

MATTHEW 22:1 – 14

THE REPLACEMENTS

In our modern world of sound bytes, snippets, bumper sticker politics and theology, we often don't take the time to think through what it is we are hearing, saying or believing. Much of what we believe or think we believe is ingrained in us from a young age. In some cases that is fine. We are to be taught these things from a young age, but that doesn't mean what we believe is right. Our standard is the Word of God – not dogma or opinion. But even if the things given to us by God can be hijacked through human corruption. That is why we are to meditate on the scriptures day and night, praying that we can rightly divide the truth.

We are at a point now in the life of Jesus, as we go through Matthew that things are coming to a head. Jesus has been in the rural area of the Galilee for the majority of His ministry. There he gathered a following of people who weren't seen to be worthy of salvation. They were seen to be too ignorant, too crass, too dirty and in some ways not even of the right stock, largely due to their geographic location and history. But Jesus went to them first and lived among them. And in that venue He taught them what it meant to be a child of God and enter the Kingdom of God. Contrary to what they had always been told, these people – the great unwashed crowd, had been accepted into the kingdom due to their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. They became a part of a new and holy nation. Their humility allowed them to hear what was said and the Spirit of God did the rest.

But now, just days before his death, Jesus is confronting and being confronted by the religious aristocracy. He has been challenged as where He got His authority to say the things He said. He has been challenged as to what the crowd who followed him to Jerusalem from "Hickville" has said about Him being the Messiah. Now things have come to a head and Jesus is pulling no punches on those who won't hear His message due to their arrogance and tradition. Those people are about to bring judgment on themselves by rejecting the Messiah who has been spoken of in the scriptures they hold so dear.

I want to backtrack a little to the first parables Jesus spoke in the Temple courts because we are actually in the middle of one long narrative (conversation) and I don't want us to miss the theme not do I want us to miss how the parables crescendo/ build into a proclamation of judgment.

Mt. 21:23

23 Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the

people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"

24 But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: 25 The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?"

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet." 27 So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know."

And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. The Parable of the Two Sons

28 "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' 29 He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. 30 Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?"

They said to Him, "The first."

Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.

- God is the man with the sons and the vineyard. Isaiah 5 tells us that Israel, as a nation is the vineyard. The first son agreed at first but didn't go to work – repented and then went to work. The second said he would go to work but didn't. The work is tending the vineyard in order to produce fruit.
- The elders answered the riddle correctly but unknowingly condemned themselves for their unbelief.
- Tax collectors, harlots, et al. believed.
- But even when they saw the fruit, the elders refused to believe. They wanted conformity to their own ideas rather than the fruit of people actually growing into a relationship with God in faith. They (the elders of Israel) had been replaced.

33 "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. 34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' 39

So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"

41 They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

'The stone which the builders rejected

Has become the chief cornerstone.

This was the Lord's doing,

And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

- God is the landowner. The vinedressers, the ones charged with tending the vineyard – Israel, and producing fruit, are the religious aristocracy to whom Jesus is presently speaking.
- The servants of the landowner are the prophets. The son is Jesus.
- Once again the elders answer the riddle, condemning themselves.
- Jesus quotes a Messianic Psalm that not only places him as the cornerstone but in other verses confirms what the crowds were saying as he entered Jerusalem. The Word of God and their own answer have shown them to be guilty. Their tradition and dead, dry religious works have come up short. There is no faith in the identity of the Messiah or His work.
- Taken from you and given to a new **nation – Gr. Ethnos – race, tribe, people**
- But this new nation is not defined by any genetics, heritage, ethnic identity, or geographical landmass. It is defined in a different way, as we shall see shortly.

Mt. 21:45,46

45 Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

The confrontation continues.

Chapter 22

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

1 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4 Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.” ’ 5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6 And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. 7 But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ 10 So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 “But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. 13 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.’ 14 “For many are called, but few are chosen.”

- God is the king. Those who were invited are first of all the religious establishment and secondly Israel, up to that point in History.
- Notice that those invited neglected to RSVP. So the king sent out His servants to ask them personally to come to the wedding but they weren't willing to come. So He sent more servants telling those invited of all the food but they mocked the servants, and/ or were indifferent, going back to their lives. They had better things to do. They even beat and killed some of the servants. I guess they were tired of hearing about the wedding.

7 But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

- That verse, my friends speaks, of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple that will come 40 years later.

8 Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ 10 So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

- The king then told His servants to go get anyone who wanted to come, both BAD AND GOOD and bring him or her to the wedding. Those who

were invited were not worthy. Why? Because they didn't want to come.

- Those who were originally invited had been replaced. By whom? The unwashed crowd.

11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 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.'

14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

- There was an impostor at the wedding feast. He didn't have the proper wedding garment. Wedding garments in those were clean, white robes and tunics.

Rev. 19: 6-9

6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 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.

9 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."

Do you see the linen imagery? Those who are at the wedding feast of the Lamb of God are clothed white linen. They are the children of God. Their wedding garments are the righteousness that has been imputed/ given to them. It is the righteousness of Jesus – the perfect sacrifice. But the linens are also characterized as the righteous acts of the saints. It is a symbol of their fruits. They didn't get to the marriage supper by their works, but their faith in the righteousness of Jesus moved them to produce fruit while on earth.

11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 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.'

This man thought himself worthy, but he had no garments. He brought His own righteousness and thusly wasn't worthy. Hell was his reward.

- God's plan for the nations. The new nation.

- **14 “For many are called, but few are chosen.”**
- Called = invited. Chosen, as we have seen are those who responded to the invitation, fell on that rock, which is Christ and were broken from their own feelings of works-based righteousness and received their wedding garments.
- We are the replacements. We are that new nation, not defined by heritage, race, or geographical location. We all come from that great un-washed crowd that wasn't seen to be worthy. Anyone, Jew or Gentile alike who falls on Jesus will be at the wedding feast. Will you be there?