

## The Coming King and His Kingdom – Part 3

This morning we come to the third part in our series on the coming King and his kingdom. And while for the most part this has been a topical study looking at a variety of passages of Scripture, this morning we are going to land primarily on one text in Luke chapter 19 if you will take your Bibles and turn there. And as we prepare to return next week to our verse by verse study of Revelation, specifically the passage regarding the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, we want to once again focus on what the Bible has to say regarding the King and the kingdom.

I want to give you a few introductory thoughts to help you understand a bit more of the importance of looking at the Word of God literally. When examining the gospel record, as we come to the New Testament, we quickly discover that the Old Testament was the literal, undisputed source of divine revelation. Our Lord and his chosen apostles and the gospel writers all held to a literal hermeneutic, a literal system of Bible interpretation and they repeatedly appealed to the Old Testament. The nascent Church measured the veracity of what the Lord and the apostles said by measuring them against the Old Testament record, like the Berean Jews, you will recall, in Acts 17 who were commanded to search the Scripture and commended for it. We read that, “they searched the Scripture daily to see whether these things were so.” And, as a result, many were “convinced” and the Bible says they believed.

Never once is there ever a hint that a proper interpretation of the Old Testament required some kind of esoteric key to unlock hidden meanings. You just never see that. Our Lord and the apostles would not have commended their hearers to search the Old Testament as it testified regarding Christ in John 5:39, if it required some previously undisclosed hermeneutic so that they could understand what it had to say. In fact, the Jewish failure to recognize their Messiah was attributed to their failure to believe what the Old Testament actually said. We read in John 5:46:

For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.  
But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?<sup>1</sup>

Now, from the beginning, as we come to the New Testament we see that the New Testament period announces the arrival of the kingdom. We see this, for example, in the genealogical record in the gospel of Matthew and as well as in Luke where Jesus’ legitimate right to rule was clearly established and it was never disputed by the Jews. We see John the Baptist announcing that the kingdom was at hand in Matthew 3:2 and the perfect tense of that verb indicates that the kingdom has drawn near. And certainly it had drawn near because the King had arrived.

The miraculous works of the Messiah king and his disciples astounded the people. They got a glimpse of millennial glory when Jesus was on earth. But the Jewish audience refused to believe that their Messiah would have to first do a work of salvation before he would establish the kingdom. They were looking for the glory, not for the cross. At first he must come as the Son of man to seek and to save the lost rather than to conquer Rome.

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<sup>1</sup> John 5:46-47.

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That is what they were looking for. Only after his saving work would he return as King of kings. He must first come as a Lamb, later on as a Lion. They could not grasp this.

Never once did Jesus' teachings about the kingdom vary in any respect from what was presented in the Old Testament. It is not like the Old Testament said one thing but then when Jesus came along now he said something very different as some people will teach today. That this is true can be seen in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount where he specifically dealt with the kingdom of heaven. And there you will recall that he cautioned his disciples that he "did not come to abolish the law and the prophets." That is not why he came, but rather "to fulfill." In fact the text says in Matthew 5:17-18, "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."<sup>2</sup>

So the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, the messianic King and the kingdom that was preached in the gospels perfectly paralleled the literal understanding of the Old Testament prophets.

But, again, the idea of a suffering Savior, that was just incomprehensible to the Jews and even to the disciples. You will recall that even after the Lord had risen from the dead the disciples asked him in Acts 1:6, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"<sup>3</sup> I mean, they were just breathless with excitement. They wanted to see Rome destroyed and a renovated earth and all of the glories of the kingdom that were promised in the Old Testament. But they could not grasp that there would be two comings separated by an undisclosed period of time, that although the mediatorial kingdom of Old Testament prophecy was at hand, as the Lord had announced, because of Jewish unbelief, the fullness of those messianic blessings promised to Israel must await the King's Second Coming. The nation must now suffer many years of judgments for its unbelief.

Now, I give you a caution. Some will say, "But wait a minute. I thought that the Church has replaced Israel, that the Church is now spiritual Israel. After all Matthew 21:43 says "the kingdom was taken away. It was given to a nation producing the fruit of it." Well, that's true in a sense. In fact, in Luke 20 and verse 16 we read how the Jews who killed the prophets and kill the Son are going to loose the vineyard. In other words, the sphere of God's saving purposes, the privilege and responsibility of disseminating truth is going to be taken away from them.

And we know that the gospel was taken to Gentiles. Yet the keys of the kingdom were taken from the Jews and they were given to a new people with a new set of leaders, namely the apostles, the New Testament prophets, the evangelists and pastor teachers, the teaching shepherds. These are now the new vine growers. Indeed, the Jews were set aside and a new guardianship was established in the Gentile church. But please understand. Although the custodianship of divine truth was taken from the Jews, it was only done so temporarily. It was never something permanent. It was temporarily transferred to the Gentile church. Israel has only been temporarily displaced, not

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 5:18.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 1:6.

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permanently replaced. We are going to see this again as we look at the Lord's words in Luke 19. God is not finished with Israel, beloved. Romans 11 makes that very clear as do many other passages.

So the truths pertaining to the King and the kingdom were hard to swallow for the Jews, even for the disciples, especially the idea of Jesus' death. Again, they were looking for glory, not for a cross. They were looking for a conquering king, not a suffering Savior. They were looking for a lion, not a lamb. In fact, immediately on the heels of fully disclosing the necessity of his death, it is interesting in Matthew 16 the Lord promised that he would return again with all of the glories of the Old Testament prophecies being fulfilled and he said in Matthew 16 verse 27, "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels."<sup>4</sup> It is interesting. That was the first time in the gospel narrative where we have an explicit reference to the Second Coming of Christ. Moreover, he made it very clear that he will come in his kingdom, verse 28, and reward every man according to his works in verse 27. So this clearly denotes that the coming of his kingdom will be at a specific point in time, namely what we would call the Second Coming.

So Jesus preached a parable to help explain this issue and clarify these truths and he did so in Luke 19. Let me give you a bit of the context. Jesus now is approaching Jerusalem for the last time. He has multitudes of people, it could have been in the hundreds of thousands of people, following him. They are fully anticipating him establishing the earthly kingdom. But Jesus, once again, will speak truth to ears that refuse to hear the truth. Very often we hear what we want to hear. So let me read the text for you and then we will examine it. Luke 19 beginning in verse 11.

And while they were listening to these things, He went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately. He said therefore, "A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return. And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.'

But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'

And it came about that when he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him in order that he might know what business they had done. And the first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.'

And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities.'

And the second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.'

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew 16:27.

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And he said to him also, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’

And another came, saying, ‘Master, behold your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down, and reap what you did not sow.’

He said to him, ‘By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow? Then why did you not put the money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?’

And he said to the bystanders, ‘Take the mina away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’

And they said to him, ‘Master, he has ten minas already.’

I tell you, that to everyone who has shall more be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence."<sup>5</sup>

We have a very simple story here. A nobleman leaves his own country for a period of time to go to a distant place to receive from a superior authority the right to rule his country, the right to be a king of his own kingdom. But before he leaves we see that he entrusts his servants with a modest amount of money to invest expecting them to turn a profit and, therefore, to demonstrate their love to him, their faithfulness and service while he is away. And what we see in this parable are three different kinds of people. I would call them, number one, the faithful servant; secondly, the false servant; and, thirdly, the ferocious citizen. Now, after receiving his kingdom we see that he returns to appraise and reward his faithful servant and to judge his false servants and his ferocious citizens that hated him. That is, in essence, the story.

Now, bear in mind that the multitudes that were following Jesus at this point readily understood the basic concept of the story because it was built upon an actual, historical event that they were very familiar with. Let me give you the historical setting.

Israel at this time was under the control of the great Roman Empire and ultimately Caesar was the king. But in order to keep peace in that vast empire Caesar was smart enough to understand that he needed to acquire subordinate kings that were familiar with the culture and familiar with the people to occupy the throne of that occupied Roman territory. And so the kings were chosen to rule Israel by Caesar, and they were never Romans nor were

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<sup>5</sup> Luke 19:11-27.

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they even Jews. They were Idumeans, meaning they were of the Edomite origin. And, frankly, that spawned the Herodian dynasty that ruled over Palestine for about 150 years.

The Jewish historian Josephus indicates that around 40 BC a nobleman named Herod traveled to Rome and received from Mark Antony the kingdom of Israel where he ruled until his death some 36 years later. And according to Herod's will the kingdom was to be divided into three parts upon his demise and given to his three sons. And one of those sons was a man named Archelaus. In fact, Archelaus had built a magnificent palace in Jericho.

You must understand that Jesus is telling this parable having been in Jericho, leaving Jericho, traveling 17 miles up the Wadi Kilt, up to Jerusalem. In fact, Jesus had just given sight to the two blind men. He had also preached the gospel and Zacchaeus the hated tax collector had come to a saving knowledge of Christ and demonstrated his commitment to Christ by wanting to give back all that he had stolen and so forth. And so these people were very familiar with the historical concept of what was going on.

Now Archelaus was given the region of Judea which included Jericho and Jerusalem along with Samaria and Idumea. And it is interesting how history records that immediately upon his father's death he takes the throne. They think that he was around 18 years old. But even before going to Rome and acquiring the imprimatur of Caesar to be able to rightfully ascend the throne, he goes ahead and takes power. And without delay he demonstrated enormous cruelty.

It is interesting that when his father had just fallen ill, just before his death, two very popular Jewish teachers and their pupils removed and destroyed an idolatrous emblem of a golden Roman eagle that had been put on the entrance of the holy temple in Jerusalem. I mean, this was a blasphemy of blasphemies for the Jews. And for that they were burned alive. And an angry Jewish populace demanded justice.

Now Herod dies. Archelaus is now all of the sudden ruling and unable to quell the crowd at Passover who were complaining about this. So, Archelaus sent in the Herodian troops into the temple area and executed 3000 Jews, most of them Pharisees.

You might also recall as a foot note in Matthew two and verse 22 it mentions the rule of Archelaus and it was a rule that was so terrifying you will recall that Joseph and Mary and Jesus who had been exiled into Egypt were returning, but rather than putting down their roots in Bethlehem which was close to Jerusalem, because of Archelaus reigning, they thought. "No, no. We are going on up into the hinterlands. We are going to go up into Nazareth up much further north."

Now, after butchering the Jews Archelaus did travel to Rome. The nobleman went to Rome to receive the crown from the emperor Augustus. However, there was a contingency of Jews and Samaritans, otherwise contentious enemies, that were so galvanized together in their hatred of Archelaus that they united, they went to Rome and they lobbied Augustus in Rome to prevent him from reigning.

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So, to find a compromise Augustus told Archelaus that he had to contend himself with the title of ethnarch, which means national leader, until he won the favor of the people where he could then be king. But that never happened. He only ruled from about 4 BC to 6 AD. Caesar finally had to remove him because of his incompetence and cruelty. In fact, he was no longer reigning when Jesus is telling this parable. But the people knew very well what Jesus was talking about.

Now with this context in mind, let's examine this parable, learn what Jesus has to say about the coming King and the kingdom. And I have divided it into six very simple parts. We are going to look at the purpose, the persons, the proposal, the prophet, the promise and the punishment of which Jesus speaks.

First of all the purpose of the parable in verse 11. "While they were listening to these things..."<sup>6</sup> Well, what things is he referring to? Well, just before this we have a description of Zacchaeus' salvation and how that the genuineness of one's faith will always be validated by the fruit of brokenness and humility and love which the Lord will one day reward. And he is also speaking of his role as the Savior. In fact, in verse 10 he says, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."<sup>7</sup> So here Luke describes the simple theme of Jesus' sermon, not the whole sermon, and the topic had to do with Jesus being the Savior of sinners, not the one coming to conquer Rome. That was not the theme. But that is what the Jews expected. So for a number of miles here Jesus is going to preach to this vast multitude and give them this parable.

Verse 11. "While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately."<sup>8</sup>

"Appear" is an interesting word in the original language, **ANAPHAINO** (an-af-ah'-ee-no), it means to come into view or to come into sight of something. In fact, it occurs only one other place in the New Testament in Acts 21:3 and that is where Paul is describing his oceanic voyage and he says, "When we came in sight of Cyprus..."<sup>9</sup> So this was a nautical term describing being at sea and then looking on the horizon and suddenly you begin to see land coming into view; so the imagery. Here it is as though these people with Jesus were like excited sailors who had been at sea for a long time and they are straining their eyes to somehow get a glimpse of the long anticipated kingdom appearing on the horizon.

But, again, the purpose of Jesus' parable was to help them understand that on the horizon stood a cross, not a throne. The glories of the earthly kingdom must await his return. So then he introduces some of the persons now, secondly, verse 12. "So He said, "A

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<sup>6</sup> Luke 19:11.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 19:10.

<sup>8</sup> Luke 19:11.

<sup>9</sup> Acts 21:3.

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nobleman...”<sup>10</sup> which means a man of noble birth and, of course, this is ultimately referring to Jesus the Son of God. “A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return.”<sup>11</sup> Again, this is a reference to Christ who around eight weeks later would ascend back into heaven, a distant country indeed, a voyage that would obviously require an undisclosed interval of time.

And we know that when Jesus ascended to the Father he was seated at the right hand of the Father. He was coronated as King of kings. And there he presently awaits his triumphant return to claim his kingdom. This is what Jesus is speaking of.

Verse 13. “And he called ten of his slaves.”<sup>12</sup> Now bear in mind a slave here would have been not someone who was treated with cruelty as we often think of it, but more often than not in those days a slave was simply a trusted employee, a trusted servant who claimed allegiance to his master. Very often they were very well educated and were given varying levels of responsibility.

But there are two kinds of servants that we are going to see in this parable. The first one is going to be *the faithful servant*. We are going to read about him here in verse 13 and verses 15 through 19. This is going to symbolize genuine believers who faithfully love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, those who do all they can with the opportunities that the Lord has given them to honor him in his absence.

We are going to see, secondly, *the false servant*. That is the phony Christian, unbelievers that have deceived themselves and others into believing that they love and serve the King. That is going to be introduced in verse 20. These are going to be the ones represented by the man who carelessly kept his master’s money in a handkerchief and did nothing to invest it, than he falsely accused his master of being harsh and unkind and so forth. And then the next type of person we will look at in a moment would be what I call *the ferocious citizens*. These represent hostile unbelievers, no allegiance at all to the king. These would refer especially to the Jews. Verse 14 said, “But his citizens hated him.”<sup>13</sup>

Now, you might say, “Well, how can Christ hating unbelievers be considered Jesus’ citizens in this parable?” Beloved, please understand. Every person who has ever lived or ever will live regardless of what they believe or whom they claim to serve, every person is subject to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the king. He is the sovereign ruler regardless of what a person thinks about the Lord. He is the creator God and sovereign over all things. Ultimately every person will answer to him either as Savior or as Judge.

Remember, Paul tells us in Philippians two that God has highly exalted him, referring to Jesus, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name. By the way, that name is Lord, meaning he is the sovereign ruler over all.

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<sup>10</sup> Luke 19:12.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Luke 19:13.

<sup>13</sup> Luke 19:14.

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He goes on to say:

That at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.<sup>14</sup>

So make no mistake. Every one living on this planet lives in a place over which the Lord Jesus Christ is ultimately sovereign, even as these ferocious citizens in the Lord's parable.

Now, historically we know that the citizens who hated Archelaus had good reason to hate him because of his cruelty. In fact, they were... he was so wicked that we read that they pleaded with Caesar, "We do not want this man to reign over us." And, in similar fashion, Jesus described those who hate him in verse 14, that his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him saying, "We do not want this man to reign over us."<sup>15</sup>

Now, there is nothing in the parable that justifies their hatred for the nobleman as in the case of Archelaus. Nevertheless, they hate the nobleman, referring to Christ, and refuse to let him reign over them. In John 15:25 Jesus described the unbelieving world's attitude towards him saying, "THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE."<sup>16</sup> Yet even as the delegation's efforts to somehow prevent Archelaus from ascending the throne ultimately failed, so, too, will be the demands of all those who hate Christ will ultimately fail.

Dear friend, Jesus does reign and every knee will bow. Jesus said in Matthew 21:42, "The stone which the builders rejected, this became the cornerstone." It is also fascinating to think about it. While Archelaus murdered 3000 undeserving Jews at the very beginning of his reign, Jesus sent his Holy Spirit and saved 3000 undeserving souls on the inauguration day at Pentecost. And though Pilate could find no fault in him, what did the Jews say? They kept saying, "Crucify, crucify him."

Many of these people in that crowd, in fact, the vast majority of them, would be among that number. It is amazing to think that Jesus knew all the way, all along as he made his way to the cross, he knew the minds and the hearts of these fickle people who were expecting him to save them from Rome who had no idea that what they really needed was saving from their sin.

So we have seen the purpose and the people. Let's look at the proposal. Before the nobleman departs to receive his kingdom in verse 13 he called 10 of gave them 10 minas. That was about three month's salary. So a modest sum of money.

"And he said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.'"<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Philippians 2:10-11.

<sup>15</sup> Luke 19:14.

<sup>16</sup> John 15:25.

<sup>17</sup> Luke 19:13.

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“Do business” is a Greek word that basically means to be occupied with anything or to carry on a business. In fact, the Greek word for business is **PRAGMA** (prag’-ma). We get our word “pragmatic” from that. And so he is saying, “Do something that produces pragmatic, practical results with what I have given you. Demonstrate your commitment to me and to my kingdom and I will reward you for your faithfulness when I return.”

The mina here, beloved, represents the sacred trust of the gospel and in this connection the spiritual gifts and the opportunities for service and the responsibility that we have to proclaim it and to protect it and to live it, all of which the Lord has given to every believer. And so real practically the Lord is speaking to all of us here saying, “Take what I give you and multiply it for my glory’ and also for the collective benefit of all those who are a part of my kingdom. And I will reward you accordingly when I return.” That is the proposal. And, certainly, true believers will always do this. False one will not.

Now, let’s skip down to verse 15 where Jesus describes what happened when the nobleman returned. And here we come to number four, the prophet.

Verse 15.

When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done. The first appeared, saying, ‘Master, your mina has made ten minas more.’

And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.’

The second came, saying, ‘Your mina, master, has made five minas.’

And he said to him also, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’<sup>18</sup>

So here we discover the return on the king’s investment as a result of the responsible efforts of his faithful slaves. And won’t you notice they call him “master.” There we have a humble acknowledgement of his authority over them. And they said, “Your mina has made more.” All the credit goes to the master. That is the idea. He is the one credited with the original means that gave them the opportunity to make a profit for the master. What a picture of genuine humility, one that will always be the distinguishing mark of those who truly know and love Christ. And true believers, mind you, faithful slaves, will always do everything they possibly can to maximize these things, to glorify their coming King and to bring blessing to those who are part of the kingdom.

And next we learn that the returning king will reward his servants according to their faithfulness. So we will look at number five, the promise.

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<sup>18</sup> Luke 19:15-19.

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And I want you to notice all the slaves received the same amount of money, one mina. And every believer receives the same sacred trust of the gospel. We all have the same indwelling Spirit. We have varying gifts, but we all have the same blessing at salvation. But some, we know, will maximize what the master has given them and will receive a 10 fold return while others, like the second slave, may only produce a five fold gain. Practically speaking, some believers are going to work harder than others. Some are going to be more dedicated, more committed, more passionate. They are going to take advantage of every opportunity.

But notice the outpouring that the master bestows. I love this. One mina, ok, three months wages and they... the first one gets a 10 fold return. Well, what does the Lord give him? For three months wages he ends up with 10 cities? My goodness. And the other one gets a five fold return and he gets five cities. Beloved, the point here is you just absolutely cannot out give God. I mean, he just lavishes his grace upon us. And as we strive to produce a spiritual profit for his glory, the benefit that accrues to us is just overwhelming.

Remember, all believers will one day give an account. Every one of us will one day stand before the Lord and give an account of what we did with the opportunities and the gifts that were given to us to give glory to the king and to build the kingdom. We see, for example, in 2 Corinthians five verse 10 the apostle Paul says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad,”<sup>19</sup> meaning worthless. In 1 Corinthians three and verse 13 we read that the quality of each man’s work will be tested and his valuable enduring works will be rewarded. We are told in 1 Corinthians six and verse two that the saints will judge the world. And we read in 2 Timothy chapter two and verse 12 and Revelation 5:10 and chapter 20 and verse six that we shall reign with the Lord, referring to the concept of reigning with him during the millennial kingdom when he returns.

So these rewards will include various degrees of responsibility and opportunities for worship when we reign with Christ during the long anticipated kingdom. We will enjoy rich rewards as Peter says in 2 Peter 1:11 that are abundantly supplied when we enter the kingdom. So these are the magnificent promises that belong to every faithful servant of our master the Lord Jesus Christ.

But notice in verse 20 where we are introduced to the false servant who has also received a mina. Verse 20. “Another came...” Now in English this doesn’t tell us a whole lot. In Greek it is huge because in Greek the word “another” means another of a different kind. So this isn’t another of the same kind. In Greek it is another of a different kind. This is a different kind of slave, a different kind of servant who claims allegiance to the master.

He says, “Master, here is your mina which I kept put away in a handkerchief.”<sup>20</sup> It could be translated “a napkin.” Now this represents the unbelieving believer. This represents

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<sup>19</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:10.

<sup>20</sup> Luke 19:20.

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those who profess Christ, but do not possess him. This represents the counterfeit Christian, the tare amongst the wheat, who looks just like the wheat until it comes time to produce fruit. And at the harvest you can really tell the difference. You see, for this person there is no attempt to do anything with the gospel of grace. It is meaningless to him. Opportunities to serve Christ are not a priority. This is of no value to him. So he takes it and he puts it in a napkin.

The rabbis tell us how ridiculous that would be because valuables were always buried. You wouldn't put it in a napkin or a handkerchief. That is appalling. You see, that would have been a sign of not only carelessness, but also disdain. This is a slave who lived for himself with no thought of honoring the master, no thought of building his kingdom. And, worse, yet, notice his justification for such behavior in verse 21.

“For I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man.”<sup>21</sup> “Afraid?” Beloved, this is a cowardly, spineless fear. This is not a reverent fear born out of a worshipful awe and a passionate love for the master. He says, “You are an exacting man,” **AUSTEROS** (ow-stay-ros’) in Greek. We get our word austere from that. It means harsh or strict or overbearing or stern. Worse yet he says, “You take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, you are thief. You abuse others. You get them to do things for you. You are unfair. I want nothing to do with you or what you have offered me. You see, here Jesus is describing the utter insanity of those who reject Christ.

And this is kind of how many fair weather Christians think. I have seen it 1000 times:

“I really want the reward of heaven and I like the Christian community. I can get lots of things from them. I really kind of enjoy that culture. But, frankly, I have no desire to suffer for Christ. That is just not my thing. This idea of living for his glory, I don't even really know what that means and that is just... I am not even going to pursue that. I really don't get into all that obedience stuff, you know, rules, rules, rules. I prefer to live and let live. I prefer to live for myself and kind of let the chips fall where they may. After all, I know that grace is going to cover it all and I have made my profession of faith. I call him master. I believe in Jesus and I am good to go when it comes to heaven. But I am... If I am really honest, I think God is just a little bit harsh for me and frankly I think in many ways he is unfair. He is certainly unfair to save some and not all. And to expect us to do all of this work. I don't know. I just don't really get into that.”

Do you get the idea? Churches are filled with these kinds of false servants, pretenders who have deceived themselves. The Lord makes it very clear in Matthew seven.

These are the type that hang around the church and associate with other believers for all manner of self-serving things. But they make no effort to advance the cause of Christ. Their private lives and even many times their public lives scream of their indifference

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<sup>21</sup> Luke 19:21.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

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and when you confront them, they give you all manner of ridiculous excuses to somehow justify their behavior.

Notice what the Lord says, verse 22. “He said to him, ‘By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow?’”<sup>23</sup> In other words, “Do you really expect me to believe that you even believe that idiotic excuse?” Verse 23. “Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?”<sup>24</sup>

In other words, “If you really believed that I was so unfair and harsh then why didn’t you at least put the money in the bank where it could be kept safe and even bring a little bit of interest and thereby avoid what you would perceive to be my injustice?” In other words, he is saying, “I am not buying it. It is just a ridiculous excuse. The real reason is because you don’t love me. And you don’t see the value in what I have offered you. You are simply an apathetic, indifferent, selfish, self deceived, false servant.”

So what is the punishment? Verse 24. “Then he said to the bystanders, ‘Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.’”<sup>25</sup> Now, the bystanders here, we don’t know for sure, but they are probably the other seven slaves in the story waiting their turn.

Verse 25. “And they said to him, ‘mater, he has ten minas already.’”<sup>26</sup> Verse 26. “I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.”<sup>27</sup>

Now at some level you have to see the comedy here. This is so typical of me and of you, of human nature and also so characteristic of God’s grace. I mean, first the slaves think that somehow they need to inform the master about the fact that this guy already has 10 minas. He has already gotten his. It is as if we have got to let the Lord know something that he is not privy to, to kind of help him out here, that this person has already been amply rewarded. “Are you sure you want me to take it from him and give it to him? Surely you are not going to give him even more.”

But the Lord is so gracious and he understands our confusion and, frankly, our stupidity especially when it comes to the concept of grace. He understands how that it is our proclivity to always want to attach some preexisting condition to grace, some condition that implies that we either deserve more or less on the basis of some self conceived standard. But that is now how grace functions in God’s economy, is it?

Think about it. The king freely gave the mina, ok? It was free. And then he freely gave

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<sup>23</sup> Luke 19:22.

<sup>24</sup> Luke 19:23.

<sup>25</sup> Luke 19:24.

<sup>26</sup> Luke 19:25.

<sup>27</sup> Luke 19:26.

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the reward for faithfulness, a reward that far exceeded anything that was possibly deserved. Moreover, grace, we see, never stops giving. There is never some cap on it as if we finally got all we deserve. Boy, that's how we think, isn't it? No, he is saying. "I am just going to keep giving. That is how my grace is. I am just going to keep giving."

Remember, the apostle Paul prayed that we could get a hold of this in Ephesians three. He prayed that we would "be able to comprehend with all the saint what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God." And then he breaks forth in that glorious doxology. He says:

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.<sup>28</sup>

But, dear friends, the punishment for the false slave is equally infinite in verse 26 at the end. But he says, "But from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away."<sup>29</sup> In other words, everything this phony slave had or thought he had was going to be stripped away. Beloved, every pretender who claims to know and love Christ but does not do what he says, those people who attach themselves to the church and to Christianity and strut around like somehow they are part of the kingdom and they love the king, but make no effort to serve him and frankly down deep they don't really like him, for those people everything they have ever perceived to be valuable or meritorious will be taken away from them and deemed utterly worthless. It is like the self-righteous older brother in the story of the prodigal son. Remember, he had a pretense of godliness and he fully expected to cash in on his father's death and get all of the inheritance. But ultimately he got nothing but eternal damnation.

And then Jesus closes with these sobering words in verse 27. "But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence."<sup>30</sup> Herein is the fate of all those who have no love for the coming king, whether false servants or ferocious citizens, both will come to eternal ruin. That is the parable.

And with this, dear friends, the Messiah King approaches Jerusalem. The crowds continue to swell in size and in frenzied anticipation of the kingdom. You go on to read that right on the heels of this they start shouting, "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD."<sup>31</sup> But what is amazing is while these crowds are screaming these shouts of praise we read that Jesus weeps aloud over their unbelief and their rejection of their king.

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<sup>28</sup> Ephesians 3:20-21.

<sup>29</sup> Luke 19:26.

<sup>30</sup> Luke 19:27.

<sup>31</sup> Luke 19:38.

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And in verse 41 we read, “When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace!"”<sup>32</sup> Then he goes on to describe the impending judgment of Rome coming in and destroying them completely in a slaughter in AD 70. And in verse 44 he says... he gives the reason why here for his weeping. He says, “because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”<sup>33</sup>

Beloved, Jesus offered himself officially and finally as the King of the messianic kingdom exactly as the Old Testament prophets predicted. But the nation of Israel rejected their king and will therefore remain his enemies until he returns to reconcile them unto himself and establish himself as King of kings and Lord of lords in an earthly kingdom.

My friends, each one of us are pictured in this parable. I can only pray that you will examine your heart. Which one are you? Are you the faithful servant or the false servant or the ferocious citizen?

In any case be assured the King and his kingdom are coming. And with him he will bring either reward or he will bring retribution. Which will it be for you?

Let’s pray together.

*Father, thank you for the power of your Word that brings such clarity to those things that you would have us understand regarding the plan of redemption, the glories of salvation, the glories of the king and the kingdom. Oh, Lord, where would we be without your Word? But, Lord, I pray that each of us who have examined this text together today will allow these truths to somehow speak to our hearts deeply that you might be able to conform us into the image of Christ and, Lord, for some, to come to you for the first time.*

*Lord, we pray for the lost. Convict them and save them by your grace. Lord, we long for your return. Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus, for it is in his name that we pray. Amen.*

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**Transcript Explanation:** Each transcript is a rough approximation of the message preached and may occasionally misstate certain portions of the sermon and even misspell certain words. It should in no way be considered an edited document ready for print. Moreover, as in any transcription of the spoken word, the full intention and passion of the speaker cannot be fully captured and will in no way reflect the same style of a written document.

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<sup>32</sup> Luke 19:41-42.

<sup>33</sup> Luke 19:44.