

THE LATTER PARABLES OF JESUS

Message 10

Scripture: Matthew 22:1-14

INTRO: We are continuing the latter parables. Our first parable took place the day Jesus stayed night at Zachaeus, the tax collector's place at Jericho. We are now up to the sixth parable and in the life of Christ, it has been six days from when He gave the first of these parables. The first three parables were addressed to the disciples, and these last three have been addressed to Israel's religious leaders. We can see a progression in these parables. The first parable likened Israel's history to a twelve hour day, in which the Lord hired workers for His vineyard. The time of Christ was the eleventh hour. The key thought was that those of the eleventh hour, who received the Messiah as their Messiah would be the first in the kingdom. All of Israel who had lived during the first 11 hours, would be last. The reason for this was that so few had chosen Christ during all that time.

But because the disciples were expecting the kingdom promised in the OT to be set up immediately, Jesus gave them another parable to let them know that He would be rejected by His own people, and that He would be leaving for quite some time. And in parable form He told them that He had work for them to do while He was away, and that they would be rewarded according to their labor when He returned.

Then came the parable of the fig tree. And here He taught them that the nation of Israel would now be set aside until the end of the age. What was not apparent then, but which we can see in hindsight is that Israel would be set aside for at least 2,000 years. In another parable of the fig tree we will come to yet, we will see some wonderful promises for Israel.

The next three parables are addressed to the religious leaders of Israel. I will review those as we consider the setting to the sixth parable. In this sixth parable, we will once more move forward in time. This time a long way forward. This parable covers time from the OT to the end of the tribulation.

F. The King's Wedding Invitation (Matt. 22:1-14)

1. The Parable (Matthew 22:1-14)

The parable before us in Matthew 22:1-14, as I see it, it has two main parts and the beginning point of both

parts is the invitation to a wedding banquet. The first invitation with its attending scenes is from verses 1-7 (read 1-7). The second invitation is from 8-14 (read). The whole parable is built around those two invitations.

2. The Setting (Matthew 21)

We come now to the setting of this parable. The setting is still the same as the previous two parables, and Jesus is still speaking to the religious leaders, although we must understand that the disciples heard these parables as well. The more I study these parables, the more I see that they center around the idea that the Jews rejected John the Baptist's message of repentance.

There was something perfectly parallel from these religious leaders to the teachers of evolution of today. It was not what they taught. It is what they thought. They could not bear the thought that they were unrighteous and needed to repent. That is exactly what keeps evolutionists, evolutionists. It is precisely what keeps all from believing the Word of God. It is this that causes some to enter that devastating class I spoke of a while ago, and that we will meet in this parable and some others yet as well.

In the first parable to these religious leaders, He told them what they were like in the parable of the two sons. The father wanted these two sons to work in his vineyard and the one son said, "I won't." But later he changed his mind and went to the work. This son Jesus likened to the sinners of Israel, like tax collectors and harlots. But when John the Baptist preached they repented and then lived a righteous life. The other son said he would work in the vineyard, but he didn't. And Jesus likened this son to the religious leaders of Israel. The evidence of the truth of this parable was that both before and after this parable, Jesus had to cleanse the temple of the filthy things the religious leaders allowed to go on there.

In the second parable, to the religious leaders Jesus likened Israel to God's vineyard. God had given His vineyard, the kingdom to Israel to produce righteous fruit. And when He sent His servants the prophets to

collect the produce of His vineyard, they killed one, stoned another and each time they sent these servants away empty. And Jesus asked the religious leaders what the vineyard owner would do to those vinedressers and they said, "He will miserably destroy them and rent the vineyard out to those who would bring forth the expected fruit." And Jesus told them that God would take the kingdom from them and give it to another nation. This would happen because they rejected Christ, the chief cornerstone of God's building and here we now have a prophecy to the Church age. So in these parables, the truths revealed are ever moving forward.

3. Interpretation

-The first invitation

I have found the interpretation of this third parable to the religious leaders very difficult to interpret and I have pondered it over many years. You may not agree with my conclusions and I would be happy to listen to anything that fits the data of this parable that I may not have seen. There are two key points to this parable as I see it. Both center around the invitation to a wedding banquet.

We begin then, with the first invitation. Now, the difficulty I had with the parable is this. There seems to be a connection between the wedding feast of this parable, and the picture the NT that portrays of Christ, God's Son as a bridegroom, and the Church as the bride of Christ. But here is the difficulty. So look at verses 2-6 (read).

I have no doubt that as in a previous parable, these servants picture the OT prophets. But the problem of applying, at least the first part of this parable to the marriage of Christ and the Church is that all things were not ready for this marriage at the end of the time of the OT.

So, if this first invitation does not refer to the marriage of Christ and the Church, what does it then refer to? For this difficulty I found a comment made by John MacArthur helpful. He writes this of the wedding feast, "The wedding feast represented God's promised blessing to Israel, a figure understood by everyone in

the Temple that day. According to talmudic literature, the Messiah's coming would be accompanied by a grand banquet given for His chosen people", end quote.

So, in interpreting this first invitation, I see it as being given prior to the coming of Christ. The banquet was to be held when the long promised Messiah came and He was received by the nation of Israel. The servants, once more, represent the prophets God sent in the OT, and the treatment received by the prophets is that which Israel, as a nation, inflicted on them.

Note in verse 3 the phrase, "...call those who were invited..." Why would you call those who were already invited? Well, there were no i-phones, not even phones, there was not even a telegraph line back then. So an early invitation had to be sent to let people know approximately when the marriage would take place. In this way they could plan for it. Then when all was ready for the wedding, the guests were informed by an invitation that all was ready. The OT prophets had given the initial invitation. When Jesus came, John the Baptist gave the invitation that said, "Come, all things are now ready."

Now consider what kind of a wedding this is. It is a royal wedding. The invitation is extended by a king. Who would turn down a royal wedding invitation? This is unthinkable! What would a king think, whose invitation to his son's wedding was snubbed by his subjects? But that is precisely what happened. John the Baptist had now sent an invitation saying, "All things are now ready." All through the OT they had been told Messiah was coming. And now John said, "He is here. The banquet is ready."

And now I ask you, why would anyone turn down a royal wedding invitation? Well, as I see it, this invitation was to the Jewish people to come to Christ, the Messiah at first advent. And just why would the Jews not come to Him? Here is the long expected Messiah. They had waited and waited, and now He is here and all is ready for them to come to Him. Why in the world would they not come? This is unthinkable! Can you imagine something like this?

Well, we must learn something about this kind of wedding before we go on. Skip ahead for a moment and look at verse 11 in our text (read). When this final invitation was given, as I understand it, it was accompanied by a wedding garment. I expect it was something put on over the other clothes and all who were at the wedding were dressed the same. That is appropriate for a royal wedding. Now, if they accepted the invitation, they would take the gown because it was their ticket into the banquet hall. No gown, no banquet.

Now I ask, in our parable, what does this wedding garment represent? I have no doubt it represents righteousness. It was also righteousness the vineyard owner sought from the vinedressers. And what did those do who accepted John's invitation to come to the Messiah? Well, they repented and confessed their sins, and accepted Christ as their Messiah. John had invited them to this very special banquet. That is clear from the Gospels. And so, at this first invitation, why did the people not accept the invitation to this royal wedding? To receive the invitation meant to receive the garment of righteousness. And to accept this garment meant repentance and confession. And to be dressed in righteousness for this very special occasion was absolutely essential since the host is God Himself.

Let me say this. Things have never changed yet. I have come to the conclusion that repentance and confession are what stop all from believing the Bible. It was not just the Jews that balked at John's baptism of repentance. We all balk at this point. All pride must be broken down before we truly accept this royal invitation to salvation. Why are men like Richard Dawkins and Bill Nigh evolutionists? With the kind of brains they have they should be the first to convert. What holds them? What makes them defend something with no evidence? Repentance and confession! They too reject this royal invitation.

But those who do not reject this invitation by denying the existence of God, as do the evolutionists and atheists; reject it by finding a way around repentance and confession, such as false religions etc.. and we will see more of this later.

But, in our parable, rejecting such a royal invitation, had dire consequences. So, we go to verse 7 (read). This verse forms the conclusion to the first invitation. Here is one of the points of the parable where the interpretation is readily apparent. You see, in the previous parable Jesus had told them that the kingdom would be taken from them and given to another nation. That began at Pentecost. But about 40 years later, Titus, the Roman general came and destroyed Jerusalem, their capital city, along with the temple, the center of their worship. Go to Matthew 24 (read 1-2). The temple was burned, and I understand that the gold of the temple melted and ran into the cracks of the rocks and later these rocks were pried apart in order to get the gold out.

Now I want to tell you just how seriously we should take prophecy. In our passage Jesus foretells the destruction of Jerusalem. Verse 7 says the king sent His armies. God's armies were the Romans. The Jewish leaders had degenerated extremely by the time Christ came. Forty years later, it was much worse. And finally God had had enough. Such a time does come with God, and such a time will come over the whole world not too long from now. If you want to know what will take place, you can read the newspapers in advance by reading Revelation 6-19. And if I should describe for you what happened to these Jews when the Roman general Titus came in 70 AD, and if you would see the scenes, the starvation, the dead bodies stacked high in the streets with no respect for the aged, the women and the children, you would weep. You would say, "How could God allow something this horrible?"

Let me read a little from John MacArthur. He writes, "The fulfillment of the second prophetic feature in the story occurred in A.D. 70. When the Roman general Titus conquered Jerusalem in that year, he killed some 1,100,000 Jews, threw their bodies over the wall, and slaughtered countless thousands more throughout Palestine" end quote. If you took the city of Edmonton and you slaughtered every man woman and child today, that would still be about 200,000 less than were slaughtered in Jerusalem!

MacArthur says further, "In his *Jewish War*, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, who witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem, graphically chronicled the

horrible scene." He then quotes Josephus like this: "That building [the Temple at Jerusalem], however, God long ago had sentenced to the flames; but now in the revolution of the time periods the fateful day had arrived, the tenth of the month..., the very day on which previously it had been burned by the king of Babylon.... One of the soldiers, neither awaiting orders nor filled with horror of so dread an undertaking, but moved by some supernatural impulse, snatched a brand from the blazing timber and, hoisted up by one of his fellow soldiers, flung the fiery missile through a golden window... When the flame arose, a scream, as poignant as the tragedy went up from the Jews... now that the object which before they had guarded so closely was going to ruin.... While the sanctuary was burning,... neither pity for age nor respect for rank was shown; on the contrary, children and old people, laity and priests alike were massacred...", end quote.

After 70 AD, you will see what Jesus meant when He said, "The kingdom will be taken from you and given to another nation." When God says it will happen, it will happen. I remind you that the 70th week of Israel lies shortly before us. What happened in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago will then happen all over the world, only Jerusalem's suffering was small in comparison to what is coming. When Jesus gave this verse, He was not fearmongering. When I tell you about the tribulation, I am not fearmongering. I am warning of what will happen.

That is the first invitation. I see the first invitation as being extended to the Jews by the OT prophets, and when all was ready, the final invitation was given by John the Baptist. His invitation including the wedding garment, but the invitation was snubbed, and God destroyed the Jewish city including the temple, their center of worship.

-The Second Invitation

That brings us to the second invitation. Let us read verses 8-10 (read). The question is, to whom is this invitation extended? As I see it, we have two possible interpretations before us. First, it could speak of the invitation to the whole world during the Church age, or second, it could refer to God's call to the whole world during the tribulation time. Both will happen. Both fit reasonably well.

John MacArthur believes it speaks of God's call to salvation during the Church age. I believe it is God's invitation to the whole world, including the Gentiles, during the time of the tribulation. The reasons why I take this view is first because of whom this parable is addressed to. It is the Jewish leaders. Second, I take this view because it perfectly fits God's invitation to the Jews and the rest of the world to the marriage supper of the Lamb during the tribulation. At this marriage feast Christ and the Church have been married, and Israel is invited to the wedding feast. And the second reason I hold to this is that I see this invitation as being extended once more to the Jews.

So, let me show you how I view this on a slide (Slide 1). Note the place of Daniel's 69 weeks and the first invitation. Then note Daniel's 70th week and the second invitation. Note as well, that when this parable was given the Church was not yet in existence.

Now look at the second slide (Slide 2). Note Daniel's 69 weeks and the destruction of the temple. And note here that the 70th week of Daniel has moved ahead and the Church is being formed. Note that the second invitation has moved ahead as well. Now let me explain all this, because in this parable the Lord gives us a huge window into the future.

Here is what happened. The kingdom was removed from Israel and given to another nation, the Gentiles. The Jews had rejected their Messiah, and thus the first invitation to the banquet. Then God began to form the Church. In the NT, the Church is likened to a bride, and Christ is pictured as the bridegroom.

During the next 2,000 years, Daniel's 70th week kept sliding ahead. I want to show you the next slide (Slide 3). How do we know this week is still to come? Because the events of this week have never happened yet, and other prophecies show they are yet to come. Look now at the end of the Church age. There we have the rapture. That is catching up of the Church as given in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

And so, before we go on, I must explain for those who do not understand this. In the NT the Church is pictured as the bride of Christ and Christ is pictured as the bridegroom. To understand this, one must understand Jewish weddings. In the Jewish wedding, first was the betrothal. Betrothal is like our

engagement, only it was so strong it required a divorce to break it. Next, the dowry price for the bride was paid. The NT pictures the Church as betrothed to Christ. The NT also shows that Christ paid the dowry price for His bride with His own blood.

Then after betrothal and the payment of the dowry, the bridegroom went back to his father's house, and there He prepared a place for his bride. Go with me to John 13 (read 1-3). Now this passage was given just a day or so after Jesus gave the parable we are studying. So, Jesus is now preparing a place for His bride. And He will come and receive her to Himself at the appropriate time, which will be the rapture.

Then, in the Jewish wedding, usually about a year or so after the betrothal, but sometimes more, he would come back for his bride. The bride never knew when the bridegroom would come. That is how it is with the Church. We will learn that in a few parables from now. The bride had to be ready at all times, and that is how we, the Church, are to be. Then, when the bridegroom came, he would take the bride back to His Father's house. On our slide, that happens at the rapture, just before the tribulation. In the Jewish wedding, at this time the private wedding took place at the father's house. Jesus' Father's house is in heaven. But the guests were not invited to this part of the wedding. That is how it is with Christ and the Church.

Now, let me say this, as I interpret this parable. It deals with the Jewish response to two invitations. In between those two invitations is the Church age. I believe this parable does not deal with the Church age because it is addressed to the Jewish leaders. Jesus will take up the subject of the Church age in the next number of parables we will come to.

So, in our picture of Christ and the Church, the church has been betrothed to Christ. The Bridegroom has paid the dowry price, the price of His own blood. He has purchased her at a very high price. At the rapture, Christ comes to take His bride home to heaven for the private wedding. This takes place while the tribulation happens on earth. And the second invitation of our text to the wedding banquet happens on earth during this time. When the private part of the wedding is

completed, then the invited guests come for the banquet, and this banquet often went on for a week. And I propose here is the significance of this second invitation. This is the banquet that is in view in the second part of our parable and it takes place right after the tribulation.

The servants that give out this invitation are the two witnesses of the book of Revelation that we have spoken of before. We don't know exactly who they will be; Moses and Elijah or Enoch and Elijah. But whoever they will be they will have a huge impact on the world from the temple in Jerusalem. You might jot down Revelation 11:1-14. In that passage we have two witnesses, those that invite others to this wedding feast.

Then in Revelation 7 we have this same time from another perspective. In verses 1-8 we have the sealing of 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. I believe these witnesses are saved through the ministry of the two witnesses of chapter 12. Go to Revelation 7. When these 144,000 finish their ministry millions upon millions of people are saved. Let us just look at that in verses 9-10 (read). All these have responded to the invitation and they are from all over the world.

In Revelation 19 we come to the end of the tribulation and it is after this that the banquet takes place. You might jot down Revelation 19:1-9. Let us go to Revelation 19 (read 7-9). Note in verse 9, that this is the marriage supper of the Lamb. This is a wedding banquet to which I believe this second invitation is given in Matthew 22. How many of you have seen the picture of an artist's conception of a banqueting table that stretches out without end? That is a picture of this banquet.

This banquet happens at the end of the tribulation. And it is right here that verses 11-13 of our parable take place. So we go back to Matthew 22. Go to verse 11 (read). It was common, at a royal wedding like this, after all the guests were gathered, that the host would make an appearance. That is what we have here. But to the surprise of the host, there was a man among the guests who did not have on a wedding garment. Since the wedding garment was the ticket to the banquet hall, it

was then not difficult for the king to recognize anyone who came who had entered but had not been invited.

So, we must ask, what does this man represent? A while ago I gave a message called, "They entered a devastating class." This man speaks of those who entered that devastating class. It is those who profess to be Christians, but have never truly repented and been born again. You find these in all the passages that use the repetition, "Lord, Lord." Let me give you those so you can look them up (Matt. 7:21-22; Matthew 22:1-14; Matthew 25:11; Luke 6:46; Luke 13:25).

All of these passages deal with the same time period, the judgment at the end of the tribulation; and they deal with the same people. If you notice in verse 10, it says they gathered both bad and good. The bad are those who say, "Lord Lord", but never got saved. And whenever the NT speaks of those who are cast into outer darkness, as I see this, it always speaks of this judgment at the end of the tribulation. Whenever it speaks of there being weeping and gnashing of teeth, it speaks of this judgment. So look at verses 12-13 (read).

Consider now verse 12. The wedding host said, "How did you get in here?" How do people get in here if they do not have a wedding garment? Let me recommend here the message I called, "They Entered A Devastating Class." There I explain these in greater detail. Who are these people? They are those who profess salvation and associate with the saved, but they have never truly repented and become Christians. And how do they get in? By making a false profession. By saying the right things at baptism and church membership and so on. Jesus said in John 10:1, listen carefully, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

And I want you to notice that when the host asked how he got in he was speechless. Here on earth, a false profession may be made. At this judgment there is no such thing as a false testimony. And note what happens in verse 13 (read).

4. The Application (14)

Now, what is the application of this parable? We find it in verse 14 (read). We have met this statement before. Our first parable closed with these words, "So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called but few are chosen" (Matthew 20:16). It was my conclusion that those who were called last would be first in the kingdom, because many were called but few were chosen. That related there, in my view, to the Jewish people. Now we have the same phrase. And of those who were called to this wedding feast, many were called. We saw that throughout the parable. In both the first and second invitation, the majority of the Jews rejected the invitation to the wedding banquet. But when the invitation went out to all others, now the wedding hall was filled. And I believe these words, "For many are called but few are chosen" is the application of this parable to these Jewish leaders Jesus is speaking to. By far the majority of Jews, in both these invitations of our parable rejected their Messiah. It is exactly like that in the tribulation, the 70th week, after which this wedding feast will take place. Only, at the end of the tribulation, all the unbelievers are cast alive into hell. What a horrific word to these Jews, and yet, for all this they did not listen.

CONCL: So, by way of conclusion, let me show you what time periods these three parables which are aimed at the Jewish leaders cover, as I interpret them. In the first parable, the parable of the two sons, Jesus showed them where they were because they had rejected the preaching of John the Baptist. That was the time then present. In the second parable, Jesus showed them that throughout the OT they had been a rebellious lot and they mistreated and killed the prophets. And now, they would kill Christ, and then the kingdom would be given to another nation, referring to the Church age. So, we have now covered briefly OT Jewish history, then what was happening at the time of Christ, and what would happen shortly after this and for the next 2,000 years.

And now, in this third parable, He takes them from the time of the OT to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and from there to the end of the tribulation, the 70th week of Daniel. The good news about Israel is that at the end of the tribulation, they finally do turn to Christ. But they wait right until the very

end. It is after that, that the Jews once more become prominent in the kingdom, but Jesus does not cover that in