

Sunday January 13th 2019
The Word of God
A Survey of the Bible – Lesson 14E
‘The End of Your Faith’

1). Lk 19:11 *Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. 12 Therefore He said: “A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Do business till I come.’*

We can see that the Lord gave the parable of the minas to His disciples ‘because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the Kingdom of God would appear immediately’. This is then a parable that sets in place the dispensation that would be allotted to the Church beyond the Kingdom of the Heavens being taken from Israel and a parable that shows the focus for the eternally saved in that dispensation. And in its detail, the parable reveals what will take place when the Lord goes to Jerusalem, already seen in –
Matt 16:21 *From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*

And Lord’s death, resurrection and ascension are seen in the parable through ‘the nobleman’ who would go into a far country to receive for Himself a Kingdom and then return. There is therefore, established in the parable of the minas the Lord’s ascension into the heavens after His resurrection and that there would be a period of time, which we know to be 2000 years, in which His servants would work with a view to making a profit, in anticipation of His reckoning with them at His return.

a). And as we compare scripture with scripture and bring these verses concerning the minas in Luke 19, to bare upon those we have been studying from Matthew Chapter 16 we realize that throughout we are dealing with issues surrounding the salvation of the soul – Matt 16:24 *Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up*

his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his soul will lose it, but whoever loses his soul for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

And as we had seen last time it is only in the 'loss' of our soul, denying our self, taking up our cross and following the Lord, in the present, that profit can be made in anticipation of the time when the Son of Man comes 'in the glory of His Father with His angels' to 'reward each according to his works'. And we see that the Son of Man coming in the glory of His Father and the return of the nobleman to reckon accounts with his servants in the parable of the minas is one and the same event.

b). And because the verses in Matthew Chapter 16 and the parable in Luke Chapter 19 are prophetically dealing with the Lord's Church, those who will make up the new creation in Christ, to be brought into existence following His resurrection and ascension, the Lord's return seen in these scriptures takes us to the Judgment Seat – 2 Cor 5:10 *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*

27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

c). According to Matthew 16, even if we should gain the whole world and everything within it during our time on this earth such gain is completely worthless, having no value whatsoever in the spiritual realm with respect to the age to come. It is without profit.

d). Not only that, but it is also implied through these verses from Matthew Chapter 16 that we cannot have the whole world now and the salvation of our soul in the age to come. It is an either, or situation which we can see through another parable the Lord gave in – Lk 12: 15 *And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."* 16 *Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, "Soul,*

you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” ’ 20 But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ 21 “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

2). Matt 25:14 *“For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.*

The parable of the talents in Matthew Chapter 25 deals with the same subject as the parable of the minas, presenting the matter from a slightly different perspective.

a). In both parables the master of the house gave his ‘goods’ into the hands of his servants with the expectation that they would take that which they had been given and make a profit – there would be an increase on that which the master originally gave them.

b). And in both parables, there is a reckoning between the master and his servants upon the master’s return. For the servants who had been profitable there was commendation and reward – Matt 25:19 *After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ 21 His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’*

And it will not escape our attention that the reward given in both parables has to do with rulership – Lk 19:15 *“And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, ‘Master, your mina has earned ten minas.’ 17 And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.’*

And just so we don’t overlook the context for that seen in these verses, let’s remember the goal for God’s great redemptive purpose as set out in the

beginning – Gen 1:26 *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion.....*

And let’s remember within that great redemptive purpose, the reason that the Church has been brought into existence – Matt 21:43 *“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

c). Whereas the profitable servants received commendation and reward at their master’s return, the unprofitable servants received condemnation and loss – Matt 25:24 *“Then he who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’ 26 “But his lord answered and said to him, ‘You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 ‘For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’*

Lk 19:26 *‘For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.*

As both these parables deal with issues concerning the salvation or the loss of the soul, that which is lost by the unprofitable servant in both can only be their soul – 25 *For whoever desires to save his soul will lose it*

1 Cor 3:15 *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

For the age to come, the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, the unprofitable servant will forfeit his soul, he will ‘lose’ it, having no place of rulership as a joint heir with the Christ in His Kingdom, separated from God’s purpose for that age.

d). And it is not an insignificant detail that the unprofitable servant in the parable of the talents hid his talent in the ground, he buried that which his

lord had given him in the earth, the realm under the control of the god of this age, providing a picture of those who would 'set their mind on earthly things'.

e). This same picture is also presented to us in the Matthew 13 parables through the imagery of fruitfulness rather than that of profitability –
Matt 13:22 *Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.*

Lk 8:14 *Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.*

And so, we can see the ground in which the talent was hidden as corresponding to the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches and the pleasures of this life. And a Christian's engagement with these 3 things describes what saving our soul in the present looks like on the one hand and that for which the soul could be exchanged on the other. The smoke and mirrors of deception.

f). And we can understand from this, that to be unprofitable and to be unfruitful are 2 ways of saying exactly the same thing with exactly the same result.

g). So, continuing with the idea of fruitfulness, this is what we find in-
Joh 12:24 *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. 25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal [age lasting] life. 26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.*

Here then, in John Chapter 12, fruitfulness is seen in relation to dying and dying is equated with hating our 'life in this world'. Which is a reference to the unredeemed soul in bondage to sin.

h). To hate our life in this world would be the same as to deny our self, take up our cross and follow the Lord, it would be the same as being a living sacrifice and to build with gold, silver and precious stones, to make a profit on the initial investment given to us – 'it produces much grain'.

i). So, what then is the connection between dying to self, making a profit and the salvation of the soul?

j). What is the initial investment, seen through the Master's goods given to His servants? And how do we make a profit? How do we become fruitful?

3). Well as always it is best to start in the beginning - Gen 2:7 *And the Lord God [Elohim] formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath [Neshamah] of life; and man became a living being.*

Man can do nothing in the spiritual realm apart from first receiving spiritual life. And if we take this back to the foundation in Genesis, we see that Adam is made alive through the action of the Triune God in breathing into his nostrils 'the breath of life'. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit acted in unison to bring this about.

a). And this is the foundational picture for our own experience – we were, like Adam, 'lifeless' in the spiritual realm, but when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ the Triune God breathed into us 'the breath of life', the 'Neshamah' of God. And we passed from death to life. And there is an important Biblical principle set forth in this.

b). The Triune God alone is able to impart spiritual life to the one dead in trespasses and sins and it is the Triune God alone who is then able to sustain that life in the one who has now passed from death to life.

c). When God revealed Himself to Abraham, He used the name seen in – Gen 17: 1 *When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am **Almighty God**; walk before Me and be blameless.*

'Almighty God is a translation of the Hebrew 'El Shaddai', which literally means 'the breasted God' – with the thought being that spiritual nourishment and sustenance can only come through God. He alone is the giver and sustainer of spiritual life.

c). So, that which we have received because of God the Son's death and shed blood is spiritual life – God's breath, His Spirit, the 'Neshamah' has been imparted to us and the spiritual life that has been given remains with us and can never be lost – Eph 2:8 *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

Now as we look at these verses from Ephesians Chapter 2, we will see that there is a progression. V8 begins with the 'gift of God', the spiritual life imparted to us as God breathed into us the breath of life. This is salvation by grace through faith.

d). Then in v10 we see that the gift of God has produced a new creation in Christ, and this is 'His workmanship'.

e). And continuing in v10, this new creation has been brought into existence 'for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them'.

f). There is then, eternal salvation, the giving of spiritual life, that is to be followed by 'good works'. And these 'good works' God has prepared beforehand.

g). Let's backtrack to make the connection – *Matt 16: 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

And the works to be rewarded in this verse are those seen in the previous verses in Matthew 16, denying our self, taking up our cross and following the Lord, losing our soul for His sake. And these works to be rewarded when the Son of Man comes in the glory of His Father can only be the same good works, we are to walk in seen in Ephesians Chapter 2.

h). *1 Cor 3:12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.*

Here we see work again in building with gold, silver, precious stones. And this work must be the same 'good works' we are to walk in from Ephesians, those works for which we will be rewarded when the Son of Man comes in the glory of His Father. And we have seen quite clearly that our work for which we will be rewarded is inseparably connected with denying our self, taking up our cross and following Him, with losing our soul in the present so that we may find it in the future – these are the good works we are to walk in.

4). Let's pause for a moment though and realize that walking in good works is not automatic. We have seen this to be so through the servants in the parables

of the minas and the talents where all were given an initial investment, but some produced a profit, walked in good works, and others didn't.

a). Rather than automatic, we should understand walking in good works in terms of a choice and a process, the same process that is pictured in days 2-6 in the Genesis account. And the choice seen in 'will you go with this man?' And the choice to deny our self and take up our cross and follow Him.

b). With this choice and process in mind we will now go to –
2 Tim 3: 16 *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [Lit God breathed], and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

There are 2 things in particular we want to note from these verses – Firstly, all scripture is the breath of God, the 'Neshamah', all scripture contains the life that only God can give, all scripture is alive – it is the breath of life.

c). Scripture is not a collection of inanimate words printed on a page, it is alive, it is the only source of spiritual life – Heb 4:12 *For the word of God [which is the breath of God] is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

We might compare the thought of the 'living word' seen here in Hebrews with God's revelation of Himself to Abraham as 'El Shaddai', the breasted God – the giver and sustainer of life.

d). And it is the sustaining of spiritual life beyond the initial breath that we see portrayed in – 1 Pet 2:1 *Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, (with respect to salvation) 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

And the second thing we will note is that all scripture is profitable. It is through the living scripture, God's breath, that profit can be made. And profit is seen in connection with doctrine, with reproof, with correction, with training in righteousness, all with a view to making us complete, 'fitted out for every good work' [Wuest]. This is the good work we are to walk in that we will be rewarded for, receiving the reward of the inheritance, the salvation of the soul, when the Son of Man comes in the glory of His Father.

e). Now, if we go back to the verses from 1 Peter Chapter 2, we will see that the expectation is that we must grow with respect to salvation - *2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,* [with respect to salvation]*3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* And this growth leading to the salvation of the soul can only come through the pure milk of the word. It is the beginning of the process to spiritual maturity.

f). But the growth with respect to the salvation of the soul will only happen if something is done in conjunction with it - *1 Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking.* Apart from this laying aside there can be no growth with respect to salvation.

g). And that which is to be laid aside is seen clearly to be characteristics found in the unredeemed soul, the self-life.

h). And this same thing is found in – Jas 1: 18 *Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.....21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

In v18 we see the beginning point and v21 onwards shows a continuing work beyond that point. And here in James, as with Peter there is an expectation to ‘receive with meekness the implanted word’ – the only means by which our souls can be saved.

i). But also, as with Peter, the implanted word that will lead to the salvation of the soul, cannot be received apart from something happening in conjunction with it - *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness,* That which is to be laid aside here corresponds exactly to that which Peter says must be laid aside – those things that are clearly seen to be the characteristics of the unredeemed soul, the self-life.

j). We can see then that the command to lay aside is the same as the command to deny our self, the same as to lose our soul for the Lord’s sake. It pictures the continuing living sacrifice.

k). And if we choose to deny our self, to take up our cross, to lay aside, these being the good works we are to walk in, then we can receive, unobstructed, the living word, the breath of life. And the more we receive of the living word the greater the increase on the initial investment of the ‘Neshamah’ of God first given to us – we will make a profit, we will be fruitful, we will walk in the Spirit and grow with respect to salvation. And ultimately, we will receive the end of our faith – the salvation of our soul.

l). But if we make the wrong choice? Remember Orpah, remember Lot and his wife.

We will continue with this next time – if the Lord is willing.