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THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET: MINISTRY CHALLENGES IN LUKE 14

OVIDIU HANC[1]
Emanuel University of Oradea, Romania

ABSTRACT: The parables of Jesus encapsulate the theology of the Kingdom of God. Since Jesus used to teach many things in parables it is impossible to define a theology of ministry outside this framework that compresses a thorough understanding of this concept. There are several narratives as the sending of the twelve and the great commission mandate in the Gospels, however The Parable of the Great Banquet in Luke 14, rooted in the Isaianic divine feast, is a parable that reflects not only a grace-based universal invitation but also some ministry challenges that arise with the refusal of such an offer.

KEY WORDS: Parables, kingdom community, Pharisees, banquet, challenges

Introduction

Jesus' teaching is centered unquestionably on the coming of the Kingdom of God. This theological reality encapsulates all other subsequent concepts that are fundamental for understanding what the Kingdom of God entails and how to reach such a reality. The Kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching has a twofold dynamic: people approaching the kingdom (Mt. 4.17; 5.10; 6.33; 11.12; Mk. 12.34; etc.) and the kingdom approaching the people (Mt. 12.28; Lk. 10.9; 11.12, etc.). One feature that is prevalent in the ministry of Jesus that synchronizes the Old Testament prophetic passages and His theology of the Kingdom is the practice of open fellowship. Dunn noted that a remarkable character of the discipleship to

1 Dr Ovidiu Hanc BA MTh PhD (QUB, Belfast) Lector univ. dr. Emanuel University, Oradea. Email ovidiu.hanc@gmail.com

which Jesus called is fundamental for the *open table-fellowship* kingdom community.[2] Indeed the openness of Jesus' table-fellowship, contrasting the table-fellowship of both Pharisees and Qumranites that were strictly defined and confined within the identity of the group, had an outward approach although in a programmatic sense it was directed to Israel.

Although the concept of the Kingdom of God has been largely debated among the scholars, the concept of the *banquet* as a feature of the coming Kingdom of God has been generally left untouched. Brand Pitre correctly noted that many scholars agree that Jesus drew on the ancient Jewish expectation of the messianic banquet to describe the Kingdom of God, however, there is a tendency to study the Jewish evidence for the messianic banquet in a rather brief approach.[3]

The parables of Jesus encapsulate the theology of the Kingdom of God. Since Jesus used to teach many things in parables it is impossible to define a theology of ministry outside this framework that compresses a thorough understanding of this concept. The Parable of the Great Banquet in Luke 14 is noticeably connected to the Isaianic concept of divine feast that heralds a universal invitation of grace. The outcome and the challenges of this parable are surprising not only for those that have declined the invitation but also for those that are the least expected to enjoy such an event.

1 The Early Jewish Literature: Messianic Banquet

The idea of an eschatological banquet is prevalent in Jewish thinking, especially in the apocalyptic literature,[4] however, the Isaiahnic theme of the

2 James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered: Christianity in the Making, Volume 1* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 205.

3 Brant Pitre, "Jesus, the Messianic Banquet, and the Kingdom of God," *Letter & Spirit* 5 (2009): 145–66; Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015).

4 J. Priest, "A Note on the Messianic Banquet," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 222–23.

Great Banquet represents the main literary and the historical context of this parable of Luke 14.

In line with the expectations regarding the participation to the Messianic banquet, the general thinking of first century society was that the key to participate to such an event was to live a righteous life in strict obedience to Torah, the only solution to be counted worthy to attend this eschatological event. However, to have a proper understanding of the development of this concept over the centuries it is important to highlight the nuances of interpretation as they gradually changed over time.

Isaiah 25 and 55

In Isaiah 25.6, Isaiah saw a great banquet in which Yahweh is the host. God gives the banquet of royal food and old wine, symbolizing the great eschatological joy reserved for all the believers. On that Holy mountain all nations (*goyim*) will be invited. The coming of Messiah will eventually inaugurate the Kingdom of God with a great feast in which all will stay together, God will wipe away any tears in their eyes and invite all. This idea is reiterated in Isaiah 55.1 where all those who are thirsty, or poor, are invited to come to eat, drink and enjoy the event. The offer available at the Messianic banquet has a symbolic value: water, wine and milk. Water was indispensable for life, milk along with honey were considered delicacies of the country, and wine was a symbol of joy. The second part of this verse implies that there is a price that has to be paid for all the goods that are available at such a feast, however the universal invitation encapsulates the concept of grace in which all the blessings are offered without payment from the invitees.

The preceding literary context highlights the element of salvation (Is. 53) and the universal character of this salvation is expressed in missional terms (Is. 54). The much-debated messianic chapter of Is. 53 presents the Anointed Messiah, the Servant who suffers and brings redemption that is ultimately available for everyone (Is. 54.2). Furthermore, God is described as an inviting God that invites everyone to feast for free, thus

meeting the basic needs and recognizing that such needs can only be met by God.

However, the prevalent concern among the Jews was a thorough description of those that will take part in this Messianic banquet. The question therefore was who exactly will take their place in the Great Banquet of the Lord? This question has a broad variety of answers; therefore, it became vitally important to define what "*all peoples*" in Is. 25.6 entails. Does *all* include non-Jews? The general answer was that *all* means all the Jews. Furthermore, not all the Jews live according to God's will, so, given the fact that not all the Jews live righteous lives, only the true and faithful ones that live holy lives will benefit from such a momentous event. This kind of thinking and argumentation is seen in the later translation and interpretation of Isaiah 25.

The Isaiah Targum

In *Targumim*, the Aramaic paraphrased translation and interpretation of the Bible, we can identify a slightly changed version of v.6. The Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Bible appeared in time after the Babylonian exile. After the return from the Babylonian captivity, the Jews no longer spoke Hebrew but Aramaic. Since they did not understand the Hebrew, they needed a new translation. This translation and interpretation in Aramaic help us understand how the message of Isaiah was gradually reinterpreted.

In the Isaiah Targum 25.6, the text reads as follows:

> On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast and a festival; *they think that it is of glory, but it will be to them, for shame, strokes from which they will not be rescued, strokes by which they will come to an end* [emphasis added].[5]

5 Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum: Introduction, Translation, Apparatus and Notes* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1987), 49.

Commenting on this interpretation of the passage, Chilton noted that it is part of the national confidence that the LORD will make a festival of 'strokes' on Mount Zion for all peoples. especially their chief 'master' and 'king,' the Roman Emperor (vv. 6, 7).[6] This interpretation helps us understand that in time, the emphasis on the Isaiahnic banquet has undergone change from a universal tone to a peculiar Jewish prominence.

1 Enoch

Another writing that emphasizes even further this tendency of redefining the universal and inclusive Messianic Meal is the writing of Enoch (*1 Enoch* 62.1-16). Written about 300 BC, the latest part of the book, entitled *The Book of Parables* (ch. 37-71) is generally considered as a first century writing.

> 10. Nevertheless that Lord of Spirits will so press them [the kings and the mighty and all who possess the earth] That they shall hastily go forth from His presence, And their faces shall be filled with shame, And the darkness grow deeper on their faces. 11. And He will deliver them to the angels for punishment, To execute vengeance on them because they have oppressed His children and His elect 12. And they shall be a spectacle for the righteous and for His elect: They shall rejoice over them, Because the wrath of the Lord of Spirits resteth upon them, And His sword is drunk with their blood. 13. And the righteous and elect shall be saved on that day, And they shall never thenceforward see the face of the sinners and unrighteous.[7]

Commenting on this passage Pitre correctly emphasizes that the banquet has the same effect as in Isaiah: those who partake of it will no longer taste the fruit of Adam's sin: suffering and death, however he fails to mention the exclusivist nature of the message. While in Isaiah's messianic banquet, all are invited in *1 Enoch*, the Son of Man will remove the

6 Chilton, 49.

7 Robert Henry Charles and R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), 68.

Gentiles from His presence: they shall be a sight for the righteous, and his sword shall be drunken with their blood. After the destruction of the sinners, the righteous will stand and eat with the Son of Man forever.

Qumran Community/The Essenes[8]

Interpreting Isaiah 40:3 emphasizing the wilderness as the place of preparing the way not as the place in which the voice cries, the Qumran community understood Isaiah 40 as a call to ascetism in the process of waiting for the Messianic times. That's why they decided to withdraw from the world and settled in the wilderness waiting a priestly (the Messiah of Aaron 1QS 9.11; lQSa 2.17-21) and a royal Messiah (a David like messianic figure Ez. 34.23; IQSa (lQ28b) 2.11-12). This theological understanding of the prophetic texts was emphasized by their waiting for the Messiah that will come to them and inaugurate the Grand Messianic Banquet (1QSa).[9]

For the Qumranic community, the Messianic Banquet excluded Gentiles, Samaritans, and even the Jews who do not keep the Law in a very strictly manner as they do. Everyone will sit at the table, each by rank, according to the Messianic Rule of the Congregation. Alongside Messiah of Israel there will sit before him the heads of the Thousands of Israel each according to his dignity (1QSa 2.20).

> From the *qĕhal 'El*, "the assembly of God," (2:4) certain persons are excluded: those with "human impurities," such as those smitten in their flesh, paralyzed in

8 The debate among the scholars to identify the Qumran community as the Essene community *per se*, or just a distinct group within the Essenes is far from reaching a consensus. References made by Josephus (*B.J.* 2.119-161; *A.J.* 18.18-22), Philo (*Prob*. 75-87; *Hypoth*.), and Pliny the Elder (*Nat. Hist.* 5.73) are the main reasons why Qumran community has been identified with the Essenes. See also Lester L. Grabbe, *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism: History and Religion of the Jews in the Time of Nehemiah, the Maccabees, Hillel, and Jesus* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 59–60.

9 See also Michael Newton, *The Concept of Purity at Qumran and in the Letters of Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 35.

feet or hands, the lame, blind, or deaf, the tottering aged, "because holy angels are [in] their [congre]gation" (2:5-9), and such angelic beings were not supposed to gaze on such deformities.[10]

Thus, the Qumranic community consider the eschatological banquet an event that is reserved only for few believers that live their lives in a worthy manner in line with their understanding of Scripture.

A similar idea is found in the Talmudic texts (*m. ʾAbot* 3.16–17; *b. Sanh*. 98a), most probably much later than the first century, nevertheless they are in line with the same idea of a messianic eschatological banquet in which the righteous ones will enjoy the heavenly food and drink.

Nevertheless, the gradual change in interpretive tone is evident. While in Isaiah's vision the description of a celestial banquet for all nations has a universal tone, in the Isaiah Targum the nations are invited but they are not willing to participate, hence the banquet will be a plague for them. In 1 Enoch the Gentiles are completely excluded from such an event without any chance, and eventually they are going to be killed. In the Qumranic passages, the Great eschatological banquet is reserves to the Jews but only the faithful ones.

The Parable of the Great Banquet in Luke 14 reflects a retelling of this theme in line with the Isaiahnic message of grace for all the people. Over the years it is obvious that in Jewish thinking there was a tendency of restricting the participants in the final messianic banquet. Jesus' parable runs against this trend bringing new challenges to invite those that are generally considered to be outcasts and to exclude those that falsely consider themselves secured in the event.

2. The Messianic Invitation: Ministry Challenges

In Luke 14 Jesus went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, an event that takes place on a Sabbath day. In fact, the whole chapter gravi-

10 Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 54, 82; F. F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts* (London: The Tyndale Press, 1960), 43–44.

tates on the theme of dining at the table, forming an evident literary unit around this topic: dining at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees and the healing of the sick man (v.1-6); the parable of the guests (v.7-11); the exhortation regarding feast meals (v.12-14); the parable of the great banquet (v.15-24). As in the previous chapter in which a ruler of the synagogue was angry that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day (Lk. 13.14), chapter 14 reiterates the same theme of healing on a Sabbath day but links this theme with a discussion of a feast setting. Many of Jesus' miraculous acts took place on a Sabbath day, triggering a tension between the traditions related to keeping the Sabbath and Jesus' authority over this day.

As the feast takes place on a Sabbath day, the discussion becomes more elaborate and reflects the eschatological banquet that will take place in the Kingdom of God (v.15). Thus, God's final Sabbath, an eschatological messianic banquet, is marked by God's healing and invitation.

The parallel version of this parable is found in Matt. 22.1-10. This parable is also found in the non-canonical Gospel of Thomas 64 with a stronger emphasis on morality and an exhortation to the servants to go outside to the streets and bring those whom they meet, since businessmen and merchants will not enter the feast. As Crossan correctly noted, this may be a possible allusion to Zech. 14:21, but it serves primarily as a moral condemnation of the invited guests—but an externally appended one.[11]

As a response to the exhortation in Luke 14:15 "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!", in the light of this historical context, Jesus gives a parable to emphasize the universal and inclusive nature of the Messianic Banquet. The theme of discussion starts from the reality of those that were seeking the places of honour at the table, while inevitably, they were neglecting those that were socially insignificant. Who should we invite to the table (v.15-24)?

11 John Dominic Crossan, "Parable and Example in the Teaching of Jesus," *Semeia* 1, no. 1 (1974): 296. See also Greg Forbes, *The God of Old: The Role of the Lukan Parables in the Purpose of Luke's Gospel*, JSNTSup 198 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 96.

Given the fact that the man has a natural tendency to associate with those that are at the same social level, or with those that are on a higher social level, Jesus overturns this tendency and highlights that the correct approach to such an event is not to look to those that are able to return or reward such an association but on the contrary to those that are unable to repay (v.14). This theme of compensation has a theological motivation in which a good deed is compensated with the reward for such an act. However, Jesus corrects this tendency to look for a reward in a short term, overlooking a later but greater reward that eventually will take place on the kingdom of God, at the resurrection of the just v.14. This concept is present also in Lk. 6.20 where the poor are described as the ones that are the blessed recipients of the kingdom of God.

This idea of reclining at the table in the kingdom of God is prevalent in the first century Judaism and is found several times in the teaching of Jesus (*e.g.* Matt. 8.11; Lk 13.28; Lk. 16.22). In the parable of Lazarus, the idiomatic phrase eivj to.n ko,lpon VAbraa,m (Lk. 16.22) most probably reflects a feast setting in which Lazarus has the place of honour next to Abraham as the beloved disciple stood evn tw/| ko,lpw| tou/ VIhsou/ (Jn. 13.23). Commenting on the concept of a great feast, Morris correctly concluded that the expression is not common but the setting denotes felicity and reflects the special privilege that one would enjoy by leaning on the chest of the great patriarch since people reclined at festive meals leaning on the left arm with the head towards the table.[12]

Since Abraham was among the most important religious historical figures alongside Moses and David, his identity has eschatological overtones as a symbol of the people of faith that will enjoy the Messianic banquet at the end of days. The eschatological great banquet is presented especially by the prophet Isaiah and this theme stirred up a constant concern about the participants to this ultimate event. Thus, rooted in the Isaiahnic Great Banquet, there was a constant concern for about 600 years in which the rabbis debated to the smallest details the great feast in the coming

12 Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 161, 276.

kingdom of God. Since the concept of the messianic age is prominent in Jewish thought, the extensive debates about the events prior and after the coming of Messiah is prevalent in Jewish writings.

The Social Context (v.16-17)

When someone gave a banquet, the custom was to send an invitation with a prior confirmation of attendance. In a world without refrigerators this was extremely important since the preparation of the food depended on the number of confirmed participants. When the feast was ready, the host would send a servant to invite the guests. The invitation in v.17 e;rcesqe(o[ti h;dh e[toima, evstin indicates that this is in fact the final invitation that was preceded by a prior confirmation.[13] In light of this custom, the refusal would have even a greater impact and reflects a situation in which the negation is rather part of a conspiracy between the invitees. The expression avpo. mia/j pa,ntej serves as an idiomatic expression that emphasizes the unexpected corporate outcome in which *all as one* declined the invitation.

The shocking social element is that all those have confirmed their presence and where supposed to participate in the event. The first and second excuse are shallow, since no one buys something before testing first, especially when the value implied is so high (v.18-19). Five *pair* of oxen represents a fortune for a first century investment. The third excuse represents a similar response that functions as a façade to a deeper state of reality. It is unreasonable to think that the feast was planned while the community was involved in a wedding event. Even if the wedding took place prior to the banquet, according to the law for married people (Deut. 20.7; 24.5), the man that was newlywed was exempt from military service but not from social involvement.

Crossan considers that at the literal level the invited guests offer perfectly reasonable excuses, however the outcome of corporate refusal is an empty banquet. "The intention is to fill the banquet and not allow

13 Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 313.

the refusing guests to ruin the evening."[14] However, a thorough historical analysis of the excuses, helps us understand that the main issue is not the outcome of the event but the offence of the invitees.

Given the very arid climate in Palestine, the land is limited and expensive, therefore the first excuse (v.18), like the others are intended rather to be an insult than an excuse. The justification seems puerile, since it is unreasonable to think that no one buys a land without knowing the slightest details about the property that is going to be purchased (e.g. location, facilities, etc.), and after a long negotiation process. Moreover, the inspection of the land after the purchase is futile. The excuses that these invitees give are indeed emphatic and ridiculous since the reasons they give fit the straw man paradigm. The quality of the excuses helps us understand that the function of the excuses is not to justify their absence but to insult the guest.

In light of all of these, the unexpected refusals function as an insult rather than an excuse. The reaction of the master reflects his character that seeks to invite people to be part of his event not something that would solve his loneliness. The ministry of the servants is to invite people to an event that is intended to be an honour for the invitee, not a solution for the master's solitude. The unexpected final invitation reflects the character of the master not his desperation.

Following the concept of open table-fellowship, Crossan used anthropology and social history to reconstruct and describe Jesus. After a thorough study of the socio-political environment, he concluded that Jesus was a peasant Jewish Cynic whose focus was on 'open commensality' or shared egalitarianism[15] through common meals and magic (free healing).[16] Thus, Jesus' teaching is to be understood against the cross-cultural anthropology and conventional socio-political structures, as a social rev-

14 Crossan, "Parable and Example in the Teaching of Jesus," 84.

15 John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 261–64.

16 Crossan, 341–44.

olutionary peasant figure "that negated alike and at once the hierarchical and patronal normalcies of Jewish religion and Roman power."[17]

Herzog correctly disagrees with Crossan and his egalitarian model of 'open commensality' because this model is unlikely to be found in the ancient world. The issue is not equality, but reciprocity, hospitality and mutuality since toll collectors and sinners offer Jesus table companionship in return for brokering God's forgiveness.[18] Crossan correctly considered that a Jesus who would let himself be crucified means that he is hardly posing a threat to the Roman Empire; however he ignores that Jesus does not fit the Cynic portrait[19] and his view on equality does not endorse social egalitarianism, it is rather ontological[20] than social.[21]

The surrounding general tendency in the first century society was to establish and maintain the boundaries that were very well established at the religious level by the purity laws, at the political level by the hierarchal segregation and at the social level by the social values of honour and shame. The theological message encapsulated in the parables of Jesus in general, and in the Parable of the Great Banquet in particular, transcends not only social realties, but also the religious and political milieu.

Thus, the ministry challenges that are found in the Parable of the Great Banquet are counterintuitive from a religious perspective, provocative from an ethnical standpoint, and revolutionary from a socio-political stance.

17 Crossan, 422. Crossan summarized his scholarly ground-breaking controo versial work in the biographic study of Jesus. John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994).

18 William R. Herzog, *Jesus, Justice, and the Reign of God: A Ministry of Liberation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 222.

19 The disciples were asked not to use staff, bag or two tunics Lk. 9.3 vs. Cynics. It is noteworthy that there is no evidence that the Jesus of the Gospels ever referred to the Cynics.

20 See Jesus' relation to all the people (outcasts, sinners, tax-collectors, religious leaders, Samaritans, women, Roman representatives, etc.).

21 The exhortation to share the tunics or food (Lk. 3.11), is followed by an imm plicit approval of social hierarchy based on correctitude (Lk. 3.12-13).

The Climax

The master is indeed insulted. The expectation to such a situation is the manifestation of anger. However, in line with the Isaiahnic Messianic Banquet, the emphasis is not on revenge but on grace. Although one would expect that ridiculous excuses to be followed by a description of the master's wrath, the strong emphasis on the demonstration of grace becomes an indicator that before the banquet the ministry should focus on invitation and not revenge. The Wedding Banquet of Matt. 22.1-10 has common affinities with the Lukan version of the Great Banquet, however in Matthew the focus is particularly on rejection.[22] The element of rejection is not excluded in Luke (v.24) but is not explained.

The master's invitation is universal: Go to the crossroads, there is still room! The mandate of going to the crossroads is a symbolic invitation of the Gentiles, those that are outside the community. Allison argued that the invitation to those from east and west, represents the ingathering of the Jewish exiles and the banquet is exclusivist in nature, and only the Jews are the partakers of the messianic banquet.[23] However, as Pitre disagrees with Allison,[24] it is important not to divorce this parable of Jesus from its pristine Isaiahnic source where all the nations are invited to the Messianic eschatological event.

Thus, the invitation is not limited to a particular social class or ethnicity or to those who do not have sufficient means. The only way that one will not take part in the feast of God is the refusal of the free invitation. The challenges of the ministry are to be seen not in the act of inviting

22 Forbes, *The God of Old*, 94–95.

23 This idea of ingathering from east and west of Israel is found in Ps. 107.1-3; Is. 43.5; Zach. 8.7 and also in Bar. 4.37; Ps. Sol. 11.2, 1 En. 57.1; etc. Dale C. Allison Jr., *The Jesus Tradition in Q* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press, 1977), 176–91.

24 Pitre correctly argues that Jesus' description of the gathering of the multitude to dine in "the Kingdom" is a very biblical vision of the eschatological restoration of Israel *and* the Gentiles. Pitre, "Jesus, the Messianic Banquet, and the Kingdom of God," 142–43.

people to the great banquet but in the act of persisting with the invitation despite refusal.

The exhortation *Force them to enter*, is an indicator that grace is incredible and somehow irresistible. While historically speaking such a text has been the theological basis for inquisition type moments, in reality the parable communicates the manifestation of incredible grace. From a cultural point of view in Ancient Near East, when someone insisted on a certain matter this act indicates hospitality not dominion (e.g. Gen. 19.3; 24.55; Jud. 19.1-10; 1 Sam 28.23; 2 King. 5.16, etc.). This highlights the divine grace in which God does not want someone to be left out. The open invitation is programmatic in the Gospel. Berković correctly noted that Luke regularly places Abraham in a context in which there are also 'outsiders' of the then society. The individuals that are socially or religiously 'marked' are presented throughout the gospel: e.g. the Good Samaritan in Lk. 10, the ill and paralyzed woman in Lk. 13, the prodigal son (Lk 15), the widow and the unjust judge (Lk 18), the unpopular Zacchaeus (Lk. 19), and the generous widow (Lk. 21).[25]

This invitation reflects a twofold challenge of the ministry, addressing both the issue of divine sovereignty and the free will: first, there is a clear emphasis on the fact that no one participates in the feast without the divine invitation, and second, no one remains outside only on a deliberate act of refusal. The shocking element is twofold, not only that those that refuse God's invitation are expected to participate, but also those that are participating in the banquet are expected not to be invited.

3. Conclusion

The theological theme of the Messianic Banquet is prevalent in the teaching and ministry of Jesus.[26] In this parable the greatness of God is seen in

25 Danijel Berković, "Jesus and Abraham: The Role and Place of Abraham in Jesus' Teaching," *Kairos* 7, no. 2 (2013): 115.

26 E.g. the descriptive reference of eating and drinking at Jesus' table and kingg dom (Lk. 22.28-30); the link between the Last Supper and the Eschatological Supper (Lk. 22.15-18 and par.); the eschatological discourse of Lk. 13.24-30;

the invitation that is made for all. Given the fact that some have refused to participate to this event, giving excuses that function as an insult rather than explanations, the invitation is extended to those who are not worthy. Since participation is based on invitation only, this highlights the incredible nature of grace that is available to all.

This reflects a theology of mission in which the master's reaction to guests' refusal is to further extend his invitation of grace. Although the refusal is not without consequences (Lk. 14.24), the unexpected element is this openness to those that are generally left out from such an event. Thus, the ministry challenges that are found in the parable of Luke 14 is twofold reflecting not only that all those that insult the master by refusing participation will be left out but also that all those that are generally left out are unexpectedly and unbelievable invited. Contrasting the development of the concept of divine feast in the religious literature between Isaiah and the Gospel of Luke, Luke's version of the Great Banquet is perfectly synchronized with the Isaiahnic grace-based divine feast.

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the rich man and Lazarus (Lk. 16.19-31); the miraculous feeding as a symbol of eschatological bounty (Lk. 9.10-17 and par.); etc.

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