

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #205

Jesus' Ministry in Perea Jesus' Parable of the Great Banquet Luke 14.15-24

15 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

16 Jesus replied: *"A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come now, for everything is ready.'*

18 "But they all alike began making excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. I beg you, please release me from this invitation.'

19 "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. I beg you, please release me from this invitation.'

20 "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

21 "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'I command you to go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

22 "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

23 "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	In the Home of a Pharisee, in Perea
Timeline	January or February (Months 36 & 37)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VII: Jesus' Ministry in Perea
	A. Jesus' Ministers Throughout Perea
Title	4. Jesus' Parable of the Great Banquet

COMMENT:

Jesus' ministry at a Pharisee's dinner party in Perea (LK 14.1-24) ended with another parable. Jesus had spoken of the final resurrection at the conclusion of his last comment. One of those present replied: "Blessed is the person who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God." Jesus' parable addressed these words.

The notion of life in heaven in eternity being like an ongoing, great banquet feast was common in Jewish thought. Jesus used this idea consistently in his own parables, such as this one. In addition, the New Testament specifies that the "banquet" is actually the marriage feast of Jesus himself, with his bride, the church.

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The feast or banquet illustration is built upon two key concepts. God is the one who provides and prepares everything necessary for the feast. Only a wealthy person in Jesus' day could host such a feast. Everything had to be carefully prepared in advance. Notice that when the host called his guests he said: **"Everything is ready."** God invites each of us to experience a salvation that HE has totally prepared beforehand—everything is ready and waiting for us to receive by faith.

The only thing necessary to enjoy the banquet was to receive an invitation. The host issued the invitations in advance, so that when the preparations were completed the guests would be ready to come and dine with him. Without an invitation it was not possible to attend the feast. This invitation is the gospel promise of Jesus to every person in the world.

The problem came when the invited guests rejected the summons to the feast. Each of them made excuses that were covering up their real reasons for not attending. The grammatical form of their excuses made it clear that their minds were made up, and they would never repent and attend the feast later. Their rejection was final.

The host was livid with his so-called "friends." He ordered his servants to go out and bring in anybody who was willing to attend the feast, who would normally never be invited to such a gala event. The lame, blind, poor—it did not matter—the invitation was now open to any body who chose to believe and receive it. The host wanted a full house so that all his preparation was not in vain. The banquet was a roaring success in the end.

Eternal salvation in the kingdom is a free gift, predicated upon God's complete preparation of everything in advance. The only requirement is to believe the invitation at face value, and therefore decide to respond. That is the nature of eternal life in the kingdom. This means that only those who choose to reject the invitation do not attend.

Jesus had been invited to a Pharisee's banquet. He graciously accepted the invitation and attended. He did so to offer his Father's invitation to the eternal kingdom feast to those very Pharisees. While piously talking about the "blessing" of joining the kingdom feast, those Pharisees were actually rejecting their invitations with meaningless excuses. They had made up their minds already.

On a larger scale, the entire nation was also rejecting God's invitation to them in Jesus. As a result, the good news would soon go out to the entire Gentile world, who would joyfully believe the invitation, and choose to attend the feast in great droves. The Father's house will be filled with those who respond to his gracious invitation. This parable described the situation in the room in which Jesus first spoke it, and it was also a prophecy of what was to come.

APPLICATION:

God has prepared everything for us already in his Son. Life in the kingdom is a feast of HIS riches lavished impartially on every person who believes and chooses to respond. Everything depends upon our faith response to Jesus.

Excuses are therefore deadly enemies of God's fulness. We use them to cover up our rejection of his will for us. They are a lethal form of self-deception.

*Is there an excuse you are currently hiding your disobedience behind?
When will you respond to God's invitation to you? How will you do that?*