

The Fourth Beatitude In Revelation

The fourth "blessed" statement alludes to the feasts celebrating God and His Redeemer. Each feast commanded in the Old Testament, from the Passover to Tabernacles, commemorated God's grace and saving power. The wedding feast celebrated the union of two different people, one man and one woman, into one new family. The Wedding Feast of the Lamb views the union of a physical people to their spiritual savior; as a betrothed bride being joined to her husband, becoming one body.

"Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' "And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God.'" (Revelation 19:9).

The words "those who are called" is the same single word used in The Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14). Verse 3 says, "... call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come." Notice that in both verses, the call was made in the past, as the betrothal was first announced. When the time for the bridegroom to receive his bride and take her to his house came, the feast was made ready and the invited guests told to come.

This parable is an analogy of the difference between those called and those chosen to attend the feast. Israel had been told of Messiah and called to wait, watch, and be ready for His arrival. When He came, they were not prepared to accept Him. But the Gentiles who had not been prepared for His coming, came as soon as they learned of Him.

A similar parable is found in Luke, when a man said "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" (Luke 14:15) In response to him, Jesus said, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many..." In each case, Jesus used the everyday experience of the people to show a sequence of events. Those in positions of power down to the ordinary folks identified a date and time for a dinner or feast and sent a formal notice to those invited. To see this in action, study the feasts in the book of Esther and note the advanced notice, so those invited could secure proper dress and prepare themselves to be in the presence of the host. For a king or queen to invite someone, the invitation was to be regarded as a command. To refuse could be considered treason and punished by death.

If the people who were invited to attend a feast given by the ruler of an earthly monarchy were condemned if they refused to attend, what will be the end of those who detest and ignore the invitation of the King of Kings and His Father?

The marriage feast of the Lamb is in the Kingdom of God, and the invitation is therefore a command of the King to attend. The invitation has been given by the call of the gospel. [Study the context of Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 1:16-17; Romans 10:16-17].

In Matthew 8:9-12, Jesus was speaking to those following Him when a Roman Centurion approached begging for the healing of his son. The Centurion believed and understood the authority which Jesus wielded and said as much. Notice what Jesus said to His followers; "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Furthermore, referring to the laborers in the vineyard, Jesus said, "For many are called, but few chosen" (Matthew 20:16).

The final clause of Revelation 19:9 reads, "These are true words of God." Indeed, these, as are all scripture, the truth which God has delivered to humanity (John 17:17). But this book of Revelation is written in the apocalyptic style of literature. Therefore, as Henry Barclay Swete, a late 19th early 20th-century writer reminds us: "... one should bear in mind that apocalyptic symbolism has its methods and laws of interpretation, and by these, the student must be guided." In short, the symbolism of Revelation must be understood in light of history and truths revealed in scripture. Any interpretation made regarding these symbols must agree with all clearly stated facts. Therefore, the Marriage Feast of the Lamb must concur with all customs revealed in both the Old and New Testaments. Many in the religious world today try to force new meanings here to back up their false doctrines.

Are you ready for the bridegroom to come? Are you part of the bride, the church, prepared for the bridegroom? Let us help you prepare if you are not ready.