

Jesus' Parables in Chronological Order

Parable #40 ~ Matthew 22:1-14 ~ Wedding Banquet ~ Scripture

¹ Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ²“The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

⁴“Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

⁵“But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. ⁶ The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

⁸“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. ⁹ Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ ¹⁰ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹² ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless.

¹³“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

¹⁴“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Parable #40 ~ Matthew 22:1-14 ~ Wedding Banquet ~ Discussion Questions

1. What do you like and dislike about weddings?
2. How do you react when long-awaited plans fail to materialize?
3. In Jesus' days, it was customary to send two invitations to a party—the first to announce it and the second to tell the guests that everything was ready. Is it surprising that those who had previously been invited later refused to come?
4. Upon receiving refusals to come, what did the king do? (22:4)
5. What keeps people from accepting Jesus' offer of salvation and eternal life?
6. How did the invited guests respond to the King's second appeal? (22:5) What shocking acts did some of them do? (22:6)
7. When you first learned of Jesus' offer of salvation (to you), did you immediately accept it?
8. How did the king deal with those who continued to refuse his invitation? (22:7)
9. After the first guests again refused to come, the king went to "Plan B" that included what changes? (22:8-9) How did that work out? (22:10)
10. If you at first refused Jesus' offer of salvation and accepted it later, what changed your mind?
11. How does God demonstrate his patience to unbelievers?
12. What did the king say when he spotted an improperly dressed guest? (22:11-12)
13. In the parable, the wedding clothes that were needed for admittance to the banquet represent what? (Isaiah 64:5-6)
14. On judgment day, many point to the good deeds they have done. Will that get them into the banquet of eternal life? Are good deeds useless? (James 2:14-26)
15. What did the king have his servants do with the improperly dressed man? (22:13) Why did he do this?
16. What will happen to those who either reject Christ or try to enter his kingdom on their own terms?
17. Does Verse 14 ("For many are invited, but few are chosen.") mean that God has only chosen a few people to enter heaven (predestination)?

Parable #40 ~ Matthew 22:1-14 ~ Wedding Banquet ~ Leader's Guide

Note to leaders: I have deliberately not included “answers” or discussion with most of the questions because they are rather straight-forward. However, I have included explanations with four key questions. I’m experimenting with my guys this week and giving each man one question to answer.

There is a good deal of overlap between this parable and Parable #27, also about a wedding banquet, in Luke 14:16-24. But Jesus told that parable earlier and it had a slightly different meaning and was less harsh. So don’t get the two of them confused.

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10. If you at first refused Jesus’ offer of salvation and accepted it later, what changed your mind?
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Many interpreters take the proper wedding attire to be righteousness, and find many passages that seem to support that. But that may be pushing the symbolism a little too much in this story. Where would he get the righteousness? The King expected him to

have it to join the wedding feast! Some have suggested that the King provided the attire (i.e., righteousness) but this man refused to have it. That is adding quite a bit to the parable, and such an addition is not necessary. We can leave the symbolism a bit general and just say that the man did not prepare properly to act on the invitation he received.

The outcome of this man's situation informs us of the true meaning of the symbolism. We have to say that the proper attire would correspond to all that Jesus said was required for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven—*true repentance for sin and faith in Christ, and then a commitment to love and obey the Lord as evidence of saving faith*. In Jesus' day many people certainly wanted to enter the kingdom, but when Jesus started telling them to come to him and take his yoke upon them and learn of him, they went away.

Isaiah reinforces the view that the wedding clothes of the guests do not represent their own (or our own) righteousness in 64:6.

Isaiah 64:5-6 – ⁵You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways. But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved? ⁶All of us have become like one who is unclean, and *all our righteous acts are like filthy rags*; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Were the clothes of the expelled guest filthy rags (his acts of righteousness)? Perhaps. But more to the point, this passage says that all of our own righteous acts are like filthy rags in God's sight.

14. On judgment day, many point to the good deeds they have done. Will that get them into the banquet of eternal life? Are good deeds useless? (James 2:14-26)

On the day of judgment many will claim to have done good deeds, but Jesus will turn them away because they will not have dealt properly with the basic issue of salvation—they will not be prepared properly and spiritually to be received by the King at the celebration for the Son. God is looking for repentance and faith, not deeds.

On the other hand, having faith will most definitely lead to one doing good deeds. James 2:14, 17, 18 – What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.

15. What did the king have his servants do with the improperly dressed man? (22:13) Why did he do this?

We see there were several invitations to the banquet, but not all who responded to the invitation were allowed to remain. The King had the improperly dressed man tied and cast out into the darkness, where “there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The “weeping” indicates sorrow or remorse and “gnashing of teeth” shows extreme anxiety or pain. People who say they don't care what happens to them after they die don't realize what they are saying. They will be severely punished for living in indifference to God.

16. What will happen to those who either reject Christ or try to enter his kingdom on their own terms?

17. Does Verse 14 (“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”) mean that God has only chosen a few people to enter heaven (predestination)?

In 22:14, the word “many” is not intended to be a restricted number. The invitation has gone out to all who care to listen, but some just refused, and some wanted to come but refused to submit to the requirements of entrance into the kingdom. So none of these will be present in the kingdom. Those Jesus refers to as “chosen” are the people who respond to the invitation to come, and respond in the proper manner so that they are prepared to enter the kingdom.

In Jesus’ experience the invitation to the Messianic banquet had been extended to the Jews first, but they refused. Then Jesus began to turn to the Gentiles, and as many as believed in him would enter the kingdom in the place of the others, even if the ones who believed were formerly prostitutes and sinners.

More people will reject the invitation or fail to meet the requirement of faith in Christ than those who are chosen, that is, those who truly believe and enter the kingdom. Which group are you in? Are you sure?

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