

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

SECOND QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. D. 30.]

LESSON I. THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

[April 1.]

Matt. 22. 1-14.

[Commit to memory verses 11-14.]



1 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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.

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

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

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.

14 For many are called, but few are chosen.



General Statement.

A parable somewhat similar to this had been given by Jesus a few months earlier, during his ministry in Perea. It was like this parable in its beginning, but unlike it in its ending, and may be found in Luke 14. 1-24. This was delivered in one of the courts of the temple, on Tuesday in passion week, the last day of the Saviour's public teaching. It was delivered before an audience of scribes and Pharisees who had already decreed his death, and had bargained with the traitor for his betrayal. Yet the Teacher does not hesitate in his utterance nor lower his claim to be revered as the Son of God. He pictures, the Jewish people as a com-

pany invited by a king to a marriage feast, and scorning the summons. With the tongue of a prophet he proclaims the impending destruction of their city as the result of their rejection of himself and his messengers. And he depicts in no less graphic language the doom of the hypocritical or deluded professor of religion, in the sudden judgment which befel the man who appeared at the wedding feast without wearing the wedding garment. So, alike for neglecters, for opposers, for persecutors, and for pretenders, this last public parable of Christ has a solemn warning.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verses 1, 2. Jesus answered. He answered either the unspoken thoughts of, or a muttered complaint of his hearers in the temple. By parables. The best definition of the parable is that given by Lyman Abbott. "A fictitious narrative, true to nature, yet unobscure, veiling a spiritual truth under a symbol, for the purpose of conveying it to minds reluctant or indifferent." **The kingdom of heaven.** God's dealings with men, especially those having reference to redemption. **Is like.** Notice that the Great Teacher constantly finds parallels to the spiritual world in the natural. **A certain king.** This king is God himself, the only real monarch of the universe. (1) *God reigns, let the earth rejoice!* **Made a marriage.** Rev. Ver., "a marriage feast." Representing the tender and close relation which the Son of God holds toward his Church on earth, his glorious Bride, and the joy attending it. (2) *May we belong to that true Church which is the Lamb's wife!* Rev. 21. 9. **For his son.** Our Saviour, who, as the founder of his Church, calling it into union with himself, is the heavenly Bridegroom.

3. Sent forth his servants. The prophets, the apostles, and all who deliver the message of God to men. **To call them.** In the East the invitation to a feast is given twice, first to inform the guests, and then to notify them when the entertainment is ready. **Them that were bidden.** In the interpretation, this represents the Jewish nation, who as God's chosen people received the first call of the Gospel. They would not come. As by their coming they would have been invited, so by their neglect and rejection they proclaimed themselves traitors to their King. (3) *Every hearer who fails to come is guilty of disobedience to God.*

4. Sent forth other servants. Perhaps referring to the preachers of the Gospel after the ascension of

Christ, as Peter on the day of Pentecost, Stephen, and others. **I have prepared my dinner.** Notice that the second call is more direct and urgent than the first. **My fiddings are killed.** Is there a figurative allusion here to the blood of the cross, since the Gospel feast was not full until Christ's blood was shed? **Come unto the marriage.** So God calls still through his messengers, inviting men to partake in the joys of the Gospel. (4) *Mark the long-suffering grace of God!*

5. They made light of it. Literally, "they caring not." This verse represents the attitude not only of the mass of the Jews, but, in a larger interpretation, of the mass of the world, to the Gospel call. They do not oppose nor reject, they simply do not care. **One to his farm, another to his merchandise.** Here are two classes of the careless, unthinking multitude; one enjoying the good things of this life, the other seeking them. (5) *How much men lose who neglect God's call for the enjoyments and aims of the world!*

6. The remnant. Rev. Ver., "the rest." Primarily, the rulers of the Jews, but also the opposers and scorers of Christ in every age. **Took his servants.** Rev. Ver., "hid hold on his servants, and entreated them shamefully." So argued Stamben, the two Jameses, Paul, and many others of the early workers for Jesus; so, too, have suffered martyrs for the Gospel in many ages. Here the parable looks beyond the time in which Jesus lived.

7. When the king heard thereof. (6) *And what is there in the universe or in the flesh which our King does not hearken to?* He was warned by the voice of the Bruhna, a "King Log," without feeling. He is stirred with a righteous indignation against wickedness (which, however, has in it nothing like passion or

malice), more than a wiser man who forty cut-purses people. Jerusalem is terribly desolate, and in plain or in the

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