

Parable of the Feast

“16 Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ 18 But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ 19 And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ 20 Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ 21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ 22 And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ 23 Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.” (Luke 14:16-24)

16 “Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great supper”

“That is, Jesus, as the Syriac, Persic, and Ethiopic versions express it; a certain man made a great supper: by which is meant not the Lord's supper, which was not as yet instituted; nor the supper of the Lamb, which will be at the end of the world; but the Gospel dispensation, which was now taking place, and the provisions of it in the word and ordinances: and which is called a "supper"; because made in the end of the world, in the last days.”

16 “And invited many.”

“This first bidding more especially respects the Jews, who are said to be "many", in reference to the promise made to Abraham, that his seed should be as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand of the sea.”

17 “and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.”

“This is either John the Baptist, the harbinger and forerunner of Christ, who declared that the kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, was at hand; and exhorted the people to believe in Christ that should come after him; or Christ himself, who is God's servant as man, of his choosing and appointing, and whom he sent in the fullness of time in the form of a servant, as the minister of the circumcision, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to call sinners to repentance.”

“18 But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.”

“These were the principal men among the Jews, the Pharisees and rulers among the people; who were rich and covetous, worldly men; seeking their own worldly advantage more than their spiritual and eternal welfare, or the interest of God and religion.”

“19 And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.”

“This man represents also the carnal and worldly Jews, who preferred temporal things before spiritual.”

“20 Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.”

“This man is more rustic and rude than the former; he does not so much as desire to be excused; and represents such who are fond of their sensual lusts and pleasures, and are resolved to indulge them, and will not be taken off from them by any means whatever.”

“21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.”

“In short, under these characters are represented natural and unconverted men, and the most vile, profligate, and abandoned of them; which are sometimes under the power of divine grace accompanying the ministration of the Gospel brought to Christ, and into his church. So the "blind and the lame", in 2Sa 5:6 are by the Targum on the place, explained of, "sinners and wicked persons".

“22 And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.”

“Still there is room for the Gentiles, after God's elect, among the Jews, for that time were gathered in: there was room provided for them in the heart and love of God from everlasting, and in electing grace; in the suretyship engagements of Christ, in the covenant of his grace; and they had a place in the redeeming grace of Christ, in time; and in the last commission he gave to his disciples; and there was now room for them in the church of God; and will be in the new Jerusalem, and in the heavenly glory.”

23 Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

“He (Jesus) commanded his apostles to turn from them to the Gentiles; see Ac 13:45, go out into the highways and hedges: the Persic version adds, "of the vineyards"; see 1Ch 4:23 and may in general design the mean, base, vile, and sinful state of the Gentiles; who might be said to be "in the highways", because they were without the commonwealth and church of the Jews; were not admitted to civil conversation, nor to religious worship with them; and were left to walk on in their own ways, of their own devising and choosing, in which they delighted: they were not in God's highway, which is a way of holiness, Isa 35:8 but in their own highways; either following the various sects of the philosophers, which were vain and foolish; or going into different practices of idolatry, and walking in very sinful and vicious courses; and so were in the broad road and highway to destruction: and their being in, and under "the hedges", may denote their state of separation from God; being without him, alienated from the life of him, and afar off from him; being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, Eph 2:12 they were not in the gardens and enclosures, but under the hedges: and compel them to come in; to the house of God, and church of Christ; to come and hear the word, and quit their former course of living, and attend the word and worship of God; and upon an evidence of the truth of grace upon their souls, to come into a Gospel church state, and partake of all privileges and ordinances in it; to which they are to be compelled, not by outward force, but by forcible words, by powerful arguments, and by the strength of persuasion; which expresses the nature of the Gospel ministry.”

24 For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.”

“none of those men that were bidden: the impenitent and unbelieving Jews, the Scribes, and Pharisees, and the greater part of the nation; who first had the Gospel published to them, who are the many that were called, though few were chosen, and therefore came not; nor did, nor shall taste of my supper: nor had they so much as a superficial knowledge of the Gospel, of the truths, blessings, promises, and ordinances of it; being given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and from whom, in a little while, the Gospel was wholly taken; and is not yet afforded to them as a body; nor will till the latter day, when the veil shall be taken away, and they shall turn to the Lord, and all Israel shall be saved; but as for the first disbelievers and rejecters of Christ among the Jews, they died in their sins, and perished eternally.”