

THE GUEST ... who refused a wedding garment
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(Matthew 22:12)

When the Lord Jesus spoke about the king who made a marriage for his son, He gave to the world one of His most comprehensive parables. The far-reaching implications of this message went beyond the immediate circumstances of His day, and embraced the entire age of grace. In speaking of the people who openly spurned the invitation to the wedding, Christ undoubtedly referred to the Jewish rejection of God's proffered grace. Yet out of this tragedy came a greater invitation to a wider audience. "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready . Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. 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" (Matt. 22 :9,10).

The Glad Request

It is significant that class distinction was unknown in this great message. The earlier invitation to the privileged few had been superseded by a far greater declaration - "Whosoever will may come." The "casting away of them" resulted in "the reconciling of the world" (Rom. 11:15). Thus the servants of the great king went out in every direction to seek guests for the wedding, and probably the scenes which took place beggared description. It seemed a fantasy that a king should welcome tramps to his palace. Yet the messengers of the royal household assured every one that this was the king's intention. It was indeed a great request, and nothing else could so adequately describe the wonder of the Gospel message. God is determined to honour His Son, and sinners of all nations are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The Glorious Raiment

An eastern wedding was always a most colourful affair, but a royal wedding was a scene of brilliant magnificence. Every guest was clothed in special garments provided by the king, and the entire scene became one of unprecedented splendour. The cost of supplying this raiment was very great, but no expense was ever spared in the matter of honouring a king's son. Bought at great price, the garments were offered free to all the guests. Therefore when the servants brought the poor, the wretched, the filthy, and the unlovely to the wedding, the colourful garments offered by the attendant seemed in strange contrast to the rags of the people. A quick wash to remove dirt, a putting off of rags, and a glad acceptance of the offered garment, were sufficient to turn a beggar into a prince. Probably this was the Saviour's best illustration of the garments of salvation. Provided at the greatest cost, they are offered free to sinners. We put away the rags of our self-righteousness, and reaching forth the hand of faith, we accept the garments of grace and stand clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Glorious raiment indeed!

The Great Refusal

"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" (vv.

THE GUEST ... who refused a wedding garment ii, 12). The king was perfectly justified in asking the question, for he had made ample provision to meet the needs of all his guests. Surely, this particular guest could not have been clad in rags, or he would have readily seized the chance to hide his poverty. Perhaps his garments were new, and he was proud of them. He was not like the other guests. Maybe he was a Pharisee and said, "I am not as other men are . . . or even as these publicans." He therefore refused the offer of the garment, believing that he was perfectly presentable for the king's banquet

The Ghastly Result

"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" (v. 13). An expression of penitence at that late hour would be totally unacceptable. The silly man had refused a king's offer. He had done so deliberately, and had thereby insulted a king's grace and dishonoured a king's son. He was exceedingly guilty, and was responsible for his own misfortune. This was a tragedy which might easily have been avoided.

"Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

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