

# INVITED!

## I. Introduction:

### A. Top Scientists were invited to a Party held on the MIT campus (RSVP), and this is how they replied:

- \* Audubon said he'd have to Wing it.
- \* Boyle said he was under too much Pressure.
- \* Darwin waited to see what Evolved.
- \* Descartes said he'd Think about it.
- \* Edison thought it would be Illuminating.
- \* Einstein thought it would be Relatively easy to attend.
- \* Morse's replied, "I'll Dash over and be there on the Dot"
- \* Newton planned to Drop in.
- \* Ohm Resisted the idea.
- \* Pavlov was Drooling at the thought.
- \* Watt reckoned it would be a good way to let off Steam.
- \* Wilbur Wright accepted, provided he and Orville could get a Flight.
- \* Dr Jekyll declined -- he hadn't been feeling Himself lately.

### B. We've all been to events that you really didn't want to attend?: Maybe it was an invitation given by a distant relative or work

associate-- & Even though you really didn't feel that relationally-connected→ You ended up attending out of a sense of Obligation... & I also imagine that all of us have given flimsy Excuses→ Of why we couldn't attend... **But I know an event that you DON'T want to Miss!:** B/C this one takes place in Heaven... (In **Revelation 19** John was given a vision & told) **"Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!"** And he added, "These are the true words of God"... Over &

**Over** again throughout Scriptures→ **We're** assured that there will be a great Marriage Feast in Heaven... **Just Think of how often** Jesus alluded to a future Great Banquet in His honor→ **That** all people of the world should desire to attend... **& This** marriage feast to come is as Sure→ **As** the Tomb is empty... **& I say that** b/c we've all heard of weddings that ended up never taking place→ **But NOT** this Wedding... **& By the Way, isn't it interesting: That of all** the Images God could have chosen to describe Heaven→ **One** of the most frequent is that Heaven is going to be like a Wedding with a great Banquet?... **If you think about it, that's an image that spans Time & Culture: I Mean**, to say that Heaven is like the Superbowl or like the 4<sup>th</sup> of July→ **Would** have little meaning in places other than here in the U.S.... **But stretching across** the Globe & back in History-- **You** can compare Heaven to a Wedding Celebration→ **&** It will immediately translate... **B/C** few things are more Joyous than a Wedding (At least, that's what we hope)...

### **C. Well, in Matthew 22 Jesus told this story:**

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when

the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless. Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are invited, but few are chosen."

Now the point of this story is this: **God will not be deterred from His announced intention to Honor His Son...** You See, The Jews were invited to come→ **But** they snubbed the invitation... **But God** remains Persistent→ **As** He continues Wooing people to come to the Feast... **But** Surprisingly (Sadly) many who have been invited→ **Will** chose not to attend...

**II. & So, this raises the Question:** Just Who (then) can you expect to see at the Wedding? (In other words, who's going to be in Heaven?)...

**A. Well, the first face you're going to see is the Groom:**

**I believe** the first person we'll take notice of is the Lord Jesus Christ... **Now**, I've participated in a few hundred weddings over the years→ **& I** can tell you that the Bride is always the Center Attraction... **I've even** coached the wedding party→ **On** how to Posture themselves as the ceremony proceeds... **There's one simple rule:** **Keep** your eyes on the Bride / **As** she moves, Rotate in order to keep your eyes on her... **But this wedding will be different:** **At this wedding**, nobody will be able to take their eyes off the Groom... **& When we all see the Groom:** **There** will be this Collective & Startling moment-- **When** we'll release our breath in Admiration & Astonishment→ (Thinking) "**Doesn't** He look Glorious!!"... **You See, we're made aware that for Jesus to walk among on Earth:** He chose to Empty Himself of some of His Divine Prerogatives... **& (in part)** this included what's first revealed back in the OT as **The Glory of God-- Which** points not only to His attributes→ **But** also His actual Appearance... **You'll Remember** how even Moses just being in God's presence temporarily→ **Left** a residual causing his face to glow supernaturally... **But** Jesus couldn't realistically walk among us as a man Radiating His Glory... **Of course, there was that rare moment where we were given a Glimpse on the Mountain**

**of Transfiguration:** Where we're told that His face shown like the Sun & His clothes a dazzling white... **But again**, Jesus couldn't (in fairness & in keeping character with His humble & gentle spirit) carry on life among people in a state like that... **But you'll also remember** that Jesus prayed in the Garden the night before He died (in **John 17**)... **& There** Jesus prayed for His Disciples→ **& for You & Me...** **& He also prayed for Himself:** Where He made this one request of God→ **"And Now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began"...** **& I can tell you that God answered this prayer:** B/C we're given descriptions of a few **Post-Ascension Appearances** of Jesus... **One** (of course) being when Jesus showed up in **Acts 9**→ **In order to** makes His appeal to Saul on the road to Damascus... **& How** was Jesus described?-- **As a Blinding Light...** **Another occasion is revealed in the book of Revelation 1:** **& Here** John is given a vision of Jesus→ **Where** He is described in this way (listen)-- **His head and his hair were as white as snow. And his eyes were like flames of fire. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace....And his face was like the sun in all its brilliance...** **Yes**, Jesus will be much more Visibly Conspicuous→ **When** we see Him in Heaven... **You Know, one of the things that stands out to me** when Heaven is pictured in movies coming out of Hollywood or Books written in our culture (Like Mitch Albom's *The First Five People You Meet In Heaven*)-- **Where** is Jesus?!... **The point being** that our Culture does with Heaven→ **Exactly** what it does on Earth-- (i.e.) **We** simply miss the point / **We** make it exclusively man-centered... **But not this wedding:** **At** this wedding→ **We'll** not be able to take our eyes off Jesus (There He will be our Preoccupation/Obsession)... **That's why when Paul was reflecting there in that prison in Philippi→ As he was torn between Life & Death:** (he said this) **"I desire to depart and be with Christ"...** (Notice that he didn't say) **"I desire to depart and go to Heaven"...** **Understand that Heaven** will simply be a physical extension of God's Goodness... **In other words**, the presence of God→ **Is** the essence of Heaven / **The Central/Irreducible draw of heaven...** **That's why Martin Luther** would say→ **"I had rather be in hell with Christ, than be in heaven without him"** (B/C a place with Christ cannot be hell→ **Only Heaven**)... **Again, That's** what we lost in the Garden / **That's** what sin has Cost us / **That's** why deep down we Long for God... **After All, why does God choose the image of a "Groom"?: I think** many people see Jesus more like a Celebrity (Rock-Star / Movie Star)... (i.e.) **A Person** surrounded by so much Fame-- **That** when you get to Heaven→

You'll only see Him from a distance... & Maybe after a Billion Years→ You'll get close enough to ask Him for His autograph... **NO, that's the very point of the image of the Groom: (i.e.) We're Destined for Intimate Friendship with God**... & So, somehow each of us (Like the Disciples themselves)→ **Will** actually be able to spend quality time with Jesus (That's our Destiny)... & We're all going to say the same thing→ "Man! Doesn't He look Glorious!"...

## **B. But there will be other guests at the Party-- The Angels:**

One of the wonders of Heaven→ Will be learning about the Host of Heaven... & Our very first eyewitness glimpse of the Angels→ **Will** be when Jesus comes for His Bride... & I can assure you that Angels aren't cute chubby Cherubs→ **That** grace Cards & Cartoons... On the rare occasions in history when Angels appeared on Earth→ **Nobody** responded by saying, "Isn't he cute?".... Rather (typically) people who witnessed the presence of Angels were so overwhelmed→ **They** instinctively fell to the ground in panic-- B/C angels are Commanding (Intimidating) Beings... **BUT** (at the wedding) we're not going to be afraid→ **When** we see the Thousands upon Thousands of Angels... & I'll admit (just knowing about their capacity & delight in executing the Sole desires of God)→ **I am intrigued with the idea of learning more about these brilliant ancient creatures who have lived with God: They** have Guarded us (Gone to fierce Battle for us / & Served as God's agents in answer to our Prayers)-- & So, having served us on Earth→ **Will** make meeting them in Heaven even more Fascinating... **In Fact, I already know** from Scriptures that Not all Angels are alike→ & That there's even a Hierarchy that distinguishes them... & Think about It: Do you really think that all the Music & Praise of God that He is capable of receiving→ **You've** heard & experienced yet?!... I Imagine that there are ways to worship God that we can't even fathom→ B/C we haven't heard the Angels yet... **You might remember that on one occasion Jesus said that when we get to Heaven→ We'll (in some ways) "Be like the Angels":** & What Jesus meant was that we're not going to Age / We're not going to get Sick / We're not going to Die / We're not going to Procreate... **But there are some important ways that we're NOT going to be like Angels: Understand**, when we go to Heaven→ We don't become Angels (no bell rings / & no wings are handed out)-- **NO**, Angles are Angels & Humans are Humans... & There are

wonderful reasons for this distinction: **First of all**, the Bible never says that Angels were created in the Image of God... That's a Dignity that God has uniquely imprinted in you & me... **Second**, the Bible never even alludes to the idea→ **That** God made provision for the Salvation of the Angels... The Angels that rebelled against God were cast out of Heaven→ **& a place** referred to as Hell was created as the destination for Satan & his angels (Remember, they were in Heaven itself→ So what more could God have offered them?)... **But** God did set in motion a Rescue effort to Save you & me... **& I'll tell you something else**: Nowhere in the Bible does it say that Angels are Co-Heirs with Jesus Christ... Yet, that's our destiny... **Our destiny is to be raised to a position of honor greater than the Angels themselves...**

**C. & That leads us to who is going to be the Guests of Honor at this Wedding:** You know who that is, don't you?... We read in **Revelation 19**

Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

**Yes, at this wedding we will not be able to take our eyes off the Groom:** **But It's also true** that the Groom will not be able to take His eyes off the Bride... **& Who's the Bride?:** Why the Bride is the Redeemed throughout all the ages... **& Isn't it the ultimate Cinderella Story:** Maybe that's why we're attracted to this story→ B/C it's actually embossed on our very own souls-- A Child who is Neglected (Scorned / & Abused)→ Is picked by the Prince to be His Bride... I mean, this is probably the Greatest Surprise in Heaven-- (i.e.) The makeup of the Bride-- WE, the ones nobody would have deemed Worthy (Chosen)...

**Back in 1990 in the city of Boston, MA:** A young couple was planning to get married... **& They** went to the **Hyatt Hotel** to plan their wedding banquet... **& By** the time they had selected the setting & menu→ **It** had turned into quite an extravagant event (**The** banquet alone was going to cost them ~\$13,000)... **& By** contract they had to pay half the money upfront... **& Then just before the big day:** The Groom gets cold feet / **&** Decided that he just



wasn't ready to make this commitment... **Of course**, his Fiancé is crushed→ **& Now** she has to go through the humiliating process of cancelling all the arrangements... **Well, she goes to the Hyatt Hotel→ Where she meets with the Events Manager: & This** Events Manager couldn't have been more sympathetic→ **Since** she herself had been through a similar experience (& she knew the pain of it)... **But** (nonetheless) she had bad news-- (she said) "**I'm** so sorry, it's such a late cancellation→ **It's** company policy that we can only return 10% of your deposit (only \$1,300)....**So**, you've got two choices-- **You** can cancel the banquet → **&** absorb the loss / **Or You** can just go ahead and have a party"... **Now here I need to tell you more about this jilted-bride: Ten years earlier** she lived in a homeless shelter-- **But** she made some good choices / **Got** her life back on track / **Got** a good job / **Saved** her money... **& So**, after some thought→ **She** decided to go ahead & throw the party... **& You know who she invited?: She** went to the Homeless Shelters there in Boston (Rescue Missions) / (she said) "**You** get word out to those who sleep under the bridges-- **& You** tell them to come to the Hyatt Hotel→ **B/C** they're invited to my party"... **She only made one change in the party menu: In honor** of the ex-groom she changed the main course to Boneless Chicken... **& They had a party like no one had ever scene: People** who literally lived off the food in the back alleys→ **Came** to the Hyatt Hotel & they Feasted & Danced... **B/C** for one night the people that some considered the scum of the city→ **Were** the guests of Honor... **AND, it's going to happen again: There's** going to be a wedding banquet→ **&** (oh, my) you ought to see the guest list!... **& They'll** be there not b/c they Deserved it→ **But** b/c they were Invited... **We will reach our destiny-- Not b/c we're Worthy to attend→ But b/c we're Willing to attend...** **& Jesus** has paid for this party→ **He** simply asks us to come-- **& I hope** all of you will / **I hope** when you get this invitation→ **You** won't make an Excuse...

**III. Just one thing you need to know: No** Admittance will be granted without proper attire... **You See**, in the days of Jesus (When a rich man was going to throw a wedding for his son)-- **He would** make special Robes for the wedding→ **& He** would send them (Along with the invitation)... **& So**, when you came to the banquet→ **You** were wearing the Robe that showed you'd been invited... **Now, if you want to come to this wedding: You** need to be

dressed right... & What are you suppose to wear?-- Well, let me show you--  
**Revelation 7:9, 13-14**

After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.... Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

**There will be no Wedding Crashers:** & Yes, this creates Tension in our culture (Anxiety /& Misunderstanding)-- But understand, if you can get to this wedding w/o your clothes being washed by the Blood of the Lamb→ **Then** the Cross was the biggest Blunder in the History of the world... **Truth Is:** Only those of us who come Trusting in the Atoning work of Jesus Christ→ **Will** be able to participate in this wedding... **Truth Is:** It doesn't matter what we have done (or where your life may be)→ **You & I** are still Invited-- & God can get you ready for this wedding (He will do this!)

**IV. Let me end with this:** When William Dyke was ten years old→ **He** was blinded in an accident... Despite his disability, William graduated from a university in England with high honors→ **Where** he fell in love with the daughter of a high-ranking British naval officer-- & they became engaged... **Not long before the wedding:** William had eye surgery in the hope that the operation would restore his sight-- If it failed, he would remain blind for the rest of his life... & He approached this with one condition: William insisted on keeping the bandages over his eyes until the moment of the wedding→ **B/C** he wanted the first person he saw to be his new bride... **Well, the wedding day arrived:** The many guests (including



royalty, cabinet members, and distinguished men and women of society) assembled together to witness the exchange of vows... **William's father & the Doctor** (who performed the surgery) stood next to William→ **As** the wedding march began / **&** his bride slowly walked toward him down the aisle... **As soon as she arrived at the altar:** **Tension** filled the room-- **As** the surgeon took a pair of scissors out of his pocket→ **&** cut the bandages from William's eyes... **The congregation** held their breath as they waited to find out→ **If indeed** William could see the woman standing before him... **& As he stood face-to-face with his bride-to-be:** (William's words echoed throughout the cathedral) "You are more beautiful than I ever imagined!"... **Someday** we'll see Jesus face to face→ (& Jesus will say) "You are so Beautiful!"