

# ***THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER***

September 2, 2018  
14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke  
**Revision F**

**Gospel: Luke 14:16-24**  
**Matthew 22:1-14**

Jesus used today's Gospel lesson twice (at least). As it is recorded in Luke 14, Jesus was in Perea just after Hanukkah, 29 AD (compare John 10:22). As it is recorded in Matthew 22, Jesus was in Jerusalem on Tuesday of Holy Week, 30 AD. In the East and in the West, both accounts are used regularly. The Eastern Church uses Matthew's account for the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (generally September, but sometimes taken out of order) and Luke's account for the Sunday of the Ancestors of Christ (two Sundays before Christmas). The Western Church uses Matthew's account for about the same time of year (September or October), and Luke's account for either New Year's Day or the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Trinity (May).

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Reflecting on the Parable of the Great Supper as related to the Ancestors of Christ, not everyone who was invited to the Supper refused to come. The Ancestors of Christ came joyfully and properly clothed, and represent a list of role models for us to follow.

**Gospel: Luke 14:16-24; Matthew 22:1-14**

Since there are many similarities, but also notable differences between the accounts of Matthew and Luke, it is instructive to compare them side-by-side.

Table I is a side-by-side comparison of the features of the parables in Luke and Matthew. The bottom line of both parables was that the Kingdom of God was about to be taken away from the Jews and given to others. Both were told at very public events: Luke's account took place at a big dinner at a Pharisee's house (Luke 14:1) attended by local dignitaries (Luke 14:7-8, 12). Luke doesn't say what the occasion was, but it could have been a wedding feast from Jesus' remarks (Luke 14:8). Matthew's account took place in the Temple (Matthew 21:23), where the chief priests and elders confronted Jesus as He taught.

In Luke’s account, Jesus had just finished saying to the host (who invited Him) that when giving a feast it would be better to invite the poor, maimed, lame and blind – who are unable to repay – rather than relatives and rich neighbors. That way one would be repaid at the Resurrection (Luke 14:12-14). The Parable was then given (featuring the poor, maimed, lame and blind) in response to the remark of one of the dignitaries: “Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God” (Luke 14:15). At this point, it is worthwhile to consider the Lord’s Supper, since the Lord’s Supper is a foretaste of eating bread in the Kingdom of God. All of us are poor, maimed, lame and blind as we come to the Lord’s Table, and we are called blessed as we receive “the least of these My brethren” (Matthew 25:40).

In Matthew’s account, Jesus’ confrontation with the Jewish leaders had gotten more acute. They had interrupted His teaching in the Temple to ask by what authority He did what He did (Matthew 21:23). After Jesus embarrassed them with a question about John the Baptist, He stated that tax collectors and harlots were entering the Kingdom of God before them. Jesus followed this with the Parable of the wicked vineyard tenants (Matthew 21:33-41) and the stone that the builders rejected (Matthew 21:42-46). Then He told the Parable of the Great Marriage Feast; the chief priests and Pharisees then knew He was talking about them (Matthew 21:45).

**TABLE I  
COMPARISON OF PARABLES:  
GREAT SUPPER AND MARRIAGE FEAST**

	<b>Great Supper (Luke 14)</b>	<b>Marriage Feast (Matthew 22)</b>
Parable told	December 29 AD	April 30 AD
Location	At Pharisee’s dinner in Perea	At Temple in Jerusalem
Central figure	A certain man	A certain king
Purpose of event	A great supper	A marriage feast for king’s son
Invitees	Rich & famous of Israel	Rich & famous of Israel
Excuses	Bought land, need to see it; bought oxen, need to test them; just got married	Left for his farm; left for his business; treated servants rudely & killed them
Central figure’s reaction	Angry	Furious; his armies killed them & burned their cities
New invitees	From streets & lanes: the poor, maimed, lame, blind from highways and hedges: the Gentiles	From highways: good and bad
Problems	- -	Man without wedding garment

In both parables, the central figure is God the Father who has prepared a Great Supper (Luke 14:16) and a Marriage Feast for His Son (Matthew 22:2). He invited His own chosen people, but His own did not receive Him (John 1:11). He sent His servants, the Apostles and Prophets “to say to those who were invited: ‘come, for all things are now ready’” (Luke 14:17, Acts 13:46, 18:6). But those invited began to make excuses. These excuses can be boiled down to the seed that fell among thorns in the Parable of the Sower: they got choked with the cares, riches and pleasures of life (Luke 8:7, 14).

## The Excuses

One of those invited said he had just bought a field and he must go see it. This may seem strange to us that someone would buy a field before he had ever seen it. Under Old Testament Law, however, the land belonged to the Lord and could not be sold permanently (Leviticus 25:23). In the Year of Jubilee (every 50<sup>th</sup> year), all land reverted to the family of its original inheritor as the land was divided at the time of Joshua (Leviticus 25:28). The worth of any land that was sold was calculated in terms of how many years until the next Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:27). Thus when one bought a field, one bought a number of years' crops and not the land itself (Leviticus 25:16). Thus one did not need to see land to determine its sale price, but one did need to see it to determine its readiness; he needed to know quickly what needed to be done to the field.

From Table II, one can see that someone buying land just after Hanukkah (December) has to be concerned about the late planting. If he takes a week off to attend a marriage feast, he may miss much of the spring rains – which can be very intermittent. Another consideration was what seed, if any, was already in the ground? Grain had already been planted, but hoeing was mandatory between December and February to keep weeds down and make harvesting easier (compare the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares – Matthew 13:24-30). The person buying the field needed to see the field to determine what had to be done.

Buying land often meant buying it from someone who was hopelessly in debt. And the creditor could then take over the debtor's land as well as take the debtor and his family as slaves (Leviticus 25:39ff). Foreclosing on debtors like this could be very lucrative for a creditor because he could afford to work the land much more efficiently than a poor man. Efficient use of land is what made the Rich Fool into a very wealthy man (Luke 12:16-19), and this new landowner seems very caught up in acquiring the riches of this life.

Another of those invited begged off because he just bought five yoke of oxen and needed to test them. Oxen were used<sup>1</sup> for plowing using crude plows (compared to today). A “plow” was little more than a stick that was stuck in the ground and dragged by oxen. Plowing couldn't be done in dry soil; it would break the “plow”. One had to wait for some of the first winter rain to loosen up the soil. Since he had bought five yoke of oxen, one can presume that he had a lot of land to plow and a number of servants to use the oxen. Thus he was managing a large farm. In this case, the new owner was really wrapped up in the cares of the world since he didn't have much time to get his fields ready for planting.

Still another of those invited said that he just got married and therefore couldn't come. According to Old Testament Law: “When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army, nor be charged with any duty; he shall be free at home one year and shall give happiness to his wife whom he has taken” (Deuteronomy 24:5). Gregory the Great wrote<sup>2</sup> that this excuse signifies the pleasures of the flesh.

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<sup>1</sup> Gower, Manners and Customs of Bible Times, pp. 87-95.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory the Great, Parables of the Gospel, XXXVI.

**TABLE II**  
**PLANTING AND HARVESTING SCHEDULE**  
**FROM THE GEZER CALENDAR<sup>3</sup>**

<b>Name of Month</b>	<b>Corresponds To</b>	<b>Number of Days</b>	<b>Month of Civil Year</b>	<b>Month of Sacred Year</b>	<b>Agricultural Events</b>
Nisan (Abib)	Mar.-Apr.	30	7th	1st	Hoeing up of Flax
Iyar	Apr.-May	29	8th	2nd	Barley Harvest
Sivan	May-June	30	9th	3rd	Harvest and Festivity
Tammuz	June-July	29	10th	4th	Vine Tending
Ab	July-Aug.	30	11th	5th	
Elul	Aug.-Sept.	29	12th	6th	Summer Fruit
Tishri	Sept.-Oct.	30	1st	7th	Olive Harvest
Heshvan	Oct.-Nov.	29 or 30	2nd	8th	
Chislew	Nov.-Dec.	29 or 30	3rd	9th	Planting Grain
Tebeth	Dec.-Jan.	29	4th	10th	
Shebet	Jan.-Feb.	30	5th	11th	Late Planting
Adar	Feb.-Mar.	29 or 30	6th	12th	

All the above excuses are reasonable excuses, but they all represent a decision on the part of the excuse-giver that was made regarding the importance of the supper or the feast. The supper had been planned a long time; they had time to prepare to attend. But their decision was that the cares, riches, and pleasures of life were more important to them. Here we might ask ourselves if we make similar excuses to avoid going to Church and partaking of the Lord's Table.

The same thing applies to us today, especially to those who may despise a priest who happens to irritate them. We have no good reason to despise him, for it is God who sent him. Gregory the Great wrote<sup>4</sup>,

“We must see that the servant sent with invitations by the Master of the household represents the preachers of the Church (beginning with Christ and the Twelve Apostles). It often happens that a powerful person has a contemptible servant, and when he sends a message by this servant to relatives or to strangers, those who hear him do not think of the person who brings the message but only of the message he brings and the person who sent it. And if you consider us preachers unworthy, nevertheless venerate God who calls you through us”.

John Chrysostom stated<sup>5</sup> that Christ does not drag people to His Kingdom against their will. People will be dragged to hell against their will; but if people were dragged into the Kingdom, it would be an insult to the nature of the blessings of the Kingdom.

“But some man will say, ‘He ought to bring men in, even against their will’. However, He does not use violence, nor compel; for who in the world that invites someone to honors, crowns, banquets and festivals, drags them, unwilling and bound? No one! Doing this would be inflicting an insult! To hell He sends

<sup>3</sup> The Gezer Calendar dates from the time of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua and was a schoolboy's exercise describing the yearly agricultural schedule.

<sup>4</sup> Gregory the Great, Parables of the Gospel, XXXVI.

<sup>5</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, II, 9.

men against their will, but to the kingdom He calls willing minds. To the fire He brings men bound and bemoaning themselves; to the endless state of blessings not so. Otherwise it is a reproach to the very blessings themselves; their nature is such that men should run to them of their own accord and with thankfulness. 'Why then', you say, 'do men not choose them?' From their own infirmity! 'And why does He not cut off their infirmity?' How tell me should He cut it off? He has made a world that teaches His loving-kindness and His power. For 'the heavens declare the glory of God' (Psalm 19:1). He has also sent prophets. He has both called and honored us. He has done wonders. He has given a Law both written and natural. He has sent His Son and commissioned the Apostles. He has threatened hell and promised the kingdom. Every day He makes His sun to rise. Are not the things, which He has asked, so simple and easy, that many people transcend His commandments in the greatness of their self-denial? As Isaiah said, 'What was there to do to the vineyard that I have not done?'" (Isaiah 5:4)

In Matthew's account of the Parable, the excuse-givers ignored the servants' invitation, but also seized the servants, treated them with violent insults and murdered them (Matthew 22:6). This occurred with Jesus at His trial (Luke 18:32, 22:64-65, Matthew 27:27-31) and with the Apostles for their whole lives (Acts 12:1-3, 14:4-6, 16:19-24, 1 Thessalonians 2:2). The King in Matthew's account was furious and sent his armies to destroy those murderers and burn their cities (Matthew 22:7). This happened in 68-70 AD when the Roman General Titus destroyed Jerusalem and massacred its inhabitants.

With the original list of invitees decimated with no-shows, the central figure in both Parables extended His invitation farther afield. In Luke's account, He first sent His servants into the streets and lanes of the city to bring in the poor, maimed, lame and blind (Luke 14:21). The word street (Greek: *platus*) refers to a broad street. Jesus taught in broad streets (Luke 13:26); people later brought the sick out into the broad streets such that the shadow of the Apostle Peter passing by might fall on some and heal them (Acts 5:15). The word lane (Greek: *rhume*) refers to the crowded streets or narrow streets. Together the streets and lanes refer to the underbelly of Jewish society: the uneducated, the poor, the crippled, the blind, etc. This is the part of Jewish society that Jesus spoke to a lot (Luke 7:22), and from which many of the Apostles came (Acts 4:13).

After the servants did as their Master had commanded, they reported to Him that there was still room at the Great Supper (Luke 14:22). The Master then sent them into the highways and hedges to compel others to come in that His house may be filled. The highways (Greek: *hodos*) are the main roads from city to city and country to country. Traveling on these roads, one would find many Gentiles. The hedges (Greek: *phragmos*) are walls or barriers such as one might find around a vineyard to prevent theft (Matthew 21:33, Mark 12:1) or between courtyards to keep out unlawful entry (Ephesians 2:14). Gregory the Great wrote<sup>6</sup> that the people called from the highways and the hedges are the rustic people; that is, the Gentiles.

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<sup>6</sup> Gregory the Great, Parables of the Gospel, XXXVI.

Tertullian stated<sup>7</sup> that God continually called His people to His banquet by the voice of the Prophets, which is the voice of the Holy Spirit. When His people didn't listen and refused the invitation, He sent out the call to others. Since they made Him jealous by refusing His invitation, He promised to make them jealous of the Gentiles. The result was a prolonged animosity of the Jews toward the Christians for several centuries.

“In a manner most germane to this parable, He said, ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and you shall walk in all my ways, which I have commanded you’. This is the invitation of God. ‘But they didn't listen’. This is the refusal of the people. ‘They departed, and walked everyone in the imagination of their evil heart’ (Jeremiah 7:23-24). ‘I have bought a field; I have bought some oxen; and I have married a wife’ (Luke 14:18-20). And still He urges them, ‘I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, rising early even before daylight’ (Jeremiah 7:25). The Holy Spirit is here meant, the admonisher of the guests. ‘Yet my people didn't listen to me, but hardened their neck’ (Jeremiah 7:26). This was reported to the Master of the family. He was moved, and commanded them to invite people out of ‘the streets and lanes of the city’ (Luke 14:21). This is the same in purpose as His words by Jeremiah. ‘Have I been a wilderness to the house of Israel, or a land left uncultivated?’ That is to say, ‘Do I have no people I can call my own; have I no place to bring them?’ ‘My people have said that they will come to Me no more’ (Jeremiah 2:31). Therefore He sent out to call others, but from the same city” (Luke 14:23).

“Although the place abounded with people, yet He commanded that they gather men from the highways and the hedges. In other words, we are now gathered out of the Gentile strangers, with that jealous resentment, which He expressed. ‘I will hide My face from them, and I will show them what shall happen in the last days, how others shall take their place. They are a disobedient generation, children in whom is no faith. They have moved Me to jealousy by that which is no god, and they have provoked Me to anger with their idols. I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation” (Deuteronomy 32:20-21).

### **The Wedding Garment**

In Matthew's account, an additional aspect is presented once everyone had come to the marriage feast: someone came without a wedding garment (Matthew 22:11-13). John Chrysostom interpreted<sup>8</sup> this individual as someone with a corrupt life. Marriage customs of that day involved a weeklong feast at the home of the groom, where the groom's parents usually presented each of the guests with a special garment. [It was at such a feast in Cana that Jesus performed His first public miracle – John 2:1-11]. The same imagery is used in Revelation referring to the saints, the martyrs and the faithful: they are given a special white garment (Revelation 3:4-5, 18; 6:9-11; 7:13-14). When the servants had gone out into the highways (and hedges), they brought in the good and the bad (Matthew 22:10). So it has been throughout the ages in the Church. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that savage wolves would come into their

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<sup>7</sup> Tertullian, Five Books Against Marcion, II, ii, 4, 31.

<sup>8</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, LXIX, 2.

midst and heretics would arise from within their midst (Acts 20:29-30). Some examples<sup>9</sup> of wolves rising from the midst of the Church, that are mentioned in the New Testament, are Phygellus and Hermogenes, Demas and Nicolas of Antioch (all of the Seventy who apostatized), Alexander the Coppersmith, Hymenaeus and Philetus. Thus Paul encouraged everyone to examine himself before partaking of the Lord's Table (1 Corinthians 11:28-29) that we might clothe ourselves in the proper garment – a humble and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 57:15), and that we might be prepared ourselves for the Great Supper and the Marriage Feast.

Irenaeus spoke<sup>10</sup> of the wedding garment as being works of righteousness. Those who are cast into the outer darkness despise the proper wedding garment.

“Christ makes it clear that we ought, after our calling, to be adorned with works of righteousness, so that the Spirit of God may rest upon us. This is the wedding garment, of which the apostle speaks, ‘Not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life’ (2 Corinthians 5:4). But those who have been called to God's supper yet have not received the Holy Spirit, because of their wicked conduct ‘shall be cast into outer darkness’ (Matthew 22:13). He thus clearly shows that the same King who gathered, from all quarters, the faithful to the marriage of His Son, and who grants them the incorruptible banquet, also orders that man to be cast into outer darkness who doesn't have on a wedding garment; that is, one who despises it. For as in the Old Covenant, ‘with many of them was He not well pleased’ (1 Corinthians 10:5); so also is it the case here, that ‘many are called, but few chosen’” (Matthew 22:14).

Athanasius of Alexandria linked<sup>11</sup> the proper wedding garment to the grace of the Holy Spirit. The lack of the proper wedding garment implies drunkenness, wickedness, being inflamed by pleasures, and thirsting for the destruction of others.

“It becomes us then in these days of the Passover, to rise early with the saints, and approach the Lord with all our soul, with purity of body, with confession and godly faith in Him. When we have here first drunk, and are filled with these divine waters, which flow from Him, we may be able to sit at table with the saints in heaven, and may share in the one voice of gladness, which is there. From this sinners are rightly cast out, and hear the words, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ (Matthew 22:12) Sinners indeed thirst, but not for the grace of the Spirit. Being inflamed with wickedness, they are wholly set on fire by pleasures, as the Proverb says, ‘All day long he desires evil desires’ (Proverbs 21:26). But the Prophet cries against them, saying, ‘Woe to those who rise up early, and follow strong drink; who continue until the evening, for wine inflames them’ (Isaiah 5:11). And since they run wild in debauchery, they dare to thirst for the destruction of others”.

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<sup>9</sup> For Alexander, see 2 Timothy 4:15-16; for Phygellus and Hermogenes, see 2 Timothy 1:15; for Demas, see Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:10; for Nicholas of Antioch, see Acts 6:5, Revelation 2:6, 15; for Hymenaeus and Philetus, see 1 Timothy 1:18-20. Of these, Phygellus, Hermogenes, Demas and Nicolas of Antioch had been members of the original Seventy Apostles (Luke 10:1-20).

<sup>10</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV, xxxvi, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, *Festal Letters*, XX, 2.

John Chrysostom stated<sup>12</sup> that the man without the proper wedding garment was invited to the feast, but he behaved with insolence toward his host. Faith is insufficient for us; if we don't also show a pure life, we may suffer the same fate. Christ is not ashamed of beggars and those who live in squalor in this life; what matters is our behavior. If we don't adapt our behavior to the dignity of the feast, we cast ourselves out. Christ is obligated to cast out those who don't act properly, since it would insult everyone else present if He didn't.

“There is no small fear, lest having sometime defiled that beautiful robe by our sloth and transgressions, we are cast out from the inner room and bridal chamber, like the five foolish virgins, or him who did not have on a wedding garment (Matthew 25:1-12; 22:12). He too was one of the guests, for he had been invited. But after the invitation and so great an honor, he behaved with insolence towards Him who had invited him. Hear what punishment he suffers, how pitiful, a subject for many tears. For when he comes to partake of that splendid table, not only is he forbidden, but bound hand and foot, and carried into outer darkness, to undergo eternal and endless wailing and gnashing of teeth”.

“Therefore, beloved, let us not expect that faith is sufficient to us for salvation. If we do not show a pure life, but come clothed with garments unworthy of this blessed calling, nothing hinders us from suffering the same as that wretched one. It is strange that He, who is God and King, is not ashamed of men who are vile, beggars, and of no repute, but brings even them to that table. We show so much insensibility, as not even to be made better by so great an honor, but after our calling remain in our old wickedness, insolently abusing the unspeakable loving-kindness of Him who has called us. He did not call us to the spiritual communion of His mysteries that we should enter with our former wickedness. Instead, putting off our filthiness, we should change our clothing to such as becomes those who are entertained in palaces. But if we will not act worthy of that calling, this no longer rests with Him who has honored us, but with ourselves; it is not He that casts us out from that admirable company of guests, but we cast out ourselves”.

“He has done all His part. He has made the marriage; He has provided the table; He has sent men to call us; He has received us when we came, and honored us with all other honor. But when we have offered insult to Him, to the company, and to the wedding by our filthy garments, that is, our impure actions, we are then with good cause cast out. It is to honor the marriage and the guests that He drives off those bold and shameless persons. If He allowed those clothed in such a garment to stay, He would seem to be offering insult to the rest. May it never be that one of us finds this coming from Him who has called us! To this end have all these things been written before they come to pass; that we, being sobered by the threats of the Scriptures, may not suffer this disgrace and punishment”.

Athanasius of Alexandria noted<sup>13</sup> that Judas came to the great supper, but despised it. The Prodigal Son, on the other hand, came back to the feast after he repented, and his father clothed him with an incorruptible garment.

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<sup>12</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, X, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, VII, 9-10.



“He who has been counted worthy of the heavenly calling, and by this calling has been sanctified, if he grows negligent in it, and although washed becomes defiled, ‘counting the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a profane thing, and despising the Spirit of grace’ (Hebrews 10:29), he hears the words, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ For the banquet of the saints is spotless and pure; ‘for many are called, but few chosen’ (Matthew 22:14). Judas came to the supper, but because he despised it, went out from the presence of the Lord, and having abandoned his life, hanged himself (Matthew 27:5). But the disciples who continued with the Redeemer shared in the happiness of the feast. And that young man who went into a far country, and wasted his inheritance, living in dissipation, may receive a desire for this divine feast, and, comes to himself, saying, ‘How many hired servants of my father have bread to spare, while I perish here with hunger!’ He can rise and come to his father, and confess to him, saying, ‘I have sinned against heaven and before you, and am not worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants’ (Luke 15:17-19). When he thus confesses, then he shall be counted worthy of more than he prayed for. For the father does not receive him as a hired servant, neither does he look upon him as a stranger, but he kisses him as a son, brings him back to life as from the dead, counts him worthy of the divine feast, and gives him back his former precious robe. So that, on this account, there is singing and gladness in the paternal home”.

“This is the work of the Father’s loving-kindness and goodness. Therefore, instead of corruption, He clothes him with an incorruptible garment; instead of hunger, He kills the fatted calf; instead of far journeys, the Father watched for his return, providing shoes for his feet. What is most wonderful, He placed a divine signet ring upon his hand; by all these things He begot him again in the image of the glory of Christ. These are the gracious gifts of the Father, by which the Lord honors and nourishes those who abide with Him, and also those who return to Him and repent. For He promises, saying, ‘I am the bread of life; he that comes to Me shall not hunger, and he that believes on Me shall never thirst’ (John 6:35). We too shall be counted worthy of these things, if we cling to our Savior at all times, and if we are pure, not only in these six days of Pascha, but consider the whole course of our life as a feast. If we continue near and do not go far off, we say to Him, ‘You have the words of eternal life, and where shall we go?’ (John 6:68) Having first nourished the soul here, we shall partake with angels at that heavenly and spiritual table”.

### **The Binding Hand and Foot**

Jesus stated, at the end of the parable, “But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 22:11-13).

In the parable, the king sent His servants out to bring in the good and the bad; but He didn't expect the bad to remain bad forever. He expected them to learn from those around them in the Church. Cyril of Jerusalem described<sup>14</sup> the fate of those who cannot or will not learn what the Master expects from observing their fellow members in the Church.

“A certain man in the Gospels once pried into the marriage feasts (Matthew 22:12), and took an inappropriate garment, and came in, sat down, and ate; for the bridegroom permitted it. But when he saw them all clad in white, he ought to have assumed a garment of the same kind himself. He partook of the same food, but was unlike them in fashion and in purpose. The bridegroom, though bountiful, was discerning. In going around to each of the guests, he observed them, for his care was not for their eating, but for their appropriate behavior. He saw a stranger not having on a wedding garment, and said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here? In what a color! With what a conscience! Even though the doorkeeper didn’t forbid you, did you take advantage of the bountifulness of the entertainer? Were you ignorant of what fashion you should come in to the banquet? When you came in, you saw the glittering fashions of the guests; shouldn’t you have been taught by what was before your eyes? Shouldn’t you have retired then, that you might have entered again at an appropriate time? But now you have come in unseasonably, to be unseasonably cast out. So he commanded the servants, (1) ‘Bind his feet’, which dared to intrude; (2) ‘bind his hands’, which didn’t know how to put a bright garment around him; and (3) ‘cast him into the outer darkness’, for he is unworthy of the wedding torches<sup>15</sup>. You see what happened to that man; make your own condition safe”.

John Chrysostom compared<sup>16</sup> the agony of being bound hand and foot with the reward for having our hearts and minds voluntarily bound to Christ.

“The blessed martyr Babylas<sup>17</sup> was bound, for the same cause as John the Baptist also was, because he reproved a king in his transgression. This man when he was dying gave charge that his bonds should be laid with his body, and that the body should be buried bound. To this day the fetters lie mingled with his ashes, so devoted was his affection for the bonds he had worn for Christ’s sake. ‘He was laid in chains of iron’ as the Prophet says of Joseph (Psalm 105:17-18). Even women have been bound like this”.

“We however are not in bonds, nor am I recommending this, since now is not the time for them. We should bind not our hands, but bind our heart and mind. There are yet other bonds, and they that wear not the one, shall have to wear the other. Hear what Christ said, ‘Bind him hand and foot’ (Matthew 22:13). God forbid we should have trials with our hands or feet bound! But may He grant us to take our fill with our hearts and mind bound!”

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<sup>14</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, “Procatechesis”, 3, Catechetical Lectures.

<sup>15</sup> The candidates for baptism, who were being educated by the Catechetical Lectures, carried torches as they came for baptism before Pascha. The atmosphere was like a bridal train as the candidates came forward.

<sup>16</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Ephesians, IX.

<sup>17</sup> Babylas was a 3<sup>rd</sup> Century Sicilian priest who suffered with two of his disciples.

# ***APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY***

## ***The Guarantee of the Holy Spirit***

September 2, 2018  
14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
**Revision D**

### **Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4**

Today's Epistle reading is used in the West for the 5th Sunday in Lent. There are two themes contained in today's Epistle Reading: (1) the Gift of the Holy Spirit in us as a guarantee of more that is to come, and (2) the Apostolic authority of the Apostle Paul in dealing with the problems in Corinth, and why he had to do it the way he did.

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### **Background for the Church in Corinth**

Paul founded the Church in Corinth about 51 AD toward the end of his Second Missionary Journey and stayed there a year and a half (Acts 18:11). Silas was traveling with Paul at the time along with Luke, Timothy and Andronicus, where all but Paul were of the original Seventy. Luke was left behind to oversee the Macedonian Churches<sup>18</sup>. Silas was left behind in Corinth<sup>19</sup> and was later known as the Bishop of Corinth.

Before Paul arrived in Corinth for an extended stay again in late 55 AD, he wrote four letters to Corinth (two of which are lost) and paid the Church one brief visit<sup>20</sup>. In the interval from 52 to 55 AD, Apollos and the Apostle Peter visited Corinth. Apollos was one of the original Seventy, but must have been back home in Alexandria at the time of Pentecost. He knew only the baptism of John in 53 AD when he came to Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28). Aquila and Priscilla, the overseers Paul left in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19), straightened Apollos out and wrote to the Churches in Achaia, (Athens and Corinth) to receive Apollos when he arrived (Acts 18:27). Apollos proceeded to help by vigorously refuting the Jews publicly showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ (Acts 18:28). Paul said that he and Apollos are one (1 Corinthians 3:8); that is, of one mind in the work of establishing the Churches.

The same can be said for the relationship between Paul and Peter. Peter visited Corinth in the early 50's AD. He obviously made a big impression in Corinth since there were factions that had developed by 55 AD (1 Corinthians 1:12) centered around Paul, Apollos, Peter and none of the above (i.e. Christ)!! On Peter's way to Corinth, Paul met him in Macedonia and together they ordained three bishops:

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<sup>18</sup> Note switch in tenses from "we" to "they" and back to "we" in Acts 16:16, 17:1, 20:6.

<sup>19</sup> Note that we never hear from Silas again traveling with Paul after he arrived in Corinth, Acts 18:5ff.

<sup>20</sup> For more details of this, see the Epistle lesson discussion for the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost.

<b>BISHOP</b>	<b>CHURCH</b>
Jason	Thessalonica
Silas	Corinth
Herodion	New Patras (SW Greece)

Thus, we can definitely say that Peter and Paul were one in the work also.

From a detailed study of Paul's Missionary Journeys, Paul worked with at least 60 of the original members of the Seventy at some point. Many of them like Luke, Timothy, and Titus traveled with him a lot. In addition, Paul had some contact with Peter, John, Andrew and Philip.

### **Apostolic Discipline**

To understand the Epistle lesson, one needs to understand the sequence of Paul's four letters to Corinth, since the Epistle lesson refers to the latter part of this sequence. In addition to the four letters<sup>21</sup> Paul wrote to Corinth, he made one brief visit that isn't mentioned in Acts. This information can be gleaned by carefully reading the two letters we have. The sequence went like this:

1. From Ephesus on his 3rd Missionary Journey, Paul wrote a letter to Corinth regarding morality and church discipline. Paul refers to this letter in 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. This letter has been lost over the centuries.
2. While still in Ephesus, Paul wrote a 2<sup>nd</sup> letter (which we know as 1 Corinthians) to address negative reports such as a man having his father's wife (1 Corinthians 5:1), schisms (1 Corinthians 1:12), heresy (1 Corinthians 15:12), etc.
3. Learning of further immorality in Corinth, Paul traveled there (from Ephesus). Timothy had been sent ahead and may have carried the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter. This visit is referred to as the "sorrowful visit" in our Epistle reading (2 Corinthians 2:1). Later, Paul stated that his upcoming visit would be his 3<sup>rd</sup> visit (2 Corinthians 13:1). From Acts, his upcoming visit would be only the 2<sup>nd</sup> visit to Corinth, thus demanding another brief visit.
4. Returning to Ephesus, probably with Timothy, Paul wrote a 3<sup>rd</sup> letter. This is the "sorrowful letter" referred to in our Epistle reading (2 Corinthians 2:4ff; also 2 Corinthians 7:8). This 3<sup>rd</sup> letter was delivered by Titus and received by the Corinthians with fear and trembling (2 Corinthians 7:13-15). This letter has also been lost.
5. Before Titus returned, Paul left Ephesus for Macedonia en route to Corinth. In Macedonia, Paul met Titus who was returning from Corinth. Paul was greatly encouraged by Titus to hear that Corinth had obeyed Paul's instructions. From Macedonia, Paul then wrote a 4<sup>th</sup> letter (which we know as 2 Corinthians) defending his apostleship and aiming for reconciliation of all the factions. The man who had his father's wife had by then repented and Paul urged them to forgive him and receive him back (2 Corinthians 2:5-11).

We get a glimpse of how Paul first came to Corinth: "Not in persuasive words but in demonstration of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). These demonstrations of power are described as, "God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were

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<sup>21</sup> Only two of Paul's letters to Corinth are extant today; the other two have been lost. We know of the existence of the other two letters from Paul's reference to them in the two letters that we have.

brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out from them” (Acts 19:11-12)

Paul’s demonstrations of power were so prevalent that a cottage industry developed among some itinerant Jewish exorcists. They began exorcising evil spirits by “the Jesus whom Paul preaches”. This worked for a while; eventually they ran into one demon that answered, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?” The demon-possessed man then “leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded”. When word of this got out, “fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified” (Acts 19:13-17).

The above two accounts occurred in Ephesus on Paul’s 3rd Missionary Journey; we can assume something similar occurred in Corinth a few years earlier when he started the Church there.

Thus, when Paul wrote concerning the man who had his father’s wife, and Paul instructed them to deliver the man over to Satan (1 Corinthians 5:5) for the destruction of his flesh (in order that his spirit might be saved on Judgment Day), this was not taken lightly. This was apostolic discipline and was taken seriously. Our Epistle lesson, then, is a snapshot taken toward the end of this time of apostolic discipline.

About 40 years later, Clement, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bishop of Rome, wrote a letter to the Corinthians, where similar problems had resurfaced. The Corinthians had evidently corrected their problems after Paul wrote to them, but the next generation in Corinth had forgotten where they had been. Clement wrote<sup>22</sup>:

“Every kind of honor and happiness was bestowed upon you, and then was fulfilled that which is written, ‘My beloved did eat and drink, and was enlarged and became fat, and kicked’ (Deuteronomy 32:15). From this flowed ambition and envy, strife and sedition, persecution and disorder, war and captivity. So the worthless rose up against the honored, those of no reputation against such as were renowned, the foolish against the wise, the young against those advanced in years. For this reason righteousness and peace are now far departed from you, inasmuch as everyone has abandoned the fear of God, and has become blind in His faith. Everyone neither walks in the ordinances of His appointment, nor acts a part becoming a Christian, but walks after his own wicked lusts, resuming the practice of an unrighteous and ungodly envy, by which death itself entered into the world”.

### **The Need for Discipline**

The Epistle lesson begins (2 Corinthians 1:21,22) with the words: “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and gives us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment”. John Chrysostom comments<sup>23</sup> as follows:

“From the past, He establishes the future. For it is He that establishes us in Christ (i.e. who does not allow us to be shaken from the faith which is in

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<sup>22</sup> Clement of Rome, First Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 3.

<sup>23</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, III, 4.

Christ); and He that anointed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts; how shall He not give us the future things?"

"For if He gave the principles and the foundations, and the root and the fount, (i.e. the true knowledge of Him, the partaking of the Spirit), how shall He not give the things that come of these: if for the sake of these, those are given, much more will He supply those. And if to such as were enemies He gave these, much more when now made friends will He 'freely give' to them those. Wherefore He said not simply 'the Spirit', but named 'earnest', (or down payment) that from this you might have a good hope of the whole as well. For if He did not purpose to give the whole, He would never have chosen to give 'the earnest' and to waste it without object or result."

"And what is, anointed, and sealed? He gave the Spirit by Whom He did both these things, making at once prophets and priests and kings; for in old times these three sorts were anointed. But we have now not one of these dignities, but all three preeminently. For we are both to enjoy a kingdom and are made priests by offering our bodies for a sacrifice, (for, said He, 'present your members a living sacrifice unto God' - Romans 12:1) and together with this we are constituted prophets too: for what things 'eye has not seen, nor ear heard,' (1 Corinthians 2:9) these have been revealed unto us".

With all this given to us, it would be truly tragic if it were all wasted because we fell into sin and decadence. Consider Judas Iscariot: He was sent out with the rest of the Twelve to heal the sick, cast out demons, and raise the dead (Matthew 10:1-23). But yet he was also incorrigible as a thief (John 12:6) and wasted his gifts and was replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:16-26). Paul knew all about this firsthand, being a Pharisee, and was involved in the decision to use Judas' 30 pieces of silver to buy the potter's field after Judas hanged himself (Matthew 27:3-10).

Paul knew he couldn't let the situation continue downhill in Corinth. He knew that the "Judases" in Corinth would create another truly tragic situation if he didn't act quickly and strongly. Therefore he tried to get them to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking to their hearts. In the Epistle reading, note how Paul didn't lord it over the Corinthians but tried to encourage them as much as possible to work things out themselves by hearing the Lord speak to them. Paul could have marched in there and really kicked some butt; but he didn't. That would make Paul the head of the Church, not Christ. Note also Paul's love for Corinth and his agony over having to correct them.

We note the words Paul used to describe the Church in Corinth: God has

- Established us (2 Corinthians 1:21)
- Anointed us (2 Corinthians 1:21)
- Sealed us (2 Corinthians 1:22)
- Given us the Spirit as a down payment (2 Corinthians 1:22)

One can think of this as a first installment on eternal life. The best is yet to come, but there is an urgent need of getting ourselves ready.

### **Paul's Love and Concern for Corinth**

Paul wrote, “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you” (2 Corinthians 2:4). He wanted so much for the Corinthians to know and understand what the Lord’s ways were for them, but he also knew that he couldn’t force it upon them. They had to take ownership of this or it wouldn’t work.

John Chrysostom stated<sup>24</sup> that we, as Christians, cannot make men better by force, only by persuasion. If we attempt to do so by force, we only make men worse. This is what we see Paul doing in Corinth: persuading them to move toward godliness, and refraining from the use of force.

“But in the case of human infirmities, it is not easy in the first place for a man to discern them, for no man ‘knows the things of a man, except the spirit of man which is in him’ (1 Corinthians 2:11). How then can any one apply the remedy for the disease when he does not know the character, often being unable to understand it even when he should be sickened with it himself? And even when it becomes clear, it causes him yet more trouble; for it is not possible to doctor all men with the same authority with which the shepherd treats his sheep. For in this case it is necessary to bind and to restrain from food, and to use the knife; but the reception of the treatment depends on the will of the patient, not of him who applies the remedy. For this was perceived by Paul ‘Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy’ (2 Corinthians 1:24). For Christians above all men are not permitted to correct by force the failings of those who sin. Secular judges indeed, when they have captured malefactors under the law, show their authority to be great, and prevent them even against their will from following their own devices. But in our case the wrongdoer must be made better, not by force, but by persuasion. Authority of this kind for the restraint of sinners has not been given us by law, nor, if it had been given, should we have any desire for the exercise of our power, since God rewards those who abstain from evil by their own choice, not of necessity. Consequently, much skill is required that our patients may be induced to submit willingly to the treatment prescribed by the physicians; and not only this, but that they may be grateful for the cure. For if anyone, when he is bound, becomes restless, he makes the problem worse; if he should pay no attention to the words which cut like steel, he inflicts another wound by means of this contempt, and the intention to heal only becomes the occasion of a worse wound. For it is not possible for anyone to cure a man by compulsion against his will”.

Paul cared for Corinth so much that he kept checking in on them, and sent his best worker (Timothy) to look in on them. Timothy also cared for Corinth a great deal. The Corinthians went about their lives expecting that Paul wouldn’t find out what they were doing; they didn’t realize that a number of people kept informing him. John Chrysostom stated<sup>25</sup>

“Paul did not learn all things by revelation of the Spirit, and for this we can see some reason. If the disciples in Corinth had believed that it were so, they would have lost all sense of shame, but now from expectation of concealment,

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<sup>24</sup> John Chrysostom, Treatise Concerning the Christian Priesthood, II, 3.

<sup>25</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, IX, vv. 19-21.

they were more easily corrected. When Timothy came he found their normal state of things, and reported it to Paul. Paul seems to have acted in like sort in his own person, when he delayed his coming to the Corinthians, that they might repent; therefore he wrote, 'to spare you I delayed to come to Corinth' (2 Corinthians 1:23). For his love was shown not simply in reporting his own state, but in his desire to learn of theirs; for this is the part of a soul, which has a care of others, which takes thought for them, and is always wrestling for them. At the same time too, he honored them by sending Timothy. 'For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state' (Philippians 2:20); that is, none of those whose care is like mine, none who 'will care truly for you'. Had he no one of those who were with him? No one likeminded, that is, who has yearnings and takes thought for you as I do. No one would lightly choose, he means, to make so long a journey for this purpose. Timothy is the one with me who loves you? For I might have sent others, but there was none like him. This then is that like-mindedness, to love the disciples as the master loves them. 'Who will truly care for you', that is, as a father. 'For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ' (Philippians 2:21), their own comfort, their own safety".

John Chrysostom also noted<sup>26</sup> that godly sorrow produces repentance. Paul had considerable sorrow over the events in Corinth, and Chrysostom admired Paul more for his love for Corinth in the face of this than for his holding together under persecution.

"Saul was the first king, and you know how he perished, after experiencing numberless ills. After him, David, Solomon, Abijah, Hezekiah, and Josiah likewise! It is not possible, without affliction and toil, without dejection of mind, to pass through the present life. But let us be receptive, not for such things as these, for which kings grieve, but for those things that give us great gain. 'For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, a repentance which brings no regret' (2 Corinthians 7:10). On account of these things we should be grieved; thus was Paul grieved for sinners, thus did he weep. 'For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you in many tears' (2 Corinthians 2:4). For when he had no cause of grief on his own account, he did so on account of others. Or rather he accounted those things to be his own, at least as far as grief went. Others were offended, and he burned; others were weak, and he was weak. Such grief as this is good, and is superior to all worldly joy. He who so grieves I prefer to all men, or rather the Lord Himself pronounces them blessed, who so grieve, who are sympathizing. I admire Paul for the dangers by which he died daily, yet this still more captivates me. For it came of a soul devoted to God, and full of affection, from the love which Christ Himself seeks, from a brotherly and a fatherly sympathy, or rather, of one greater than both these. Thus we should be affected, thus weep; such tears as these are full of great delight; such grief as this is the ground of joy".

Jerome stated<sup>27</sup> that good men have always sorrowed for the sins of others, and this is what Paul did with the Corinthians.

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<sup>26</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, XV, Moral.

<sup>27</sup> Jerome, Letter to Rusticus, CXXII, 1.



“Lot of old desired to rescue his wife as well as his two daughters, and refused to leave blazing Sodom and Gomorrah until he was himself half-on-fire; he tried to lead forth one who was bound by her past sins. But in her despair, she lost her composure, and looking back, became a monument of an unbelieving soul. Yet, as if to make up for the loss of a single woman, Lot’s glowing faith set free the whole city of Zoar. In fact, when he left the dark valleys in which Sodom lay and came to the mountains the sun rose upon him as he entered Zoar, or the little City; so-called because the little faith that Lot possessed. Though unable to save greater places, he was at least able to preserve smaller ones. For one who had gone so far astray as to live in Gomorrah could not, all at once, reach the high ground where Abraham, the friend of God, entertained God and His angels. For it was in Egypt that Joseph fed his brothers (Genesis 42:1-8), and when the bride speaks to the Bridegroom her cry is, ‘Tell me where you feed, where you make your flock to rest at noon’ (Song of Solomon 1:7). Good men have always sorrowed for the sins of others. Samuel lamented for Saul because he neglected to treat the ulcers of pride with the balm of penitence (1 Samuel 15:35). And Paul wept for the Corinthians who refused to wash out with their tears the stains of fornication” (2 Corinthians 2:4).

### **The Holy Spirit as a Guarantee**

Paul stated, “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). What does it mean, we might ask, to have the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee? Tertullian addressed<sup>28</sup> this by contrasting our flesh with our soul.

“The flesh, even now in this life, has the Holy Spirit by faith. The question remains to be asked how it is that the animate (or natural) body is sown? (1 Corinthians 15:43). The flesh has received the Spirit, but only its ‘guarantee’ (2 Corinthians 1:22), whereas the soul has received, not the guarantee, but the full possession. Therefore, the soul has the name of *animate* (or natural) body, expressly because of the higher substance of the soul in which it is sown. The flesh is destined afterward to become, through the full possession of the spirit, the spiritual body, in which it is raised again. The body is more commonly called after the substance with which it is fully furnished, than after that of which it has yet but a sprinkling?”

John Chrysostom gave<sup>29</sup> a very flowery description of the Lord’s work in remaking man and giving him the Holy Spirit. It gives us a good perspective on His kindness, His purpose and His goal. He describes the guarantee of the Holy Spirit, both the part we have now and the part that we shall receive later.

“When Christ came, He found the harlot, i.e. human nature, full of sores, brutalized, and oppressed by devils; how did He act? He drew near to her. She saw Him and ran away. He called the Magi saying, ‘Why are you afraid? I am not a judge, but a physician. I came not to judge the world but to save the world’.

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<sup>28</sup> Tertullian, On the Resurrection of the Flesh, II, vi, 53.

<sup>29</sup> John Chrysostom, Two Homilies on Eutropius, II, 11-13, 16.

The immediate first fruits of His coming were wise men (Matthew 2:1-2). The publican came and was turned into an evangelist (Matthew 9:9); the Canaanite woman came and partook of his loving kindness (Matthew 15:21-28). This is the mark of one who loves, not demanding an account of sins, but forgiving transgressions and offenses. He took the sinner and espouses her to Himself. He gave her a signet ring: the Holy Spirit. Paul said, 'Now He who establishes us with you is God, who has also sealed us, and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee' (1 Corinthians 1:21-22). Next, He said, 'Did I not plant you in a garden?' She said, 'yes, but the devil came and cast me out of the garden'. Now I am planting you in Myself, and I will uphold you. And so, the Lord carried our nature: and the devil approached and was beaten. 'I am the root, you are the branches' (John 15:5); so He planted her in Himself. 'But', she said, 'I am a sinner and unclean'. 'Let this not trouble you; I am a physician. For observe: He took dust from the earth and made man (Genesis 2:7); but the devil came, and perverted him. Then the Lord came, took him again, and remolded, and recast him in baptism, no longer to be of clay, but of a harder material. He subjected the soft clay to the fire of the Holy Spirit. 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire' (Matthew 3:11). He was baptized with water that he might be remodeled, with fire that he might be hardened".

"The kings of the earth and rulers, when they have treasures, prepare large houses, having strong walls, bars, doors, guards, and bolts in order that the treasure may be preserved. But Christ did the contrary; He placed the treasure not in a stone vessel but in an earthen one. The vessel is weak but the treasure is great; the vessel does not preserve the treasure, but the treasure preserves the vessel. The devil has come, the world has come, multitudes have come, and yet they have not stolen the treasure. The vessel has been scourged, yet the treasure was not betrayed; it has been drowned in the sea, yet the treasure was not shipwrecked; it has died, yet the treasure survives. You all know that the guarantee is a small part of the whole; let me tell you how. Someone goes to buy a house at a great price, and he says 'give me a guarantee that I may have confidence'. Or one takes a wife for himself; he arranges about dowry and property, and he says 'give me a guarantee'. Observe: in all covenants, there is a guarantee. Since Christ made a covenant with us (for He was about to take us as a bride), he also assigned a dowry to us not of money, but of blood. But this dowry, which He assigns, is the giving of good things 'such as eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, neither has entered into the heart of man' (1 Corinthians 2:9). He assigned these for the dowry: immortality, praise with the angels, release from death, freedom from sin, the inheritance of a kingdom, etc. Great was my dowry! He came to take the harlot (i.e. human nature), for so I call her, unclean as she was, that you might understand the love of the bridegroom. 'Have you lost paradise? Take it back! Have you lost your beauty? Take it back; take all these things. But yet the dowry was not given to me here".

"Why does He not give us the dowry here? 'It will be given when you have come to My Father, when you have entered the royal palace. I came to you not that you should stay here but that I might take you and return. Don't seek the dowry here; all depends on hope and faith'. Does He give us anything in this

world? We receive a guarantee that we may trust Him concerning that, which is to come; that is, we receive pledges and betrothal gifts. Therefore, Paul said, ‘I have espoused you’ (2 Corinthians 11:2). As gifts of betrothal, God has given us present blessings; they are a guarantee of the future, but the full dowry stays in the other world. The full dowry includes immortality; no sorrow; no poverty; no darkness, only light; liberty; complete health; righteousness, without sin or envy. We must wait for these in order that our fellow servants also may be saved. Our guarantee is the Holy Spirit, the supply of the Spirit. He gave the signet ring to the Apostles, saying ‘take this and give it to all’ (Matthew 28:19). The ring is portioned out, and yet is not divided”.

“The dowry of the bride was divided into two portions consisting of things present and things to come. The things present are those seen, given, experienced and belonging to this present life. The things to come are things heard, things taken on trust, and things to come after the resurrection. The former things you see, the latter you hear. The former things are great and surpassing all understanding. ‘Listen daughter and behold; hear the latter things and see the former that you may not think that you are to depend only on hope, faith and the future’. I give some things, and I promise others; the latter depend on hope, but receive the others as pledges, as a guarantee, as a proof of the remainder. I promised you a kingdom, and let present things be the ground of your trust in Me. He promised us a kingdom, and He has given us the greater part: the Lord of the kingdom. He promised us the resurrection of the body and He has given us the greater part: release from sins. Since sin brought forth death, by destroying the parent (i.e. sin), He shall also destroy the offspring. He has dried up the root, and shall also destroy the produce. What do I see? Dead men raised to life, lepers cleansed, the sea restrained, the paralytic braced up into vigor, paradise opened, loaves poured forth in abundance, sins remitted, the lame man leaping, the robber made a citizen of Paradise, the publican turned into an evangelist. Hear and see. Accept from present things a proof of the others”.

Basil, on the other hand, describes<sup>30</sup> the lot of those who reject the “Guarantee” and grieved the Holy Spirit by the wickedness of their ways. They will be deprived of their “dowry”, and it will be given to others.

“Anyone who carefully uses his reason will find that the Holy Spirit will have a function to discharge, even at the moment of the expected appearance of the Lord from heaven; in the day of His revelation, the Holy Spirit will be present with Him. For who is so ignorant as not to know that the crown of the righteous is the grace of the Spirit, bestowed in more abundant and perfect measure in that day, when spiritual glory shall be distributed to each in proportion, as he shall have nobly played the man? For among the glories of the saints are ‘many mansions’ (John 14:2) in the Father’s house, that is, differences of dignities; for as ‘star differs from star in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead’ (1 Corinthians 15:41-42). Those that were sealed by the Spirit for the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30 ), and purely preserve the first fruits, which they

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<sup>30</sup> Basil, On the Spirit, XVI, 40.

received of the Spirit, are they that shall hear the words ‘well done you good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things’ (Matthew 25:21-23). In like manner they, which have grieved the Holy Spirit by the wickedness of their ways, shall be deprived of what they have received, their grace being transferred to others. They shall even be wholly cut in half (Matthew 24:51 ), the cutting in half meaning complete separation from the Spirit. The body is not divided, part being delivered to chastisement, and part let off; nor is the soul cut in two. The cutting in half is the separation forever of the soul from the Spirit. For now, although the Spirit does not allow mixture with the unworthy, He nevertheless does seem in a manner to be present with them that have once been sealed, awaiting the salvation which follows on their conversion. But then He will be wholly cut off from the soul that has defiled His grace. For this reason, ‘In Hell there is none that makes confession; in death, none that remembered God’ (Psalm 6:5 LXX), because the aid of the Spirit is no longer present. Thus, the judgment cannot be accomplished without the Holy Spirit. The Word points out that He is Himself the prize of the righteous, when instead of the guarantee is given that which is perfect. The first condemnation of sinners is when they are deprived of that which they seem to have”.