

Matthew 22:1-14 A fool at the feast



This is the third (and final) parable Jesus told by way of response to the Jewish chief priests and elders accosting him in the Temple (21:23). There is some overlap with the first two parables, but sufficient differences to keep us guessing all the way through.

The parable could have concluded with a happy ending at v10, but Jesus inserts a final and very uncomfortable “sting in the tale”: a man who thinks he has no need of the grace of God.

➤ The empty hall (1-6)

Clearly the invited guests who didn't turn up are intended to represent the Jewish nation. But why, then or now, would anyone simply “pay no attention” (5) – simply *not be bothered!* – about something as wonderful or important as this?

➤ Deserved retribution (7)

The king's actions could definitely hint at the destruction of Jerusalem a few decades later. But does the king's (literally!) incendiary response seem well over the top for more modern ears? What are we not getting if we think so?

➤ The filled hall (8-10)

But the king's hall *will* be filled. In this parable, the servants are sent to recruit from the most heavily frequented areas of town. In another similar parable (Luke 14:12-24), a second wave of servants go out to the “highways and hedges”, compelling (rather than inviting) people to attend. Is either parable a blueprint for evangelism?

➤ Surprising rejection (11-14)

So what is the error of this sole man present without a wedding garment? Is the king's response appropriate?

What comparable errors are open to us? And how can we avoid them?

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