

Parable of the Great Dinner

Key Verse: “*The lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.*”
—*Luke 14:23*

Selected Scripture:
Luke 14:16-24

servant out again with the commission to invite others to the feast. Having done this, the servant returned and said, “Sir I have done what thou didst command, and yet there is room.”—vss. 22,23, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

The feast described by Jesus in this parable denotes the spiritual feast of the present Gospel Age. It is not for all people, because “many are called,” or invited, but “few are chosen.” That is, few accept the terms of God’s call and fully dedicate their life to do his will, and to follow in Jesus’ footsteps of sacrifice and service. Thus, they withdraw themselves from feasting at the Lord’s spiritual table. (Matt. 22:14) Those first invited to this spiritual feast were the Jewish nation and, in particular, their religious leaders—those who sat in “Moses’ seat.” (Matt. 23:2) However,

IN THIS PARABLE OF

Jesus, a householder had prepared a great feast and invited many people to partake of the bounties which he had so graciously provided. Once the feast was ready, he sent his servant to gather the guests. However, all who had been invited found some excuse to cancel their attendance. (Luke 14:16-20) When the servant related this to his master, he became angry, and sent his

instead of accepting Jesus' call to come out from Moses into Christ, the greater prophet than Moses, we are told that the religious leaders "derided him," and the nation as a whole rejected him.—Luke 16:14; 20:17; Isa. 53:3

In our Key Verse, the servant of the parable is told to go out and "compel" those whom he would call from the "highways and hedges" to come to his lord's feast. The word translated "compel" more accurately means to constrain, entreat, or urge. The Lord never compels, with the thought of forcing the acceptance of his favors. However, he does constrain by his love, his grace, and the promises held out to those who love righteousness. (II Cor. 5:14,15) It was God's will that his spiritual "house may be filled." Thus, after giving the Jews sufficient opportunity, the Lord's apostles were commissioned to turn to the Gentiles, beginning with the conversion of Cornelius. Since that time the invitation to the Gospel feast has been open to all without distinction. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, ... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."—Gal. 3:28

The spiritual table spread before us when we accept God's invitation is bountiful. There is food to satisfy every spiritual longing and hunger, more than we can ask or think. It is a feast of joys and pleasures in the presence of the Lord, and in the outworking of his plan to bless all mankind. To come to this feast involves leaving worldly hopes, aims and pursuits. In proportion as earthly things are abandoned, and according to our hunger for righteousness, we may feast heartily. (Ps. 147:14; Matt. 5:6) "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."—Ps. 34:8

God, in his foreknowledge, has determined a fixed number to constitute the church of Christ, those whose names will be "written in heaven." (Rev. 7:4; Luke 10:20) When the number of the elect is complete, the Lord's spiritual house will at last be filled. Then the remainder of mankind shall be uplifted and blessed, that they might fill God's earthly house. ■