

# Parable of the Pounds (Part 2)

by J.C. Ryle

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*The Lord Jesus is currently in a far country, receiving a kingdom, but will return to set up His complete kingdom and cast out the devil.*

**Scripture:** Luke 19:11

**Topics:** "The Return of Christ", "The Kingdom of God"

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## Description

J.C. Ryle expounds on the Parable of the Pounds, illustrating that Jesus, like the nobleman, has gone to receive His kingdom and will return. He emphasizes that while Christ reigns spiritually over believers, His complete and visible kingdom has yet to be established. Ryle warns that the current world is under the influence of the devil, and many serve him rather than Christ. He reassures believers that Jesus will return in glory to establish His kingdom, execute judgment, and gather His people. The delay in Christ's return is due to God's patience in gathering His elect, not a lack of power or promise.

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## Transcript

"Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten pounds, and said to them, Occupy till I come." (Luke 19:11-13)

A second question I wish to consider is this: What is the present position of our Lord Jesus Christ? The parable appears to answer that question distinctly in the twelfth verse: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return." This nobleman represents the Lord Jesus Christ, and that in two respects.

Like the nobleman, the Lord Jesus is gone into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom. He has not received it yet in possession, though He has it in promise. He has a spiritual kingdom unquestionably; He is king over the hearts of His believing people, and they are all His faithful subjects. He has a controlling power over the world without controversy; He is King of kings and Lord of lords. "By Him all things consist," and nothing can happen without His permission. But as for His real, literal, visible, complete kingdom, that the Lord Jesus has not yet received. To use the words of Heb. 2:8, "We see not yet all things put under Him." To use the words of Psalm 110:1, "He sits on the right hand of the Father till His enemies are made His footstool."

The devil is the prince of this world during the present dispensation. The vast majority of the inhabitants of the earth choose the things that please the devil far more than the things that please God. Little as they may think it, they are doing the devil's will, behaving as the devil's subjects, and serving the devil far more than Christ. The Lord Jesus, during the present dispensation, is like David between the time of His anointing and Saul's death. He has the promise of the kingdom, but He has not yet received the crown and throne. He is followed by a few, and those often neither great nor wise, but they are a faithful people. He has none of the visible signs of the kingdom at present: no earthly glory, majesty, greatness, obedience. The vast majority of mankind see no beauty in Him; they will not have this man to reign over them. His people are not honoured for their Master's sake. They walk the earth like princes in disguise. It is not the day of "His power." The Lord Jesus is biding His time. The day of His power has not yet begun. He is gathering out a people to carry the cross and walk in His steps until the time of His coronation arrives.

"This same Jesus which was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." As His going away was a real literal going away, so His return shall be a real literal return. As He came personally the first time with a body, so He shall come personally the second time with a body. As He came visibly to this earth and visibly went away, so when He comes the second time He shall visibly return. And then--and not until then--the complete kingdom of Christ shall begin. He departed from His servants as "a nobleman," He returns to His servants as "a King." Then He intends to cast out that old usurper the devil, to bind him for a thousand years and strip him of his power. Then He intends to make a restitution of the face of creation. It shall be the world's jubilee day. Our earth shall at last bring forth her increase, the King shall at length have His own again. At last the ninety-seventh Psalm shall be fulfilled, and men shall say, "The Lord reigns. Let the earth rejoice!"

Then He intends to fulfil the prophecies of Enoch, John the Baptist, and St. Paul; to execute judgment, to burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel. Then He intends to raise His dead saints and gather His living ones, to gather together the scattered tribes of Israel, and to set up an empire on earth in which every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that Christ is Lord.

I charge you to establish in your mind the great truth that Christ is one day to have a complete kingdom in this world; that His kingdom is not yet set up, but that it will be set up in the day of His return. Remember that "the days are evil," and that the time of general conversion has not yet arrived. How can one possibly expect a millennium before the Lord Jesus returns if the world in the day of His coming is to be found as it was in the days of Noah and Lot?

Know these things clearly, and you will see why God delays the final glory and allows things to go on as they do in this world. It is not because He is unable to prevent evil; it is not because He is slack in the fulfilling of His promises. It is because the Lord is taking out for Himself a people by the preaching of the Gospel. He is longsuffering to unconverted Christians. The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Once let the number of the elect be gathered out of the world, once let the last elect sinner be brought to repentance, and then the kingdom of Christ shall be set up and the throne of grace exchanged for the throne of glory.

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