

# THE MARRIAGE FEAST

Frequently we hear lessons taken from Matthew 22:8-14. But in fact, this is only a part of a parable that begins with verse one of this chapter. The reason we use a part of this parable is that it contains more than one lesson.

In the first seven verses we see a King inviting guests to the marriage feast of his son. When his servants went out to bring in those who had been invited, they would not come. Because he had made great preparation for this event, he sent his servants out once again to invite the guests, but some of them went about their everyday business and the rest mistreated his servants and even killed them. The King in his anger, sent out his armies and not only destroyed those who had murdered his servants, but even burned their cities!

Beginning with verse eight, we see the King saying that those whom he had originally invited were not worthy of the feast which he had prepared. Then he sent out his servants into the highways to bring in total strangers, that they might enjoy the feast which his friends had rejected. As was the custom, the rich King had provided costly garments for the guests to wear on this festal occasion. But when the King came in to welcome his guests, he saw one who was dressed in the same clothes he had worn upon the streets. He then asked this man why he had come in to the feast without a wedding garment. The parable says that the man was speechless. It was not because he could not afford the garment, for it was freely provided. The wording in the Greek indicates that he knew that he was improperly attired, so it was not a matter of insufficient knowledge. The only explanation is that the man was negligent, and was thus showing utter contempt and disrespect for the gracious King. Thus the man was bound hand and foot and cast into prison, where he would be in torment.

Keeping in mind that Jesus was rendering this parable before his death upon the cross and before the eventual destruction of the Jewish nation, we can see how this lesson fits into God's plan for the redemption of man. God, the gracious King, sent His servants time and time again to invite the Jews to the great feast. Instead of coming, they persecuted and killed the servants of God (Matthew 23:37; Acts 7:52). In His wrath, God determined to utterly destroy them as a nation (Matthew 24:ff). Then He sent out His servants into all the world to bring in those who would be thankful for His hospitality (Mark 16:15,16). But even some of those who *DID* come to the feast, were not properly dressed. They are without excuse, for God the King has provided the proper attire (Revelation 19:8). This robe of righteousness has been supplied free of charge, but in order to avoid being ejected from the feast, we must put it on (Isaiah

55:1; Romans 13:14).

Whenever we stand in the presence of the great King, He will be personally scrutinizing our apparel. Even if we have been obedient to Him in the primary sense (i.e. faith, repentance, confession and baptism), if we have not been busy dressing ourselves in the robe of righteousness provided, we too will find ourselves in the "outer darkness; where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

-Gailen E. Evans