

• *We do not know when the end of the world might be*

People often think that the final glory of God's kingdom is going to come at any moment. In fact, we do not know when the end of the world might be. It certainly is good to be ready for interventions of God's judgement into our world at any time. But sometimes people get very excited about 'the last things' and like to insist that the end of the world must be very near, and will certainly be in our lifetime. People are quite sincere in this but it is not good to be over-dogmatic.

• *A parable to be prepared for a lengthy delay*

Jesus' disciples were among those who believed that God's glorious kingdom was very near at hand^{□1}. However, Jesus told them a parable to persuade them not to expect an immediate glorious kingdom but to be prepared for a lengthy period of delay in which we are to serve God.

□1 19:11

1. *The parable is a warning about delay*

1. **The parable is a warning about delay**^{□1}. A man of noble birth has to travel to a far-off land to receive a kingdom. Actually this happened several times in the royal family that ruled Israel. Various members of the Herod family who were the rulers of Israel had to travel to Rome to receive the power to rule from the Roman authorities.

□1 19:12

• *Jesus has gone to the Father to receive a kingdom*

This is a good illustration of what has happened in the life of Jesus. He has gone to the Father to receive a kingdom. Actually He has received His kingdom already and is ruling from heaven over the world. One day He will physically and literally return to reign as King more gloriously and visibly.

• *One day he will physically and literally return to reign as King*

• *The return of the King is delayed*

The main point is: the return of the King is delayed. The Father has reasons for wanting His Son to reign from heaven. He is the King of the universe but is physically absent from planet earth at the moment. The Second Coming of Jesus comes only after great delay. The delay has already lasted for two thousand years and may last even longer.

2. *The parable is a message to us about using the delay in Jesus' return*

2. **The parable is a message to us about using the delay in Jesus' return**^{□1}. In the parable, while the future king is absent he gives his servants some money to use in trade in the financial systems of Israel. Each has ten 'minas'; a 'mina' was a small amount of money. They are to use it to do business for the future king while he is away.

□1 19:13

• *Each has a 'measure of grace'*

The parable is a picture of the situation of each Christian. We each have a 'measure of grace'. We have anointings and situations which we can use to serve our Lord Jesus Christ while He is physically absent from this world.

3. *The parable warns us that Jesus will call us to account for how we have served Him*

3. **The parable warns us that Jesus will call us to account for how we have served Him**^{□1}. When the nobleman travels to the far-off country a separate delegation of citizens travels to the same far-away destination to tell the colonial rulers they do not want this man as king^{□2}. This actually happened when Herod the Great died and his son Archelaus went to Rome to receive authority to be the next king. Fifty people from Israel also went to Rome to oppose his becoming the next king. There are people who say about Jesus, 'We do not want this man to reign over us.'

□1 19:14-19

□2 19:14

When the king returns he summons his servants to give account of how they have used the minas he gave them. The reward for being

• *Reward is the further privilege of serving him*

how they have used the minas he gave them. The reward for having served the king is authority and the further privilege of serving him¹. When Jesus returns and finds that we have served Him, our reward will be the honour that He gives us. Perhaps also there will be varying levels in our authority as kings reigning with Christ. It starts even now. The more faithful we are, the more authority Jesus gives us.

19:15-19

4. Those who are not fruitful will be punished

• *Lazy Christians will suffer serious loss*

4. **Those who are not fruitful will be punished**¹. One servant failed to serve his master, because he was paralysed by fear². The master calls his laziness wickedness and a sin against knowledge³. The authority that should have belonged to the wicked servant is given to the faithful servant as an additional reward⁴. Faithfulness gets **abundantly** rewarded; laziness gets punished. Lazy Christians will suffer serious loss, in this world and on the day of judgement.

19:20-26
19:20-21
19:22-23
19:24-26

5. There are two kinds of punishment, one for disobedient servants and another for those who refuse to be servants at all

• *The two categories are considered separately*

5. **There are two kinds of punishment, one for disobedient servants and another for those who refuse to be servants at all**¹. It is to be noticed that lazy servants and complete rebels are considered separately and punished differently. As we have already seen, it is important not to try to get too much out of a parable, but it is clear the lazy servants suffer loss, whereas the rebels who refused their king altogether are executed. It will be similar in the final day of judgement. Lazy Christians will certainly suffer loss, and the loss will be terrible. But those who rebel even more seriously because they have rejected the kingship of Jesus altogether will experience the greatest punishment that can ever be known: what the Bible calls 'the second death'.

19:27

The Important Point

• *Christians are each given their 'measure' of grace with which to serve God*
• *When Jesus comes He will call us to account for reward or loss*

The important point of the parable is that Christians are each given their 'minas', their 'measure' of grace with which to serve God. The Second Coming of Jesus might be long delayed. We do not know for sure when He will return. It might be sooner than we think. But when Jesus returns He wants to find us busy using His grace, and using the various giftings and callings that He has placed upon us. Christians have certain things which we are to do for Jesus. When Jesus comes He will call us to account. There will be everlasting rewards for those who have served Him; there will be loss for those who have been lazy. To everyone who has served God, the privilege of doing more for Jesus will be given.



Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



These specially reformatted chapters "Slices of Bread" produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below

Slices for the Nations	Slices for Sponsors	Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world where resources are scarce and unaffordable In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available free of charge Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the <i>Slices</i> web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those in more prosperous circumstances who can afford to contribute to the development of this material and its distribution with a small monthly donation The same material as Slices for the Nations Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the <i>Slices</i> web site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who wish to sample the material or dip into it from time to time, a proportion of the PTTB series is available free of charge Slices for Everyone (as a download) or Slice of the Week (attached to a weekly email) The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive Slices for the Nations

To subscribe please contact: slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at www.slices.org.uk
Details of the availability of *Preaching Through The Bible* books and how they may be purchased can be found on www.ibtr.org.uk