

Matthew 22:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For many are called, but few are chosen.

Analysis

For many are called, but few are chosen (πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσὶν κλητοὶ ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί)—This concluding maxim summarizes the parable's theology. Polloi (many) receive the klētoi (calling/invitation)—the gospel goes to all. But oligoi (few) are eklektoi (chosen/elect)—not all who hear respond savingly. This isn't a contradiction but a distinction between the universal call and effectual election.

The 'called' includes both groups who refused (vv. 3-6) and those who came (v. 10). The 'chosen' are those who both respond to the call and are clothed in the wedding garment (v. 11-12). This echoes Jesus's teaching on the narrow gate (7:13-14): 'Wide is the gate...and many go in...narrow is the gate...and few find it.' The sobering arithmetic—many called, few chosen—should drive us to examine ourselves (2 Corinthians 13:5) and urgently proclaim the gospel.

Historical Context

This statement reflects the historical reality of Israel's response: the entire nation was 'called' through the prophets and Jesus's ministry, but only a remnant believed (Romans 9:27-29; 11:5). The pattern continues in church history—many hear, few genuinely believe unto salvation. The Reformers saw this verse as central to understanding election and effectual calling.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do you reconcile God's universal invitation ('many called') with particular election ('few chosen')—what is the relationship between calling and choosing?
2. What should the 'few are chosen' reality produce in you—presumption, despair, or urgency in evangelism and self-examination?
3. How does this verse address the question 'Are you among the chosen?'—what is the evidence of true election according to this parable?

Interlinear Text

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| πολλοὶ | γάρ | εἰσιν | κλητοὶ | ὀλίγοι | δὲ | ἐκλεκτοί |
| many | For | are | called | few | but | are chosen |
| G4183 | G1063 | G1526 | G2822 | G3641 | G1161 | G1588 |

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 1:10 (Parallel theme): Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

Revelation 17:14 (Parallel theme): These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

Matthew 20:16 (Parallel theme): So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Matthew 24:22 (Parallel theme): And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

