

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

The Parables

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

The Wedding Banquet

Reading:
Matthew Chapter 22: 1-14

1. The Wedding Invitation

The God of Israel has prepared a magnificent, royal banquet to celebrate the marriage of His Son **Yeshua**. It will be an occasion more glorious by far than the universe has ever seen. To this once-in-an-eternity event the Almighty has invited the whole human race. The following parable briefly describes what is about to take place. You cannot afford to ignore or turn down the invitation it brings with it. Make sure that you read the parable through before proceeding any further.

Rejection

Matthew 22: 2: *"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, **which made a marriage for his son,***
3: *And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come."*

Too Busy/Spite/Murder

Matthew 22: 5: *"But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his **farm**, another to his **merchandise:***
6: *And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them **spitefully**, and **slew** them."*

- **One to his farm** (Too busy working)
- **Another to his merchandise** (Too busy making money)
- **Spite/Murder:** And the remnant took His servants and entreated them spitefully and slew them. (Too ignorant, violent and spiteful to appreciate what was on offer)

2. The King's Reaction

How would you, if you were a king, react to a situation like that? I find it impossible to imagine the scale of the insult God is currently suffering by millions who are too busy to even consider His gracious invitation. Nor can I imagine His anger when His servants are insulted and martyred. I have little doubt but that His anger is great; and the outcome will be terrifying.

Matthew 22: 7: *“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.”*

NOTE: The message of Salvation through Jesus Christ (**Yeshua the Messiah**) initially went out to the people of Israel. They were the **first guests invited** to the royal wedding banquet. It was the Most High's hope that they would accept the invitation and then take the good news to the rest of mankind. But even though many Israelites accepted the Saviour, the nation in the main rejected the divine invitation to the wedding banquet. The Apostle Paul wrote of Yahweh's frustration with His people Israel.

Romans 10: 21: *“But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”*

Who knows, but that the awful persecution the Jews have endured through the centuries may well be a result of their tragic decision to reject their Messiah. Had not the people of Israel, in an unthinking moment, answered Pilate by saying: *“...His blood be on us, and on our children.”*

Matthew 27: 24: *“When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.*

25: Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.”

3. Worthy Guests

But a banquet - any banquet - without guests is a failure, no matter how dignified the host or wonderful His preparations. A **‘royal banquet’** without guests is unthinkable. So the Most High decided to remedy the situation immediately. He sent forth more servants to the highways and byways of the earth.

Matthew 22: 8: *“Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were **not worthy**.*

9: Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

*10: So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, **both bad and good**: and the wedding was furnished with guests.”*

NOTE: Notice the apparent inconsistency between the guest in verses 8 and 10. The original guests were **‘not worthy’** (verse 8) and yet **‘bad guests’** were made welcome in verse 10. In view of this I ask: What makes a guest worthy?

- Is it his/her character?
- Or is it his/her reaction to the divine invitation?

In the light of this parable it does appear that **willingness to accept salvation regardless of personal holiness is reckoned as worthiness**. This is so vital a truth that I will repeat it: It is not personal **holiness** or **sinfulness** that qualifies or disqualifies entry to the banquet hall of the King of Kings. Rather it is a **willingness to believe and accept the Gospel invitation to salvation**.

“And the wedding was furnished with guests.”

I am delighted to report that the wedding of the Almighty's only begotten Son will be attended by countless millions of human beings; and the innumerable host of holy angels who currently inhabit the universe. Yes, there will be multiplied billions at that wedding banquet. Like the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore they will come from every nation under heaven. Black, brown, yellow and white, will all be there. The question is: **Will you be there?**

4. The Wedding Garment

Garments tell a lot about a person's character. The wedding garment in this parable is offered to every guest irrespective of whether he/she is **good** or **bad**. The wedding garment represents the **Righteousness of Yeshua the Messiah** (Jesus Christ). Our own righteousness (holiness) however attractive we may consider it to be, is like

filthy rags when compared to the righteousness of the Son of God. To gain entrance to the royal wedding banquet we must accept the righteousness of God's Son - Jesus Christ. **No other qualification will do.** A person's willingness to accept the Messiah will determine his/her salvation. Here are some texts about garments and why man's righteousness is not good enough to ensure entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Infected Garments

Long before medical science learned about sickness caused by germs, the Bible told of **infected garments**. See (Leviticus 13: 47-59) for more details about this phenomenon.

Filthy & Clean Garments

In Scripture '**garments**' often symbolize a person's character: **filthy garments** representing sinful character and **white garments** representing holiness and purity.

Zechariah 3: 1: *"And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.*
2: *And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*
3: *Now Joshua was clothed with **filthy garments**, and stood before the angel.*
4: *And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, **Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.**"*

In the prophecy of the Revelation, we see believers **"washing their robes in the blood of the Lamb."** This drama symbolizes the sanctifying effect the Saviour's life has on the true believer's behaviour. '**Washing their robes**' is another way of saying, they '**began to keep the commandments of God.**'

Revelation 7: 13: *"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in **white robes?** and whence came they?*
14: *And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have **washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.***
15: *Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*
16: *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.*
17: *For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."*

NOTE: A believer's obedience, though never enough to earn everlasting life is, nevertheless, an extremely important sign of **living faith**. It is also the main factor in deciding his/her position in the eternal Kingdom of God. This fact is made clear in the parable of the servants whose faithfulness was tested by their handling.

Luke 19: 16: *"Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.*
17: *And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, **have thou authority over ten cities.***
18: *And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.*
19: *And he said likewise to him, **Be thou also over five cities.**"*

In short:

- Entry to the Kingdom is gained by **faith in Jesus Christ**
- **But one's position in the Kingdom will be determined by one's present performance.**

'Washing one's robes' (living a righteous life by the power of Jesus Christ) is therefore an important part of the true believer's discipline: because in the final analysis it is **obedience that demonstrates that faith is alive**. The Apostle James confirms this fact:

James 2:
24: *"Ye see then how that **by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.***

25: Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?
26: **For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.**"

5. The Day of Judgment

The Day of Judgment is fast approaching!

Matthew 22: 11: "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

12: And he saith unto him, Friend, **how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.**

13: Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Yes, **the Day of Judgment is fast approaching!** It will be a Day of astonishment for many; not least for those who are depending upon their own righteousness for entry to the Kingdom of God. The questions we must ask ourselves are these:

- Have I really accepted **Yahweh's invitation** to the marriage banquet of His Son? Have I accepted **Yeshua** (Jesus) as my personal Saviour? **Do I really believe in him?**
- Or am I too busy to give the matter any thought?
- Am I, however good or bad I consider myself to be, willing to accept **Yeshua's righteousness as my wedding robe, my only covering?**
- Or am I fooling myself into thinking that my own righteousness (my own robe) is good enough to enter the banqueting hall of the King of Kings?
- **Suppose the judgment were this week, would I be ready to face the King's inspection?**

These are questions we must all answer. There is no getting away from them. We must answer them. My prayer is that every one who hears and reads this sermon will gladly accept salvation through **Yeshua the Son of the Most High.**

AMEN!

In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.
Elder: Max W. Mader

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