

San Juan Church of Christ

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What does God's Word Say About...

Parable of the Marriage Feast

Jesus often spoke in parables, which means "a placing beside." Parables are an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. The parable of the marriage feast in Matthew 22:2-14 teaches who will be invited into the kingdom of heaven, which is the church (Matt. 16:18-19; Heb. 12:22-23).

The king [God] gave a marriage feast for his son [Jesus]. The parable deals first with "who" was invited (Matt. 22:3). The principle teaching through verse 8 concerns the gospel going to the Jew first, but even as God's chosen people, they rejected it. The Jews even "seized his slaves [servants] and mistreated them and killed them," (Acts 7:58-59). Because the Jews rejected Jesus, "the king [God] was enraged, he sent his armies [Roman Empire] and destroyed those murders [Jews] and set their city on fire [Jerusalem - 70 A.D.]. Then he said to his slaves the wedding is ready but those who were invited [Jews] were not worthy. Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there [Gentiles] invite to the wedding feast," (Matt. 22: 9-10). When Paul preached in the synagogue at Antioch the Jews would not believe the gospel so Paul said "behold, we are turning to the Gentiles," (Acts 13:46).

The gospel was to be given to "both the evil and the good" where the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests. The first invitation had been extended only to those who were special friends of the king, but now no discrimination was made in extending the second invitation. Both "evil and good" means the gospel invitation is given to all (Gal. 3:28).

"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," (Matt. 22:11-12). In a first century wedding the invited guests were given the same garments to wear to indicate they were invited to the wedding. The lack of a wedding garment was the only reason for casting out the man in this parable (Matt. 22:12-13). But the implications are clear. He was trying to be a part of the wedding feast without doing what was required. Only those who obey Jesus are invited to this feast. When we believe and are baptized into Christ (Mark 16:16) we "have clothed" ourselves with Christ (Gal. 3:27).

The apostle John wrote, "These who are clothed in the white robes... have washed their robes [been baptized] and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," (Rev. 7:13-14). John also wrote, "the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride [church] has made herself ready, it was given to her [the church] to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts [obedience] of the saints." "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life," (Rev. 19:7-9; 22:14). When we are invited to the feast of God, we need to do what the Lord requires. For those that try to claim God's blessings without meeting His requirements, there is the certainty of being cast out into the outer darkness [hell].

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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