

Matthew 22:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

Analysis

Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage (πάλιν ἀπέστειλεν ἄλλους δούλους λέγων· εἶπατε τοῖς κεκλημένοις· ἰδοὺ τὸ ἄριστόν μου ἡτοίμακα)—The second group of doulous (servants) likely represents the apostles and early Christian witnesses. The ariston (dinner/banquet) is hētoimaka (perfectly prepared)—all the sacrificial work is complete.

My oxen and my fatlings are killed points to the ultimate sacrifice: Christ's atoning death. In Jewish sacrificial terminology, the feast is ready because the Lamb has been slain. The urgency of panta hetoima ('all things ready') echoes throughout the New Testament: 'Now is the day of salvation' (2 Cor 6:2). There is nothing left to prepare—only to accept or reject.

Historical Context

The slaughter of oxen and fattened calves signified an extravagant feast. In ancient Palestine, meat was rarely eaten except at festivals. A royal wedding with multiple animals slaughtered indicated a feast of unprecedented abundance. The announcement 'all things are ready' was the customary final summons.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does it mean that Christ's sacrifice made 'all things ready'—what is left for you to add or accomplish?
2. How does the image of abundant provision ('oxen and fatlings') challenge a minimalist view of God's grace?
3. Why does God send 'other servants' with the same message—what does repetition reveal about divine mercy?

Interlinear Text

πάλιν	ἀπέστειλεν	ἄλλους	δούλους	λέγων,	Εἶπατε	τοῖς	
Again	he sent forth	other	servants	saying	Tell	G3588	
G3825	G649	G243	G1401	G3004	G2036		
κεκλημένοις	Ἴδού,	τὸ	ἄριστόν	μου	ἡτοίμασα,	οἱ	
them which are bidden	Behold	G3588	dinner	my	I have prepared	G3588	
G2564	G2400		G712	G3450	G2090		
ταῦροί	μου	καὶ	τὰ	σιτιστὰ	τεθυμένα	καὶ	πάντα
oxen	my	and	G3588	my fatlings	are killed	and	all things
G5022	G3450	G2532		G4619	G2380	G2532	G3956
ἔτοιμα·	δεῦτε	εἰς	τοὺς	γάμους			
are ready	come	unto	G3588	the marriage			
G2092	G1205	G1519		G1062			

Additional Cross-References

Acts 13:46 (Parallel theme): Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Matthew 21:36 (Parallel theme): Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.

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