

THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #038 A Chronological Study

*"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and
uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."*

Psalm 78:2[▲]



"THE WEDDING FEAST"

INTRODUCTION

The Parable of The Ten Virgins, The Wedding, and the Wedding Feast.

Biblical interpretation is dependent upon the theology, hermeneutics and mindset of the interpreter. What I mean by this is that the manner that the interpreter decodes what the words of the Scriptures mean is largely dependent on their choice of where in the spectrum of "literal" verses "symbolic" their interpretation lays. This is a central part of interpreting and understanding what the words of the bible are saying.

For the purposes of these studies we've often reported that we use the "Normal Literal" method of interpretation. This method reads the Scriptures using the same understanding of language as any normal person would use to, let us say, read a note from a friend or loved one – or a good novel. Words mean what they mean. In normal language we also use metaphor and simile (and other modes of language) that we recognize as just that. If I told you to "Go jump in the lake," after you asked me to do something for you, you would immediately know that I didn't want to do what you asked, and we both would also know that there was in fact no lake, nor jumping into it, involved.

This "Normal-Literal" method of "hermeneutics," the study of biblical language interpretation, makes the most sense as to God revealed information that He wants His children to know and understand. If you see the Scriptures as mostly spiritualized secrets that need to be decoded by a specialist, you then fall way over to one end of the spectrum. If you see the Scriptures as mostly absolute literal, then you fall way over to the other end of that spectrum. Normal-literal falls in the middle and allows you to read and understand the way you would normally understand written or spoken communication.

Having said that, in the study of Jesus' parables we find ourselves in the land of stories as illustrations "cast along side" (Gk., *parabole*) Jesus' main point. Stories that tell a pointed illustrative story to illustrate His meaning. What this does is to allow Jesus to communicate important points to His audience that may be understood differently by different audiences. We've often seen this already in these studies – the disciples will hear a message of encouragement, and what the Pharisees hear makes them angry – from the same story – very clever. Those who have no interest in what's being said... don't have a clue as to the meaning of His story.

This particular parable deals with the prophetic future and how you interpret language will change what you understand about that future. Many change their manner of interpretation when moving into the book of Revelation or the Old Testament when it deals with prophecy – moving to a largely "spiritual" or "you have to have special knowledge to understand these things." We'll stick to the

Normal-Literal approach... for we believe that God wants us all to know and understand His Word, especially the future.

The Wedding and the Wedding Feast

Matthew 22:1-14

There were three major steps in the Jewish marriage of Jesus' time. Don't think of a wedding or feast (dinner) in terms of today. Think about how society has changed in your own lifetime - then think how different, more controlled and conservative, 2000 years ago.

1. THE BETROTHAL

The binding of the husband to the wife – the “Engagement.” In our case, as believers, we are “The Bride of Christ.”

“For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” 2 Corinthians 11:2

“Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.” (Romans 7:4)

This pairing of the couple was normally by either a dual agreement of the couple or pre-arranged by the families. This agreement would take place 1 year before the marriage ceremony. During this time the groom would build an additional room onto his Father's house, normally where the groom would be living.

The importance to this part would be the relationship of Jesus to the Believer. Jesus is spoken of in the Scriptures as the “husband” and the corporate membership of the “Body of Christ” is spoken of as the “Bride.” So in the language of a parable there is the betrothal, that is when the Groom invites the believer to become His bride. Upon her acceptance the betrothal becomes complete. The marriage will occur at a much later time. Jesus then returns to His Father's

house - upon Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension - to build a dwelling place there for her (John 14:1-3).

"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:1-3).

2. THE WEDDING - Taking the bride to the groom's Father's House for the Wedding, Consummation and Dinner Feast

Again, this happens 1 year after the betrothal. In terms of the parable this time is "some time later." The Groom and the Bride are finally brought together and the marriage ceremony takes place - then there is a change of location and it's done "At Night." On this occasion the groom takes his bride into the new marriage dwelling place that He has built for her, and his best man guards the door... listening! When the marriage is made complete by the physical union... the groom calls out!! And the best man informs the gathered wedding crowd that the marriage has been confirmed - and the Marriage Feast commences.

It's here that we need to consider that there are three positions in interpretation for the return of Christ to gather His Bride (not His second coming). This moment is normally called, "Jesus' Coming In The Air." He's coming to gather His Bride, The Church. These positions are called Pre, Mid, and Post tribulationism." Since these studies are in the "Normal-Literal" mode we'll be in the Pre-Tribulation position. Jesus will leave His Father's house and return here "in the air" to retrieve His Bride before the start of the Tribulation. This is the next event in the prophetic time-line. In the process He will "translate" the bodies of those believers living at the time and will Raise the Dead bodies of those church age believers who have already passed away and their souls are already in Christ's presence and take us all to His heavenly home (His Father's House) as "The Bride Of Christ."

Please notice that He does not come to dwell with her on the earth. He comes to take His bride unto Himself, so that the relationship

that was pledged might be consummated and that the two might become one at His Father's House in Heaven.

Then, at the appropriate time - The Wedding will begin and upon its completion and we are united with Jesus The Christ... The Wedding Feast will begin. It is thought that that feast will last for the full 7 years of the Tribulation.

As we study this parable we need to pay attention to the fact that the parable is about the Wedding Banquet – which happens following the wedding, and usually at night, and it's about those who were expected to be there, but did not show up.

This all happens just before the return of Jesus to the earth for His reign as King over the Promised future Kingdom of God on Earth at the end of the Tribulation – "The Second Coming."

As a side note, the Old Testament teaches that there will be another separate "Marriage Feast of the Lamb" that will happen at some point early in the Millennium, on earth (Isaiah 25; Judges 14). Isaiah indicates that this feast will happen at a time when all the nations on the earth, including Israel, will feast together in prosperity. ¹

3. A Summary of Israel's history.

The Old Testament teaches that God betrothed Israel (bound the nation to Himself as His wife) through the Mosaic Covenant at Mount Sinai (Jer 2:2; Ezek 16:8), but Israel repeatedly broke the covenant through spiritual adultery (Jer 3:1-3, 6-9, 20; Ezek 16:32, 59; Hos 1:2; 2:2, 5; 3:1; 4:12, 18; 5:3-4; 6:7, 10; 7:4; 8:1; 9:1). God divorced Israel, but not permanently (Isa 50:1; 54:7-8; Jer 3:12). He did not regard the divorce as a termination of His marriage with the nation (Jer 3:14; cp. V.8).¹

4. Israel's Future (Briefly)

A. God has been judging Israel (Ezek 16:38)
 b. This judgment will stop Israel's unfaithfulness
 c. God will remove His anger (Ezek 16:41-42) This will happen and be complete with Christ's 2nd coming – following the tribulation.

d. God will betroth Israel to Himself forever (Hos 2:19-20) with the New Covenant. Israel will be the bride and there will be a wedding and feast – on earth.

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

Matthew 22:1-14 Paragraph by Paragraph

¹ Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, ² "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.

Once again we are presented with a *Kingdom of Heaven* parable. Each of these parables relate the description of the kingdom of heaven in personal terms (Like a man, like a woman).

In this case the "man" is a King. A man of great power who can command those below him.

In the previous chapter Jesus has entered Jerusalem as "King," that's what the cheering and singing crowds have proclaimed Him to be. His first act was to clean out His Father's temple – where the Tabernacle dwelt – the biblical image of Christ Himself. The Jewish religious leadership then questioned Jesus' authority, and Jesus told them the parable of the "Unrighteous and Murderous Tenants." That parable told of the killing of God's prophets by Israel, and the killing of God's Son... Jesus. The Religious leadership then wanted to kill him – but were afraid of the crowd.

Now Jesus continues to press the Jew's buttons as He tell them their national future. Our King is Almighty God. The feast is a wedding feast.

³ And he sent out his servants to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.

Verse 3 shows us the extreme bad nature of the relationship between the King and the invited guests. The **King** invited them to

a Wedding feast, and we are to assume that this feast was for His Son. We'll say it again, **"The King invited them... but they were Unwilling to come!"** The phrase I have come to use in these circumstances has become, "No, I will not believe."

We are to assume that this rebellion must have gone on for a long time for they all refused to come to the wedding feast – a great time of joy and fellowship – lots of food and wine, all free! **"And they were Unwilling to come!"**

⁴ Again he sent out other servants saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast."

We can see from what the King tells his servants that He is a gracious and caring King. He has prepared the best meats, all the best food... for them! Please, **"Come to the wedding feast."**

⁵ But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business,

They just don't care about the **King** of the Wedding party, or **His Son and Bride**, or even being entertained during the party, or having free food and wine – because the King has asked them to join Him at this important event.

Now we'll take a moment and begin relating this Wedding Banquet event to it's meaning. As in all of the Kingdom parables it's all about the sovereignty of God over His Kingdom – Heaven and earth. He created it through the agency of His Son. In that Kingdom, here on earth, God has selected the family of Abraham to be His beloved family who was supposed to represent Him to all the human families on the earth – and they refused to do that. They instead chose to divorce themselves from their God and seek to pursue the worship of all kinds of false gods, including themselves. Now, after a couple thousand years of repeating the cycle of continuing to divorce Him, Jesus tells this story.

6 and the rest seized his servants and mistreated them and killed them.

Similar to a previous parable (The Unrighteous Murderous Tenants), those who were the object of the parable were seized, mistreated, and killed... They were His servants... the Prophets and those sent to minister to the Jews. In the background, all of this came to a head back when Assyria gained power.

7 But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.

The History continues as Assyria overtook the Northern nation of Israel and took their people captive to other lands, burned their homes, and killed many of them and their flocks as well.

That should have changed the Southern nation of Judah/Benjamin, but it did not. So the King – God – sent the nation of Babylon to do the same to both. God disciplined Assyria for being willing to discipline Israel and He disciplined Judah for their continued rebellion against Him. Buried in the longer history is the long trail of Greece, Persia, and Rome continuing the effort to turn them back to their God. The trail seemingly ending with Caesar Nero's burning and destruction of Jerusalem, and the Jews being dispersed in AD 70.

8 Then he *said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.

As we mentioned earlier the Bible speaks about two wedding feasts. One that takes place in Heaven and one that takes place later, on earth. The on-earth wedding feast was designed for the Jews, upon their full belief, to become God's bride. That was His hope for them. Now their wedding and their feast has been delayed until that time when they do believe as a nation – and do it through Jesus the Son of God – after the tribulation (judgment for them and all the world for unbelief) and the second coming of Jesus – to establish His millennial Kingdom on earth. This will help us understand some of what we read here.

⁹ Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.' ¹⁰ Those servants went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.

I think we can see that what Jesus means here is that with the turning away by Israel from her covenanted God, that God, as part of His Gospel program turned away from Israel to "the world" to populate His plan for filling the wedding feast guest list, and many came... both evil and good. It is probably good to remember that this is the guest list for the wedding feast – not anyone who will represent the Bride in this narration. So the "world is invited" to "enjoy" the wedding feast, but not take part of the "ceremony."

¹¹ "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, ¹² and he *said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless.

Immediately I had this vision of a time, a long time ago, when a young man came into a church service I was attending who was dressed unbelievably inappropriately for worship. It was obvious he was there in an effort to ridicule the Pastor, servants, and Christ Himself. He was there just for that purpose. After a short time a deacon came and "escorted" the young man out of the sanctuary, and tried to have a helpful conversation with him in the lobby. Eventually... the young man was asked to leave the building.

This part of the parable is about that very scenario. In our parable, the King Himself approached this man - probably satan himself - and asked Him why he was dressed inappropriately – he wouldn't respond to the **King** – total disrespect! Arriving to dishonor, disturb and disgrace Jesus and His Bride, and His heavenly Father – on purpose.

¹³ Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen."

Lots of commentators have lots to say about this parable. For me the answers all lay right here in this last verse. The unbelieving world is not invited to participate in this wonderful event – the spreading of the Gospel. Hundreds of thousands, millions over time will respond to that invitation. Some come as tax collectors, some come as former ministers, deacons, or elders, some come who were perfectly evil – and some come who have great lives and love their fellow man – all have the invitation and they are welcome to take their time in believing. BUT, and there's always a but. But there are those who are of the devil and will not change. There are those who's very nature make them respond to the invitation with..., "NO, I WILL NOT BELIEVE IN THIS JESUS – EVER."

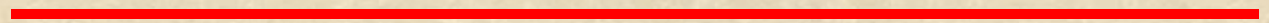
This parable is descriptive of the world the way it is since Abraham – The central core of Judaism has been from the very beginning self involved and power oriented. Our Loving Almighty God has worked with them, invited them, encouraged them, disciplined them, and offered them to become His as His special Priesthood – and they have rebelled at every turn and corner. That's what this parable is about. Yes, there is a lot of stuff in there hidden around the corners, but the central theme is the rebellion of Israel. Many Hebrews have been able to see and recognize their Savior and become believers – It's our responsibility to pray for the whole nation especially in these stressing times. They are His Covenanted People with a destination in His Kingdom forever, don't opt out of caring for them in that end. If we are at the end of the age... then the whole world hasn't got a lot of time to choose Jesus as their Savior and an eternal life of living with Him, **or** face an eternity of Hell.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

1. Why is the grammar of your interpretation skill matter as to what meaning you will see in the text.

2. Why is it important to read, and be familiar, with the whole Bible – both Old and New Testaments?

3. What is the central message found in The Parable of The Wedding Banquet?



FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

1. Why is the grammar of your interpretation skill matter as to what meaning you will see in the text.

Saying this backwards gives you a pretty good primary answer: the meaning you see in the text is dependent upon how you interpret the text. For our purposes it is essential to understand that God has given us His Word for us to know, love, understand, embrace and if able memorize. Over the centuries many church institutions have chosen to remove the Scriptures from the lives of regular people and only allowed church based interpreters to "decode" them – leading to all kinds of error... looking for hidden spiritual meanings that allow these institutions to control and manipulate their people – keeping their people from knowing the simple truth of God's Word.

Often misunderstood by many are Figures of Speech:

Simile: a direct comparison, like or as; She is **like** a beautiful flower.

Metaphor: an implied comparison, verbal illustration; She **is** a beautiful flower.

Personification, humanizing; The **friendly** hills seemed to **welcome** us.

Hyperbole, exaggeration; I am **completely starved**.

Metonymy, substitution; This car is broken (some part is broken).

[A good, straight forward, article on Biblical interpretation is available at this link.](#)

2. Why is it important to read, and be familiar, with the whole Bible – both Old and New Testaments?

Simply put: The Bible is ONE BOOK in its story and intended purpose for all people. It begins with beginnings that tell of The God of the universe and His love and care of mankind and His long-term "program" for man to: 1. Look forward to a coming Savior (the Old Testament) 2. The coming and sacrifice of the Savior (the Gospels of the New Testament) 3. The beginnings of the distribution of the "Good News" of that sacrificed Savior (the Epistles of the New Testament) 4. The coming return and establishment of the Savior's Kingdom on

earth (Prophetic writings of both the Old and New Testaments) 5. The Promise of a wonderful eternal life for those who believe, and believe in the Savior – Jesus, the Anointed King, the Blessed Messiah, The Worshipped Christ.

3. What is the central message found in The Parable of The Wedding Banquet?

It was a message to the then unbelieving Jews – and as recorded Scripture it is a message to all unbelieving people: You are invited to God's Banquet for the marriage of Believing People of all ages to Himself, His Son, His Holy Spirit – All One God. Those who consistently refuse to Believe in His Son will be turned away and sent away... forever.

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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path"

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Note:

If you're interested in verses that have to do with Christ and the Marriage and Supper of the Lamb here's a wonderful collection of 100 verses:

https://www.openbible.info/topics/the_marriage_supper_of_the_lamb

[A] All Scriptures are from The New American Standard Bible [1995]

¹ [Showers, Renald – Israel My Glory, The Friends of Israel Ministry](#)

¹ Ibid.