

THE DISPENSATIONAL PARABLES

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No. III. The Talents.

Matthew 25:14-30

"For it [the coming of the 'Lord' verse 13] will be as a man traveling into a far country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one—to every man according to his several ability, and straightway took his journey" (vv 14,15)

The parable evidently refers to the conduct of the Lord's servants during His absence, concerning the things committed to them. It refers to ministry committed to Jews, for He called "His own servants." The people of Israel were "His own people" (John 1:11).

"He delivered unto them his goods"—the things which belonged to Him as Man, in connection with His own people. These things are:—

His Royal authority, as King;

His Prophetic office, as Teacher and Leader;

His Priesthood and Offering

To Peter the Lord Jesus gave the "keys of the kingdom of heaven," Peter being the first of the twelve.

THE FIVE TALENTS

Five is a number of grace, and is intimately connected with the deliverance of Israel and with David. The people came out of Egypt in ranks of five (Exo 13:18). They put their feet on the necks of "five kings" in the days of the conquest of the land under Joshua (10:24). David met Goliath with "five stones" (1 Sam 17:40), and received "five loaves" from the hand of Abiathar (1 Sam 21:3).

The five talents therefore represent the ministry committed to Peter and the apostles concerning Jesus as the King of Israel, the seed of David.

THE TWO TALENTS

Two loaves baked with leaven were to be offered to the Lord on the day of Pentecost (Lev 23:17)—the firstfruits unto the Lord. The two talents may therefore represent the ministry of the twelve apostles with Paul, concerning Jesus the Messiah, the Prophet like unto Moses (Acts 3:22), whereby the Gentiles were brought into association with the saved of Israel, in confession of Jesus as the Christ and Lord of all.

THE ONE TALENT

One talent expresses unity. The ministry to the people of Israel in the Epistle to the Hebrews, concerning Jesus as the One Priest after the order of Melchizedek and His one offering for sin. Now, with regard to the reckoning.

THE TEN TALENTS

Ten is the number used in Scripture in reference to the Gentile nations (Zech 8:23; Rev 17:12). The testimony of Peter concerning Jesus as God's King has been received by the Gentile nations. The professing Church among the Gentiles to-

day claims to be the kingdom of God. So the five talents have become ten.

Two is the number expressing the association of Jew and Gentile in confession of Jesus as Lord of all (Acts 10:36; Eph 2:15-18; Rom 1:16).

The testimony of the apostles both Peter and Paul concerning Jesus as the Christ, the Teacher from God has been received throughout the four quarters of the earth "in all the world" (Col 1:6).

So the two talents have become four.

"But he that had received one went and digged in the earth and hid his Lord's money. After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them."

The Lord commends the servant who had received five talents as faithful to his trust, for the nations of the Gentiles acknowledge the Son of David to be God's King.

The Lord commends also the servant who had received two talents as faithful over a few things; both these servants are to be made rulers over many things, and to enter into the joy of their Lord: to reign with Him.

The ministry of the twelve apostles within the land of Israel was fulfilled according to the mind of the Lord.

The ministry in the synagogues among the Gentiles by Paul in association with the other apostles was fulfilled according to the mind of the Lord; for Jesus is owned as the King and Saviour by every professed Christian of all nations.

"Then he that had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed, and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine'" (vv 24,25).

The important lesson of the parable is in the conduct of the servant who received the one talent.

The last truth given by the Lord Jesus to His own servants, the Jews as His own people, concerning Himself, is that of His Priesthood, and of His One offering in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Unity is its characteristic, for He abideth a Priest continually in contrast with the many priests of the Levitical order, and His One offering is in contrast with the many sacrifices under the law.

But where has there ever been a corporate testimony to the truth concerning the Lord Jesus, declared in the Epistle to the Hebrews to be "made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek"; all the ordinances of the Levitical priesthood being ended, having been fulfilled in the offering of the body of Jesus once, when He suffered without the gate, to sanctify the people with His own blood?

On the contrary, men professing to believe the Scriptures have continued a worldly sanctuary, an earthly priesthood, and ordinances upon the flesh in continuation or in imitation of the Levitical order; thus denying practically the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ, and the perfection of the believer as sanctified with His blood; hiding the results of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and of His appearing in the presence of God for us in the value of His One offering, under the imitation of the earthly things that belonged to the Mosaic dispensation.

The conduct of the wicked and slothful servant is seen in the ritualism of Christendom, of those "who say they are Jews and are not," who claim to possess authority given by the Lord to His apostles, and reject the grace declared in connection with His Priesthood and His Sacrifice.

The wicked servant judged the Lord to be a hard man, according to his own carnal mind; he knew nothing of the perfect love that casteth out fear.

The Lord did not disown reaping where He had not sown, nor gathering where He had not scattered; for He had been a

sower in the land of Israel, the harvest is among the Gentiles; He is gathering among the Gentiles while Israel is scattered.

The blood of the covenant is treated as a common thing, and the Spirit of grace is despised, when ordinances administered by an earthly priest are credited with a result which can only arise from the one offering of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit (Heb 10:29).

The wicked servant who hid in the earth the things revealed from heaven (Heb 12:25) falls under the same judgment as those who rejected the Lord Jesus when on earth (Matt 8:12), and the man at the marriage supper without a wedding garment (Matt 22:13), outer darkness, eternal judgment. To reject grace is a more fearful thing than to transgress law.

The one talent is given to him who has ten, for the unity which has not been manifested in the day of grace under the Melchizedek priesthood, will be manifested in the day of Christ's power, when He shall sit on the throne of His father David on God's holy hill of Zion, and all nations shall serve Him.