

The parable in Luke 19:11-27 is similar to the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25. However, even though there are some similarities, they were spoken on different occasions, in different locations, and each has a different application. The parable in Luke 19 was told on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. The Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25 was told in the middle of the Passion Week in Jerusalem some days later.

***19:11 While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.***

While the disciples were listening to the interaction between Zacchaeus and Jesus (Lk. 19:8-10), He spoke this parable. The purpose of the parable was to dispel the disciples' false expectations that the kingdom was about to come immediately, and to teach faithful stewardship while He was away. The primary warning is directed toward the unfaithful servant.

***19:12 So He said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return.***

***19:13 "And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, 'Do business with this until I come back.'***

***19:14 "But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'***

The parable begins by introducing a nobleman who went on a journey to secure a kingdom for himself. A nobleman is not technically a king; he is simply a "man of noble family," a man of noble descent.

The parable itself has an interesting historic parallel. Although Caesar was the emperor of the Roman Empire, it was the custom in those days for individuals to be appointed as rulers over particular areas. In 40 B.C. Herod the Great went to Rome and asked to rule over Israel. He was granted his request and ruled until he died in 4 B.C. At his death the kingdom was divided into three parts and given to his three sons. The son who was given Judea (which included Jerusalem and Jericho) was named Archelaus. Archelaus built a palace in Jericho. Wanting to display his power and instill fear into his subjects, he slaughtered 3,000 of his countrymen in the temple precinct at the first Passover after he had ascended to this throne. When the time came for him to go to Rome and receive the official approval to rule from Caesar, the Jews sent a delegation to oppose him from ruling over them. Their request was rejected, but Archelaus was given the title of *ethnarch* instead of "king." Most of the citizens hated him. As these facts were fresh in the memory of the Jews, it makes this parable much more striking.

If the parable is intended to mirror the historical situation of Archelaus, then the kingdom that the nobleman was to receive was not a kingdom in a distant place, rather, he had to go to the distant place in order to receive authority to rule over those who had been his fellow citizens up to that time – just as Archelaus had done. Therefore, the citizens who hated him were the people in the land in which he was living before he departed.

Before the nobleman left, he called ten slaves and gave each a *mina* - the equivalence of about four month's wages. Each was commanded to use the money to do business until the master returned. The master expected the servants to increase his wealth while he was gone.

In verse 14 the story abruptly turns from the servants to the citizens who hated the nobleman. The imperfect tense used for "hated" indicates that it was an ongoing animosity toward the nobleman. The citizens didn't want him to rule over them so they sent a delegation to protest it. There is no question that the citizens represented the Jews whom Jesus had come to rule over; however, the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, so in a wider sense the citizens represent all who hate Christ. The Jews had reason to hate Archelaus, but they had no reason to hate Christ. Jesus said, "They hated Me without a cause" (Jn. 15:25).

***19:15 "When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done."***

When the nobleman returned, he called the servants to him, and told them to give an account for how they had managed his resources in his absence.

***19:16 "The first appeared, saying, 'Master, your mina has made ten minas more.'***

***19:17 "And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.'***

The first servant reported that he had made ten minas; that is, he had made a 1,000 percent increase. There was no question that he had managed his master's resources well; he had been faithful at carrying out his master's desires.

The master responded first by commending the servant: "Well done, good slave." He then rewarded him: "you are to be in authority over ten cities." The reason for this promotion is then given: "because you had been faithful in a very little thing."

***19:18 "The second came, saying, 'Your mina, master, has made five minas.'***

***19:19 "And he said to him also, 'And you are to be over five cities.'***

The second servant had also invested the master's resources and made a profit – 500 percent! His reward was less than the first servant but was commensurate to his achievement.

***19:20 "Another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief;***

***19:21 for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.'***

A third servant is mentioned; he had nothing to show for his management of the master's money; he had simply taken the money and hid it in his handkerchief. He then explained why he did this. He was fearful of the master because you are an "exacting" man. The Greek adjective translated as "exacting" is not used anywhere else in the New Testament. Literally, it means dry, or hard and stiff (Ellicott). It is

translated in other literature as “mean-spirited.” The servant viewed the master as “cruel and uncompassionate toward his servants, and impossible to please (Gill). So the servant despaired of pleasing him and was fearful that had he lost the money entrusted to him he would have been punished severely.

All this is designed to show the sinner's view of God.

**19:22 "He said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow? 19:23 'Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?'**

When the nobleman heard the baseless charges he simply used the servant's impression of him to justify his condemnation. He judged the servant by his own standard (“By your own words I will judge you” – v. 22); that is, based on the character given to him by the slave he reasoned that the servant's behavior was even more inexcusable. It's as if he were saying, “If you really believe I am as severe as you say, and if you were really afraid, then you should have tried harder, not less, and you should not be surprised if you are judged harshly.”

The bottom line was that the servant had been a poor steward. He could have at least earned interest from the bank. The word translated as “bank” in English is literally the word “table” in Greek, and is referring to a lender's table where people would go and give money to a lender who would loan it to others for interest. The lender then shared the interest with the one who gave him the money originally. The slave wouldn't have had to do anything. But he didn't even do the minimum.

Of course, the parable shows that the master wasn't as the servant had portrayed him. He was gracious and rewarded people for their efforts, and the reward was massively disproportionate to what was deserved. A mina could scarcely purchase a barn, yet the first servant was given ten cities for being faithful! The second was given five! (Edwards, 539). The third servant thought he knew the nobleman, but he really didn't know him at all, and certainly didn't trust him.

**19:24 "Then he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.'**  
**19:25 "And they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas already.'**

The bystanders are probably the other servants gathered to report on how they used the monies allotted to them. The nobleman instructs them to take the money from the unfaithful servant and give it to the one who had been most faithful. The one who fulfilled his responsibility to the highest degree would be the one most capable of managing the master's assets.

The bystanders express shock over the fact that the servant who already has the most is given even more. The assumption is that the master isn't being fair. They don't like people to be given more than others. But that is the nature of grace. No one deserved what they had received, so if the master decides to give more to one over another who has the right to complain?

**19:26 "I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away."**

Verse 26 explains why the servant who had received the most receives more and why the mina was taken from the evil servant. The person who fervently uses what the master has entrusted to him discovers that the master entrusts him with more. The person who squanders the master's resources finds that even what was given will be taken away from him. What purpose would there be in leaving the master's wealth sitting idly in the hands of someone who has no desire to accomplish the master's desires?

"The third servant represents people who are related to the king in that they are associated with the community and have responsibility in it. Nevertheless, their attitude shows that they do not view God as gracious, and that they have not really trusted him. The third slave's attitude toward the master is important. He does not see the master as gracious, but as hard and unjust, and so he does not respond to the king. Such people are left with nothing at the judgment; they are sent to outer darkness, because they never really trusted or knew God" (Bock, 1542).

**19:27 "But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence."**

Before the parable ends Jesus addresses the rebellious delegation of 19:14. This group, who represents the unbelieving Jews, is identified as the nobleman's enemies and is ordered to be executed.

Jesus' description, "bring them here and slay them in my presence" is shocking, but is intended to stun people into the reality of judgment and the imagery is to stay in their minds with the goal of bringing about repentance.

In conclusion, the parable is about Jesus' departure from this earth to receive the kingdom from the Father. It was to teach His disciples that the kingdom was not going to come immediately, so they (and we) need to wisely use the resources that God has given, for all will be accountable when Jesus returns.

Three types of people are present when He returns:

1. There are faithful stewards who receive reward.
2. There are those who are outwardly associated with Christ but are unfaithful. They confess Christ, connect to the church, hear the gospel, make a profession, but in the end have no relationship with the Lord, no love, no desire to honor Him. They don't care about the honor of the King. They don't even like Him. They think He's harsh, demanding, and unfair (MacArthur). They receive judgment.
3. And there are those who openly hate and reject Him; these are judged as well. In the immediate context these are the Jews who opposed Him, but in a broader sense it includes all who reject Him.

Every person fits into one of these categories. We're in the story. We're either among the faithful, the false, or the foes. Our destiny will be determined by the group we associate with.

***19:28 After He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.***