

The Parable of the Elder Brother

Luke 15:25-32

1. Relate the parable briefly.
2. What is it in the parable that indicates a wider intention than simply the story of the prodigal son?
3. Who is now brought upon the scene after having been named and no more?
4. How is the conduct of the elder brother a contrast to that of the prodigal son?
5. Why didn't the elder brother go into the feast at once?
6. How did the elder brother learn the occasion of the joy or "what these things meant"?

7. What was the occasion of the father's joy?

8. Does the explanation of the source of the joy stir up the gladness in the elder brother's heart?

9. What did the old father do to get the elder brother to lay aside his displeasure?

10. About what unfairness did the elder brother complain?

11. How does the elder brother refer to his brother?

12. Do you agree with the elder brother that the prodigal had "devoured" his father's living with harlots?

13. Instead of answering with severity, how does the father show the unreasonableness of the elder brother's complaint and warn him at the same time?

14. How does the father refer to the prodigal son when remonstrating with the elder brother?

15. How do the scribes and Pharisees misunderstand the nature of the kingdom as represented by the reaction of the elder brother to the joy inside the house?

16. What is it about the father that provides a perfect picture of the Heavenly Father?

17. The prodigal has the shoes, the robe, and the ring, but what does the elder brother have?

18. If the elder brother represents the Jews, does he have a form of righteousness? If he does, is it true or false?

19. If it is true, how do we reconcile this attitude toward his father and the unloving spirit toward his brother?

20. On the other hand, if the younger brother represents the Gentiles and the elder brother the Jews, how do we reconcile that with the idea that the primary purpose is to set forth the Jews' relation to God and to one another?

21. About what were the Pharisees and scribes critical that occasioned Jesus to relate the parable of the lost?

22. If the younger brother had spent some time "in the field," i.e., under the apprenticeship of the law, instead of being brought into the festival at once, would the elder brother have been more pacified?

23. Although the elder brother thought himself righteous, can you think of sins he committed?

24. Can we determine from the history of the Jews whether the elder brother ever went in?