

**Matthew 22:1-14** Parable of the Wedding banquet (Pentecost Study 20)

**22** Jesus also told them other parables. He said, <sup>2</sup> "The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. <sup>3</sup> When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they all refused to come! <sup>4</sup> "So he sent other servants to tell them, 'The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!' <sup>5</sup> But the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business. <sup>6</sup> Others seized his messengers and insulted them and killed them. <sup>7</sup> "The king was furious, and he sent out his army to destroy the murderers and burn their town. <sup>8</sup> And he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren't worthy of the honour. <sup>9</sup> Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.' <sup>10</sup> So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests. <sup>11</sup> "But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn't wearing the proper clothes for a wedding. <sup>12</sup> 'Friend,' he asked, 'how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?' But the man had no reply. <sup>13</sup> Then the king said to his aides, 'Bind his hands and feet and throw him into the darkness outside, where people will be weeping and gnashing their teeth.' <sup>14</sup> "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Q.1. Jesus' parables were often about 'the Kingdom of God (heaven)' v.1. Generally speaking, what does he mean by the phrase?

Q.2. Why is this wedding feast more important than others?

Q.3. What do we learn about those originally invited vv.5-6?

Q.4. What is so surprising about their response?

Q.5. How should we understand the king's actions in v.7 Is this justified?

Q.6. The king says the originally invited guests are 'unworthy' of coming to the wedding v.9. Why?

Q.7. Who did the king subsequently invite? Why? What made them 'worthy' of inclusion?

Q.8. Why is the ill-clad guest banished vv.11-13?

Q.9. Why will 'people be weeping gnashing their teeth' v.13?

Q.10. Let's ask some questions about the parable. By analogy:

i. Who is the king?

ii. Who is the king's son?

iii. Who are the king's servants?

iv. What is the wedding banquet?

v. Who are the original guests?

vi. Who are the 'everyone the servants could find' v.10?

vii. Who is the ill-clad guest v.11?

viii. Who are the people 'weeping and gnashing their teeth' v.13?

ix. Who are the 'many' and the 'few' of v.14?

**Application: for reflection, prayer and action**

Q.11. What does Jesus mean by v.14 'for many are called, but few are chosen'? Are you among the 'many' or the 'few' or how do you see yourself?

Q.12. What is the appropriate clothing to 'put on' for the kingdom of God? See Ephesians 6:10-20, Colossians 3:9-14

## **Matt 20:1-16 (my suggested answers)**

**NB.** Please answer the questions yourself. We all have different ways of answering; God may give you greater insights than mine. Put '*John thinks*' ... before each answer.

A.1. The kingdom of God is the place where God is king, where his saving rule is evident and enjoyed. Like a wedding banquet.

A.2. This wedding feast is more important than others because it is for the king's son.

A.3. Those originally invited were bad-mannered, rebellious and violent.

A.4. What is surprising is their lack of insight and awareness – this is the king's invitation – it's his son's wedding. They are blind and caught up in their own affairs to realise the snub this is to the king.

A.5. As I mentioned in my sermon – these 'guests' have been warned many times. They have snubbed the king and murdered his servants. Now their own actions are leading the nation into direct confrontation with Rome and their own destruction v.17 & v.13

A.6. They are unworthy because they have ignored the king's invitation and snubbed the wedding. Selfishly they don't realise what's going on.

A.7. The king decides to invite 'everyone' (the all and sundry', including the sinners, the tax-collectors, the poor, the lame, the blind, the possessed, the disturbed and Gentiles (us). The only criteria of 'worthiness' for receiving the invitation is a willingness to come.

A.8. We have to assume; the ill-clad guest is banished because he has snuck in (uninvited). He doesn't fit because he is dressed in pride, self-righteousness and judgement of others.

A.9. When the destruction of Jerusalem hits the city, many people will die horrible deaths or be enslaved. Those caught up in the chaos will naturally weep and gnash their teeth in fear.

A.10. i. The king is God

ii. The King's son is Jesus

iii. The king's servants are the prophets of old & John the Baptist

iv. The wedding banquet is the kingdom announced by Jesus – the time is at hand – come join in the celebration

v. The original guests are the Jewish people represented by their leaders – the Scribes, Pharisees, Chief-Priests & Elders

vi. The everyone is those I mentioned in A.7.

vii. The ill-clad guest is probably a Pharisee or religious leader

viii. The people weeping & gnashing their teeth are the Jewish people led astray by bad leaders and caught up in the destruction of Jerusalem.

ix. The many are the Jewish people, the few are those who have responded to Jesus' invitation to follow him

A.11. Your answer. The invitation has been going out to the nation of Israel for hundreds of years. The many have been called (by the prophets etc). But few have responded. In Elijah's day only 3,000 hadn't given in to worship idols. In Jesus' day it appears that small pockets of followers appeared in places across Judea & Galilee but 'few' really. Then the few increased as gentiles heard the message and believed.

A.12. The whole armour of God, and love (the fruit of the Spirit) these are the clothing we need to put on.