
Matthew 22:45-46 | The Background

- In Matthew 22:33-44 Jesus told the parable of the vineyard, in which Jesus concluded that the Kingdom would be taken away from the current generation and given to another.
- In Matthew 22:45-46 the religious leaders correctly **perceived that he spake of them**. They would have put him to death then and there, but did not due to political expediency.

Matthew 23:1-7 | Invited Guests

- Verse 1 –
 - The word **answered** is from ἀποκρίνομαι [apokrinomai], built on the root word *krino* (judgment).
 - It is a word that is not required to be connected to an actual question.
 - Jesus *answered the situation at hand*. He answered with his *judgment* of the situation.
- Verse 2 -
 - The text is clear (though the theologians are confused) when it states the “ground rules” for this parable: *any likeness of the wedding feast must be tied to **the kingdom of heaven** and not to the church (or to marriage, or to education, or to economics...etc.)*.
 - Since Israel is the *Beulah land* (Is. 62:4), the natural assumption at this point is to conclude that Israel is **them that were bidden to the wedding but would not come**.
- Verse 3 –
 - After the first refusal, **he sent forth other servants**. This aligns perfectly with the prophets (ending in John the Baptist) being rejected, but God sending a “second chance” message in Peter and the apostles in the book of Acts.
- Verse 4 –
 - In this second invitation, the dinner is already prepared, and **all things are ready**.
 - This aligns with the message of Peter who (unlike the prophets) can proclaim the completed work of Christ on the cross and can say with confidence that **times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord** (Acts 3:19) if they accept His invitation.
- Verse 5-6 –
 - The response was twofold. Some **made light of it** and ignored the message. Some others **took his servants and slew them**.
 - Once again, this aligns with the history of the kingdom offer in the book of Acts.
- Verse 7 –
 - All evidence is that this is a prophetic revelation of the future destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. In the destruction of Jerusalem, **those murderers** of the Apostles were destroyed.
 - In Luke 13:1-5 Jesus gave a very specific warning of death for those who did not repent. The Luke passage was also fulfilled in 70AD.

Matthew 23:8-14 | The Guests Who Came

- Verses 8-9 –
 - Those students of the Word who are not careful will assume that the Jewish nation is passed over and the gentiles (i.e.: the church) are invited to replace them.
 - This cannot be true because the church is a hidden mystery at this point which, unless Paul is a liar or a mistaken fool, was **in other ages...not made known unto the sons of men** (Eph. 3:5) and was **unsearchable** (Eph. 3:8) because it **was from the beginning of the world...hid in God** (Eph. 3:9).
 - Therefore, in these verses we have an almost 2,000-year unforeseen (and unrevealed) gap of time, and these verses are about the future offer of the Kingdom to Israel (the only nation to whom it can be offered).
- Verse 10 -
 - This connects with Matthew 24:14, the complete spread of the Kingdom gospel before the end shall come.
 - The fact that there are **both good and bad** present in the gathering for the wedding aligns with passages such as Revelation 2:14-15, 20-23 (verses which refer to future Jewish assemblies) as well as passages such as Matthew 24:11, 23-24, , etc., which speak about false witnesses.
- Verses 11-12 –
 - Those who try to apply these verses to the church make a theological mess. Those who recognize that these verses are about the kingdom, that the kingdom is not the church, and that the kingdom had a works-based element find the scriptures in perfect harmony.
 - For example, Revelation 19:8 speaks of the wedding feast and says that the wedding garment is **fine linen** which is **the righteousness of saints**.
 - So, one is found in the future wedding banquet **not having a wedding garment** and is punished.
- Verse 13 –
 - The one who was not dressed worthily was bound and removed. In the parable of the talents the **unprofitable servant** is also cast into **outer darkness** (Matt. 25:30).
- Verse 14 –
 - This verse has caused much consternation in the church, most of which has stemmed from applying it to the church rather than the Kingdom.
 - It is true that **many are called**, but what are they called to? In context, they are called from the highways and byways into the Kingdom, not into a personal salvation by-grace-through-faith. When we apply this to the church-age, we create a Calvinistic problem.

Some Bad Commentary

- Whereas those who should have been “good” (Israel, God’s chosen people) had shown themselves to be evil, the king treated all who were evil as though they were good. The impartiality of the king represented the impartial grace of God, inviting all people of all nations into the kingdom during the church age. By extension, we can identify the king’s servants or messengers now as the believers in the New Testament church (*Stuart K. Weber, Matthew, vol. 1, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 352–353.*)
- Not everyone who is invited will be among the chosen. The adjective *chosen* suggests that the faith decision is not totally in our hands, but it is a response to God’s sovereign election. (ibid)
-