

## The Great Invitation

Glenn Robertson

Revelation 22:10-21

Invitations are emotionally powerful. It is wonderful for someone to think enough of you to send you a personalized invitation. I remember the first invitation I received. I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and I received an invitation to a dance. The dance was hosted by a girl's organization – like a coming of age thing. Yet, I was amazed to be considered to attend the dance. Someone thought of me!!!! Likely, every male student was invited.

Another time, when I was in seminary, I received an invitation to be recognized as an Outstanding Men of America. That seemed impressive. I received a small plaque on marble. Wow! I've made it! Until I began to realize it is all a marketing scheme. Turns out they want you to buy some book that shows all the other fools who thought they were outstanding Men of America. I had my suspicions. I hadn't done anything outstanding.

Yet, invitations are emotionally powerful. "You are invited" has a powerful appeal because it makes you feel wanted. It makes you feel valued, loved, special. God has given us an invitation. It is His closing words to John's vision we call Revelation. "You are invited to enter the city. Come drink from the water of life." It is a special invitation. God is saying, "Come."

### Revelation 22:10-21 NIVO

**<sup>10</sup> Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near. <sup>11</sup> Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy."**

**<sup>12</sup> "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. <sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."**

**<sup>14</sup> "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup> Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood."**

**<sup>16</sup> "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star." <sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."**

**<sup>18</sup> I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. <sup>19</sup> And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."**

**<sup>20</sup> He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. <sup>21</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people. Amen."**

### *1. You are invited to heaven, but your response is urgent.*

This invitation is a personal appeal from God for everyone to enter eternal life. It is a direct invitation from Jesus.

**<sup>16</sup> "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."**

Jesus' name is on the invitation. This is a direct invitation from God! Jesus along with the Holy Spirit have invited everyone to come to the party! The invitation is placed in the Bible so everyone can have the great invite to enter eternal life. Jesus says, "Come!"

"Come!" And let him who hears say, **"Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.**

The Holy Spirit and the Bride – the church of the newborn, all of Jerusalem above – are inviting sinners to be saved. They say to all, "Come, drink from the water of life, and have eternal life."

Yet, the invitation comes with urgency. You must reply now. You cannot wait to give your RSVP. Timing is critical. If you wait too long, you will not get in. You do not have time to go buy better clothes. You don't have time to change.

Two things tell us of this urgency. First, John is told to not seal the book of prophecy. If it were something to occur much later, it would be sealed and set on a shelf. Not sealing means, people need to get the message today. The time is urgent.

The idea of urgency is seen in the following words:

**<sup>11</sup> Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy."**

What does He mean by these words? Why should the vile continue to be vile and the holy continue to be holy? It is suggesting that there is not time for people to change their character. One does not cease to be vile overnight. You do not set a holy character of life in a single day. Jesus' often used hyperbole as a teaching method. "If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out." I. e., you need to get really serious with temptation. In a similar fashion here, there is not time for change. Yet, you are invited still to enter the kingdom. It will require a change of life, but not one you are empowered to make on your own. Only God can make you a different person. Only God can make you holy,

Yet, you are invited. God Himself has sent you the invitation. Will you respond? God is waiting on your response.

***2. You are invited to the city, but you cannot enter unless you are holy.***

You are invited to the party, but the dress code is holy.

This invitation is a wonderful invitation. It is an invitation to enter and live forever in the glorious city of God in the new creation. It is heaven above come to earth in the end. When you received the invitation, it was written in all gold foil letters. Beautiful scripted, handwritten, perfectly laid out lettering forms the words – Come, drink from the water of life.

Yet, at the bottom of the note you notice a small line. It must not be ignored. It says at the bottom, "**Attire – Holy.**" It is a small line. A single word you cannot change. It says you must be holy.

**<sup>14</sup> "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup> Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.**

You are invited to baptism into life in Christ Jesus. You are invited to wash your robes in the blood of the Lamb. Here is how you are made holy.

A holy life is also a holy lived life. It is not enough to claim eternal life then live in sin without regard to repentance. Such is not the life of Christ.

**<sup>12</sup> "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. <sup>13</sup> I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.**

God empowers the life he demands. The righteousness of God not only applies Jesus' righteousness to our sinful condition to cover us, it also supplies the power of the life of the Spirit in us so we lead a life that pleases God. The Holy City does not allow entrance to anyone who practices immorality, witchcraft, murder and idolatry. Such people may have power and influence in this life, but they cannot enter the city of God.

Holy is the requirement on God's invitation.

Sometimes I have been invited to go to a dinner and I am uncertain of the dress code. It is formal? (tux). Coat & tie? Or Dress shirt and slacks? Or, more often now, casual. I remember one time I went to one of these dinners and found myself the only person not in a coat and tie. Not even a tie! I've learned to always carry at least a coat and tie in the car, just in case. You can always take something off to fit in, but it is very difficult to put on what you don't have with you when you arrive.

When you arrive in the presence of God at the end of life or when he returns, you cannot suddenly put on holy when you didn't wear it here on earth in our lifetime. The invitation says, "**Attire – Holy.**"

### *3. You are invited by Jesus, but He who sent the invitation set the terms.*

When you get an invitation, you cannot change the conditions listed on the invitation. When a dress attire is indicated, that is the expectation for being granted entrance. If it is black tie, I wouldn't suggest you wear a mod orange tie. Black tie usually also mean a tux with a bow tie. It means formal. You cannot come in your cut-offs or your holy jeans, or your sweat suit.

On the invitation, someone has indicated they expect a certain attire. When you show no respect to the dress code, you show no respect to the one who sent the invitation. The same is so with God's invitation. God has said holy is required in heaven. He sent the invitation. He set the attire. You cannot re-write the invitation to suit your preferences. On the bottom of God's invitation is says, Anyone not in proper attire will be refused.

So Jesus warns:

<sup>18</sup> I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. <sup>19</sup> And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

The words have to do with the prophecy of Revelation, yet Revelation holds to the same holy standards as the rest of the books of the Bible. God is the

same today, yesterday and tomorrow. He does not change His holy condition.

People want us to change the Bible to fit what they want to do. They say what they do is natural. They are born that way. First homosexuality, then transgender, now pedophilia. These sexual practices, following desires have won their way into society by force of political will. They tell us we must change the Bible. Yet, we did not write the Bible. It is not my authority to change the Bible. They who want to change Scripture must realize that God sets the rules. He invites all, yet he has set the standards to what He accepts.

If you alter the note, you will not be allowed to enter. You cannot white out the note and re-write it for your standards. You cannot substitute – casual, or as you are. God has set a dress code.

Jesus told the parable of the king who held a banquet for his son (Matt. 22). He sent out invitations for everyone to come. Many refused. Then he sent out instructions to bring in everyone they could find so his banquet hall would be filled. Yet, the king found a person who got in without the proper wedding clothes. He asked the man, How did you get in here without the proper wedding clothes? The man was speechless. Then Jesus said, Cast him out into outer darkness where there is gnashing of teeth. The man could not enter the banquet without the proper attire, and you cannot enter heaven without the proper attire. God's attire is holiness. The wedding clothes is the white garments signifying you have been made clean by the blood of the Lamb. Yet, it also indicates you have lived a life of holiness because the life of Jesus is in you.

You are invited to the ball, but God sets the dress code. Those who insist that the dress code be changed, that the invitation be rewritten to allow them to come in the clothing they prefer will find the door shut when they arrive.

Jesus gave a parable about such a situation. The invitation when out and they brought all kinds of people into the banquet hall. Yet, one person got in who was not wearing the proper clothing. Jesus said to take him and throw him out into the outer darkness.

The proper clothing is God's covering of grace because of the blood of Jesus shed for our sins. Those who repent and seek salvation in Jesus Christ, God's Son receive the clothing of God's righteousness. They are clothed in God's holiness. This is the only clothing suitable for the Holy City of God.

*You are invited. What is your response?*