

AN INVITATION TO THE ROYAL WEDDING FEAST

Respond...Accept or Reject

Matthew 22:1-14

(Luke 14:15-24)

This parable is the *third* and *final* parable in a *trilogy* of *judgment parables* given by Jesus in response to the **Jewish religious leaders** who have maliciously challenged His authority...(Matthew 21:23, 28-32...the *parable of the two sons*; Matthew 21:33-46...the *parable of the landowner*). It's among the most dramatic and powerful of all His parables, and graphically illustrate their *willful rejection* of God.

For three years Jesus had been *preaching* and *teaching* the *gospel* of the *kingdom of God*...which included proclaiming Himself as the *Messiah*, the *Son of God*, and *Savior of the world*. He had been offering Himself and His kingdom to the people of **Israel**...with all but a few having rejected Him.

The multitudes were in *awe* of Jesus because of His *authority* when He was *teaching*...teaching that was in stark contrast to the *legalistic* and *complicated traditions* taught by the **scribes** and **Pharisees**. They were even more in *awe* by His *miracles*...miracles that included *healing the sick*... *restoring* those who were *blind* and *lame*...*delivering* those who were *demon possessed*...and *resurrecting* the *dead*.

But when the people finally realized the kind of Messiah that Jesus was...and especially because He had no plans to deliver them from their **Roman** oppressors...their *acclamation* quickly turned to *rejection*...as was evident in their changed attitude towards Him from the time of His *triumphal entry* on **Sunday** to His *trial* on **Thursday** of this **Passover** week.

I. **THE INITIAL INVITATION:** (vs. 1-6)

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son” (vs. 1-2)...Although none of His hearers had probably ever attended a royal **wedding feast**...they were very familiar with **wedding feast** in general...and would have had some idea of the magnitude of one that a king would have prepared for his own son.

In His first two parables, Jesus gave no *introduction*...saving the *explanation* and *application* until the end. However, in this parable He states from the beginning that it illustrates the **kingdom of**

heaven. And because most **Jews** believed that the **kingdom** was reserved exclusively for them...they immediately knew that what Jesus was about to say directly applied to them.

In that region, it wasn't usual for a **wedding feast** to involve a *week-long* series of *meals* and *activities*...and it was the highlight of all social activities. For a royal **wedding** such as the one Jesus mentions here...the celebration *could* (and *would*) often last *several weeks*...and since a royal **wedding** would be held in the king's palace...the guest would also stay at the palace for the entire celebration. Again, a picture of the **kingdom of heaven**.

And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come (vs. 3)...

Had been invited...The fact that they **had been invited** indicates that the guests had plenty of time to prepare for the **wedding feast** and they knew that they were expected to attend.

They were unwilling to come...It is inconceivable that when the **call** to attend came...that **they were unwilling to come**. What's even more inconceivable was their excuses...they were *cold* and *indifferent*. They responded by carrying on business as usual.

Again he sent out other slaves saying, “Tell those who have been invited, ‘Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast’.” (vs. 4)...All the preparations are complete. **Dinner** is ready to be served.

The tone from the **king** is one of telling his **slaves** to *plead* with the people to **come to the wedding feast** now.

But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them (vs. 5-6)...

Paid no attention...The invited guests literally *disregarded* the call from the king. It means that they turned a *deaf ear* to the *call*.

Went their way...Means that they were doing the things that they would normally have been doing...looking after their own interest.

The rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them ...Contempt for the king's **slaves** demonstrated *contempt* for the

king himself...and in **mistreating** and **killing** the slaves they committed a flagrant act of *rebellion* towards the king.

II. THE INSTRUCTIONS: (vs. 7)

But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire (vs. 7)...

The king was enraged...As with the king...God's patience isn't without limits. As with **Noah's** generation...

"My Spirit shall not strive with man forever..."

~Genesis 6:3

He sent his armies...Literally means *troops*. Since the king would not have needed his full military might to accomplish this purpose, he would have only sent enough men to fulfill his instructions.

Destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire...The fulfillment of this prophecy occurred in **70 A.D.** when **Jerusalem** was destroyed.

The Jewish historian **Josephus** wrote that when the **Roman general Titus** conquered **Jerusalem** in **70 A.D.**...he killed some **1.1 million Jews** and through their bodies over the wall...and then slaughtered countless thousands more throughout **Palestine**.

III. THE SUBSEQUENT INVITATION: (vs. 8-10)

Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy." (vs. 8)...

Not worthy...Their *unworthiness* wasn't because that they themselves lacked the *required righteousness*. Neither the *original* invitation nor the *subsequent* invitation were based on *merit* but solely on the king's *gracious favor*. They were declared to be **not worthy** because they *refused an invitation* that was based in no way on *worth*.

That which makes a person *worthy of receiving salvation* isn't any sort of human *goodness* or *religious* or *spiritual accomplishment*... but simply his saying *yes* to God's *invitation* to receive His Son, Jesus Christ, as Savior and Lord.

Because they rejected their own Messiah...they were temporarily cast off as a *nation* and as God's *chosen people*.

Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast (vs. 9)...This is precisely what Jesus commanded in the **Great Commission**.

Paul quoted **Hosea** when he wrote to the church at **Rome**...

"I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' and her who was not beloved, 'beloved.' And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'you are not My people,' there they shall be called sons of the living God."

~Romans 9:25-26

"...By their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous."

~Romans 11:11

Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests (vs. 10)...They called/invited the morally **evil** and the morally **good** alike...both being unworthy based on their own merit. God has always extended His call for salvation to both *evil* and *good* people...because neither are *righteous* enough and both are equally in need of *salvation*.

What makes a person *worthy of salvation* today is exactly what has made a person worthy of salvation since the *Fall*...*personal faith because of His extravagant grace in Jesus Christ...and Jesus Christ alone*.

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

~Acts 4:12

IV. THE INTRUDER: (vs. 11-13)

But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, and he said to him, "Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?" And the man was speechless. (vs. 11-12)...The **man** had obviously been *included in the general invitation*... but he had come improperly **dressed**. The fact that all the other **dinner guests** were **dressed in proper wedding clothes** indicates that the king had to have made provision for such **clothes**...but this

man chose not to wear them. He chose to stay clothed in his own clothing.

And the man was speechless...The man was going to be held fully *accountable* for being improperly **dressed**...but the gracious **king** nevertheless gave him an opportunity to *justify himself*. It's obvious that the **man could** have come in proper **wedding clothes** had he been willing...but he didn't. The man was *presumptuous*... he came to the king's **feast on his own terms**.

Then the king said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (vs. 13)...The man was permanently expelled from the presence of the king and from the king's people into the **outer darkness**...where he would experience perpetual **weeping and gnashing of teeth**.

Ever since **Cain's** first attempt to please God by offering his own self-chosen offering...men have been trying to come to the Lord on their own terms. They may *fellowship with believers...join the church*...become *active...serve in the leadership...give generously* to its support...and *speak of their devotion to God*. But like the *tares* among the *wheat*...they may coexist for a while with God's people...but on the **Day of Judgment**...their *lostness* will become obvious and their *removal* certain.

"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

~Matthew 7:22-23

The only proper *wedding garment* of a *true believer* is God's *imputed righteousness*. The only acceptable *wedding garment* is the genuine...

"...sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."

~Hebrews 12:14

Isaiah declared...

"I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, my soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness..."

~Isaiah 61:10

Jesus closed with this simple but sobering statement...

For many are called, but few are chosen (vs. 14)...This phrase reflects the scriptural balance between the *sovereignty of God* and the *free-will of man*. The invitation to the **wedding feast** has been given with **many** being **called**...but **few** are going to be willing to accept the invitation...therefore being **chosen**.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS PASSAGE:

- **The gospel invitation is given to everyone**...because it isn't the Father's will that a single person be exclude from His kingdom and perish in the outer darkness of *hell*...where **there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth**.

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

~II Peter 3:9

- **Not everyone desires God**...and many who claim to want Him do not want Him on His terms...but theirs.
- **Those who are saved**...enter the kingdom of God because they *willingly accepted* His *sovereign grace*. **Those who are lost**...are excluded from the kingdom because of their *willing rejection* of that same *sovereign grace*.