

The Kingdom in 14 Verses

Matthew 22:1-14

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The Kingdom of Jesus Christ is an important topic in the Bible, and one of the most important topics of Christianity. It is mentioned 150 times in the New Testament (Kingdom, Kingdom of Christ, Kingdom of God, Kingdom of Heaven). It is mentioned throughout the Old Testament, most specifically in places like Daniel 2:44 and 7:14. When John the Baptist began preaching, his message was that the Kingdom of prophecy was at hand (Mark 1:15). Many misunderstood the nature of the kingdom, seeing it as though it were a kingdom of the world. Yet Jesus told Pilate that it was not of this world (John 18:36), and that it was not something that would come visibly, since the kingdom was something within a person (Luke 17:20-21). Simply stated, the Kingdom of God is the authority of God in Jesus Christ, now in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18-19).

When Jesus taught difficult truths, he often did so in parables (Matthew 13:34). It is not that he taught exclusively in parables, but that everything He taught was also taught in a parable. Consider that a great number of Jesus parables were about the kingdom (for example, in Matthew 13 many parables begin "the kingdom of heaven is like...."). This brings us to our parable in Matthew 22:1-14 of a wedding feast.

In the parable, it is easy to identify the King and the Son (The King = Our Heavenly Father; The Son = Our Savior Jesus Christ). We also can understand that the Bride of Christ is the church, based on many statements to this effect in the New Testament (e.g. Ephesians 5:31-32). In this parable we see that the first guests refused the invitation; in other parables, the first guests are revealed to be the children of Israel (Matthew 21:43-45). When the king "burned up their city", this corresponds to what Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:1-3. The last guests would then be the Gentiles, or simply all of mankind. Jesus' great commission in Matthew 28:18-20 reveals as much.

The purpose of the parable is to tell us that "many are called, but few are chosen." How are men called to the Kingdom? When Jesus preached the Bread of Life sermon, He said that men were going to be called by God Himself. He then goes on to say that His words would be what teaches us (John 6:44-45, 63). Thus the Word of God calls men today. Jesus said that few are chosen; this corresponds to His teachings on the small number of saved in Luke 13:23-27; thus, the nature of "chosen" refers to the choice of the called. In essence, Jesus is saying everyone is called to the feast, but only a few choose to come.

What about the wedding garment? It seems to be the case that in ancient times garments were provided in a wedding by the host (Judges 14:12), or when being present before a king (Genesis 45:22). What garment has God provided? We find this in Galatians 3:27 – "*For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ*". The Garment is Christ, and we put it on in baptism. We cannot enter the wedding feast, which is the kingdom of heaven, without being baptized into Christ (*Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* John 3:5). We retain this garment by our walk of faith, as seen in romans 13:14 – "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts". Obedient, we remain wearing Christ. Disobedient, we remove Christ, as seen in Revelation 16:15 - "Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame."