



Nurturing Faith...
Every Day in Every Way

October 12, 2014

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 25:1-9

Psalms 23 (5)

Philippians 4:1-9

Matthew 22:1-14

Excuses! Excuses! Object: An Invitation.

Look what I have. It's an invitation to a party. A friend of mine is having a birthday party and has invited me to come. Look what it says at the bottom of the invitation... it says, "R.S.V.P." Do you know what that means? (The term R.S.V.P. comes from the French expression "répondez s'il vous plaît", meaning "please respond".) It means that my friend wants me to reply to the invitation and say whether I will attend the party or not.

Sometimes people who receive an invitation to a party don't want to go, so they make up excuses. Here are some excuses they might use:

- I've had a bad cold and I just can't seem get over it.
- I think we are going to visit my grandmother.
- We are having a test at school and I need to stay home and study.
- I have to go to soccer practice.
- Mom said I have to babysit my little brother.

Making excuses isn't new. Even back in Bible times people made excuses. Jesus once told a story about a king who threw a party, but none of the people he invited showed up for his party. In Jesus' story, the king was going to have a party for his son who was getting married. Since he was a king, and this was his only son, you can imagine that it was going to be quite a celebration and it was a tremendous honor to be invited!

All of the plans had been made, the food was prepared, the invitations had been sent. The day of the celebration came, but no one showed up! The king sent his servants to see where the people were and why they had not come to his celebration. The people all began to make excuses about how busy they were.

The king was very upset, so he told his servants to go out into the streets and invite everyone they saw to come to his son's wedding celebration. They did exactly what the king told them to do and the Bible tells us that the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Can you guess who the King was in the story that Jesus told? It was God. I'm sure you know who his Son was in the story. Right, it was Jesus.

Jesus has sent you an invitation. You will find his invitations in here. (Hold up a Bible.) The Bible is full of invitations from Jesus. He says, "Whoever is thirsty, let him come and take the free gift of the water of life." (Rev. 22:17) He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) He says, "Let the little children

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in God's salvation. Alleluia (Isa. 25:9)

come to me, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14) Jesus has invited us to come to him, and yet, some people are still making excuses.

Father, thank you for Jesus, your Son. We thank you for his invitation to come and receive the free gift of life which he offers. Without making excuses, we say, "Yes, Lord, Yes!" Amen.
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Word Search Puzzle

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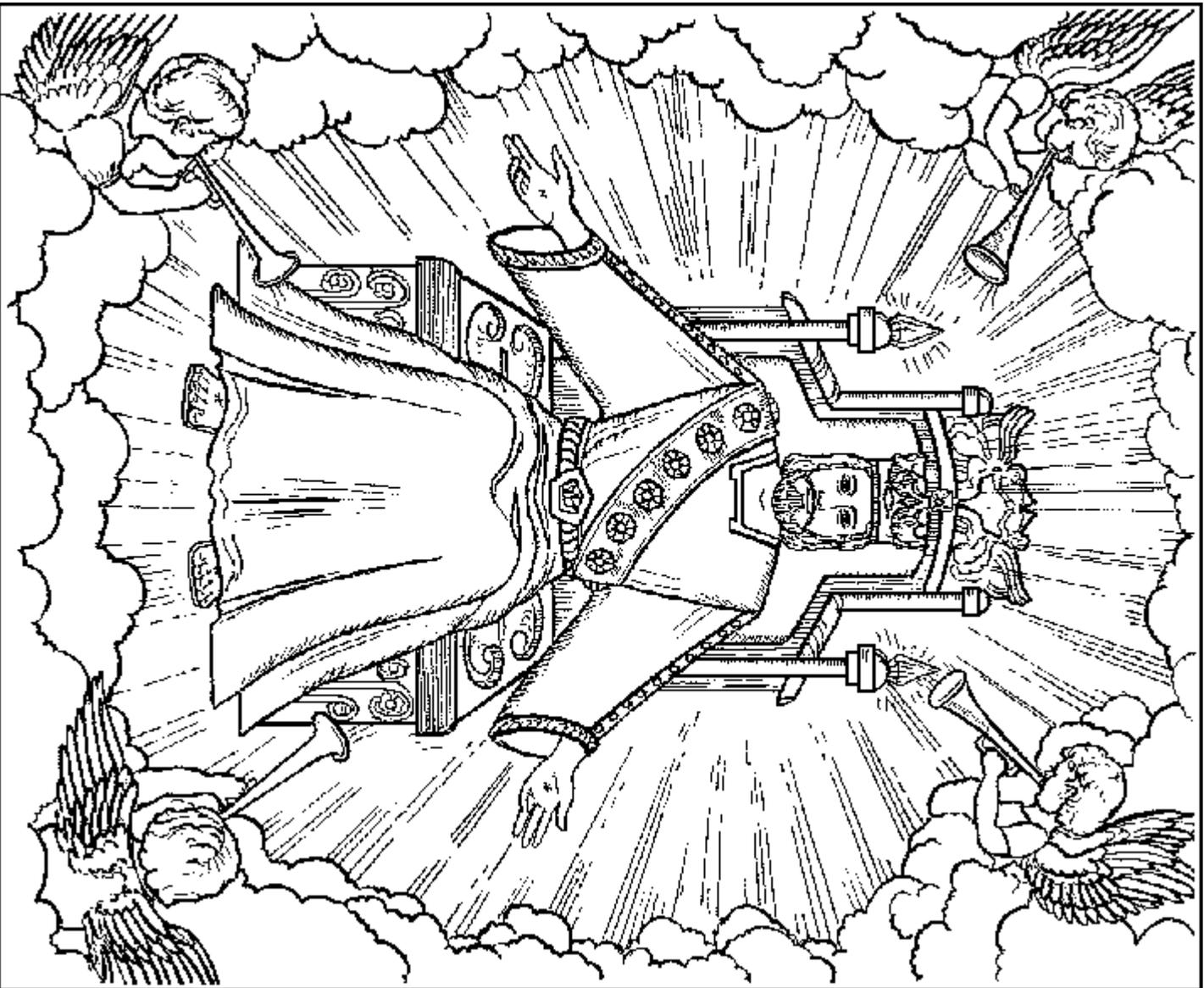
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PARABLES	STREET	INVITED	BANQUET
GUESTS	HEAVEN	KINGDOM	CORNERS
SERVANTS	CATTLE	COME	OXEN
FILLED	REFUSED	WEDDING	DINNER

EXCUSES GAME: Have children sit in a circle with a big ball! A child will toss the ball to another player and give an excuse that they can think of. The child who catches the ball will then give an excuse and roll or toss the ball to someone else, etc. Children will begin to realize how funny excuses sound. Begin to tell the story.

TEACHER WITH EXCUSES: The teacher can start the class with EXCUSES, such as I can't take attendance because I don't like this pencil, I can't write on the chalk board because the chalk is too short, or I can't get your construction paper because my back hurts, I can't open this can of cookies because the lid is on too tight, etc. Children will begin to get the LESSON VERY QUICKLY!

YOU ARE INVITED!



Go to the streets corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.

Matthew 22:9