



## There's Simply No Excuse!

**W**e must always keep in mind that the Bible is an Eastern book. In the East, nearly every move a person makes is based on his religion. When you read the parables in the Gospels, more often than not, there are hidden religious customs and traditions. The act of constraining and providing excuses has a religious foundation. Luke 14:16-24 teaches about accepting salvation, and within this teaching, we will find what it means to be constrained and to provide excuses – and the consequences of elevating them over God's Will.

Luke 14:16-17 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade



many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

*As you delve into this section, please don't look at it through western eyes.*

In the East, when a man invited to you a great supper, he invited you three times. The first invitation was a written one – “and he bade many” – sent some time ahead of the event. Right before the supper, the man “sent his servant” to tell you that

everything was ready. This was the second one. Here are a couple of neat facts. When you arrived, your feet were washed and you were sprinkled with some nice perfume. Once done, the host would come and kiss you with a holy kiss. Then, for the third invitation, each member of the receiving family had the responsibility to greet you and provide you with a different reason to stay and eat. You would stand there and listen to each and every one. All three of these invitations comprised the act of constraining. Interestingly, even if you planned to stay, at first, you must offer some excuses. These acts were done, not to elevate any person, but to put God first.

Luke 14:18-20 And they all

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with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it [should be –dedicate it]: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them [dedicate and bless them]: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come [I'm still on my 12 month honeymoon].

Even though you must offer objections at first, there are only three legitimate excuses allowed. With one of these, you could excuse yourself from the great supper.

1. Bought a piece of ground and must go see it.
2. Bought a yoke of oxen and must prove them.
3. Have taken a wife.

If you had purchased some land, it

was a religious custom to dedicate the land in the evening during the day before you would start to use it. In fact, the buyer wouldn't even touch the land until this had been done. This was keeping God first and one man was planning to do this. This might not make much sense to you if you don't know about the rains in the East. You may have bought the ground many weeks before, but you are waiting on the former or first rain. Right after this rain comes, you must plow your ground. Then you must plant and await the later rain, a rain that comes in two to three months. If the former rain fell on the day of the great supper, you could be excused because you had to go and dedicate and bless your land that evening.

***People in the East are taught that they must dedicate everything to God before they use it. Otherwise it will not prosper.***

If you had purchased some oxen, it was a religious custom to bless and dedicate those oxen to God on the eve before you would start to use them. That's what "to prove" means. In the evening before you were going to use them, you would take them to your land and tie them up, dedicate and bless them, and ask God to protect them. This was keeping God first and one other man was planning to do this as well.

Finally, if you were still on your 12-month honeymoon, as was the custom, you were not allowed to accept any dinner invitations outside of from good ole mom and pop and family.

Deuteronomy 24:5 When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.

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The custom was that mom and pop took care of the bride and groom during this time. They provided you with all of your dinners during the first year. You and your new wife would go from parent's house to parent's house for your meals. One man was on his honeymoon and could not accept.

These three excuses are godly excuses because these people were putting and keeping God first.

Luke 14:21-24 So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges,

and compel ["urge" is a better word] them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Again, looking through Eastern eyes, begging is a religious act. A lot of people in the East put on long white robes at dinnertime and beg for food. They take a bowl with them and go knocking on someone's door asking for rice or something. The Buddhists do this today. If you are throwing a dinner and want to feed these beggars, you can send your servant out into the street and have him yell that there is a free dinner. The beggars will come running by the hundreds. Beggars wait for these dinners, which happen quite often, causing them to become very lazy.

Now, you might be asking, why did the lord get so angry? The answer lies in the fact that this is

not a parable about three excuses or constraining or even eating and drinking. It is a parable about the great supper, referring to entering into the Kingdom of God or heaven. In other words, it is an invitation, still future, to come enter the kingdom of God. Jesus Christ invited all to enter therein. The three excuses represented man's attraction and commitment to the customs and traditions of man and refusal to enter the kingdom. *Jesus expected man to walk away from traditions and walk into eternal life. He taught them to abandon religion and accept the things of Jesus Christ.*

Matthew 11:28-30 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart:

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and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

God bless you abundantly!

Jerry D. Brown

In general, any time non-Christians put their religious customs ahead of the gospel of Christ, they cannot be saved. Any time Christians put their religious customs and traditions ahead of God's Word, they become hard-hearted towards godly things. This is because the traditions of men cause man to harden his heart towards God. Jesus said to cut yourself loose from religion and come to him. The three excuses are good, but they are no good when put up against salvation. *No sincere and even godly excuse is good enough for refusing Jesus Christ. There will simply be no excuse good enough to not attend this supper designed to gain entrance into God's Kingdom (still future).*