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FOREWORD

Once David, the Psalmist, said in amazement, “What is man that you (God) are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? (Ps. 8:4)” God of glory should focus His attention on the man He created! As the Scripture variously tells of stories of its characters, God obviously has His glorious purpose on man. Not only did He create man in His own image, He has also given His life through His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to whoever has faith in Him. Then, through the work of the Holy Spirit in man, God molded man into His Son’s likeness to manifest His glorious purpose. This is one of the core revelations in the Bible.

Chosen and called upon by God, Brother Jeremiah L.K. Cua, has been committed to the study of biblical characters. Through years of meticulous studies and meditations, he shares with the reader the work of God on a number of characters from various angles. Much as there have been many discourses and books enunciating their views on biblical characters, each having its own merits, the riches of God’s word have never been exhausted. As Brother Cua’s «Series on the Message of Biblical Characters» has its own unique perspectives and fresh expositions, the reader will surely benefit from his works. May God bless the book and use it mightily.

Rev. Stephen Kaung

Verses from the Bible

Mt 25:14-30

¹⁴"Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.

¹⁵To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. ¹⁷So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. ¹⁸But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

¹⁹"After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

²¹"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²²"The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

²³"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I

will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²⁴"Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

²⁶"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

²⁸" Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. ²⁹For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ³⁰And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Mt 13:35

³⁵So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world."

2 Co 5:10

¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of

Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2 Co 4:16-18

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

PREFACE

I. The Reason Why the Lord Jesus Spoke in Parables

While on earth the Lord spoke to the people in forty-nine parables [Note 1].

The Lord opened His mouth in parables, because He wanted to utter (or **expose**) things hidden since the creation of the world (Mt 13:35). He spoke in parables because He wanted to make known the secrets of the kingdom of heaven to His disciples but not the Jews. These Jews would be hearing but never understanding; they would be seeing but never perceiving, for the heart of these people had become calloused; they hardly heard with their ears, and they had closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and the Lord would heal them. Therefore the Lord said to His disciples, “**But blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear** (cf. Mt. 13:10-16).”

II. Response of the People to the Lord’s Parables

The parables the Lord spoke in, i.e., parables about the secrets of the kingdom of heavens, were

not necessarily understood by all that had heard; but the Lord certainly made them known to His disciples so that they could hear and perceive; they were indeed a group of blessed people. In Revelation Chapters 1-3, the resurrected, ascended and glorified Jesus wrote in the Spirit seven letters to the seven churches in Asia, calling on the believers seven times, **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”**

These blessed ones, i.e., those who could hear and perceive, raised up the Lord’s churches everywhere after the Lord ascended to heaven. But thirty or fifty years later, the churches in general were rendered desolate, most representatives of the churches did not so much as understand the cries of the Holy Spirit [Note 2]. Those who heard the Lord’s call held firmly to what they should and repented of what they ought to, would surely become the overcomers of the churches after the Lord’s own heart.

The spiritual seniors of all previous generations have boasted precious understanding of God’s holy words and the Lord’s parables, many of which have become our spiritual heritage [Note 3]. For this we must worship God. But, if the Lord is gracious to us, we may be enlightened by the Holy Spirit and gain fresh insights into God’s living words and the Lord’s parables that proclaim the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven. May the Lord’s words correct us — children of God — and fill us. The mystery of God’s living