

# Parable Of The Marriage Feast

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While teaching in the Temple in Jerusalem, Jesus presents a parable to the chief priests and elders (Matthew 22:1-14). To make His point, Jesus uses the illustration of a wedding feast given by a king in celebration of his son's marriage. It reveals the blending of mercy and justice in God's character, as well as the Jewish leaders' neglect of God's offers of mercy and the judgment that falls on those who abuse their privileges.

In the Parable of the Marriage Feast, Jesus answers the Pharisees, who were enraged at Him for His blunt rebuke of them in Matthew 21:33-44. Jesus continues His frank teaching to expose their rejection of the gospel, portraying them as ungrateful citizens who would reject their king's invitation. In this Bible Study, we will see how Jesus uncovers what was going on in their minds and in their conduct, as opposed to what they said.

1. What are this parable's significant features? Matthew 22:1-14; Revelation 19:7-9; John 3:29.

**Comment** : Clearly, "a certain king" refers to the Father, and the king's son, the bridegroom, is Jesus Christ. The bride is God's church, but it is not a primary issue in this parable, nor is the marriage itself. However, the marriage feast is prominent, illustrating the full benefits of God's truth: fellowship with God, excellence, abundance, and happiness. God offers such a spiritual banquet to "the called." The glorious feast He has spread includes pardon of sin, favor with God, peace of conscience, exceedingly great and precious promises, access to the throne of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

2 . How is the first invitation different from the other two? Matthew 22:1-3; II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:24-32.

**Comment** : God offered ancient Israel a part in His plan of salvation, but they could not keep focused on Him. Through every call addressed to them by the prophets, they slipped and fell in willful ignorance. Those invited by the first invitation would not come. They returned their invitation unopened. They treated it indifferently as if to despise it. So preoccupied with worldly interests, they would not even take the time to open it.

3 . How is the second invitation different from the other two? Matthew 22:4-7; 23:34-36; Luke 21:20-24; Proverbs 1:24-26.

**Comment** : This invitation is more precise and urgent than the first. Everything was ready for the marriage celebration, yet the servants sent in this round of invitations were no more successful than the first. The king's kindness was met with contemptuous ridicule; indifference became scorn. The invitees' business interests meant more than their obligations to the king. Some were even murderously hostile, showing their wickedness in their treatment of his servants.

God's servants, the prophets, were ridiculed, attacked, and abused, and since Christ's death, his servants have been just as cruelly treated. The disrespectful refusal of the invitation, leading to the more grievous sin of murder, results in unexpected judgment. The initial prophetic fulfillment of this can be seen in Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70, when the Roman armies of Titus ("his armies") destroyed the city. God carried out this judgment on a people who utterly rejected both His Son and His servants.

4 . How is the third invitation different from the others? Matthew 22:8-10; II Thessalonians 1:3-10.

**Comment** : This invitation reveals divine mercy offered to the Gentiles in addition to the Israelites. The good and bad represent the whole spectrum of moral character. The king's invitation shows no partiality; God can call both the good and the bad out of this world. But will the person repent, change his ways? Human goodness cannot earn an invitation to be called. So the good and bad are only welcome by invitation from God through the blood of Christ.

5 . Why is it important for the guests to wear proper wedding garments? Matthew 22:11-14; Isaiah 64:6; Zechariah 3:3-4; Romans 13:14; Revelation 3:4-5; 19:7-9.

**Comment** : The guests do not enter the wedding hall immediately. Those gathered from the highways would be inappropriately clothed, so time is given them to clothe themselves in proper attire provided by the king. The parable suggests that, not only did the man not have on a wedding garment, but he did so intentionally. He decides against clothing himself properly, even though the appropriate clothing is available. His presence at the wedding is a sign of his rebellion against the king's authority and majesty, symbolized by the feast. When the man realizes his sin against the king's order, he is speechless as his judgment is pronounced.

The wedding garment, conspicuous and distinctive, represents a person's righteousness. It symbolizes the habit of sincerity, repentance, humility, and obedience. It replaces the street clothes that stand for the habits of pride, rebellion, and sinfulness. Biblically, beautiful clothing indicates spiritual character developed by submission to God. Paul exhorts Christians to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" like a garment. Clothing, then, represents a Christ-covered life, and as a result, character consistent with God's way of life.