

The King was Angry that Day, My Friend!

A description of the parable of the marriage feast is found in Matthew Chapter 22, verses 1 through 14, as follows:

22 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

² The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

³ And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

⁴ Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

⁵ But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

⁶ And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

⁷ But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

⁸ Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

⁹ Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

¹¹ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

¹² And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

¹³ Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.

Initially, please see how this narrative started out – **Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables.** (Matthew 22:1). This suggests Jesus was responding to something that had just been said or done. In other words, this marriage feast parable *was an answer, if not to spoken words, to the thoughts that were stirring in the minds of those who listened.* (Ellicott). You see that Jesus was able to read the minds of his auditors.

More specifically, this parable was spoken in response to what had just happened in Matthew Chapter 21; what Jesus had just said there had enraged his listeners. And what was the topic at hand? Our Lord just foretold the approaching ruin of the Jewish nation and then vindicated God's mercy and justice in the rejection of that particular people and the calling of the Gentiles. Here's what Christ had just spoke: **Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken:**

but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. (Matthew 21:42-44).

Now, when the chief priests and Pharisees heard these words, they accurately perceived that Jesus was talking about them and they were quite angry. Hear the words: **But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.** (Matthew 21:46). They were keeping their anger and murderous rage to themselves, but Jesus knew their minds and hearts.

And it was in this context that Jesus answered and announced the parable of the marriage feast. It's all about the context.

So let us look a bit closer at this parable and see what we can gather.

I. ***The Salvation of the Gospel is Compared to a Complete Marriage Feast.***

The King has made a marriage feast for his son. It was a lavish and wholesome spread. Nothing was wanting.

There is in the gospel a complete provision for all the needs of man's soul. There is a supply of everything that can be required to relieve spiritual hunger and thirst. Pardon, peace with God, a lively hope in this world and glory in the world to come – all that, and more, are set before us in rich supply. **Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.** (Matthew 22:4). **(Wisdom) hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. * * * Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.** (Proverbs 9:2, 5).

This is a feast of fat things, and all this provision is owing to the love of the Son of God, who clothes us with His own righteousness to give us a place in His kingdom, and to present us **faultless before the**

presence of his glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24) at the last day. Note that **all things are ready** (Matthew 22:4); we bring nothing to the table. To that effect, we read in 1 John 4:10-11: **Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.**

This whole affair, this entire glorious scene we are presented with here, results from God's generous kindness towards us. We played no role in its preparation, presentation and/or consummation. **But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.** (Titus 3:4-6).

When a king prepares a wedding feast for his son, no expense is spared. Nothing is left to chance. All hands are on deck. Only the best will do. The components of this feast are wide, full, broad and unlimited.

This scene we study today is comparable to the **great supper** prepared by a **certain man** (Luke 14:16). And that man **sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.** (Luke 14:17). The "now" in that quote tells us the preparation took considerable time, and that the presentation of the feast is time sensitive and specific. But it's a "great" supper, meaning it is unusually or comparatively large in size and dimensions, large in number of offerings, wonderful, first-rate, notable, exceptionally outstanding and remarkable – for starters!

There is nothing lacking on God's part for the salvation of the souls of his sheep. The three components of the Great Trinity are present and engaged. Angels are on standby. Grace is present. The Bible is available for instruction. Heaven is prepared as an everlasting home. It is, indeed, a wide, full, broad and unlimited marriage feast.

Left to us is to heed the words of Nehemiah: **Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength. * * * And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.** (Nehemiah 8:10, 12).

II. *The Beautiful Gospel is Rejected by Many.*

Astonishingly, this wonderful array of goodness is rejected by most. You will recall, right out of the chute, the immediate reaction to the opening invitation was **they would not come.** (Matthew 22:3).

So the king tried a second time. **Again, he sent forth other servants** (Matthew 22:4) that extended a more appetizing invitation. And here was one response: **But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.** (Matthew 22:5). Those described here slight the kingdom of God and prefer the interests of the world. They neglect God's word, detecting no value in it. Their thoughts are employed by other matters and concerns. They are unconcerned and couldn't care less about this ruby.

John Gill highlights the heinousness of such rejection, with this partial sentence: *The aggravations of their sin, in slighting and neglecting the Gospel and Gospel ordinances, are, that this is a grand entertainment, a very expensive provision, as well as a very plentiful one; that it was a wedding dinner, a feast of love, they were invited to; that it was prepared by so great a person as a king, and who is the King of kings, and the only potentate; who provided this dinner of his own sovereign good will and pleasure, in the everlasting council and covenant of grace and peace[].*

And to what end; to pursue their own worldly inclinations, ways and methods of life. They place their happiness in the affluence of this

life – such as it is – which they clearly prefer to the words and ordinances of Christ.

Thus far, we have considered one group of invitation-rejecters: those who acted with indifference. The text suggests those folks were the working class; the farmers; those that worked in manufacturing plants; and so on.

But, worse yet, there is a second group that went beyond simply making light of this feast, but conducted themselves in open hostility towards it. **And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.** (Matthew 22:6). These were the movers and shakers of that society; the religious leaders (chief priests); the media (scribes); and the government officials.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown describes these two groups reflecting disdain towards the marriage feast: *These are two different classes of unbelievers: the one simply indifferent; the other absolutely hostile—the one, contemptuous scorers; the other, bitter persecutors.*

And Barnes on the same point: *That is, a part made light of it; treated it with silent contempt, and coolly went about their business. The others were not satisfied with that, but showed positive malignity. Some sinners seem to be well satisfied by merely neglecting religion; others proceed against it with open violence and bitter malice.*

Though there were two separate and distinct groups alluded to here as rejecting the invitation, combined they made up virtually all of the invitees. Combined, they make up a group that the angry, hosting king called **not worthy**. (Matthew 22:8).

III. *All False Professors will be Detected, Exposed and Eternally Condemned at the Last day.*

We launch into this portion of the discussion by recalling the applicable text: **And when the king came in to see the guests, he**

saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen. (Matthew 22:11-14).

This language here seems to be drawn from the following remarkable passage found in Zephaniah Chapter 1, verses 7 and 8: **Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God: for the day of the Lord is at hand: for the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the Lord's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.**

The early custom of presenting garments or raiment is presupposed here. We read of that custom in the story of Joseph when making his identity known to his brethren. Then and there, Pharaoh authorized Joseph to give his brethren of the riches of Egypt and Joseph **gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment.** (Genesis 45:22). Another example is found in 2 Kings chapter 5 where Gehazni, the servant of Elisha, answers Naaman: **All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.** (2 Kings 5:22).

This wedding garment then refers to the Lord's unilateral gift of salvation and righteousness to His people. The King gives us these garments; we put them on. **The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work[.]** (Psalm 45:13, 14).

This concept is not foreign to us. We read of it throughout the Bible. So we see from Isaiah 61:10 – **I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.**

But this man of whom we read, who was spotted by the hosting king, did not have this garment on. And the king called him out on the spot. It was the king who knew it. **The Lord knoweth them that are his.** (2 Timothy 2:19). The other guests didn't know it. The servants who had gathered the guests didn't know it. Those that catered the feast didn't know it. In fact, it appears the man himself didn't know it – **he was speechless.** Or perhaps he was self-condemned. Only the king knew it. And when the king pronounced the lacking garment, there was great sadness all around.

IV. *Of the Guests.*

Once the unworthy invitees were disposed of, the king had his servants out beating the pavement to find others. **So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.** (Matthew 22:10).

The language of this parable, and other comparable Bible passages, gives us ideas of who the people are who ultimately attend this marriage feast as the king's guests, including –

- They were not the king's first choice. As it turned out, the first invitees **were not worthy.** (Matthew 22:8). So the ultimate guests were the “also-rans.” In a word, they are the Gentiles. **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.** (Romans 1:16). And this: **Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the**

Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also[.] (Romans 3:29). And from long before this parable was uttered, we see this from Isaiah: **And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.** (Isaiah 49:6).

- They are gathered by aggressive, energetic and active servants of this mighty king. Barnes says regarding a comparable passage at Luke 14:21: *Go out quickly - The feast is ready. There is no time to lose. They who partake of it must do it soon. So the gospel is ready; time flies; and they who partake of the gospel must do it soon, and they who preach it must give diligence to proclaim it to their fellow-men.* These “servants” are also called preachers. So we learn from Romans 10:14 – **How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?** The guests who made it to this great feast were not looking to go; they were not so much as aware it was going on or what it consisted of; they were leading meaningless lives. Yet, on a day certain, the king – through his servants – went storming out on the highways and byways of this world looking to gather them up. It was all the work of the king.
- These guests are a wretched lot. **Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.** (Luke 14:21). The very poor and low of the world were now welcome to this king’s house and banqueting table. Usage of this phrase twice in the same passage brings the point home: **But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.** (Luke 14:13). Consider Ellicott on Luke 14:21: *The former*

*word [streets] includes the “piazza” or “place” of an Eastern town; the latter [lanes] is the long, narrow “street” or “lane” hardly wide enough for a man to ride through. It is the word used for the “street called straight” in Damascus (Acts 9:11). In the application of the parable these represent the by-ways of Jewish life—the suburbs, and the wretched courts and alleys, which no scribe deigned to enter, and which lay entirely outside the notice and the functions of the priesthood. “The poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind” are the publicans and sinners and harlots and men of violence, who obeyed the summons and pressed eagerly into the kingdom. Elsewhere, we learn more of these people. They are the **foolish, weak, base, despised** nobodies (**things which are not**) (1 Corinthians 1:27-28). They are distressed, indebted and **discontented** cave-dwellers. (1 Samuel 22:2).*

Lord’s Supper (Mark 14:17-26)

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I?

20 And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.

21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

22 And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.