
Mission 119 Ministries

DECONSTRUCTING CALVINISM
EPISODE 5: A POPULAR PROOF TEXT
— MATTHEW 22:1-14

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EPIISODE GOAL

- **Explain the popular Calvinist proof text for unconditional election found in Matthew 22:14**
 - **Do a word study of the Greek *eklektos* (elect)**
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READING PARABLES

- **A parable is an extended metaphor that is utilized to teach by analogy.**
 - **All analogies break down when you push them beyond their moorings.**
 - **Our goal is to identify and understand the analogy and not push the parable beyond the intended analogy.**
 - **Shorter parables tend to have one analogy, while longer parables might have two or three points of analogy.**
 - **E.g., the lost coin / lost sheep parables of Luke 15**
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UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

The doctrine of election declares that God, before the foundation of the world, chose certain individuals from among the fallen members of Adam's race to be the objects of His undeserved favor. These, and these only, He purposed to save. (David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, and S. Lance Quinn, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, p. 27)

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ Although they were looking for a way to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because the people regarded him as a prophet.

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables: ² “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his servants to summon those invited to the banquet, but they didn’t want to come.

⁴ Again, he sent out other servants and said, 'Tell those who are invited: See, I've prepared my dinner; my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' ⁵ **"But they paid no attention and went away, one to his own farm, another to his business,** ⁶ **while the rest seized his servants, mistreated them, and killed them.**

⁷ The king was enraged, and he sent out his troops, killed those murderers, and burned down their city. ⁸ “Then he told his servants, ‘The banquet is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go then to where the roads exit the city and invite everyone you find to the banquet.’

¹⁰ So those servants went out on the roads and gathered everyone they found, both evil and good. The wedding banquet was filled with guests. ¹¹ When the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed for a wedding. ¹² So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless.

13 “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him up hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.””

IDENTIFYING ANALOGIES

- **We need to identify the three analogies in the parable of the wedding banquet drawing primarily from the context and overall message of Matthew**
 - **The first group invited refused to come and this may be compared to Israel's characteristic (not total) rejection of Jesus as the Christ (especially the leadership, Pharisees and scribes)**
 - **The second group, referred to as "everyone you find" and "evil and good" may be compared to the Gentiles (recall the centurion of Matt. 8 and the announcement of the "church" in Matt. 16)**
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IDENTIFYING ANALOGIES

- **The third analogy is the man without a wedding garment**
 - **But to understand this analogy we must ask where the second group, who were corralled from the streets on the day of the wedding banquet, received their wedding garments**
 - **The Sermon on the Mount is the critical interpretive grid in Matthew, and the theology there plays out over and over again in what follows after that**
 - **Remember 21:45 — the scribes and Pharisees perceive the parables are about them**
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IDENTIFYING ANALOGIES

- **The man without a wedding garment is not fit to be present at the banquet and he corresponds to one who sought a works righteousness under the Law, i.e., the Pharisees and scribes (see Matt. 7-8)**
 - **But Jesus said your righteousness must surpass theirs**
 - **The second group that accepted the invite and went immediately to the wedding received their garments from the king and this analogizes to faith (see Matt. 8-9)**
 - **Being at the banquet is being in the kingdom**
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WORDS HAVE MEANING

“our finest burial place” (Genesis 23:6)

“well-fed cows” (Genesis 41:2, 4, 20)

“seven heads of grain, plump and good” (Genesis 41:5)

“thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven plump, full ones” (Genesis 41:7)

“he took six hundred of the best chariots” (Exodus 14:7)

“liquid myrrh” (Exodus 30:23)

“bring there...your choice offerings” (Deuteronomy 12:11)

WORDS HAVE MEANING

“seven hundred fit young men” (Judges 20:15; 1 Samuel 24:2, 26:2)

“with the pure you prove yourself pure” (2 Samuel 22:27; Psalm 18:26)

“assistant to Moses since his youth” (Numbers 11:28)

“ten fattened cattle...and pen-fed poultry” (1 Kings 4:23)

“They were the heads of their ancestral families, chosen men, valiant warriors, and chiefs” (1 Chron. 7:40)

“It is being built with cut stones” (Ezra 5:8)

WORDS HAVE MEANING

“do not let me feast on their delicacies” (Psalm 141:4)

“the Lord is the tester of the hearts” (Proverbs 17:3)

“you will kill their young men” (2 Kings 8:12)

“I cut down its tallest cedars, its choice cypress trees”
(2 Kings 19:23)

“young men stumble” (Isaiah 40:30)

“to crush my young warriors” (Lamentations 1:15)

“young men labor at millstones” (Lamentations 5:13)

“the young men” (Lamentations 5:14) “struck down
Israel’s fit young men” (Psalm 78:31)

“well-fed, healthy-looking cows” (Genesis 41:18)

WORDS HAVE MEANING

“as majestic as the cedars” (Song 5:15)

“pure silver” (Proverbs 8:19)

“They turned a pleasant land into a desolation”
(Zechariah 7:14)

“Your best valleys were full of chariots” (Isaiah 22:7)

“a tested stone, a precious cornerstone” (Isaiah 28:16)

[precious is Gr. entimon, “highly regarded”]

“He made me like a sharpened arrow” (Isaiah 49:2)

“your walls out of precious stones” (Isaiah 54:12)

WORDS HAVE MEANING

“Why have your strong ones been swept away?”

(Jeremiah 46:15)

“shattered like a precious vase” (Jeremiah 25:34)

“Dedan was your merchant in saddlecloths” (Ezekiel 27:20)

WORDS HAVE MEANING

- **BDAG is a leading Greek lexicon.**
 - **The Greek word *eklektos* is an adjective (not a verb)**
 - **The first definition listed in BDAG is “pertaining to being selected”**
 - **The second definition listed in BDAG is “pertaining to being especially distinguished”**
 - **The third definition listed in BDAG is “pertaining to being considered best in the course of a selection, *choice, excellent*”**
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13 “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him up hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.””

NO TULIP ELECTION HERE

- **In the analogy in the parable “chosen” (eklektos) is not to unconditional election but being excellent, distinguished or choice**
 - **In the parable everyone is invited**
 - **The reason stated for the Jews not coming to the wedding is that they cared more for going about their daily business, and killed the king’s servants**
 - **The one called out by the king had no wedding garment, but the garments had to be provided as people arrived at the banquet, not before**
 - **They do not attend the wedding because they are elect, they are elect because they accepted the invitation and showed up at the wedding banquet**
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