

Ezekiel 44A

- As we finished our last study in Ezekiel, we entered into Chapter 44 where the prince, David, had set up his office in the east gate of the temple
 - This will be the place he spends his work time (at least part of it) serving the Lord

Ezek. 44:1 Then He brought me back by the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces the east; and it was shut.

Ezek. 44:2 The LORD said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it, for the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut.

Ezek. 44:3 "As for the prince, he shall sit in it as prince to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by way of the porch of the gate and shall go out by the same way."

>> IMAGES 1-2

- The east gate is now shut and can't be used again since it was used by the Lord
 - No one will take the same journey that the Lord took, which clearly symbolizes the Lord's work of atonement
 - Jesus' death on the cross was an act of atonement that can't be repeated by anyone
 - And His entry into the temple is a symbolic representation of Christ serving as our High Priest interceding for our sin
 - Therefore His entry into the temple through the east gate happens once, and thereafter the journey can't be repeated
 - This symbolizes the once-for-all reality of Christ's sacrifice
 - So David enters into the gate from the inside of the outer court and performs service to Christ in that place
 - We don't know his job description, but we know that leaders and judges sat in the gate of city walls in ancient times
 - So it seems likely that David will officiate over Kingdom business for Israel

- There's simply more we don't know than we do know about the nature of that time and the work that will take place
- And as I showed in the graphic from last week, Jesus' government has several levels

>> **IMAGE 3**

- Under David will be the 12 apostles ruling the twelve tribes, according to Matthew 19:27-28
 - And Gentile believers (Church saints) will also be in the government

[1Cor. 6:2](#) Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?

[1Cor. 6:3](#) Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

[Rev. 20:6](#) Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

- We will judge the world in Christ's government and we will reign with Him
- Furthermore, the Gentile nations of the world will have rulers, princes according to Isaiah

[Is. 49:5](#) And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant,
To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him
(For I am honored in the sight of the LORD,
And My God is My strength),

[Is. 49:6](#) He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also make You a light of the nations
So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

[Is. 49:7](#) Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One,
To the despised One,
To the One abhorred by the nation,
To the Servant of rulers,

“Kings will see and arise,
Princes will also bow down,
Because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen
You.”

- Isaiah says that “kings” and “princes” will see the Kingdom of Christ and the prominence of Israel in that time
- They will come to bow down to Christ
 - But the point is that there are rulers in that day, which is part of a government
- So fundamentally, the government of the Kingdom is a monarchy: Christ as King and various levels of authority under Christ to rule the world
 - What place will you have in Christ’s government?
 - Many passages give us those answers but we get a concise summary in two parables Jesus taught
 - The parables of the minas and talents – and we want to take a moment to consider that teaching before we move on in Ezekiel
 - You can read the answer on the VBVM I website [here](#)
 - These two parables together explain how Christ will assess each believer so He may assign to each a just reward
 - The reward takes two forms, and these two parables explain the two-sided nature of our reward
 - The first part is found in Matthew 25:14-30

[Matt. 25:14](#) “For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.

[Matt. 25:15](#) “To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.

[Matt. 25:16](#) “Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents.

[Matt. 25:17](#) “In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more.

[Matt. 25:18](#) “But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

[Matt. 25:19](#) "Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.

[Matt. 25:20](#) "The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.'

[Matt. 25:21](#) "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

[Matt. 25:22](#) "Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.'

[Matt. 25:23](#) "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

[Matt. 25:24](#) "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.

[Matt. 25:25](#) 'And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.'

[Matt. 25:26](#) "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed.

[Matt. 25:27](#) 'Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest.

[Matt. 25:28](#) 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'

[Matt. 25:29](#) "For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.

[Matt. 25:30](#) "Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- In the parable, a master gives his slaves "talents" to steward during His absence
 - A talent in Jesus' day was a measure of weight of about 130 lb or nearly 60kg
 - A talent of silver was equal to 9 years salary for a laborer, so even a single talent represented considerable personal resources

- In fact, our modern meaning of the word “talent” finds its origins in this parable
- The three slaves received differing amounts of wealth based on their ability
 - Evidently, the master recognized the abilities and limitations of each servant
 - So he assigned responsibility to each accordingly
- Regardless of the degree of responsibility, each slave was to devote his full time and attention to managing the talent(s) he was given
 - Even the slave who received only one talent still had a significant responsibility in light of the high value of a talent
 - Therefore, all slaves must serve faithfully in the master's absence.
- At the end of the parable, the master returns to evaluate each slave's service to know if the slave had been faithful in discharging his duty
 - The first slave doubled his five talents as did the slave given two talents
 - So both slaves received the same commendation from the master.
 - Even though the master assigned a different degree of responsibility to each slave, he did so understanding each slave's ability
 - Therefore when both slaves performed faithfully, the master awarded each slave equally
- The master's commendation to each slave in v.21 and v.23 was identical
 - To both he emphasized each slave's faithful service rather than the magnitude of his achievement
 - Only the third slave received a rebuke for failing to provide faithful service to his master
- Based on these details, we see Jesus is describing a reward system for believers

>> IMAGE 4

- Christ (i.e., our Master) invites every believer (i.e., His slaves) to serve Him during His absence
 - A talent in the parable symbolizes a believer's duty to serve the Lord faithfully in some important and challenging way
 - And the way we are called to serve the Lord will vary in keeping with our abilities
- Jesus calls some believers to assume greater burdens than others
 - Some believers must bear greater burdens in serving Christ (i.e., five talents)
 - While other believers are asked to make fewer sacrifices in serving the Lord (i.e., two talents)
 - Nevertheless, all believers are expected to demonstrate faithfulness so as to receive an equal inheritance
- A faithful servant's reward is a share of Christ's inheritance in the Kingdom
 - Believers will receive a portion of Christ's inheritance on the Earth to enjoy during the 1,000-year Kingdom

[Col. 1:12](#) giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

[Col. 3:23](#) Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, [Col. 3:24](#) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

[Eph. 1:11](#) also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

[Eph. 1:12](#) to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

[Eph. 1:13](#) In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

[Eph. 1:14](#) who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

- We can tell that this parable is focused on Christ's inheritance in v.14 since the parable opens speaking about the master's "possessions"
 - In fact, notice how each faithful slave was permitted to keep the additional talents he earned during the master's absence
 - In a sense, we can say the slaves stored up wealth for themselves by their faithful service to the master
 - Scripture commands the believer to do this very thing:

[Matt. 6:19](#) "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

[Matt. 6:20](#) "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

[Matt. 6:21](#) for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- We store up treasure by faithfulness to our assigned duties in service to Christ, not the magnitude of our accomplishments
 - Christ may assign us lesser opportunities to serve Him, but our assignment does not limit our potential inheritance
 - For example, a pastor serving faithfully in a small church, or a Christian mother serving faithfully in her home, may be rewarded equally with the Apostle Paul or Martin Luther, assuming equal faithfulness
- Jesus' parable on the laborers in Matthew 20:1-16 confirms equal material reward for equal faithfulness
 - In that parable, a landowner hires some laborers early in the day and others late in the day
 - But at the end of the day, the landowner pays every laborer the same based on faithfulness, not accomplishment
 - Certainly, those that worked longer accomplished more – nevertheless the pay was the same
- So the parable in Matthew 20 confirms that faithful service earns a material reward in the Kingdom
 - All believers who serve the Lord faithfully will receive an equal inheritance regardless of when we were "hired"

- Even those assigned the least role to serve Christ (i.e., the one receiving only a single talent) are still expected to serve
- If even the least among us rise to the challenge and demonstrate faithfulness, they will receive a reward equal with the greatest
- Finally, we notice that the third servant who produced no return with his talent received no reward at all
 - In the parable, Jesus says the slave was “afraid” of the master and “went away” after the master departed
 - This indicates the slave did not love the master nor did he wish to remain in the house serving him
 - When the master returns, he calls this slave “wicked” and “lazy”
 - Then the slave is sent to "outer darkness"
 - In other words, the slave's faithlessness to serve was an indication that he was not truly a servant
 - So the master is putting him out of the home
 - In literal terms, the servant's failure to serve was evidence of an unsaved heart
 - The Bible teaches that without faith it is impossible to please God
 - So Jesus included that final slave in the parable to reinforce the necessity of faith before reward
 - The slave's unwillingness to serve his master was proof that he was faithless
 - He was never truly a disciple, so he was sent to outer darkness; which pictures the disposition of unbelievers (i.e., hell)
 - In summary, Matthew's parable teaches that faithfulness in service to Christ will determine our inheritance in the Kingdom
 - Believers may be assigned different opportunities to serve Christ
 - But faithful service will be rewarded equally

Luke 16:10 “He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

[Luke 16:11](#) “Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you?”

[Luke 16:12](#) “And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own?”

- So our physical rewards in the Kingdom (i.e., our share of Christ’s inheritance) will be assigned by Christ to us based on faithful service to Him now
 - So that in our daily Kingdom life, as we eat, sleep and work in some capacity for Christ, we may enjoy our inheritance
 - It will be our home, our farm (or ranch), the place we enjoy for 1,000 years based on our faithfulness to Him now
 - That’s what Christ means when He calls us to store up treasure in Heaven...make decisions now that maximize our inheritance
 - That’s one side of the reward system...so now to the second part of that system: our place in the government
 - Jesus explains that part of the reward system in a similar parable in Luke 19

[Luke 19:11](#) While they were listening to these things, Jesus went on to tell a parable, because He was near Jerusalem, and they supposed that the kingdom of God was going to appear immediately.

[Luke 19:12](#) So He said, “A nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself, and then return.

[Luke 19:13](#) “And he called ten of his slaves, and gave them ten minas and said to them, ‘Do business with this until I come back.’

[Luke 19:14](#) “But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We do not want this man to reign over us.’

[Luke 19:15](#) “When he returned, after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves, to whom he had given the money, be called to him so that he might know what business they had done.

[Luke 19:16](#) “The first appeared, saying, ‘Master, your mina has made ten minas more.’

[Luke 19:17](#) “And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.’

[Luke 19:18](#) “The second came, saying, ‘Your mina, master, has made five minas.’

[Luke 19:19](#) “And he said to him also, ‘And you are to be over five cities.’

[Luke 19:20](#) "Another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I kept put away in a handkerchief;

[Luke 19:21](#) for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.'

[Luke 19:22](#) "He said to him, 'By your own words I will judge you, you worthless slave. Did you know that I am an exacting man, taking up what I did not lay down and reaping what I did not sow?

[Luke 19:23](#) 'Then why did you not put my money in the bank, and having come, I would have collected it with interest?'

[Luke 19:24](#) "Then he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.'

[Luke 19:25](#) "And they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas already.'

[Luke 19:26](#) "I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.

[Luke 19:27](#) "But these enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence."

- This parable sounds almost identical to the one in Matthew and it is similar in the broad outline, yet numerous details differ from the parable in Matthew
 - First, a master departs to receive a new kingdom, and he leaves ten slaves behind commanding them to "do business" until he returns
 - The Greek word for "do business" (*pragmateuomai*) means to keep occupied, to busy oneself
 - So the slaves are expected simply to pursue everyday life, not some special project or task
 - Secondly, the unit of weight in this parable has changed from a talent to a mina
 - In Jesus' day one mina was equal to 1/60th of a talent
 - So a mina represented considerably less value than a talent
 - Once again, the relatively modest payment to each slave is consistent with the master's charge to "do business"
 - Thirdly, every slave received the same number of minas
 - No slave was given an advantage in this assignment

- All had the equal task of doing business
- Fourthly, when the master returned he assigned rewards proportional to each slave's performance
 - Those who accomplished more with their minas received a proportionally greater reward
 - So the rewards varied with performance
- Finally and most significantly, the form of the reward was not more wealth but authority over cities
 - Since the master had received a new kingdom, he needed men to assist him in ruling this new territory
 - So he assigned responsibility in the new kingdom according to each slave's performance in everyday matters
 - The slaves who were more effective in business were deemed worthy of greater responsibility in managing the new kingdom
- These differences in Luke's parable show us that Jesus was teaching a different reward system than the one in Matthew's parable
 - Matthew's parable taught how believers receive material wealth in the Kingdom, which was assigned equally
 - But Luke's parable teaches how the Lord will assign believers responsibility to rule in the Kingdom
 - And that responsibility will not be assigned equally
 - So what will be the criteria for assigning levels of responsibility in the Kingdom?
 - Our first clue is the prominent repetition of the number ten in this parable
 - For example, the master initially calls ten slaves (though only three are judged), and each slave received ten minas
 - The number ten in scripture signifies testimony or witness
 - The prominent use of that number here suggests the parable is focused on a believer's testimony rather than his degree of service

- Further reinforcing that conclusion, we know the slaves were told to do business; which means pursue everyday activities
- In other words, our good testimony is not a special work or short-term task
 - Rather, believers are called to live everyday as a testimony as Paul says:

Rom. 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

Rom. 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

- Our witness is a life lived according to the will of God, which is a spiritual service of worship
- This is a daily effort, a way of “doing business” while the master is gone
- More specifically, our witness takes the form of good works, according to Matthew 5:16

Matt. 5:16 “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

- The good works of our sanctification is like light shining before men
 - Those who pursue sanctification as Christ expects are those producing good testimony
 - Those who live in their flesh are grieving the Holy Spirit and failing to produce a good testimony
- And just as every slave began with an equal number of minas, so every believer begins his or her walk in Christ with equal opportunity
 - We all have equal opportunity to pursue sanctification and yield a good testimony
 - The Lord does not “handicap” one believer over another in the cause of sanctification

- Though our life's circumstances, spiritual gifts and mission may vary, nevertheless every believer receives the same Spirit
- And we all have access to the same word of God and therefore must answer the same call to godliness
- The test is whether we will obey Christ's command to "do business" (seek sanctification) in His absence
 - The believer who shows the self-discipline and character to pursue sanctification now demonstrates trustworthiness
 - And that trustworthiness will be rewarded with greater responsibility in the Kingdom
 - Therefore, a believer's testimony of godliness determines his or her ruling position in the Kingdom
- Notice that the judgment for responsibility is proportional: a believer with a better testimony will be awarded a greater opportunity to serve in the Kingdom
 - Similarly, a believer with a poorer testimony will receive a lesser degree of authority in the Kingdom
 - Responsibility then is a proportional reward, unlike material rewards which will be assigned uniformly
 - This difference makes sense when we realize that greater sanctification makes for greater spiritual leadership
 - Who better to receive greater authority in the Kingdom than the one who has achieved greater spiritual maturity during the present world?
 - As Jesus said:

Luke 12:48 ...From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

- The more we have been given here (in terms of responsibility), the more we will be required to show for it
- And to the one who has cared well for much here, there will be more to care for in the Kingdom
- What of the slave who produced no results with his minas? The master denies him reward just as we saw in Matthew

- But unlike in Matthew 25, this slave was not consigned to outer darkness
- Why not? Because in the case of spiritual maturity, every believer is assured the Kingdom regardless of the degree of our sanctification
- Faith is required for the Kingdom but a good testimony is not
- A believer with a poor testimony who fails to pursue sanctification will still be saved by their faith and cannot be denied the Kingdom

>> IMAGE 5

- As Paul says:

[2Tim. 2:11](#) It is a trustworthy statement:

For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

[2Tim. 2:12](#) If we endure, we will also reign with Him;

If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

[2Tim. 2:13](#) If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

- Paul says if we died with Christ (i.e., we have faith in Him), then we will live with Him (be resurrected)
 - If we endure (pursue sanctification), we will receive a reward of reigning with Christ in the Kingdom
 - If we deny Christ our endurance, He will deny us the opportunity to reign with Him
 - Even if we are faithless, however, we still enter the Kingdom because Christ is faithful to us
 - The Lord cannot deny Himself, meaning He cannot reject the one He has come to dwell within
- It's worth noting that Luke's parable still includes the example of an unbeliever though the unbeliever in Luke's parable is called an "enemy"
 - This distinction makes sense, since Luke's parable isn't focused on faithfulness but rather a testimony
 - And discussions of testimonies are only relevant for believers

>> IMAGES 6-9

- So faithful service leads to equal inheritance (the talents) while better testimony leads to greater authority (the minas)
 - Our inheritance in the Kingdom will be determined by what we do for Christ
 - Our authority in the Kingdom will be determined by who we become in Christ
- The Kingdom will be the period of history when we will enjoy the rewards of our lives spent as Christians now
 - And Christ's justice will be evident both in how He rules over the natural citizens of that day
 - But also in how He rewards the glorified citizens