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HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 3



THE GREAT INVITATION

THE SPIRIT & THE BRIDE SAY COME

Allen Webster

The 31 words of the 30,997th Bible verse, in its 1189th chapter, are quite remarkable.

They contain the last invitation God would offer for two thousand years. They echo across the centuries, inviting each new generation to participate in God's great plan for saving man.

They read: "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

The passage contains heaven's favorite word—*come*—three times. The Father said, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18–19). The Son said, "Come to Me, all you who labor" (Matthew 11:28–30). The Spirit here says come to the fountain of eternal refreshment.

Heaven's King invites us to be His guest—not for a visit or meal, but to live with Him forever. If we plan a banquet, birthday party, or Independence Day celebration, we must decide four things:

- A list of potential guests
- Who is to receive invitations

- Who is coming
- What it will cost

Revelation 22:17 has these four entities.

THE SPIRIT'S INVITATION LIST IS LONG

What a big word "whoever" is! Years ago, a well-known evangelist was to hold a crusade in Chicago. He requested the mayor to send him a list of citizens needing spiritual guidance or salvation. The mayor mailed him a phone book—containing the name of every resident.

The Spirit's list is like that. All are invited, for everyone needs to come (Romans 3:23; Matthew 7:8; John 3:16; 7:37)—big sinners, bad sinners, fair sinners, teen sinners, old sinners, aggravated sinners, aggravating sinners. Every face of every race in every place needs grace.

More personally, your name is on the list. You and I are in "whoever." No one should ever say, "Church is not for me. I didn't come from a family that went to Sunday school. Christianity is for 'good people' who have lived righteous lives. I have not always been good. I've made mistakes."



Church is for everybody. When Jesus came, “church people” rejected Him and “sinners” heard Him gladly (Matthew 9:10–11; 11:19; 21:31–32). Jesus never turns anyone away (John 6:37). You will be welcomed. You have an invitation. Come on!

THE SPIRIT ADDRESSES INVITATIONS TO THOSE LIKELY TO ACCEPT

Invitations are sent to the thirsty. The Lord offers water to those whose hearts are thirsty for forgiveness (John 4:14; 6:35); whose minds are thirsty for truth (John 8:32); and whose souls are thirsty for Him (Psalm 42:1; 107:9).¹

Self-satisfied people are uninterested in invitations to church. With no thirst, they want no water. On the other hand, many have not found life satisfying. They feel like an actor on a stage, playing a banquet scene, pretending with gusto to drink from a wooden cup painted gold. It looks believable to the audience, but there is nothing in the cup. It provides no refreshment.

Man is more than a body (Genesis 2:7). Fame, riches, success, and pleasure cannot feed the soul. Queen Elizabeth I (ruled 1558–1603)—the Virgin Queen, one of history’s great rulers—said, “I wish I had been born a milk maid,” as she watched a girl, poor as a church mouse, from a palace window. The care-free girl merrily sang as she carried two

heavy buckets of milk yoked across her shoulders. In contrast, the queen was burdened with the conspiracies of Spain. She had money, fame, and power, but she would have traded places with a servant.

This world’s allurements promise satisfaction but do not deliver. Some think that if they had money or popularity, life would be complete. Do not imagine rich people are satisfied or that famous people are not thirsty for something more (read Ecclesiastes). Hollywood is filled with beautiful, rich, famous, pleasure-mad people—who often feud, sexually harass, divorce, become addicted, and commit suicide.

True joy from physical pursuits is a mirage. How many have . . .

- looked for satisfaction in drugs only to find them the ruin of their finances, career, and relationships? (Romans 3:13–17).
- sought joy in alcohol only to discover that it was Satan’s trap to destroy hope, home, and health? (Proverbs 20:1).
- indulged in sex for happiness, only to get more guilt than pleasure, an unwanted pregnancy, a disease, or a lowered opinion of self-worth? (Proverbs 6:24–7:27).
- drunk deeply of the pool of selfish sin only to come away with a bad taste in their mouth? (Numbers 32:23; Galatians 6:7).

A new Christian said, “I never knew what happiness was till I found Christ. I thought I did. I warmed my hands by the fire of sin, but it was painted fire.” Nothing can satisfy the heart but God. It is a triangle that can only be filled by Father, Son, and Spirit. Augustine said, “Thou has made us for Thyself, O God, and our heart is restless till we find our rest in Thee.” God says, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

What about you? If your soul has a gnawing discontent, if you are tired of the world’s lies, if you want hope beyond this life, then the Spirit invites you to come. Jesus said those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled (Matthew 5:6).

God lets us drink deeply of the water of life. An emaciated child was treated for malnutrition. After his system could take it, a nurse brought him a tall glass of milk. He took it with sparkling eyes, but drank only a little. Hesitatingly, he asked, “Miss, how deep can I drink?” In his large, poor family, he was used to sharing one glass among many children. Each drank just so much, so all got some. The nurse smiled and said, “Son, drink deep! Drink it all. Drink till you are full.”

RSVP REQUIRED

The Spirit’s invitation requires a response. The person who desires salvation must “come” and “take.” Salvation

is offered to all; God loves all; Jesus paid for the sins of all (Titus 2:11; 3:4; 1 Timothy 2:6); but all will not be saved (Matthew 7:13). If we refuse to come, we will still be lost.

A river of blessings flows past our door, but it benefits us only if we fill a pitcher and drink. A gift is only an offer until received. In 1829, George Wilson was sentenced to be hanged in Pennsylvania for murder. President Andrew Jackson issued a pardon. Wilson refused, saying that he deserved to die. The case went to the Supreme Court, which decreed that a pardon was of no value unless accepted. So George Wilson was executed.

Jesus has issued pardons for all, sealed in His blood, but they benefit sinners only when accepted (John 3:5, 16, 36; 14:6; Acts 2:38; 4:12). What's in it for you? Look at some of the benefits of salvation:

- Every sin forgiven (Acts 2:38).
- Name written in God's Book of Life (Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3).
- Adopted into God's family (Romans 8:15)—a child of the King (1 John 3:1–2), a citizen of heaven (Philippians 3:20).
- A new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- A new start (1 Corinthians 6:9–11).
- Needs provided (Matthew 6:25–34).
- Peace with God (Philippians 4:6–7).
- Spirit-indwelt (1 Corinthians 6:19).
- Filled with hope (Titus 2:13).
- Jesus' presence in life (Hebrews 13:5).
- A mansion in death (John 14:1–3).
- Eternal life (John 6:47; 10:28).

These are just the beginning (Ephesians 1:3). A lot to gain—a lot to lose!

THE COST IS FREE

An amazing offer usually comes with a hook. How much is this water worth? Priceless (1 Peter 1:4). How much does it cost you? Nothing (Isaiah 55:1). Salvation is a gift because Jesus paid

the entire bill on the cross (Romans 3:23–26; 1 John 2:2). He paid a high price for it to be free.

In doing so, Jesus removed all barriers to salvation. “Let” (in “let him take the water of life”) means to remove a hindrance. If you want to be a Christian, the path is clear.

- Whoever is thirsty may drink the water of life (John 4:14).
- Whoever is hungry may eat the bread of life (John 6:35).
- Whoever is weary may come to Jesus for rest (Matthew 11:28).
- Whoever desires salvation may seek and find (John 10:27).
- Whoever is in need may ask and receive (Matthew 7:8).

Don't say, “I will come later.” The time to seek salvation is while we have thirst, time, and mental acuity on our side. Now is the accepted time; today is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2).

God very much cares about where we spend eternity (John 3:16; Romans 5:8), but He guarantees no tomorrow (James 4:14; Luke 12:20). Will we abuse God's mercy and grieve God's Spirit? (Ephesians 4:30). We might turn down many invitations, but how can we refuse God's? (Hebrews 12:25).

Consider carefully the words of the classic hymn:

Just as I am—without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to
Thee—
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Endnote:

¹ Adapted from MacArthur commentary on Revelation.

If you want to become a Christian, we would be happy to help. Contact us!



Faith Will Show the Way

In this busy world of ours
Do not lose your way,
Stop to pick a budding flower,
Gather a bouquet.
Pause to hear a robin sing,
Let him sing for you.
Drink the sunshine and the rain
As the lilies do.

In this age of strain and stress
Take the time to know
There is courage, there is hope,
Everywhere you go.
There is joy in little things,
Love which cannot die,
Sunbeams dancing round the door,
Rainbows in the sky.

As the days go rushing past
Take the time to dream,
Find a quiet hide-a-way,
Rest beside a stream.
Guide your soul to sing again,
Teach your heart to pray.
Peace will come to those who seek,
Faith will show the way. —Viola Berg

God's Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9

The Holy Spirit's Gospel: Romans 1:16

Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner's Baptism: 1 Peter 3:21

Christian's Work: James 2:24

Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10



Bad Mosquitoes

When my grandson, Billy, and I entered our vacation cabin, we kept the lights off until we were inside to keep from attracting pesky insects. Still, a few fireflies followed us in. Noticing them before I did, Billy whispered, “It’s no use, Grandpa. The mosquitoes are coming after us with flashlights.”

—Author Unknown

“A merry heart does good”

PROVERBS 17:22



Confucius Updated

Husband who gets breakfast in bed is in hospital. —Hugh Allen in *Knoxville News-Sentinel*

To save face, keep part of it shut.

—Minneapolis Tribune

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

THE VALUE OF BEING A GOOD SPOUSE



One of the kindest things God did for humans was to institute marriage.

Marriage is not a Christian ordinance. It is a general concept for all mankind (Genesis 2:24). It is the oldest of all earthly institutions.

Let us notice some things of value to every marriage.

Spiritual help. There is no greater relationship help in going to heaven than the constant help of a loving mate. It is difficult for one to make it through the strait and narrow passage of life; however a good spouse, who has common values and a common love for God, certainly helps.

One’s loyalty to God will be made evident as he tries to help his family grow spiritually. It will also be seen as she sets priorities in rearing children to believe in and respect the God of heaven. Spouses with respect for God treat each other

with respect. The husband loves his wife as himself; the wife is in subjection to her husband (Ephesians 5:25–33).

Child-rearing. Your faith is a great tool to make your family a better one. Children see the faith of parents in action in making good choices, so their faith grows. Parents have the assurance that God will answer their constant prayer for wisdom to guide their children in the right way (James 1:3–5).

Heirs together. Husbands and wives are “heirs together for the grace of life” (1 Peter 3:7). No other way in life leads to such blessings. Zacharias and Elizabeth are a good example: “They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:6). —Author Unknown

“Marriage is honorable among all”

HEBREWS 13:4

Better Judge

When the famous politician and orator William Jennings Bryan (1860–1925) was a young man, he went to the home of the father of his prospective wife to ask him for her hand in marriage.

Bryan was determined to impress the father by quoting from the Bible, and he chose Proverbs 18:22: “He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord.”

Bryan was unnerved when the father replied by quoting Paul: “He who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better” (1 Corinthians 7:38).

Bryan, never at a loss for words, said: “Yes, but Paul had no wife and Solo-

mon had 700. Therefore, I believe Solomon ought to be the better judge as to marriage.” —Doc’s Daily Chuckle

There is no contradiction here, of course. Paul spoke of a local situation—a “present distress” (1 Corinthians 7:26)—which made it a bad time to begin a marriage, but did not trump the general truth of the benefits of marriage (Genesis 2:22–24).



Down to Only ONE FEAR



WE NEED NOT FEAR:

Economic Collapse. Whether the breaking of Social Security, a major stock market crash, the mounting U.S. debt, recession, the real estate bubble bursting, bankruptcy, out of control inflation, or job losses. "I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread" (Psalm 37:25).

Potential Persecution. Whether the steadily rising antagonism against Christianity, overthrow by foreign oppressors, the mounting tide of immorality promoting sin, or the epidemic ignorance of the Bible in our land. "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

Military Threats. Whether Al Qaida, the Taliban, Iranian nuclear weapon building, alliances between China, North Korea, and Russia, or armed forces spread too thin.

Peter said, "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (Acts 10:34–35).

Natural Catastrophe. Whether global warming, meteors crashing through the atmosphere, glacial melting, California sliding into the ocean, or events like tsunamis and hurricanes.

"He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. The Lord preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy" (Psalm 145:19–20).

Health Problems. Whether cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's, ALS, AIDS, kidney failure, dementia, arthritis, blood clots, or liver disease. "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Academic Decline. Whether comparative test scores with children in other nations, a socially charged curriculum agenda, the "dumbing down of America," the de-emphasis of classroom competition, or outcome-based education programs.

WE NEED TO FEAR:

"Fear God" (Ecclesiastes 5:7; 1 Peter 2:17). "You shall walk after the Lord your God and fear Him" (Deuteronomy 13:4). "His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation" (Luke 1:50). "The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him" (Psalm 25:14).

—Neal Pollard

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Bible Quiz

VOLUME 23:3

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Chapter to Chapter: Matthew" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State: _____
Phone: _____

Questions taken from the King James Version

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 23:1 Women of the Old Testament: 1. "Mother of all living" (Genesis 3:20); 2. Sarah (Genesis 17:15); 3. Rachel (Genesis 29:28); 4. Hannah (1 Samuel 1:20); 5. Rahab (Joshua 2:1); 6. Ruth (Ruth 1:16); 7. Jochebed (Exodus 6:20) 8. Zipporah (Exodus 2:21); 9. Delilah (Judges 16:6); 10. Esther (Esther 7:3); 11. Gomer (Hosea 1:3); 12. Jezebel (1 Kings 19:2); 13. Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:3); 14. Orpah (Ruth 1:4); 15. Lot's wife (Genesis 19:26); 16. Tamar (Genesis 38:13–30); 17. Vashti (Esther 1:9) 18. Peninnah (1 Samuel 1:4–6).

V. 23:2 Wonderful Women: 1. Far above rubies (Proverbs 31:10); 2. Wisdom (Proverbs 31:26); 3. The law of kindness (Proverbs 31:26); 4. Godliness (1 Timothy 2:9–10); 5. Hannah (1 Samuel 1:9–11); 6. To be a "help meet" (suitable) for Adam (Genesis 2:18); 7. Elisabeth (Luke 1:5–6); 8. Mary (Matthew 1:16–21); 9. Priscilla (Acts 18:2); 10. Submit (Ephesians 5:22–23); 11. Trust in God; Holiness; Love their children; (1 Timothy 5:5; Titus 2:3–4); 12. Sarah, Rahab (Hebrews 11:11, 31); 13. Lois, Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5); 14. A crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

John: The Gospel of Belief

Directions: Find your answers in John 1:18, 42; 2:9, 13–17; 3:3, 9–16; 4:9; 5:16; 6:9, 13; 8:3, 32; 9:7; 11:1, 39; 15:1, 5, 13; 17:20–21; 18:36.

1. What man has seen God? _____
2. Christ gave Simon Peter this name: _____
3. What miracle did Jesus perform at a wedding? _____
4. Jesus told Nicodemus that one would not see the kingdom of God, unless one: _____
5. Why was it strange for Jesus to ask a woman for a drink? _____
6. Why were the Jews angry that Jesus healed a lame man? _____
7. What sin had the woman committed who was brought before Jesus for judgment? _____
8. Jesus said: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall" _____
9. When Jesus fed the five thousand, what did He use to feed them? _____
10. After having fed them, what was gathered up in baskets? _____
11. What pool did the blind man have to wash himself in to be healed? _____
12. Where did Lazarus live? _____
13. How long had Lazarus been dead when Jesus arrived? _____
14. Jesus says in John that He is the true vine, and God is the _____.
15. Jesus says in John that He is the vine, and His disciples are the _____.
16. Greater love has no one than this _____
17. Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one in what way? _____
18. Jesus said that if His kingdom had been of this world, what would His servants have done? _____
19. During what feast were the money-changers cast out of the temple? _____
20. We all know John 3:16. To whom was Jesus speaking when He said this verse? _____

The Time Jesus Got Sick

There is no record of Jesus getting sick on earth. Perhaps He had childhood colds, the occasional stomach ache, or the flu. We don't know; the Bible doesn't say.

The only time Scripture records Jesus being sick is after He returned to heaven. It is found in Revelation 3.

Revelation 3:16 pictures a church trying to straddle the fence between the world and the kingdom of God. They were like the little boy who prayed one night before he went to bed, "Dear God, make me good but not too good, just good enough so I don't get in trouble."

The condition of the Laodiceans was nauseating to Christ. Jesus said, "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:15–16).

They were a little too cold to be hot and a little too hot to be cold.

They were a little too bad to be good and a little too good to be bad.

They neither loved God fervently nor hated Him zealously.

Those who compromise still upset God's stomach, but those who are faithful put a smile on His face (Revelation 3:7–12; Hebrews 11:6).

—Author Unknown

"[Jesus] gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works."

TITUS 2:14

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Recommended Resource



The Gospel Broadcasting Network is unique in the world of religious TV—commercial free, and they never ask for money! Sponsored by the churches of Christ, GBN is available on many cable systems, as well as through their smartphone apps, the Roku device, and at gbntv.org.

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- ☐ When Persecuted, It Is Best To ...
- ☐ Does Mark 16:16 Belong in the Bible?



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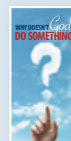
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VOLUME 23:3

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WHY DO YOU TALK SO MUCH ABOUT JESUS?

An old Indian chief constantly spoke of the Lord Jesus and what He meant to him.

"Why do you talk so much about Jesus?" asked a friend.

The old chief did not reply, but slowly, deliberately gathered some sticks and bits of grass. He made a circle of them.

In the circle he placed a caterpillar. Still silent, he struck a match and lit the sticks and grass. They watched the caterpillar. As the fire caught around the circle, the trapped caterpillar began to crawl around rapidly, seeking a way of escape.

As the fire advanced, the helpless caterpillar raised its head as high as it could. If the creature could have spoken, it would have said, "My help can come only from above."

Then the old chief stooped down. He extended his finger to the caterpillar which crawled up his finger to safety.

"That," said the chief, glowing, "was what the Lord Jesus did for me! I was lost in sin. My condition was hopeless. I was trapped. Then the Lord Jesus

stooped down. In love and mercy he drew me out of the horrible pit of sin and shame. How can I help but love Him and talk of His wondrous love and care?"—Author Unknown

"According to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit"

TITUS 3:5

6 DAYS* OF CREATION

Created for a reason.

"Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him" (Isaiah 43:7).

GOD SHAPED

1 GENESIS 1:2-5

God separated light from darkness.

2 GENESIS 1:6-8

God made clouds and separated the waters above and below.

3 GENESIS 1:9-13

God created dry land, trees, grass, and seed-bearing vegetation.

GOD POPULATED

4 GENESIS 1:14-19

God created the sun, moon, and stars.

5 GENESIS 1:20-23

God created fish and birds.

6 GENESIS 1:24-31

God created all the land animals, Adam, and Eve.

*Note that these are 24-hour days (Exodus 20:11).



Just Waiting

A family was fishing at the pier.

Dad was watching bobbers while his two sons, ages twelve and three, were down playing along the dock.

The older boy was watching his brother, but he got distracted. Three-year-old Billy thought that would be a good time to see if he could reach the bottom.

He fell into the water, which was five or six feet deep. The splash alerted his brother who screamed for help. Dad jumped in and swam down but couldn't see anything. Sick with panic, he felt along the bottom. On his way up, he felt Billy's arms locked around a dock post, about four feet under the surface.

After prying the boy's fingers loose, father and son broke the surface of the water and climbed onto the pier.

Dad asked him, "What on earth were you doing hanging onto the post so far under water?"

Billy answered in a child's matter of fact way: "I was just waiting for you, Dad."

Jesus plunged into this dark, gloomy world on a rescue mission, to save us from drowning in sin . . . a rescue mission for us who are barely hanging on . . . a rescue mission for us who were lost in the darkness (John 1:14). —Author Unknown



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3/18



OPINION POLL

What are the top five issues facing our country? And, why?

☐ Abortion	☐ Immigration
☐ Alcohol/Drugs	☐ Marijuana/Drugs
☐ Corruption	☐ Minority Rights
☐ Death Penalty	☐ Morality
☐ Environment/Energy/Earth Care	☐ Supreme Court Appointees
☐ Foreign Affairs	☐ Muslims/Sharia Law
☐ Gender Identity Issues	☐ Personal Freedom/Government "Big Brother" Surveillance
☐ Global Warming	☐ Racism
☐ Gun Control	☐ Religious Freedom
☐ Health Care	☐ Traditional Marriage
☐ Homosexual Marriage	

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