

# PARABLES, "THROUGH PEASANTS EYES!"

Study 44, "The Great Banquet," Part IX, 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

Shall taste 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 *Spirit of the Lord* is upon me

2 For He has sent me to preach to the poor

3 He has *sent me* to proclaim to the captives—Freedom

THOSE INVITED

MY BANQUET

SPIRIT OF THE LORD

PREACH

SEND OUT-

FREEDOM

4 and recovering *sight to the blind;*

3' To *send out* the oppressed---in *freedom*

2' and to *proclaim*

3' the acceptable *year of the Lord*

SIGHT

SEND OUT--

FREEDOM

PROCLIAM

YEAR OF THE LORD

2. 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.
3. A stranger from outside the city is suddenly invited to a GB, he not a relative or even a citizen of the host's city. The offer is generous and delightful, but the stranger thinks that he cannot possibly mean it. After



some discussion the servant may have to take the surprised guest by the arm and gently pull him along. There is no other way to convince him that he is actually invited to the GB, irrespective of his being a foreigner. Grace is unbelievable! How could it be true, the foreigner asks himself. For me? What have I ever done for him? I cannot pay this back! The host is not serious! It is a most pleasant prospect, but consider who I am, he cannot mean it. The host knows that this kind of shock and unbelieve will face the servant/messenger at every turn. He instructs him to overcome his unbelief with the only method possible—with a smile grab them by the arm and pull them in! Demonstrate to them that the invitation is genuine! Compel them to come in.

4. Finally, the final motive for this extra invitation is; “that my house may be filled.” The purpose of this final remark seems to be a concern to demonstrate that it is possible for the GB to be full w/o the original guests. The occasion can be a grand success even in their absence. The noble host want his new guests to feel totally accepted. They must look around and say, “See how many seats are vacant.” What a shame! Poor man, he is rejected by the important people and only the few of us at his banquet! “No!” His house must be full! This brings our consideration of the seven speeches to a close. The concluding remark must now be examined.

5. *For I tell you (plural)*

*None of those men who were invited*

*THOSE INVITED*

*Shall taste my banquet*

*MY BANQUET*

There is some ambiguity in the text and considerable discussion among the commentators regarding this final sentence. It is part of the p. itself and a concluding remark of Jesus to his audience reclining with him at the GB (Jeremias). With the awareness that it is possible to read the phrase either way, the text is most probable a remark of Jesus to his audience. In Luke 15:7, at the conclusion of the p. of the Lost Sheep we have a similar construction with a concluding Dominical comment. Luke 15:10 has the same formula, as does Luke 18:6 and 18:14. We have argued elsewhere that Luke 16:8 is not a similar construction. There the master of 16:8 is better understood as the master of the p.. (Bailey). But in this text the shift to a plural “I tell you” is significant. The master talks in the singular to the single servant all through this p., and does so in the concluding speech in stanza 7. Derrett argues that the host would often send portions of a banquet to his leading friends, who were unavoidably absent. (Derrett).



6. But such, we have argued is not the case. In the p. they are deliberately absent and obviously he is not going to send special portions out to the guest who have just offended him to the point of anger. For the host to report such a decision as the climax of the p. would be redundant. But as a statement of Jesus to the audience it becomes profoundly meaningful. He states symbolically that those who would like to "eat bread in the Kingdom of God," better hurry & accept his invitation to table fellowship, because they will not be able to participate at a distance. This the sudden shift to a plural seems to indicate that the p. is over & that Jesus is addressing his audience.

7. Yet just below the surface two possibilities fuse. The original guest who refuse the host will certainly (by their own choice) not participate in the GB. Furthermore, the guests reclining with Jesus are in grave danger of excluding themselves from the banquet of salvation already spread by the inaugurator of the kingdom. If the understanding of the text presented above can be sustained, the GB is openly called "my banquet." Thus Jesus identifies himself with the host. The banquet is His banquet. He extends the original invitation to the guests. He pleads with them to attend and records that their self-exclusion is final. Again, T. W. Manson's reflections are worth noting;

*"Jesus does not teach here a mechanically operating predestination, which determines from all eternity who shall or shall not be brought into the Kingdom. Neither does He proclaim that t man's entry into the Kingdom is purely his own affair. The two essential points in His teaching are that no man can enter the Kingdom of God w/o the invitation of God, and that no man can remain outside of it, but by his own deliberate choice. Man cannot save himself; be he is/can be damned, damn himself. He Jesus sees the deepest tragedy of life, not in the many wrong and foolish things that men do, or the many good things that they fail to accomplish, but in their rejection of God's greatest gift." (Sayings, p. 130).*

8. This then brings us to an examination of the symbols that the original listening audience would instinctively have identified. In the light of these we will try to determine the single response that Jesus was trying to evoke from the listeners, and finally, attempt od discern the theological cluster of the p.. First then, the symbols; What precisely would the original audience have instinctively identified? At least the following can be affirmed with some confidence. ("Poet and Peasant through Peasant Eyes," p. 110).