

The Gospel Invitation: Ellen White's Call During the Feast Pt. 2

In the Review and Herald, only 8 days later, another article regarding the call inviting them to keep the feast was written. This was concerning the series of meetings endorsed by Ellen White at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. Of the meeting, she said:

“We are at this time in our camp-meeting having a feast of precious things. The word is presented in a most powerful manner. The Holy Spirit has been poured out upon Brother Prescott in a great measure... Brother Prescott has been bearing the burning words of truth such as I have heard from some in 1844. The inspiration of the Spirit of God has been upon him. Unbelievers say, “These are the words of God. I never heard such things before.” We have had the truth presented in clear lines. Bro. Prescott has never had such power in preaching the truth as he has had since coming to this meeting. The unbelievers sit with their eyes riveted on him in amazement, as the truth comes forth from his lips, vitalized by the Spirit of God. When I consider the responsibility resting upon all who hear this heaven sent message, I tremble at the word of the Lord. Who will receive the message sent to them?” November 6, 1895 (Letter 25, 1895 to S. N. Haskell, unreleased)

The first part, given on October 28th [can be read here](#). The November 5th article of the Review and Herald, 1895, is as follows:

“A man who had been invited to the feast with Christ in the house of one of the chief Pharisees, and who heard Christ declare what was the duty of those who had God's bounties, had

exclaimed in self-satisfied complacency, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." He had designed to draw away the minds of those at the feast from the subject of their practical duty; but instead of this he furnished an occasion for the utterance of a parable that had still deeper significance, and that more plainly opened before the company the character and value of their present privileges.

Jesus said: "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. And they all 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; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." Christ had sent out an invitation to a feast that he had provided at great cost. He had sent the Holy Spirit to move upon the minds of prophets and holy men of old to invite his chosen people to the rich feast of the gospel. The man who had sought to turn the attention from the practical duties that Christ presented, thought to carry the minds past the present life to the remote time of the resurrection of the just; but the Lord Jesus unveiled the deceptive utterance, and by means of the parable of the supper he showed that they had a part to act in that very time if they should ever have a part in the blessedness which should come in the future. They were despising the present invitation to the gospel feast. Christ had been invited as a guest to the house of the Pharisee, and he did not excuse himself. He respectfully responded to the invitation, knowing it would furnish him an opportunity to enlighten the minds of the people. The man who had sought to divert the attention of the company, spoke with great assurance, as though he thought he would certainly eat bread in the kingdom of God. But Jesus warned him and all present against the danger of rejecting the present invitation to the gospel feast. Those who refuse the

invitation will never taste of the marriage supper.

He gave them the result of refusing the first invitation. He said, "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." The servant had shown him that those to whom he had sent his invitation had rejected his message. The manner of excuses they offered, showed the selfish nature of their refusals. The Lord's messengers in every age have given the gospel invitation. The Lord had brought Israel as a favored nation out of Egypt, he had manifested great love and compassion, and had freed them from a life of servitude to become a holy and happy people. Of them it could have been said, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." The Lord had first sent his invitation to his chosen people, but they had slighted and rejected his messenger. How vain, how needless, were the excuses they offered; but are the excuses that men give in this age any more sensible than those offered in the time of Christ?

Some who are invited exclaim, "I beg thee have me excused. If I should come, my neighbors would jest at and ridicule me, and I cannot bear their scorn. I have lived among them a long time, and I do not want to displease my neighbors. If they would all come, I would be very thankful to accept this invitation; but because they refuse the message of God, I beg thee have me excused." Others are desirous of paying for their lands and of building up their temporal interests, and the powers of mind and soul and body are absorbed in their earthly affairs. They are deceived in the same manner as was Eve, who was allured to do the very thing that the Lord told her not to

do. Satan suggested to her that the Lord was keeping her from great and high enjoyments by unnecessary prohibitions; but the higher good could only be received by a course of disobedience to God by which she would lose the blessedness of the favor of God, and forfeit her beautiful Eden home. When the Lord speaks, will men act as did Adam and Eve, and follow their example of disobedience? Which voice shall we heed, the voice of God, or the suggestions of the great destroyer? When God commands, it is for our present and eternal good to obey. When he presents our dangers, it is safe to reverence every injunction. Voices will sound in every direction, bidding us to turn from the plain commandments of God. The pleasure-loving, the unbelieving, the disobedient, the traitorous, will present pleasing, fictitious promises of permanent exaltation that they will claim as sure to us if we will follow the course that God has forbidden. With flattering lips they will present peace and safety when destruction is at hand. Deceived themselves, they will view things of eternal interest in a false light, and will cry peace to those who choose their own way and follow their own imaginations in daring to transgress God's holy requirements. The invitation to the gospel supper will have no charm for them, though the message is, "Come; for all things are now ready."

Shall we venture to turn from God's word? Every excuse that is offered is a falsehood of Satan, a seduction by which he would draw the human mind from God. But the Lord, who holds our eternal destiny in hand, will not always be mocked. The loving and compassionate Jesus declares that there is a greater sin than that for which Sodom was overthrown. It is the sin of those who, after hearing the gospel invitation to come to the marriage supper of the Lamb, turn away, and refuse to respond to the heavenly invitation. The invitation to the gospel feast is often rejected with apologies; but those who do this show themselves to be the very actors whom the Lord saw, and presented in his message while at the house of the Pharisee.

0 what senseless excuses are made for refusing to accept the conditions upon which salvation is promised! The excuses are varied that men offer to God for refusing his invitation, but they have no weight with God. The Lord has provided the feast at infinite expense, at a cost beyond all human computation. Who can comprehend the fact that God humbled himself to bear the transgressions of a fallen world? We despise Esau for selling his birthright for a mess of pottage; what about your own case? Has not your reason been convinced that you should accept the gospel invitation? Has not the Holy Spirit done its office work upon your heart and convinced you of sin, and you have thought you would repent and be ready when the messengers came to bid you to the wedding? The invitation has come to you, but when the final message reached your ears, and you heard the voice saying, "Come; for all things are now ready," were you ready to respond? When Esau sold his birthright, he thought he could easily win it back; but he found no place for repentance. Take heed lest you too long slight the heavenly invitation.

The servant who first presented the invitation, represents those who proclaimed to the Jews the advent of the Son of God, and who pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sins of the world. The priests, rulers, and religious teachers, who should have been the first to receive Jesus, ignored the message and hated the messenger. They not only refused to go to the feast themselves, but as far as possible hindered all others by misrepresenting and misinterpreting the word of God, while teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. They had slain the prophets, and at last thought they were doing God service by taking the life of his Son.

The rejection of light leaves men in darkness, so that they know not at what they stumble. The invitation which the Jews refused, was sent to the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. The terrible denunciation was pronounced that none of

those who had refused the invitation should taste of the marriage supper. They had listened to the suggestions of Satan, and had made excuses, and under his leadership they would be left in the darkness of unbelief. They intrenched themselves as did Pharaoh in stubborn resistance against the Lord Jesus and his disciples; they chose Barabbas instead of Christ.

The precious message has come to us in these last days. Warnings and entreaties have sounded. The invitation has been given, "Come; for all things are now ready." While it is called today, harden not your hearts. Shall men and women whom God has blessed with great light, permit themselves to be led astray by the flattering lies of the enemy of their souls? Shall they seek for distinction, for worldly honor and prosperity, when it involves disobedience to the commands of God? Will they yield their eternal interests and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage? Shall we not arouse, and shake off the dangerous lethargy of the world, which is lulling us to sleep in the cradle of carnal security? Will you who are intimidated with the jeers of those who trample upon God's commandments yield to the temptation to be cowards, and to forfeit the favor of God rather than to endure the reproaches of your neighbors who laugh at your singular faith? God's Spirit will not always strive with man. Those that slight the invitation, scorn the last message of mercy that God sends for their salvation, and they cannot taste of the blessed supper. Jesus, the compassionate Saviour, has sent to our world the general invitation, "Come; for all things are now ready." Will you imitate the Jews, who refused the invitation? To us the invitation is given, and the Lord would have you fear and tremble at his word, that he may kindle in your heart hope and faith and holy trust. He commands you to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and promises that all necessary things shall be added unto you. He unfolds before you the glories of paradise, and the question is, Will you accept his invitation?

The angels hastened Lot out of Sodom; but the same warnings that came to Lot are now sounding to a world that is heedless and impenitent. To each of us the message is given: "Haste! escape for thy life!" Better opportunities will never come. No earthly interest is worth a moment's consideration where eternal interests are involved.

Christ sends his messages of love, and directs the attention of men to the nobler world which they have lost from their vision. He seeks to uplift the mind of him who is absorbed in worldly enterprises, and bids him to look within the gates ajar, from which the glory of God is streaming to earth. With eternity in view, he asks the soul, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The Lord Jesus made the world and its inhabitants; but he would lift the mind from the slavery which the love of the world enforces. Christ has pledged his own life for the redemption of his people, and he would have them consider their higher, eternal claims. The duties of this life must be placed in harmonious relation to their eternal interests, or else the affections will be absorbed in earthly things, and the mind will be utterly incapacitated for the great things of the heavenly world. The perceptions will be obscured by the little worrying, perplexing things of this life; the thoughts will be engrossed by the things of earth; and the moral, mental, and physical capabilities which God claims for his service, will be dwarfed and weakened by serving self and the world. Christ assigns to the world its place, and subjects men to the will and mind of God. He would separate them from the vanities of life, and have them co-operate with God in blessing the needy, in lifting up those who are bowed down, and in inheriting the blessing which God has promised to those who are laborers together with him."