

God chooses people who believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“A businessman well known for his ruthlessness once announced to writer Mark Twain, ‘Before I die I mean to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will climb Mount Sinai and read the Ten Commandments aloud at the top.’

"I have a better idea," replied Twain. "You could stay in Boston and keep them.

“Twain's witty rejoinder may have put that businessman in his place, or at least set him to thinking. But as any reader of Galatians knows, Twain's advice would have been impossible for his friend to follow even if he were so inclined. The point Paul has been making all along is that Law-keeping cannot gain anyone God's favor, because no human being ever has or ever will keep His perfect Law. **Only the death of Christ could satisfy the Law's demands.**”¹

“The Lord Jesus Christ has died for believers: taken their sins upon Himself and suffered the penalty, judgment, condemnation, and punishment of their sins. He has sacrificed and substituted His life for them.

“The Lord Jesus Christ has risen from the dead for believers: conquered death and ascended into heaven for them. The believers of the world believe the gospel with all their hearts: believe they will never have to die because Jesus Christ died for them—believe they shall ascend into heaven to live eternally with the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. They believe and have entrusted their lives to this glorious truth.

“When a person really believes the truth of the gospel, God saves him. This is man's part in salvation. No person has ever been saved who did not believe the truth of the gospel. And no person who has rejected the gospel is lost because God has not chosen him. The person is lost because he rejected Christ. God will choose any person who will accept

¹ Ibid.

Christ. This is His Word; it is the promise of His Word. God will not force us to believe nor will He keep us from believing. The choice is every person's choice. No person is forced to receive or to reject Christ. Every person is responsible for his own decision.”²

John 5:24 (NASB):

²⁴ "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

John 11:25 (NLT):

²⁵ Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. **Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.**

John 20:30-31 (NLT):

³⁰ *The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book.*

³¹ But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

Romans 10:9 (NASB):

⁹ If you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved.**

“The purpose of salvation is to gain the glory of Christ. Remember: the Thessalonian believers were suffering severe persecution. Think what this verse meant to them. They were bound for glory—to obtain and share in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The word ‘glory’ (*doxēs*) means to possess perfect light and to be full of perfect light; to dwell in the perfect light, brilliance, splendor, brightness, luster, and magnificence of God.”³

Now we’ll take a closer look at Matthew 22:1–14. The Parable of the Marriage Feast: Israel's Rejection of God's Great Invitation.

Matthew 22:1-14 (NASB):

² *The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, (Chattanooga: Leadership Ministries Worldwide, 1991), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "E. The Salvation of God's Followers, 2:13-17".

³ *The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, (Chattanooga: Leadership Ministries Worldwide, 1991), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "E. The Salvation of God's Followers, 2:13-17".

- ¹ *Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying,*
- ² *"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.*
- ³ *"And he sent out his slaves **to call those who had been invited** to the wedding feast, and **they were unwilling to come.***
- ⁴ *"Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast."'*
- ⁵ *"But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business,*
- ⁶ *and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them.*
- ⁷ *"But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.*
- ⁸ *"Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.*
- ⁹ *'Go therefore to the **main highways**, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.'*
- ¹⁰ *"Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.*
- ¹¹ *"But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes,*
- ¹² *and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless.*
- ¹³ *"Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw 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."**

This parable is somewhat comparable with Luke 14:15-24. Matthew's parable tells of The Great Marriage Feast; Luke's parable, as we've previously discussed, is The Great Supper. Luke's parable occurred earlier than Matthews. Matthew's parable was told during the last week of Christ's life. Each parable had a different purpose and was taught in a different place, but we must not lose sight of the fact that our difficulties and sufferings are similar to those of other people throughout the earth. These two parables have different specific purposes but a common overall purpose.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NASB):

¹³ *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*

All people need to be well-acquainted with the entire Bible.

The Great Marriage Feast deals with the *Kingdom of Heaven* (Matthew 22:2). The meaning of the parable is relatively easy to understand. God is king and the Son of God is Jesus Christ. This feast will be held on the day of redemption.⁴ It is the glorious day when the Church will see Christ for the very first time and be joined with Him forever.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NASB):

¹³ *But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.*

¹⁴ *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.*

¹⁵ *For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.*

¹⁶ *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.*

¹⁷ *Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.*

¹⁸ *Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

Those that were invited to the marriage represent the nation of Israel. They were called by God from the very first, beginning with Abraham. However, this point can be applied to any of us—the farmer, the merchant, the religionist, the worldly—any who scoff, abuse, persecute and deny that Christ is the Son of God.

Those who were taken off the streets and highways are the Gentiles, people from all nations who accept God's invitation to His Son's wedding. The **wedding garment** is **righteousness**. No guest is acceptable for the wedding unless he is properly clothed, and the only proper clothing is righteousness, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. The parable has both an historical and personal meaning. It can apply to anyone.

⁴ In the NT two word groups convey the concept. The first consists of *lutron* and its cognates. They mean “to redeem,” “to liberate,” or “to ransom.” The idea of ransom suggests the heart of Jesus’ mission (Mark 10:45). His life and ministry culminated in His sacrificial death. His death served as the ransom to liberate sinners from their enslaved condition. Another word family, *agorazein*, means “to buy at the market,” or “to redeem.” This group is used several times to express God’s redemptive activity in Christ. For example, God’s redemption of fallen humanity is costly (1 Cor. 6:20). Believers are liberated from the enslaving curse of the law (Gal. 3:13, 4:5). God’s redemptive mission among the nations is cause for eschatological worship (Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4). Paul provides the fullest explanation in the NT, connecting the redemptive work of Christ with the legal declaration of the sinner’s pardon (justification) and the appeasement of God’s wrath against sin (propitiation, Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30). Paul also interpreted the redeeming activity of Christ from two perspectives. Based on the ransom price paid by Christ’s shed blood, forgiveness can be presently applied to the believer (Eph. 1:7). This redeeming work of Christ also has a future aspect. There will be a final deliverance of the physical body from the present decay and corruption (Rom. 8:23). This final redemptive act will occur at the resurrection of the body. This is not, however, as the first expression of redemption of believers. Rather, the earlier “redeeming” that occurred within the believer will culminate in the final redemption of the body from sin and the grave. Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, ed., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), s.v. “,” WORDsearch CROSS e-book.

Here, Jesus is once again telling a parable about the Kingdom of Heaven. God has prepared a Great Marriage Feast for His Son and **His true followers**. The close loving relationship that Christ has with His Church His Church is often compared to a marriage.

2 Corinthians 11:2 (TLB):

² *I am anxious for you with the deep concern of God himself—anxious that your love should be for Christ alone, just as a pure maiden saves her love for one man only, for **the one who will be her husband**.*

Ephesians 5:23 (TLB):

²³ *For a husband is in charge of his wife in the same way Christ is in charge of his body the Church. (He gave his very life to take care of it and be its Savior!)*

Revelation 19:7-9 (NASB):

⁷ *"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."*

⁸ *It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

⁹ *Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the **marriage supper of the Lamb**.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."*

Faith is like a covenant of marriage. When a person believes, Christ promises that they will have a permanent relationship which will last forever. .

God's invitation to Israel (22:3-7) was reflective of Jewish custom whereby the king would send out various invitations. The King would first announce the upcoming occasion by invitation and then send out follow-up reminders as the day came closer.

First, beginning with Abraham, God invited Israel to the great feast for His Son, but Israel rejected the invitation.

Genesis 12:1-3 (NASB):

¹ *Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you;*

² *and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing;*

³ *and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."*

The time frame here was during the life of Christ and the servants sent out were sent to share the Gospel with the Jews for the purpose of their accepting Christ as the Messiah. Therefore, the servants would include John the Baptist, the twelve apostles, and the seventy who were sent out to every city to teach the people that the Savior of the world had come in the person of Jesus Christ.

Luke 10:1-16 (NASB):

¹ Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come.

² And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

³ "Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.

⁴ "Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way.

⁵ "Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.'

⁶ "If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you.

⁷ "Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.

⁸ "Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you;

⁹ and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

¹⁰ "But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say,

¹¹ 'Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.'

¹² "I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.

¹³ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

¹⁴ "But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you.

¹⁵ "And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!

¹⁶ "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."

And the nation of Israel refused to come. They as a nation were the first ones to receive this invitation, and they did not come. Why would anyone not accept an invitation from the King to the wedding of His Son?

If you were to receive an invitation from the King of England to come to Buckingham Palace for the wedding of the prince, would you go? So why wouldn't you go to God's celebration of His son's marriage? Most everyone would seize the opportunity to spend several days in the royal palace. So why do most people refuse to spend eternity with the King in a place where the beauty is far, far above any earthly palace?

Luke 13:34 (NLT):

³⁴ "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God's messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn't let me.

Psalm 81:8-16 (NLT):

⁸ "Listen to me, O my people, while I give you stern warnings. O Israel, **if you would only listen to me!**

- ⁹ *You must never have a foreign god; you must not bow down before a false god.*
- ¹⁰ *For it was I, the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it with good things.*
- ¹¹ *“But no, **my people wouldn't listen. Israel did not want me around.***
- ¹² *So I let them follow their own stubborn desires, living according to their own ideas.*
- ¹³ *Oh **that my people would listen to me!** Oh, that Israel would follow me, walking in my paths!*
- ¹⁴ *How quickly I would then subdue their enemies! How soon my hands would be upon their foes!*
- ¹⁵ *Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him; they would be doomed forever.*
- ¹⁶ *But I would feed you with the finest wheat. I would satisfy you with wild honey from the rock.”*

God showed grace and mercy even though He had been rejected in a most disrespectful and disgraceful way. He still held out an invitation for the Jews to come to the Great Wedding Feast. So God extended yet a second invitation. The servants who carried this invitation were the witnesses who went forth after the Lord's resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit.⁵

The dinner was now ready: The sacrifice that was necessary for the celebration to take place had already been given. They were now to come to the feast. Everyone was still invited.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 (NLT):

- ¹ *As God's partners, **we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it.***
- ² *For God says, “At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you.” Indeed, **the “right time” is now.** Today is the day of salvation.*

The feast was to be the greatest feast ever held to celebrate the greatest day in history. It will be a time for feasting. But they reject God's message a second time. Some thought they were very important farmers. Crops needed to be looked after. “*His own farm*” seems to suggest personal enjoyment. The man wanted to personally enjoy his own property. He valued his own personal enjoyment rather than honor the King and His Son.

Matthew 16:26-27 (NASB):

- ²⁶ *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”*
- ²⁷ *“For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and **WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.**”*

Luke 8:14 (NASB):

⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴ "The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

Psalm 39:5 (TLB):

⁵ *My life is no longer than my hand! My whole lifetime is but a moment to you. Proud man! Frail as breath! A shadow! And all his busy rushing ends in nothing. He heaps up riches for someone else to spend.*

Some thought they were very important merchants who were engaged in business and couldn't get away.

James 4:13-17 (TLB):

¹³ *Look here, you people who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to such and such a town, stay there a year, and open up a profitable business."*

¹⁴ *How do you know what is going to happen tomorrow? For the length of your lives is as uncertain as the morning fog—now you see it; soon it is gone.*

¹⁵ *What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we shall live and do this or that."*

¹⁶ *Otherwise you will be bragging about your own plans, and such self-confidence never pleases God.*

¹⁷ *Remember, too, that knowing what is right to do and then not doing it is sin.*

“Some were worldly-minded and religious. They were so attached to the world that they wanted nothing to do with the King. He disturbed their interests and their lives. He was a threat to their position, prestige, wealth, and security. Therefore, they were hostile to Him. In fact, they would have overthrown His reign and taken His kingdom for themselves. They persecuted and slayed His servants, anyone who reminded them of their obligation to keep the Marriage Feast of the King (cp. Acts 4:3; Acts 5:40; Acts 7:58; Acts 9:2; Acts 12:2f; Acts 14:19; Acts 16:23; 2 Cor. 11:23-25).”

People are always rejecting God's invitation. Why? *Not because they have to but because they want to.*