

The Wedding Garment

Will you be at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb? “Yes,” you may reply, “for I am a child of God; I have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ.” But while the imputation of Christ’s righteousness provides eternal security, does it ensure one’s inclusion at the Marriage Supper? By exploring one of Christ’s kingdom parables we can gain insight as to this important question.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come ([Matt. 22:2-3](#)).

From the parallel text in [Luke 14:16-24](#) we learn that this wedding is, more specifically, the wedding supper, or feast, which precedes the actual wedding. It is equated with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in [Rev. 19:7-9](#), which inaugurates the Millennial kingdom.

Virtually all commentators identify the King as God the Father and His Son as Jesus Christ. Those who are bidden to the wedding by the King’s servants (likely the Old Testament prophets and perhaps John the Baptist) are the Jewish people who reject Jesus. *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not ([John 1:11](#)).*

Later in the passage the King sends out more servants (likely the apostles) to graciously summon the invitees once again. Those servants are ignored by the Jewish people en masse and, worse yet, violently abused and killed by a “remnant,” who martyr them. The King, in His anger, sends forth His armies, destroying the murderers and burning up their city. Most conservative commentators see this as the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

The King insists on moving ahead with the wedding, as everything has been meticulously and beautifully planned. So He sends His servants out again, this time outside the city (Jerusalem) into the highways and hedges (the realm of the heathen), compelling all those who will come, both bad (Gentiles) and good (Jews).

So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. 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 ([Matt. 22:11-12](#)).

The wedding is finally filled with guests who respond to the king’s invitation. Those who do not come to the wedding are not saved. Those who respond favorably to the invitation are those who have received the free gift of salvation by grace through faith alone. They have accepted the invitation

of the King!

What about the man who comes to the wedding but is not properly attired? His offense is not wearing a wedding garment. This out-of-place man suggests a real rubbing point, not merely for the King but for all of us as interpreters of the passage.

Some say that the wedding garments refer to both the imputed righteousness of Christ and the imparted righteousness of the saints. They would argue that saved people live and act like it, and thus the impartation of robes of righteousness must, of necessity, accompany any persevering saint. Those who have not persevered in righteousness are not true saints and will not stand before Christ at the Judgment Seat, much less be present at the Marriage Supper, they would claim.

But is that what Jesus is saying in this parable? This man's presence before the King seems to demonstrate that he has accepted the King's invitation. In other words, he is saved. Furthermore, the King refers to him as "friend." When the King asks the man why he is not wearing the wedding garment, the man is speechless, literally muzzled. He can say nothing; he has no adequate response, for he knows better. I believe this scene is reminiscent of the Judgment Seat of Christ, when some are saved, yet so as by fire and will undoubtedly have nothing to say for themselves.

Interestingly, in [Rev. 19](#), we find the nature of an appropriate wedding garment:

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath 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 of saints ([Rev. 19:7-8](#)).

How does a saint make himself ready (i.e., prepared) for the Marriage of the Lamb? By living for Jesus here and now. By losing his soul in this life so he can gain it in the next. See previous articles entitled, The Paradox of Saving the Soul, [Part 1](#) and [2](#). That is the only way one becomes qualified to receive robes of righteousness, the wedding garments that are required for entrance to the Marriage Supper.

All saints, it seems, are not granted automatic entrance; for the qualification, according to the end of v.8, is not Christ's righteousness, Gr. *dikaiosis*, but rather the righteous acts of the saints, Gr. *dikaionoma*. In other words, this passage implies that only those saints who are deemed worthy, based on their obedience – their righteous behavior, as determined by Christ at the Judgment Seat – will be allowed entrance to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb and, presumably, to the glories of the Millennial kingdom which is inaugurated by the Marriage.

Some tend to discount this view of [Matt. 22](#) and [Rev. 19](#) because they interpret what happens to the improperly dressed wedding guest as being cast

into hell. But does the Bible say he is cast into hell?

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. For many are called, but few are chosen ([Matt. 22:13-14](#)).

What is outer darkness? Is it hell? The term literally means “the darkness outside.” Scholars tell us these feasts would typically be held at night, so that one cast outside would be in relative darkness compared with the brightness of the banquet hall.

Furthermore, “weeping” and “gnashing of teeth” imply sorrow and conscious regret. While that *could* describe the emotional state of one in hell, could it not also describe the emotional state of one who has been excluded from the glories of the Millennium? If some true believers, based on Christ’s determination at the Bema, are excluded from the Marriage Supper, because their life is not worthy of receiving a wedding garment, will they not weep and consciously regret being cast out?

Many are called, but few are chosen. Could this mean that many are saved, but few of the saved will be deemed worthy of ruling and reigning with Christ in His kingdom? Will all the other saints (those deemed unworthy) regret that their millennial existence is outside of the King’s realm, far less than what it could have been if they had lived differently in this life? These are questions that all Christians need to wrestle with. It is important that we not be ashamed at His coming ([1 John 2:28](#)) and that we lose not our reward (2 John 8).

Thankfully, every child of God has been given equal opportunity to earn robes of righteousness because every saint has been given the provision of Christ’s righteousness. If you are appropriating his grace by faith ([Rom. 5:2](#)), to perform His will on earth, living a revived life, then you are a candidate for the wedding garment!

This article may seem shocking to some who have never heard this interpretation of Matthew 22 and Revelation 19. But if this view is correct, there are serious ramifications that should be considered by all Christians. May we search the Scriptures and determine whether these things are so.