

Matthew 22

The Wedding Feast

Mat 22:1 And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ² "The kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, ³ and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.

- After His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (21:10) "Jesus entered the temple and drove out" all who had no business there making "it a den of robbers" (21:13). When His authority by which He was doing those things was questioned, He, as the Master of rhetorical response put His detractors on the spot through parables to where "they perceived He was speaking about them" (21:45). This chapter continues those parables.
- "The kingdom of Heaven" we understand represents the church that Jesus came and died for. She is known as the "place" Jesus went back to Heaven to "prepare" (Jn 14:2), she is the "woman" (*spiritual Israel*) of Rev 12 and is "the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God (see also Heb 12:28), prepared as a bride for her Husband" (Rev 21:2). This invitation was first available at Pentecost (*as it has continued since then*) and is the context of "the wedding feast" in Jesus' parable here. Those who were first "invited" were the Jews ("chosen... out of all the people who are on the face of the earth"- Deu 7:6 but "not because of [their] righteousness"- Deu 9:5 and only those who were circumcised in heart- Deu 30:6; Rom 2:28-29). Overall they did not accept the concept of the spiritual nature of the kingdom. The servants being sent here first were the prophets who prophesied of His coming, and then came the apostles, disciples and preachers who were sent "to the Jew first..." (Rom 1:16) because "to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ..." (Rom 9:4-5).

Mat 22:4 Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.' ⁵ But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶ while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.

- The first to be sent were the prophets specifically, then the "other servants" (*evangelists like Paul and Timothy- 2 Tim 4:5*). At this point preparations have been made that were not before this (*the Lamb has been sacrificed- 1 Pet 1:19*), those prophesies concerning the Messiah have been fulfilled (Mat 5:17) and now salvation via the Gospel has been offered to Israel first. But because the Jews, *as Steven accused them, were so obstinate about what they erroneously believed (*that salvation was through the Law even though they didn't keep it- Mat 23:3-4*) that Jesus blamed them of building "the tombs of the prophets whom [their] fathers killed" (Lk 11:47). Remember, Jesus said that "the one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward" (Mat 10:41). To receive a prophet was to accept his inspired message and make an adjustment to the outcome that the prophesy offered. Here the prophesy to the Jews concerned accepting God's Christ as their only Savior.

*Act 7:51 "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart (*Heb.3824-mind, understanding*) and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those

who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, Whom you have now betrayed and murdered, 53 you who received the Law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.”

Deu 10:16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.

Great preparation was made, the Sacrifice prepared (*Php 2:8*) “and everything is ready” which still stands today. The invitation is the great commission (*Mat 28:18-20*). Those who do not R.S.V.P. to the call (*as stated by Paul*) “on that day when, according to my Gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus” (*Rom 2:16*), in the context, this group (*physical Israel*) will be judged “according to what they had done” (*Rev 20:12*). They were more concerned with the physical (“*one to his farm, another to his business*”) “[setting] their minds on the things of the flesh” which “is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s Law; indeed, it cannot” (*Rom 8:5, 7*).

Mat 22:7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

- In 70 AD God “sent His troops” to destroy the inhabitants of Jerusalem “and burned their city”. God’s troops, in this case referring to the Roman Empire, aren’t always necessarily from among His own people. In Exodus He used Pharaoh (*Ex 9:16*). He used Nebuchadnezzar to punish Israel for their disobedience with eventually punishing Babylon for going beyond the purpose of their being employed for His service (*Jer 27:6, 14-15, 22, etc.*). The fall of Jerusalem will later be discussed in chapter 24 but is what Jesus is alluding to here since the Law became obsolete, grew old and finally “[vanished] away” (*Heb 8:13*). And when Jerusalem was destroyed so also were the records and genealogies that proved their (*physical*) Jewish heritage upon which they based their covenant relationship with God (“*myths and endless genealogies*”- *1 Tim 1:4; Titus 3:9*).

Mat 22:8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' 10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

- This was the message to the “Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven” (*Act 2:5*) consisting of “both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians” (*v. 11*). To the Jews first on Pentecost and then to “the Gentiles, [bringing] salvation to the ends of the earth”.

Act 13:46 And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth."

- “bad and good”- James gives a good argument (*Jas 2*) in not showing partiality when it comes to the outward appearance since “God... knows the heart” (*Act 15:8*) and is more concerned with the “inner self [that] is being renewed day by day” (*2 Cor 4:16*). Knowing what the Jews felt about the Gentiles (*Act 11:2-3*), Jesus included them here as also being worthy of the invitation, thus making the Jews “jealous [in order to] save some of them” (*Rom 11:14*). We can’t decipher a person’s intentions, and to make

distinctions between who is “bad” and who is “good” is to make oneself equal to God. Our responsibility is to “make disciples of all nations” (28:19) and leave the sifting to God. But that doesn’t mean we are to just allow anyone into the fellowship since God has set certain parameters.

Mat 22:11 "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

- Inferring from the evidence given here, since it would have been customary for a “wedding garment” to be worn by the guest as proof of his invitation and respect for his host, anyone not obliging this Jewish custom of acceptance would have been escorted by force away from the celebrating. Jesus’ audience here was made up of Jews who felt they had secured their favor with God through their lineage (*Titus 3:9*) noting “he who does not enter the sheepfold by the Door but climbs in another way, that man is a thief and a robber” (*Jn 10:7, 1*). Our garment of invitation to the “wedding feast” is Christ through obedience to scriptural baptism (*Gal 3:27-28*). How many people who believe in Christ but hold to doctrines that are foreign to the Gospel will be “speechless” when at death and the final judgment they realize their error, only to be “cast... into outer darkness”?

Mat 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen."

- Our calling is “through [the] Gospel, so that [we might] obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (*2 Thes 2:14*). Of all those that have heard the message of the Gospel, which “has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world” (*Rom 10:18*), there are very few that have or will answer it.

Eph 1:13 In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, and believed (*Gk.4100- to entrust [especially one’s spiritual well-being to Christ]*) in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory.

- “chosen”- *Gk.1588- select*; by implication *favorite*. These make up “His Bride [which] has made herself ready” (*Rev 19:7*) and are what Jesus called “the elect” (*Mat 24:22*) “even as He (*the Father*) chose us (*the church*) in Him (*Jesus*) before the foundation of the world” (*Eph 1:4*). Not that God showed individual partiality (*Act 10:34*) without setting qualifications to become part of this whole group. It is the group that is chosen to be saved (“*all Israel*”- *Rom 11:26*) and not the individual based on his own merit.

Mat 22:15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle Him in His words. 16 And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and You do not care about anyone's opinion, for You are not swayed by appearances. 17 Tell us, then, what You think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put Me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show Me the coin for the tax." And they brought Him a denarius. 20 And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 22 When they heard it, they marveled. And they left Him and went away.

- The Pharisees tried but failed to “entangle [Jesus] in His words” so they “sent their disciples... along with the Herodians” (*Gk.2265- Herod’s partisans*), who, as their title implies, would have been aligned to Rome’s puppet king, Herod, and thus sensitive to Roman law. They began questioning Jesus through flattery, as though He was their average Jew, first by acknowledging Him as “Teacher” (*Gk.1320- an instructor*). In this case concerning Jesus “of those who by their great power as teachers drew crowds about them”- Thayer.
- Then they artfully, knowing they were part of an audience where Jesus demonstrated His ability to rhetorically ‘one-up’ their own masters, attempted to humor them, making the audience feel they were only seeking the unbiased truth by paying Jesus some compliments. They didn’t actually believe He was “true [or taught] the way of God truthfully” or any of the other compliments they paid Him, except for the fact that He didn’t “care about anyone’s opinion” nor was He “swayed by appearances”. Their status didn’t change His opinion on them which they resented. They were only trying to set Him up for what they thought would “entangle Him in His words”.
- “taxes”- Knowing the current oppressive rule they were under and how the Jews resented the Romans, they asked (*in the presence of all who could hear*) if it was right to pay an enrolment (“census”) to their oppressor, Caesar. (*The Romans weren’t the only foreign nation that the Jews were subjects to. They were once subjugated to Babylon, under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar for their disobedience. –Jer 25:3-9*) Affirming in the negative **or** in the positive would have given them their ammunition. To say “no” would have brought the wrath of the Romans on Him and to say “yes” Jesus would have lost the somewhat fragile respect He had from the common Jew. His answer was to give to government whatever belonged to it and to God what is due Him. After hearing His response to their baited question, “they marveled” (*Gk.2296- to wonder, wonder at, marvel*), leaving Him with their proverbial ‘tails between their legs’. To not pay whatever tax that government exacts (*whatever its ideology*), even when we don’t agree on how it’s spent, is going against the will of God since “the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. Pay to all what is owed them: taxes to whom taxes are owed...” (*Rom 13:6-7*).

Rom 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. **2** Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

The very government Jesus paid tribute to (*Mat 17:24-27*) was the very government that crucified Him. When a government gives its citizens the right to influence taxation via the ballot (*i.e., chose those of moral character who will govern accordingly and who will oppose any tax that promotes immoral behavior*), it is the Christian’s duty to participate in the electoral process. Next, it was the Sadducees’ turn to attempt to ensnare Jesus in His words.

Mat 22:23 The same day Sadducees came to Him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked Him a question, **24** saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.' **25** Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother. **26** So too the second and third, down to the seventh. **27** After them

all, the woman died. 28 In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her."

- Another baited question. Again addressing Him as "Teacher" out of deceit in order to make themselves look like they were genuinely interested in His instruction, they attempted to skew something "Moses said" in order to justify what they themselves taught; that there is no resurrection. After giving the example of the widow's circumstance from Deut 25:5-10 and "having no children" to either brother (*who was to "perform the duty of a husband's brother" in that the son "she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother"*) "down to the seventh" they thought they had Him asking "whose wife will she be" in the resurrection that they didn't even believe in since "they all had her". (*Just because a person doesn't believe in something, even if it exists, doesn't mean it doesn't exist. An atheist not believing that God exists doesn't omit the fact that He does.*) Jesus once again refuted the Sadducees' example in trying to discredit the teaching of the resurrection, and by doing so pointed out their lack of understanding.

Mat 22:29 But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in Heaven.

- To "know neither the scripture", Jesus here stated how they didn't quote any O.T. passages to support their claim. Remember "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of the Law" (*Deu 29:29*). Whether such is found in the O.T. Law or not, they didn't have ample proof for promoting such claims. And neither can we be "prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks" (*1 Pet 3:15*) if we don't know Scripture. And being known as One Who did "not care about anyone's opinion" (*v. 16*) Jesus went right to the point. He didn't beat around the bush! (*Imagine that!*) How often have we been shy of pointing out doctrinal error when we know that allowing whatever the false teaching to continue, it will condemn souls to eternal punishment?

God would show His "power" in later raising Jesus from the dead (*which proved He was the Messiah*) after He declared openly that He is His Son (*Rom 1:4*). Here, Jesus points to the fact (*as Paul later wrote in 1 Cor 15:53*) where "this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality". There will be no need for procreation or to "be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth" (*Gen 1:28*) since immediately after the resurrection "the earth and the works in it will be burned up" (*2 Pet 3:11- LTHB*). And as it applies to Heaven, there will be no need to procreate since, as Jesus also pointed out, the resurrected faithful will be "like the angels of Heaven", i.e., have spiritual bodies. Here also is a moral argument for marriage before procreation.

Mat 22:31 And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: 32 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." 33 And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at His teaching.

- **Mat 7:28** added; "for He was teaching them as One Who had authority, and not as their scribes". The Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection so, that said, they didn't believe in the afterlife either, even though they held "Abraham... Isaac, and... Jacob" with such high regard as fathers of the Jewish faith. Did they think they vanished into thin

air? If God said He is the God of the living (*Ex 3:6*) then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must still be alive somewhere and the Sadducees needed to accept that as fact.

Mat 22:34 But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. **35** And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question to test Him. **36** "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" **37** And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. **38** This is the great and first commandment. **39** And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **40** On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

- Now that Jesus had "silenced" the Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and their disciples, "they gathered together" to conspire against Him. They opposed each other's beliefs but were in agreement that something had to be done to discredit Jesus as the Messiah. So another one, this time "a lawyer" (*Gk.3544- an expert in the [Mosaic] law*), attempted to trick Jesus into saying there was one preeminent Law that, if obeyed, would diminish a Jew from having to comply with the rest. Remember, the Law "was put in place through angels by an Intermediary" (*Gal 3:20*) Who was Christ, so Jesus was not partial to one particular ordinance at the exclusion of the rest. To do so would be tantamount to bringing a curse on "everyone who [did] not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law" (*Gal 3:10*). And He didn't "come to abolish the Law or the Prophets... but to fulfill them" (*Mat 5:17*) and thus gave the lawyer an answer he wasn't expecting. We love God and love our neighbor "in order that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (*Rom 8:4*) which "has set [us] free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (*[you sin, you die]- Rom 8:2*). Jesus didn't give the lawyer one Law as he requested, but two that held the Law together ("depend") and which covered "the weightier matters of the Law: justice and mercy and faithfulness... without neglecting the others" (*Mat 23:23*). The first commandment Jesus referred to covered the first four of the Ten Commandments (*Ex 20:1-17*) with reference to the love for God and the second covered the remaining six that covered the love for neighbors.

Mat 22:41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, **42** saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." **43** He said to them, "How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls Him Lord, saying, **44** "'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, until I put Your enemies under Your feet'? **45** If then David calls Him Lord, how is He his Son?"

- Turnabout is fair play. Now it was Jesus' turn to put **them** on the spot since He had all their attention. He asked what He would have considered a rhetorical question, quoting *Psa 110:1*. They understood the Scripture where the Messiah, as the Son of God (*Psa 2:7*), was prophesied to be born in Bethlehem (*Mic 5:2*) through the lineage of David (*Isa 11:1-2*) and would enter Jerusalem "mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (*Zec 9:9; Mat 21:5, 9*), all of which Jesus had fulfilled yet they still questioned the prophecies as though they didn't pertain to Him. When He asked them what they thought "about the Christ" they, knowing His lineage, answered Him as though the Messiah had not yet arrived. For David to call "Him Lord" shows he knew of Christ's pre-incarnate existence as Deity but also how he understood God's promise to him that "One of the sons from [his] body [He would] set on [his] throne" (*Psa 132:11*) through the "body" that God "prepared for [Him]" (*Heb 10:5*).
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Mat 22:46 And no one was able to answer **Him** a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask **Him** any more questions.

- As the **Master** of apologetics **Jesus** must have had their proverbial jaws dropping. **He** exposed publically how these so-called experts were not what they claimed to be, nor were they to be held to the respect they demanded. They were elitists who were exposed for the things they undoubtedly and/or purposely overlooked, so their collective prides were stung by this **Man** they had such low esteem for.

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