

**Luke's Gospel (Contd.)
Parable of the Minas & Entry into Jerusalem
Luke Chapter 19: 11 to 40**

*[Please note : sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.
Englis Standard Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

Please can I welcome you to *Truth for Today* where we are continuing with our consideration of Luke's Gospel. We are still studying chapter 19 and we are going to look at verses 11 to 40, which cover the Parable of the Minas and the triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Last week, my colleague Graham Mair, finished his talk by referring to the call of Zacchaeus, as the Lord Jesus passed through Jericho on His last journey to Jerusalem. A large crowd surrounded the Lord, watching with interest, as the despised tax collector opened up his home at the Lord's request. I mention this because the Parable of the Minas, which the Lord tells, is stimulated by this event, so I shall read the opening verse of our study, using the English Standard Version of the Scriptures:

“As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed the kingdom of God was to appear immediately” (Luke 19: 11).

What was it they had heard that called forth the parable? The Lord Jesus had just told the reformed tax-collector that salvation had come to his house that very day. It was obviously the immediacy of the event that excited the crowd. They had also witnessed the healing of the blind man, who had shouted for the Son of David to heal him. Opening the eyes of the blind was one of the characteristics of the Messiah mentioned by the Lord in the synagogue, at Nazareth, when he had began His ministry (Luke 4: 18). The apocalyptic excitement was palpable as the people crowded around the Lord, fervently hoping that the proximity to Jerusalem would be the trigger for the unveiling of Jesus, the Son of David, as the long promised Messiah. This king, they hoped, would deliver the nation from the domination of the Romans. Some of the disciples, who, expecting the immediate establishment of the kingdom, were selfishly seeking a prominent and superior place. (Matthew 20: 20-21). To summarise, both crowd and disciples were looking for a kingdom of earthly power and prestige, which would bring some advantage to them. Right up to the cross, the disciples were expecting that the Lord would perform something spectacular that would redeem Israel (Luke 24: 21). Such views needed correcting, thus this parable.

Personally, I think that some parts of the church need correction today in their understanding of the kingdom. What is the prosperity gospel if it is not the idea that being in the kingdom of Christ brings material reward? To hear a preacher repeat: “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things” (Romans 8: 32), then they claim this as a proof text for a kingdom blessing of material prosperity is a travesty of biblical exposition. I cannot accept that we plead in prayer to God for the appurtenances of wealth. The Apostle Paul gives us a flavour of God's kingdom in our present age:

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14: 17).

The kingdom, in this present time, is a spiritual kingdom, just as it was in AD 60.

To return now to Luke chapter nineteen and verse twelve that begins the Parable of the Minas:

“He said therefore, ‘A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.’”

This story is probably based upon a true incident when, after the death of Herod the Great, Archelaus, one of his sons, went on a journey to petition Augustus for Herod’s title of King of the Jews. Such details make no difference to our, or their, interpretation of the parable. I only mention it because some commentators cast doubt upon its spiritual value, owing to its historical connection. This parable is also similar to that in Matthew 25: 14 to 30. There again we do not accept that Matthew’s is a simpler form of the same parable. There are important differences so, therefore, this parable has the same validity as the rest of Scripture.

If the crowd outside of Jericho, along with the disciples, listened to the statement contained in verse twelve, their concept of the immediate appearance of the kingdom would be massively challenged. They, like us, heard what they wished to hear. A sudden appearing of Messiah and His kingdom was what they longed and hoped for. Waiting was not on their agenda. Don’t criticise them, for we also are slow to believe and similar to the couple who were on their way to Emmaus when the Lord had to say: “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!” (Luke 24: 25). How much of the Bible do we believe? We need to follow the hymn-writer’s advice ‘to sit as learners at His feet.’

Notice that verse twelve also states that the king would return. I readily accept that parables are not allegorical, yet I cannot help thinking that some of the details in this parable shadow actual events and prophetic truths. We shall learn, as we proceed through the verses, that there are some who served the absent king while he was away. We also learn that the kingdom would be seen, in all its fullness, when the king returned from the far country. However, the corrective that this verse carries is that the kingdom would not be set up immediately. Let us also recognise that a visible kingdom will be established when the Lord returns. The disciples were still looking for the kingdom, just before the Lord ascended, for they asked Him when He would restore the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1: 6-7). It was not for them, or us, to know that time.

Peter, in his second letter, warns us that scoffers will cause us to doubt the promise of the Lord’s return (2 Peter 3: 2-4). We wait that time with hope and patience. My wife used to attend the Railway Mission in the town where we live. On the wall was a large framed and glazed coloured motto stating that, “His Coming is as certain as the Dawn”. Sixty years have passed during which the mission hall has been demolished and the motto is no more. The promise of His coming has not faded into oblivion, however, for we still await it with hope and patience. That hope is true Christian hope, not hope tinged with doubt.

This event, the coming of the king, is an important point in verses thirteen and fourteen:

“Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I come.’ But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’ When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he given the money to be called to him that he might know what they had gained by doing business.”

We see from these verses, where “minas”, the title of the parable comes from, though for most of my life I have used the Authorized Version where the word is translated “pound”. I trust I am not being patronising when I say that “minas” is the plural of “mina”. It might be that you are using one of the many translations where it states that the servants received a pound, However, even though “minas” sounds strange to me, I have no doubt that it is the correct word; therefore, I shall use the English Standard Version despite my habitual preference for “pound”. It makes little difference to our understanding and interpretation of the parable, whether “mina” or “pound” is used. Apparently, the mina given to each servant was worth about three months wages, so it was not an insubstantial amount to place into the hands of the servants.

Notice that they all received one mina each. They were thus equally endowed with the same gift. This parable, then, is not dealing with natural abilities, where all are different. I have read, or heard it suggested, that the “mina” could equate to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or possession of the Word of God, or an individual’s responsibility for the transmission of the Gospel, or living for the Lord as a Christian. Regarding possession of the Scriptures, I am fully aware that not all servants, in every age, have ready access to the Bible. We, in the UK, have been in the happy position of having the Scriptures in our own tongue for the past five hundred years, though only for the last two hundred years have we had the possibility of owning a personal copy. This does not invalidate the suggestion that the Word of God is a gift of great value. For myself, if pressed to interpret the “mina” handed to the servant, I would choose transmission of the Gospel.

Later, we will discuss further the task, and success, of the servants as they “engaged in business”, when we move on to the following verses. Before that, we will quickly look at the other group mentioned in the parable. Many of the citizens desperately tried to prevent the king from ascending his throne, by sending a delegation that snarled, “We do not want this man to reign over us”. Can you hear the echo from the judgment hall, in Jerusalem, when the Lord stood before Pilate, a few days later? Two thousand years after the crucifixion, though we might not articulate the words “We do not want this man to reign over us”, yet our attitudes, activities and demeanour sadly demonstrate that we ignore, or even reject, the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus in our lives.

The verses that I wish to examine next are fifteen to seventeen:

“When he returned having received the kingdom, he ordered those servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by doing business. The first came before him, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.’ And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in very little you shall have authority over ten cities’.

We will not involve the second servant in our survey; suffice to say that he made five pounds during the period before the king returned, and received the same commendation. Notice that these servants were not part of the crowd who rejected the king. They faithfully served, in his absence, and were commended for doing so. The third servant is the subject of verses twenty to twenty-two:

“Then another came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your mina, which I have kept laid away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you, because you are a severe man. You take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’ He said to him, ‘I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant!’ You knew that I was a severe man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow?”

This servant had been very dilatory and lazy with his mina, by hiding it away, so that he had nothing to offer the king. All the servants had been given the same resources, one mina each; they were given a task, “engage in business”; and they had a period of employment, “till I come”. They

were not workers in the gig economy on a zero hours contract! If we, by faith, acknowledge Jesus as Lord, we own allegiance to Him similar to the faithful servants. Surely, we do not want to emulate the idle and unprofitable servant.

The example of these two groups of servants brings me to the thought of “judgment”, as they all had to give an account of their service. In my experience, such a concept is often ignored today, perhaps, even denied by some. It’s readily and thankfully accepted that the judgment for our sins has been borne by the Lord at Calvary. We forget, or ignore, that the Scriptures talk of the judgment seat of Christ, which lies before all believers:

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil,” (2 Corinthians 5: 10).

When Paul writes to the Corinthians about Christian service, in his first letter, he informs us that what is required of stewards, and servants, is the need to be faithful. The judgment seat is not something to be feared for, as the apostle states in the same passage, each of us will receive an appropriate commendation from the Lord (1 Corinthians 4: 1-5). I pray that we all endeavour to be good and faithful servants.

At this point, it is worthwhile considering briefly the duties and attitudes of the Lord’s people during the time of His absence, as suggested many years ago by Ada Habershon, in her study of the parables. There are seven that she records in her book, though I shall just look at two, having already dealt with “trading with a mina”. The two are “...keeping awake” (Mark 13: 34-37) and “having our lamps trimmed,” (Matthew 25:1-13). Many parables could be cited that illustrate the need for vigilance on the part of the servant. Our example, from Mark 13, commands the servant to, “stay awake”. From this, we learn that the servant was charged with a particular task. When the master of the house was a long time returning, some of the servants were asleep, neglecting their duties. I think we can all see how the teaching affects the Christian today. There should be a calmness and vigilance and earnestness about all that we do for the Lord. In other words, we should live in the expectation of His return. Just a brief consideration now, as to the meaning of having “our lamps trimmed” (Matthew 25). It seems to me that the point of this parable is not the danger of sleeping, for both groups were drowsy and slept. Rather, is it not being prepared when the bridegroom arrives, or as Joachim Jeremias puts it, “inexcusable, punishable carelessness.” Two questions then arise for each one of us from the foregoing parables. Are we awake and looking for the Lord’s return and are we prepared for the event when it happens? If we are awake to His return, we will be concerned more deeply with His interests now. As Philip Doddridge wrote:

“Let all your lamps be bright, and trim the golden flame;
Gird up your loins, as in His sight, for awful is His name.
Watch: tis your Lord’s command; and while we speak He’s near,
Mark the first signal of His hand, and ready all appear.
O happy servant he, in such employment found!
He shall his Lord with rapture see, and be with honour crowned.

Before we move on to consider the second part of our study which concerns the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, can I inform any who have joined us that you are listening to a broadcast from *Truth for Today*, where we are looking at the nineteenth chapter of Luke’s Gospel. Let us now consider verses twenty-eight to forty:

“And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, ‘Go into the village in front of you, where on

entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat.' Untie it and bring it here" (Luke 19: 28-30).

The Lord's last journey to Jerusalem, which began in chapter 9 verse 51, is now approaching its climax. He, along with the disciples, paused for a short while near to Bethpage and Bethany, two small villages on the Mount of Olives. From here the Lord sent two of His disciples for a colt on which He was to ride into Jerusalem. The detail, 'on which no man sat', regarding the colt, is also found in Mark's Gospel, so such words must have something to add to the description of the Lord's ride of triumph up to Jerusalem. I would suggest that riding on an unbroken colt could act as an unspoken parable, for here we have a picture of the power of the Man of Galilee, dominating the wildness of an unbroken beast. He is travelling to the city, where He will suffer a death that ended death's reign.

'...that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery," (Hebrews 2: 14-15).

The events at Jerusalem, when the Lord was crucified and rose again from among the dead, have an impact which affects the destiny of us all. The completeness of the victory wrought at Jerusalem is foreshadowed in Luke 9: 51, which states that He began the journey to Jerusalem, "When the days drew near for him to be taken up." This, I believe, refers to the ascension.

Sadly, the ascension is an event that is neglected in our worship, for we, quite rightly, give everlasting thanks and praise for His resurrection from among the dead. Do we also give thanks that He is now seated on the throne of all power and might? Let us watch again, with wonder, that scene when He took His disciples as far as to Bethany, that they might watch Him ascend to glory (Luke 24: 50-53). We, at *Truth for Today*, along with many Christians, believe that the ascension is not a Christian myth, for its reality, revealed to us through the power of the Spirit, takes us to the realm where He is NOW. The ascension, and this is important, is not the reversal of the incarnation, for He has returned to heaven as the glorified Man, who has tasted death for us all.

There was a time in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, when He wanted His Messiahship kept secret. (Luke 9: 18-21). Now the hour has arrived, when all will be patently obvious that the secret is being publicly announced, as He rides into Jerusalem with the cries of acclamation ringing through the air. The very animal on which He rides is a fulfilment of the prophecy in Zechariah 9: 9, where the prophet states that "...the King cometh riding upon the colt the foal of an ass." There were already plans, by some, to arrest Him when the time was opportune. This display of prophetic proclamation was not lost upon the religious elite at Jerusalem, for it only made them more determined to bring to an end this dangerous upstart, with His false claims of being the long desired Messiah. The common people, crowding into Jerusalem for the Passover celebrations, had a different response:

"As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'" (Luke 19: 37-38).

We cannot ignore the reference in these verses to the mighty works they had seen, one of which had occurred a short time before, when Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, had opened the eyes of a blind beggar, a miracle indeed. The Scripture, in Luke 18: 43, says that he, the beggar, followed Jesus, glorifying God. I suggest that he could well have been among the crowd who cried, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord." Do we raise our voices in praise of the Lord and seek to glorify Him in the world in which we live?

Let us not miss the close parallel of verse thirty-eight: "... peace in heaven and glory in the highest", with the angel's proclamation in Luke chapter two and verse fourteen: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" As one commentator has written: "The messianic peace is now realized only in heaven, that is, in the realm to which the resurrected Jesus goes." "Peace on earth" was rejected (Luke 19: 42) and must await the coming of the Lord for its fulfilment. As we said, earlier in this talk, the blessings of the kingdom of God today are spiritual, and can only be experienced by those who are led of the Holy Spirit. Amongst these blessings are love, joy, and peace. We must never forget that we are citizens of heaven, from whence come our blessings, so let us set our minds on things above.

My closing remarks concern verses thirty-nine and forty of chapter nineteen:

"And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples.' He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.'"

The acclamation that the Lord was receiving, as He made his way on the colt towards Jerusalem, obviously incensed the Pharisees, to the point where they were demanding silence. Perhaps they were concerned that a riot would break out, leading to the intervention of the Romans. More likely, however, it would be that they were irate and enraged because the carpenter of Nazareth was being proclaimed as the promised king. How could such a One be magnified and honoured? They thought they knew the Scriptures better than these unlettered men from Galilee. They did not realize that it was an occasion when if men refused to sing, then the stones would cry out in protest. We leave Him there until next week, when, God willing, David Anderson takes Luke's account a little further.

Let us, by faith, this day and always, sing the praise of Him who died, of Him who died upon the cross.

May God's peace rest upon us all this day and for evermore.

Thank you for listening to this talk numbered T1169 from *Truth for Today* on Luke chapter nineteen entitled "The Parable of the Minas and the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem".

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