

DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY

PART II

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

By Arlen L. Chitwood

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).

Two things are to be avoided during the time of the Lord's absence:

- 1) *Being unoccupied or idle.*
- 2) *Being busy in the wrong realm.*

Prior to His departure, *the Lord was very specific* concerning the conduct of His servants between the time of His departure and the time of His return. He had distributed His goods to His servants and had left them with the specific command, "*Occupy till I come.*"

The Lord's servants were to be occupied with handling the Lord's goods, His business, throughout the entire time of His absence. The Master of the house had left those within His household in charge of matters

pertaining to affairs in His house. He had distributed the household business among His servants in the house according to their individual ability to function in particular realms; and He had left each servant with a specific charge to faithfully carry out the particular household responsibility with which he had been entrusted.

His Own Servants

The Householder called "his own servants," which leaves no room to question the identity of those in view throughout the entire section.

There is a double possessive in the structure of the Greek text in Matt. 25:14 (*idios* [meaning "one's own"], preceded by the definite article), with the proper translation of this structure, as seen in the English text, "His Own."

Idios, "one's own," refers specifically to that which belongs to an individual in contrast to that which is not his, belonging to another. This is the word used twice in John 1:11, where the same double possessive structure appears in the Greek text each time:

"He came unto his own [*idia*, neuter plural, preceded by the article ('His Own things')], and his own [*idioti*, masculine plural, preceded by the article ('His Own people')] received him not."

The things to which He came (the throne of David, His Own throne, the domain over which He was to rule, etc.) were His Own things, though not yet in His possession; and those who rejected Him were His Own people, the Jewish people, constituting God's firstborn son, His covenant people, and Christ's brethren according to the flesh.

Things and individuals outside the scope of "His Own" are not in view in John 1:11. Jesus specifically stated that He had been sent only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and He commissioned His disciples to go only to these same individuals, forbidding them to go "into the way of the Gentiles" (Matt. 10:5, 6; 15:24). The Gentiles were "aliens from the commonwealth [Gk., *politeia*, referring to one's 'citizenship' or 'political sphere of activity'] of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).

The same thing is true through the use of the

expression, "his own servants," in Matt. 25:14. The specific reference is *to those within His household, as those within the now desolated house of Israel in John 1:11*. "His own servants" can refer to *none other than those who belong to Him, comprising His house during the present dispensation*. These individuals are neither Jew nor Gentile but rather comprise the "one new man" *in Christ*.

Through no type of sound exegesis can "his own servants" be enlarged to include unsaved Jews or Gentiles. The servant thrust into the darkness outside at the conclusion of the parable must be reckoned to possess *the same standing relative to being the Lord's Own servant as the servants allowed to enter into the joy of their Lord in an earlier part of the parable*.

His Goods

In Genesis chapter twenty-four, the mission of Abraham's servant was to obtain a bride for Isaac. The servant had in his possession *all of his master's goods, which belonged to Isaac*; and these goods were carried into Mesopotamia with a view to obtaining a bride for Abraham's son, who remained with his father throughout the time of the search.

Abraham's servant, once in Mesopotamia and in the presence of Abraham's own people, made known the purpose for his journey; and once Rebekah had been singled out as the prospective bride, the servant brought forth "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment." He gave these to Rebekah, and he also gave "precious things" to other family members (v. 53).

In the antitype, the Holy Spirit is in the world today to obtain a bride for Christ. This is His primary mission in the world during the present dispensation. He has in His possession all the Father's goods, which belong to the Son; and these goods have been brought into the world with a view to obtaining a bride for the Son, who remains with the Father throughout the time of the search.

The Holy Spirit, as He indwells those comprising the "one new man" *in Christ*, makes known the purpose for His presence in the world today; and once this purpose begins to be realized — once Christians become aware of *the true nature of the Holy Spirit's present ministry and begin to manifest an interest in that which is uppermost in the mind of the Father* — they find

themselves, as Rebekah, coming into possession of choice treasures from the things which belong to the Son. And, in line with the type, even other family members, other Christians, come into possession of "precious things" from the Son's storehouse of treasures.

The distribution of the Master's goods among His servants during the present dispensation must be in accord with I Cor. 2:9, 10:

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

God has made known, *through His Word*, the things which He has prepared "for them that love him." And the indwelling Holy Spirit takes this Word, searching "all things, yea, the deep things of God," and reveals these things to Christians.

In the type there was a distribution of the son's goods to both Rebekah and other family members, but this was not an equal distribution. *The prospective bride received the largest and best portion.*

In both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds there was a distribution among all servants, but in the parable of the talents some servants received *more* than other servants. In keeping with the type and the central issue surrounding the Holy Spirit's mission in the world today, it would have to be recognized that *the unequal distribution of the Lord's goods among Christians occurs on the basis of a Christian's interest in and adherence to that which Scripture reveals as the very purpose for the present dispensation.*

God has set aside two days, two thousand years, to call out the rulers who are to reign as co-heirs with His Son during the coming age. These co-heirs will constitute the bride of Christ, who will reign as consort queen, seated on the throne with Him. And the Holy Spirit is in the world today procuring the bride.

It is those Christians who manifest an interest in and respond to the Holy Spirit's call as He searches for the bride who find themselves in the position of Rebekah in Gen. 24:53. These are the

ones who come into possession of "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment."

Other Christians, though they are in possession of what is called "precious things," find themselves in an entirely different category in relation to things reserved peculiarly for the bride.

"Ability," as in the parable of the talents, in the light of the type in Gen. 24:1ff, is not to be thought of in a *natural sense* but in a *spiritual sense*. Some men have great natural "ability," allowing them to achieve numerous things; but "ability" in the parable of the talents is something entirely different. "Ability" in this parable can only have to do with *an individual's capacity to carry on matters of a spiritual nature through spiritual means in the Lord's house*, not matters of a natural nature through natural means either in the house or out in the world; and this ability pertains *particularly and peculiarly to matters relating to the purpose for the present dispensation.*

Those Christians who understand the true nature of the Holy Spirit's mission in the world today, allowing the Holy Spirit to do a work in their lives within this same framework, would have to be looked upon as the ones possessing *the most capacity in the realm of "ability"*; and within this group there would be varying degrees of "ability," with some Christians being more zealous in their faithful servitude than other Christians. "Lesser ability" within this same framework would correspondingly come about through *lesser capacity* as individuals possess lesser degrees of a work of the Spirit in their lives, in keeping with the purpose for the present dispensation.

An interesting thought drawn from Gen. 24:53 concerns the type goods, from those belonging to Isaac, which the servant gave to Rebekah. He delivered into her hands "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment."

The "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold," which would constitute a portion of the Lord's goods used in trading and trafficking in the antitype, are ultimately seen in a similar sense in connection with issues surrounding the judgment seat of Christ (where usage of that delivered to household servants during the present dispensation will be dealt with). Those Christians using the "jewels of silver, and jewels of gold" to bring forth an increase during the present time will see their

works described after *the same fashion*, as "gold, silver, precious stones," at the judgment seat. However, those Christians failing in this respect will have nothing to show but works described after *an entirely different fashion*, as "wood, hay, stubble" (I Cor. 3:12-15).

Then the "raiment" would undoubtedly point to *the wedding garment*, for the prospective bride in the type arrayed herself in a proper fashion before meeting Isaac (Gen. 24:65). And the same can only hold true in the antitype.

The wedding garment is made up of "righteous acts" (Rev. 19:8), and Christians have been granted the privilege of clothing themselves through the proper use of the Lord's goods in their possession.

Concluding Remarks:

The Lord's command concerning the manner of living in which those of His house are to be engaged during the time of His absence is clear. The Lord has delivered *all His goods into the hands of all His servants and has left them with the command, "Occupy till I come."*

Each servant is to be busily engaged, on his Lord's behalf, with that portion of the Lord's goods delivered *to him personally*. He is not to be engaged in another's affairs, nor are others to be engaged in his affairs.

He is responsible to the Lord alone to exercise faithfulness within the scope of His calling; and he will one day answer to the Lord alone, at the time of His return, for faithfulness or unfaithfulness in carrying out delegated responsibility within the house.

The nature of rewards for faithfulness is clearly revealed to be that of occupying one of the numerous proffered positions as co-heir with Christ, seated with Him on the throne, during the coming age (Matt. 24:47; 25:21, 23; Luke 19:17, 19).

And *the nature of chastisement for unfaithfulness* is clearly revealed to be not only that of being rejected for one of the numerous proffered positions with Christ but that of chastisement as well (Matt. 24:48-51; 25:26-30; Luke 19:22-26).

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