

Best Lesson Ever: The Gospel Is For Everyone

Introduction

Review of the Old Testament Framework

Beginning with Adam and Eve in the creation story, the framework that God operated in was that He placed people in a specific place and engaged with them there in that place. The Old Testament is virtually devoid of missionaries (Jonah was one and he hated it). The Old Testament framework was that God was with a particular people in a particular place. The tabernacle and temple were built to house the glory and the presence of God—God in a place. Regularly, prophets were sent out to call back the nation to repentance and to remember the Law (think of them as internal missionaries), but only rarely would prophets be sent out to other nations. The normal construct was God is in Israel and if you want to experience Him, you have to go to Israel.

The impact of this is seen in the way the Israelites viewed other nations in the New Testament—they despised them. From the Romans (which was understandable) to the Samaritans, the Jews viewed God as for them and them alone. Look at how many times Jesus was ridiculed for socializing with those on the ‘outside.’ To cement further this concept, when Jesus came, He came for Israel first.

The Big Shift

However, when Jesus died, was buried, and rose again, He left us with the Holy Spirit and this forced His followers to see things differently—it changed everything. This ‘God *always* with us’ framework was a framework that was not present in the Old Testament—this was the permanent indwelling of God in us (as opposed to permanently indwelling a place). A stationary God was the idea in the Old Testament. A mobile God was the idea after the resurrection of Jesus. This new framework illustrates that God moves with us. This view of God was for wherever we went. This view of God was not just for Israel.

This changed everything—this view means that the gospel is for everyone.

Acts 10-11

The book of [Acts](#) is the historical record of the transition period from the sacrificial system to the church age. God gets out of Israel in [Acts](#). [Acts 10-11](#) illustrates this shift.

After Jesus leaves and the Holy Spirit comes, we see the apostles begin to understand that things are now different and to be honest, it takes them a while to get it. Remember that we are still very early on in the history of the church. Simon Peter (the big-name apostle in today's text) is just now coming to grips with the idea that the gospel is for everyone.

Now, to Simon Peter's credit, once he gets a hold of this idea, he really understood that everything has to change. Everyone is now a possible convert. Jesus came for everyone. We continue to see this in the writings of the apostles and the authors of the New Testament and it radically shifts the mindset of all followers of the one true God.

A meeting takes place in [Acts 10-11](#) between Peter and Cornelius and God uses this story to teach Peter a fundamental truth about God's Good News: salvation through Jesus Christ is for everyone, not just a select group of insiders. The Kingdom of Heaven is open to all who believe in Jesus Christ ([Acts 10:43](#)). This has powerful ramifications for the church.

Key thought: The gospel is for **everyone**

Scripture: Acts 10-11

Cornelius Sends a Delegation

1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, **2** a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. **3** About the ninth hour of the day [3:00 pm of day one] he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

4 And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" [notice the lower-case, 'l,' indicating that this is someone Cornelius is subject to, but this is not God]

So he [the angel] said to him [Cornelius], "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. **5** Now send men to Joppa [30+ miles south], and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. **6** He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do." **7** And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. **8** So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

9 The next day [day two], as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter [note the scene shift—we were with Cornelius' men, now we are with Peter] went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour [noon]. 10 Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance 11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. 12 In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." [Peter was an obedient Jew who held to the dietary constraints of the Old Testament, but when Jesus came, His sacrifice overcame the bonds of the Law and set the Jews free from it. Paul even wrote a letter about this—Galatians—and he told the Galatians that they were free from the Law. Ben Myers (on Galatians): We felt insecure without our chains so we hired experts to repair them. Then Paul came wielding a sledgehammer. Peter was beginning to understand that everything in the Old Testament pointed to Jesus in the New Testament.]

15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." 16 This was done three times [which almost implies that Peter said no a second time]. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

Summoned to Caesarea

17 Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant [How hard would this be to understand? Peter, you can eat anything now. Peter wants to pick up those chains so badly.], behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate [still day two]. 18 And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

19 While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. 20 Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

21 Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?"

22 And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you." 23 Then he invited them in and lodged them.

On the next day [day three] Peter went away with them, and some brethren [these are others] from Joppa accompanied him.

Peter Meets Cornelius

24 And the following day [day four] they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*. 26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.” 27 And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. 28 Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean [phase one: Peter sees **value** in those that are not like him]. 29 Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?”

30 So Cornelius said, “Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, 31 and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ [This is an almost word-for-word retelling of [Acts 10:4-6](#)] 33 So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.” [Bring this attitude every time the Scripture is opened. These people were not concerned about the time, they were not concerned about the subject, and they were not concerned about the ramifications. They just wanted to hear from God.]

Preaching to Cornelius’ Household

34 Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality [there are serious ramifications from this statement: phase two: Peter sees that all men are **loved** by God]. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him [national boundaries are irrelevant in God’s kingdom ([John Piper: America and all its presidents will be a footnote in history, but the kingdom of Jesus will never end](#))]. 36 The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— 37 that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. 40 Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. 42 And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead. 43 To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 And those of the circumcision [Jews] who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also [the Holy Spirit is for all believers]. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues [languages] and magnify God [visible evidence that the gospel is for everyone—but not all know about it].

Then Peter answered, 47 “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord [baptism is for all believers]. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Acts 11

Peter Defends God’s Grace

1 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision [Jews] contended with him, 3 saying, “You went in to uncircumcised men [Gentiles] and ate with them!” [i.e., you broke the rules of the modern-day religious leaders]

4 But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying: 5 “I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. 6 When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ 8 But I said, ‘Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.’ 9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ 10 Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. 12 Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren [the others] accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. 13 And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, 14 who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’ 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning [what we experienced at Pentecost, they experienced (they are like us—‘us’ is **redefined** here)]. 16 Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit [Peter is beginning to connect the theological dots between his Rabbi and the work of the Holy Spirit].’ 17 If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” [i.e., God is doing something new here and I had better not get in the way—the gospel is for everyone]

18 When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.” [YES! YES! YES! We get life, too! Don’t you see? This changes everything! Phase three: **All** the apostles understand that the gospel is for everyone—now they understood why Jesus ate with sinners and hung out with outcasts—because Jesus came for the sinners and the outcasts too. Jesus came for us! The gospel is for everyone!]

Since the gospel is for everyone, our challenge is to be as **liberal** as we can with it:

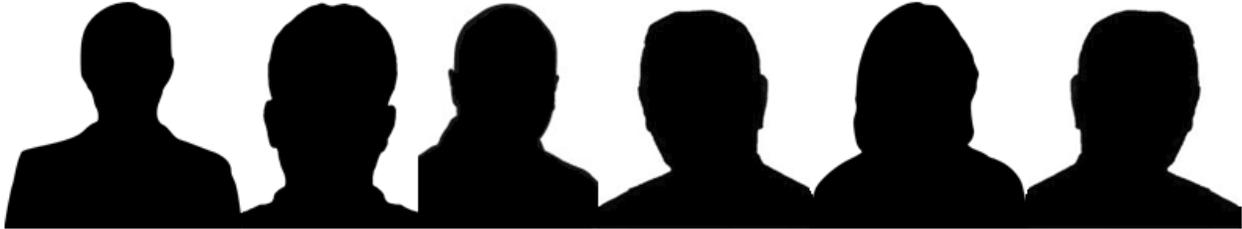
- Skin color does not matter to the gospel
- Nationality does not matter to the gospel
- Religions and denominations do not matter to the gospel
- Language and accents do not matter to the gospel
- Physical disability does not matter to the gospel
- Ethnicity does not matter to the gospel
- Social class does not matter to the gospel
- Employment status does not matter to the gospel
- Age does not matter to the gospel
- Gender and gender identity do not matter to the gospel

Application (What is the point?)

1. Everyone except Jesus had/has theological deficiencies
2. **The gospel is for everyone** (let me break that down for you)
 - a. The – there is only one gospel (and if you monkey with it, it is no longer the gospel)
 - b. Gospel – the gospel is the good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus
 - c. Is – we need the gospel before we are saved, at the moment of salvation, and every moment thereafter—the gospel will always be important
 - d. For – the gospel has a purpose and it is not to remain wrapped up in a tract—it is to be shared directly, explicitly, and verbally with everyone on the planet
 - e. Everyone – you, me, everyone alive now, everyone that ever has been alive, and everyone that will live after us—it is for everyone—because everyone will live in heaven or in hell for all of eternity—the stakes are too high to put boundaries on the gospel’s reach

Personalization (What do I do with that?)

1. Be open to have your theology **tweaked** by God (none of us have it all 100% correct)
2. See everyone as savable (rich, old, young, poor, talented, straight, gay, unsure, intelligent, annoying, and mean) and **share** with everyone because the gospel is for everyone



Best Lesson Ever: Oh Happy Day! (Church Roadmap or Just another Wedding?)

Introduction

The ancient Jewish culture is rife with ceremonies, rituals, celebrations, feasts, and remembrances. We all think in pictures and the language is full of pictures depending upon the various Hebrew words that may be used. One of the most widely used ceremonies and correlating language used in the New Testament has to do with the Jewish wedding ceremony. Unlike western civilization, stories are not told from beginning to end, but the emphasis is on the purpose with which the teller intends. This presents a problem to us as we like the whole story tied together from beginning to end with a nice “happily ever after” ending. The New Testament is full of “wedding” analogies to help us picture and prove the author’s point, but we often miss these analogies, as we are uneducated in what the ancient ceremony involves. In addition, the ancient wedding was not just the ceremony itself, but included the matching, engagement, preparations, as well as the feast to follow. The following is a synopsis to help us see what was involved and to help provide us a tool during our future studies. Note: marriage is a central theme of the Bible.

Shiddukhin

Shiddukhin: “**Tranquility**” (from the peace that should result from the union between the two families) (**James 4:4**: Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. **Ephesians 2:14**: For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.): the matching (two families are getting together to match the bride and the bridegroom)

1. Initiated by the **Father** of the groom (**John 5:30**: I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. **John 6:44**: No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.): culture dictated this

2. An agent (Abraham used one) was often used: especially when traveling distances (**Galatians 4:6**: And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" **John 16:8**: And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.)
3. The bridegroom's choice was important (**John 15:16**: You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.): Was the bride wanted/desired by the groom? All three members of the trinity were involved and agreed on us. God chose us and we should feel desired because of this.
4. The bridegroom's effort was also important to note, reflecting his love (**John 6:38**: For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.). Jesus went out of His way to show us that He loved us.
5. A contract was written (bridegroom-centric) as negotiated (including price and promises but no date of fulfillment) and then signed (**Mark 14:24**: And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. **Hebrews 8:6**: But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.)
6. A **toast** was made (**1 Corinthians 11:25**: In the same manner *He* also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.") showing commitment. A handshake costs nothing! Communion is our toast to agree with the promises in the New Testament.
7. The bride's consent (**1 Peter 1:8**: whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.): Always sought, though the consent often was moot. She may not know the groom, anything about him, and may not have even seen him; but she knows the importance of this for her family. She also is not privy to steps 1-6.

Kiddushin

Kiddushin begins: "**sanctified**" (because the bride is set apart for the use and glory of her husband) (**2 Corinthians 11:2**: 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.): The betrothal (time of engagement—just as we are now set apart for the use and glory of Christ)

1. The *mohar* (bride-price) was paid (**1 Peter 1:18-19**: knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.) by the **father** of the groom to the bride's father/family (**John 3:16**: For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.) The price paid by the father was the Son.

2. The *mattan* was given (**John 14:27**: Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.) by the **groom** to the bride. This was an agape gift, reflecting His love for us. One of Jesus' gifts to us is His peace (just as eternal life is a gift).
3. The groom leaves to prepare the bride a new home (**John 14:2**: 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.)
4. The bride is **cleansed**/washed (**1 Corinthians 6:11**: And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.) because she needed to be pure when the groom returned. This was a physical bath that represented a spiritual truth (union with the bridegroom) that only occurred one time.
5. The bride was to be **faithful** (**1 Corinthians 4:2**: Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.) and suitors would often attempt to woo her away. Other suitors would tell the bride, "He's not coming back." Or, "It's been too long." All of the things that can pull us away from Christ are competing suitors.
6. The bride would be **watchful** for the bridegroom's return (**Matthew 24:42**: Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.), showing her eagerness/desire. What defines her life is what is coming next, not what has passed.
7. The bride was to be ready/**prepared** (**Matthew 24:44**: Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. See also the Parable of the Ten Virgins in **Matthew 25**). Sometimes the bridegroom would come back and the bride would not be ready and the bridegroom would be shamed.

Nisuin

Part 1: the taking "**elevated**" (the Jews believed that everyone should marry, so the elevated concept means that you are now complete) (the ceremony begins)

1. The father sends the son to get his bride (**Mark 13:32**: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.): practical
2. The son returns to the bride's **home** (**John 14:3**: 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.), but does not go inside: cultural
3. His arrival begins with a **shout** (**1 Thessalonians 4:16**: For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout); don't want to give the residents heart attacks
4. The groom arrives with his **entourage**/wedding party/groomsmen (**1 Thessalonians 4:16b**: with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.)

5. The trumpet blasts announce the “Day has arrived” (1 Corinthians 15:52: in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.)
6. The bride is **stolen** (1 Thessalonians 4:17a: Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds): this is extremely romantic to young brides
7. The bride goes out to meet the groom (1 Thessalonians 4:17b: to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.)

Part 2: the expected **glory** (the formal ceremony and reception)

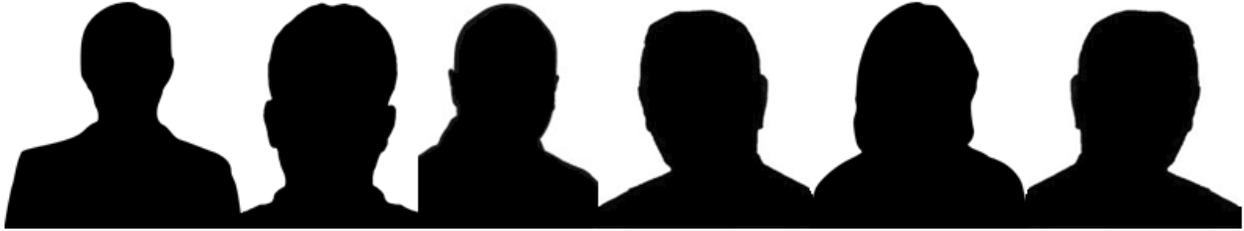
The ancient ceremony always observed the bride and groom decorated in extravagant riches—jewels, crowns, and rich and ornate gowns. Usually, all of these were presented, given, loaned, and or arrayed by others (normally the women of the families). A remnant of this practice is still displayed in the Middle East in the form of a Henna. This is a pre-wedding celebration, where the bride and groom are arrayed by their families and friends before “officially” being presented to their guests. Song of Solomon 3:11: Go forth, O daughters of Zion, And see King Solomon with the crown With which his mother crowned him On the day of his wedding, The day of the gladness of his heart. This was not his coronation as king, because she had no authority to do so. She is crowning him as her son on this most joyous occasion. Isaiah 61:10: I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (Jeremiah 2:32, Ezekiel 16:8-14) Will the bride/the church get such glory? Of course, this was all a precursor of the glory to come.

1. The crown (Revelation 4:4: Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.)
 - a. **Imperishable** crown (1 Corinthians 9:25: And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.)
 - b. Crown of **rejoicing** (1 Thessalonians 2:19: For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?)
 - c. Crown of **righteousness** (2 Timothy 4:8: Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.)
 - d. Crown of **life** (James 1:12: Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Revelation 2:10: Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you

- may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.)
- e. Crown of **glory** (1 Peter 5:4: and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.)
 - f. Crowns **returned** (Revelation 4:10-11: the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.")
2. The robes (Revelation 19:8: And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.)
 3. The feast: In the typical ancient Jewish wedding, a feast was held for the bride and groom. Genesis 29:22 describes Laban throwing a feast for Jacob and his bride to be and inviting guests from around the area. A common practice was for the feast to last seven days (refer to Samson in Judges 14:12). That was not always the case as Tobit 8:20 in the Apocrypha describes a two week feast. However, seven days was the most common according to Jewish historians. This feast most always followed the union of the bride and groom. **Can we expect such a feast after our union with the Bridegroom? Revelation 19:6-9** describes a marriage supper/feast that He and His bride (the church) will be enjoying during the tribulation on Earth. **How long is that feast?** Many speculate it will envelope most of the tribulation (seven years). All of this is in the honor of the bride and groom finally being united!
 4. The future: following the feast, the couple would begin their journey as husband and wife and from this point on, living with one another. In the eyes of the Jew, this is exactly what God intended and makes them now complete. **Is our future as complete and promising? 1 Thessalonians 4:17b: And thus we shall always be with the Lord. When does that imply that we separate or our future status changes? Revelation 21:3: And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle [dwelling place, home, permanent residence] of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.**

Application (What is the point?)

1. Our future is set in stone and founded on a Rock
2. That Rock's name is Jesus
3. Jesus is our bridegroom, our promised one, our *mohar* (bride-price), our love, our home-preparer, our soon coming King, and our perfect match



Best Lesson Ever: Matthew 13: Parables, Presentations, & Priority

Introduction

To grasp properly the concepts presented in [Matthew 13](#) we must first consider the context leading up to the chapter as well as the events that follow the chapter.

Context leading up to [Matthew 13](#):

- Jesus reveals himself as “Lord of the Sabbath,” thereby claiming His deity
- Jesus is rejected by the Jewish (religious) leadership
- The occurrence and revealing of the “unpardonable sin”

Events following [Matthew 13](#):

- John the Baptist is beheaded
- Jesus is transfigured
- His triumphal entry into Jerusalem
- The upper room, Lord’s Supper, and His final Passover feast
- His trial, death, burial, and resurrection
- The ascension

Scripture: Matthew 13

In between these two lists falls [Matthew 13](#) with its seven parables

- I. These parables create a **mystery** ([Matthew 13:10-17](#))
 - A. The parables were spoken to the **multitudes**
 1. The concealment was purposeful
 2. The concealment was prophetic
 - B. The parables were explained only to the **disciples**
- II. Through these parables Christ is revealing the **true kingdom**
 - A. It will be available to all
 - B. It will be available for a certain age

C. Its rejection will be awful

Consider two of the seven parables:

1. The sower

2. The Wheat & the Tares

III. Consider the care in which Jesus concludes ([Matthew 10:49-52](#))

A. Our Lord does not hide any truth

B. He has given the parables

C. He has called the disciples aside to explain the parables

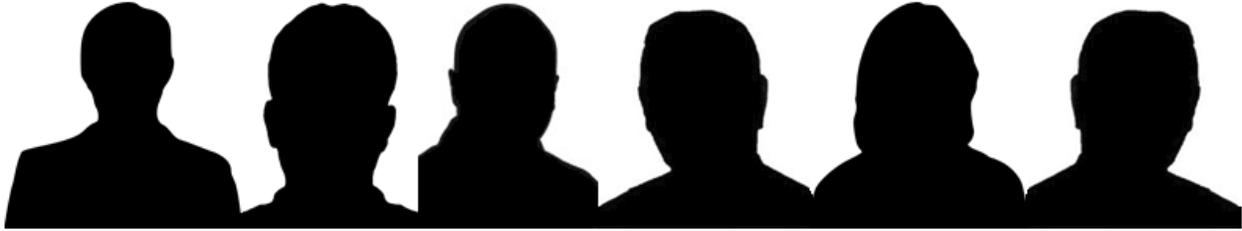
D. Then, Jesus reiterates the severity of final judgment with “plain speak”

Application (What is the point?)

Much is made today of better programs in church, promoting different studies and various group meetings and functions. I am not against any of these. However, given the care in which Christ took to speak on the responsibility entrusted to those of us who have “heard and understood,” we cannot afford to be too distracted.

Personalization (What do I do with that?)

If we do not carry the message of the Kingdom of Heaven and its consequences, who will?



Best Lesson Ever: God's Position on Salvation

Introduction

Context: Paul has just encouraged through his own personal testimony concerning the gospel

Key thought: Make God's position on salvation my position

Scripture: Acts 10, 11, 14; Galatians 2:1-5

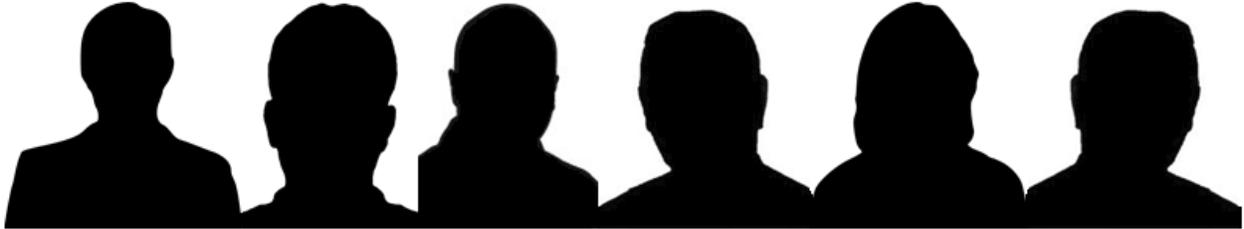
- I. The position is settled ([Acts 10:4-11, 18; 15:7-11](#))
 - A. The problem for Peter (Peter had a problem trusting the simplicity of the gospel)
 - B. God's response
 - C. The church's problem (do not expect the unconverted to clean up prior to salvation— a pagan has no ability to 'clean up' prior to engagement with the gospel)
 - D. The issue is resolved in Jerusalem
- II. God's position produces fruit ([Acts 14:22-23](#))
 - A. Many disciples made
 - B. Strengthened their souls
 - C. Preparing for tribulation (persecution occurs when we share our faith, but it also results in the growing of our faith)
 - D. Appointing leadership
- III. Settle the issue in your mind ([Galatians 2:1-3](#))
 - A. Paul goes to Jerusalem (obedience and offense)
 - B. Paul's purpose for going
 - C. Paul presents a test case
- IV. Be ready to defend your position ([Galatians 2:4-5](#))
 - A. Fake followers exist
 - B. An inside job
 - C. They have a mission
 - D. Do not submit to their false doctrine

Application (What is the point?)

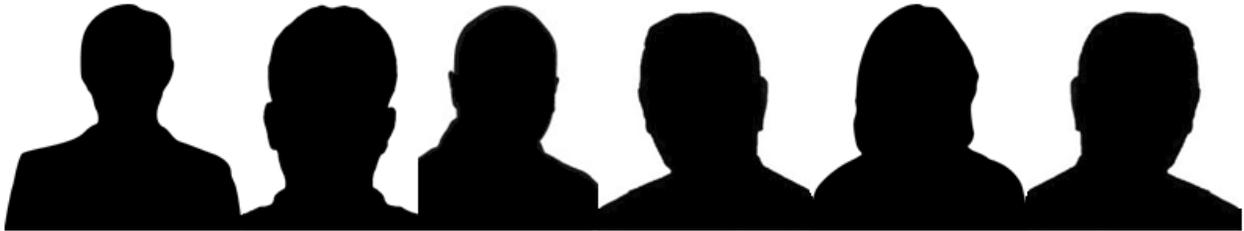
What we think about the gospel determines what we do with it

Personalization (What do I do with that?)

Stick with the simplicity of the gospel



Best Lesson Ever: Bill Brandenburg



Best Lesson Ever: Some thoughts from Mr. Charles

Do you **love** God?

Animals live by **instinct**.

Humans have the greatest power: the power of **choice**.

Keep My commandments. **Abide** in My **love**.

You are My friends if you keep my **commandments**.

Read scripture to find His commandments.

Love one another.

Intercession: **Jesus** and the **Holy Spirit**.

True, pure, lovely, of good report: We should **think** on these things.

Our Lord requires us to do **justice**, to love **mercy**, and to walk **humbly** with our God.

The Big S's:

Salvation **in your heart**

Song **on your lips**

Smile **on your face**

Sparkle **in your eyes**

Spring **in your step**

Share

Serve

Study the bible