

WHICH PRINCE SHOULD BE KING?

LESSON 180 → Luke 16:1-13

Gawain and Merek had raced before, but this time their competition centered on a critical question.



A covey of quail scurried to higher ground as the quiet of the afternoon was shattered by the two princes racing on foot over the meadow, yelling and shouting like children as they went. The winter sun chased them into the woods where their shouts ceased as the brothers slowed and each caught his breath.

“I beat you!”

“Yes,” gasped Gawain. “Yes, somehow you did, Merek. But next time it’ll be different, you wait and see!”

Giving his brother a good-natured thump on the back, Gawain headed back toward the castle and his brother followed. Halfway, they mounted their horses, which had been tethered at the side of the meadow, and their conversation turned to the coming evening.

“What do you think Father wants to talk to us about?”

“Merek, I feel that he knows he is not long for this world. As sick as he’s been the last three months, maybe . . . well, maybe he wants to make sure you’re ready.”

Merek stopped and looked at his brother, “You mean ready to be king, Gawain?”

“Of course, there are only the two of us, and you’re a few minutes older than I. That’s another race I didn’t win!” The two princes laughed and continued the short ride to the castle which was home to them.

After dinner that night their father called them to his private chambers in the west tower.

“Well, my sons, no doubt your young minds have been very busy today trying to determine what it is I wanted to talk to you about.” He paused and coughed deeply before continuing. “You’re not unaware that I have been very sick, so sick in fact that I feel it necessary to set a few things in order so that my nobles will know how to proceed in the event of my death.

“I had assumed that you, Merek, as the first born, would receive the crown rather than your brother, even though you’re but a few moments older than he. It was, however, brought to my attention recently that in the by-laws of the kingdom a different process may be followed in the case of twins. After making this a matter of great thought and prayer, I



JESUS, HELP ME TO DO MY BEST!

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.
— 1 Corinthians 4:2

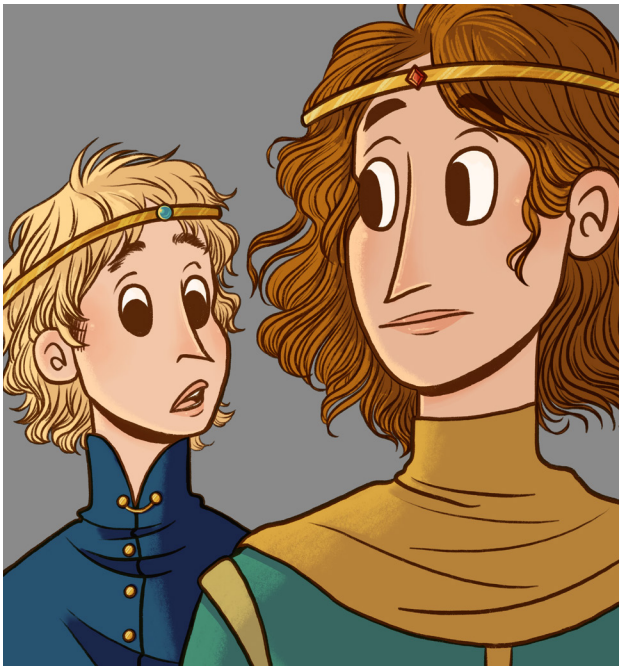
have elected to proceed according to this alternative course.”

The two young men looked briefly at each other and then back at their father.

“As king of this vast realm, one must bear tremendous responsibilities and much wisdom is needed. Therefore, in order to discover which of you is better fitted for the throne, I am going to ask a single searching question and then give you ten days to arrive at an answer. Your answers will be given in the council chambers before the five justices who must decide who will reign. The question, my sons, is this: What would be the guiding principle which would direct your ruling of the kingdom? Consider this question carefully.”

In the days that followed, Merek determined to talk to the people of the kingdom about what he could best do in order to please them and be an effective ruler. On this, he concluded, he would base his response to the question.

Meanwhile, Gawain kept to his room, spending a great deal of time consulting God in meditation and prayer.



The tenth day finally arrived and the princes’ written answers were delivered to the justices and the king who were waiting in the council chambers. Sending word that their decision would be delivered to the people of the realm on the following day at high noon, they began their deliberation. The chief justice stood and read aloud the two responses to the question.

“Prince Merek’s response: ‘The guiding principle which would direct me in the ruling of this kingdom would be that I must try to please the people. I have determined that as ruler, I would have no right to live for myself, but rather for the good and betterment of the people over whom I would reign.’”

“Prince Gawain’s response: ‘The guiding principle which would direct me in the ruling of this kingdom would be that I am accountable to God for the privileges and responsibilities He has seen fit to give me. As a ruler, I would purpose to conduct all the affairs of the kingdom in a manner that would please Him and bring honor to His Name.’”

The next day, when the appointed time was come, an expectant hush came over the crowd gathered in the castle courtyard. The king, accompanied by his two sons who had not yet been told the decision, greeted his subjects. He spoke solemnly. “I know you have been awaiting the decision about to be announced. I hereby proclaim that it is the decision of the justices that Prince Gawain shall ascend the throne before his brother. His answer reveals that he understands that to both rich and poor, small and great, are given short life spans in which we are to labor carefully and obediently before our Creator, before the One we shall all someday give an account for the blessings given us.”

Merek managed a smile and then spoke in his brother’s ear, “Well, little brother, you were right. You won the next race.” He bowed to his brother, and then they gave each other a hug and stepped forward to greet the people waiting to hail their future king.

GIVING AN ACCOUNT

We should all be very careful how we use our time. The coded verse below tells us why. To complete the verse, the letters in each column must be placed in the proper boxes directly above it. The letters are in order. Example: In the second column you will find a V and an I. The V is at the top so write it in the top empty square, and then the I in the empty square below. Do each column in the same way.

WE WANT TO _____ GOD.
(LASEEP)



		S			T								
E							O			O			
	U			S						G			
		A								O			
H								T		G			
	V	E	O	Y	H	H	E	N	O		I	F	E
	I	S	R	C	O	A	N	E				V	D
		M	C	E	L	U	L	L				F	
			S			F	N	T				O	