

# The Great Invitation

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*Revelation 22:16-20*

## INTRODUCTION

- A. “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let everyone who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let everyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.”
- B. The ministry of Jesus could almost be summed up by the words, “Come to me.”
  - 1. “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30.
  - 2. “On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.”’” John 7:37,38.
- C. Many have called this “The Great Invitation.”
  - 1. Why? Coming to Jesus is not a simple matter.
    - a. Coming to Jesus means adopting a hard way of life. READ LUKE 14:25-33.
    - b. Coming to Jesus means leaving sin. He told the woman caught in adultery, “Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.” (John 8:11). In coming to Jesus, she needed to give up her sinful lifestyle.
  - 2. The invitation is not just a call to live differently.
    - a. It is a call from our Creator.
    - b. It is a call to life.
    - c. It is a call to forgiveness.
    - d. It is a great invitation.
    - e. It is great because:
      - 1) Of its Sender.
      - 2) Of its recipients.
      - 3) Of its benefits.

## THE INVITATION IS GREAT, BECAUSE OF ITS SENDER

- A. First of all, we must understand that this invitation comes from an awesome God.
  - 1. READ ISAIAH 6:1-5.
    - a. Isaiah trembled at the sight he beheld. He trembled because he saw the holiness of God.
    - b. The seraphs called to one another, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”
    - c. Because he is holy, God stands as the supreme example of moral perfection.
  - 2. The One who sends this invitation created the universe. He created mankind.
    - a. Revelation 4:11 reads, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”
    - b. That boggles my mind. The Creator of man cares enough about me to send me a personal invitation to come to him.
- B. God needed to make some preparations in order to extend this invitation.
  - 1. You ladies know how this works, you will not allow just anyone to see your house. If you invite someone over for dinner, you clean and make other necessary arrangements.
  - 2. God did the same thing. In order for this invitation to be extended, Jesus had to leave heaven.
    - a. READ PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8.
    - b. This passage speaks of Jesus’ emptying himself. In emptying himself, Jesus left heaven with all its glory and splendor. He gave up his right to divine attributes-being free from weariness, for example.
    - c. You see, Jesus had to leave heaven. In heaven, there is no Gethsemane. There is no Calvary. There is no cross. There is no sin. There is no death.
    - d. Jesus had to experience Gethsemane. He had to experience Calvary. He had to hang on a cross. He had to experience my sin. He had to die.
  - 3. In order for us to be here today, he had to take my sins upon himself.
    - a. 1 Peter 2:24 reads, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross so that free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”
    - b. READ ISAIAH 52:13–53:12. No other passage in all the Bible explains so eloquently that Jesus died for us.

- c. Jesus became our vicarious sacrifice, i.e., Jesus took our place. We should have died, but he died instead.
- d. “My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more.”
- 4. God made these preparations because he loves me.
  - a. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” John 3:16.
  - b. God did not have to give his Son to redeem man. God could have allowed us to go to hell. But God loves me so much that he could not stand to see that happen.
  - c. Please understand that God truly does love you. He gave his only Son to redeem you.
  - d. “The love of God is greater far Than tongue or pen can ever tell It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell; The guilty pair, bowed down with care, God gave His Son to win His erring child He reconciled, And pardoned from his sin. Could we with ink the ocean fill, And were the skies of parchment made; Were ev’ry stalk on earth a quill And ev’ry man a scribe by trade; To write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry; Nor could the scroll contain the whole, Tho’ stretched from sky to sky. Oh love of God how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forevermore endure — The saints’ and angels’ song.”
  - e. God truly loves you more than we could ever say.
  - f. His Son left glory and went to Calvary for you.

## **THIS INVITATION IS GREAT BECAUSE OF ITS RECIPIENTS**

- A. God presents this invitation to sinful man. That’s the beauty of it all.
  - 1. God is a holy Being. Man is sinful. But God still calls man into fellowship with him.
  - 2. We do not deserve salvation. We deserve hell. “But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, he made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:4-7).
  - 3. The word grace sums up the Gospel of Christ. God gives us salvation because of his grace.
- B. God gives us salvation by grace, because we cannot have salvation any other way.
- C. Man has a serious sin problem.
  - 1. Scripture clearly teaches that all sin.
    - a. “There is no one who does not sin.” 1 Kings 8:46.
    - b. “There is no one who is righteous, not even one.” Romans 3:10.
    - c. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23.
  - 2. Because man sins, he stands condemned, without any hope.
    - a. “Remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” Ephesians 2:12.
    - b. That is a horrible situation—being without hope and without Christ.
    - c. When man is in sin, he stands condemned to an eternal hell. No hope. No future. No salvation.
- D. Our sin affects God.
  - 1. Our sin hurts him. He created man to have fellowship with him. when man sins against God and severs that fellowship, God’s heart bleeds with grief.
  - 2. “The LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the LORD said, ‘I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created — people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, For I am sorry that I have made them.’” Genesis 6:5-7.
  - 3. God did not believe he made a mistake in creating man. But he was greatly hurt by man’s contempt for his commands.
  - 4. If you are not living obediently, God grieves over you. God wants you to have fellowship with you. God loves you. God wants to save you.
  - 5. But that decision is up to you. God has completed his “job.” Now you must act upon what God has done.
- E. Sin is horrible. It does not give what it offers. Sin deceives. The writer of Hebrews warns us against the “deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 3:13).
  - 1. Sin is so horrible that God’s very Son had to die to redeem us.
  - 2. Sin held us in its power, until Jesus came and loosed that power.
  - 3. When one truly considers sin, he cannot help but be amazed that God wants to redeem man.

## THE INVITATION IS GREAT BECAUSE OF ITS BENEFITS

- A. In this invitation, God offers us freedom from our burden of sin. This is a call to forgiveness.
1. “Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of your possession? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in showing clemency. He will again have compassion upon us; he will tread our iniquities under foot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.” Micah 7:18, 19.
  2. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.” Isaiah 1:18.
  3. “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates.” Revelation 21:14.
  4. But my favorite passage on forgiveness is Psalm 32:1,2: “Happy [or blessed] are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Happy are those to whom the LORD imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.”
    - a. This psalm was probably written after David committed adultery with Bathsheba.
    - b. David had gone as far down as anyone could possibly go. But God still forgave. And David knew the blessing of forgiveness.
    - c. God could not give us a greater blessing than forgiving us of our sins.
    - d. One evening I had the pleasure of baptizing a friend into Christ. He later confessed to me that he had trouble going to sleep that night. He said he just kept thinking of everything being wiped clean, made whole. And what a wonderful feeling that is.
  5. Regardless of what we might have done, God can and will forgive.
- B. Not only do we have the wonderful blessing of forgiveness, but we have the assurance of salvation.
1. READ 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-17.
  2. In heaven, we will be able to always be with God.
  3. There we need not worry about sickness nor death. Those things no longer exist.
  4. God will be our Protector. Nothing will be able to harm us in heaven.
- C. We deserve hell.
1. We deserve eternal torment, eternal separation from God.
  2. We do not deserve to gaze upon our Savior’s face, but we deserve to gaze upon Satan’s face and live with him eternally.
  3. READ LUKE 16:19-26.
    - a. The rich man lived wonderfully in this life. He had everything he could possibly imagine.
    - b. But he neglected God. He left God out of his life.
    - c. And as a result, he went to torment. The torment was so great that he begged Abraham to have Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger and comfort him in the flames of torment.
    - d. Jesus described hell as a place of “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 8:12).
  4. That’s what you and I deserve. But God extends to us an invitation to forsake that. That’s why the invitation is a “Great Invitation.”
    - a. We can enjoy the same benefits as Lazarus.
    - b. Things may not be great in this life. But if we accept this invitation, we will be comforted in the next.
    - c. If we accept this invitation, we will never need to fear hell. If we are faithful to God, it is impossible for us to go to hell or to experience torment when this life is over.
    - d. One man said, “That which makes hell so full of horror, is, that it is below all hopes; and that which makes heaven so full of splendor, is, that it is above all fears. The one is a night without the return of day; the other is a day free from the approach of night.”

## CONCLUSION

- A. I want you to leave here understanding something this morning.
1. If your heart is not right with God, you are damned to eternal torment. You have no hope. You are lost. You have nothing to look forward to.
  2. But God loves you. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” (John 3:16).
  3. Because God loves you, he extends this invitation. He said through Ezekiel, “As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?” (33:11).
  4. Why will you die? Why will you spurn the invitation? Why will you go to hell?
- B. If you need to come to Jesus, come right now as we stand and sing.