



Intruders in God's Kingdom

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Dear friends,

But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:11-14). So, the King of the Kingdom of heaven calls someone 'Friend' which is in Greek 'het-ah'-ee-ros' (a comrade, mate, partner, in kindly address, friend, (my good friend)) and cast him into outer darkness. Hmmm, that's not where friends are for, this needs further investigation.

The wedding feast (Matthew 22:1-14).

First this wedding feast, as meant here, can't be on the new earth, for there will be no intruders anymore on the new earth. Well, this must be correct, for the place of punishment, 'outer darkness' mentioned here is in Greek the Hades and not the final lake of fire as mentioned in Revelation 21:8. So both happenings (wedding feast and the outer darkness) are before Jesus second coming, on this side of life.

But why called Jesus this man 'Friend'? Please have a look at Jesus question: Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment? So, the friendship with the King (Jesus) is fixed, however he is missing the wedding garment. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints (Revelation 19:8). You are making your own wedding garment by doing righteous acts. Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21). Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead (James 2:17).

This guest got saved, his salvation is secure, which is 100% by grace, that's why Jesus calls him friend. However to enjoy already the privileges on this side of life, he has to prove his faith by works. No works, no feast on this side, however for our salvation our works don't count, that's only grace. The Kingdom of heaven, wedding party etcetera as mentioned in the scripture is almost always before Jesus second coming, the whole New Testament period, on this side of life! Please allow me to explain that with next story out of the scripture.

Jesus counsels the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-22).

"Someone asked Jesus: What good deed must I do to have eternal life? Jesus answered this question: keep the commandments. Which ones? the man asked. Jesus replied: You must ... I've obeyed all these commandments, the young man replied. What else must I do? Jesus told him: If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus said to his disciples, I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 19:16-23)". This man is asking two different questions and is receiving two different answers.

The first question is about salvation: What must I do to have eternal life? Because this man was living before the victory of Jesus at the mighty cross, the law and the prophets were still applicable, and the answer was: Keep the commandments. The answer for today is: Believe in Me and you will have eternal life as written: "God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it (Ephesians 2:8-9)". The first question is answered, this man has fulfilled the conditions, and has eternal life (his salvation is secure), which is only based on believe, 100% grace and not based on one single work from our side.

The second question is another one in addition: What else must I do? The answer is: If you want to be perfect, ... This question is not about salvation at all. Jesus is not judging this man regarding his decision but only suggesting him how to be perfect in addition to his salvation. As a result the consequences "it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven" are also not about salvation, but in relation to the rich man's own decision not to sell all his possessions. There is a price to pay to join the wedding party, already on this side of life!

No works, no party on this side! However you will be saved "as through the fire" as written: If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:15). In that case you will miss the benefits of the Kingdom of Heaven in this very life like the first generation Israelites who never reached the promised land in their very lives, however never exclude them from the new heaven and earth! They are God's chosen people, his children, however they missed the party on this side because of their own choices: The people refused to enter the pleasant land, for they wouldn't believe his promise to care for them (Psalm 106:24). This is also applicable for the wise and foolish virgins in Matthew 25. Never exclude the five foolish virgins from eternal life on the new earth! They were excluded from the Kingdom, on this side of life! With their works they never could have reached their salvation! It's only Jesus! Thank you Lord that my salvation is not depending on any work from my side, I would have missed it!

The Kingdom and its stages.

The kingdom of God has come upon us with Jesus first coming (Matthew 12:28). The Kingdom of God (Jesus) during the whole New Testament period is spiritual and not of this world (John 18:36). Jesus became King with His first coming as written: He would raise up the Christ to sit on the throne of David (Acts 2:29-34), to fulfill the prophecy of the prophet Zechariah: Tell the daughter of Zion, behold, your King is coming to you (Matthew 21:5). With Jesus second coming He will hand over the spiritual Kingdom to the Father, which implicates the start of the visible Kingdom in its full glory (1 Corinthians 15:24). Ephesians 5:5 is also speaking of those two different Kingdoms: You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

Some more equal examples which are before Jesus second coming:

- To all who are thirsty (Greek = painfully suffer) I will give freely from the springs of the water of life (Revelation 21:6). Painfully suffer is not something from the new earth and the new heaven. We won't suffer there, or being thirsty and we don't need life giving water anymore. So, this must be now.
- The nations (Greek = foreign nations not worshipping the true God, pagans) will walk in its light (Greek = to make one's way, to regulate one's life, to make due use of opportunities) (Revelation 21:24). This is for sure something for now, for on the new heaven and earth we don't have to be a light (to help them to make progress) for others (not worshipping the true God) to make progress. On the new heaven and earth it will be too late to seek salvation.
- On each side of the river grew a tree (Greek = a cross, a log or timber with holes in which the feet, hands, neck of prisoners were inserted and fastened with thongs) of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations (Greek = pagans) (Revelation 22:2). Well, the tree (of life) is the cross of Christ or Jesus Himself. The leaves of this tree are medicine to heal the nations (pagans). This is something for now and not for the new heaven and earth. Nothing has to be healed on the new heaven and earth.
- Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life. Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshippers, and all who love to live a lie (Revelation 22:14-15). If you was your robe, in the blood of Christ (born again), you have access to the tree of life (Garden of Eden)

again, which is logical for Jesus is the Tree. Cool he! This "outside the city are the sinners" is of course for now, they are outside the (spiritual) Kingdom (as the friend on the wedding party was placed outside the Kingdom in the Hades), for on the new heaven and earth all sin and everything that belongs to it, will be banned out.

- Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever! ¹⁷ We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned (Revelation 11:15, 17). John is speaking about this Kingdom on this side of life for he is stating: The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ and at the same time speaking about Christ who is to come! This must be before Jesus second coming.

It's party time!!

'Praise the Lord! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honor to Him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself. She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear. For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God's holy people' (Revelation 19:6-8). 'The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!' (Matthew 22:4).

God's promise of entering His rest still stands, so we ought to tremble with fear that some of you might fail to experience it. We know it is ready and the time for entering His rest, is today (Hebrews 4).

Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness' (Exodus 5:1). We will have a party, within the spiritual Kingdom of God, in occupied territory, called the earth. Halleluja!

Yours in His service,

Kees

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