

Exegetical Notes, Matthew 22:1-14
“A Problem Wedding”

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Matthew 22:1-14

Verse 1

“Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying:

- This happened during Holy Week. Jesus has been teaching in parables, short stories designed to teach a simple lesson, since Matthew 21:23. He has presented several stories all of which have the same point. Again, this parable will emphasize the same lesson.

Verse 2

“The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.

- In Jesus’ day, a wedding banquet was a big deal. Great and deliberate preparations were made. In this case, because the host was a king, the banquet would have been a notch above the usual wedding banquet.

Verse 3

“He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

- Apparently, formal invitations were sent to the potential wedding guests. But, in this case, when the time had come for the banquet to begin, the king sent servants to personally summon his guests. This would have been a very special and extraordinary step. It may indicate that the king had some reason to suspect that the invited guests would not come to the banquet.
- The guests all refused to come to the wedding banquet. In that day, this would have been considered a direct insult to the host.

Verse 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.’

- The king does not take offense at his guests’ refusal to come to the wedding banquet. Instead, he sends another personal invitation to each guest. He explains that he has already made all the necessary preparation for them to come to the banquet and urges them to come. This king is taking exceptional steps to get the guests to the banquet.

Verse 5

“But they paid no attention and went off ... one to his field, another to his business.

- Despite the extraordinary steps the king takes, the wedding guests still do not come to the banquet. In fact, they do not even give the invitation serious consideration. They “pay no attention” to it.
- The verse indicates that some of the guests went to work as usual. There was nothing special that prevented them from coming to the wedding banquet. They just went about their day as usual. This would have been highly insulting behavior under ordinary circumstances, but this man was a king. The guests are deliberately insulting the king! Jesus clearly wants those who hear this story to see the absurdity of the situation. No one, in his right mind, would deliberately insult the king as these people are doing.

Verse 6

“The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them.

- If simply refusing to attend the king’s banquet for his son was absurd, this behavior is even more so. It shows that the people who were the invited guests to the banquet have no regard whatsoever for their host, the king. These people hold the king in absolute and utter contempt, and they are willing to show it. This is not politically correct behavior.

Verse 7

“The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

- The king took revenge, killing those who mistreated his servants and destroying their city. Because the king was a powerful man, the

wedding guests acted outrageously in refusing his invitation and showed absolute stupidity when they abused his servants.

Verse 8-9

“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’

- The behavior of those who were invited to the banquet illustrates their unworthiness to come. Though they seemed to be deserving of the honor of an invitation, they proved that they were not.
- However, all of the preparations for the banquet were complete. It would be wasteful not to use the items prepared for this great celebration.
- So, the king sent his servants out to the street corners to invite anyone they might find to the banquet.

Verse 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.

- The servants did as they were told. They went out into the streets and invited everyone they met to come to the banquet. They did not screen the guests in any way but invited everyone they met to come regardless of social standing or character. The result was a well-attended banquet. Apparently, it was a great party.

Verse 11

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes.’

- Then as now, people dressed up to go to a wedding. In this case, however, since the wedding feast was already prepared, there could not have been time for everyone to return home to dress for the banquet. Scholars believe that, in this case, the king provided the wedding garments for each guest himself.
- One guest had either refused to wear the wedding garment or had not been offered one. He stood out like a sore thumb and the king noticed him.

Verse 12

***“‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’
The man was speechless.***

- The king confronted the man about his lack of wedding clothes. But the man had no explanation.

Verse 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.’

- This man’s appearance was improper. He had refused or would not wear the king’s wedding garments. This made him unworthy to attend the banquet, so he was tossed out.

Verse 14

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

- This proverb summarizes the point of the parable:
 - + God invites everyone to his banquet. He invites every person to come into the kingdom of heaven.
 - +But only those who choose to wear the right garment, Jesus Christ, may stay. There is no other way to enter heaven than by Jesus. God decreed this. Those who try to attend the banquet, enter the kingdom, without Jesus will not be allowed to remain. They will be tossed out like the guest who refused to wear the wedding clothes.

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