

Isaiah 25: 6-9

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.

⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;

⁸ he will swallow up death for ever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the Lord has spoken.

⁹ It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

1. If you could have any four people - alive, dead or fictional - at your dinner party, who would it be and why?
2. Why do you think Scripture often depicts the new creation and the world to come as a feast?
3. Isaiah's prophecy is clear that all nations and kinds of people will one day sit at God's table. Who in our world most needs to sit round a table at the moment?

Matthew 22:1-14

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ² "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴ Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." ⁵ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶ while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸ Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." ¹⁰ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹² and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.'

4. Read the parable of the wedding garment over to yourself. What character or characters do you most identify with? Why?
5. Why do you think the man is bound and then thrown out?

6. Activity: make two list of names in a column. On the left, write down a hose people known to you personally or known to the wider world who you would like to have dinner with. Then, in the right-hand column, write down those people who you would never consider sitting down to dinner with. Once you've done this, draw a rectangle around the two columns to represent the one table God invites us to sit at. How do you feel sitting next to these people? Happy? Relieved, angry? Bring your thoughts and feelings to God in prayer