

MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN

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Published On : August 11, 2012

Last Updated : July 2, 2018

Parable Of The King And The Marriage Feast, Many Are Called But Few Are Chosen, God's Invitation For All Men Everywhere To Be Saved, The Old Testament Prophets And Messengers Were Rejected Persecuted And Killed By Unbelieving Jews, The King Sends His Servants To The Riff-Raff Of Society, Gospel To Jews And Gentiles, Revelation's Bride Of Christ And Marriage Feast Of The Lamb, No Wedding Garment Means Being Cast Into Outer Darkness, Robe Of Righteousness, Washed In The Blood Of The Lamb, Self-Righteous Works Versus Grace And Mercy Of God, Children Of The Kingdom Cast Out, Unbelieving Reprobate Dogs, Beware Of The Concision, Few Are Chosen, The Broad Way To Destruction, Bride Is Clothed In Garment Of Righteousness And Covered By Her Husband Jesus Christ, Now Is The Day Of Salvation, Brevity Of Human Life, Invitation, Reading List

In the twenty-second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, we find Jesus sharing the following Parable with the chief priests and the elders of the people when they challenged Him in the Temple:

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 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. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

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. 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. 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. For many are called, but few are chosen."
Matthew 22:2-14, KJV

Exactly what does the Lord mean when He states that "many are called, but few are chosen"? By examining the context of His Parable, as well as by studying other verses which are found in the New Testament, we can easily understand what the Lord is trying to convey to us through this Parable. In fact, I discuss related issues in articles such as "All Are Given a Chance, But . . ." and "Is the Message of Salvation Meant for All Men?". I encourage you to read them. The spirit and intent behind the phrase "many are called" is very similar to what we find in the following verses:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
John 3:16, KJV

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."
John 12:32, KJV

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
2 Peter 3:9, KJV

In the aforementioned Parable, the word "called" is derived from the Koine Greek word "kletos". Pronounced klay-tos', it means to be called or to be invited. In short, just as in this Parable where the king invites or calls people to his son's marriage, God has likewise extended an invitation to all men everywhere to be saved. However, please notice what

happened in this Parable. Let me call your attention to the fact that this Parable was actually directed to Jesus' jealous enemies who were trying to trap Him in His words; that is, the proud, unbelieving Jews. In the Parable, the servants who were sent out represent the Prophets and other messengers who God sent to the Jews since the time of the Old Testament era. However, as we know, God's mouthpieces were often despised, rejected, persecuted and murdered, exactly as we see happening to the servants in this Parable. Thus, we find verses such as the following in the Scriptures:

"Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 29:19, KJV

"I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me."

Jeremiah 35:15, KJV

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye

would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Matthew 23:29-39, KJV

"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."

Revelation 16:5-6, KJV

"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

Revelation 18:20-24, KJV

So that is exactly what Jesus is talking about, and who He is talking about, in this Parable. In a word, He is blasting His unbelieving Jewish listeners. So, because these lofty-minded Jews who were bidden to the king's marriage feast snubbed the invitation, and were so unworthy, what happens next? The king sends out more of his servants to find those people who might be found worthy to partake in the marriage feast of his son. This time, however, instead of going to the royalty, he sent his servants to the common people, and to the riff-raff of society. As I explain in other articles, initially, this was represented by common Jews only. However, later on in the Book of Acts, it came to include the Gentiles as well. Thus we find verses such as the following in the New Testament:

". . . And the common people heard him gladly."

Mark 12:37, KJV

"On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven . . . Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him . . . Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?"

Acts 10:9-16, 34-35, 11:17, KJV

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:"

Romans 11:13, KJV

"Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity."

1 Timothy 2:7, KJV

"Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles."

2 Timothy 1:11, KJV

"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go

unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."

Galatians 2:7-9, KJV

Returning to Jesus' Parable, it should be evident to you by now that the king in Jesus' story is God the Father, and the son is none other than Jesus Christ. The wonderful marriage feast which is given by the king is discussed in the Book of Revelation, as we see by the following verses:

"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. 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. 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."

Revelation 19:7-9, KJV

You will notice in the previous verses that the verb "called" is again used. This time, however, it's derived from "kaleo". Pronounced kal-eh'-o, this is yet another Koine Greek word which likewise means to call or to invite.

While the original invitees ignored the king's invitation in Jesus' Parable, this time the servants were more successful in their endeavors, and guests soon arrived to fill up the marriage feast. But look what happens next. Someone arrives who is not wearing a proper wedding garment. Exactly what is this wedding garment? As I explain in articles such as "Once Upon a Time: A True Story", this garment symbolizes the Robe of Righteousness which we each receive when we are washed in the Blood of the Lamb, and cleansed of our sins. This truth is made evident by verses such as the following:

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Isaiah 1:18, KJV

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is

my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Matthew 26:26-28, KJV

"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."

Mark 14:22-24, KJV

"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

Luke 22:14-20, KJV

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

Ephesians 2:13, KJV

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;"

Hebrews 10:19-20, KJV

"Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate . . . Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Hebrews 13:12, 20-21, KJV

"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

1 Peter 1:2, KJV

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

1 John 1:7, KJV

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

Revelation 1:5, KJV

"And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Revelation 7:14, KJV

While the man in Jesus' Parable had been invited to the son's marriage feast, he did not arrive properly prepared. What was he lacking? Quite simply, Salvation. He was trying to sneak in without having accepted the Lord. Just like those Scribes and Pharisees who Jesus was exposing, he was trying to sneak into the feast wearing his own dirty clothes. In other words, he was depending on his own self-righteous works to save him, and to gain him admittance to the marriage feast. However, as it is made quite plain in the Scriptures:

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Isaiah 64:6, KJV

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one . . . For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

Romans 3:10, 23, KJV

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

Titus 3:5, KJV

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

So, because this man in the Parable was depending on his own righteousness and his own goodness to save him, instead of being washed in the Blood of the Lamb, and depending on the Grace and Mercy of God to save him, the end result is that he was bound hand and foot, and cast into darkness. The Bible informs us that the very same thing will occur with these sad, rebellious people as well:

"But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 8:12, KJV

"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? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."

Matthew 21:42-45, KJV

"And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 25:30, KJV

"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

Revelation 22:14-15, KJV

Please notice that just as He is doing in the current story that we are discussing, in the previous verses where Jesus uses the phrase "the children of the kingdom", He is in fact again referring to the unbelieving Jews. They will be cast out, they will lose the kingdom, due to their stiff-necked rejection of their very own Messiah.

Please also notice that in the previous two verses which are found in the Book of Revelation, dogs are mentioned. Exactly who are these dogs? As Jesus Himself informs us in the Gospel of Matthew, they are in fact the very same people that Jesus is describing in the above Parable regarding the king and the marriage feast. They are the people who have rejected the Message of Salvation. In the context of the Gospels, as well as other Books of the New Testament, they are in fact the unbelieving Jews. This becomes evident by this verse:

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

Matthew 7:6, KJV

That is precisely what those self-righteous, holier-than-thou Scribes and Pharisees were doing when the Lord shared this particular Parable with them. They were gnashing on Him with their teeth. In his Epistle to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul uses this very same kind of harsh terminology to warn the Christian brethren to beware of the "concision". Who or what does this word represent? Quite simply, the legalistic Jews who were bound by the harsh mandates of the Mosaic Law -- such as the need for circumcision -- and who repeatedly tried to enforce those same rigid rules on the new Christian converts. This becomes evident in both the Book of Acts, as well as in some of the Epistles. Consider this verse:

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."

Philippians 3:2, KJV

So, despite how offensive this particular Scriptural truth may be for certain Christians who are staunch supporters of Israel, this is exactly what is meant by the term "dogs", as spoken by the Lord, and written by the Apostles John and Paul. It is a Biblical fact which cannot be watered down or softened, just because some people don't like it, or because

they are offended by it. The truth is still the truth.

The essence of what Jesus is saying is that many people are indeed called -- or invited -- to accept God's free Gift of Salvation and Eternal Life, but few are chosen -- from the Koine Greek word "eklektos" -- because so very few of them choose to accept Christ when they are given the opportunity to do so, compared to the overall population of the world. Instead, Jesus makes it rather clear that the vast majority of people will follow the broad way to destruction, precisely as we see in these two verses:

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

Matthew 7:13-14, KJV

In contrast to the foolish man in Jesus' Parable who arrived without the proper wedding attire, and who deceived himself into believing that he could talk his way into the marriage feast based on his own self-righteousness, the Bride who is mentioned in the Book of Revelation is indeed clothed in her glistening Garment of Righteousness, her clean, white linen, because she has accepted her husband-to-be, Jesus Christ, and her sins are covered by Him.

To reiterate, we have all been called -- or invited -- but if we expect to really gain entrance into the wonderful Kingdom of Heaven, if we actually expect to be chosen by the King, we must embrace Christ as our Bridegroom and spiritual husband. Have you done so? It is not too late if you are reading this message. Please repent of your pride and unbelief, and accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior today. By so doing, you will likewise be cleansed of your sins through the Blood of Christ, and you will be symbolically clothed in your Garment of Righteousness, so that you will be able to gain admittance to the Kingdom of God without hinderance. He is calling out to you even now. Now is your time. Tomorrow may be too late. Please consider the following verses:

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Romans 13:11, KJV

"(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.)"

2 Corinthians 6:2, KJV

"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

James 4:14, KJV

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"

Hebrews 9:27, KJV

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?"

Luke 12:20, KJV

With these verses I will bring this article to a close. I trust that you have enjoyed it, learned something from it, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Google+ or any other social network, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thank you so very much! May God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this article, or which are related to this article, and which are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server:

All Are Given a Chance, But . . .

Do You Want Love and Light, or Rod and Wrath?

Free Will and Personal Choice

Going Down the Highway of Life

Is the Message of Salvation Meant for All Men?

Message to the World

Once Upon a Time: A True Story

Salvation is Free Through Jesus Christ

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