

What Does Yeshua Say About the End Times - Part 10

In my last post, we explored the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids in Matthew 25:1-13. In this post, we will unpack the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30. This parable explains **how** Yeshua's talmidim are to **stay alert** (Matthew 25:13) during their wait for His return. While the previous parable about the **wise** and **sensible** bridesmaids stressed readiness, this parable focused on using the waiting time well. Due to the length of this parable, I've decided to unpack it in two separate posts.

The Parable of the Talents ~ Part 1



"For it will be like a man about to leave home for awhile, who entrusted his possessions to his servants. To one he gave five talents [equivalent to a hundred years' wages]; to another, two talents; and to another, one talent — to each according to his ability. Then he left. The one who had received five talents immediately went out, invested it and earned another five. Similarly, the one given two earned another two. But the one given one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. "After a long time, the master of those servants returned to settle accounts with them. The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the other five and said, 'Sir, you gave me five talents; here, I have made five more.' His master said to him, 'Excellent! You are a good and trustworthy servant. You have been faithful with a small amount, so I will put you in charge of a large amount. Come and join in your master's happiness!' Also the one who had received two came forward and said, 'Sir, you gave me two talents; here, I have made two more.' His master said to him, 'Excellent! you are a good and trustworthy servant. You have been faithful with a small amount, so I will put you in charge of a large amount. Come and join in your master's happiness!'" ~ Matthew 25:14-23

The **man about to leave home for awhile** was obviously wealthy enough to have servants and to have an amount of money that he wanted invested and multiplied while he was gone. He would be gone a **long time** and did not want his assets to lie fallow during his absence. The master divided the money (**talents**) among his servants according to their abilities. While the English word **talent** has come to mean a natural ability, the Greek word **talanton** simply means a sum of money. Each of three servants received different amounts of money **according to his ability**. The first received **five talents of money**, the second **two talents**, and the last **one talent**. (As we learned in Forgiveness ~ Part 2, a talent was a lot of money, in excess of \$600,000 US.) No one received more or less than he could handle.

Obviously, the master knew his servants well, for the one entrusted with the least was the one who let him down. The different sums of money point out how God recognizes each person as a unique individual with varied circumstances, abilities and personalities. What he **gives** to each person is exactly what that person can handle. For these servants, if any of them failed in the assignment, his excuse could not be that he was overwhelmed. We can only speculate why the servant with one talent failed in his responsibility. He could have been lazy, borne hatred toward his master, made a stupid decision, lacked self-confidence, or even

simply procrastinated. The talents represent any kind of resource that Believers are given. God gives us time, abilities, and other resources according to our abilities, and He expects us to invest them wisely until He returns.

These **servants** may have been professional people who were either allowed to engage in business, paying a fixed amount to their master, or to trade on his behalf and share the profits with him. Many **servants** earned their freedom this way, saving their share in order to buy their freedom. The first two servants doubled the money the master had given them. But the third servant **went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money**. This would not have seemed unusual to Yeshua's listeners, for in the ancient world, it was not an uncommon way to safeguard one's valuables (see Matthew 13:44). We do not know why he did it; he could have been lazy or afraid.

The master returned **after a long time** (again Yeshua was making it clear that His return would not be immediate) and **settled accounts with them**. The **settled accounts** meant that the master had expected his servants to make money with his money. This first **servant** brought the ten talents, and his master was pleased with his efforts and with the profit. **Excellent! You are a good and trustworthy servant**. The reward for the servant's fulfilling his responsibilities and faithfulness is even greater responsibility. In addition, the **master's happiness** points to the eternal rewards of heaven (see John 15:11).

The second **servant** had also faithfully fulfilled his responsibility. He had been given less money, but he had done everything he could and brought four talents to the master. Because he had faithfully discharged his responsibility, even though he had less than the first **servant**, he received the same reward, commendation, and privileges.

You have been faithful with a small amount. The master's identical statements of praise to both **servants** show that what was important was not the total amount earned but faithfulness in utilizing their gifts and potential. Faithful stewardship in this life will result in being given greater responsibility and stewardship in the life to come.

We are responsible to use well what God has given us. The issue is not how much we have but how well we use what we have. Each believer should faithfully carry out the duties entrusted to him or her by God and multiply his or her God-given spiritual gifts and abilities for the sake of the Kingdom.

We must all give an account of our faithfulness. Yeshua is coming back ~ we know this is true! Does this mean we must quit our jobs in order to serve God? No, it means we are to use our time, talents, and treasures diligently in order to serve God completely in whatever we do. For a few people, this may mean changing professions. For most of us, it means doing our daily work out of love for God. Be faithful in what you have been given.

In my next post, we will finish up with the third servant who was given only one talent.