

BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH!

By Pastor Mike Taylor

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22:1 “And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, *in Matthew 22:1-14*:

22:2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

22:3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

22:4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.”

Do you remember the day your were married to your spouse? In it was much joy and expectation. For me, it was a joy to finally find my soul mate that God brought us together against all odds.

We put much effort into that ceremony that would join us as one flesh. God has been doing the same for thousands of years. In the Old Testament, God sent His servants to the nation of Israel.

We know these servants as the prophets sent by God to His chosen people, Israel. It was our Father's invitation to come to a planned wedding of His only Son, who had not even yet come to this earth in the form of a man. What did they do?

22:5 “But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

22:6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.”

Israel was given the first invitation to come to the wedding, but they were too busy with their own interest, their own desires, to even respond to the invitation in a positive manner. More importantly, they responded to the invitation with wrath, as they were told how they must present themselves with a wedding garment by the prophets sent. So they killed them in their ignorance of what this invitation was really meaning.

Notice two things here:

The nation of Israel was being invited as guest, not part of the wedding procession, but attending as a people supporting the Groom and the bride and entering into joyous celebration. Secondly, they received invitation after invitation, but treated the invitation and the King's command with contempt and ridicule that led to murder.

God in His knowledge of all things, knew that they would not accept this calling to come to the marriage of His Son to His chosen Bride. Jesus emphasized this in this passage. So what did the King do in His wrath of their continued contempt of listening to His call?

22:7 “But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.”

This second round of invitation noted in the New Testament was met with no more success than the first in Old Testament. The apostles and the followers of Jesus Christ were slain, as well as their brethren, the prophets before

them. They even slew His only Son upon a cross. Finally swift judgment came and destroyed their city and their nation in 70 AD when the Roman armies of Titus razed and burned the city of Jerusalem to the ground and destroyed the temple, the symbol of their national identity. The ones who were not slain were dispersed to other countries and the nation of Israel ceased to exist for almost 2000 years.

22:8 “Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

22:9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

22:10 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.”

Jesus prophesied here that the grace of God would be extended to the Gentiles, as the nation of Israel did not answer the call, so the invitation was given to the good, the bad, and the all who would answer the call to come to the wedding of His Son by repenting of their sins and accepting the substitution, the propitiation for their transgressions, the blood and body of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In verse 10, who are the servants? The answer is, we are. Starting with the apostles including Paul, the message was proclaimed to the gentile nations. Those who have been called and accepted the payment of sin through Jesus Christ our Lord's sacrifice have been commissioned to reach as many people as time will allow to fill God's wedding chamber with guest. But notice the end of this parable:

22:11 “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

22:12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

22:13 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.

22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.”

The parable suggests that, not only did the man not have on a wedding garment, but he did so intentionally. He decides against clothing himself properly, even though the appropriate clothing is available. His presence at the wedding is a sign of his rebellion against the king's authority and majesty, symbolized by the feast. When the man realizes his sin against the king's order, he is speechless as his judgment is pronounced. You can't fool God and think you can get to this wedding feast on your own merit. You won't be good enough, righteous enough, or a moral person enough to qualify entry into this ceremony. The ones clothed with the correct wedding garment have put on Jesus Christ being covered with His righteousness by the covering of their sins by His own blood. They have accepted His call of grace and have been obedient to follow Him and being transformed into His likeness. Of course, first you have to have the righteousness of Jesus Christ, by accepting His blood payment for your sins, but from there forward, it takes some of us a lifetime to be even similar to the life the Jesus exemplified while on earth. We do this by submission, being obedient to please our Lord, and grateful, even thankful that His love extended to each of us who heeded the Holy Spirit's call.

SO WHAT ABOUT ISRAEL?

But what of Israel? Are they cast away? If you read the Bible and understand, it would seem to the casual reader that God has done away with Israel. Jeremiah wrote by Holy Spirit inspiration a frightening indictment of the nation of Israel for their refusal to accept His call.

7:20 “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.

7:21 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh.

7:22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:

7:23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

7:24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

7:25 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:

7:26 Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.”

It was a scathing indictment as judgment was declared upon the nation of Israel. They were dispersed by Assyria in the north kingdom, and Babylon in the south. But God gave them mercy and allowed them to come back to their homeland, again as is written in Ezra and Nehemiah. But beginning in the account of the birth of our Messiah, Jesus Christ in Matthew and proclaimed by the Gospel account of Mark, Luke, John and finally Paul, Israel was blinded to the coming of their Messiah, which had been prophesied for thousands of years and they knew that they were in the season of His coming, but rejected Him. He just didn't fit their idea of a conquering King to deliver them from the Romans. They had the Lord God right in front of them, but they didn't recognize Him. Some will say, “Why did God allow them to be blinded to His coming and allow the nation to be destroyed?” Good question, and the answer is summed up in two words**mercy and grace**. It has been extended to all in the fullness of time.

Jesus said in Matthew chapter 21:

21:42 “Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

21:44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

21:45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.”

God in His wisdom has put Israel aside, for a time, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled and the end of the age of grace. The Gospel (good news) has been proclaimed by the Apostles and the disciples of Jesus Christ even unto this day. Why? To show mercy on all. God desired to be the God of all people, not just Israel. God knew their hearts and their past performance proved it, that they would keep this blessing unto themselves, and not share it with other nations, so God planned that Israel would be blinded and not see, and deaf so as not to hear what was meant by this Good News of the coming Kingdom of God. But it has been a road marked with persecution and faith tested. Paul writes in Hebrews chapter 11:

11:32 “And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

11:33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.

11:34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

11:36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

11:38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

God's invitation has been given for 1000's of years to any generation that would listen, but most did not. Most turned a blind eye and desired more from this life, not looking forward to the next. “For many are called, but few are chosen.” Why is this so? I'll try and answer fully that question further on.

OUR MESSIAH REJECTED

Let us return to my prior thought about why Israel has been blinded to their Messiah, but for a time. Paul speaks of this in Romans chapter 11:

11:25 “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

11:28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes.

11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

11:30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief:

11:31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.

11:32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

11:33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

ISRAEL , THE CHURCH AND THE OLIVE TREE

To any and everyone that is a proponent of Replacement Theology and Israel being replaced by the Church and is without hope, I would point you to this passage, and to encourage each and every Christian who calls upon the name of the Lord to read the full 11th chapter of Romans. Paul explains that we have been grafted into the Olive Tree that is Israel's call to be a chosen people. But let us not boast:

11:15 “For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?”

11:16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.

11:17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;

11:18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

11:19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

11:20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear:

11:21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

11:23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again.

11:24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?

11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.”

In this passage, God through Paul speaks of Israel being set aside, for a short while, so that a people who were not His people would be called. Those chosen are the bride of Christ that are being readied for the coming Marriage Supper of the Lamb, but never fear, Israel will be called and purified in the last days, before the coming of Jesus Christ Kingdom rule upon earth for 1000 years.

THE COMING WEDDING OF THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

I pray that we have established that there is a difference between the Bride and the guest of the coming wedding of our Lord and Savior to His chosen bride, the Church. The guests have been called from the beginning of the fall of man, leading right up to the time of the appearing of our Messiah as a man on earth. Israel rejected the call during the Old Testament times, and even during the New Testament writings proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Son of God, slain from the foundation of the world. Thus began the Age of Grace, from the time of the death and resurrection of our Savior, until modern times that we live in. Israel is still blinded even as I write this, save for a few that have been able to believe on their Messiah, but as a majority, they are still blinded; but it won't always be so.

As we draw closer and closer to the appearing of Lord God in the clouds of heaven to remove His people out of the way of His coming wrath, a ceremony will be taking place in realms of glory. It is described in Revelation 19:

19:7 “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.

19:8 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.

19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”

I see a difference in the guest and the Bride herself. The guest are the ones who believed the report of the prophets down through the ages, but were not part of the Church. I point to the parable of the 10 virgins given by Jesus Christ while on earth, as an example. For brevity, see Matthew chapter 25, starting verse 1. Five were foolish and were denied entry as guest to the wedding reception. Five were wise and had oil in their lamps, a symbol of the Holy Spirit. I believe this is a period in the Tribulation where those who believe but are NOT part of the Bride, are allowed into the wedding feast that is taking place in Glory during these 7 years of Tribulation. Note that in both passages, the Bride is already in the wedding banquet. She is not invited, she is the focus of this wedding ceremony. Every parable in this 25th chapter of Matthew given by Jesus Christ points to that time of the Church being removed, and the nation of Israel being tested and refined, as silver is refined in the fire.

When the time of the marriage of Jesus Christ to His Bride has arrived, then will be the time for the resumption of gladness and rejoicing. Not forgetting that it will also be a time for giving additional glory and honor to our great God, this gladness and rejoicing—shared with God the Father, His Son, and all the angelic host of heaven—will exceed anything that we have ever experienced. It is very important to note that Christ's Bride will have "made herself ready" for the wedding. She will not have allowed anything to sidetrack her from her preparation for this most wonderful occasion.

THE SAINTS HAVE A GLORIOUS FUTURE

What a glorious promise. What a glorious future that each of us will experience that call upon the Lord Jesus and are saved this side of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The Nation of Israel and the Gentile Church will stand with our God, our Savior, our King and sing His praises for saving each of us. We will sing for 10,000 years and forevermore, the Lamb that was slain, because of love for His creation. I want each of you who are reading this sermon to be with us, singing songs of heartfelt praise. There is only one way, and one way only. And that is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, that was slain before the foundation of the earth. God knew that He Himself would have to come in the form of a servant to become the perfect sacrifice to pay the price for the sin of mankind. May the Holy Spirit speak to your heart and you search out to seek His Face. Matthew chapter 7:

7:7 “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

The Lord of Creation is calling all who will respond to His invitation. He calls come to the marriage of my Son. Will you answer and heed His call? Don't make the mistake to think that you have time. “I'll put it off until I feel like it, when it's more convenient” when that time may never come. Israel is prophesied to get another chance to accept their Messiah during a time of great Tribulation that is coming. Will you have the same chance? If you do get that one chance, it will be at the expense of your life. But what if you don't get the chance and your heart is hardened to the calling of God to repent and accept His Son as payment for your sins? To anyone reading this message, don't wait and don't procrastinate, as you may NOT get that chance if you miss it this side of the coming of the Bridegroom for His bride. At the end of the book of Revelation, God makes a clear statement of the Bride being removed before judgment comes upon this earth...they each speak to someone else as an invitation to a wedding banquet, as quest,

“And the **Spirit and the bride** say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” **Revelation 22:17**

“(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)” **II Corinthians 6:2**

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life”. John 3:16

*This is Pastor Mike Taylor praying God salvation comes into your life by His Son, Jesus Christ.
If you need counseling, prayer, or just a listening ear, email me at atrealteam1999@sbcglobal.net,
God bless you all, till we meet at Jesus feet.*