

THE PARABLE OF THE



WEDDING BANQUET

MATTHEW 22 1-14

This parable is very hard to interpret, but there are three simple aspects to this story which are important to its interpretation.

First, this isn't just any banquet. It's the royal wedding banquet of the king's son. Who in their right mind would refuse such an imperial invitation. Well, many in this story did refuse.

Second, Matthew combines a second story about a badly dressed guest, so you get two stories for the price of one.

Third, both parables end badly.

So to paraphrase this parable - 'There was once a king who prepared a royal banquet for his son's wedding. After the preparations were made, he sent out the invitations. Some people refused to come. Others paid no attention. Another group even killed the king's messengers.

So the king sent out a second round of messengers, and a B-list of guests accept the

kings invitation. So at long last the guest hall was full.

But one guest stood out like a sore thumb. He was a party crasher who dressed like a slob - to the wedding party of the king's son! In the royal palace! What was he thinking?

I was once invited to Downing Street, I know I would not have dared to turn up in a dirty tee shirt.

The people who refused the king's invitation didn't deserve to come and the guest who turned up dressed inappropriately didn't deserve to stay.

In the story there were bad endings - those who refused the invitation the king sent his army and burned the city in which they lived. The one who

dressed inappropriately was tied hand and foot, and thrown outside into the darkness.

This story is meant shock us into our spiritual senses.

Everyone, without exception, has received a free invitation to the kingdom of God. But some refuse God's generosity. Other people try to enter the kingdom of God on their own terms and conditions. They want to write their own rule book and you cannot bend reality to your own wishes.

God's generosity is free for all, but it doesn't come cheap. It asks for everything. *"A merchant sold everything to buy the pearl of great price. The rich young ruler refused Jesus' invitation and went away sad."*

And so, said Jesus, in a rather melancholy conclusion, “many are invited, but few are chosen.”

