

PARABLES, “THROUGH PEASANTS EYES!”

Study 43, “The Great Banquet,” Part VIII, 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.”	
1 The <i>Spirit of the Lord</i> is upon me	SPIRIT OF THE LORD
2 For He has sent me to preach to the poor	PREACH
3 He has <i>sent me</i> to proclaim to the captives—Freedom	SEND OUT- FREEDOM
4 and recovering <i>sight to the blind</i> ;	SIGHT
3' To <i>send out</i> the oppressed---in <i>freedom</i>	SEND OUT-- FREEDOM
2' and to <i>proclaim</i>	PROCLIAM
3' the acceptable <i>year of the Lord</i>	YEAR OF THE LORD

2. Review from last session/week; We now can affirm that the composite Isaiah text, as it now appears in Luke, represents major themes from Isaiah selected by Jesus in his discussion in the synagogue. The eight line midrash is traceable to Jesus of Nazareth reflects the centrifugal force of a mission, rarely done by Jesus.
3. Luke adds comments to this as the centrifugal force of mission permeates and informs the entire comment. The harsh criticism of the gentiles of Is. 61:2 is omitted. The very illustrations suggested in the midrash set forth two Gentiles as heroes of faith to be imitated. Why are two non-Jews made the heroes of faith rather than Abraham on Mt. Moriah? Or Moses at the Red Sea? Or Jeremiah going to buy a field? Is not the very wrath of the worshipers in the synagogue most likely partially related to this focus on the Gentiles? Jeremias argues that verse 22 can be best understood to mean, that they all bear witness against him and they were astonished that he spoke of the mercy of God.” They expect him to continue reading in Isaiah 61:2b, “and the day of the vengeance of your God.” Rather than talking about the “foreigners who will be your plowmen and vinedressers,” Isaiah 61:5. The 2 Gentiles are held up as illustrations as the kind of faith that the kingdom demands. The audience is understandably furious. Thus in this crucial passage there is clear reference to the centrifugal force of mission, the going out even to the gentiles. The entire text does reflect

Lucan and early Church theological interests, but these interests we see as traceable in the text to Jesus himself and beyond him to Isaiah 49:5-6.

4. Two other passages need to be examined briefly. The first is the p. of the lamp. In Luke 11:33, the lamp is put on a stand “that those who enter may see the light.” Here we are back to the centrifugal force of mission. Only those who come in will see the light. The same is reflected in Matthew 5:15 where the lamp is put on a stand to ‘give light to all in the house.’ Again the center force of the mission, only those who see the light. Significantly, the proceeding verses read, “You are the light of the world, a city on the hill cannot be hid.” We expect to read, “You are the light of Israel,” but not so. Like Isaiah 49:6, the light on the hill is to shine out to all the world.
5. Again in Luke 4:16-30, the center forces of mission are side by side. The city on the hill sends out light to all the world., and the lamp is seen only by those who are in the house. Finally, in the case of the Greek/Canaanite woman of Tyre and Sidon, (Matthew 15:21-30, Mark 7:24-30), we have a clear statement of the exclusive nature of the ministry of Jesus. Here, He says to the woman that he was sent “only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” Matthew 15:24. The discussion then turns on to the symbols of food and the children’s bread. Jeremias affirms; *“the key to the understanding of Jesus’ words to the woman who sought his help lies in the fact that she understood that Jesus was speaking of the Messianic Banquet. Her “Great Faith,” (Matthew 15:28) consisted in her recognition, as shown by her words about the crumbs that the little dogs might venture to eat, that Jesus was the giver of the Bread of Life.”*
6. If we accept Jeremias argument, we have in this case of a gentile woman who sees in Jesus, the bringer of salvation. Thus, in the very story where he specifically states that he has only come for Israel, we see him reach out to minister to a gentile woman, who sees him as “the giver of the Bread of Life.” In Isaiah 49:5-6, we saw the same juxtaposition of the restorer of Israel+light of salvation for nations. Unless we make a prior theological judgment that Jesus could not have had an interest in the gentiles, we have here a case of such an interest. Is not this text simply saying, “To the Jew first and also the Greek?” (Romans 1:16)? In the light of the texts discussed above, is it not possible to see the ministry and teachings of Jesus directed primarily to the Jewish nation, but with clear pointers in the direction of something beyond Israel which fulfills the great

Servant Song of Isaiah 49:5-6? Elijah was sent out. The light from the city on the hill goes out. The Greek woman of Sidon is fed by the bread of life and she meets Jesus on the non-Jewish land. It is in the light of these texts that the concluding verses of this p of the GB must be examined. T. W. Manson succinctly remarks, "the whole p. of the GB might be regarded as midrash on Isaiah 49:6."

7. When Luke 14:23-24 is considered in the light of the above, it becomes possible to see the two concluding stanzas as part of the original p.. Not only is the suggestion of an invitation to the gentiles theologically harmonious with other things that Jesus has done and taught, but the very literary form of the p. should suggest that the last 2 speeches complete the series of the seven. Furthermore, at the beginning of the feast there were to invitations to the original guests: thus it is not surprising that at the end of the p. there are two invitations to unexpected guests (Granted, in one case they are the same people and in other they are not). It seems that there are significant differences in this p according to Matt. & Luke. There are 2 invitations at the beginning of this p in Luke as there is only 1 in Matt. It appears that at the end of this p the two invitations to outsiders are limited to just one. What then does this final invitation mean?
8. In stanza 6, the servant tells that after the outcasts of Israel are brought in that there is still room in the banquet hall. In stanza 7 the invitation goes out to the Gentiles. The key word is "compel." The Spanish Inquisition and the tragic subversions of the Gospel that have been perpetrated by 'the organized' church used this text as support. Nothing could be further from its original content. In the ME the unexpected invitation must be refused. The refusal is all the more required if the guest of lower social rank than the host. (The unexpected guest may be half starving and in real need for the offered food, but he still senses a deep cultural pressure to refuse). In Luke 24:28-29 we have, culturally speaking a similar scene. This time Jesus receives the unexpected invitation. As a courteous Oriental, "He made as though he would go further." The two men, again in ME fashion, "compel him" to stay. He is not forced against His will. Rather, they know he must refuse for the first 15 minutes of discussion as a matter of honor. In order to convince him to convince him that they really DO want him to stay and they really have FOOD, they gently drag Him into the house. They compel Him to stay. Even so in the p. we have a classical case of an unexpected invitation from someone of higher rank.