**Parable of the Wedding Guests**

Excerpts from Charles Strong's Topical Bible Studies titled [Parable of the Wedding Guests](http://bibleone.net/print_tbs98.html)

(Includes commentary by Arlen Chitwood of [Lamp Broadcast](http://lampbroadcast.org/).)

Matthew 22:1-14

**Mat 22:1** Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying,

Mat 22:2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.

Mat 22:3 "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.

Mat 22:4 "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."'

Mat 22:5 "But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business,

Mat 22:6 and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them.

Mat 22:7 "But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.

Mat 22:8 "Then he \*said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.

Mat 22:9 'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find *there,* invite to the wedding feast.'

Mat 22:10 "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.

Mat 22:11 "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes,

Mat 22:12 and he \*said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless.

Mat 22:13 "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.'**

Mat 22:14 **"For many are called, but few *are* chosen."**

This parable is about the coming kingdom of Christ and who will participate (rule) in it.  Christ will rule with His bride (the *faithful*) at His side, but those who have been *chosen* (who have passed the Judgment Seat of Christ with sufficient divine good works) will also reign and rule, although in lesser positions, along side of them.  While those who are only able to be classified as the *called* (those saved without sufficient divine good works) will suffer outside in obscurity (no positions of rulership) during the kingdom age.

The cast-out guest represents those who are *called* (who are saved) but who fail to produce sufficient works of righteousness (garment) during their temporal life, all which will be revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ.  They therefore will not be of the *chosen*, i.e., those who in fact will have a proper “garment” (righteous works; spiritual fruit) after appearing before the Judgment Seat and who will be the properly attired guests at the wedding who will be seated in order of priority relevant to their *works*.  The bride of Christ will be those to which all classifications apply—the *called* (saved by faith) and *chosen* (with many righteous works) and *faithful* (with the most righteous works—the highest order of those who have believed in Christ).

This commentator [Charles Strong] has grown to see the expression “kingdom of heaven” in a clearer light. For instance, the phrase in the Greek is plural, and is best expressed as the “kingdom of the heavens.”  And this would be in line with both (1) the plural promise of the kingdom contained within the covenant initially made by God to Abraham as articulated by the passage in **Genesis 22:17**, in which God promises to multiply his descendants “*as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies*;” and (2) the structure of God’s rule over the earth in which there is a *heavenly administration*, which is presently occupied by the god of this world (Satan) and those angels that followed him in his fall; and an *earthly administration*, which is composed of all earthly rulers who have been permitted by God to occupy rulership positions throughout the world.

The coming kingdom of Christ that will last a millennium will be composed of two segments:  (1) an earthly portion, which will be administrated by Israel as the fulfillment of God’s promise to Israel from the very beginning; and (2) a heavenly portion, which although offered to Israel by Christ during His earthly ministry, was rejected by Israel and subsequently “*given to a nation bearing the fruits of it*” (**Matthew 21:43**) — that nation being those “*in Christ*” who are a “*holy nation*” and who are neither Jew or Gentile, but Christian ([1 Peter 2:9; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Peter%202:9;%20Galatians%203:28;%20Colossians%203:11&version=NLT)).

This dual aspect of God’s rule over the earth in this age, i.e., the permitted rule by Satan and his cohorts from the heavens through a parallel earthly rule; so in like manner will the earth be ruled

The fact that upon the redemption of the *inheritance*, as set forth in the *type* as seen in the book of **Ruth**, the Christ’s bride automatically becomes His wife is expressed quite competently by Arlen L. Chitwood, as follows:

During the Messianic Age, ruled by Christ and His wife from the heavens through a parallel earthly rule by Israel, Christ and His bride will displace Satan and his angelic rule upon taking back the *inheritance* of the earth that was lost by the First Adam during the Fall in **Genesis**.  Christ and His bride who then will become His wife will rule from the heavens while Christ with a restored Israel will rule upon the earth.

The future marriage of Christ and His bride will occur exactly in accord with the type set forth in **Ruth** chapter **four**, not in accord with the way things are done in the modern world, whether in the East or in the West.  As Boaz purchased Ruth through the process of redeeming a forfeited inheritance, so will Christ purchase His bride through the process of redeeming a forfeited inheritance (forfeited by the first Adam in **Genesis** chapter three [*cf.*[Romans 8:20-22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%208:20-22&version=NLT)]).  And, as Ruth automatically became Boaz’s wife through this redemptive process, so will it be with Christ and His bride.  The bride (having previously been revealed at the judgment seat) will automatically become Christ’s wife through His redemption of the forfeited inheritance.

**1.*Redemption Completed***

The redemption of the forfeited inheritance is seen occurring in **Revelation** chapters **six** through **eighteen**.  The seven-sealed scroll in **Revelation** chapter **five** contains the redemptive terms for the forfeited inheritance (the earth), and chapters **six** through **eighteen** reveal the seals being broken and these terms being carried out (*ref.* Chapter 10 of my book [Time of the End](http://lampbroadcast.org/Books/TOE.pdf)).

Then, in chapter **nineteen**, after the terms set forth in the seven-sealed scroll have been carried out, after the inheritance has been redeemed, the bride is seen as Christ’s wife.

“*Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him:  for the marriage [‘marriage festivities’] of the lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready.*

*And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white:  for the fine linen is the righteousness [‘righteous acts’] of saints.*

*And he said unto me, ‘Write Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper [or, ‘marriage banquet, feast’] of the Lamb.’  And he said unto me, ‘These are the true sayings of God’*” (vv. **7-9;** *cf.*[Revelation 21:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%2021:9&version=NLT)).

And note the reverential awe and excitement in heaven surrounding *the redemption of the forfeited inheritance*, which allows this statement concerning Christ’s wife to be made.  The twenty-four elders, along with the four living creatures, “*fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen*; *Alleluia”* (v. **4**).  Then “*a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God*, *all you His servants*, *and you that fear Him*, *both small and great”* (v. **5**).  Then a voice was heard, described as that of “*a great multitude… many waters… mighty thundering*, *saying*, *Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigns*” (v. **6**).  And even John, having seen all this, could do little more than *fall at the feet* of the one showing him these things (v. **10**).

Thus, the book of **Revelation**, up to this point in the book, centers *far more* around the Church in heaven than around Israel and the nations on the earth.  This book begins with the Church removed into heaven and judged, followed by the twenty-four elders casting their crowns before God’s throne (chaps. **1-4**).  Then it continues with the search for One found worthy to loose the seals of the seven-sealed scroll — containing the redemptive terms of the forfeited inheritance (chap. **5**).  And, in succeeding chapters, covering Daniel’s unfulfilled Seventieth Week, the book deals with the inheritance being redeemed, with the bride then being seen as Christ’s wife at the end of this redemptive process.

The redemption of the inheritance in chapters **six** through **eighteen** has to do with *the domain* which Christ and His wife, His consort queen (chap. **19**), will rule over during the succeeding Messianic Era (chap. **20**).  And it is in the preceding respect that events in these chapters really have to do *far more extensively* with the Church than with Israel, though the Church will be in heaven when these events unfold on earth.

(Note [Revelation 5:1-7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%205:1-7&version=NLT) in the light of events surrounding the nearer kinsman and Boaz in [Ruth 4:1-8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth%204:1-8&version=NLT).  The Father, in possession of the seven-sealed scroll, will be unable to redeem the inheritance [vv. **1-4**].  It would mar His Own inheritance.  *These redemptive rights will have to be passed on to the Son* [vv. **5-7**].)

**2.  The Marriage Festivities**

When Scripture deals with the “marriage” of Christ and His bride, as in [Revelation 19:7-9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%2019:7-9&version=NLT), the reference is always to *festivities surrounding the marriage*, not to a marriage itself.  There will be no marriage *per se*, as we think of marriage in our modern-day culture.  There wasn’t one in the type, and there won’t be one in the antitype either.  And this is an easy matter to see in both the type ([Ruth 4](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth%204&version=NLT)) and the antitype ([Revelation 5-19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%205-19&version=NLT)).

The wedding festivities surrounding the marriage of God’s Son will occur in heaven *following* the redemption of the forfeited inheritance, for the entire redemptive process must be carried out before the bride can become Christ’s wife.  And this can be clearly seen from the context of [Revelation 19:7-9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%2019:7-9&version=NLT), where these festivities are mentioned.  In this passage, these festivities are seen occurring *immediately following* the redemption of the forfeited inheritance (chapters **6-18**) and *immediately preceding* Christ’s return to the earth (**19:11**ff).

Near the end of Christ’s earthly ministry, He gave a parable concerning a whole panorama of events surrounding these marriage festivities.  And this parable was given within the framework of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, first to Israel, then to the Church.

A.*The Parable* ([*Matthew 22:2-14*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2022:2-14&version=NLT)).

This parable begins with a King arranging all the various festivities for the wedding of His Son, a royal affair (v. **2**).  Then, following these preparations, the King sent forth His servants to call those who had been invited; but they wouldn’t come (v. **3**).

Another call was issued, but those who had been invited still wouldn’t come.  And not only did they ignore this second call, but they made light of the whole matter, even going so far as to mistreat and kill those extending the offer (vv. **4-6**).

And when the King heard what had happened, His anger was such that He sent forth His armies to both destroy those individuals and to burn their city (v. **7**).

Then, the call was sent forth to an entirely different group of individuals.  Some from this group heeded the invitation, but others paid little to no attention.  And, in the end, two types of individuals are seen — “both bad and good.”  Those spoken of as “bad” hadn’t prepared themselves to attend the wedding festivities, and they, resultantly, didn’t possess wedding garments; but those spoken of as “good” had prepared themselves, and they, resultantly, did possess wedding garments (vv. **8-10**).

And the end result of this invitation is then presented.  Those who had heeded the call and had made proper preparations, possessing wedding garments, were allowed to participate in the marriage festivities.  But those who had disregarded or had rejected the call, not having made proper preparations, not possessing wedding garments, were not allowed to participate in the marriage festivities.  They were not even allowed within.  Instead, *they found themselves in the darkness outside* (vv. **11-14**).

B.*That to Which the Parable Refers*

The parable of the marriage festivities in [Matthew 22:2-14](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2022:2-14&version=NLT) covers the whole panorama of that seen in the New Testament, from **Matthew** chapter **one** through the first half of **Revelation** chapter **nineteen**.  This parable covers God’s complete dealings, throughout the New Testament, with both Israel and the Church in relation to the kingdom of the heavens; and it extends up to and includes the marriage festivities in [Revelation 19:7-9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%2019:7-9&version=NLT), preceding the Messianic Era.

The kingdom of the heavens (with a view to the wedding festivities, seen in the parable) was extended to Israel through the gospel accounts, Israel rejected the offer, and the kingdom was taken from Israel ([Matthew 21:33-43](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2021:33-43&version=NLT)).  Then, another entity (the Church) was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected (**Acts 2:1**ff [[Acts 2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202&version=NLT)];*cf.*[Matthew 16:16-19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2016:16-19&version=NLT)).

But, as in the parable, there was a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel, something seen throughout the book of **Acts**.  The one now in possession of the kingdom (the infant Church) reoffered it to Israel, beginning in **Acts** chapter **two**.

However, as in the parable, rejection again occurred; and the servants extending the offer were mistreated, and even killed ([Acts 4:17-21; 5:40, 41; 7:54-60](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%204:17-21;%205:40,%2041;%207:54-60&version=NLT)).  And, because of this, the same thing again occurred as seen in the parable.  Between 66 and 70 A.D., Titus and his Roman legions were allowed by the Lord to come against the Israelites in Jerusalem after a manner that resulted in both the destruction of the people and the burning of their city.

The call was then extended only to those seen in the parable as *other than the Jewish people,* those out in “*the highways*,” *Christians*.  This part of the parable is covered in the New Testament by the epistles, though some of the epistles were written during the **Acts** period when the offer was still open to Israel (for the offer was also open to Christians, as well, throughout this period).  And, as in the parable, some Christians would heed the call, others wouldn’t.

(The epistles — all of them — center on the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Christians during the present dispensation.  And the central subject of all the epistles has to do with various facets of information surrounding this offer.)

And, as in the parable, the end of the matter will witness some Christians prepared to attend these festivities and others unprepared to attend.  Proper or improper preparation is given in both [Matthew 22:10-12](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2022:10-12&version=NLT) and [Revelation 19:7, 8](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation%2019:7,%208&version=NLT).  It has to do with possession or non-possession of *a wedding garment*.

Those properly dressed will be allowed to participate in the festivities, looking forward to that which lies ahead — the Son’s coming reign over the earth, with His consort queen.  But those improperly dressed will be denied entrance into these festivities and left *in the darkness outside,* with *nothing* to look forward to during the Son’s coming reign, for they will occupy *no place in His kingdom*.  They will occupy *no place among those forming the Son*’*s wife*, *His consort queen*.

(Mysteries of the Kingdom by Arlen L. Chitwood) <http://bibleone.net/MK.htm>

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