

## THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #042 A Chronological Study

*"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and  
uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."  
Psalm 78:2*



### "The Talents" Matthew 25:14-15 [NASB]

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#### THE INTRODUCTION

As is our usual approach, we need to step back and see where Jesus is in His ministry, and where He is physically.

Jesus is in the last week of His life before He is arrested, charged, convicted, brutalized, and killed on the Cross.

As to where in the timeline He is, Jesus has cleansed the temple and He

### **Matthew 24:1-2a**

***"came out from the temple and was going away and stopped on the Mt. of Olives (just north of the city proper). His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things?"***

It seems to me He is asking His disciples if they are aware of the terrible things that Israel has done to get them to this point in history. The constant going astray of the will of God and intermarrying with pagan gentiles who have led them away from the God of Israel and into false religions. Their leadership has strayed from the teachings of God through Moses and the other Prophets into a false and self purposed way of legal life developed by the Rabbinical system of Israel that has done away with the Grace of God and His promise of a Savior from their sin and sins.

***"Do you not see all these things?"*** He has been trying to tell them of a great discipline that is coming to their nation and especially to the city of Jerusalem: Complete and utter destruction.

### **Matthew 24:2a**

***"Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another."***

A little later

### **Matthew 24:3**

***The disciples came to Him privately. They asked, "Tell us when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"***

He then speaks to them "Don't be frightened" for these things must take place...

### **Matthew 24:7-8**

***For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. 8 But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.***

Jesus then moves on from His introduction... to the time of Tribulation.

### **Matthew 24:9-14**

***"Then... they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many (Jews) will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another... 13 but the one who endures (in believing in Me) to the end, he (that one) will be saved... 14 this gospel (good news) of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations (the Church Age), and then the end will come (The Tribulation).***

There is no talk of the Rapture here - as He is speaking to His Jewish Disciples about Israel and her millennial reign.

### **Matthew 24:29**

***29 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.***

Then at the ending of the tribulation Jesus will come and rescue (gather) those who (Jews and Gentiles) have turned to Him during the tribulation (Those who are not of the Church Age). He will gather together His elect from the four winds and from one

end of the sky to the other - as He returns with His Church to begin the New Millennium.

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## **THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE KNOW THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

He then tells them of the dangers and events of the tribulation and warns them those will be especially perilous times.

As He stands there looking at the disciples and seeing the horror and confusion in their faces... He moves on to telling them how to know when these times are going to come.

### **Matthew 24:32**

***When its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near;***

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## **THE PARABLE OF THE FAITHFUL AND UNFAITHFUL SERVANT**

Jesus then asks His Disciples, "Who then is the **faithful** and **sensible** servant?" (Rabbis, wardens, sextons, deacons, elders, missionaries, pastors, teachers, etc.). **Those whom He finds still serving when He returns.** This is a focused message – not directed at the "average" believer who has put their trust in Jesus, but not become a "Servant" to the body of Christ. It applies only in general, not like it applies to those whom God has gifted with full servanthood wisdom. It should be clear to us that in the average congregation (or synagogue, as Jesus was addressing His Disciples) there are those who hold leadership responsibilities and those who do not.

And also, in a much broader sense, there are those in a congregation who have never given their lives over to the Holy

Spirit's offer of salvation. It is these that The Lord is singling out as evil servants. It should be noted that God Almighty is the master of everyone when we read this next verse.

### **Matthew 24:48**

***48 But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,'***

But the evil servant will be dealt with severely because they are, in fact, unbelievers, making believe they are believers – the wicked among the chosen.

## **THE PARABLE OF THE 10 VIRGINS**

### **Matthew 25:1**

***"Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.***

This parable is the first of three that concern the coming judgment. *"Jesus is reminding His disciples that the day is coming when He will return as Judge of all men and that all who are wise should prepare to meet Him in that Judgment."*<sup>i</sup> The kingdom will be full of both faithful (the 5 prepared virgins) and unfaithful (5 unprepared – ready to use the resources of the faithful servants) "servants." These two types: those who call themselves His, and those who are His. Those who are empty of the Holy Spirit, and those who are indwelled by Him.

The unfaithful will be found out and dealt with severely because they are, in fact, unbelievers.

## THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Matthew 25:14-30

### INTRODUCTION

This parable is the second of three that concern the coming judgment. *"Jesus is reminding His disciples that the day is coming when He will return as Judge of all men and that all who are wise should prepare to meet Him in that Judgment."* While I was studying, merrily on my way, I ran across an "alternate" view discussion by Iran Paul on the Psephizo website. Iran is a biblically trained theologian, author, speaker, etc.

We'll try to tackle two different interpretations of this parable and try to come away with a balanced view. This alternative view will also affect the deeper understanding of Jesus last parables and hopefully bring deeper understanding of Jesus... to us all.

Before engaging with the text let's get the definition of a "Talent" down first.



1 Greek/Roman Talent

### VALUE FACTS

A single [New Testament] **Dinari** coin was the standard payment for a single day's work. A single **Talent** coin (shown) was worth **6,000 Dinarii** or about **16.7 years wages**.

In today's marketplace using a common state minimum wage of \$15... those 5 Talent coins would be equal to **\$3,657,300.00** which will be given to our first servant in the story, **\$1,462,920.00** to the second servant, and **\$731,460.00** to the third. These are extremely large amounts of money given.

The word "Talent" refers to MONEY, not the God given talents (abilities and gifts). The Greek Word *Talanta* which means an ancient weight or measure – of money. Through the influence of the Latin and French languages, the English word was developed, as a state of mind, inclination, disposition, or passion – or as we now know the word talent as a natural ability or aptitude. However, the New Testament word "talent" is a coin of great value – more to come.

In the back of our minds, we may remember the "Parable of the Vine-growers. In that parable "a man" planted a vineyard and rented it out while he went away for a long time. In that parable we had no problem with that man representing Jesus. There was nothing about the parable that distracted us from that interpretation. Here, we are faced with another "man" who went away for a long time... but...

### **Matthew 25:14-30**

**"FOR IT (THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN) WILL BE LIKE A MAN"**

We will explore two different interpretations of this parable. First the "Popular" interpretation, and then an interpretation that digs a little deeper as to its nature and meaning. So let us get a read-through of this oft-misunderstood parable.

***<sup>14</sup> "For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own servants and entrusted his possessions to them. <sup>15</sup> To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.***

***16 Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them and gained five more talents. 17 In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. 18 But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.***

***19 "Now after a long time the master of those servants \*came and \*settled accounts with them. 20 The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'***

***22 "Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'***

***24 "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.'***

***26 "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. 27 Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on***



***my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. <sup>28</sup> Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'***

***<sup>29</sup> "For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. <sup>30</sup> Throw out the worthless servant into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.***

## **THE POPULAR INTERPRETATION**

Depending on how you divide up Christianity, there are at least three different popular views on the qualities of Salvation. First there is Salvation is by faith alone. Then there is Faith and Works. And last the position that Salvation is by faith alone but works must result as proof. All three of these last parables of Jesus demonstrate the third position.

The first, faith alone, position is an easy one to believe in because in its most liberal sense, you just get saved and when you die you go to heaven – regardless of how you have lived or have any evidence that you were indeed really saved at all.

The second position, the “faith and works” position basically means that without doing required works (law) your faith alone has no value.

The third position fits well with these last three parables. Without demonstrable life changing efforts in doing right (in the eyes of God), there is no evidence that this person belongs to Him. No evidence that the Spirit of God is indwelling and enabling the individual to do God’s work on earth.

### **James 2:14-17**

***14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? 17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.***

Jesus said that if one loves Him, that person will keep His commandments (**John 14**). The Apostle John stated that a Christian is to walk in the same manner as Christ walked (**1 John 2**). He also said, "This is love, that we walk according to His commandments." (Receive, Pray, Feed, Obey, Honor, Study, Preach/Teach, Convert, Disciple, and Tremble).

### **2 Peter 1:10a**

***10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you;***

I'll give you the interpretations before we look at the text so you can be prepared to analyze the story.

The normal "today" interpretation of this parable involves "people being exhorted to shine [invest] with God-given light (their Talents) lest in hiding it away they find themselves cast into outer darkness to gnash their teeth." <sup>ii</sup>

Quite often, even in conservative Christian environments, Talent in the English (natural ability) should be "invested" and expected to grow with interest. Our banking systems are based upon these principles – and often the church sees great value in this kind of interpretation. That may be well and good, but I believe that might not be what this parable is talking about.

The historical difficulty comes when we take a close look at the ancient Jewish culture of Jesus' time and see that if your neighbor

was having more wealth than you it would lead you to believe they were involved in something dishonest. Thus, the general attitude toward Jesus' disciple Matthew in the New Testament who was a tax collector – those who often required more tax from their charges than the Romans demanded, making themselves rich, and compounding their wealth through investment and charging high interest rates. Just not seen as a righteous way of life in those days.

To further complicate this interpretation is that the Old Testament forbids charging interest when loaning money to those who have less than you [**Exodus 22:25**].

So, based on the culture, it would seem hard to understand why Jesus would use investment as the basis of a parable teaching good things.

SO... Perhaps we need to see this parable from a different angle. It became obvious to me upon first reading that there was something wrong with the way this parable was normally being interpreted.

**First**, I couldn't fathom Our God disciplining **believers, especially those specifically trained and ministering**, and sending them to Hell, because they didn't invest their gifts properly.

**Second**, the defining of our God, and Jesus Christ, as:

***'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed'*** (**Matthew 25:24b**).

And the Master's response:

***'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed.'***

Just not Our God, or Our Lord, or resembling Him in any way throughout Matthew's Gospel. I think of Him as the one who, because of the Gift of His Son, "has Forgiven, from before the foundation of the world," based upon Jesus' gift of His life and blood on the Cross, "Once for All."

**And then,** it would seem to me that someone who had violated the Law of God – that no interest should be charged for any loan given to another believing member of the Jewish community, especially if their wealth was lower than yours. But, here in our parable the servants are rewarded for the maximum return on the loaned monies.

**And lastly,** that these rewards are being administered to those who violate the culture of their day. Those, like the tax collector, who took advantage of their charges and taxed them more than the Roman law demanded to make themselves an excessive income advantage by robbing their fellow citizens. The local community hated the tax collectors for such actions.

Therefore, I see this parable to be all about A MAN who represents **the nature of the society in the End Times** (or possibly the evil one). I believe this parable is all about the wicked actions that permeate the Last Days. That's what "The Kingdom of Heaven," the area of God's focus upon His people of the time will be like during those Last Days.

Think about the society in which we now live (God's Kingdom of Heaven on earth). Money, power, and self-importance seems to be everything to this culture, and evil runs rampant.

Our culture is that of the "evil man" who has given wealth and power to three types of people while his evil minions work in our cultures of the world. Some were given great power and with that great power have caused worldwide havoc. Some were given much power and with that power have caused individual and corporate corruption and disturbance. The third was given some power and failed to invest it to cause it to grow – and that Evil

One condemned this third party to utter darkness because of their failure.

Thus, we end up with a meaning that fulfills every aspect of the parable. An evil wealthy and powerful man, three servants with three levels of responsibility. One very successful, one successful, and one failure – investing in Evil and making it grow. An apt picture of the then and now cultures and two interpretations, however different, that come to good conclusions.

### **TO BE CLEAR**

I'm taking this moment to make it clear that you may find different explanations of what Jesus' words may be saying, not only in His parables but in other places in the Scriptures. This is evidence that you are thinking, and that is a good thing. This is especially true when reading what others say about what a passage means. Always try to find the clearest meaning you can and then check it against what others may have to say – you may be surprised that many think what you did was good. You may be completely surprised when others find your meaning important. One famous writer, Arthur Pink<sup>iii</sup>, was long dead when someone found his writings and now, they are a trusted, often required, source in theological schools and universities – you just never know!

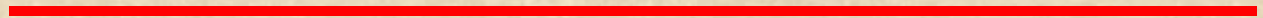
I like my understanding of this parable - I didn't like the usual "Sunday School" interpretation I had found with it. Does that make mine right? That's a question for others to think about and do their own research. If it's not... that is all right with me, at least it gives me the satisfaction to find an answer that has the right ending and does no violation to the Lord and His meaning.

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***FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS***

**1. Why is it good to always read, if available, the chapter (or chapters) before your study text?**

**2. There are so many translations of the Bible, how can I know which one(s) to trust?**



## ***FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS***

### **1. Why is it good to always read, if available, the chapter (or chapters) before your study text?**

The text that you may be studying is part of a longer on-going story. In order to understand the character(s) involved in that story or dialogue, you need background - often called the context of the story. When understanding Scripture, you may even have to delve into ancient cultural history to find the fullest meaning.

### **2. There are so many translations of the Bible, how can I know which one(s) to trust?**

Most all modern translations found in churches today can be trusted in the core messages found in the Bible. There are, of course, a couple which have been written purposefully to mislead certain areas of central doctrine. Most people have a favorite. Different Bibles have different translation backgrounds.

A "Translation" Bible should be translated from the text's original language documents (scrolls and such) and be translated by scholars of the same languages.

A "Version" is a Bible based upon someone else's translation of the original language text and re-worded to further define meanings.

A "Paraphrase" is a Bible, like a "Version" but re-worded to reflect the message the current writer(s) wishes to promote.

Both the "Version" and the "Paraphrase" can be excellent, but it is always good to understand the difference and the goal of the writers.

There are literally hundreds of different translations. Ask your pastor or other trusted friend when looking for a Bible that will suit your needs and desires.

I also recommend having a few bible translations (versions, paraphrases) so that you can understand the process of translation and get a fuller understanding of the Scriptures themselves.

Translation from one language to another can be a challenging task. Choosing the best words to reflect what the primary language was saying in my language... is like a police officer trying to figure out a traffic accident based on several witnesses – all using different words to describe the same event what they saw.

Most translations have been superintended by the Lord God over time. Many who don't believe the Bible, try to say that all these translations, versions, and paraphrases just mean you can't trust any of it. That's just not true. Almost all of those people who have given their lives to biblical translation have done so because they either love accurate word-for-word translation, or because they love the Lord God with all their heart, mind, and soul – and wish to accurately communicate the message that He gives to them through His holy influence upon them, or both.

Here is a link that will take you to a Wikipedia page that lists most all of the English Bible translations, versions, and paraphrases.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_English\\_Bible\\_translations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_English_Bible_translations)

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J. Deering [AncientPath.net] is the author and editor of this study.

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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path."

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<sup>i</sup> James Montgomery Boice, "The Parables of Jesus," Moody Publishers, Chicago, Ill.

<sup>ii</sup> Ian Paul, Theologian, author, speaker, Adjunct Professor, Fuller Theological Seminary, "The parable of the 'talents' in Matthew 25," Psephizo.com

<sup>iii</sup> Arthur W. Pink, <https://www.thriftbooks.com/a/arthur-w-pink/227281/> and <https://banneroftruth.org/us/about/banner-authors/a-w-pink/>