**Issues of the judgment seat, *in every instance*, will result *in a just recompense*. *Every Christian will receive exactly what he deserves* — reward, or chastisement — in complete accordance with revealed faithfulness or unfaithfulness in carrying out or failing to carry out that portion of the Lord’s business which had been entrusted to him.**

**When He Is Approved**

**By Arlen Chitwood of** [**Lamp Broadcast**](http://lampbroadcast.org/)

*Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love Him.* ([James 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.12&t=NKJV))

The epistle of James — as all epistles in the New Testament — centers its teaching on different facets of *the salvation of the soul* ([James 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21&t=NKJV); [5:19-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+5.19-20&t=NKJV)), which is with a view to *an inheritance in Christ’s coming kingdom* ([James 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.5&t=NKJV)). This epistle opens by pointing to the fact that the various trials, testing in one’s life (the trying of one’s faith), result in “*patience* [patient endurance]”; and a Christian is to patiently endure under these trials and testing, allowing the Lord to progressively lead him from immaturity to maturity in the faith.

He is to let “*patience have its perfect work* [patient endurance have its end-time work]” in order that he might be “*perfect and complete, lacking nothing* [mature and complete, lacking nothing]” ([James 1:2-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.2-4&t=NKJV)).

Christians are not brought from immaturity to maturity in the faith overnight. Maturity in the faith is *a lifelong process*. When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham had numerous things to learn about how the Lord works patient endurance and brings about maturity in one’s life.

Abraham failed many times (*e.g*., not leaving his kindred behind in Ur, going down to Egypt for help, seeking to help God fulfill His promise concerning a son, etc. [[Genesis 12:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+12.1&t=NKJV), [10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+12.10&t=NKJV); [16:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+16.1ff&t=NKJV)]); but God continued to work in Abraham’s life until he had been brought to the place of unquestioned obedience, to the place where there was complete reliance upon the Lord.

It was not until some sixty years beyond the time Abraham had left Ur that he is seen being brought into a state where he was ready to undergo the supreme trial, the supreme test, in his life. God, at this time, instructed Abraham to offer His son “*for a burnt offering*,” at a particular place ([Genesis 22:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+22.1ff&t=NKJV)); and Abraham simply set about to do exactly what God had told him to do. There was no remonstrance, no delay, and no questions were asked; instead, *there was perfect obedience and complete reliance upon the Lord to bring matters to pass* (*cf.* [Psalm 37:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+37.5&t=NKJV)).

Abraham had been brought into this mature state in the true sense of [James 1:2-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.2-4&t=NKJV). He had learned *patient endurance* by and through his faith being tested. He had *patiently endured* under various trials and testing over a period of about six decades (though failure had occurred at times); and the Lord had, through this process, brought him into that mature state where he was “*complete, lacking nothing*.”

And Christians today are to be brought into a mature state through this same process (though failure, as it did with Abraham, may occur at times). Abraham’s faith (a belief in that which God had said) was tested, and a Christian’s faith (a belief in that which God has said) is to be tested.

(Note that there is an inseparable connection between a person being led from immaturity to maturity and that person receiving the Word of God into his saved human spirit. There can be no growth from immaturity to maturity apart from a reception of the Word, for *faith* — believing God, the one thing pervading the whole of the matter — “*comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*” [[Romans 10:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+10.17&t=NKJV)].

In James, Christians are to “*receive with meekness the implanted Word*” [[James 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21&t=NKJV)]. *They are to study the Word, meditate upon the Word, allow the Word to flow into their saved human spirits*. The indwelling Holy Spirit then takes this Word and leads Christians “*into all truth*” [[John 16:13-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+16.13-15&t=NKJV)]. Thus, it is this “*implanted Word*” that lies at the heart of all activity surrounding *the testing of one’s faith, which brings about patient endurance.*

The continued reception of the Word can only be *that which is seen as central* in the entire process. There can be no *testing of one’s faith* apart from “*the implanted Word*,” and there can be no *patient endurance and progressive growth toward maturity in the faith* apart from such testing.)

**Approval**

In [James 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.3&t=NKJV), the trials and testing of one’s faith bring about patient endurance. Then, in [James 1:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.4&t=NKJV), as in [James 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.12&t=NKJV), the individual is to continue to patiently endure under continued trials and testing that the Lord brings to pass in his life. A continued refining process after this fashion, progressively working *maturity*, is for *a revealed purpose.*

According to verse twelve, the man who patiently endures temptation in the manner set forth in these verses will be “*blessed*” of the Lord, he will be “*approved* (KJV: ‘tried’)” by the Lord, and he will then “*receive the crown of life*” from the Lord.

Thus, the entire matter is with an ultimate view to issues of the judgment seat of Christ and the Messianic Era to follow. “Approval” or “disapproval” in connection with *blessings* and *crowns* will occur at the judgment seat; and the reason for approval, blessings, and crowns will be realized in the era beyond, during the Messianic Era.

In this respect, the revealed purpose for the present patient endurance of Christians, leading to maturity, is in order that *they might one day realize the purpose for their calling*. This maturing process, for those allowing it to occur in their lives, will result in their one day being *approved* for positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom.

(The word translated “*tried*” in verse twelve of the KJV is from *dokimos* in the Greek text, meaning “approved [through testing].” This same word, with the prefix “*a,*” appears in [1 Corinthians 9:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.27&t=NKJV) [*adokimos*]. The letter “*a*” negates the word, making it mean exactly the opposite. The context of [1 Corinthians 9:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.27&t=NKJV) has to do with running the present race of the faith, with a crown in view [[1 Corinthians 9:24-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.24-26&t=NKJV)], which is the identical thought in [James 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.12&t=NKJV). Paul sought to always keep his body under subjection (in reality, a patient endurance under trials and testing), lest after instructing others concerning this very thing, he himself could be “*disqualified* [KJV: ‘*a castaway*’ (be disapproved or be rejected)].”

*Dokimos* in its verb form [*dokimazo*], with the preposition *apo* prefixed to the word [*apodokimazo*], appears in [Hebrews 12:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.17&t=NKJV), where Esau was *rejected* for inherited blessings associated with the birthright. The preposition *apo* means “from”; and, prefixed to *dokimazo*, the word, for all practical purposes, means the same as *dokimos* with an “*a*” prefixed, as in [1 Corinthians 9:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.27&t=NKJV).)

In relation to the preceding, an object is in view — *the birthright.* Esau, although he was the firstborn, had sold his birthright; and, relative to *the inheritance*, he was now “*rejected*” (*apodokimazo*).

Esau was rejected immediately after his younger brother, Jacob, had received the blessing belonging to the firstborn. Prior to this time, Esau had *made light* of his birthright, considering it to be *of little value* (“*Esau despised his birthright*” [[Genesis 25:34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+25.34&t=NKJV)]. The Hebrew word translated “*despised*” means t*o hold in contempt, to make light of.* The Septuagint version of the Old Testament uses a word that means *to consider of little value*).

Esau did not come into a realization of the true value of the birthright until *after* Isaac had bestowed the blessing belonging to the firstborn upon Jacob. It was *only then* that Esau realized what he had forfeited and sought to retrieve the rights belonging to the firstborn.

Esau, at this time, “*cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said to his father, ‘Bless me, even me also, O my father.’*” But it was *too late*. The birthright had been forfeited, the blessing belonging to the firstborn had been bestowed upon another, and no reversal of the forfeiture and blessing could occur. The birthright, with its attendant blessing, was now beyond Esau’s grasp forever.

Esau, after realizing that the birthright was no longer his and was beyond his grasp forever, referred to the forfeited rights of the firstborn after this manner:

*“Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!”*  ([Genesis 27:38a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+27.38a&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Genesis 27:34-37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+27.34-37&t=NKJV))

And it is recorded that Esau then “*lifted up his voice, and wept.*” ([Genesis 27:38b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+27.38b&t=NKJV))

This is seen within another frame of reference in Matthew’s gospel where individuals are seen *weeping and gnashing their teeth* ([Matthew 13:42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.42&t=NKJV); [22:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV); [24:51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.51&t=NKJV); [25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.30&t=NKJV)). This is an Eastern expression showing *deep grief*; and the contexts of these passages clearly show that things relating to *the rights of the firstborn*, not eternal life, are in view.

The rejection experienced by Esau is the last of five major warnings in the book of Hebrews, and this rejection constitutes an Old Testament type of that rejection that Paul referred to in [1 Corinthians 9:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.27&t=NKJV). The reference is to Christians who will have forfeited the rights of primogeniture, appearing in Christ’s presence at His judgment seat.

Many Christians are presently following the same path that Esau took (considering the birthright to be of little value), and such Christians will one day come to the end of the matter in exactly the same way as seen in Esau’s life. They, although presently in line to be blessed as the firstborn — Christians are presently being dealt with as “sons,” with a view to one day being adopted as *firstborn sons* ([Hebrews 12:5-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.5-8&t=NKJV)) — will have forfeited this right; and they will be rejected for the blessing.

The rights of the firstborn must be retained or there can be no blessing belonging to the firstborn. The “spiritual blessings” associated with *the heavenlies* in [Ephesians 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.3&t=NKJV) cannot be appropriated by Christians who forfeit the rights of primogeniture, for these blessings are intimately connected with *the inheritance belonging to the firstborn* ([Ephesians 1:10-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.10-18&t=NKJV)). These blessings are reserved for those who overcome the inhabitants of that heavenly land *during the present age*, who will be shown qualified to enter that land as *sovereigns during the coming age*.

Christ is presently in the process of “*bringing many sons to glory*” ([Hebrews 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.10&t=NKJV)). He, through the things that He suffered, has become the “*Captain* [Originator, Founder]” of *a salvation* associated with *sonship* — the “*so great a salvation*” of [Hebrews 2:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.3&t=NKJV).

In [1 Peter 1:9-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.9-11&t=NKJV), suffering with respect to Christ’s sufferings is connected with both the salvation of the soul and the glory to be revealed (“sufferings of Christ” [[1 Peter 1:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.11&t=NKJV)] should literally be translated, “sufferings with respect to [on behalf of] Christ”). The reference is not to Christ’s sufferings but to Christians entering into these sufferings.

In [1 Peter 4:12-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+4.12-13&t=NKJV), such sufferings are connected with the trials and testing in James chapter one. *The trying of one’s faith* (working patient endurance) and *the sufferings with respect to Christ’s sufferings* (suffering through trials and testing) cannot be separated one from the other. That which is in view has to do with *patient endurance under trials and testing*, and the end of the matter in both James and 1 Peter is the salvation of one’s soul. It is being *approved* (as in [James 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.12&t=NKJV)) and being *placed in the position of a son* (as in [Hebrews 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.10&t=NKJV)), *realizing the rights of primogeniture* during the coming age.

**Sovereignty**

To exercise sovereignty during the coming age, *one must possess a crown*; and to possess a crown *one must first be approved* for the crown. Approval will occur before the judgment seat, and approval at this time will be based on *works that endure the fire* ([1 Corinthians 3:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.11-15&t=NKJV)).

The “*trying of one’s faith*,” working *patient endurance*, is inseparably associated with “*works*” in James. Comparing [Genesis 22:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+22.1ff&t=NKJV) with [James 2:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.21&t=NKJV) (along with the text leading into the passage in James) reveals that a servant’s works emanate out of his patient endurance under trials and testing; and viewing [James 2:14-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+2.14-26&t=NKJV) as a whole, works are seen to emanate out of faith. It is faithfulness under trials and testing, resulting in works. Such works are those that God would have the one being tried and tested to carry out; and these are the type of works that will endure the fire at the judgment seat.

The trial of “*every man’s work*” *in fire* at the judgment seat will be with *a view to approval or disapproval — approval if found worthy, disapproval if not found worthy.*

This approval or disapproval will occur through testing, and the method of testing will be “*by* [‘in’] *fire*”:

*each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by* [in] *fire; and the fire will test* [test with a view to approval] *each one’s work of, what sort it is*. ([1 Corinthians 3:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.13&t=NKJV))

Approval at the judgment seat will be for a prior revealed purpose. God’s purpose in working patient endurance in a Christian’s life through trials and testing (progressively effecting maturity) is the corresponding issuance of works in his life, *the heart* of that which this entire process leads into in the epistle of James. *Approval* follows Christians allowing the Lord to work patient endurance in their lives; and *approval* will, in turn, be followed by *sovereignty* during the coming age ([Revelation 3:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV)).

1) To Receive a Kingdom, and to Return

During His earthly ministry, Christ delivered two companion parables to His disciples to graphically illustrate various aspects of the matter at hand — the parable of the talents ([Matthew 25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV)), and the parable of the minas or pounds in the KJV ([Luke 19:11-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.11-27&t=NKJV)). The “*man*” or “*nobleman*” in the two parables called “*his own servants*,” delivered unto them “*his goods*,” commanded them to “*Do business* (KJV: ‘*occupy*’) *till I come*,” and then departed “*into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return*.”

The “*man*” or “*nobleman*” is *Christ*, the “*servants*” are *Christians*, “*his goods*” have to do with *His business*, and the “*far country*” is *heaven*. Christ has departed into heaven to receive a kingdom from His Father, with a view to returning for His servants (to reckon with them) following the reception of this kingdom (*cf.* [Daniel 7:9-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+7.9-14&t=NKJV); [Revelation 11:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+11.15&t=NKJV); [19:11ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+19.11ff&t=NKJV)).

During the time of the Lord’s absence, His servants are to “*occupy*” themselves with that which is entrusted to their care. The “*ten servants*” and “*ten minas* (*pounds*)” in the gospel of Luke, showing *ordinal completion* in both instances, reveal that *all of His servants* and *all of His business* are in view. Christ called *all of His servants* and left them in charge of *all of His business* during the time of His absence.

While the parable of the pounds in Luke’s gospel reveals the overall scope of both the Lord’s servants and the Lord’s business (“*ten servants*,” “*ten minas* [*pounds*]”), the parable of the talents in the gospel of Matthew reveals the different portions of this business delivered to different servants within the overall scope of His dealings with His servants (“*And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to each according to his own ability . . . .*”).

Simple teachings derived from comparing the two parables point to the fact that *every servant* of the Lord has been entrusted with some facet of the Lord’s business during the time of His absence. No servant has been overlooked; nor has any portion of *the Lord’s business* been withheld from His servants.

The one thing above all else required of servants is *faithfulness* ([1 Corinthians 4:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+4.2&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Luke 12:42-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+12.42-46&t=NKJV)). Servants of the Lord *must exercise faithfulness in carrying out that portion of the Lord’s business with which they have been entrusted*. “Success” is an entirely different matter. No servant has ever been called to be successful, only *faithful.* Success though will always follow faithfulness, whether man so recognizes that which the Lord deems as success or not.

Placing the entire matter over into the framework of the epistles of James and 1 Peter, it seems apparent that God brings about the necessary trials and testing in a Christian’s life that will move that Christian into that area of work (that portion of the Lord’s business) that has been outlined for his life (delivered to him by the Lord). The individual is to exercise faithfulness as he patiently endures trials and testing; and as he progressively matures in the faith after this fashion, the Lord brings about an outworking in his life of that facet of the Lord’s business entrusted to him (*cf.* [Philippians 1:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+1.6&t=NKJV)). Thus, such works, in reality, are those done under the direction and leadership of the Lord as the Christian exercises faithfulness to his calling.

All of this occurs for *a purpose*. In the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, the day eventually came when the “*man*” or “*nobleman*” returned to reckon with His servants — pointing to the return of Christ “*in the air*” for His servants and the subsequent reckoning “*at the judgment seat*” *with* His servants.

The only concern at hand in this reckoning in both Matthew’s and Luke’s accounts was *that which the servants had done with the Lord’s possessions that had been entrusted to their care during the time of their Lord’s absence, and the only matter in view beyond this reckoning was that of occupying positions of sovereignty in the kingdom.*

2) Well Done Good and Faithful Servant

According to both the parable of the talents and the parable of the pounds, hearing a “*Well done .* . . .” from the Lord at the time He reckons with His servants is contingent on the servants having brought forth an increase through the use of the talents and/or pounds. The increase not only had to come from within the scope of that which the Lord had left in charge of *all His servants* (*the ten minas* [*pounds*]) but it also had to come from within the scope of that which the Lord had entrusted *individually to each servant* (*the various talents*).

In the parable of the minas (pounds), the servants were judged strictly on the basis of their use of the minas (pounds) during the time of the Lord’s absence. *Nothing else was in view.*

The increase was wrought *only through the use of that which the Lord had entrusted to their care*:

*Then came the first, saying, “Master, your mina* (KJV: pound) *has earned ten minas* (pounds).”

*And the second came, saying, “Master, your mina* (pound) *has earned five minas* (pounds).” ([Luke 19:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.16&t=NKJV), [18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.18&t=NKJV))

And the revealed reward for faithfulness therein was *completely commensurate with the increase*:

*And he said to him* [the first servant], *“Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.”*

*Likewise he said to him* [the second servant], *“You also be over five cities.”* ([Luke 19:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.17&t=NKJV), [19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.19&t=NKJV))

In the parable of the talents, a slightly different facet of the picture is presented. Judgment in this parable is based strictly on *the increase of that which was delivered to individual servants within the scope of their calling*, and an increase of the same proportion percentage-wise (though not necessarily in quantity) brought about identical commendations and rewards:

*So he who had received the five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, “Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents beside them.”*

*He also who had received two talents came and said, Lord, you delivered to me two talent; look, I have gained two more talents beside them.”* ([Matthew 25:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.20&t=NKJV), [22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.22&t=NKJV))

The increase in each instance was one hundred percent, and the response of the Lord to both servants was identical:

*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.”* ([Matthew 25:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.21&t=NKJV), [23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.23&t=NKJV))

The thought is not necessarily how *hard* or how *long* one works, but how *faithful one is in carrying out the task that the Lord has delivered into his hands during the time allotted* (*cf.* [Matthew 20:1-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+20.1-16&t=NKJV)). By comparing the parable of the talents with the parable of the minas (pounds), faithfulness among Christians to the task at hand is not always the same. Thus, it would seem apparent that there could be increases of less than or more than one hundred percent, allowing a two-talent Christian to realize an increase above that of a five-talent Christian, or vice versa. *The number of talents* is not really the issue. *Faithfulness to the task at hand* is that which God looks upon and requires.

And *a person always reaps that which he sows*, whether faithfulness or unfaithfulness is manifested ([Galatians 6:7-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+6.7-9&t=NKJV)).

*Blessings, rewards*, and *crowns* are for those exercising *faithfulness* in the proper use of the talents/minas (pounds) entrusted to them. A commendation of “*Well done .* . . .” from the Lord awaits Christians exhibiting faithfulness after this fashion. But, a task “well done” is just that — *one well done*.

“Jesus will never say ‘Well done’ to anyone *unless it has been well done*.” — G. Campbell Morgan

3) You Wicked and Lazy Servant

In both the parable of the talents and the parable of the minas (pounds), *unfaithfulness* on the part of the Lord’s servants and *the end result of unfaithfulness* are shown in the latter part of each parable. Such unfaithfulness resulted in rebuke and loss in each instance; and also in each instance, the unfaithful servant was not associated in any manner whatsoever with positions of power and authority in the kingdom.

These things can be clearly seen by and through the Lord’s actions in both parables. That which the unfaithful servants possessed (the talents and minas [pounds]) was taken from them; and in the parable of the talents, the unfaithful servant was cast into “*outer darkness*.”

In the parable of the talents, one talent had been delivered to the servant who proved unfaithful. He was just as much a servant of the Lord and just as much in a position to bring forth an increase as the servants to whom five and two talents had been delivered; and, had this unfaithful servant brought forth an additional talent, which would have been an increase of one hundred percent, it is apparent that he would have received *the identical commendation* that the others received.

However, he hid his talent; it remained unused. He did not exercise faithfulness in that realm of service that the Lord had entrusted to him; and at the time when the Lord called all His servants before Him to ascertain how much each had gained through trading and trafficking in the Lord’s business (by and through each servant exercising faithfulness to that entrusted to his care), the unfaithful servant experienced *rebuke* and *loss*.

The case of the unfaithful servant in the parable of the minas (pounds) is very similar. He, as the other servants, could have received authority over one or more cities had he brought forth an increase; but he kept the mina (pound) “*put away in a handkerchief*” ([Luke 19:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.20&t=NKJV)). He didn’t use the mina (pound). He didn’t involve himself in the Lord’s business during the time of his Lord’s absence. He proved unfaithful concerning that which the Lord had left in his care, during His time of absence. And, following the Lord’s return, at the time when the Lord called His servants before Him to ascertain how much each had gained through trading and trafficking (by and through each servant exercising faithfulness to that entrusted to his care), the unfaithful servant — as the unfaithful servant in the parable of the talents — experienced *rebuke* and *loss*.

**The Kingdom**

Two great mountain peaks dominate the whole of Scripture — *Calvary*, and *the Kingdom*.

Events depicted by the parable of the talents and the parable of the minas (pounds) both pick up at a point *beyond the events of Calvary*. It was at this time that the “*man*” or “*nobleman*” — Christ — called “*his own servants* [*all of His servants*],” delivered to them “*his goods* [*all of His goods*],” commanded them to “*Do business till I come*,” and then departed “*into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return*.”

Then the matter at hand, as is evident in both parables, has *one goal* in view — *the kingdom*. And the focal point in both centers on *the present activity of the Lord’s servants, in view of the coming kingdom of Christ.*

(Note that “the kingdom” is not *the main thing in view toward which everything moves* in these parables; rather, it is *the ONLY thing in view toward which everything moves in these parables*. And the present activity of the Lord’s servants, in view of the coming kingdom of Christ, is not *the main activity, with a view to a particular, revealed goal*; rather, it is *the ONLY activity, with a view to a particular, revealed goal.*

Attempting to read eternal verities [eternal salvation or eternal damnation] into these parables is *to completely misunderstand, misinterpret, and misrepresent that which the Lord has set forth.* And, beyond that, *it completely hides the truth of the matter taught in these parables*. *It does away with that which is taught in these parables*. And, beyond that, such a teaching can only present the salvation message to be carried to unsaved man in *a corrupted respect,* bringing works into a realm where works cannot exist.

It is plain that the servants in these two parables are those who had already availed themselves of the free gift of eternal salvation, wrought through Christ’s sacrificial death at Calvary. Such is evident from several observations:

*First*, these were the Lord’s “*own servants*.”

*Second*, they were the ones left in possession of the Lord’s “*goods*” during His time of absence.

*Third*, at the time of the Lord’s return, *all of the servants were called together at the same time and place to give an account*. If the unfaithful servants represent the unsaved, as some contend, these two parables teach a general judgment of saved and unsaved — something completely foreign to Scripture. Also, the fact that *all of the Lord’s servants were called to an accounting at the same time and place* leaves no possible room for that which is widely taught in many circles today — a selective resurrection and rapture of Christians at the end of the present dispensation.

*Fourth*, the issue at hand in the reckoning was “faithfulness,” “fruit-bearing,” with a view to occupying or being denied positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom [and no unsaved person can ever enter into such a judgment].)

The present activity of the Lord’s servants is made possible only because of the finished work of Christ on Calvary’s cross at His first coming; but, as is evident in both parables, this work of Christ — providing a propitiatory, vicarious sacrifice, effecting man’s redemption — was only an essential part of a much broader purpose.

In His own words, Christ revealed that His first coming involved two central issues: His sufferings, to be followed by *His glory* (*cf*. [John 3:14-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+3.14-16&t=NKJV); [18:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+18.37&t=NKJV); [Luke 24:25-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.25-26&t=NKJV)).

Christ was born “*King of the Jews*”; and the turmoil caused by His birth (emanating from Satan through Herod) involved *His Kingship*, not things having to do with His also being “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (*cf.* [Matthew 2:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+2.1ff&t=NKJV); [John 1:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+1.29&t=NKJV)).

Simeon at the temple in Jerusalem, shortly after the birth of Jesus, saw “*the Lord’s Christ*,” the One who would effect “*the consolation of Israel*.” Simeon’s words, “. . . *mine eyes have seen your salvation . . . A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel*,” refer to national blessings wrought through Israel’s Messiah — redeemed Israel occupying the nation’s proper place with respect to all of the surrounding Gentile nations ([Luke 2:25-32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+2.25-32&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Luke 2:36-38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+2.36-38&t=NKJV)). Such cannot exist apart from a restoration of the theocracy to Israel and God’s Son exercising His position as “*King of the Jews*” within this theocracy.

Before Christ began His public ministry, He met Satan face to face in the wilderness. The first man, the first Adam, through Satan’s confrontation with Eve, had been defeated; and it was necessary that the second Man, the last Adam, experience a similar confrontation Himself to show that He was fully qualified to redeem that which the first Adam forfeited in the fall.

The first Adam had been created to rule the earth in the stead of Satan, who had previously disqualified himself. However, through sin, the first Adam was also disqualified, allowing Satan to continue as ruler over the earth. The confrontation between Satan and the last Adam was with the same objective in view — *rulership over the earth, preceded by Calvary* (*cf.* [Genesis 1:26-28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+1.26-28&t=NKJV); [Luke 4:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+4.5-6&t=NKJV); [24:21-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.21-27&t=NKJV)).

Christ’s appearance in the presence of Satan, showing that He was fully qualified to redeem that which the first Adam had forfeited in the fall, anticipated not only Calvary but also events beyond Calvary. It was at Calvary that Christ paid the price for man’s redemption, making it possible for man to ultimately be brought back into the position for which he had been created.

The entire earthly ministry of Christ centered on *His coming kingdom*, and His present ministry in the sanctuary centers on *the kingdom* as well. Then, when Christ comes forth from the sanctuary, all activity will continue to be with a view *to the kingdom, which will ultimately be realized*.

Christ’s message to Israel during His earthly ministry had to do with *the kingdom*. His ministry centered on *an offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel*. There was a call for national repentance, *for the kingdom of the heavens was at hand* ([Matthew 3:1-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.1-12&t=NKJV); [4:17-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4.17-25&t=NKJV)).

However, Israel spurned the offer, *the kingdom* (that facet of the kingdom proclaimed, *the kingdom of the heavens*, not the kingdom covenanted to David) was taken from Israel, and a new nation — *the one new man “in Christ,”* the Church — was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected. Thus, the Church, as Israel, was called into existence *for purposes surrounding this kingdom* ([Matthew 21:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.43&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.11-15&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.9-10&t=NKJV)).

But Christ, following His first coming, didn’t immediately ascend the throne (His own throne and David’s throne, not His Father’s throne where He is presently seated, awaiting that coming day). An entire dispensation has been set aside, during which the Spirit of God has been sent into the world to procure a bride for God’s Son (to reign as consort queen with the Son in His kingdom). And while the Spirit is in the world searching for the bride throughout the present dispensation, Christ is ministering on the Christians’ behalf in the Holy of Holies in the heavenly tabernacle (on the basis of His shed blood, shed at Calvary), *with the kingdom in view* ([Hebrews 4:11-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+4.11-16&t=NKJV); [9:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+9.11-12&t=NKJV); [10:19ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.19ff&t=NKJV)).

The birth from above, imparting spiritual life, is made possible through Christ’s finished work at Calvary. And the same One who died at Calvary is presently ministering, as High Priest, in the heavenly sanctuary. He is presently ministering after this fashion in order to provide a present cleansing (from defilement through contact with the world) for those having availed themselves of His past work at Calvary — *those destined to be “kings and priests,” the new order of “sons” about to be brought forth to rule in the coming kingdom* (*cf*. [John 13:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+13.8&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.10&t=NKJV); [1 John 1:6-2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1John+1.6-2.2&t=NKJV); [Revelation 5:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+5.10&t=NKJV)).

Thus, everything in Scripture moves toward *that coming day when the kingdom will be realized*. This teaching begins in the first chapter of Genesis and pervades all Scripture. Man’s creation had to do with *the kingdom*; man’s fall had to do with *the kingdom*; and man’s redemption has to do with *the kingdom*. Christ’s past work had to do with *the kingdom*; and His present work is occurring with *the same end in view*. And matters are the same with the Spirit’s past and present work. *It is all about a kingdom to be realized on the seventh day, the seventh millennium, dating from Adam’s creation.*

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Christ’s present work is occurring with *the same goal in view.*

And matters are the same with the Spirit’s past and present work.

*It is all about a kingdom to be realized on the seventh day, the seventh millennium, dating from Adam’s creation.* This is the way Scripture opens in *Genesis*, this is the way Scripture continues from that point forward, and this is the way God will bring matters to pass after everything has been said and done.

Redeemed man is presently being called to *the throne in a heavenly realm*. There is *a salvation* out ahead, the salvation of the *soul,* which is *the greatest thing God has ever designed for the one whom He created and has redeemed*. This is a salvation that even the angels “*desire to look into*” ([1 Peter 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.12&t=NKJV)), for it includes *joint-heirship with God’s Son over all things.*

The trials and testing of life — effecting patient endurance, maturity in the faith — are with a view to approval at the judgment seat and subsequent positions of power and authority in the kingdom; and the instructed Christian knows that he is to “*count it all joy*” ([James 1:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.2&t=NKJV)) when subjected to all the multifaceted trials and testing that the Lord, for a purpose, brings to pass in his life.

*If we endure* [‘patiently endure’], *we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him* [not deny Christ *per se* but refuse to patiently endure], *He also will deny us* [refuse us a position with Him in the kingdom]. ([2 Timothy 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.12&t=NKJV))

(The word translated “*deny*” in [2 Timothy 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.12&t=NKJV) is *arneomai* in the Greek text, which could, as well, be understood and translated in the sense of “refuse,” which would be more in keeping with the overall thought in this verse. That which is set forth in the verse has nothing to do with eternal salvation. Rather, the subject, both textually and contextually, has to do with *patiently enduring under trials and testing, with a view to reigning with Christ.*

The thought in the latter part of the verse is not refusing or denying Christ, for the word “Him” is not in the Greek text. It is refusing or denying that which is previously seen in the text.

Following the thought, “If we patiently endure, we shall reign with Him,” *the remainder of the verse parallels the first part of the verse*. The continued text, as previously seen, reads, “if we refuse,” not “if we refuse him.” Refusing, contextually, *can only have to do with refusing to patiently endure*. And as well, by the same token, Christ refusing the one who does not patiently endure *can only have to do with refusing that person for a regal position with Him in His kingdom*.)

*Concluding thoughts*:

There is a day coming when every Christian will *render an account to his Lord*, and the present day is t*he time of preparation for that coming day*. The present day is the time when the Lord’s servants are in possession of the various talents; and the present day is the time when a work is being performed in the lives of Christians that is connected with maturity in the faith, the proper use of the talents entrusted to them, etc. This day though will last only as long as God’s Son remains in the “*far country*.”

One day Christ will receive the kingdom from His Father and then return to reckon with His servants.

This will be an *individual reckoning* — “. . . *we must all appear . . . that every one may receive* . . . .”

And this reckoning will be based strictly on *each servant’s use of the talent/talents entrusted to his care during the time of his Lord’s absence.*

This is exactly what the Apostle Paul had in mind when he sought *to warn* “*every man*,” and *teach* “*every man in all wisdom*,” in order that he might *present* “*every man perfect* [*mature, complete*] *in Christ Jesus*” ([Colossians 1:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.28&t=NKJV)). The *warning* that Paul sounded had to do with the coming time of evaluation at the judgment seat. His message along this line was really threefold:

1) A present preparation.

2) A preparation with a view to a coming evaluation.

3) And a preparation and evaluation with a view to the kingdom to follow.

The reference to “*the hope of glory*” in [Colossians 1:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.27&t=NKJV), leading into Paul’s ministry in verse twenty-eight, has to do with that hope that Christians possess of one day occupying positions as co-heirs with Christ in the kingdom. This is referred to elsewhere in Scripture different ways, *e.g*., “*that blessed hope*” ([Titus 2:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Titus+2.13&t=NKJV)), “*the hope set before us* . . . *as an anchor of the soul*” ([Hebrews 6:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.18-19&t=NKJV)), and “*the hope that is in you*” ([1 Peter 3:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+3.15&t=NKJV)). Paul, above everything else, did not want any Christian within the scope of his ministry to experience rejection/disapproval when he appeared in Christ’s presence at His judgment seat ([Colossians 1:28-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+1.28-29&t=NKJV)).

Issues of the judgment seat, *in every instance*, will result *in a just recompense*. *Every Christian will receive exactly what he deserves* — reward, or chastisement — in complete accordance with revealed faithfulness or unfaithfulness in carrying out or failing to carry out that portion of the Lord’s business which had been entrusted to him.

And this will be with a view to occupying or being denied positions of power and authority in the kingdom that will follow.