

# The Parable of the Wedding Feast



Matthew 22.1-14

# Context of the Parable

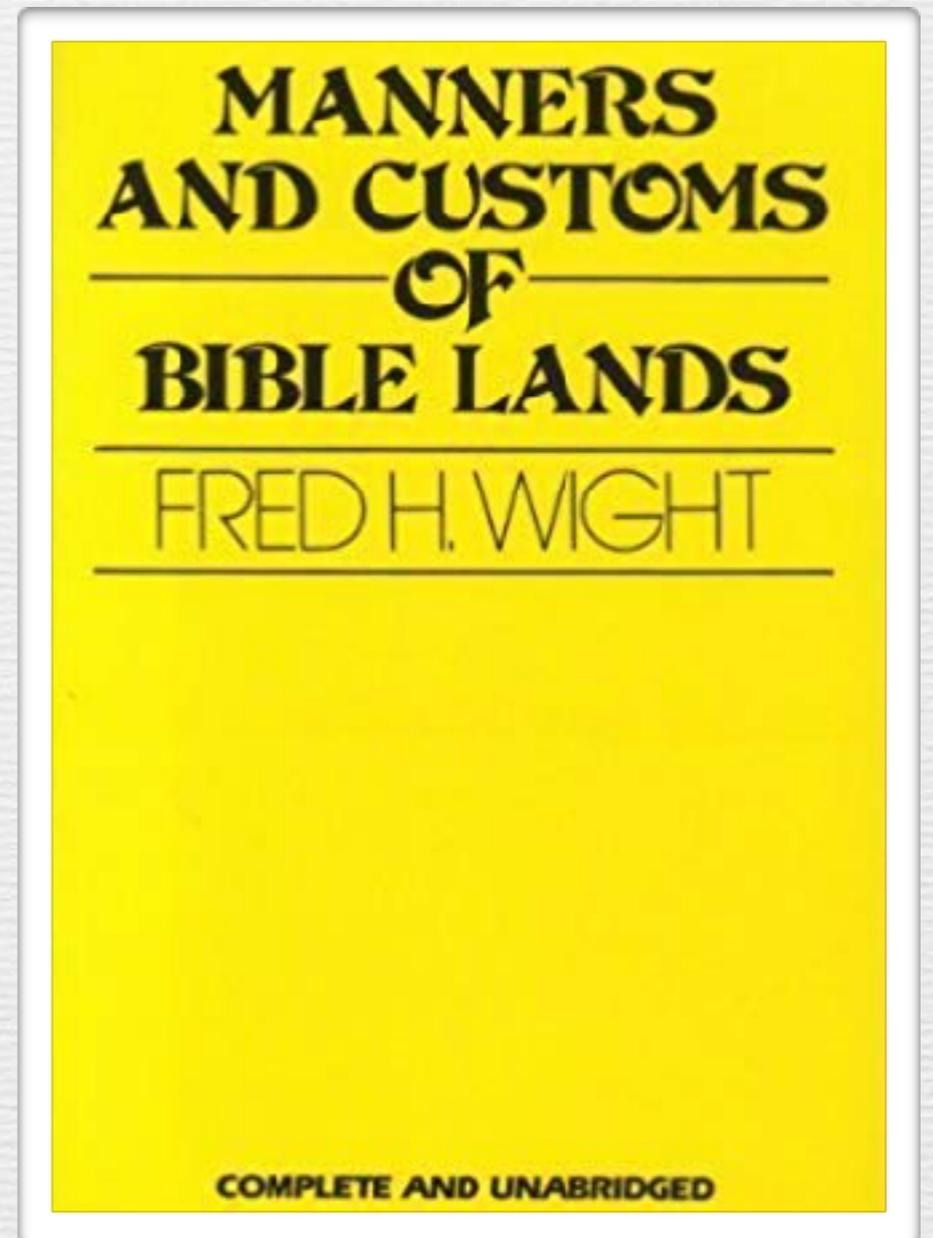
- Six days before Passover, Jesus enters Jerusalem.
  - John 12.1
- The “triumphant entry” is the following day.
  - John 12.12ff; Matthew 21.1-11
- The day after is a busy day:
  - Jesus curses the fig tree (Matthew 21.18ff).
  - Jesus is questioned about His authority (21.23ff).
  - Jesus gives three parables (21.28ff).

# Context of the Parable

- The three parables that Jesus gives on this day are all delivered to the same audience.
- He is responding to the Jewish elites who were challenging His authority (Matthew 21.23,27).
  - The parable of the two sons was addressed to them (21.28).
  - The parable of the landowner was addressed to them (21.33,45).
  - The parable of the wedding feast was likewise addressed to the Jewish elites (22.1 — “them” = 21.46; 21.27).

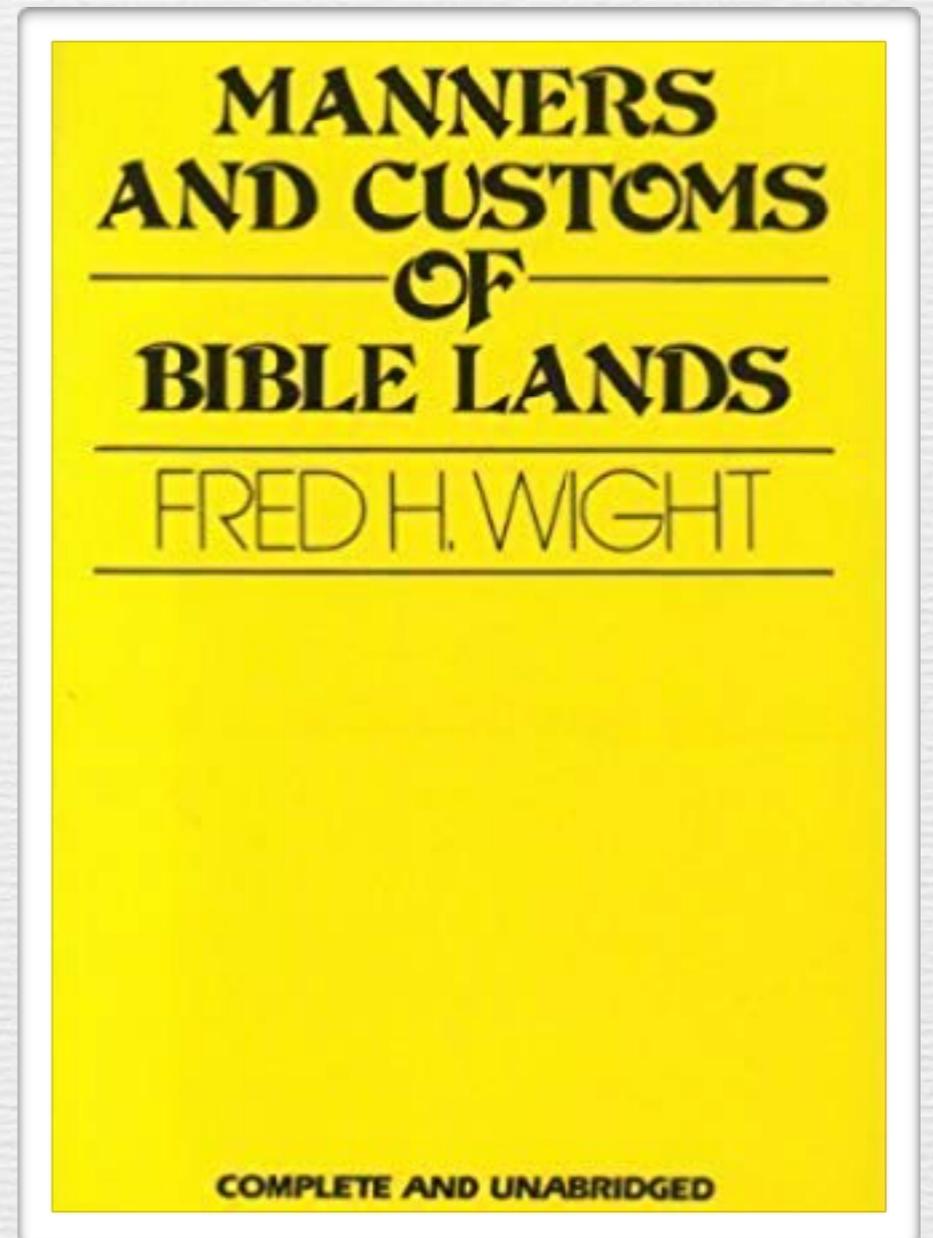
# Culture and Custom

“A custom of double invitations... Some time before the feast is to be served, an invitation is sent forth; and then, when the appointed time draws near, a servant is sent again, this time to announce that everything is ready.”



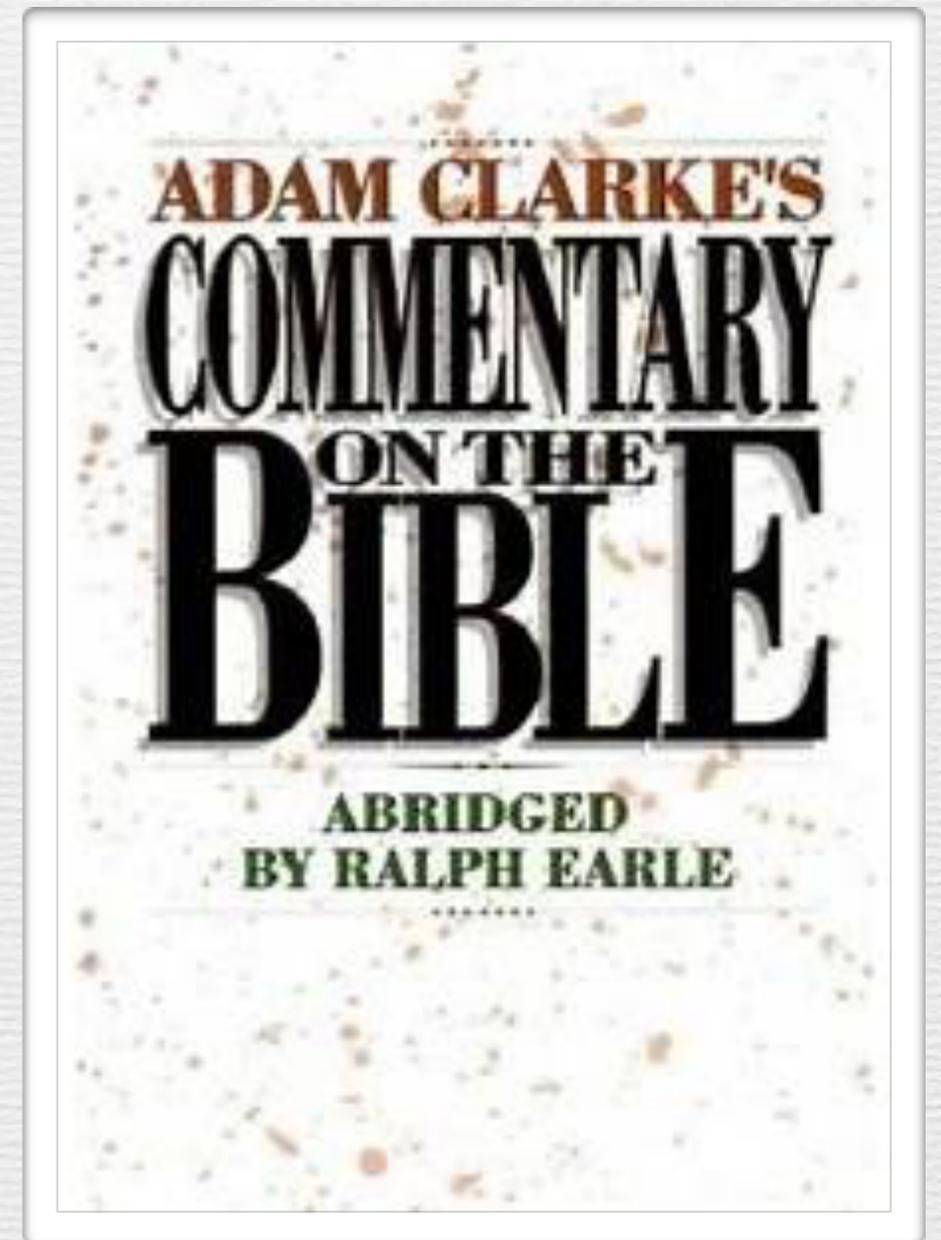
# Culture and Custom

“The one invited must not at first accept, but is expected rather to reject the invitation. He must be urged to accept. Although all the time he expects to accept, he must allow the one inviting him the privilege of ‘compelling him’ to accept.”



# Culture and Custom

“Long white robes were worn at public festivals; and those who appeared on such occasions with any other garments were [worthy of punishment]. The person who invited the guests prepared such a garment\* for each... It was this which made the conduct of the person mentioned in the text inexcusable”



*\*R. T. French objects to this idea, which possibly originated with Augustine.*

# Framing the Parable

- The parable is not about the poorly dressed man.
  - Our time should not be invested in discerning the motivation of the man or the king.
- The parable is not about dinner growing cold.
- This parable is not about “evil and good” sitting together in the wedding hall.
- Parables drive at one central message — what is that message in this instance? (Matthew 22.14)
- The parable is about the kingdom of Heaven.

# “The Kingdom of Heaven”

- Scripture uses the term “kingdom” in different ways:
  - God’s general rule over humanity (Mt. 13.24,36-38).
  - Israel’s former relationship with God (21.43,23).
  - Christ’s kingdom, the church (Mt. 16.19; Col. 1.13).
  - God’s eternal kingdom (Mt. 8.11-12).
    - Composed of all of the righteous of all time; fully realized in Heaven (2 Timothy 4.18).
- The idea of God’s eternal kingdom fits Mt. 22 well.

# “Many are Called”

- A parable drives at a central message — Jesus tells us the message of this parable.
  - A parable is not an invitation for over-analyzation.
- All three parables (Matthew 21-22) reference the Jewish audience to whom Jesus was speaking.
  - Two Sons — they had been called, but “did not go.”
  - Landowner — they rejected servants and Son.
  - Wedding Feast — they were called, but “were unwilling.”

# “So What?”

- The kingdom of heaven is open to all.
- We have been invited to this feast in the most remarkable manner conceivable.
  - This ancient culture had invitations and pleadings; how greatly God has pled with us to come to His feast!
- We must please our king.
  - We must accept His invitation on His terms (22.11-14).
- Our choices have consequences.