

THE WEDDING FEAST

Mt. 22:2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, **3** And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. **4** Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

A royal invitation to a royal wedding! The king's son is to be married and the invitations are taken to the various residences and personally handed to the invited guests. This was to be a grand occasion when the prince would be honoured by his father with the most lavish celebrations. However, *they would not come* (v.3)! No excuses given, - the people to whom the invitations were given would not come!! They refused! They did not ask any questions or make any excuses ... they rudely disregarded the kind offer of no less than the king to attend the prince's wedding.

He then sent out 'other servants' (v.4) with the same message, but with more detail, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. ... This time they made light of it [*the king's invitation and preparation*], and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise ... They treated the king's invitation with utter contempt, and some treated the servants abysmally, going so far as killing them (v. 5,6). ... Let's analyse this ... First of all, **WHAT A PRIVILEGE** to be invited to a royal wedding. It was a great honour, - a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You would not miss it. You would do everything in your power to be there. You would not be late. You would arrive in your finest. You would take your seat in anticipation for the entrance of the bride. This was a day you would never forget ... the wedding of the king's son to his bride!

In this parable the Lord Jesus does not describe the beautiful bride, but there is no doubt about it ... she would have been elegant, graceful, dazzling for only the best was fitting for the son of the king! ... And I'm

sure you immediately see how we are going to study these verses. The hymn writer pictured it too, “Oh, the soul thrilling rapture when I view His blessèd face, And the lustre of His kindly beaming eye ... I shall know Him, I shall know Him, And redeemed by His side I shall stand” ... The Bride of the King of kings ... the *commoner*, - for that is what we are, as sinners saved by grace, raised to the privilege of Heavenly royalty!

But as we look at this parable simply, we see the father honouring his son, - and we see the closeness of this special relationship between the king and the prince.

In this parable we also see how the invited guests were not prepared to honour the father because they refused the invitation to his son’s wedding. They ‘turned down’ his gracious offer of kindness! ... No matter what else they had on that day of the wedding, the king’s invitation ought to have had priority! They could have applied themselves to their business afterwards for surely nothing was more important than attending to the king’s request.

Consider, as king, what this father had done for these people. He had kept them, he had guarded and protected them. Many of them would have worked on his estate. Without the king their lives would have been poor and unsafe! ... There were plenty of other kings they could have had who would have abused them and treated them wrongly ... but *this* king had shown them kindness and with his invitation he showed them even *more* kindness. Obviously, the father of this prince was a good king because of the grace he showed towards his citizens. He did not have to invite them, but out of graciousness and courtesy, he did. He had a relationship with them, and they had a *relationship* with him. He was not a stranger, - he was *their* king!

It is obvious how the picture of the king and his son relates to the Lord Jesus and His Father. ... Apart from Him this earth would not exist for in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1). We would not be if it were not for God! The air we breathe, the food we eat, the life we have all comes from God. He keeps the world in its place, ... the waters, the sea, the rivers, and the lakes. He keeps the mountains from falling into the valleys. ... Imagine what a world this would be if God was not in charge!

The king in this parable was no less bountiful in the favour with which he blessed these ungrateful subjects. His son, - the bridegroom, - was the purest example of 'princeliness' for he maintained the grandeur and glory of his father. His father invited the guests to share his joy as he married his bride ... but foolishly they were not interested! ... Into their hands, - placed personally by the king's servants, - was the invitation to each of them to come and share the king's joy, but they would not come (v.3) and they made light of it (v.5).

In the Gospel, the Father has presented His precious Son. The most important Gift God has ever given this sinful world ... and yet how many are not interested, - they will 'not come', and they 'make light of it'! God is honoured in the Gospel, and His Son is honoured in the Gospel. The Gospel demonstrates how God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten, co-equal and co-eternal Son so that every man, woman, boy and girl who believes and puts their faith in Him to save them will never perish in Hell, but will be granted the privilege of everlasting life with the God Who saved them. They will be seated with Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9). He will receive them unto Himself and they will live with Him forever.

What a beautiful marriage these servants were inviting the guests to! How could they possibly refuse to be present?! The prince was not just

marrying ‘anybody’, but he was marrying the most beautiful bride, adorned and fitted to appear beside of the son of the king! ... Notice how the Lord Jesus worded what was happening, ² The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, *which made a marriage for his son*, ... It all began with the king. The king desired it and the king established it!

He chose the bride for his son. He watched as she developed, and he helped her along the way to royalty. He brought her into his banqueting house and his display over her was royal love (Song 2:4). He showered her with gifts because of his devotion to her, Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee (Songs 4:7).

How would she ever have considered herself worthy of a Prince so great and so handsome, and yet the love of the father made her worthy. She loved him, yes ... but *how much more* he loved her! *He* was the son of the king, and the throne was in view for the crowning day was coming. All the father had, - all the king owned, - would become his. Look at the tenderness and the goodness of his father’s character ... inviting all those guests to the wedding. Such was the son’s nature also for he is *the chiefest among ten thousand* (Songs 5:10). ... “He’s the Lily of the Valley, the bright and Morning Star, He’s the fairest of ten thousand to my soul. ...” What delight awaits the Bride!

The virgins would have been there with their lamps burning. They would have had them filled with oil to the brim, awaiting his arrival ... watching for the bridegroom, - the son of the king, the prince, - to make his entrance for his bride! ... **what a privilege!**

WHAT A PLAN! Nowadays you can hire someone to arrange the wedding and the celebrations. They do it all for you, for a price. But that was not the way the king organised it, - he *himself* *made a marriage for his*

son. ... The *king* himself chose to make all the preparations for they would be done to *his* specifications, and to *his* approval.

The exact number of guests would be invited, and the exact people he would decide upon ... what the celebrations would consist of ... the wording of the invitation ... it was all his work. Nothing would be a bother to him for it was a pleasure to see his son being married to such a beloved and beautiful bride ... and it would be a feast and a day like none other.

The cost he would incur was worth all the joy as he would watch his son lead his bride to the top table. And this would not be a union which would last only a little while, but this marriage would be forever. Nothing would destroy it. Nothing would be allowed to mar or ruin their relationship ... **Rom. 8:39** [*neither*] height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them ... for their relationship was built upon the love which knows no limits, - as vast as eternity.

And because she is the bride of the son of the king, she is marrying into the royal family. When she sits around the table, she is not a stranger for she is sitting at the side of the prince, and at the table with the king. No longer is she a foreigner, or an alien, or an outsider to the royal courts, because now her home is where her husband is. All that the prince has is hers too. All his friends are now her friends. Where he leads her, she follows in the line of privilege. Everywhere he goes, she goes, and she takes every care she does not go anywhere, say anything, do anything that would deflect from his glorious reputation. She will never put herself in front of him, or elevate herself above him so that others see her, instead of him. No, they will see only him for he is the prince, and she is his bride.

Those silly people who passed up on such an opportunity to witness such a wonderful event ... it's unforgivable they would put anything in the way of being there. They 'let themselves down' when they rejected the king's invitation for they missed out on this glorious day ... Imagine ... *not* wanting to attend the royal wedding! Imagine ... choosing something else instead! ... **Jn. 1:11** He came unto his own, and his own received him not. **12** *But* as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name ... Yes, the king knew those who would receive His invitation, but he offered it to all so none could say, "I wasn't asked. I wasn't invited".

The king would have been understandably hurt and disappointed, but it would be fair to point out the king was not taken unawares for he knew the heart of the sons of men is full of evil (Eccles. 9:3). He knew what they were going to do, even before they did it ... but he gave them the opportunity so they would be without excuse (Rom. 1:20). When he called them, they did not answer, when he spoke they did not listen but instead, they did evil before [*His*] eyes, and did choose that wherein [*He*] delighted not (Is. 65:12).

Yet, what did the king do? ... And here is more grace ... He did not cancel the wedding or the feast. He did not move it to some other date or venue ... or wait to see if the invited guests would change their minds. No, not at all! **Because of unbelief they were broken off (Rom. 11:20)**, ... yes, the call had gone out to many, but the few had already been chosen (Mt. 22:14) for the king 'grafted in', - he invited, - the outsiders who *would* accept his invitation. ... The wedding of the prince and his bride went ahead and it was glorious ... and nothing or nobody cancelled it!

What an opportunity was missed and squandered! ... And then you can hear them 'running down' the king. They would get into their wee huddles and despise him and his invitation. They would concoct

something derogatory to say about his son and his wife, or about how the kingdom is ruled. They would not have a good word to say about him! ... Listen to someone deprecating and condemning the Gospel. Listen to these foolish characters who say there is no God and who claim authority for themselves. They are wise in the world's eyes, but God judges, The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt (Ps. 14:1). ... Yet, for those who have received the king's invitation ... **what a privilege! ... What a Plan!** ... and ...

WHAT A PROSPECT! All things are now ready! The preparations are complete. All has been done. The table is laid. The clothes of the bridegroom and the bride have been finished. She has been set apart from the other women in the kingdom, she has been cleansed and will be presented a glorious bride ... *not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing* (Eph. 5:27). When she walks down the aisle towards him, it will be the most spectacular bridal procession ever. A marriage truly made in Heaven!

Yes, it has been quite a journey since the prince began his love for his bride, - in fact, it has been an eternity! There had been times when she had to pass through the waters of affliction and adversity, and the rivers sometimes almost covered her over ... but the promise of his presence never left her. When she had to walk through the fires of great trouble and sorrow he never forsook her. Always, she had his words upon her heart, **Songs 2:10** My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. ... **6:3** I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. **What a prospect!**

And when the guests arrived at the wedding feast, the announcement awaited them, **Is. 55:1** Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money. "He owns the cattle on a thousand hills, the wealth in every mine; He owns the rivers and the rocks and hills, the sun and

stars that shine. Wonderful riches, more than tongue can tell – He is my Father and they’re mine as well ... None of those guests could have afforded to be there, but their places were reserved and purchased by the king ... paid for out of his own bank ... and there was plenty to drink and plenty to feed upon, **Is. 58:14** Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

... Such is the king’s guarantee, it is impossible to go hungry or thirsty at the king’s table.

CONCLUSION In these few verses describing the king, the prince, and his bride ... underlying the whole flow of our study is more than a story about an earthly king, and an earthly prince, and an earthly bride. As we said at the beginning, in view is the Lord Jesus Christ and His Beloved Church ... and the means by which the Father has brought them together. “A day of light and gladness, On which no shade will fall; Tis this at last awaits me, My Father planned it all. ... I sing through the shade and the sunshine, I’ll trust Him whatever befall; I sing for I cannot be silent, My Father planned it all.”

Could the father of the bridegroom, - the king, - have gone to all that energy and expense and none would have come to the feast? ... Yes, in an earthly setting ... but not in the plan of God for the salvation of His people! He has the table laid. Every seat bears the name of every invited guest for He knows who all will be there ... and there will be no seats empty!

This is a wonderful Gospel indelibly written in the eternal scroll of God’s plan of sovereign grace. He began the love affair in eternity, and He has written it on our hearts that we would love Him and believe in Him as our Saviour and Lord, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore

with lovingkindness have I drawn thee (Jer. 31:3). ... He left nothing to chance when He set His mind to save us, and He did not stop until His Son paid the ransom to purchase us for Himself, and we became His beloved Bride.

“What a day that will be when my Jesus I shall see,
And I look upon His face, the One who saved me by His grace.
When He takes me by the hand and leads me through the Promised
Land.
What a day, glorious day that will be.”