

## **Luke 19: The Parable of the Minas**

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In Luke 18:33-34, Jesus had been teaching His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, be sacrificed, and then resurrected. After the resurrection, He would go to Heaven to be with God the Father. Therefore there would be a delay in setting up the Kingdom of God. Theoretically, if everyone in Israel had received Jesus as the Messiah, Lord, and Savior, then He would have immediately set up the Kingdom. Jesus' widespread rejection necessitated a delay theologians call "the inter-advent age", or church age, which is the extended time period between Jesus' first and second coming. Unfortunately, because of their presuppositions, His disciples "understood none of these things...and they did not comprehend the things He told them" (Luke 18:33-34). Then in Luke 19:1-10, Jesus saved a known sinner, Zaccheus which further blew their mind because they thought Jesus came to set up the kingdom, but Jesus told them "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost (sinners)". The problem that provoked the Parable of the Minas was the incorrect Messianic expectations that He would set up the Kingdom immediately. In Luke 19:11, we are told they were near Jerusalem, and "they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately". Jesus countered their expectations by telling them this parable which had a remarkable likeness to the well known historical story about Herod's son receiving his kingdom. The parable explains the delay in the kingdom, rejection by Israel, Jesus' investment in His followers, His return to be King, and the day of judgment. By way of application for us, we learn about what kind of stewardship Jesus expects of His disciples while He is gone.

### **The Historian Josephus**

The great historian of the first century, Josephus, wrote that when king Herod the Great died, his will named his son Archelaus as king over Judea (the area in and around Jerusalem). This kingship would have to be approved by Rome, so Archelaus went to Rome to appeal to Caesar for his title. Amazingly, part of his own family and a contingent of 50 prominent Jews went to Rome to oppose Archelaus before Caesar. They were joined by 8,000 expatriate Jews living in Rome. In a public setting at the Temple of Apollo, the well publicized confrontation took place. After hearing both sides, Caesar gave the kingdom of Judea to Archelaus. When Archelaus got back to Israel, he rewarded his supporters and punished his enemies. Therefore back in Jerusalem, this scandal was well known by all the Jews. When Jesus told His Parable of the Minas about the king who left to receive a kingdom and then return, He was using a well known story as an attention grabber.

### **Delegation of Responsibility**

In Luke 19:13, the nobleman who was leaving to receive a kingdom, met with ten of His servants to delegate stewardships to all of them while He was gone. He gave each a mina to do business with for His account while He was gone.

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MATTH. XXV.

Fœnora qui referunt, herus his nova munera donat,  
Qui tulit effoslas e serobe, perdit opes.  
Gratia subtrahitur, quam non inpendis in usum.  
Perdere apud justum est, non meruisse, Deum.

*Der Herr schenkt denen neu, die Ihm den Wucher bringen.  
Führt den, des Gut vergrub, als einen Praffer, an  
Die Gnade fällt, wann wir Sie nicht stets höher schwingen:  
Wer nicht bei Gott gewiint, Der hat sein Gut verthan.*

The parable of the talents, as depicted in a 1712 woodcut. The lazy servant searches for his buried talent, while the two other servants present their earnings to their master. (Photo credit: Wikipedia)[/caption]

A mina was 100 denarii and thus was 3 months wages for the average worker. For our purposes, just consider it whatever you make in 3 months.

**Use it or Lose it**

While His loyal followers were supposed to be working on His behalf, the rest of the citizens (Israel) rejected and opposed Him saying “we do not want this man to reign over us”. In Luke 19:15, after an extended period of time, the nobleman returned as king. The first thing He did was call His servants in that He had given the money to in order to come see Him to give an accounting of what they had done in His absence. The first servant had gained an extra ten minas for his master, and the second servant had gained an extra five minas for his master. Both had been excellent stewards of what they were entrusted. They were very humble, taking no credit for themselves, they said “Sir your mina has earned ten minas more”, and the second servant repeated the same with five minas more. The King’s response was something we all hope to hear, “Well done good and faithful servant”. Then as rewards, He gave them respectively authority over ten cities and five cities. These faithful servants in the parable symbolize us as believers at the Judgment Seat of Christ which is mentioned in 2 Corinthians 5:10. It is also called the Bema Seat Judgment where Christ gives out rewards to us after the resurrection. These rewards of authority in the parable which constitute reigning with Christ, might surprise many people who have a concept of heaven as angels floating on clouds, or rewards of playing better golf courses or living in bigger mansions. But God knows the most wonderful and fulfilling reward He could give us is further joyful fruitful service. Our work now may seem tedious and difficult with many hardships, but in heaven serving God will be an awesome fulfilling exciting experience. Heaven does not consist of what we shall selfishly receive, but in what we shall become—Christ’s confidants with exciting responsibility.

The third servant came in verse 20 with a different story and a different outcome. I personally don’t think this guy was expecting the nobleman to return, or perhaps he just got so carried away with his own life that he couldn’t be bothered with serving his master. The guy’s explanation was easily refuted by his master, so I think he spent all the time working for himself, doing his own thing. This guy told the King that he kept the mina hidden away because he feared his master was unfair and took stuff that wasn’t His. So in other words, he was saying that whatever the servant made, the king would have just unfairly taken. I think we can easily analyze this guy, and I think we all know this guy. The third servant lived for himself only, his understanding and knowledge of Jesus’ character was wrong, and his focus on the future was temporal and not eternal. Today, we call this guy a “carnal Christian”. In verse 22, the King dismissed the man’s excuses because he didn’t even bother to put the money in the bank to earn a little interest. Therefore, the King took the mina away from him and gave it to the servant who had earned ten minas. When they were shocked, He gave them a parabolic saying, “to everyone who has shall more be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.” In other words, since the man has no good works done for God, everything he thinks he has will be gone, but the one who serves God faithfully will get an abundance. This is in accordance with Paul’s teaching of the Bema Seat Judgment of Christ in 1 Cor. 3:11-15. Paul likened our selfish work to wood, hay, and stubble; but the work we do for Christ is gold, silver, and precious stones. In the fire of judgment, the selfish stuff will be incinerated, but our work for Christ will remain. According to Paul then, the third servant in the parable would be saved but suffer loss.

In summary of the Parable of the Minas, the nobleman symbolized Jesus Christ. The far country he went off to symbolized heaven where Jesus is now. The servants symbolized Christians. The citizens who hated him symbolized unbelievers. The mina symbolized the equal opportunity of spiritual life for all Christians. The nobleman’s return with the kingdom symbolized the second coming of Christ, and the accounting of His servants represents the Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema).

### **Servants or Subjects?**

All people must make one of two choices: Will you be a servant or a subject? In the parable, the citizens who rejected and hated Him were still His subjects and under His authority. Therefore, in Luke 19:27, those citizens were called in to a different kind of judgment. The King will say, “these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence”. The worthless servant just lost rewards, but these enemies were destroyed. This is a short but clear verdict for all who reject Christ.

## The Delay of the Return of Christ

Jesus told the parable to explain to His disciples that there would be a delay in setting up the Kingdom of God. During that delay, Jesus expects all of His followers to be representing Him well here on earth, and there will be an accounting for how we lived our lives for Christ. Everyone who believes in Christ as their Lord and Savior, has a stewardship now as we live our lives waiting for Christ's return. Naturally we wonder exactly when Jesus is coming, and why it is taking so long. Peter gives an excellent answer to these questions in 2 Peter 3:8-10. Peter says that time is not that important to the Lord. Even though we are amazed that 2000 years has passed by, God is not slow about His promise of the second coming and the Kingdom. God is just patiently waiting for all who will come to Him to come during this time. We are not meant to know when Jesus is coming, but we are to live and represent Him as if He is coming tomorrow.

## Conclusion

Our life now should be all about taking the opportunities God gives us to serve Him well. You should have noticed that there were ten servants in the Parable of the Minas, yet only three reported. What happened to the other seven, or better, who do they represent? I believe we are the other servants, and our rewards have not been determined yet. The end of the story won't be written until we also stand before the Lord and hopefully hear Him say, "Well done good and faithful servant".

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