

Mt. 22:1-14 (LD 7, Q/A 20) “Many Called, Few Chosen”

For the Children: Have you ever been to a wedding reception? People must be invited to such an event. They do not invite themselves. Even when they are invited, not everyone is able to be there. If someone who does come acts badly, they might be asked to leave. God’s Kingdom is like that: not everyone is given a personal invitation. Not everyone who hears the Gospel wants to enter God’s Kingdom. And some of those who do join the church end up being put out for bad behaviour. **Questions:** What does the “invitation” represent? What are some of the excuses people make so they don’t have to act on this invitation? What is required of those who do accept it?

Introduction:

First Point: The Human Refusal

- 1) The Invitation from the King: In Bible times, wedding invitations were first sent out, then followed on the day by a second round of messengers when the preparations were all ready. Of course, a king’s invitation was more like a command. God’s Gospel invitation is also a call/command to repent and believe – as well as an invitation to join a great celebration. The fact that Christ has now come means that all the “preparations” are now complete.
- 2) Israel’s Indifference: The first “invitation” went out to Israel in OT times. But many then, and in Jesus’ time, were indifferent. They make no excuses, but it is still snubbing the King. The King reacts with great forbearance, sending Israel a second round of messengers to tell them that all is ready when the Lord Jesus begins His work.
- 3) Excuses and Violence: The second round of messengers meet with weak excuses (v. 5) and even with violence (v. 6). See also Mt. 23:37. This time, the King must act. Murderers must be punished. They and their city are destroyed. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in AD 70, and of course all who rebel against God will suffer eternal destruction.
- 4) Bad Behaviour in the Wedding Hall: The King sends out messengers to the highways and byways, to gather any who will come. This represents the Gospel being sent out to Gentiles, to tax-collectors and sinners. The wedding-hall is then filled with such people. However, all must put on the clean, white robes given them by the King – the righteousness of Christ. Then they must begin to walk in that righteousness. The man who refuses is removed. This represents the fact that those who come into Christ’s Kingdom will also be consigned to hell if they refuse Christ’s righteousness.

Second Point: The Divine Calling

- 1) A Matter of God’s Grace: Not all receive the invitation to attend the Lamb’s wedding feast. “Many” are called – but that is not *all*. Sinners do not invite themselves. Those who do not receive the invitation will not be found in attendance. Blind, dead sinners do not desire to attend this feast. Grace is also seen in that the King provides the clean, white robes. Christ imputes and imparts His righteousness.
- 2) A Matter of God’s External Calling: In the OT, it was mainly the people of Israel who received the external invitation to enter God’s Kingdom. In the NT, the external call was put in “indefinite” terms – whosoever believes” (Jn. 2:16). This is not to suggest that faith is an act of man’s free will, but to remove any excuses from sinners. Even in the NT, God does not ensure that every person receives the Gospel-invitation. This is clear proof that He has not chosen every single person to eternal life.
- 3) A Matter of God’s Internal Calling: Not all who receive the invitation respond rightly to it. Note the different reactions in the Parable. Even among those who receive the invitation, God does not send His Spirit to issue the internal call.
- 4) A Matter of Election: It is God’s choice as to who receives the external call of the Gospel; and His choice as to who receives the internal call. This implies election: “Many are called, but few are *chosen*.” The word means “elected.” They do not elect themselves, they “*are* elected.” As LD 7, Q20 makes clear, “universalism” is a false teaching.

Conclusion: