

Remnant Life Church
03.12.23
The Prophetic and the Return of Jesus
Pt 2
John 14:1-4, 28-31

Jesus Christ was the greatest teacher who ever lived

- He utilized many styles and methods
- But the one He used the most was the parable
 - A parable is short story taken from everyday life and surroundings
 - And Jesus used them as analogies to teach heavenly principles
 - *“This what the Kingdom of Heaven is like...”*
 - IOW – He spoke of the shepherd leaving the 99 of the herd to go and search for the one as a way of explaining how much God loves us
- Jesus also taught by using the prophetic to tell His disciples of things yet to come
- Specifically, about the end times
 - But the subject of Jesus’ return has yet again become a point of division within the church
 - Pre, mid, post tribulation
- The question that is being asked the most is when will Jesus return?
 - I want for you to understand that for the 21st century Christian the question should not be when will Jesus return, but why will He return?
- Jesus is coming back to receive His church unto Himself so that we may be where He is, with His father, in His father’s house
- The entirety of that promise was spelled out by Jesus to His disciples
 - And Jesus used a very common occurrence in their lives as a way that could understand
 - He used a wedding – a Galilean wedding – because Jesus along with every one of His disciples were Galileans
 - They knew that a wedding was the most significant event for any Galilean village
 - And Jesus used the sequences of that event to answer the question the disciples asked as recorded in **Matt 24:2** – ...*what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?*

READ – **John 14:1-4, 28-31** (Miles Saksek)

A Galilean Wedding

1. The Betrothal
 - a. Today, getting engaged is really not much more than a grand announcement
 - b. What I mean is that it is not by any means an unbreakable bond between the man and woman
 - i. Either can end the engagement for any reason
 - ii. Some are very brief whiles others are very long with the timing being entirely up to them
 - iii. But it was very different in Jesus’ day
 - c. The betrothal took place at the city gate

- i. The gate was the seat of authority for the city
 1. It was where the elders would sit and where both justice and business transactions took place
 2. Think back to the story of Ruth
 - a. Ruth 4 tells us that it was the city gate that Boaz became the kinsman redeemer for Ruth
 - b. A process that needed to be approved by the living closest kin of Ruth who did not want the responsibility
- ii. The bridegroom and his family would walk through the town to the gate to meet the bride and her family to begin the series of events that would lead to the wedding
- iii. When the village heard that a betrothal was taking place, everyone who was able would rush to the gate
 1. And both families welcomed this
 2. This was very different than today when a groom will often plan an elaborate way to propose on some isolated beach or private area
 3. You needed witnesses to attest to what was taking place
- iv. The father of the bridegroom would begin the proceedings by reading a parchment scroll that spelled out all of the details of the proposal
 1. If this was agreeable to the bride and her family they would then all agree to abide by what they had heard
 2. This was witnessed not only by both families but the witnesses of the village as well
- v. A sum of money was then presented by the father of the groom to the father of the bride
 1. Contrary to popular belief this was not simply or only a payment for the girl's hand known as the dowery
 2. That was not how the Galileans viewed the marriage arrangement
 3. Instead, it was an amount of money that did two things
 - a. First, it paid for whatever the bride needed to do in order to prepare herself for the wedding day
 - b. Second, if anything happened to the groom before the wedding the money would help provide for her since she would be alone until such time that she married someone else
 4. Finally, as the last act of the proposal, the bridegroom would be handed a pitcher of wine by his father along with a ceremonial cup
 - a. It was called "The Cup of Joy"
 - b. The bridegroom would pour wine into the cup and then offer it to the bride
 - c. At that moment, the bride has been given all of the power to determine what would happen next
 - i. She can outright reject the cup
 - ii. She could accept the cup but then return it to the groom without drinking

- iii. Or, she could accept the cup, drink from it, hand it back to the groom who would also drink signifying to all who were there that both have agreed to marry the other
- d. This single act is different from all the surrounding cultures
 - i. In the Galilean wedding, the bride has the right to refuse
 - ii. In all of the other cultures of that region, the bride has no say in who she marries
- e. Then after drinking, the bridegroom will then say these words
 - i. *“You are now consecrated to me by the laws of Moses, and I will not drink from this cup again until I drink it anew with you in my father’s house.”*

Let’s now take this first part of the wedding process and see how that aligns with what God has done

- First, recognize each major participant of the betrothal and who each represents -
 - The father of the bridegroom is God the Father
 - The bridegroom is Jesus Christ
 - The bride is the believer individually and the church collectively
- So, as we examine the metaphor that Jesus is using, I want you to see how this relates to us as Christians today

The betrothal begins with the father of the groom presenting the proposal of marriage

- So too has a proposal been presented to each of us
- Consider the words of the familiar verse
 - **John 3:16** – *For God so loved the world that whoever believes in Him would never die but have eternal life.*
- This is the summary of the marriage proposal between God and man
 - We were separated by sin at the outset of creation, yet God had a proposal
 - If we believe in Him and have faith in God through the person of Jesus Christ, we would be forever with Him
- This is the same agreement presented by the bridegrooms father at the outset of the Galilean wedding
 - If we believe, accept and agree to live by the words of the marriage proposal...
 - We will be together forever

Then the price is paid

- The father of the groom provides a payment for the life of the bride and to provide for her
- In the same way God the Father offered a payment for each of us
 - Prior to the coming of Jesus, the only way the people could be forgiven of their sins was to offer a blood sacrifice offering to God

- **Lev 17:11** - *For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.*
 - Blood represented life – without blood nothing alive needing blood can live
 - Because of this, God chose to use a blood sacrifice as an act of contrition for the forgiveness of sin and as a reminder of life and death.
- But there another reason for the blood sacrifice
 - It brought the one offering the sacrifice back to the night the people received their freedom from the bondage of slavery to the Egyptians on the night of Passover which began with a blood sacrifice that was then placed on the lintel and down the side posts of the door.
- And so the lifeblood was not only about life and death but about freedom from slavery
 - For the Israelites of the OT it was freedom from the bondage of physical slavery
 - For the people and church of the NT it became about freedom from the slavery of sin
- Of course, the blood sacrifice of the OT was a precursor or foreshadowing of the ultimate, final sacrifice provided by Jesus Christ.
 - It was the completion of the law given by God through Moses
 - And the beginning of the New Covenant in Jesus' blood
- What God did then He is still doing today
 - The blood sacrifice given by Jesus on the cross still provides the forgiveness of sins
 - And it is still setting free the hearts of any who will believe from the bondage and death sentence of sin

Once the price is offered and accepted for the care of the bride the cup is presented and the bride has the choice to accept it or reject it

- We too are given that same choice
 - The Cup of Joy has been presented to each us and every person who is alive today or ever lived
 - The Joy of knowing Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior is presented to every person
 - But each person also has the option, like the Galilean bride, to accept or reject the offer
 - And when the bride has accepted the cup it sets in motion a year long period of preparation that culminates with the groom returning to his father's house to prepare a place for himself and his bride.

This is the first phase of the Galilean wedding that Jesus used to show His disciples what God the Father had already done and was going to be doing for each of us in the last days.

Having heard the first part of the Galilean wedding process, let me ask each you a question now that will play a major part in how you view this teaching.

- Do you believe we are in the end times?
- By that I mean do you think there is a chance that the coming of Jesus to take His church will or could occur in your lifetime?
 - Many Christians believe that the end times are yet a long way off
 - And in some ways that is understandable
 - Most people want to live their lives, watch their children grow up, perhaps enjoy some grandchildren
 - The end of the world is not exactly comfortable conversation for the average person
 - But we should not be average when we have received the greatest gift possible – the assurance of life eternal with God the Father in the paradise of heaven
 - Still more are saying they no longer believe in a physical rapture itself
- Are we in or getting close to the end times?
- To answer that question, you need only look at what is going on in the world today

The Bible presents us with the signs of the end times:

- **Daniel 12:4** – tells us that there will be an explosion or increase of knowledge
- **Rev 11:3, 7-10** – foretells of instant international communication
- **Matt 24** tells of a time of great deceptions, famines, and earthquakes
- And **Rev 17** speaks of the one-world false religion that is to come during the end times
 - It speaks of the great harlot or prostitute
 - Throughout the Bible the word harlot is used to mean false religion
 - Do you think the end times are getting close?
 - Let me show you something that might help you to answer that question anew
- These 3 building were completed and opened on Feb. 28 of this year in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
 - Less than 2 weeks ago
- It is called the Abrahamic Family House
 - It was established after a global peace covenant called the *Document of Human Fraternity for World Peace* was signed on Feb 4, 2019.
 - The three buildings represent, from left to right, a Christian/Catholic church; a Jewish Synagogue, and an Islamic Mosque.
 - Pope Francis and Sunni Muslim leader, Sheikh Ahmen al-Tayeb both signed the agreement- but not a representative of the Jewish faith
 - It is the proposed site to become an international HQ for the diversity of religion to be accepted and tolerated
 - It is interesting to me that this is being done in a country where it is legal to convert to Islam but illegal to convert to another religion punishable by death
 - That is hardly tolerant
 - But there is much more that could be taking place at this sight in the not-too-distant future

- There are those who already believe this could be the very staging area where the antichrist will first gain recognition and support as a global peacemaker and the answer to the global problems that will continue to escalate in the near future.
- And so, if we are getting closer to that time, how close are we?
 - Listen to what the Apostle Paul wrote

2 Thess 2:3-4 - Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

Have no fear!

Trust in the mighty hand of God to deliver you and sustain you.

But be assured that He is coming back for us – just as a bridegroom comes for his bride