

## *THE DISPENSATIONAL PARABLES*

August, 1897

### **IV.—The Marriage of the King's Son**

*(Matthew 22:2-14)*

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son."

The parable is concerning "the king's son" when about to receive his bride and to enter into possession of his inheritance. It refers to the fulfillment of Psalm 2:8-12.

The guests had been bidden by the preaching of John the Baptist that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

To these "bidden" guests the Lord Jesus sent out His twelve apostles still to preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 10:7).

After His resurrection the Lord Jesus sent His apostles to preach "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," that "all things are ready"; for the Scriptures concerning the sufferings of Christ had been fulfilled (Acts 3:18). All things were ready for his return in power, when His foes should be made His footstool. Although the heathen did rage, and the people imagined vain things. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ" (Psa 2:2; Acts 4:26). Christ being raised from among the dead to sit upon the throne of David, as God had sworn; all

things were ready for God's King to be set upon the holy hill of Zion (Psa 2:6; Acts 2:30-33).

But the nation through its rulers at Jerusalem rejected each successive invitation. Not only so, they took His servants and entreated them spitefully and slew them. For the record of the Gospel testimony at Jerusalem ends with the death of Stephen (Acts 7:59).

"When the King heard thereof He was wroth, and He sent forth His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

From the destruction of Jerusalem, i.e., the burning up of their city, the parable passes over the time during which the Lord is sitting in the heavens, and is being declared as the Son of God among the Gentiles (Psa 2:4,7), unto the time of verse 8 when He shall receive the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Jesus "having received the kingdom" sends forth His apostles first to the nations to claim their submission to His authority. "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage" (v 9).

This bidding to the marriage is parallel with Psalm 2:10-12, Matthew 24:14, and 28:19, 20. The proclamation of Christ to the Gentile nations, as "the Son of God" and "the King of Israel" by a Jewish ministry, a revived apostleship, at the end of the age, calling the Gentiles to submit themselves to his authority before the great day of His wrath; that they may be spared when His foes shall be made His footstool, to share the joy of the bridegroom, and to be blest in His kingdom.

The Gospel whereby the nations will be bidden to the marriage feast will have its own special characteristics. Its subject will be the authority given to the King's Son: "All power in heaven and in earth" (Matt 28:18), the Son having received the heathen for His inheritance. Those who receive it will be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; thus confessing the God of Israel in each

Divine person as dwelling with His people from their deliverance out of Egypt to the day of Pentecost (Exo 29:46; Matt 1:23; Acts 2:4).

Each Divine person has been manifested as dwelling with His people and in Jerusalem. It was as "The Father" that God was known to Israel dwelling in the temple built by Solomon (Isa 63:16; Jer 3:19; Mal 1:6). The Son was manifest in flesh, and dwelt in Nazareth and Capernaum, and was declared as such in Jerusalem (Mark 14:61,62; John 5:17,18). The Holy Ghost came down on the day of Pentecost, and His presence was manifest in the miraculous gifts. At the end of the age those who receive the testimony will be baptized in confession of each Divine person as manifested to Israel, to be the true God, the God of Israel; in contrast with the Man of sin, the Antichrist then sitting in the temple of God in Jerusalem, and shewing himself that he is God (2 Thess 2:4).

This parable shows very clearly the peculiar character of the Gospel by Matthew as looking onward to the time of Israel's deliverance as a nation, at the end of the age, and not at all to the present time of grace to the Gentiles. There is absolute silence as to all that takes place between the destruction of Jerusalem ("the burning up of their city," v 7) and the gathering of the "guests for the King" immediately before His return at the time of the wedding-feast (vv 9-11).

The same silence as to the present time of grace is apparent in chapter 27:50-53. As soon as the Lord's death is announced, it is immediately connected with His death and His resurrection and with the circumstances that accompany the deliverance of the nation at the time of the Great Tribulation (compare Matt 27:50-53 with Dan 12:1,2), and from that point to the end of the Gospel there is not a word of reference to the Lord's absence from the earth or to the presence of the Holy Spirit, the two great facts which characterize the present time.

It was on a mountain in Galilee that the Lord proclaimed to His disciples the coming kingdom and its principles (chap 5-

7); it was also on a mountain in Galilee that after His resurrection He gave the commission to his disciples to proclaim Him as the King of Israel to the nations, for use at the end of the age. He spoke to them prophetically as having already received the kingdom, "all power in heaven over the earth" and as come to take possession of it by power.

The subject of the Gospel is Christ the Son of David, Emmanuel, God present with His people Israel for their salvation (1:21-23). Therefore the time of His absence and of the desolation of Jerusalem and of grace to the Gentiles is passed over in silence, except as it is referred to in some of the parables, but never the subject of the Lord's direct teaching. The last words in chapter 28:20 show that the application of that commission is at "the end of the age."

The sequel to the Gospel by Matthew is the Book of the Revelation.

Then the Gentile disciples are to be taught subjection to the rulers of the Jews. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to "observe all things whatsoever the Scribes and Pharisees bid you observe"; for they "sit in Moses' seat" (Matt 23:2,3). These things the Gentile disciples are to be taught to observe (Matt 28:20). To recognize the authority of Moses in the Scribes and the Pharisees. The Gentile nations are to be subject to Israel as a nation, for the Lord has said concerning Israel, "The nation and the kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish" (Isa 60:12).

"And when the King came in to see the guests, He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment."

The authority of the King is the subject of the Parable, but it is associated with the grace of the Son of God. A "wedding garment" (justification in Christ) is provided for each guest. For truth once revealed is not withdrawn however ordinances may change. But the guests are bidden, and are not compelled as in Luke 14:23. The invitation is addressed to the

responsibility of those bidden, and may be accepted feignedly or in truth. Some will accept it professedly and yield feigned obedience (Psa 18:44 and 66:3, and 81:15), as did Simon in Acts 8:13, and will obey a command without a new heart. The Lord can discern between subjection to ordinances to fulfil a legal righteousness, and the heart that accepts and responds to the word of His grace.

The false professor is judged as the avowed unbeliever, is cast into outer darkness, that is, eternal judgment.

The difference between those who are gathered from the highways in Matthew 22:10, and those who come in Luke 14:23 is the difference between being bidden and being compelled.

In the future ministry indicated in Matthew 22 the guests are bidden as the Jews were by the ministry of John the Baptist, and also by the Lord's disciples (Matt 10:7). The people are addressed as under law, and the responsibility is theirs to accept or to reject the invitation. It was the same in the ministry of Peter in Jerusalem (Acts 2 and Matt 22:4). In Luke 14:23\* the present time of grace to the Gentiles is referred to, and those who are compelled to come are those ordained to everlasting life, whose faith is the result of the action of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus; among such there is no one without a wedding garment (Acts 13:48).

\* The principle in Matthew 22 is government.  
The principle in Luke 14 is grace.