

# THE WEDDING GARMENT

The vital need for obedience to the Lord's invitation for us to benefit from His provisions and to do works meet for salvation are eloquently emphasized in the parable of the Wedding Garment. Those called to eat at the Lord's table must not make light of it lest they lose the opportunity and go to destruction.

According to the parable as recorded in Matthew 22:1-13, Jesus Christ likened the kingdom of heaven to a certain king, who made a marriage feast on the occasion of the wedding of his son. He then sent forth his servants to call them that had been invited to the wedding but they refused to come. Then the King sent other servants to them to impress on them the importance of the invitation. But "they made light of it", that is, they treated the invitation with contempt, "and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise". The rest went beyond merely despising the call; in that they took the King's servants, "entreated them spitefully, and slew them."

As should be expected, when the king heard of the violent and malicious way his servants were treated, "he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Then the King, seeing "that they which were bidden were not worthy" of the wedding invitation, commanded his servants to go to the highways, that is, the principal streets of the city where many people of all descriptions would be seen and as many as they could find, they should bid to the marriage. The servants dutifully carried out the instructions given them, gathered from the highways "as many as they found, both good and bad": Consequently, the wedding was furnished with guests.

However, a particularly striking incident or drama which took place as the King came in for the party as recorded in verses 11-13 is of great significance in the parable. "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

## The call

The King in the parable is God Almighty, JEHOVAH "a great King above all gods" (Psalm 95:3). And in 1 Timothy 6:15 St. Paul speaking of God Almighty, described Him as "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." The Kingdom of heaven under reference in the parable means the Kingdom of God, also called *Mountain or New Jerusalem*. It is called the Kingdom of heaven because the power and authority comes from "God out of heaven." – Revelation 21:1; Isaiah 2:2; Galatians 4:26

The King's son who is the bridegroom in the parable is Jesus Christ while the "bride" are the anointed Christians, the saints. It is a great honour to belong to the bride class of Jesus Christ.– Revelation 19:7; See also Revelation 22:17

God Almighty made a marriage feast for His son, Jesus Christ, (who is the bridegroom) and his bride, the anointed Christians. He sent his servants to call the natural Jews to come to the feast. But because they repeatedly despised and rejected the invitation, the privilege was offered to the gentiles, who honoured the invitation.

(Matthew 23:34-39; Acts 13:45-48) Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry confirmed that many non-Jews according to the flesh will be saved in God's Kingdom because of their faith. He said,

“And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” -Matthew 8:10-12.

## Today's despisers

Just as some of the Jews despised the call of God and rejected the invitation by His servants so also many are scoffing at the call on them to serve God in truth. Rather than identify with the simple truth of the gospel, many prefer to follow false prophets who deceive them with promises of miraculous cures and overnight wealth. (Matthew 7:15-23; Matthew 24:11,24; etc) Many Churches are today ordaining women as pastors; some women are even founding their own churches despite clear injunctions in the Bible that women are not ordained by God to preach the gospel. ( 1 Corinthians 14: 34,35; 1 Timothy 2: 11-15; Revelation 2:20–22)

## Righteousness

The wedding garment is righteousness of God which every one who has responded to God's invitation must cultivate in order to be saved. Righteousness comes by putting the knowledge of God into practice. The prophet Solomon declared: “By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.” (Proverbs 16: 6) By continuous striving to put off the filth of the flesh, the Christian will become properly attired in the robe of righteousness. The prophet Job declared: “I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.” (Job 29:14)

On the other hand anyone who fails to wear the “wedding garment” will have proved himself unworthy of the call and will have his privileges withdrawn. He will be cast out into outer darkness, into everlasting destruction. The “highway” is God's Organisation where the truth is preached without adulteration, where there is discipline, order, justice and judgment. It is holy. Those who keep to its standards, who do not conform to this world, but regard themselves as wayfarers, pilgrims on the earth, shall eventually attain holiness. (Isaiah 35:8; Proverbs 4:18; 1 Peter 1:15,16; Hebrews 11:10,11) But anyone who refuses to forsake his evil ways, but continues in uncleanness will not get to the end of the highway. Such will not enter God's Kingdom fully established. –Matthew 13:40-42; Revelation 21:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9,10.

It is the righteousness of God which comes from knowing and practising the truth that will make one to be properly clothed – else one will be spiritually naked. ( Revelation 3:14-18) It is those who are clothed in the proper garments that will enter into the joy of the Lord as it is written: “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” – Isaiah 61:10 The one who has been called into God's way of truth must also cultivate Christ-like virtues such as diligence, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness and charity. – 2 Peter 1: 5-12 May the Lord help us to fear him and work righteousness so as to be accepted with Him. – Acts 10:34,35

