

Here Comes the Bridegroom

Matthew 25.1-13

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The Parable Within Matthew

This parable reinforces other themes within Matthew

Wedding Imagery & Jesus

Jesus said, "The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast." 9.15

The kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son... 22.1-14

In Matthew's allegorical readings, Jesus is likened to a bridegroom, and the banquet to the eschatological feast.

Foolish & Wise

The faithful and wise slave... the evil slave... 24.45-51

The wise man who built his house on rock...

The foolish man who built his hand on sand. 7.24-26

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 7.21-23

In Matthew, the distinction between wise and foolish characterizes the difference between those who are faithful or not, even within the Christian community.

The Problem of the Eschatological Delay

Now when the bridegroom was being delayed...

If that evil slave says to himself, 'My master is delayed,'... (24.48)

It is just as dangerous to count on the delay as it is to fail to anticipate the delay.

The Parable Within Matthew An Allegorical Reading

Bridegroom = Jesus

Virgins = Mixed Christian community

Delay = Delay of Parousia

Arrival = Unexpected arrival of Parousia

Foolish virgins locked out = Judgment of unfaithful

Keep on staying alert, therefore, because you know neither the day nor the hour.

Bridges inside and Boy Scouts!

Be Prepared!

The Parable Within Matthew

This parable creates so many contradictions within Matthew!

It begs for a 'resistant reading.'

What makes one wise or foolish?

Why don't the wise ones share? Is this a good and faithful thing to do?

- 5.42: Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.
- 10.8: You received without payment; give without payment.

What makes one wise or foolish?

What did the foolish ones do wrong?

- Whose fault is it that the bridegroom was delayed?
- They all fell asleep!
- >> Conclusion with *grêgoreô* cannot be translated as "Stay awake!" >> Use idea of "Stay alert!"

What about the oil?

Is the oil supposed to be symbolic of:

- Faith
- Works (as Matthew understands them)
- Holy Spirit

BUT:

- Can you store it up?
- Can you buy it? (At midnight!?!?)
- Is the main problem that of insufficient lighting at the wedding banquet?
- Whatever it is, the foolish ones have plenty of it at the end!



Why are the foolish ones not admitted?

What about:

- The promise of 7.7?
Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.
- The warning in 23.13?
But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven.

Questions from a Resisting Reader

Are we to identify with the foolish who do not reckon things according to worldly wisdom? Or with 'neurotic' wise ones? "There will never be enough..." and so is it foolish to think we can ever have enough 'works'? Does 'just showing up' really count?

The Parable Within Matthew An Allegorical Reading

Bridegroom = Jesus
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 Arrival = Unexpected arrival of Parousia
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What is missing?

Keep on staying alert, therefore, because you know neither the day nor the hour.

Where Went the Bride?

What is the Good News in this parable?

Recognition that things get messed up in the present
 Promise of an assured future:
 God is faithful
 To be wise, it is just as important to be there as it is to be good
 In the end... it's a party!

*This Is Going to Be
the Happiest
Day of My Life*