

Luke 14:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

Analysis

Jesus responds with a parable: 'Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many.' The parable begins innocuously—'a certain man' (ἄνθρωπός τις, anthrōpos tis) 'made a great supper' (ἐποίησεν δεῖπνον μέγα, epoīesen deipnon mega) 'and bade many' (καὶ ἐκάλεσεν πολλούς, kai ekalesen polloous, invited many). This pictures God's gracious invitation to enter His kingdom. The 'great supper' represents salvation's blessings—intimate fellowship with God, eternal life, joy. That he 'bade many' shows the invitation's wide scope—God desires all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9). The parable will reveal that invitation alone doesn't save; accepting the invitation is required.

Historical Context

In ancient culture, wealthy hosts sent initial invitations well in advance, then summoned guests when the feast was ready (as in Esther 6:14). This two-stage invitation process forms the parable's background. God's initial invitation came through the Old Testament prophets; Jesus represents the final summons—the kingdom is at hand, the feast is ready. Israel's rejection of Jesus despite centuries of prophetic preparation fulfills the parable's warning. The pattern continues—God invites all through gospel proclamation, but many refuse. The parable teaches that hearing the gospel without responding in faith brings greater condemnation than never hearing at all.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the great supper illustrate salvation as God's gracious initiative rather than human achievement?
2. What does the two-stage invitation (advance notice, then final summons) teach about progressive revelation and gospel urgency?
3. In what ways does this parable challenge both presumption (assuming participation) and despair (assuming exclusion)?

Interlinear Text

ο	δὲ	εἶπεν	αὐτῷ	Ἄνθρωπός	τις	ἐποίησεν	δεῖπνον
G3588	Then	said he	unto him	man	A certain	made	supper
G1161		G2036	G846	G444	G5100	G4160	G1173
μέγα	καὶ	ἐκάλεσεν	πολλούς				
a great	and	bade	many				
G3173		G2532	G2564				
				G4183			

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 22:17 (Parallel theme): And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Revelation 3:20 (Parallel theme): Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

