



THE GOSPEL OF  
**Luke**

**SESSION OBJECTIVE: LUKE 19:11-27**

To understand more about the parable of the ten minas.

## A Tale of Two Parables

Luke 19:11-27 presents us with yet another parable, and one that, if you are familiar with the other Gospel accounts, might be easily confused with a parable from Matthew's Gospel. This particular parable features "a nobleman" who "went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom" (Lk. 19:11). Before leaving, he gives "minas," a relatively small monetary amount in the ancient world, to "ten of his servants" (Lk. 19:12). Upon his return, he rewards or punishes them based on how they invested what was given to them. It sounds strikingly similar to another parable Jesus told in Matthew 25:14-30, but with some slightly different details. The danger of these similar parables is that one runs the risk of essentially teaching this parable in Luke 19:11-27 with the same interpretations and applications as those found in Matthew 25:14-30 without considering the differences between the two. Some scholars even think that this parable is completely different than the Matthean counterpart meant to communicate a completely different outcome. When studying the Scripture, it's important to use meticulous care when studying a passage even if you think you know what it means or are mildly familiar with it. Our task for this session is to understand the differences between the two parables, and the meaning of our primary passage.

## The Parable of the Ten Minas

As mentioned above, there are similarities and subtle differences between this parable in Luke 19:11-27 and the one found in Matthew 25:14-30 called "The Parable of the Talents." Below is a breakdown of some of the key characters, terms, and phrases that help us separate these parables and rightly understand each of them.

**THE NOBLEMAN**

The primary character in Luke's parable is simply called "the nobleman" (Lk. 19:12), a title that conveys royalty by birth. This is a different title from the main character in Matthew's similar parable, who is simply referred to as "a man going on a journey" (Matt. 25:14). The "nobleman" is set to go on a journey, but more specificity is given: "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return" (Lk. 19:12). This seems like a strange objective for a journey, but it was common in the ancient world. If an individual was set to inherit kingdom or power through marriage, death, or some other means, they would have to travel to wherever the ruler lived (or in the case that the ruler died and his authority was being transferred to the nobleman, a ruling body would rule in the stead of the deceased as a steward until the transfer of authority was made). This nobleman was not well loved by his people, either: "His citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him saying, 'We do not want this man to reign over us'" (Lk. 19:14). Apparently, the nobleman had a reputation that preceded him in the worst of ways.

**THE CONTEXT**

There is some historical context to ground this parable as well. This parable closely resembles actual events that took place concerning the Herodian dynasty, which included Herod the Great, Archelaus, and Antipas. After Herod the Great died in 4 B.C., Archelaus made a journey to Caesar Augustus in a quest to take power from his now deceased father. Edwards adds, "Luke's description of the nobleman and Josephus's description of Archelaus share a half-dozen words or phrases in common; furthermore, like the nobleman, opponents hounded Archelaus to Rome, where they opposed his appointment before Caesar Augustus."<sup>1</sup> Jesus' parables usually play off of well-known objects or scenarios; this parable is no different. The crowds would have been very familiar with Archelaus' claim to power, and the sizable public objection that came from the crowds he would soon rule over.

**THE MINAS**

Another difference between Luke's parable and Matthew's is the amount of money being handled. In Luke's parable, the nobleman gives to his servants minas: "Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, 'Engage in business until I come'" (Lk. 19:13). Compare this to Matthew's account which included a much higher amount measured not in *minas* but in *talents* (Matt. 25:15-18). A mina was worth roughly 1/60 of a talent, or about 100 drachmas. There is no real significance to be drawn out from either the mina nor the talent. The point is that each parable uses different measurements, indicating that they are not the exact same story.

**THE RESPONSE**

Once the nobleman returns, he evaluates the faithfulness of his servants based on how they invested the minas he gave to them. Though he gave "ten servants" the minas, only three appear for evaluation. The first one doubled his investment which brought elation from the nobleman: "And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities'" (Lk. 19:17). This is the only servant who receives the "good" and "faithful" response. The second one returns five minas and in turn will rule over five cities (Lk. 19:18-19). The third one, instead of investing it and making a profit, hides it "away in a handkerchief" (Lk. 19:20). He is rebuked, has his mina stripped away and it given to the first servant (Lk. 19:24), and then the nobleman issues an execution for all of those who opposed his authority (Lk. 19:27). The response is where the two parables really find harmony together. The nobleman's response to his servants mirror in many ways the man and his servants in the Matthean account, and even virtually the same "lesson" is given by the main characters of each of the parables: "I tell you that to everyone who has,

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<sup>1</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, Pillar New Testament Commentary. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 537.

more will be given, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away” (Lk. 19:26, see also: Matt. 25:29).

### **PUTTING IT TOGETHER**

So what do we make of this parable? Is Jesus saying the same thing as He was in Matthew 25:14-30, or does He intend to convey something different? The side of scholarship that argues for a different parable does so on account of a few things. For one, they seem to be slightly different characters. They use different money forms. Beyond that, the ruler is seen as cruel and reprehensible and so some scholars would argue that this clearly doesn’t describe the Lord. Beyond that, the man in Matthew 25 (who is supposed to represent the Lord) has authority to cast the wicked servant into “the outer darkness” where “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 25:30), whereas the nobleman simply steals away the one mina and gives it to another servant. These are acceptable observations.

However, it is more likely that they do tell the same story. Both men go on a journey and leave their servants with money. Whether it is minas or talents is irrelevant to the story. How then do we explain the nobleman’s unfavorable reputation? Well, if the citizens who reject Him represent the Jewish people it makes a lot of sense. Jesus is going to soon go away to receive His kingdom (at the resurrection and ascension). That would mean the nobleman’s return symbolizes Jesus’ return wherein He will judge everyone according to how they lived their lives. That would also mean the nobleman’s execution plan symbolizes the final judgment wherein Christ will judge His enemies once and for all. While the two parables have some differences, it seems likely that they both intend to convey the same thing.

## **What About Now?**

The takeaway for this is fairly straightforward: Jesus will one day come back from receiving His kingdom and judge everyone for how they stewarded what was given to them. This is not to say that you are saved by works, but that your actions matter and will be evaluated accordingly when Christ returns.

## **Study Questions**

### **Day One**

1. Read Luke 19:11-12. What did Jesus begin to tell the crowds? Where was Jesus, geographically speaking? Who is the main character of the parable, and where was he going?

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2. Read Luke 19:13-15. How many servants did he call and what did he give them? How did the citizens respond to his imminent rule? When he returned, what did he do?

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### **Day Two**

1. Read Luke 19:16-17. How much did the first servant make back on the nobleman’s investment? How was he rewarded?

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2. Read Luke 19:18-19. How much did the second servant make back on the nobleman's investment? How was he rewarded?
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### Day Three

1. Read Luke 19:20-21. What did the third servant do with the single mina he was given? Why did he do this?
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2. Read Luke 19:22-23. How did the nobleman respond to his servant's actions? What suggestion did he make to the servant?
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### Day Four

1. Read Luke 19:24-25. What did he do with the single mina? To whom was it given?
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2. Read Luke 19:26-27. What was the main point of the parable?
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## Week 69 Discussion: Stewards

In Luke 19:11-27, Jesus tells a parable wherein we find out that upon His return, He will judge everyone according to what they were entrusted with. Talk as a group about what God has entrusted you with and how well you are stewarding it.

1. Icebreaker: What is the biggest responsibility God has entrusted you with at this point in your life? (Think ministry, kids, family, calling, etc.)
2. What has God previously entrusted you with over which you no longer have responsibility?
3. What is one way in which you have been a good steward? (Example: "God has given me the gift of teaching, and I now teach the Bible in some capacity.")
4. What is one way in which you have not stewarded well?
5. Are there things God has entrusted you with over which you wish you were not given responsibility?
6. Encourage one another to begin stewarding those things you've neglected in your life.

## Takeaways:

1. Jesus tells the parable of the ten minas.
2. This parable is slightly different than Matthew's parable of the talents, but they convey the same thing.