

**MISCELLANEOUS
BIBLICAL STUDIES**

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

**A NEW INTERPRETATION OF
JESUS' PARABLE OF THE
WEDDING BANQUET**

Thomas F. McDaniel, Ph.D.

©

2010

All Rights Reserved

XVIII

A NEW INTERPRETATION OF JESUS' PARABLE OF THE WEDDING BANQUET

Matthew 22:1–14*

*And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a **marriage feast** (γάμος) for his son, 3 and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the **marriage feast** (γάμος); but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.’ 5 But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. 7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, ‘The **wedding** (γάμος) is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the **marriage feast** (γάμος) as many as you find.’ 10 And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the **wedding hall** (γάμος) was filled with guests. 11 But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no **wedding garment** (ἔνδυμα γάμου). 12 and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a **wedding garment** (ἔνδυμα γάμου)?’ And he was **silent** (ἔφωθή). 13 Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.’ 14 **Indeed many have been invited, but few have been chosen.**”*

* The focus of this study is on the words highlighted in **bold italic**.

This *Parable of the Wedding Banquet* has been considered by many to be quite a complex narrative. Craig Blomberg (1990: 152)¹ summarized the major problems some scholars find with this parable.

The four main objections to seeing Matthew 22:1–14 as a coherent unity are the following: (1) The guests' action and king's response seem extraordinarily violent for the context of invitations to a wedding feast. (2) The destruction and burning of the city read like a "prophecy after the event" of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. (3) Rejecting a man who appears without a wedding garment makes no sense if he has just been pulled off the street as a last-minute replacement; he could hardly be expected to be dressed for the occasion. (4) Verse 14 is much too general to be the point of the detailed narrative which precedes it. .

. .

But for Blomberg the parable is not as complex and some scholars make it. He concluded,

Given that Matthew 22:1–14 can stand on its own as a united whole The three main points which derive from this structure follow: (1) *God invites many people of different kinds into his kingdom;* (2) *overt rejection of God's invitation leads to eventual retribution;* and (3) *failure to prepare adequately even when apparently accepted by God proves no less culpable or liable to eternal punishment.* . . . The first group of guests stands for the Jews who are hostile to Jesus and the second group symbolizes the would-be disciples who fail to "count the cost" is perfectly intelligible and consistent with the setting Matthew gives of Jesus' teaching in the temple during the last week of his life.

Richard Bauckham (1996: 482)² noted how the parable in

Matt 22:1–14 has suffered from misinterpretations:

The Matthean parable of the royal wedding feast has suffered both from its interpreters' preoccupation with its relationship with another parable (Luke 14:16–24), which is held to have preserved more faithfully the original parable on which both are based, and from their failure to appreciate the Matthean parable's own narrative integrity. . . . It is often explained as a conflation of two parables (vv. 3–10 and vv. 11–14, with v. 2 perhaps originally the introduction to the second parable.

In disagreement with those who argued for a conflation of two parables, Bauckham argued for the narrative integrity of the parable, noting the “political resonances” in the parable and lamenting the fact that “few interpreters have done justice to the political nature of the story.”

By way of contrast, Daniel C. Olson (2005: 453)³ confessed, “I have simply accepted the common view that the Gospel of Matthew was written in Greek by a Jewish Christian in the latter third of the first century C.E.” From this perspective Olson concluded,

Matthew's parable of the Great Feast is a complex composition. In Matthew's hands, exegetical readings of Zephaniah [1:9–10] and *I Enoch* [45:3–6; 51:3–5; 62:1–14] were combined with a traditional parable of Jesus to create a new form of this parable, a king-*mashal* functioning as a midrash on Zephaniah/*I Enoch*. The fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. apparently struck Matthew and his community as fulfillment of Zephaniah's oracle, . . . I still feel that the most economical accounting of the evidence is to see in Matt 22:7 an *ex eventu* reference to the events of 70 CE., as most critics do.

Disagreeing with Olson, I will now make the case that this parable is not at all complex once it is recognized that several mistranslations were made when the original Hebrew parable

was written down and subsequently translated into Greek.

Matthew 22:2

Ὁμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ
 βασιλεῖ, ὅστις ἐποίησεν γάμους τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ.

Young (1898)

The reign of the heavens was likened to a man,
 a king, who made marriage-feasts for his son.

McDaniel (2010)

דְּמֻתָּהּ מִלְכוּת הַשָּׁמַיִם לְגֵבֶר מֶלֶךְ
 אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה חֲתָנָה / חֲתָנָה לְבָנוֹ:

The kingdom of the heavens was likened to a lord,
 a king, who made for his son.
 marriage-feasts / a circumcision feast.

The Greek ἀνθρώπῳ “man” is omitted in the NIB, NIV, NAS, NAU, RSV, NRS, DRA, NAB, and NLT, and is translated as “certain” in the KJV, ASV, NKJ, and WEB. But once ἀνθρώπῳ is translated back into Hebrew as גֵּבֶר it can be vocalized as גֵּבֶר “man” or as גִּבִּיר “lord” (Gen 27:29, 37), with the מֶלֶךְ “king” being in apposition. The γάμος “wedding, wedding feast” can be translated back into Hebrew as חֲתָנָה / חֲתָנָה, which can be vocalized as חֲתָנָה “marriage, marriage banquet,” or as חֲתָנָה “circumcision, feast of circumcision.” The noun חֲתָן can mean “the infant fit for circumcision, a circumcised child” as well as “a bridegroom, a son-in-law” (Jastrow, 1903: 514). Castell (1669: 1451) translated this חֲתָן as “*convivium instruxit ob circumcisionem infantis vel nuptiale.*” Lane (1865: 703–704) cited ختن (*hatana*) “he

PARABLE OF THE WEDDING BANQUET 291

circumcised” and ختان (*hitân^{un}*) “circumcision” and “a feast, or banquet, to which people are invited on account of a circumcision . . . or on account of a wedding.”⁴

Given the fact that a *son* is mention in the parable but no mention is made of a *bride* or *bridegroom*, and given the fact that, like the masculine ختان (*hitân^{un}*), the feminine חתנת / חתנה might well designate a feast of circumcision⁵ as well as a wedding banquet, the seven occurrences of γάμος/ γάμους “wedding” in the parable may not reflect what was intended in the original Hebrew source. But whether read as a wedding banquet or as a feast following a son’s circumcision, the teaching found in ths parable remains the same, i.e., many have been invited to the enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but few have accepted God’s invitation.

Chan-Hie Kim (1975: 397, n. 6) in his study of twenty-five Greek invitations on papyri found in Egypt—including wedding invitations—noted that, “The similarities between the papyrus invitation and our own contemporary invitation is striking, but it should not be taken for granted.” As much as there is a continuity from antiquity to modernity when it comes to wedding invitations there is also a continuity when it comes to wedding gifts. Not only was there the נְדָוֶה / נְדָוֶה “gift, dowry” (= Assyrian *nudnu* “dowry”) which went from the bride to the groom (cf. Ezek 16:33), there was also the נְדָוֶה (Arabic مهر [*mahr^{un}*], Syriac مہر [*mahrā*]), “a nuptial present, dowry” which the groom offered the father of the bride (Gen 34:12; Exod 22:17; I Sam 18:25). Following the etiquette of biblical times which has perpetuated itself over the ages—comparable to inviting guests to the wedding banquet—guests gave gifts to the bride and groom, as well as the bride and groom giving gifts to the guests.

In Jesus' parable in Matt 22:1–14, when first spoken in Hebrew, a “wedding gift” was probably mentioned. For that reason a fresh look at the ἔνδυμα “garment” in Matt 22:12 is in order, for behind the “garment” (הַבְּרִיטָה) there may well be a “gift” (הַתְּרומָה).

Many scholars, including T. W. Manson (1935: 226), J. Jeremias (1963: 188) W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann (1971: 270),⁶ have used the parable of Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai (c. 30–90 A.D.) as the key for interpreting Jesus' parable because of its focus on “adorning oneself ” for a wedding.⁷

It is like a king who summoned his servants to a banquet without appointing a time. The wise ones adorned themselves and sat at the door of the palace; they said, ‘Is anything lacking in a royal palace?’ The fools went about their work, saying, ‘Can there be a banquet without preparations?’ Suddenly the king desired the presence of his servants. The wise entered adorned, while the fools entered soiled. The king rejoiced at the wise but was angry with the fools. He said, ‘Those who adorned themselves for the banquet, let them sit, eat and drink. But those who did not adorn themselves for the banquet, let them stand and watch.’

Jesus' parable recorded in the Coptic *Gospel of Thomas* (64) provides additional commentary, although the dinner may not have been a king's wedding banquet where proper attire was expected.

Jesus said, A person was receiving guests. When he had prepared the dinner, he sent his slave to invite the guests. The slave went to the first and said to that one, “My master invites you.” That one said, “Some merchants owe me money; they are coming to me tonight. I have to go and give them instructions. Please excuse me from dinner.” The slave went

PARABLE OF THE WEDDING BANQUET 293

to another and said to that one, “My master has invited you.” That one said to the slave, “I have bought a house, and I have been called away for a day. I shall have no time.” The slave went to another and said to that one, “My master invites you.” That one said to the slave, “My friend is to be married, and I am to arrange the banquet. I shall not be able to come. Please excuse me from dinner.” The slave went to another and said to that one, “My master invites you.” That one said to the slave, “I have bought an estate, and I am going to collect the rent. I shall not be able to come. Please excuse me.” The slave returned and said to his master, “Those whom you invited to dinner have asked to be excused.” The master said to his slave, “Go out on the streets and bring back whomever you find to have dinner.” Buyers and merchants [will] not enter the places of my Father.

The parable in Luke 14:15–24—like the parable in the *Gospel of Thomas*—the one hosting the banquet was just a “man” (ἄνθρωπος / ΡΩΜΕ) not a “king.” Appearing only in the parable in Matt 22:6–7 are there references to the murder of the king’s messengers, the king’s subsequent killing the murderers, and the king’s torching the city of the murderers.

Francis Beare (1981: 432–433) identified the Matthean parable as a full-blown allegory having these incongruities:

- it is hardly conceivable that a king would wait until the meal was ready to invite his guests,
- it is barely conceivable that a royal invitation would be bluntly refused,
- it is unlikely that prospective guests would have murdered the king’s messengers,
- it is absurd to have the king murdering the murders and then burning down his own city in retaliation,
- it is hard to believe that the king was so offended by one guest in informal attire that he has him bound and cast into

the outer darkness where men weep and gnash their teeth.

But as an allegory the servant messengers in 22:3 could allude to the prophets from Moses to Samuel; the messengers in 22:4–7 could be the prophets from Nathan to Jeremiah; and the messengers in 22:8–10 could be the prophets from Ezra to John the Baptist. The city burned by the king in retaliation for the murdering the king's messengers could be Samaria (which fell to the Shalmaneser V in 722 or to Sargon II in 721 B.C.) or to Jerusalem (which fell to Nebuchadnesser in 586 B.C.). The messengers who were slain would include Urijah the son of Shemaiah (Jer 26:20–24), who was killed by the sword of King Jehoiakim, and Zechariah the son of Jehoiada (II Chron 24:20–22) who was stoned to death by the command of King Joash—not to mention Jezebel's killing Israel's prophets in retaliation for Elijah's killing the prophets of Baal (I Kings 18:4; 19:1–2).

This interpretation of the allegory has Jesus addressing Israel's past. But when the beheading of John the Baptist and Jesus' own impending crucifixion come into focus, Jesus was also addressing his own moment in history.

However, many scholars interpret the allegory in terms of the eschatological future. For example D. C. Sim (1992: 14)⁸ argued that

This Matthaean tradition describes in allegorical form the notion of exclusion from the eschatological kingdom (cf. Mt. 8.11–12; 25.30). . . . This reading of the text entails that the garment motif in the parable represents the eschatological garment, a theme which is common in both contemporary Jewish and Christian texts and which is found elsewhere in Matthew's Gospel. It is not to be identified directly with the conditions of entry, but is awarded on the basis of fulfilling those conditions.⁹

PARABLE OF THE WEDDING BANQUET 295

Similarly, W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison (1997: 197) came to this conclusion:

Obviously [Matt] 22.1–10 is an allegory very much influenced by 21.33ff. The king is God. His son is Jesus (cf. 21.37–8). The royal wedding feast is the eschatological banquet. The dual sending of the servants is, as in the preceding parable, the sending of God’s messengers. The murder of the servants represents the murder of the prophets and Jesus (cf. 21.35–9). And the third sending of servants is the mission of the church, in which good and evil stand side by side until the end. All this has been evident throughout the history of exegesis. Here the traditional allegorical interpretation . . . has been correct.

However, this interpretation requires the king’s burning the city in retaliation for the murder of his messengers (Matt 22:7) to refer to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., which precludes Jesus’ having made the statement—requiring this part of the parable to be a Matthean addition.

If Jesus taught this parable in Hebrew there may well be a *double entendre* in Matt 22:11–12, for the noun מְזִיָּה can mean “garment” as well as “tribute, contribution, gift.”¹⁰ The מְזִיָּה “garment” appears in Psalm 133:2,

כֶּשֶׁמֶן הַטּוֹב עַל־הָרֹאשׁ יֵרֵד עַל־הַזָּקָן
זָקֵן־אַהֲרֹן שִׁירֵד עַל־פִּי מְדוּתָיו:

ὡς μύρον ἐπὶ κεφαλῆς τὸ καταβαῖνον ἐπὶ πώγωνα
τὸν πώγωνα τὸν Ααρων τὸκαταβαῖνον
ἐπὶ τῆν ὄαν τοῦ ἐνδύματος αὐτοῦ

It is like the precious ointment upon the head,
that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard:
that went down to the skirts of his garments.

The מְדָה “tribute, contribution” appears in Neh 5:4,

וַיִּנּוּ כֶסֶף לְמִדַּת הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׂדֵתֵינוּ וְכַרְמֵינוּ:
 ἔδανεισάμεθα ἀργύριον εἰς φόρους τοῦ βασιλέως
 ἄγροὶ ἡμῶν καὶ ἀμπελώνες ἡμῶν καὶ οἰκίαι ἡμῶν
 We have borrowed money for the king’s tribute
 upon our fields and our vineyards.

With Psalm 133:2 and Neh 5:4 in focus, translating the Greek of Matt 22:12 (Ἐταῖρε, πῶς εἰσῆλθες ὧδε μὴ ἔχων ἔνδυμα γάμου; “Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?”) permits this back translation:

רְעִי אֵיךְ בָּאתָ הֵלֶם בְּלִתִּי נִתֵּן מִדַּת חַתָּנָה¹¹

Friend, how did you come in here without

- *putting on a wedding garment*?¹²
- *giving a wedding gift*?¹³

This “friend” without proper attire and without even a small gift—which could have been as simple as some honey for the honeymooners—became belligerent and rancorous once confronted by the king. The Greek text has it that he became “speechless” (ὁ δὲ ἐφίμωθη “he was put to silence”). This “silence” in the Greek text points to a Hebrew source which had אֵלֶם that was read as אֵלֶם, stem I (אֵלֶם or אֵלֶם) “silence, dumb, speechless.” This stem appears in Delitzsch’s translation of ἐφίμωθη as וַיֵּאָלֶם “and he was silent.”¹⁴ But the אֵלֶם in the original Matt 22:12 should have been read as אֵלֶם or אֵלֶם, from אֵלֶם, stem II, which is the cognate of

- the Syriac אַבַּר (= אֵלֶם) “to keep anger” and אַבַּר (= אֵלֶם) “lasting anger, ill-will” (cited by Payne Smith,

1903: 18), and

- the Arabic *ألومة* (*°alûmat* / אֶלֻמַת) “lowness, ignobleness, baseness, vileness, or meanness” (cited by Lane, 1863: 82) and *أليم* (*°alîm* / אֶלִים) “rancorous” and *تألّم* (*ta'allam* / תִּאֲלַם) “to be irritated” (cited by Hava, 1915: 12).

Thus, the *ויאלם* in the Hebrew source was misread as the *Niph^cal* passive *ויאָלַם*, meaning *ἐφίμωθη* “he was silenced”; but it should have been read as the active *Qal* *ויאלם*, meaning *ὀργισθεῖς* “he became angry/rancorous.”¹⁵

This restoration and interpretation resolves the incongruity noted by many commentators and succinctly stated by Beare (quoted above), “it is hard to believe that the king was so offended by one guest in informal attire that he has him bound and cast into the outer darkness where men weep and gnash their teeth.” But this man, whom the king call “friend,” was obviously one of the “bad ones” (Matt 22:10) who were invited to the banquet. Once the guest became *אָלַם* “rancorous” the king returned the *אָלַם* “anger,” commanding his servants to “*אַלֵם*” the man. In the original Hebrew parable there was surely a wordplay involving *אָלַם*, stem II, “to be rancorous, angry” and *אַלַם*, stem I, which in the *Pi^cel* means “to bind,” as with the *מֵאֲלָמִים אֲלָמִים* “binding sheaves” in Gen 37:7.

Once it is recognized that the person in the parable who was bound and cast into the darkness had *not* been “silent” (*אַלֵם*) but had become “rancorous” (*אָלַם*), the king’s response in having him bound (*אַלֵם*) and expelled ceases to be problematic. Using a very powerful wordplay the point was

made that those who accept the invitation to the banquet (i.e., to enter the Kingdom of Heaven) are expected to make a contribution to the Kingdom with their gifts, tithes, mites, and talents (monetary and otherwise). Moreover, in the Kingdom anger and rancor will not be tolerated, especially when it is directed toward the King of the Kingdom. Israel's history provides the proof of the accuracy of this allegory, for the 'Ten Lost Tribes' were bound and carried into the darkness of Assyria, and the tribes of Levi and Judah were bound and carried into the darkness of Babylon—with all twelve tribes "weeping and the gnashing of teeth."

Once the parable is recognized as an allegory on Israel's past and her new "generation of vipers" (Matt 3:7, 12:34, 23:33, Luke 3:7), the meaning of Matt 22:14 becomes transparent—the analogy was historical, not eschatological.

Matthew 22:14

πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν κλητοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί
for many are called, but few are chosen.

This Greek can be translated literally back into Hebrew as¹⁶

כִּי רַבִּים הֵם מְזַמְּנִים וְהַבֹּחֲרִים מְעַטִּים

and this Hebrew text can be vocalized and translated as

כִּי רַבִּים הֵם מְזַמְּנִים וְהַבֹּחֲרִים מְעַטִּים

Indeed, many have been invited,
but the ones accepting are few.

The initial כִּי, translated as γὰρ "for," was actually an asseverative כִּי "yea, indeed" (GKC 118^x), whereby this closing verse of the parable refers back to those who rejected the king's invitations (22:3–9).¹⁷ The passive adjective

ἐκλεκτοί can only mean “chosen,” which in Hebrew would have been בַּחֲרִים. But בַּחֲרִים can be the *scriptio defectiva* for the *Qal* active participle בּוֹחֲרִים “the ones choosing/accepting” or the *Qal* passive בְּחֻרִים “the ones being chosen.” The translator who read the בַּחֲרִים in light of the predestination spelled out in Sirach 33:10–13 would understandably have opted for the passive ἐκλεκτοί “chosen,” whereas the translator who read the בַּחֲרִים in light of the freewill in Sir 15:11–20 would understandably have opted for the active ἐλόμενος “choosing, accepting.”

CONCLUSION

The Greek text of the *Parable of the Wedding Feast* is a translation of what Jesus said in Hebrew or Aramaic. Once his words were written down with consonants only there was immediate ambiguity, permitting diverse *correct* translations. An English analogy would be my making the statement “*that is the person who speaks weakly in church.*” In speech there is no ambiguity, but once the statement appears in print without vowels as “*tht s th prsn wh spks wkly n chrch*” it can rightly be interpreted to mean “*that is the parson who speaks weekly in church.*” Interpreting the *prsn* as “parson” rather than “person” and the *wkly* as “weekly” rather than “weakly” can transform a soft-spoken *layman* into a *clergyman* who preaches every week. Both interpretations of “*tht s th prsn wh spks wkly n chrch*” are valid but only one of them actually reports what I said.

In this study I have identified several words in the Greek text of the parable which reflect a similar misinterpretations of Jesus’ original words. The parable can be restored to read as follows.

Matthew 22:1–14 Revised

*And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a **feast of circumcision** (חַתֻּנָּה) for his son, 3 and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the **feast of circumcision** (חַתֻּנָּה); but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.’ 5 But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. 7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, ‘The **feast of circumcision** (חַתֻּנָּה) is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the **feast of circumcision** (חַתֻּנָּה) as many as you find.’ 10 And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the **feast of circumcision** (חַתֻּנָּה) was filled with guests. 11 But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no **banquet gift** (מְדַת חַתֻּנָּה). 12 and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a **banquet gift** (מְדַת חַתֻּנָּה)?’ And he was rancorous (אַלֵּם). 13 Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind (אַלֵּם) him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.’ 14 **Indeed** (כִּי) many have been invited, but the **ones accepting** (הַבּוֹחֲרִים) are few.*

Following Jesus’ telling this parable, the Pharisees in their attempt to entangle him focused on the word מְדַת “**tribute**,

gift” (22:11–12) and asked him, “Is it lawful to give tribute (κῆνσος) unto Caesar, or not?” The Greek κῆνσος would equal the מְדָה “tribute, gift” in the original parable. Consequently, Matt 22:1–22 can be read as a literary unit composed of the parable and an audience response. The question posed by the Pharisees focused on their present situation—not on eschatological implications hidden in the parable. Once the מְדָה תַּחֲנִיחַ “banquet gift” in 22:11 was read as a “wedding garment” the natural transition to the Pharisees’ question was lost.

Finally, 22:14, “Indeed many have been invited, but few are the ones accepting [the invitation],” provides a verifiable notice that freewill had been at work. In disagreement with many commentators—including Francis Beare (1981: 437) who stated with reference to 22:14 that “This line is a tag, inappropriately attached to this parable”—22:14 is a fitting conclusion to the parable once the בַּחֲרִים in the reconstructed Hebrew is read as the active בַּחֲרִים “choosing” (ἐλόμενος) rather than the passive בְּחֻרִים “chosen” (ἐκλεκτοί). Many in Judah thought of themselves as having been בְּחֻרִים “chosen” (ἐκλεκτοί) for the Kingdom of Heaven, but Jesus’ parable made it clear that too many in Israel had been בַּחֲרִים “choosing” (ἐλόμενος) not to accept the repeated invitations to enter the Kingdom and to bring their contributions and talents with them. The invitation was then extended to anyone who would accept it, be they Israelite, Judean, or Gentile.

NOTES

1. Blomberg, Craig L. 1990. *Interpreting the Parables*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. Now available online at <http://www.evangelibrary.info/members/nt/blom/itp.pdf>.

2. Bauckham, Richard. 1996. "The Parable of the Royal Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14) and the Parable of the Lame Man and the Blind Man (Apocryphon of Ezekiel)." *JBL* 115: 471–488.
3. Olson, Daniel C. 2005. "Matthew 22:1–14 as Midrash." *CBQ* 67: 436–453.
4. The cognates of נֶחֱוָה "marriage" are ختونة (*ḥutûnat^{um}*) "marriage," נִשְׂחַח (נִשְׂחַח) "to marry" and נִשְׂחַח (נִשְׂחַח) "nuptials." See BDB 38; Lane, 1865: 704; and Payne-Smith 1903: 164).
5. Click [HERE](#) for an online account of the Feast of Circumcision which was observed over the centuries by Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Coptic Churches.
6. Cited by Francis Beare (1981: 436).
7. Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 153a,
8. Sim, David C. 1992. "Matthew 22.13a and 1 Enoch 10.4a: A Case of Literary Dependence?" *JSNT* 47: 3–19.
9. In the *Apocalypse of Abraham* 13:14, Azazel tries to convince Abraham not to complete a sacrifice to God. The angel Iaoel intervenes and commands Azazel to depart, concluding with these words, "For behold, the garment which in heaven was formerly yours has been set aside for him (Abraham) and the corruption which was on him has gone over to you." See the translation by R. Rubinkiewicz in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, edited by Hames H. Charlesworth, Vol. I,

PARABLE OF THE WEDDING BANQUET 303

695, which is also cited by D. C. Sim (1992: 14). The heavenly garment in this apocalypse was not a wedding garment.

10. See BDB 551, Jastrow, 1903: 733. Payne Smith (1903: 251) cited מַדְאָתָא (*madâtā*) “tribute, tax.”

11. Compare the translations of Franz Delitzsch (1877),

רְעִי אֵיךְ בָּאתָ הַנָּה וְאֵין עָלֶיךָ בְּגָדֵי הַחַתָּנָה:

and that of Isaac Salkinson and Christian Ginsburg (1894),

רְעִי אֵיךְ בָּאתָ הַלֵּם בְּלִבִּי מִלְּבַשׁ לְבוּשׁ הַחַתָּנָה:

12. For the verb נָתַן “to give, to put on” used with לְבַשׁ “to wear” and חָגַר “to gird” note Lev 8:7,

וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו אֶת־הַכֹּתֶנֶת וַיַּחְגֹּר . . .

וַיִּלְבָּשׁ . . . וַיִּתֵּן . . . וַיַּחְגֹּר . . .

καὶ ἐνέδυσεν αὐτὸν τὸν χιτῶνα καὶ . . .

ἔζωσεν . . . καὶ ἐνέδυσεν . . . ἐπέθηκεν . . .

He put the tunic on him and girded him . . .

and clothed . . . and put on . . . and girded

13. For the traditional importance of gift giving at a circumcision banquet, see David Gollaher, *Circumcision: A History of the World's Most Controversial Surgery* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) p. 49.

14. See BDB 48 and Jastrow, 1903: 71. Compare Salkinson and Ginsburg who translated the ἐφιμώθη as כְּמִחְרִישׁ “as one being silent.”

15. Compare Luke 14:21 and 15:28.

16. Delitzsch translated the verse as **פִּי רַבִּים הֵם הַקְּרוֹאִים** וּמַעֲטִים הַנִּבְחָרִים, and Salkinson translated it as **פִּי רַבִּים הֵם הַנִּקְרָאִים** וְהַנִּבְחָרִים מְעַטִּים, both translating the adjective κλητοι as passive.

17. For the *Pu^cal* **זָמַן** “to invite” see BDB 273 and Jastrow, 1903: 404.