pharisees made fun of him!



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WHY?

IMMEDIATELY AFTER



Notice what happened *as soon* as the Lord finished:

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They were covetous...

IMMEDIATELY AFTER





Notice what happened *as soon* as the Lord finished:

Luke 16:14 → the Pharisees made fun of him!

They were covetous...

...and they realized that the parable *condemned* those who loved money!

IMMEDIATELY AFTER





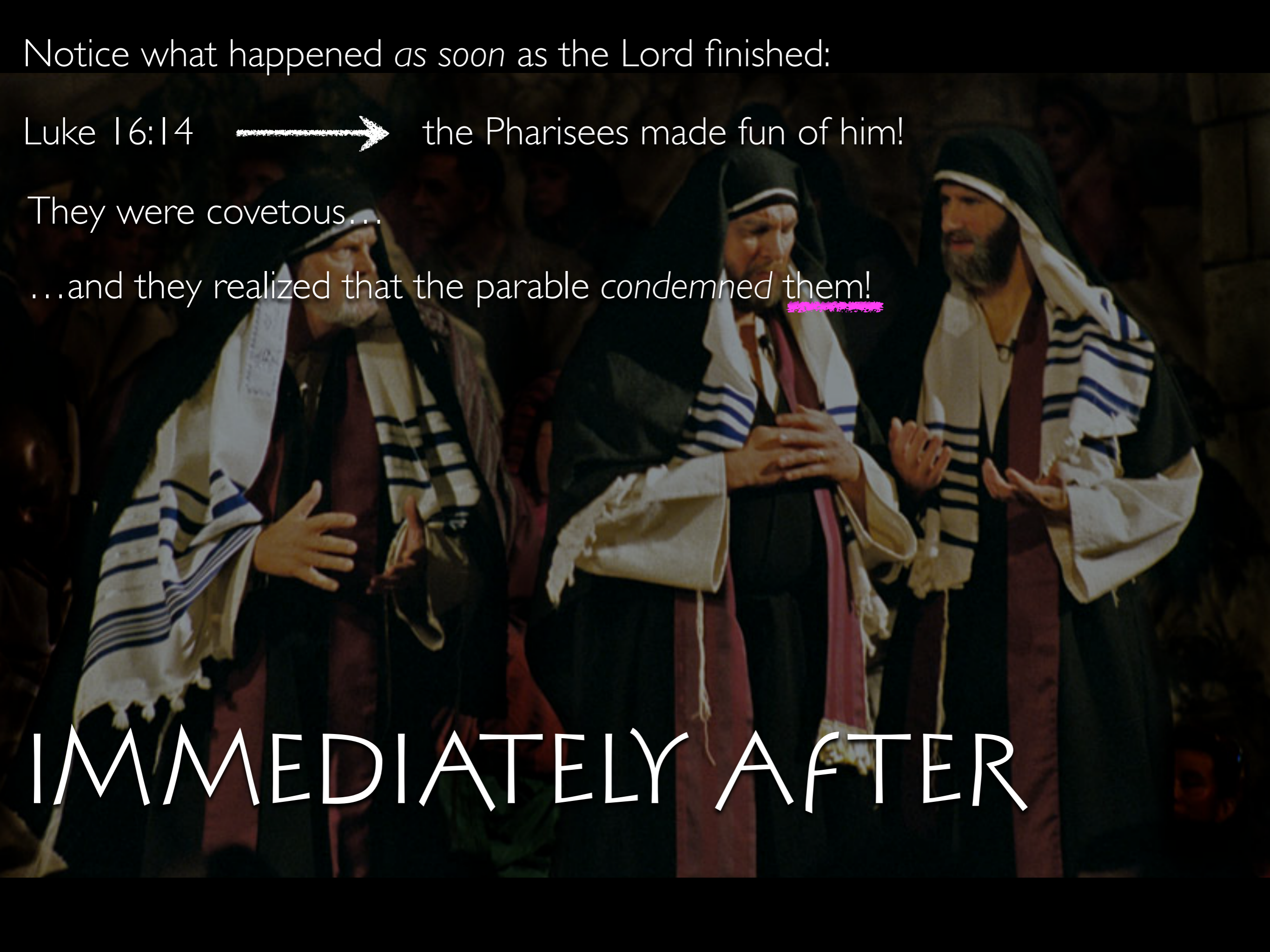
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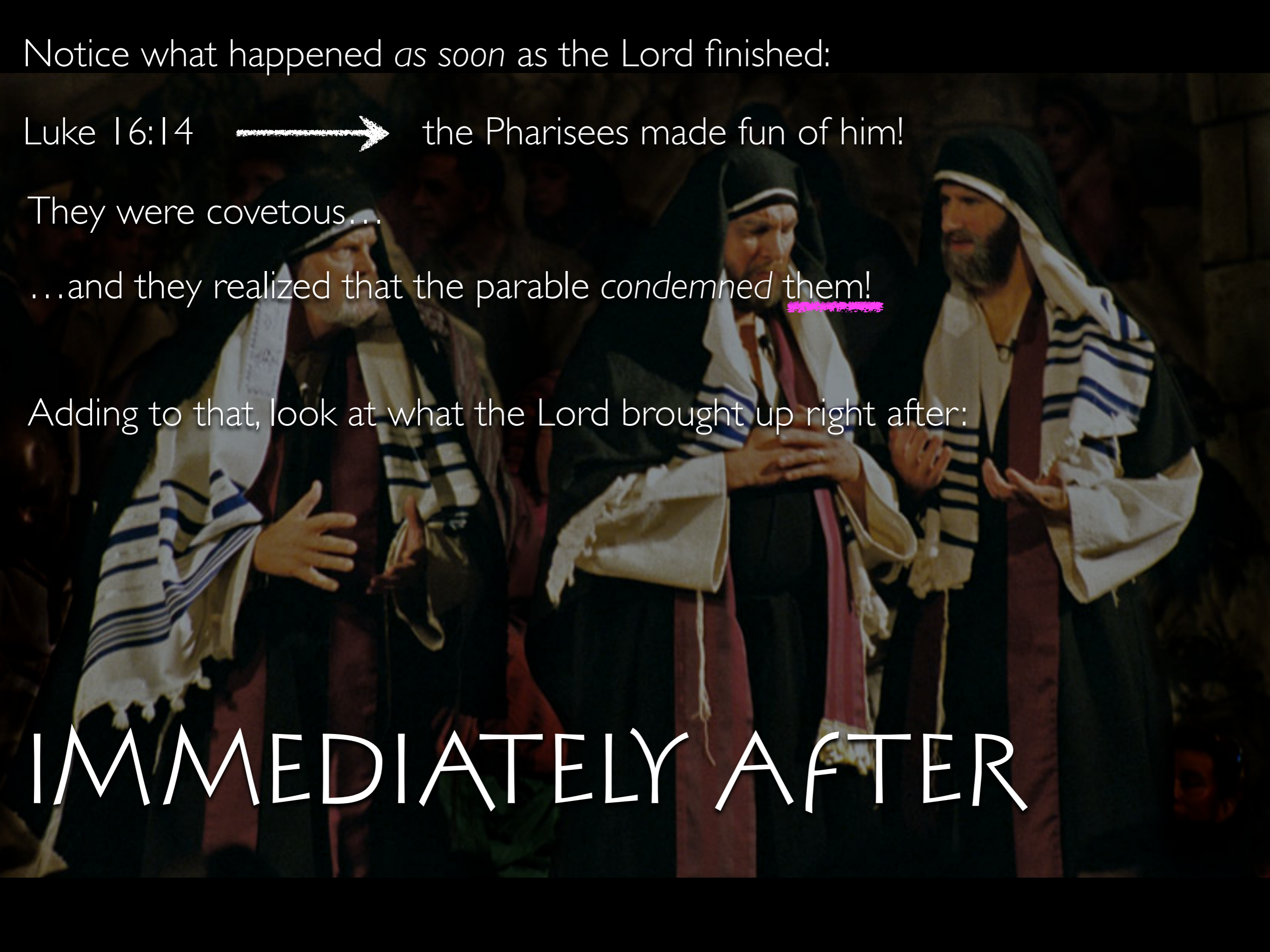
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Adding to that, look at what the Lord brought up right after:

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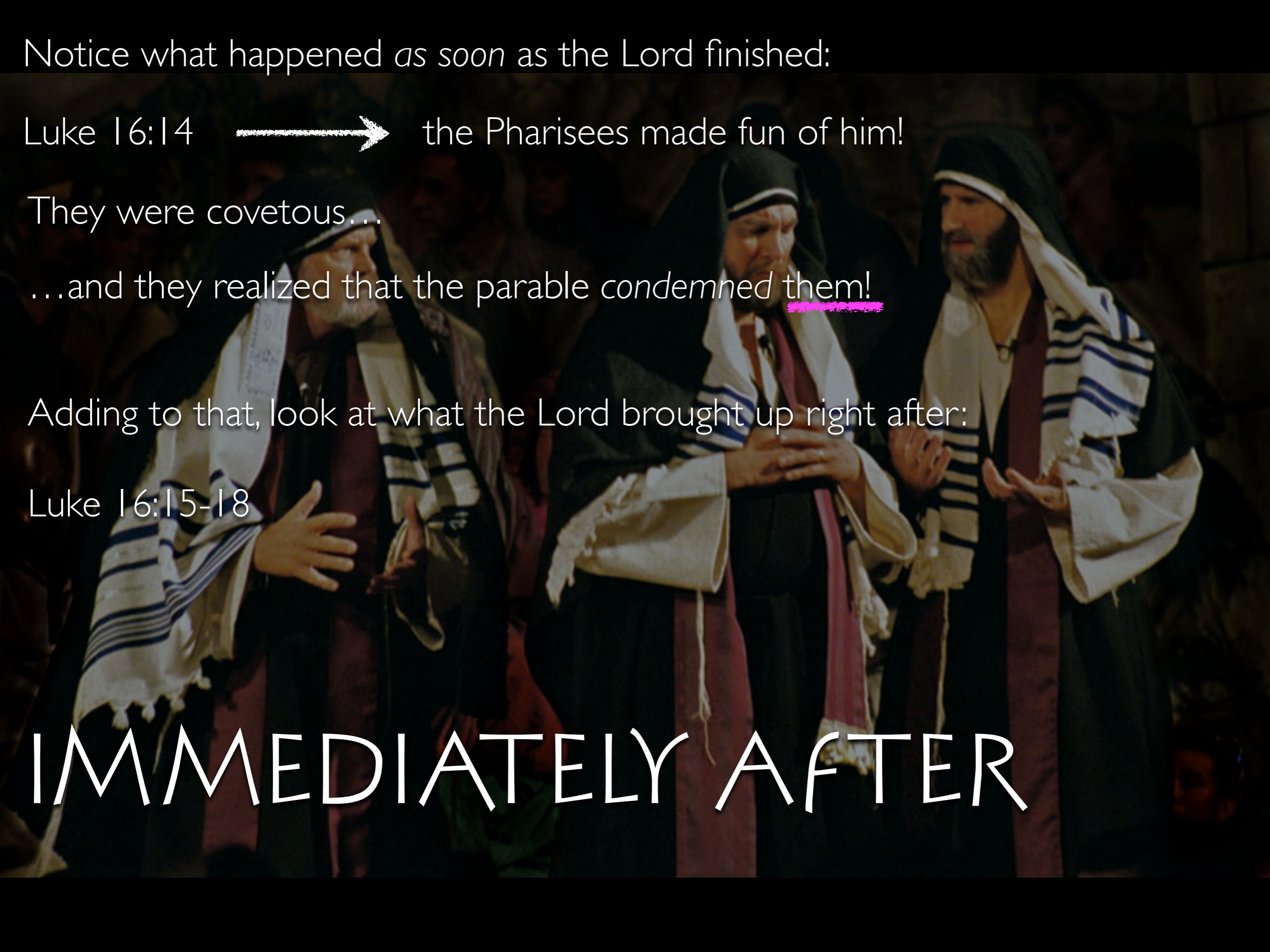
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and then he brought up divorce and remarriage!

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They began to realize that the parable targeted them!

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They began to realize that the parable targeted them!

Luke 16:15-18 → “justify yourselves before men”

And, the Lord gave a specific example of how they fit!

“than one tittle of the law to fail”  
and then he brought up divorce and remarriage!

IMMEDIATELY AFTER



A landscape photograph capturing a sunset over a vast, grassy field. The sun is positioned on the left side of the frame, partially obscured by a tree branch, creating a bright, golden glow that illuminates the scene. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds, and the mountains in the background are silhouetted against the bright light. The overall mood is serene and contemplative. The text "LOOKING WITHIN" is overlaid in the lower half of the image in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

LOOKING WITHIN



So, who was lost in this parable?

LOOKING WITHIN



So, who was lost in this parable?

Perhaps that's the real power that comes from this study.

LOOKING WITHIN





So, who was lost in this parable?

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When we consider "seeking the lost," we're often looking for people who have left.

LOOKING WITHIN





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# LOOKING WITHIN

But the Lord's words show us that sometimes it can be *us* who are lost.



So, who was lost in this parable?

Perhaps that's the real power that comes from this study.

WE NEVER GIVE UP.

When we consider “seeking the lost,” we’re often looking for people who have left.

LOOKING WITHIN

But the Lord’s words show us that sometimes it can be *us* who are lost.