

## DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY

### PART I

#### CONSEQUENCES OF FOLLOWING OR NOT FOLLOWING THE LORD'S PARTING INSTRUCTIONS

By Arlen L. Chirwood

For the kingdom of the heavens is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money (Matt. 25:14-18).

And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come (Luke 19:13).

The Master of the house, prior to His departure, entrusted His goods to the servants within His house, leaving them with the command, "Occupy till I come." The Master's servants were *to be busily involved in the use of that which had been entrusted to their care during the time of the Householder's absence.*

The Householder had previously purchased the servants, paying the price with His Own blood at Calvary.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19, 20).

They were "his own servants." *They belonged to Him alone, and they were to serve Him alone.*

"Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (I Cor. 7:23).

*The Master of the house, being perfectly just and righteous, is revealed to be a Householder Who deals with His servants accordingly. There is no unfair treatment or any mistreatment of the servants. Everything is carried out within the framework of the Householder's perfect justice and righteousness.*

The Householder had entrusted a portion of His goods and a corresponding responsibility to each servant (*with all His goods being distributed after a particular fashion among all His servants*). Not a single servant was overlooked. And within this distribution and responsibility, there was one thing above all else which the Householder expected: *faithfulness to assigned responsibility* (I Cor. 4:2).

*Then within the Master's just and righteous dealings, faithfulness would result in commendation and reward, but unfaithfulness would result in rebuke and chastisement.*

Upon the Householder's return, *each servant would be called to an accounting, with a view to faithfulness concerning that which had been delivered to that particular servant.* Any thought that the Householder might overlook anyone or certain things — whether in the realm of either faithfulness or unfaithfulness — *would be completely out of character with His perfect justice and righteousness.* A just distribution among and a corresponding expectation concerning *all of His servants* occurred prior to the Householder's departure, and an equally just accounting and recompense would occur concerning *all of His servants* when the Householder returned.

If there were to be rewards for faithfulness, there must also be a corresponding chastisement for unfaithfulness, else injustice within the Householder's

dealings with His servants would occur.

*A failure to deal with all of His household servants on exactly the same basis would be completely out of line with the Householder's perfect justice and righteousness, as it related to all of His goods previously placed in their charge.*

### Ten Servants, Ten Pounds

"Ten" is the number of *ordinal completion*, pointing, in the parable of the pounds, to *all of the Master's servants and all of the Master's goods.* Prior to His departure into the far country, Christ called *all of His servants* and delivered unto them *all of His business.* *Not a single servant was overlooked, and not a single item in His business was held back.*

*Numerical completeness* is shown in the Olivet Discourse parables through *the ten virgins* taking their lamps and going forth to meet the Bridegroom. This parable is simply a continuation of the thought from the previous parable (the parable of the Householder and His servant), presenting a different facet of teaching surrounding the matter of a house being broken up. And the parable of the talents which follows the parable of the ten virgins is "just as" the parable of the ten virgins, presenting yet another facet of this same teaching.

The parable of the talents, on the other hand, is essentially the same as the parable of the pounds in Luke chapter nineteen. Both show an overall view of the same sequence of events, though each presents certain things after a slightly different fashion. All of these parables, along with companion parables such as the parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:2-14), must be viewed together in order to see the complete picture. Certain specific truths are emphasized in each, with no one parable being an island unto itself (*cf. II Peter 1:20*). Specific truths from one parable will be in complete keeping, in every detail, with specific truths from another parable; and as one begins to correlate these truths, the complete subject will correspondingly begin to open to his understanding.

Parables comprise one truth placed alongside of a previous truth to help explain the previous truth. This is the thought derived from the meaning of the word itself. Our English word "parable" is a transliterated

form of the compound Greek word *parabole*, which means “to cast alongside [*para* means ‘alongside,’ and *bole* means ‘to cast’].” Thus, a parable is simply one truth placed alongside of an existing truth to provide further light on the existing truth.

In this respect, viewing the four parables comprising the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse, the parable of the Householder and His servant (second parable) was placed alongside of previously explained truth concerning a house being broken up at the time of the Lord’s return (first parable) in order to provide further information concerning this parable. In turn, the parable of the ten virgins (third parable) was placed alongside of previously explained truth (second parable, reflecting back on the first parable) to provide even further information.

That is, the parable of the ten virgins was given to provide additional information which would help to further explain the parable of the Householder and His servant, along with the parable concerning a house being broken up. And the same can be said for the relationship existing between the parable of the talents (fourth parable) and that which precedes this parable (the third parable in particular but the first two parables as well).

With these things in mind, along with the thought of ten servants and ten pounds, we can move back into the Old Testament and view a corresponding type after a somewhat similar fashion. In Gen. 24:1ff the account is given concerning Abraham sending His eldest servant into Mesopotamia to procure a bride for his son, Isaac. The servant had in his possession “ten camels” laden with *his master’s goods*, and the Scripture specifically states that “*all the goods of his master were in his hand*” (v. 10).

“Ten” shows *ordinal completion* (all the goods of his master, carried by the ten camels), as in the parable of the ten virgins or the parable of the pounds. And the manner in which the pounds (the Master’s goods) are to be used is shown in the type.

Abraham’s eldest servant, typifying the Holy Spirit in the world today, is the one who took his master’s goods and laid them out before the prospective bride. He, as in the antitype in John 16:14, 15, took the things of Abraham (which belonged to Isaac, for

“unto him hath he [Abraham] given all that he hath” [v. 36; cf. 25:5]) and showed / gave them to Rebekah.

The Holy Spirit is doing the same thing in the world today. He is taking the things of the Father, which have been given to the Son (the Son has been made “heir of *all things*” [Heb. 1:2; cf. John 16:15]), and He is revealing them to Christians.

The Lord’s servants, during the time of His absence, are to function in complete dependence upon the power and work of the Holy Spirit. The Lord’s goods are seen in possession of His servants in the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, and these same goods are seen in possession of the Holy Spirit in the antitype of Gen. 24:10, 36, 53.

These goods are to be used by the Lord’s servants under the perfect leadership of the Holy Spirit. This truth can be seen by comparing the parable of the ten virgins with the parable of the talents. The faithful, productive servants in the parable of the talents are synonymous with the five wise virgins possessing the extra supply of Oil in the parable of the ten virgins.

That is to say, faithful, productive servants are those wise servants filled with the Holy Spirit, allowing the Spirit to govern and control their affairs.

Or, to state the matter after another fashion, faithfulness in allowing the Holy Spirit to manifest Himself in His fullness in one’s life will, through a use of the Lord’s goods, result in productivity, fruit-bearing.

### Events at the End of the Dispensation

Another thing which can be seen through viewing the parables in the Olivet Discourse within their correct framework and comparing things taught in these parables with things taught in Genesis chapter twenty-four is the correct Scriptural view concerning the resurrection and rapture of Christians at the conclusion of the present dispensation. Some Bible students take the section preceding the parable of the Householder and His servant as referring to the *rapture*. However, aside from internal evidence within this section itself showing that this is not the case, the succeeding three parables reveal that something completely different is in view. That which is in view concerns *Christians appearing before the Lord in judg-*

*ment following the rapture, not Christians being removed from the earth at the time of the rapture.*

All of the servants — the faithful and the unfaithful alike — are dealt with *by the Lord together, at the same time*. They are removed together (though such would have to be inferred if using the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse alone, for this section of Scripture does not deal with the rapture), and they are subsequently judged together.

The type in Genesis chapter twenty-four shows all the servants of the Lord being removed together at the same time. When Abraham’s servant departed Mesopotamia, Rebekah and her damsels rode upon the “ten” camels (v. 61; cf. v. 10). That is, *they all went forth to meet Isaac at the same time, though not all would be manifested as the bride*. Rebekah alone covered herself with a *veil* when Isaac approached. *She clothed herself, anticipating meeting the bridegroom, undoubtedly pointing in the antitype to the wedding garment.*

The wedding garment is comprised of “the righteous acts of the saints” (Rev. 19:8, ASV) — works emanating out of faithfulness to one’s calling, producing an increase through the use of the talents or pounds — and this is the garment with which Christians must clothe themselves when they arrive in the Bridegroom’s presence, else they will appear naked (cf. Matt. 22:11-14; Rev. 3:17, 18).

The Master’s servants have been called and His goods have been committed to their trust. *All of the Master’s servants participate in this calling, and all will one day be called forth to render an account.*

In that coming day there will be both faithful and unfaithful servants who will be shown to have been either profitable or profitless servants. It will be at that time, not before, that a separation of the Lord’s servants will occur. It will be in that day that *a full disclosure will be made among all the Lord’s servants concerning how each one handled that portion of the Lord’s goods committed to his trust.*

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