

***“Many are called, but few are chosen...”***

**Matthew 22**

The parable of the wedding feast, which begins this chapter, and which occurs only in Matthew's Gospel, contains a solemn message to both Jews and Gentiles. The indifferent and the hostile toward the gospel shared the same fate; neither group made it to the feast. The 'bad' were invited to the feast, but they did not remain bad – they were made fit for the feast by the king's garments.

And there's a frightening twist at the end of the story (“cast him into the outer darkness”, v 13), when the idiom of the parable gives way to the reality Jesus wants to convey – clearly he is talking about something far more important than a breach of wedding etiquette...

***The parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22 v 1 to 14)***

- A king gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to invite the guests – but how did those who were invited react (v 3, 5, 6)? How did the king respond (v 7), and is this an accurate portrayal of God's character? See Exodus 15 v 3. What did the king do next, and why? See John 3 v 16.
- Eastern custom was for the host to provide wedding garments for the guests – the man who was not wearing one (v 11) considered his own garment good enough, and refused the covering offered by the king (Romans 10 v 3). But God wants to clothe us – see Isaiah 61 v 10, Zechariah 3 v 1 to 5.

This parable portrays God's judgment on the Jews, especially the leaders, who rejected his invitations to accept the Messiah. Jesus brought the first invitation himself, and the apostles brought the second invitation in the book of Acts. 'To the Jew first' was always God's plan (Acts 3 v 26, Romans 1 v 16), but from Acts chapter 8 we see the gospel going to the Samaritans and then to the Gentiles further afield...

***Paying taxes to Caesar (Matthew 22 v 15 to 22)***

- The Pharisees (ardent nationalists) and the Herodians (supporters of the puppet monarchy) were sworn enemies. Why then did they combine to trap Jesus? How did the question they posed to Jesus reveal their conflicting interests?
- Jesus not only avoids their trap, but also succeeds in establishing an important principle. What do we owe to our Government, and what do we owe to God? Remember, the coin bears the image of Caesar, but we bear the image of God...

***Sadducees ask about the resurrection (Matthew 22 v 23 to 33)***

- The Sadducees differed from their Jewish contemporaries because they rejected the idea of resurrection. What motives lie behind their question to Jesus?
- How did the Sadducees display ignorance of both the Scriptures and the power of God? Why is it essential to know both the Bible and the power of God in order to avoid error?

***[MORE OVER...]***

***The great commandment (Matthew 22 v 34 to 40)***

- Although Jesus is only asked for one commandment (Deuteronomy 6 v 4 to 5), in good rabbinical tradition he responds by adding a second to his reply (Leviticus 19 v 18). What relationship does this second commandment bear to the first?
- What does it mean in practical terms to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength? What does 'loving your neighbour as yourself' actually mean?

***Whose son is the Christ? (Matthew 22 v 41 to 46)***

- To a Jew in Jesus' day, a descendant was always inferior to an ancestor. A son might call his father or grandfather 'lord', but never the other way round. Jesus quotes from Psalm 110 v 1 – so how *can* Jesus be both David's 'Lord' and his 'son'? What does it mean for us to call Jesus 'my Lord'?