

The Treasure in the Earthen Vessel: The Parable of the Unjust Judge in *Luke 18:1-8*.



The treasure:
The character of God

The message

The earthen vessel:
The parable of the
unjust judge

In this parable the character of God is clearly represented to all who want to understand it. If the unjust judge was willing to help the widow, how much more is God willing to do so. God is eager to help us: "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." If we look at the vessel alone, we will not recognize the treasure in this parable.

of the unjust steward in *Luke 16:1-9*, and of the rich man and poor Lazarus in *Luke 16:19-31*. If we look only at the vessel, it is difficult to understand these parables. But the Lord has hidden a treasure in them, and that is what we need to see. In fact if we take a closer look at all the parables of Jesus then we will see that each one demonstrates this principle of the treasure in an earthen vessel.

Why an Earthen Vessel?

Why does the Lord hide His treasure in an earthen vessel? Would there not be less misunderstandings and rejection of the truth if God would show the treasure to the people right from the start? This was

exactly what Jesus' critics thought when they came to Him with the challenge: "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." *Matthew 12:38*. But Jesus did not give them what they wanted because it would not have been good for them. If He had given it to them, they still would not have understood, as He Himself said, "Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand." *Matthew 13:13*.

It is impossible for humanity, living in this sinful world, to see the full glory of the treasure. Therefore, in His love for us, God hides in an earthen vessel that which He cannot give us directly. In this way He can bring the treasure really close to us, until our weak eyes become accustomed to the sight.

"So it was in Christ's teaching: the unknown was illustrated by the known; divine truths by earthly things with which the people were most familiar." *Christ's Object Lessons*, 17.1.

The word of God has been given for readers living at different times and coming from different nationalities. In order to come as close as possible to each person, the treasure has been wrapped in diverse earthen vessels. For example, Luke publicly declared that there were already several representations in written form of the life of the Lord Jesus. He writes, "Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us." *Luke 1:1, 2*. But the Holy Spirit obviously directed him to add another report to those already existing. "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus." *Luke 1:3*.

It was obviously necessary for Theophilus to receive another report, especially written for him, as Luke says, "that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed." *Luke 1:4*. The Spirit of God not only decided for Theophilus but also for many others who had a similar need, that there should be another vessel in which the treasure was to be hidden.

"There is variety in a tree, there are scarcely two leaves just alike. Yet this variety adds to the perfection of the tree as a whole.

"In our Bible, we might ask, Why need Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Gospels, why need the Acts of the Apostles, and the variety of writers in the Epistles, go over the same thing?

"The Lord gave His word in just the way He wanted it to come. He gave it through different writers, each having his own individuality, though going over the same history. Their testimonies are brought