

The Wedding Banquet

By

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Have you ever given much thought to the parables in the Bible, or do you read them and think of them as a very short story with no purpose to them? I was one of those in the short story category until a friend of mine at work asked me the meaning behind the parable of the Marriage Banquet spoken of in Matthew, chapter 22, verses 1–14.

Jesus tells us that “The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a King who gave a wedding banquet for his son. And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, and they were unwilling to come.” (Mt. 22:2–3).

An invitation is a command when a King gives it. Those who do not come are not simply left out, but punished severely! By Jewish custom, the “promise of marriage” came about twelve months before the official wedding; it was more than an engagement, because it was considered that the two were legally married from that time on (Deuteronomy 23:22–27), even though the official ceremony had not yet been performed. The Jewish official wedding banquet was a bigger celebration than is the custom in our present society. The custom was to invite the guests during the twelve months, and then to call them just before the wedding banquet was to start.

“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 Banquet.’ 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” (Mt. 22:4–6).

Two types of people were invited. The first group were those who were not loyal to their King. The second type were violently opposed to the King. Note: This was true of the Jewish leaders who persecuted the messianic community.

“But the King was enraged and sent his armies and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire. Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding banquet.’ And those slaves went out into the streets, and gathered together all they found, both good and evil; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests” (Mt. 22:8–10).

The King was very angry because to insult a King’s servants is to insult the King. Remember that our God is a “jealous God!” Put God in place of the King. God’s chosen people were the Jews, but were they really loyal to him? Was God really angry with the way they accepted Him? Yes, He used the Roman armies to punish the Jewish nation, but the Christian Jews escaped! Josephus, in his history of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, states that over a million Jews were killed in the battle, but that not a single Christian was injured. Christ predicted that in Matthew chapter 24. God was foretelling the Jews of things to come. Those who will not respond to the Good News of Christ are not worthy of eternal life (Acts 13:46). The Good News of Christ is having the doors opened to all, even the Gentiles (us). God is a God of love. He does not care if we are bad when He first

