



MATTHEW 22:1-14

*The Dress-Code of the Kingdom: Devotion to
the King's Son*

The Parable of the Wedding Feast is not just a fictitious story illustrating a kingdom truth, but a prophetic description of a coming eschatological reality.

Matthew 22:1-10

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

Matthew 22:11-14

“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.’ ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Key Interpretive Questions from Matthew 22:1-14

- What's the big deal about the wedding garments?
- What does it mean that he was speechless?
- What does Jesus mean that “many are called and only a few chosen?”

Genesis 45:22

“To each and all of them he gave a change of clothes, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five changes of clothes.”

Esther 6:8-9

“Let royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse that the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown^[a] is set. ⁹ And let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials. Let them dress the man whom the king delights to honor, and let them lead him on the horse through the square of the city, proclaiming before him: ‘Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.’”

*In the ancient world, the king's subjects
were expected to be dressed for
devotion*

The man without the wedding garment wanted the benefits of being in the presence of the king without having to actually honor the King or his son

Exodus 24:9-11

“Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.”

Isaiah 25:6-9

⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.

⁸ He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the
earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

⁹ It will be said on that day,
“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he
might save us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

Rev. 19:6-9

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

“Hallelujah!
For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;
it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure”—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”

According to Matthew, genuine devotion to God is not defined by Torah (i.e. Old Testament law), but by God's Son, Jesus, who fulfills Torah

(Eschatological) Interpretation of the Parable of the Wedding Feast:

King – *God*

Son – *Jesus*

King's Servants – *The Church on Mission*

Uninterested Guests – *general Jewish population who rejects Jesus*

Malicious Guests – *Jewish leadership*

New Guests (“good”/“bad”) – *future believers (Jews/Gentiles)*

King's Justice – *destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.*

Improperly Dressed Attendant – *false believers (i.e. people who professes Christ with their lips, but are not truly devoted to Him from a heart regenerated by the Spirit of God)*

“Many are Called, But Few Chosen” is not a statement about free-will vs. predestination, but Jesus lamenting that the “called ones” (Israel) are not showing themselves to be “elect ones” (God’s true people)

Main Point:

God is preparing an end-times wedding feast in honor of His Son, Jesus, and everyone is invited. However, there is a strict dress-code: only those dressed for devotion to the Son may attend

The purpose of being “clothed” for *salvation in Christ* is to enable believers to lives of *devotion to Christ*

Romans 13:14

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires”

“Paul’s exhortation to ‘put on the Lord Jesus Christ’ means that we are to consciously embrace Christ in such a way that His character is manifested in all that we do and say.” – Douglas Moo, NT scholar on Rom. 13:14

“The metaphor of putting on clothing implies not just imitating Christ’s character, but also living in close personal fellowship with Him.” – Thomas Schreiner, *Romans*, ESV Study Bible note on Rom. 13:14

Believers put on the clothing of devotion because they have already inhabit the wardrobe of salvation

“Faith is not a distant view [of God], but the warm embrace of Christ.” – *John Calvin, Protestant Reformer*

“Resolved to make the desire to please Christ the grand motive of all my actions.” – *Adoniram Judson, 19th century pioneer missionary to Burma (Myanmar)*

“Let me urge you frequently to reexamine the foundation of your hope. O, it is a solemn thing to die – an awful thing to go into eternity, and discover we have been deceiving ourselves! Let us depend upon it that nothing but real faith in Christ, *proved to be genuine by a holy life*, can support us at last. That faith which consists merely in a correct belief of the doctrines of grace, and prompts to no self-denial – that faith which allows us to spend all our days serving self, content with merely refraining from outward sins, and attending to the ordinary duties of religion – is no faith at all. O, let me beg you to look well into the matter! And let me beg my dear mother, in her old age, and in view of the near approach of death and eternity, to examine again and again whether her faith is of the right kind. *Is it faith which gives more enjoyment of Jesus, from day to day, than she finds in anything else?*” – Adoniram Judson to his younger sister, Abigail, in 1829

Isaiah 61:10

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;
my soul shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful
headdress,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

The doors to God's banqueting hall are wide open, and His guest list has no social restrictions