

Matthew 22:14 The Privileged Few

Introduction: This verse is a part of the Parable of the Marriage Feast. There are two main interpretations: (1) All could be saved, but few will be because the majority neglect to repent and trust Jesus. (2) All are invited to be saved but only a few can be because God pre-selected only a few and there is no way the others can be saved.

There are three principles of interpretation by which the right interpretation can be found.

I. Interpret the verse in light of the language used within it.

- A. Words are vehicles by which thought is expressed.
 - 1. It is especially important to pay attention to key words.
 - 2. Most of the time the meaning of the English words will be sufficient.
 - 3. But the meaning in the original language is always helpful and sometimes essential.
- B. The first key word in our text is “many.”
 - 1. It means the same in both the English and the Greek.
 - 2. It means large numbers as in contrast to a few.
 - 3. But in Greek it was often used to represent “all.”
- C. The second key word is “called.”
 - 1. In the Greek it means “called” in the sense of “invited.”
 - 2. Thus many (in the sense of “all”) are called (in the sense of invited).
(All are invited to be saved.)
- D. The next key word is “few.”
 - 1. This word means not many.
 - 2. It is used to mean a few in contrast to the many.
 - 3. There may be a sizable number to be saved, but it will be a few in contrast to the great majority who will go to hell.
- E. The final key word is “chosen.”
 - 1. The Greek word means “chosen as a recipient of special privileges.”
 - 2. The one who does the choosing is obviously God.
 - 3. This still does not tell us whether God chooses on the basis of one's repentance and faith or without regard to one's repentance and faith.

II. Interpret it in light of the passage in which it is found.

- A. The passage in which this verse is found is the Parable of the Marriage Feast.
- B. In this parable we learn about the many who are invited.
 - 1. The king prepared a guest list and invited them.
(This list represented the Jews. God invited the Jews to be saved.)
 - 2. The king finally sent his servants out into the highways to invite all that they found.
(This represented the Gentiles. God invited the Gentiles to be saved.)
 - 3. In keeping with the greek language, the parable reveals that the many does represent all.
(God does invite all to be saved.)
- C. In this parable we find the meaning of the word “called.”
 - 1. The guest were “called” in the sense of being invited.
 - 2. They were invited to the wedding feast.
 - 3. But in our text those who are called are invited to be saved.
- D. In this parable we learn about the few who are chosen.
 - 1. These were not man who had been chosen beforehand by the king to be at the wedding feast.
(Thus they do not represent men whom God predestined to be saved and fixed it so that they and they alone would be saved.)
 - 2. The king did have a list of pre-selected people, but they did not come.

3. The ones who did come were not on the list at all.
 4. The few who did come may have made a sizable crowd, but they were few in comparison to those invited.
- E. What about the guest without a wedding garment?
1. He does not represent one who got saved and then lost his salvation. (He never had on a wedding garment.)
 2. He does not represent one who was invited to salvation but who could not be saved because he was not one of the chosen.
 3. He represents those who appear to have responded to God's invitation, but neglect to repent and trust Jesus. (They make a profession, get baptized, join the church, and engage in Christian activity, but they are never saved.)
 4. What this teaches is that one is not chosen or approved for heaven on the basis of his profession of faith and religious activity. (He must repent and trust Jesus.)

III. Interpret it in light of the over-all teachings of the Bible.

- A. It must not contradict the plain teachings of the Bible but must be in harmony with the rest of the Bible.
- B. God indeed does invite all men to be saved, Isaiah 45:22; Matthew 28:19; John 3:16; Revelations 22:17.
- C. The Bible nowhere teaches that God has pre-selected men to be saved without regard to their repentance and faith, Luke 13:3, 5; John 3:18.
- D. The Bible further teaches that God commands all men to repent (Acts 17:30) and draws all men to Jesus for salvation (John 12:32).
- E. The Bible says that God did not deliberately leave the great majority in a situation whereby it would be impossible for them to be saved, II Peter 3:9. (Does not wish men to remain in unrepentance.)
- F. The Bible does speak of "election, predestination, and foreordination," but teaches that it is based on God's foreknowledge of who would repent and trust Jesus and who would not repent and trust Jesus, I Peter 1:2; Romans 8:29.

IV. The teaching of the text.

- A. God invites all to be saved and has made it possible for all to be saved.
 1. God does not deal in fraud.
 2. It would be fraudulent to invite all to be saved and then deliberately fix it so that only a few could be saved.
 3. God's invitation to salvation is genuine.
- B. The great majority deliberately reject the gospel or carelessly neglect it. (The result is the same.)
- C. Those who repent of their sin and trust in Jesus are approved for heaven, Acts 20:21.

Invitation: One who gets saved is indeed a part of the privileged few. What about you?

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