

# PARABLES, “THROUGH PEASANTS EYES!”

Study 40, “The Great Banquet,” Part V, Luke 14:15-24

1. The p. can be even called the p. of “The Banquet of the 7 Speeches.” They fall naturally into 7 stanzas, with ideas in the first four and then other key ideas in the last three;

“And he said to him,

‘A man once gave a GB

And he invited many

(1) And he sent his servant at the hour of the  
Banquet to say, ‘Come, all is ready now!’

But they all began making excuses.

(2) The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field  
And I must go out to see it.

I pray that you have me excused.’

(3) And another said, “I have bought five yoke  
of oxen.

and I go to test them

I pray you have me excused.’

(4) And another said, I have married a bride,  
And therefore--

I cannot come.’

(5) So the servant came and reported to the  
Master. Then the householder in anger said

To his servant, ‘Go out quickly, into streets  
And the lanes of the city, Bring in the poor,  
Maimed, blind and lame.’

(6) And the servant said, ‘Sir,’ what you have  
Commanded has been done,  
and there is still room.’

(7) And the master said to the Servant, ‘go out’  
Into the highways and the hedges,

And compel to enter, that my house may be filled.’

GREAT BANQUET

MANY INVITED

DO THIS

BECAUSE OF THIS

EXCUSES

I DID THIS

I MUST DO THIS

EXCUSE ME

I DID THIS

I MUST DO THIS

EXCUSE ME

I DID THIS

THUS I MUST

NOT COME

MASTER\_GO

THE STREETS

FILL UP

SERVANT

I WENT

NOT FULL

MASTER\_GO

TO HIGHWAYS

FILL UP

For I tell you (plural)

None of those men who were invited

THOSE INVITED

Shall taste my banquet

MY BANQUET

to enjoy it must come in. They cannot have the portions sent out for them to enjoy while they busy themselves with other things.”

2. With these theological implications in mind, we return to the text.

**STANZA FIVE\_\_THE OUTCAST’S INVITATION:**

‘So the servant came and reported to the

Master. Then the householder in anger said

To his servant, ‘Go out quickly, into streets     MASTER\_GO

And the lanes of the city, Bring in the poor,     THE STREETS

Maimed, blind and lame.’     FILL UP

The host’s anger is natural—he has been publicly insulted. But his response is grace, not vengeance. He turns to invite the outcasts of the village. These poor, maimed, blind and lame are from the city. They are part of the community, although ostracized from the community life.

Clearly these categories symbolize the outcasts of Israel that were attracted to and welcomed by Jesus.

3. We noted above that the Qumran community anticipated a rejection from the messianic banquet of everyone who was “smitten in the flesh...or lame or blind.” For centuries commentators have observed that the poor are not invited to banquets, the maimed to not get married, the blind do not go out to examine fields and the lame do not test oxen. The word, “poor” in Biblical literature often has the theological overtones meaning, humble and pious. Let’s look us Isaiah 66:2 and Matthew 5:3. Whether or not such meanings are intended here, we cannot determine, but it is clear that there is a radical reversal. The original guests (assuming to be worthy peers of the host) refuse to respond to the good news that the GB is ready. They are confident that the banquet cannot proceed without them and the entire event will thus be a humiliating defeat for the host. But not so—unworthy guests are invited. The host isn’t indebted socially in the poor, the maimed, blind, & lame, and they won’t be able to respond in kind.
4. His offer is what we have described elsewhere as an “unexpected visible demonstration of love in humiliation.” (Bailey). The dramatic, visible nature of the demonstration is clear. It is unexpected and breaks in upon the new groups of undeserving guests as a stunning surprise. The host may anticipate suffering since the original guests will be infuriated that

their attempt to abort the banquet has failed, and they will taunt the host as one who is unable to put together a banquet w/o bringing in 'this riffraff.' See Luke 15:2. "This man receives sinners and eats with them." Again as in the case of the Prodigal Son, the unexpected visible demonstration of love in suffering points to and foreshadows the cross and demonstrates in dramatic part of its meaning. The offer to the 'outcasts of Israel,' is an offer of costly grace. This offer, the p. is accepted. The last two stanzas round out the final scene.

**5. STANZA 6 \_\_STILL ROOM:**

And the servant said, 'Sir,' what you have	SERVANT
Commanded has been done,	I WENT
and there is still room.'	NOT FULL

6. As we noted, the unworthy guests were from the city and thus a part of the community. Now, however, the servant is sent out into the 'the highways and the hedges' to bring in people from the town. The 'highways' are the well traveled roads. But much of the inter village traffic moves on narrow paths. Marshall understands the 'hedges' to be 'fences' along which beggars might rest for protection. Beggars are found in villages and cities where large concentrations of people live. Furthermore, there is no hint that this last group of guests are themselves outcasts from their society. They are from beyond the host's community and that is all we know about them. There is a general agreement among contemporary scholars that this latter invitation symbolically represents an outreach to gentiles, and Luke understands it in this fashion. (Manson). However, some contend that such an outreach to the gentiles was not envisioned by Jesus and this is an expansion of the p. by the early Christian Church. "in a situation demanding missionary activity." (Jeremias). To this question, we briefly turn. Hunter has written, "We are entitled to regard this mission to the 'highways and hedges,' in Luke 14:23 as a secondary feature if we can show that Jesus never envisaged a Gentile mission."
7. We would rather accept the burden of proof and ask if there is any material in Luke regarding the gentile mission that can most reasonably be traced to Jesus of Nazareth. The quest for an answer can certainly start with the p. under discussion. We have noted in Isaiah 25:6-9, a crucial text for the clear understanding of this p. There the inclusion of the gentiles in the GB of God is clearly set forth. One would then expect to find a similar inclusion of the gentiles in Jesus' banquet p. . When it occurs, (Given the

Isaiah background), it is easier and more natural to assume it to be part of the original p. than to argue for it as a later addition. Furthermore, in the p. the servant does not go out after the outsiders (gentiles) along the highways and the hedges. The command is given, but it is not carried out. It remains an unfulfilled future task as the p. closes. The order to invite the outcasts within the community is carried out in the p.. This parallels Jesus' own ministry in that he did carry out a ministry of inviting the outcasts of Israel into his fellowship. He did not carry out any major outreach to the gentiles. Indeed, the 12 were sent only to the lost within Israel (Matthew 10:5). Thus the details of the p. as it now stands precisely fit Jesus' own historical ministry. But is there other evidence in Luke or elsewhere of Jesus' interest in the gentiles?

8. Luke's interest in gentiles is unmistakable (Martin). Simeon declares Jesus to be a "light for revelation to the Gentiles," 2:32, The genealogy is traced to Adam, Luke 3:38 and not to Abraham, Matthew 1:2. The quotation from Isaiah 40:3-5, in Luke 3:6, includes the phrase, "and All flesh shall see the salvation of God." The Commission of the disciples at the end of Luke specifically mentions the gentiles, Luke 24:47. Our question thus becomes, is there direction set by Jesus Himself that this is reflected on, enlarged and fulfilled by the church? Or is all concern for the gentiles traceable only to the post-Easter situation.
9. The ministry of Jesus is clearly focused on "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," (Matt. 15:23). Johannes Blauw argued; The resurrection is a great turning. There is a centripetal force of mission (let the gentiles come in if they like, but do not go out to them), becomes a centrifugal force & The Church goes out to the gentiles with a message for all people. (Blauw).
10. Jeremias affirms the same position when he writes, "Jesus expressly rejected the idea that He was also sent to the Gentiles; His mission was confined to the lost sheep of the Israelite community." (Jeremias). He also sees the message of the OT as being always, "centripetal' The Gentiles will not be evangelized where they dwell; but will be summoned to the holy Mount by divine epiphany. Yet Blauw admits there are hints of the centrifugal force of the mission in the OT. Isaiah 42:4 reads, "He will not fail or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law." The message among the famous Servant Songs of Isaiah, and clearly the servant in some sense is seen as going out to "establish justice in the earth."