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GREAT INVITATIONS OF THE BIBLE

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Preface

This is a study that is based on a series of ten sermon outlines originally prepared by Alan Carr.

I wrote to Alan and asked him if it was okay to adapt his lessons in order to present to the church here at King's Cross. He replied, saying:

Brother Cambridge:

Thank you for your kind words about the web site. I'm glad you found it to be a helpful resource. Please feel free to use the sermons in your church. I am fond of what Dr. Adrian Rogers used to say. He said, "If my bullets fit your gun, fire away". God bless.

In HIS Tender Care,

Alan Carr

If you wish to see the original lessons, then you can visit his website here:
www.sermonnotebook.org/series.htm#moments

Introduction

The Bible is a book of invitations. From Genesis to Revelation, God invites people to come to Him for salvation, help in times of need, and whatever they may lack in life. How blessed we are that the Lord so regards us and invites us to come to Him.

Over the next several weeks, we will be examining some of the great invitations found in the Bible. I hope they will be a help, a challenge, and blessing in your life.

Scriptures:

Genesis 7:1-16

Numbers 10:29-32

Isaiah 1:18

Isaiah 55:1-3

Hosea 6:1-2

Matthew 19:13-15

John 1:35-42

John 6:37-40

Revelation 22:17

Revelation 22:20

LESSON 1

THE INVITATION TO COMMITMENT

Genesis 7:1-16

“Then Jehovah said to Noah, Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation. You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made. And Noah did according to all that Jehovah commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth. So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark - they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and Jehovah shut him in” (Genesis 7:1-16).

Introduction

1. We begin this series by looking at the first invitation in the Bible. The word “come” is used 1,972 times in the KJV Bible. It is used for the first time in Genesis 7:1 as both a command and as an invitation. Here, God commands and invites Noah and his family to come into the ark in order to save themselves from that wicked generation (cp. Acts 2:40) that God was about to destroy by means of a world-wide flood. This invitation is of great interest because, even though it was given thousands of years ago, God is still inviting people to enter the “ark” of safety today.
2. God’s command and invitation to enter the “ark” still stands today! But, as with any invitation, it is of no benefit to us unless we accept it or act upon it. Before Noah and his household could be saved **they had to commit themselves to accepting the Lord’s invitation** to enter the ark. If you and I are going to be saved, then we have to *commit* to accepting His invitation, too.
3. So, in this lesson, we shall consider The Invitation To Commitment. God’s invitation to enter the “ark” is to every man and women on the planet and we ought to heed it.

I. THE SANCTUARY OF THIS INVITATION

- A. This huge ark was surely an unusual sight as it sat there in ancient Mesopotamia. Basically, it was a wooden box 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high (Genesis 6:15). For the last 120 years, Noah had worked on the ark and preached his message that a torrential rain and a terrible flood was coming upon the earth. Those that heard Noah must have thought he was crazy (cp. Genesis 19:14). After all, it had never rained on the earth until that time¹. Still, Noah labored and told his neighbors that they needed to come into the ark when it was finished if they wanted to be saved. He warned them that the ark he was building was the only hope any of them had of salvation (cp. John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 1:30). Noah is described by Peter as “a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5).

¹ God had created all things as He wanted them during the first week, and all the laws of physics, etc., were in place. The fact that the rainbow was a new phenomenon seems to prove it; unless one is prepared to say that God changed universal laws in order for rainbows to exist. “If it had not rained until after the deluge then rainbows ‘in the cloud,’ would be a new phenomena. They would not have existed pre-deluge since they are created by the refraction of light passing through suspended water (water drops). It seems likely that God used the new phenomena known as rainbows as a ‘reminder’ to both Him and man of the promise made right after the deluge” (The Bible Study Site: www.biblestudy.org/question/no-rain-before-flood.html).

- B. The ark was a sanctuary against the flood that was coming as a judgment against the sin and evil in the world. As God looked upon the world, He was greatly grieved by the extent of sin (**Genesis 6:5-6; cp. Ezekiel 33:11**):
1. **Genesis 6:1-4**. There was intermarriage between the godly line of Seth and the ungodly offspring of Cain. This was an attempt to pervert the human bloodline and prevent the birth of the Messiah (**Genesis 3:15**). The children born of this union were evil beyond words.
 2. **Genesis 6:5, 11-12**. God saw the wickedness of man and knew that he was hopelessly corrupt (**cp. Jeremiah 17:9**). Every desire within mankind drew him away to evil thoughts and deeds. Man was unjust and violent and had abandoned the ways of the Lord, and had turned from God completely (**cp. Genesis 15:16**).
 3. **Genesis 6:6-7**. Thus, God determined to destroy mankind from the face of the earth.
- C. However, there was one man, among all the men of the earth, who was still walking in the ways of the Lord, to whom God extended His grace (**Genesis 6:8**). We are told that Noah was a “just” man (**Genesis 6:9**). This does not mean that he was sinless; it means that his faith was in God and that God counted him righteous on the basis of that faith, which is the way it has always been (**cp. 2 Peter 2:6-8**). We read that Abraham “believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness” (**Genesis 15:6**). If you are saved, it is not because you earned that salvation through meritorious works, but, as Paul says, “**For by grace you have been saved through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (**Ephesians 2:8-9**), and, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, **that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus**” (**Romans 3:23-26**).
1. Noah is commanded to build a great ark (**Genesis 6:13-22**) that will provide him, his family and all the creatures of the earth, a place of safety and sanctuary. In that age, the only place of salvation for any man or woman from the terrible judgment that was coming upon the world was **in the ark**. Likewise, in these latter days, the only place of safety for any man or woman from the judgment to come is **in Christ** (**1 Corinthians 1:30**). Peter said of Christ: “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (**Acts 4:12**), and Paul says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (**Ephesians 1:3**).
 2. Some people see aspects of the ark as picturing things concerning Christ²:
 - a. Its security. The ark was covered with “pitch” to secure against leaks. The word “pitch” comes from the Hebrew word *kāphar*, of which is said: “A primitive root; to *cover* (specifically with bitumen); figuratively to *expiate* or *condone*, to *placate* or *cancel*: - appease, make (an) atonement, cleanse, disannul, forgive, be merciful, pacify, pardon, to pitch, purge (away), put off, (make) reconcile (-liation)” (Strong’s). The basic meaning is “a covering” and, indeed, of the 102 appearances of the word in the Old Testament it is translated “atonement” 73 times (e.g., **Exodus 29:33; Leviticus 1:4; Numbers 5:8; 2 Samuel 21:3; 1 Chronicles 6:49; 2 Chronicles 29:24; Nehemiah 10:33**). Without this “atonement” the ark would have leaked and all would have perished. Likewise, if Christ had not offered Himself as an atonement for our sins, then all would perish (**Hebrews 2:17; 9:23-28; 1 John 2:2; 4:10**). Paul says, “And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins” (**1 Corinthians 15:17**).
 - b. Its sustenance. For the whole time that Noah and his household were in the ark (one year and ten days) they had more than enough food to sustain them (**Genesis 6:21**). Likewise, a Christian finds all that he needs to sustain him in Christ: Jesus says, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (**John 6:35**). In Christ are all spiritual blessings (**Ephesians 1:3-14**) and in Him we are complete (**Colossians 2:9-10**).

² Alan sees several aspects of the ark that he sets forth as pictures of Christ, but I felt some of them were a bit of a stretch, and so I have omitted them and just set forth the one’s that are more plausible.

- c. Its structure. The ark had one door, one window and three stories (**Genesis 6:16**). How did Noah and his household enter the ark? Through the *one* door. Likewise, there is only one “door” or way by which we enter into Christ. Paul says, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (**Galatians 3:27**). It is essential that every sincere believer be found “in Christ”. One may believe in Him, repent of his sins, and do many good works, but none of these things puts a person into Christ. It could not be stated any clearer... one gets into Christ by being baptized into Him. Jesus said, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture” (**John 10:9**).

D. Noah’s salvation and our salvation:

1. Noah and his household obeyed the Lord and built the ark according to the pattern that God revealed (**Genesis 6:13-22**), and they accepted God’s invitation to board the ark and save themselves from the coming judgment upon the world (**Genesis 7:13-16**). There was no other ark and no other way of salvation. I don’t know what the population of the world was in that day³, but we do know that only a few were saved – those who believed and obeyed. Peter says, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water” (**1 Peter 3:18-20**).
2. There is one final judgment coming in which God will destroy, not only all that lives on the world, but the world itself (**2 Peter 3:10**). So building an ark would, of course, be of no avail. But there is an “ark” we can enter in order to escape the coming judgment. We speak, of course, of Jesus Christ our Savior. There is no other Savior (**Acts 4:12**). The invitation is to believe the gospel and be baptised into Christ (**Mark 16:15-16; Galatians 3:27**). Will you commit yourself to entering the “ark”?

II. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THIS INVITATION

A. It is incredible to think that only one person in the entire world found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

1. Three things are said of Noah in Genesis 6:9:

- a. He was just. Noah’s disposition was to do the will of God in all things and he believed and obeyed in faith (**Hebrews 11:7**). As it is written, “And he [Abraham] believed in Jehovah, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (**Genesis 15:6**), and, “...the just shall live by his faith” (**Habakkuk 2:4**).

“The just is the right in law; the perfect is the tested in holiness” (Barnes).

- b. He was perfect. Noah was committed to moral integrity in his dealings with God. He was not sinless, but he did strive always to do the right thing in all his dealings with man and before God. Similarly, Job is so described: “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil” (**Job 1:1**).



- c. He walked with God. “This is the native consequence of his victory over sin, and his acceptance with God” (Barnes). Noah walked according to the will of God in the ways of truth and righteousness, and enjoyed much communion with Him, as did Enoch (**Genesis 5:22; cp. 1 John 1:1-10**).

2. Two points to note: (i) Noah did not find grace in the eyes of the Lord just at that particular moment... Noah was just and perfect and had been walking with God for some time and had found favor with God all the while. (ii) Noah was a sinner like every man and his current standing with God was because of his faith in God and God’s grace. All have sinned (**Romans 3:23**) and God had the perfect right to condemn everyone to suffer the everlasting consequences of their sins. It is only because of His love, mercy, and grace that anyone can be saved (**Ephesians 1:3-10; 2:8-9**).

³ One source estimates the population was around 10 trillion (see <https://biblesciencguy.wordpress.com/2014/06/18/4-population-growth-how-many-died-in-noahs-flood/>).

B. There are four judgments that stand out in scripture, and I'd like us to focus on three things here: (i) Man would have had no idea that judgment was coming unless God had revealed it, (ii) No one was able to devise any plan to escape the judgment, and (iii) those that are saved are saved by God's grace.

1. The four judgments:

- a. The judgment against Sodom (**Genesis 18:16-19:29**). (i) No one knew that God was about to destroy the five cities in the plain where Lot and his family dwelt until God revealed His plan to Abraham. (ii) Two angels went down to Sodom and warned Lot, who in turn sought to warn his brethren, but they took no heed. (iii) Having no plan, the angels practically dragged Lot and his wife and his daughters out of the city that they might be spared. (iv) The four cities in the plain were destroyed (one city was spared due to Lot's intervention) and so Lot and his three daughters were saved from the judgment by the grace of God (as you know, Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt!).
 - b. The judgment against Jerusalem (A.D. 70). There is no Biblical record of the destruction of Jerusalem, but it is recorded in secular works. (i) No one knew that God was about to destroy Jerusalem until the Lord revealed it to His disciples (**Matthew 24:1-2**), (ii) Christians dwelling in Jerusalem had no idea when this judgment would occur, but Jesus gave them signs and told them to flee when they saw them (**Matthew 24:3-22**), (iii) We are told in secular sources that those Christians who believed the words of Jesus fled the city when they saw the signs and so were all spared when the city was destroyed. If not for the grace of God, they would have perished.
 - c. The judgment against the world in Noah's day (**Genesis 6:1-8:19**). (i) No one knew that God was about to destroy the world until God revealed it to Noah, (ii) Noah had no idea how he and his household might escape the judgment of God, but God gave Noah a blueprint to build an ark, (iii) Noah believed and obeyed God and so he and his household were saved by the grace of God.
 - d. The final judgment when Christ returns (**Acts 17:19-31**). (i) No one would have known that a day was coming in which God's Son would judge the world in righteousness unless He had revealed it, (ii) Men have sought to establish their own righteousness (cp. **Ezekiel 33:13; Romans 10:3**), but no man could have known God's plan of salvation unless He had revealed it, (iii) Those who are to be spared the coming wrath (**Romans 5:9**) are those that are saved by God's grace.
2. Whether we are speaking of the physical ark or the spiritual ark, no man is ever saved through a plan of his own – it is by God's grace that any man is ever saved. Were it not for the grace of God, Noah and all his generation would have perished in the flood.
- a. If you are in Christ, it is because God drew you to Himself (**John 6:44**), it is because He called you by His gospel (**2 Thessalonians 2:13-14**), it is because He saved us by His grace: "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (**Titus 3:4-5**). "You are saved because God looked beyond your dead, darkened, deceived, doomed condition and He reached out to you in grace (**Ephesians 2:1-10**)" (Alan Carr).
 - b. Three things revealed by God's grace (i) We would never have seen the truth of our own sinful condition unless God in His grace had revealed it to us through His word (**Romans 3:20**), (ii) we would never have known about the wrath that awaits every sinner in Hell unless God in His grace had warned us of it in His word, and, (iii) we would never have known of God's love for us and the way of salvation unless God in His grace had revealed it to us in His word. O how our hearts overflow with thankfulness and gratitude toward God for His amazing grace that saved such wretches as us. Yes, we are faced with many temptations but when we wonder at God's grace, we say, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (**Genesis 39:9**).
 - c. If not for the grace of God, Noah would have died in his sins and gone to Hell (is this fact hard to grasp?). It was Noah's commitment to the gracious invitation of God by which he saved himself and his household (cp. **Acts 2:40**). The same is true today! We must commit ourselves to God's gracious invitation to believe and be baptised for the remission of sins (**Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:37-38**).

III. THE SECURITY OF THIS INVITATION

- A. When Noah heard the command and invitation of God he committed himself to believing in “things not yet seen” and, through reverence for God, obeyed Him in preparing an ark for the salvation of his family (Hebrews 11:7). When they entered the ark they found safety and security – though the world outside was being tossed to-and-fro, yet their salvation was assured and secure. Indeed, we have the same assurance: “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).
1. Have you ever noticed that God’s invitation to Noah does not say, “Go into the ark”, it says, “Come into the ark” (Genesis 7:1 YLT, KJV, NKJV, MKJV, ASV, ISV, ACV, AMP, WEB)? At the end of this ordeal, God does not say, “Come out of the ark”, He says, “Go out of the ark” (Genesis 8:16). God was with them from the beginning to the day they stepped out into a new world (cp. 1 Peter 3:20). God also invites us to be baptised into Christ (the true ark) (Galatians 3:27) and it is in Christ that we have fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-7; Ephesians 1:3; Galatians 3:26; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19). As long as we remain in Christ, then God will always be with us – through the good times and the bad times (Romans 8:38-39; Hebrews 13:5). The world outside may rage and we may suffer many tribulations (Acts 14:22), but God will bring us to safety; to a new heaven and a new earth (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1).
 2. After Noah had entered the ark, it says, “... and Jehovah shut him in” (Genesis 7:16). “Literally, shut behind, him, i.e., closed up the door of the ark after him” (TPC). The Lord, if you will, sealed him in. Every saint that is in Christ is said to be “sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30; cp. Colossians 3:3). We are safe and secure in Christ Jesus (John 10:27-30).
 3. The turmoil, upheaval, and destruction that was taking place on the earth was very great (Genesis 7:17-24), and the ark “moved about on the surface of the waters” (Genesis 7:18). One would think that any vessel would be completely destroyed in such circumstances, but this was a vessel designed by God, built by Noah at the command of God, and they had this hope and assurance: “But **I will establish My covenant with you**; and you shall go into the ark - you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, **to keep them alive with you...**” (Genesis 6:18-19). There was absolutely no chance that any living thing in the ark would perish because they were being kept by the power of God. In Christ Jesus, we too have a lively hope and great assurance: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5).
- B. It is hard to imagine what it must have been like in the ark as great destruction wrought on the earth... perhaps some were a little anxious at times, maybe some of the animals were uneasy and restless... it could be there were difficulties in preparing food, using the restroom, maintaining personal hygiene, getting any privacy, etc. A rough trip, to say the least! As Christians we are not promised an easy “ride” through life (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12), but we are promised a safe arrival at our destination (John 14:2-3; 2 Corinthians 5:2; Philippians 3:20; Colossians 1:3-5; 1 Peter 1:3-4).

Conclusion

1. The Lord had determined to destroy everything on the face of the earth, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord because he was a man that walked with God. God commanded Noah to build an ark and invited him to “come into the ark” for the salvation of himself and his household. Noah committed himself to this invitation, which is seen in his undertaking to build the ark and his preaching righteousness to that wicked generation. His commitment to the Lord’s command and invitation wrought the salvation of himself and his household – just eight souls (1 Peter 3:20).
2. As we read through the account in Genesis, we cannot help seeing parallels between being in the ark and being in Christ. The most important being: (i) There is only one way of salvation that is offered to all men (Acts 4:12), (ii) One must commit himself to accept the command and invitation to be saved (Mark 16:15-16), (iii) One is safe and secure “in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3) and will be kept by the power of God (1 Peter 1:3-5).

3. The flood and the final judgment:

- a. Jesus made this statement: “And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all” (**Luke 17:26-27**). Most commentators view this coming of the Son of Man as a reference to the judgment wrought against Jerusalem in A.D. 70 but there are a few (such as Kyle Pope) that understand it to refer to Christ’s second coming. Nevertheless, will it not be true regarding Christ’s second coming? The warning of judgment has been preached for over 2000 years and relatively few have “boarded the ark” or been baptized into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**). The majority of people do not believe there is a coming judgment and they simply go about their daily lives without a care. But the judgment will come and they will be destroyed and spend eternity separated from the presence of the Lord (**2 Thessalonians 1:9-10**).
- b. Some people don’t believe there is a coming judgment and even mock, saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation” (**2 Peter 3:4**). Peter answers these mockers, saying, “For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (**2 Peter 3:5-13**).

4. An appeal to believers and unbelievers:

- a. For us who have believed and obeyed the gospel, Peter admonishes: “Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless” (**2 Peter 3:14; cp. 1 John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 7:1**).
- b. To those who may believe the gospel but have not obeyed: the scriptures warn us that there is a price to pay for sin – death (**Romans 6:23**) and eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord (**2 Thessalonians 1:9**). If you do believe that Jesus is the Son of God, don’t deceive yourself into believing that you have plenty of time to repent because you simply don’t! The day to repent and obey the Lord is today. Speak to someone today about arranging to be baptised for the remission of sins (**Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21**).

LESSON 2

THE INVITATION TO COMPANIONSHIP

Numbers 10:29-32

“Now Moses said to Hobab the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are setting out for the place of which Jehovah said, ‘I will give it to you.’ Come with us, and we will treat you well; for Jehovah has promised good things to Israel. And he said to him, I will not go, but I will depart to my own land and to my relatives. So Moses said, Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes. And it shall be, if you go with us - indeed it shall be - that whatever good Jehovah will do to us, the same we will do to you” (Numbers 10:29-32).

Introduction

1. As we read through the Bible we see that God is continually inviting people to join Him in what He is doing and where He is taking His people. In this passage, Moses is talking to a man named Hobab. There is some dispute over the identity of this man: (i) some think he is Moses' brother-in-law, and, (ii) others believe that Hobab is another name for Moses' father in law Jethro. This latter view is the more likely because we see in the book of Judges that Hobab is called “the father-in-law of Moses” (Judges 4:11). Jethro had visited Moses and the children of Israel; he had been a blessing and he had received a blessing; he had also given Moses a great piece of wisdom concerning how he was leading the people of Israel (Exodus 18:1-27). In this lesson we shall refer to him as **Jethro**.
2. In this passage, Israel is preparing to leave their encampment at the foot of Mount Sinai. While they were there, they received the Law, built the Tabernacle and were taught how to worship the Lord God. Now, they are breaking camp and heading toward Canaan. Before they leave, Moses takes the time to invite Jethro to go with them to their destination.
3. In these verses there are several aspects of this invitation we need to investigate. There is a word here for the church and for those who are outside the church. Indeed, there is a word for everyone! So, let's take some time to study this passage and consider The Invitation To Companionship.

I. COME SHARE IN OUR PILGRIMAGE

A. A special people.

1. Moses uses the words “us” and “we”. He is inviting Jethro to join **a special people**. God said to Israel, “For you are a holy people to Jehovah your God; Jehovah your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 7:6). They were also a redeemed people; redeemed from Egyptian bondage (Exodus 15:13; cp. 12:1-13).
2. God still has a special people today – all Christians today are a holy nation; the Israel of God (Galatians 6:15-16; 1 Peter 2:9-10). Paul says, “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). And we, too, are a redeemed people: “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18-19).

B. A special place.

1. Moses invites Jethro to join them on their journey to a place that Jehovah said, “I will give it to you.” When God called Moses to deliver His people from Egyptian bondage, He said to him, “So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites” (Exodus 3:8). This is the same land promised to Abraham (Genesis 12:1). When Abraham arrived in Canaan, God said to him, “To your descendants I will give this land” (Genesis 12:7). Some twenty times it is called, “a land flowing with milk and honey” (e.g., Leviticus 20:24; Numbers 16:14). It is to this land of victory and blessing that Moses invites Jethro.

2. As God's special people, we too are heading to the heavenly Canaan – the land of promise. It is not so much a land of "milk and honey" as it is a place where all the woes and sorrows of this world will no longer plague us: "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (**Revelation 21:4**); it is a place where no wicked thing shall enter: "But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life" (**Revelation 21:27**). This is the place we know as heaven; in fact, the Lord is there now preparing a place for us (**John 14:1-3**).



C. A special privilege.

1. Jethro is not a descendant of Jacob (Israel) and, therefore, has no part in the covenant or the promises (cp. **Ephesians 2:11-12**). Yet Moses invites Jethro to join with his people and share in their blessings, saying, "Come with us, and we will treat you well; for Jehovah has promised good things to Israel."
2. We today are the Israel of God that includes both Jews *and* Gentiles. Paul reminds Gentiles, saying, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity" (**Ephesians 2:13-16**). This is the mystery that was once hidden but now revealed: "... that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel" (**Ephesians 3:6**).
3. Inviting others to share in the privileges of God's chosen nation, Israel (**1 Peter 2:9**), is both a privilege and duty. What Paul said of himself is true for all of us: "Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" (**1 Corinthians 9:16**; cp. **Matthew 28:19-20**; **Mark 16:15-16**).

II. COME SHARE IN OUR PARTNERSHIP

A. Join our family.

1. Moses sought to persuade Jethro to join them with the promise, "We will treat you well" and, "Whatever good the Lord will do to us, the same we will do to you". While Jethro was not an Israelite, Moses assured him that he would be treated (if you will) *like* family.
2. Things are different today because anyone that accepts the invitation to "come with us" is adopted into God's family (**Ephesians 1:5**), becomes a son of God (**Galatians 3:26**), and enjoys all the spiritual blessings in Christ (**Ephesians 1:3**). But now notice this powerful statement: "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (**Galatians 3:29**). In other words, God regards each person, regardless of race, color, and gender (**Galatians 3:28**), as a part of His holy nation Israel, and he enjoys all the associated privileges and blessings: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people" (**1 Peter 2:9**). Let us, then, be diligent in inviting others to "come with us" to become a part of God's family.

B. Join with us in fellowship.

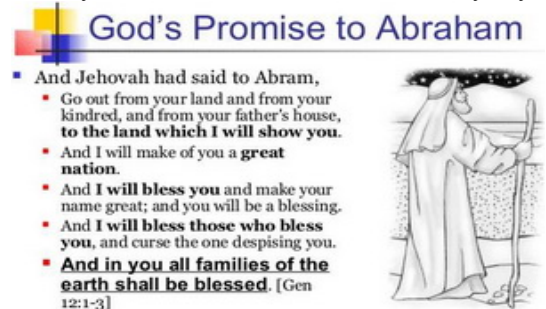
1. Moses appeals to Jethro, saying, "We will treat you well" and, "Whatever good the Lord will do to us, the same we will do to you". Moses speaks of sharing with him in all the blessings with which God blesses Israel. He also says, "Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes." Moses is saying two things:

- a. You need us – If you come with us, then you will share in all the blessings of Israel and come under God’s divine protection. The questions he is asking Jethro to ask himself are: “What will you have if you return to your own life and ways? What blessings will you have? What purpose will your life serve apart from God?”
- b. We need you – Jethro knew the desert well; it was his home territory. He knew where the best camp sites were located. He knew where the best trails could be found. He knew where all the watering holes were. Jethro, then, would be their eyes.

2. When we invite people to join us in Christ, we are inviting them into fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (**Matthew 28:19; 1 John 1:3**). Paul likens a local church to the human body to illustrate how all the members are interdependent upon one another (**1 Corinthians 12:12-26; Romans 12:3-8; Galatians 6:2**). Once a person is in Christ, we can say, “You need us and we need you”. Can we, as a church, honestly say, “Come with us, and we will do you good”?

III. COME SHARE IN OUR PROMISES

- A. Moses appealed to Jethro, saying, “Jehovah has promised good things concerning Israel”. The “good things” are all the promises that God made to Abraham: “Now Jehovah had said to Abram: Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (**Genesis 12:1-3; cp. Exodus 3:6-8; 6:6-8; 23:20-33**). Moses is inviting Jethro to share in the promises given to Israel.
- B. Jehovah has likewise promised good things to spiritual Israel. So when we share the gospel with others, we are inviting them to “come with us” and share in the promises of God:
 1. The promise of a home. The Israelites had to wander through the wilderness before they reached the Promised Land and we too recognize that this world is not our home; we are pilgrims (**1 Peter 2:11**) on our way to a better country (**Hebrews 11:9-10; 13:14; Philippians 3:20**). We are given a glimpse of that homeland in the book of Revelation:
 - a. It is a land of worship where the redeemed will praise their Savior (**Revelation 7:9-17**).
 - b. It is a land of wonders where words cannot begin to describe that city with its walls of jasper, gates of pearl, foundations of twelve precious stones, and streets made of transparent gold. There we shall dwell in the presence of Jesus Christ and God the Father. Heaven is truly a land of wonderful beauty and glory (**Revelation 21:1-22:21**).
 - c. It is a land of wellness where there will be no tears, no pain, no suffering, no sickness and no death (**Revelation 21:4**). The problems and burdens of life which trouble us here will have no effect there; they will be banned at the gate (**Revelation 21:27**).
 2. The promise of hope. In his appeal to Jethro, Moses made reference to God’s promise of a land of which God said, “I will give it to you”. Moses invites Jethro to share in this hope of a land “flowing with milk and honey”; the implication being that he might share in the spoils of their enemies and be given a settlement. The hope of every believer is to one day leave behind this world of heartaches, trials, and tribulations and enter the Promised Land. It will be a day of...
 - a. Rest. The Hebrew writer says that Joshua led the people into Canaan, but that was not the “rest” God had promised, and that there remains “a rest for the people of God” (**Hebrews 4:8-9**). It is in view of this that he says, “Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience” (**Hebrews 4:11**).



- b. Reunion. How many loved one's have we known that have died in the Lord (**Revelation 14:13**)? Their loss has caused us much sorrow. But we have a wonderful promise and a great hope in which the world does not share – Paul says, “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so **God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus**. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (**1 Thessalonians 4:13-17**). It will be a day unlike any other; a day of reunion. It is with these words that we comfort one another (**1 Thessalonians 4:18**).
- c. Reward. Those who serve the Lord in sincerity suffer many trials (**1 Peter 1:6**), tribulations (**Acts 14:22**), and persecutions (**2 Timothy 3:12**) for Christ's sake (**Philippians 1:29; Revelation 2:3**). But in all these things we do not retaliate in any way (**Romans 12:17, 19**). In fact, we bless those who persecute us (**Romans 12:14**). Four things we are promised: (i) a great reward in heaven (**Matthew 5:10-12**), (ii) God will comfort us (**Revelation 7:16-17; 21:3-4**), (iii) God will repay those that have done us evil (**Romans 12:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10**), and, (iv) we shall receive praise from the Lord (**Matthew 25:23; 1 Corinthians 4:5**).
3. The promise of a help. Moses tells Jethro that God has “promised good things to Israel”. Since God can be seen to be fulfilling the promises made to Abraham (**Genesis 12:1-3**), and since God had redeemed Israel by His mighty power, then it is safe to assume that God would bless, lead and be with them on their journey to Canaan. As we journey toward that heavenly Canaan, we can rely on God's promises:
 - a. To sustain us. Just as God fed Israel throughout their journey to Canaan with the Manna and the quail, so He promises to supply our needs: (i) physical (**Matthew 6:25-34**), (ii) emotional (**Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7**), and (iii) spiritual needs (**John 6:31-35; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:1-3**).
 - b. To sanctify us. God set Israel apart to be a holy, separate people (**Exodus 19:6; Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26**). We, too, have been called to be a holy (**Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 3:17; Ephesians 1:4**), separate (**2 Corinthians 6:14-18**), and a peculiar people (**1 Peter 2:9 KJV**). Thus, in Christ, we are new creatures (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) that walk in “newness of life” (**Romans 6:4**).
 - c. To satisfy us. God was with Israel in the wilderness, and He provided food (**Exodus 16:4-15**) and water (**Exodus 17:1-6**) for them. Yet they often complained and so the Lord punished them for their rebellion (**Numbers 11:1-34**). These things are written for our admonition that we might learn not to complain (**1 Corinthians 10:5-12; cp. Romans 15:4**), but to be content (**1 Timothy 6:8**). Those who learn to trust the Lord by faith will see that He can provide perfect satisfaction (**Psalms 103:5; 107:9; Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 12:9**).
 - d. To secure us. God fulfilled His promises and brought Israel safely into the Promised Land. “And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he swore to our fathers” (**Deuteronomy 6:23; Joshua 23:14**). God's purpose is to bring us through the wilderness to the Promised Land - Heaven! As long as we remain in Him, we are secure (**John 6:37-40; 1:28; Revelation 2:10**).

Conclusion

1. When Jethro received Moses' invitation, his first response was to say “No”. But it seems that he changed his mind at some point (see **Judges 1:16; 4:11, 18-22**), and was blessed along with Israel just as Moses promised. Moses' invitation was to (i) Share in Israel's pilgrimage; to join a special people on their way to a special place, and to share in their special privileges, (ii) Share in Israel's partnership; to become a part of the family and share in a fellowship, (iii) Share in Israel's promises; the promise of a home, a hope, and a help.
2. If you are not a Christian, then this is your invitation to “Come with us to heaven”. Someone said, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” (Lao Tzu⁴), so take the first step today.

⁴ Lao Tzu is a major figure in Chinese philosophy whose historical existence is debated. He is recognized as the founding father of Taoism. “**Taoism** (also called **Daoism**) is a philosophical, ethical or religious tradition of Chinese origin that emphasizes living in harmony with the *Tao* (also romanized as *Dao*). The term *Tao* means ‘way’, ‘path’, or ‘principle’... force behind everything that exists” (Wikipedia).

LESSON 3

THE INVITATION TO CLEANSING

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, and let us reason together, says Jehovah, Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

Introduction

1. Isaiah ministered during a turbulent time in Israel’s history. The nation had abandoned the way of the Lord and was living in open sin and idolatry. The verses leading up to our text chronicle a scene of rebellion and sin:
 - a. Despite having brought them up and nourished them, God’s people were in open rebellion against Him (Isaiah 1:2).
 - b. The ox knows its owner and the donkey knows its master’s crib, but the people refused to acknowledge their God (Isaiah 1:3).
 - c. Spiritually, the nation was “laden with iniquity”, and are described as “a brood of evildoers”. They had forsaken the Lord and had provoked Him to anger (Isaiah 1:4).
 - d. They had refused to respond to the Lord’s attempts at chastisement (Isaiah 1:5).
 - e. They were sick spiritually and they desperately needed help (Isaiah 1:5-6).
 - f. Violence filled the whole land (Isaiah 1:7-8).
 - g. In many ways they had become as vile as ancient Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 1:9-10).
 - h. Their religious services were an abomination to the Lord (Isaiah 1:11-15).
 - i. The only thing that held the nation together was a small remnant of faithful Jews (Isaiah 1:9).
2. Much of this sounds as though it is describing events of our own day! There would certainly be some Christians and even congregations to whom this might apply. In the midst of this sad commentary, we see an amazing scene acted out. These people had been blessed by the Lord in many ways, and they should have been seeking God and looking for ways to mend their relationship with Him. Instead, we see the Lord seeking His people and inviting them to make things right with Him. This fact underscores a truth we encounter throughout the pages of the Bible:
 - a. When people fall away from the Lord, His great love and mercy prompts Him to send prophets to seek their repentance; as a shepherd that seeks one of his sheep that has gone astray, so here we see God, through Isaiah, seeking and calling His people to repentance.
 - b. Isaiah says, “All we like sheep have gone astray” (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus says, “For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost” (Matthew 18:11). Indeed, we were all “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1), “But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:4-7).
 - c. Today, many new age gurus and religious leaders elevate man to the point of being gods. Some people just don’t want to believe that man is sinful and cut off from God, and they hold to the idea that man contains within himself “a spark of the divine”. The Bible is very clear in this matter: while it is true that “God made man upright”, it is also true that “they have sought out many devices [for evil]” (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Paul says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

“Seek Jehovah while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:6).

3. What we see in this passage are a people that have strayed from God and sunk into great sin. They needed to examine their ways and turn to God to be cleansed (cp. **Lamentations 3:40**). They are approached by the Lord and invited to come to Him for cleansing. We can also see a principle that is still true today - God is still inviting sinners to come to Him to be cleansed. In this lesson, we shall consider the *principles* contained in The Invitation To Cleansing.

I. THE INTENSITY OF THIS INVITATION

- A. The word “come” is an “imperative”; it is a command. God is reaching out to a wayward, sinful people and He is calling them back to Him. This is amazing because God knows the vileness and depths of their sins, and how they have spurned His Law. Yet He still loves them and reaches out to them in love, to extend grace and mercy to them if they will repent.
- B. The blessing in this verse is the fact that this invitation still stands! Whether you’re a sinner that needs to repent or a Christian that has fallen away, God knows all about the sins in our lives. Yet He loves us in spite of our sinful condition, and He calls us to come to Him. Listen to the Lord’s voice as He calls lost people to come to Him:
1. To the sinner: “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**; cp. **John 7:37-38**; **Matthew 11:28-30**).
 2. To the Christian that has fallen away. The Christians in Laodicea thought of themselves as being rich and in need of nothing. The Lord, though, describes them as “lukewarm” and “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (**Revelation 3:14-17**). Yet Jesus calls them, saying, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me” (**Revelation 3:20**).
- C. God understood Israel’s condition better than they did. They thought they were doing all right, but they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. God knew that they were in deep trouble, so He invites them to come to Him to be cleansed.
1. The cleansing of which God speaks would never have been possible were it not for the fact that Jesus was to come to this world and offer Himself as a sacrifice for our sins. God is just (**Isaiah 45:21**), and so He cannot just casually forgive people of their sins... justice must be done; sin must be punished (**Isaiah 13:11**; **26:21**). Thus a judgment is coming (**2 Corinthians 5:10**).
 2. The price of our redemption was not cheap: “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (**1 Peter 1:18-19**). With such a high price paid for our redemption, how much of a sorer punishment do you think one deserves who rejects God’s invitation to be cleansed (cp. **Hebrews 10:28-29**)?

II. THE IMMEDIACY OF THIS INVITATION

- A. God’s command is for them to come “now”. There must be no delay! He could see where their rebellion and sin was leading them. He could see the judgment that was about to fall upon them: “If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken” (**Isaiah 1:19-20**). They were in a serious condition and judgement stood at the door, which makes immediate repentance necessary.
- B. This is true of those who are not right with God today – whether Christian or non-Christian; all they can see is the next step that lies before them (cp. **James 4:13**); all they can feel is the pleasure of their sins (cp. **Isaiah 47:8**; **Hebrews 11:25**); all they can think about is the here and now (cp. **Philippians 3:19**; **Luke 12:19**; **James 5:5**); they give no thought to what is awaiting them down the road (cp. **2 Peter 3:3-4**; **Revelation 3:17-18**).

1. Salvation can only be found in Christ (**Acts 4:12**); all spiritual blessings are in Christ (**Ephesians 1:3**), and it is only through baptism that one is put into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**). Whether a person believes in God or not, if one has not believed and obeyed the gospel, he shall be condemned (**Mark 16:15-16**). So many, even those with virtually no knowledge of the scriptures, have heard of heaven and hell, and yet their whole attitude is one of either disbelief or apathy. The wicked continue in their sinful lives and “there is no fear of God before his eyes” (**Psalms 36:1**). God has “appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man [Jesus] whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead” (**Acts 17:31**). This warning is issued wherever the gospel is preached.
2. The Christian that has fallen away knows full well that he has denied the Lord, and such people can expect a sorer punishment: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some [this describes those Jewish Christians that had turned their backs on Christianity and returned to Judaism], but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day [of judgment] approaching. For if we sin wilfully [fall away from the faith] after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (**Hebrews 10:24-31**).
- C. God knows the torment that sinners will have to endure for all eternity but He actually desires all men to come to a knowledge of the truth and be saved (**1 Timothy 2:3-4**), which is why He calls the wayward ones to come to Him to be cleansed. He calls them to come *now*, without delay, for He knows that delay is dangerous. If you are not right with God this day, the time to come to Him is *now* (see **Proverbs 27:1**; **James 4:13-16**; **Luke 12:16-20**).

III. THE INTIMACY OF THIS INVITATION

- A. The invitation is “Come now, let us reason together”. The phrase “let us reason together” is legal terminology. “Here it denotes the kind of contention, or argumentation, which occurs in a court of justice, where the parties reciprocally state the grounds of their cause” (Barnes). It means, “Let’s settle this matter before a court of law; let’s try our case in court”.
 1. Israel had broken their *covenant* with the Lord. They had failed to hold up their end of the contract and God has initiated legal proceedings against them. He is bringing them up on charges. He has declared His case against them (**Isaiah 1:1-17**), and He now invites them to defend themselves. They are in serious trouble!
 2. However, the phrase “come now” is an invitation for these people to walk with the Lord. He is not inviting them to a debate or opening the matter up for negotiation. He is inviting them to come to His way of thinking; He is inviting them to agree with Him (**cp. Amos 3:3**) and giving them an opportunity to say, “You are right and we are wrong. We’re sorry and we’re ready to go Your way.”
 3. There is a tone of concern and pleading in this invitation. He is offering them a chance to settle their case out of court. If they will be reasonable and honor their covenant with the Lord, He will drop the charges and restore them to a place of fellowship. If they will repent of their sins and change their ways, God will receive them and restore them. David’s words are so true: “He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities” (**Psalms 103:10**).
- B. God’s invitation to follow Him is still an intimate thing. God does not call *groups* to come to Him; He calls *individuals* to come to Him. His call is personal, individual and intimate. When God calls, He always points out the areas of disagreement and He invites the wayward one to come to a place of agreement with Him.

- C. Have you ever heard that intimate, individual call to come to Jesus for salvation? It is a call that comes through the hearing of the gospel (2 **Thessalonians** 2:13-14). We have all sinned (**Romans** 3:23) but the good news is that Jesus bore the punishment for our sins on the cross. Indeed, *your* sins (1 **Peter** 2:24); He was buried but was raised from the dead for *your* justification (1 **Corinthians** 15:3-4; **Romans** 4:23-25), and then He ascended back to the Father (**Hebrews** 1:3). If you believe that Jesus died for your sins and will repent, then you can receive cleansing - the forgiveness of your sins by being immersed in water (**Mark** 16:16; **Acts** 2:38).

IV. THE INCREDIBILITY OF THIS INVITATION

- A. God's promise to Israel, if they will come to Him, is that *all* their sins will be washed away. God says that their hands are "full of blood" (**Isaiah** 1:15); they are dirty and unclean in the sight of the Lord. But, if they will just come to Him, and heed His invitation, He will cleanse them completely. "Come now, and let us reason together, says Jehovah, Though your sins are like **scarlet**, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like **crimson**, they shall be as wool" (**Isaiah** 1:18).
1. The words "scarlet" and "crimson" refer to dye that was extracted from both shellfish and a certain type of insect. When white garments were dyed with these colors, **they could never be made white again**. These colors were both colorfast⁵ and indelible⁶. Once they were dyed no human means could ever return them to their pure state.
 2. In ancient times, once a garment was stained it could never be made perfect again. God describes the sins of Israel as being like a garment stained scarlet and crimson; they were dirty and there wasn't anything they could do to remove the stain. Yet if they would just respond to Him and repent of their sins, **He** had the power to make them "as white as snow" and "as [white] as wool". Their religious rituals and observances would not make them clean... Only **God** had the power to take the stain of their sin away and make them clean again.
- B. Today, this invitation still stands! There isn't anything we can do to cleanse ourselves - not by religious rituals or good works. When we try to erase our sins by our own efforts, all we succeed in doing is making the stain deeper!
1. However, God has the power to cleanse us; He is able to take our sins and put them away from us as "far as the east is from the west" (**Psalms** 103:12). He is able to wash us in the precious blood of Jesus and declare us holy and clean (1 **Corinthians** 6:9-11). He is able to deliver us from condemnation (**Romans** 8:1; 5:9).
 2. All the spiritual blessings of which we speak are found "in Christ" (**Ephesians** 1:3) and it by submitting to being immersed in water that we get into Christ: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (**Galatians** 3:27).

Conclusion

1. Israel had fallen into a sorry state: they were "laden with iniquity" and are described as "a brood of evildoers" (**Isaiah** 1:4). They certainly deserved to be punished for their sins. But rather than destroy them, God would rather seek their repentance. Thus He calls to them with this beautiful invitation: "Come now, and let us reason together, says Jehovah, Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (**Isaiah** 1:18).
2. In this wonderful invitation we see (i) an intensity, (ii) an immediacy, (iii) an intimacy, and, (iv) an incredibility. Despite the wicked depths to which they had sunk, God does not desire their destruction, He desires to cleanse them; He wants to restore the relationship. However, it is they that must make the choice to "come".
3. The invitation to come to God for cleansing still stands today. The message of the gospel is preached throughout the world and every creature is called upon to believe the gospel, repent of their sins, and be baptised for the remission of sins (**Mark** 16:15-16; **Acts** 2:38). Will you come to God today for cleansing?

⁵ "Maintaining color without fading or running" (Dictionary.com).

⁶ "Making marks that cannot be erased, removed, or the like" (Dictionary.com).

LESSON 4

THE INVITATION TO CONTENTMENT

Isaiah 55:1-3

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you - The sure mercies of David” (Isaiah 55:1-3).

Introduction

1. Philip Parham tells the story of a rich industrialist who was disturbed to find a fisherman sitting lazily beside his boat. The message being, “Don’t get greedy!”.

a. The Lazy Fisherman.

Rich man: “Why aren’t you out there fishing?”

Fisherman: “Because I’ve caught enough fish for today”.

Rich man: “Why don’t you catch more fish than you need?”

Fisherman: “What would I do with them?”

Rich man: “You could earn more money and buy a better boat so you could go deeper and catch more fish. You could purchase nylon nets, catch even more fish, and make more money. Soon you’d have a fleet of boats and be rich like me.”

Fisherman: “Then what would I do?”

Rich man: “You could sit down and enjoy life”.

Fisherman: “What do you think I’m doing now?!”

- b. Few people ever reach that level of contentment. In fact, one poet put it this way:

As a rule, man’s a fool
When it’s hot, he wants it cool.
And when it’s cool, he wants it hot,
Always wanting what is not.

2. We live in a world filled with discontented people; all around us people are striving to accumulate more possessions. But not many people find complete contentment and satisfaction with their lot and place in life. Why is this? I think the answer lies in the fact that people are looking for contentment in places, people and things that can never provide it. The answer to this question is in our text: “Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance” (Isaiah 55:2).

- a. **People seek satisfaction in their possessions** – They think that their “things” will bring them contentment. They spend their time making money so they can spend it on accumulating more “things”. People are looking for contentment in the “things” they possess. What people fail to realize is that possessions are temporary at best. They wear out and must be replaced. All those “things”

that we hold in so high a regard are going to be left behind one of these days (1 Timothy 6:7). You cannot take a house, car, boat, jewellery, laptop, clothing or any other thing with you into eternity. If a person acquires too many possessions, they may find that the things they think they own will end up owning them! As a man by the name of Bill Earle once said, “If your outgo exceeds your income, your upkeep will be your downfall.” Possessions can never satisfy the deepest needs of the soul.

“Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry. ' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?'” (Luke 12:16-20).

- b. **People seek satisfaction in their pursuits** – According to our text they “labor for that which does not satisfy”. They spend all their time and energy pursuing “things” that can never give them satisfaction of soul. Work, hobbies, sports, and the pleasures of life will never satisfy the deepest needs of the soul. The more you invest your time and effort in these things, the more they will require from you. Regardless of what you pursue in life, you will find, in the end, that your pursuits will pursue you. Whether it is work or pleasure, it will consume your life if you let it. If you seek satisfaction in these things, you will discover that it will take more and more of these things to bring contentment into your life. And, just like possessions, the pursuits of life will end when this earthly life ends.
3. In these verses (**Isaiah 55:1-3**) God reveals the true source of permanent satisfaction. He issues an ironclad guarantee of perfect, eternal contentment to all who will hear His voice and respond to His invitation. Notice some of the components of The Invitation To Contentment:

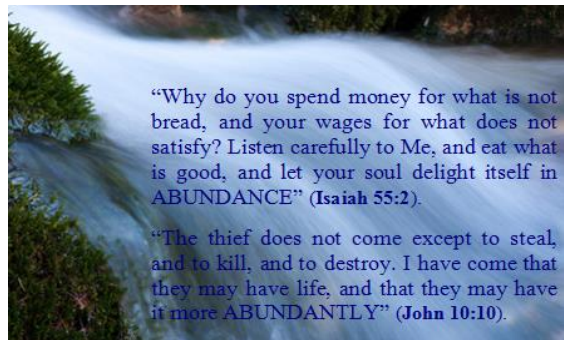
I. THE OFFERS OF THIS INVITATION

A. In this invitation God sets forth wonderful offers that are too good to pass up:

1. The right provisions:

- a. There are three basic substances that God offers in this verse. He offers these substances to *all* who will come to Him. Let’s examine these a little more closely:

1) **Water.** Water is essential to all life on earth and without it death soon follows. The same is true regarding spiritual water. The invitation here is for anyone that is thirsty, i.e., anyone whose soul thirsts for God (cp. **Psalms 42:2; 63:1**). The word “waters” is plural, which indicates an abundant supply (cp. **Isaiah 41:17-18; 12:3**).



2) **Wine.** Wine is spoken of as that which makes glad the heart (**Judges 9:13; Psalms 104:15**), “and it is possible that the image here may be designed specifically to denote that the blessings of salvation make people happy, or dissipate the sorrows of life, and cheer them in their troubles and woes” (Barnes). Indeed, there is a joy in believing: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (**Romans 15:13; cp. 1 Peter 1:8**).

3) **Milk.** Milk is that which nourishes the body and is here used figuratively to denote that which nourishes the soul (see **1 Peter 2:1-2**).

- b. All these things are offered freely and abundantly, and they are all things that are suited to nourish and support the soul, which also results in gladness and joy. On one occasion, Jesus was at Jacob’s well and He asked a Samaritan woman for a drink. The woman was surprised that He was even talking with her. Jesus replied, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water”. The woman pointed out that He did not have anything with which to draw water and asked, “Where then do You get that living water?” Jesus replied, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (**John 4:13-14**). Jesus promises complete contentment to everyone who will drink of the water that He offers. Unlike physical water, which one must drink again and again, the spiritual water that Jesus offers will forever satisfy the soul of him that will take just one drink of it (cp. **John 7:37; Rev. 22:17**). Jesus’ offer of soul-satisfying water still stands today.

2. The right price:

- a. The world makes you pay for everything you get: false religion will make you labor for every blessing you think you will receive (cp. **Colossians 2:18-23**). Sin, the flesh and the world all make you pay dearly for any promise of contentment they may offer (**Jeremiah 7:1-15; Proverbs 16:25; Romans 6:23**).
 - b. On the other hand, God offers spiritual blessings and complete fulfilment as a *free* gift (**Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8**). This is because He knows that we have run up a debt that we cannot repay (**Matthew 18:23-27**); we cannot pay the price for our own redemption (**Psalms 49:1-9**). So the Spirit says, “‘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**).
 - c. Since God’s gifts are free, *anyone* can receive them. God doesn’t require money, self-righteousness, good works or any other resource. He wouldn’t accept those things even if they were offered to Him. The only currency God requires is the currency of faith (**Habakkuk 2:4**). He will open the storehouse of His blessings to all those who will exercise simple faith in His offer and come to Him. That is an offer anyone can afford!
- B. Now we have emphasized that all the blessings that God offers are free, and they are! We have also emphasized that we could never pay for our own redemption, and we can’t! But that doesn’t mean a price hasn’t been paid! God is only able to offer us these free gifts because the Lord Jesus Christ has Himself paid the price for our redemption.
1. Jesus, our High priest, entered the heavenly tabernacle “not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (**Hebrews 9:11-12**).
 2. Paul says that God has transferred us into the kingdom of His Son “in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins” (**Colossians 1:13-14**).
 3. Peter reminds his brethren that “you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (**1 Peter 1:18-19**).

II. THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THIS INVITATION

- A. What does the person who accepts this free offer receive? These two verses reveal at least three opportunities that await those who receive the Lord’s free offer.
1. **The opportunity for salvation.**
 - a. God promises those who come to Him that their “soul shall live” (cp. **Ezekiel 18:20-23**). This is a picture of salvation! The soul that sins is separated from God (**Isaiah 59:2**) and in terrible danger (**Ezekiel 18:4**). Every soul born into this world will eventually sin (**Romans 3:23**) and – whether he realises or not – deserves death (**Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 6:23**) and is on his way to Hell (**Romans 2:5-11**).
 - b. When a person receives God’s free offer and drinks the “water of life” he is receiving the salvation of God. When a person believes and obeys the gospel, he is saved (**Mark 16:16**); delivered from the condemnation of sin (**Romans 8:1**), and saved from the wrath of God (**Romans 5:9**). He passes from spiritual death into spiritual life (**John 5:24**); he becomes a brand new creature (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). Thank God for salvation!
 2. **The opportunity for satisfaction.**
 - a. Those who receive God’s offer can let their “soul delight itself in abundance.” When God saves a soul, He gives that soul new life (**Romans 6:4**); a far better life (**John 10:10**). He causes the saved soul to rest in what it has in Jesus (**Matthew 11:28-30**). One that is saved no longer finds happiness and satisfaction in the world; he doesn’t find happiness and satisfaction in things like popularity, wealth, possessions, drugs, etc. The redeemed soul finds everything he needs in Jesus to enjoy true peace and satisfaction (**Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 5:1; 8:6; 15:13; Philippians 4:6-7** cp. **Jeremiah 6:16**).

- b. The blessings we have in Christ are of far more value than anything this world has to offer (**Ephesians 1:3-14**). Jesus put it this way: “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (**Matthew 16:26**). In Him we have peace, joy, rest, acceptance, blessing, love, and salvation. Paul says God has “blessed us with **every** spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (**Ephesians 1:3**). No wonder those who know the Lord are a happy, satisfied people.

3. The opportunity for security.

- a. There is a promise contained in this invitation: “I will make an everlasting covenant with you”. A covenant is a “legally binding obligation, especially of God for man’s redemption” (Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible). It is when one comes to the Lord and listens to what He says, with the intent of doing it, that he enters into this covenant (**Isaiah 55:3**).
- b. When you enter into a covenant that God has made with you, you know you are secure. Men often lie and break covenants, but “God is not a man, that He should lie” (**Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18**). When one believes and obeys the gospel, he is saved (**Mark 16:16**) - let no one ever doubt it! John, writing to Christians, says, “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God” (**1 John 5:13**). We are eternally secure if we remain in Him. Paul says, “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, **if** you hold fast that word which I preached to you - unless you believed in vain” (**1 Corinthians 15:1-2**).

III. THE OBLIGATIONS OF THIS INVITATION

A. This is a tremendous offer! All the things we need for our eternal salvation are offered to us at the right price – free! So what is required to accept this offer? There are three requirements mentioned in these verses:

1. There is something you must have.

- a. Everyone has experienced the desire to quench their physical thirst. However, the thirst mentioned here is spiritual in nature. While everyone experiences physical thirst, not everyone experiences the same level of *spiritual thirst*. Some people have their thirst satisfied by all that is in the world; they have no desire for a new life and they have no reason to come to God.
 - b. But there are those that develop a spiritual thirst; they acknowledge their spiritual bankruptcy (**Matthew 5:3**) and they can find nothing in the world to fill the spiritual void (**Ecclesiastes 2:10-11**). These are the ones that become candidates for God’s offer of salvation. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled” (**Matthew 5:6**).
2. There is something you must hear. Four times in these verses God tells Israel that they need to hear His message: “Ho” (v.1), “Listen carefully” (v.2), “Incline your ear” (v.3), “Hear” (v.3). If they will hear Him calling they can come to Him and get what they need for their soul’s salvation. Four times in these verses, He calls them to “come” to Him. Once, He invites them to “eat”. Paul says, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (**Romans 10:17**).

B. If there is a thirst in your soul for a different life; if you are dissatisfied with the way you are living and with your prospects for eternity, then God invites you to hear His voice and come to Him. He will save you and give you eternal life. All it takes is a positive response to His call and salvation becomes a reality. God calls us through the gospel (**2 Thessalonians 2:13-14**) and if we believe and obey the gospel, then He will save us (**Mark 16:15-16**).

Conclusion

1. There is a void in the human heart that only God can fill. It is a restless void that hungers and thirsts and demands to be filled. Thus men are driven to satisfy their hunger: (i) some give themselves over to occultism, idolatry, hedonism, materialism, etc. (ii) others pursue fame, wealth, possessions, etc. But in all these pursuits, people discover that such things do not bring any lasting satisfaction for the soul.

2. God created us and He knows what will bring lasting satisfaction to the soul; so He invites anyone that hungers and thirsts to come to Him for that which satiates hunger and quenches thirst. And so he will find true satisfaction. God provides the right provisions at the right price – free!
3. The onus is on each individual to “come” and to “listen” with a view to doing (cp. **Romans 2:13; James 1:22**), and God promises: “I will make an everlasting covenant with you”. Ah, what peace and security there is for the soul that comes to the living God.
4. God’s invitation to contentment, satisfaction, and an abundant life still stands today. Jesus says, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (**Matthew 11:28-30**).

LESSON 5**THE INVITATION TO CONTRITION**

Hosea 6:1-2

“Come, and let us return to Jehovah; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight” (Hosea 6:1-2).

Introduction

1. In this passage, the prophet Hosea calls out to the people of Israel. They have wandered far away from the Lord and he issues a call for them to come back to God. It is a call for both personal and national revival. Israel had forsaken the way of the Lord and they had turned away from Him to worship the idols and false gods of the Canaanites. This invitation is a call for them to repent of their sins and to turn their hearts back to the one true God.
2. While these verses were written to people who lived 2,500 years ago, they still have a message that speaks to our need today. Just like ancient Israel, our nation needs a revival! This country has given itself over to sin and evil of every description: the horror of abortion, the abomination of sodomite marriage, etc (cp. 2 Timothy 3:1-5). The rampant rise in sin and perversion of every flavor declare that our nation has moved far away from God and needs to find a place of repentance and redemption.
3. This passage is a call for the people of God to humble themselves before God, and to seek His face for forgiveness and restoration. It is, in essence, an invitation to contrition. The word “contrition” means “sincere sorrow over sin, with a desire to repent of that sin” (Alan Carr). It describes people who are broken hearted in having wronged God. They are sorry for what they have done and they want to make things right with Him.
 - a. It is a state of heart that God will honor: “Jehovah is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit” (Psalms 34:18), and, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart - These, O God, You will not despise” (Psalms 51:17).
 - b. It is those of a contrite heart that will experience revival: “For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15; cp. Luke 18:13-14).
4. This is a message we all need to hear - we are living in an age when there is very little contrition and sorrow over sin (cp. 2 Timothy 3:1-5). People of the world, and even some Christians, live according to the flesh and don’t feel any remorse over their waywardness. So let us consider The Invitation To Contrition.

I. GOD’S PLEA TO A WANTON PEOPLE

- A. I believe the word “wanton” accurately describes the people at this time - it means “deliberate and without motive or provocation; uncalled-for; headstrong; wilful” (Dictionary.com). It comes from an Old English word that means “to be undisciplined”. The people of Israel had every reason to serve and honor the Lord, but they had abandoned Him and turned to follow other gods. They were a wanton people! They had no discipline in their spiritual lives.
 1. The phrase “let us return” implies that a closer relationship than the current relationship once existed. There had been a time in Israel’s past when they were closer to the Lord than they were now. There had been a time when they had followed His Law, sought His face and honored Him above all others. Now, they are far away from Him; they have allowed their relationship to grow cold; their love for Him is not as strong as it used to be; they had become a wayward, wicked people. Their condition is clearly laid out in Hosea 6-7:
 - a. Hosea 6:4-11. Their faithfulness to God was like a “morning cloud” and like the “early dew” that goes away. Their devotion to God was shallow and temporary. They talk about getting right with God, but their repentance and devotion was fleeting at best!

- b. Hosea 7:1-7: They are called “a heated oven”. Like an oven heated to its maximum temperature during the night so that it would be ready for the baker in the morning, Israel burned with a passion for sin. The use of the words “adulterers”, “wickedness” and “wine” bear this out. They should have had a passion for the things of God, but they loved their sin far more than they loved Him (cp. 1 John 2:15-17).
 - c. Hosea 7:8: Israel is called “a cake unturned” (i.e., half-baked). The people of this time cooked their bread on heated rocks. A cake not turned would burn on one side and be raw on the other. Israel was burned on her earthly side through her enduring foreign relationships, but on the other side she was still uncooked by her separation from God. “A mongrel religion, consisting of some lip service to Jehovah and a more active, zealous pursuit of idolatry, had developed” (Bobby Graham).
 - d. Hosea 7:9-10. Israel’s alliances, rather than strengthening and securing them, were weakening the nation. They are compared to those that live a profligate life and grow old before their time. They were growing weak and old but they didn’t know it. This reminds us of Samson when his hair had been shorn: “He did not know that Jehovah had departed from him” (Judges 16:20). Yet despite all their problems, they would not seek God.
 - e. Hosea 7:11-12. Israel is like a “silly dove”. Instead of looking to the Lord and trusting Him, they flew to Egypt for their help, and then they flew to Assyria. Yet, had they listened to the Lord’s prophets, they would have known that these nations would have failed them. They disobeyed God by making covenants with heathen nations.
 - f. Hosea 7:13-16. Israel is like a “deceitful bow” (i.e., it misses the mark). They cannot be trusted to serve the Lord and remain faithful to Him. They had been given His Law and they had received His training. They should have been able to hit a bull’s eye and walk with the Lord in holiness. Yet, they were a fickle people.
2. This was the condition of Israel. There had been a time when they had walked close to the Lord, but now they had drifted far away from Him. As we look at them, let us not fail to look at ourselves (cp. Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11)!

B. Are there any here today that have drifted from the Lord?

1. Look again at these six descriptive phrases used to describe Israel... can you see parallels in your own life?
 - a. Is your devotion to God shallow?
 - b. Do you have a greater passion for sin than you do the things of God?
 - c. Have you compromised with the world?
 - d. Have you lost your power with the Lord?
 - e. Are you like a silly dove flitting here and there looking for help in every source but the Lord?
 - f. Are you like a deceitful bow that cannot be trusted to hit the target of righteous, faithful living?
2. If you find yourself in that condition, then you know you are not where you need to be with the Lord. Like the people in the church in Ephesus, you have “left your first love” (Revelation 2:1-7). You may be going through the motions, but your heart is not aflame with a passionate love for the Lord Jesus Christ and the things of God. You have allowed your soul to drift away from God, and this is His call to you to come back to Him! Why not respond to His call today?

II. GOD’S PLAN FOR A WAYWARD PEOPLE

- A. The reason Israel is interested in returning to the Lord is found in two words – “torn” and “stricken”. The word “torn” is “a verb indicating to tear in pieces. It is used especially of things torn in pieces by wild animals” (CWSD). The word “smitten” is “a verb meaning to beat, to strike, to wound” (CWSD). These words describe what Israel had been going through at the hand of God.

1. Sin had become a habitual way of life for Israel (**Hosea 4:1-2**), and so God would bring judgment against them (**Hosea 4:3-10**). The Lord is described as a lion that comes upon this wayward people to tear them and punish them for their sins. Then, after inflicting judgment, the Lord will withdraw His presence from them to wait for them to seek His face (**Hosea 5:12-15**).
 2. It is clear from these verses that Israel is going to pay a terrible price for their sinful ways.
- B. Just as surely as the Lord brought harsh judgment upon the nation of Israel for their disobedience, so He will inflict harsh judgments on those Christians that turn away and refuse to walk in His will.
1. Solomon writes, “Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way, and he who hates correction will die” (**Proverbs 15:10**).
 2. The Hebrew writer had a word of warning for them that would fall away: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking⁷ the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (**Hebrews 10:24-31**).
- C. We deceive ourselves if we think we can turn our backs on the Lord and not have to face any consequences.
1. There is a price to pay for disobedience! So “let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to Jehovah” (**Lamentations 3:40**).
 2. The painful effects of chastisement can be clearly seen in the lives of many of the people in the Bible. David's adultery and murder brought the chastisement of God upon him and his family for many years. An infant son was taken in death; a son grew up a rebel to his father; another son raped his sister and was murdered by another brother. David suffered under the chastisement of God (**Psalms 51:8; 38:3**). Let us not despise the chastening of the Lord (**Hebrews 12:5-12; Revelation 3:19**).

III. GOD'S PROMISE TO A WOUNDED PEOPLE

- A. Some people see these words as foolish thinking on the part of Israel. They think the people are trying out a religious formula, saying, “If we act in a certain way then God is obligated to respond to us in a certain manner.” While this may be true, there is a ray of hope here for those who have allowed sin to come between them and the Lord.
1. Israel has suffered at the hand of the Lord, but if they will return to Him with their whole heart (**Psalms 119:2, 58**), He will “heal us”. The word “heal” is a verb meaning “to heal, to make fresh. It describes the process of healing, being restored to health, made healthy...” (CWSD). The Lord will also “bind us up”. The word “bind” is a verb that means “to bind. This word is used primarily to describe a binding or wrapping of one object with another” (CWSD), i.e., “to tie up a wound”. Yes, God had torn and smitten them, but He would prove to be their salvation and healing if they would only come back to Him. If they would return to Him, God would minister to them personally. He would meet their needs quickly and He would restore them to a place of blessing. Did they have any grounds for their confidence? Indeed, they had experienced such before: “For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; but when in their trouble they turned to Jehovah God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them” (**2 Chronicles 15:3-4**).

⁷ The English word “forsaking” is an accurate translation of the Greek word *egkataleipo*. The writer is not warning them against missing a service, he is warning them not to forsake the assemblies or forsake Christianity. Some Jewish Christians were forsaking Christianity and returning to their former religion due to persecution.

2. If we will examine our ways and see where we have strayed from Him and return to Him, then He will restore us to wholeness again. We need the blessings mentioned in these verses.
- B. Those who have been enduring God's chastisement ("torn" and "smitten") need His "healing" and "binding". You can have that in your life if you will come to Him.
 1. If we have fallen away from the Lord, we need to come to a place where we can be honest about our condition before the Lord. He already knows what kind of shape we are in, and so do we! When we come to the place where we can confess our need of renewal - our need of Him and the depths of our sins - we will find that God is ready to heal and bind us.
 2. God is waiting for us to return to Him (**cp. 2 Chronicles 7:14**). Are we willing to confess our sin and return to the Lord? "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (**1 John 1:9**).

Conclusion

1. God had torn and smitten His people because they had turned away from Him and sunk into a depraved state. But even at their lowest, His people still recognized that the Lord is merciful, saying, "Come, and let us return to Jehovah; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight" (**Hosea 6:1-2**). Interestingly, the reading of LXX has God making the appeal: "In their affliction they will seek Me early, saying, Let us go, and return to the Lord our God; for He has torn, and will heal us; He will smite, and bind us up. After two days He will heal us: in the third day we shall arise, and live before Him, and shall know Him" (**Hosea 6:1-3**).
2. But whether it is the people themselves speaking to one another or God stating what would happen, there are applications to be made:
 - a. A whole nation may fall away from God and plummet into the depths of sin, and sin itself brings its own punishment - misery and suffering; it tears and it afflicts. "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (**Proverbs 14:34**). Yet the Lord will be merciful toward any nation that turns from its evil: "The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it" (**Jeremiah 18:7-10**).
 - b. A Christian may fall away from the Lord and entangle himself in all kinds of sins that tear his soul and afflict his conscience (**Psalms 32:1-5**). But God is always waiting with open arms; He does not desire our destruction, He desires that we turn back to Him again. "But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord Jehovah, and not that he should turn from his ways and live? But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die" (**Ezekiel 18:21-24**).
3. The scripture declares that "all have sinned" (**Romans 3:23**), and God "commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (**Acts 17:30-31**). For the Christian that has fallen away, the message is the same, "Repent therefore of this your wickedness" (**Acts 8:22**). Why not humble yourself before Almighty God and say, "Come, and let us return to Jehovah; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up" (**Hosea 6:1**).

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart - These, O God, You will not despise" (**Psalms 51:17**).

LESSON 6

THE INVITATION TO CHILDREN

Matthew 19:13-15

“Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And He laid His hands on them and departed from there” (Matthew 19:13-15).

Introduction

1. This is a very precious and much loved invitation. Jesus had just finished teaching about the very serious matter of marriage and divorce. As soon as that discussion is finished, Jesus turns His attention to some little children that are being brought to Him by their parents. It was a Jewish tradition to bring small children to a great rabbi so that he could bless them and pray for them. It was also common for parents to take their children to the synagogue, where each of the elders would take the child in his hands and pray for the life of the child.
2. Despite being a custom of the time, Jesus' disciples rebuked those who brought their children to Him for a blessing. Apparently, they felt His time was too valuable to spend blessing children. Jesus, in turn, rebuked His disciples for their attitude, saying, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven”.
3. Children are a blessing to be enjoyed! David says, “Behold, children are a heritage from Jehovah, the fruit of the womb is a reward” (Psalms 127:3). This passage has something to say about children and about the Savior's invitation for them to come to Him. Now, lest you think this message is only for the children, there is a word here for all of us. Let's take a few minutes to examine the elements of this great invitation – The Invitation To Children.

**I. A WORD ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY**

A. Parents have an awesome responsibility toward their children, which we shall now consider:

1. We are responsible for evangelizing our children. The parents cared enough about the spiritual condition of their children to bring them to Jesus to pray for them and pronounce a blessing on their young lives.
 - a. God doesn't just *expect* parents to teach their children, He *commands* it: (i) Moses wrote: “Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which Jehovah your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear Jehovah your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as Jehovah God of your fathers has promised you - 'a land flowing with milk and honey.' Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one! You shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes” (Deuteronomy 6:1-8). (ii) The New Testament renews this challenge: “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).
 - b. Parents should do everything in their power to ensure that their children are exposed to the Gospel: teaching them at home (*every day*), ensuring they're enrolled in the children's Bible class (if the congregation makes such provision), and setting them a godly example by their own lives.

2. But let us be careful not to focus so much on teaching our children doctrine that we forget to bring our children to Him that gave the teaching! In other words, we must seek to bring our children to Jesus. We have the responsibility of modeling our faith in Jesus so that the younger generation can see that He is worth knowing. If my faith does not change my life, my children will pick up on that. I can talk about my faith but if I do not live out my faith, it translates into hypocrisy in the eyes of our children. They are very quick to spot a phony! When these parents came to Jesus with their children they were encouraging them to approach Him as well. When mature adults love Jesus with a sincere devotion, it encourages children to love Him too!

B. You reap what you sow (**Galatians 6:7**):

1. Those parents that follow the direction of the Spirit will reap godly children that look forward to attending services (**Psalms 122:1**), are fervent in prayer (**1 Thessalonians 5:17**), have a craving for the pure milk of the word (**1 Peter 2:1-2**), and seek to be conformed to the image of Jesus (**Romans 8:29**).
2. But then there are those parents that refuse to listen to the Spirit, and they, too, reap what they have sown; children that have to be dragged to services, never go to God in prayer, have no desire to study the word, and live according to the principles of the world. These parents are blind to their failure and blame the child rather than accepting responsibility. The spiritual condition of children is often a reflection of the spiritual condition of the parents.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” – Proverbs 22:6.

II. A WORD ABOUT REDEMPTION

- A. While this text certainly highlights adult responsibility toward a child’s spiritual foundation, it also speaks about the matter of salvation.

1. Children need a Savior!
 - a. Do children tell lies, steal, etc.? The thing is they do not know the difference between right and wrong: (i) God speaks of children that “have no knowledge of good and evil” (**Deuteronomy 1:39**), (ii) God says there is a time when children do not know “to refuse the evil and choose the good” (**Isaiah 7:16**), (iii) God speaks to Jonah of those in Nineveh “who cannot discern between their right hand and their left” (**Jonah 4:11**). This is speaking metaphorically of those children who had no knowledge of good and evil.
 - b. While a child does not know good or evil, they are not accountable to God; they are in a state of innocence. If this were not so, then we would have to accept that babies are born sinners and in need of a way of salvation. But children will eventually reach an age of accountability or, as some prefer to term it, the “age of decision”. This is why it is so essential for parents to introduce their children to the person of Jesus as soon as possible and to diligently teach them of His ways; not just through teaching... they must see Jesus living in you. When children hear the Gospel preached, taught *and* lived out, they are far more likely to obey the gospel in true knowledge and sincerity⁸
2. What it involves.
 - a. A child becomes accountable for his or her sins when they come to the place where they can understand the difference between right and wrong and when they are able to choose between right and wrong. When a person reaches a level of mental understanding regarding the nature of sin and its consequences and are able to make a decision for or against Jesus Christ, they have reached the “age of decision”. So, when is that age? It is not a question of age; it is a question of belief and conviction on hearing the gospel (**Mark 16:15-16**; **Acts 2:36-37**).

⁸ I say “in true knowledge and sincerity” because some – while obeying the gospel in sincerity – do not have any true knowledge of what it means to be a Christian. Due to the failure of their parents, they suppose that there is nothing more to being a Christian than learning how to recite the names of the twelve apostles and attending services twice a week. They have not been taught to pray and have no desire to study or engage in any spiritual exercises. Such is the attitude of many “religious” people in the many denominations. They know of Jesus but they do not know Him.

- b. How should a parent respond to their six year old son or ten year old daughter that says, "I want to be baptized"? Alan Carr suggests, "Take the time to ask them some pointed questions like: What does it mean to be saved? Why do you feel that you need to be saved? Can you explain to me how a person gets saved? Can you explain to me what sin is? There are many other questions, but you get the idea. If they do not understand, keep praying for them and talking to them about Jesus. They will come back when they are ready."

3. What it illustrates.

- a. It illustrates the way all believers must come to Jesus. Earlier, Jesus had said that all who come to Him must come as a little child (**Matthew 18:1-6**). He is referring to a few of the special characteristics that separate children from adults: children are trusting, humble and dependent. Those coming to Jesus must, likewise, be trusting, humble and dependant.
- b. For a person to be saved, he must be willing to cast aside his pride in himself and his achievements (**cp. Galatians 6:14**). He must be willing to confess that he cannot be saved by his own works of righteousness (**Philippians 3:3-11**). He must be willing to humble himself before God and acknowledge his sins (**1 Peter 5:6**). Let us not be like the Rich Young Ruler (**Matthew 19:16-22**) - he came to Jesus, but he would not turn loose his pride, his money or his self-righteousness. He left with all his possessions, but he left without Jesus! A person must look to Jesus by faith, trusting Him for their soul's salvation. This requires the childlike qualities of trust, humility and dependence. This is the only way anyone ever receives salvation.

The simple, unvarnished faith of a child is seen in the following little story. Celeste Sibley, one-time columnist for the Atlanta (GA) Constitution, took her three children to a diner for breakfast one morning. It was crowded and they had to take separate seats at the counter. Eight-year-old Mary was seated at the far end of the counter and when her food was served she called down to her mother in a loud voice, "Mother, don't people say grace in this place?" A hush came over the entire diner and before Mrs. Sibley could figure out what to say, the counterman said, "Yes, we do, sister. You say it." All the people at the counter bowed their heads. Mary bowed her head and in a clear voice said, "God is great, God is good, let us thank Him for our food."

III. A WORD ABOUT THE REDEEMER

- A. This passage also has something to say about the Savior. Watching Jesus minister to these children, we get a glimpse of the aspects of our Lord's personality:

1. We can see His heart.

- a. Perhaps the disciples thought Jesus was too busy or that it was beneath Him to be bothered with blessing children. But when the Bible says, "brought to Him", it has the idea of a long line of children being brought to Jesus. It seems that parents from all over the area had brought their children to Jesus so that He could pray for them and pronounce a blessing over them. When the disciples rebuked the parents, they were themselves rebuked. In Mark's account of these events, he says that Jesus was "much displeased" (**Mark 10:14**). This means that Jesus was angry with the disciples for trying to prevent children from coming to Him. Children hold a special place in our Lord's heart. In fact, we are warned that harsh judgment awaits those who abuse little children (**Matthew 18:6**). Jesus always defends the defenseless!
- b. This scene reveals a lot about Jesus. Children cannot serve Him like those who are older. Yet still, He loves them and reaches out to them in grace. This just reminds us that God is not interested in what we can do, what we can give or how old we are. He simply invites people to come to Him on the basis of pure grace! Jesus loves innocent children and lost sinners and He invites them all to come to Him, (**Revelation 22:17, Matthew 11:28; John 3:16**).
- c. Let us be sure to bring our children to Jesus and help them to get to know their Savior. To adopt the attitude of the disciples is to incur the displeasure of Jesus (**Mark 10:14**).

2. We can see His hands. This verse says “and He laid His hands on them”. This indicates that He took the time to bless each individual child that came before Him. No matter how young they were or how insignificant they appeared, Jesus cared about them and took time over them.

B. Never think for an instant that Jesus doesn’t care about you. He loves you and He will not turn you away if you will come to Him (**John 6:37**). No matter where the path of life has taken you; no matter what you may have done (**1 Timothy 1:16**); no matter how insignificant you may feel; Jesus Christ will save you and change your life if you will come to Him as a little child in trust, humility and dependence.

Conclusion

1. Children are a blessing from God (**Psalms 127:3**), and every parent wants the best for them. In those days “it was a custom to take infants to the synagogues, that they might receive the prayers and blessings of the rabbis, or holy men” (PC). The disciples may have thought it was beneath Him to be bothered with blessing children, but Jesus wanted nothing more than to comply with their parents’ wishes and bless them.
2. In this lesson we have noted a few words...
 - a. A word about responsibility. Parents have the grave responsibility of bringing up their children “in the training and admonition of the Lord” (**Ephesians 6:4**), and introducing them to Jesus – they must be able to see Jesus living in us. Hymn: “Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me”. Those parents that fail to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord are no better than the disciples that hindered the children being brought to Jesus.
 - b. A word about redemption. Jesus says, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” The key word here is “such”. “Jesus did not say that the kingdom would contain children, but it was to have men and women who had become *such* persons by repentance and humility” (Zerr). I have heard some say “This passage shows that infants are innocent in regards to sin and have no need of salvation”. But children grow up very quickly and certainly will need a Savior! This, again, highlights parents’ responsibility to introduce children to Jesus as soon as possible in order to prepare them to accept Jesus as their Savior. This passage also illustrates how all believers come to Jesus – as little children, trusting, in humility, and wholly dependant on Him to redeem us from our sins.
 - c. A word about the Redeemer. As we picture the scene – little children being brought to Jesus for a blessing – we get a glimpse into the heart of Jesus. True, children are not accountable, but that doesn’t mean He doesn’t want anything to do with children until they become accountable. Jesus loves the little children and He wants to bless them, and they can be blessed if we take the time to teach them of their Lord and Savior. In fact, to fail in this duty is to incur the displeasure of the Lord.
3. Let parents recognize and fulfill the grave responsibility to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and let the congregation ensure it makes some provision that helps to bring its children to the Lord.

LESSON 7

THE INVITATION TO CONSIDER

John 1:35-42

“Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, Behold the Lamb of God! The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, What do you seek? They said to Him, Rabbi (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), where are You staying? He said to them, Come and see. They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour). One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, We have found the Messiah (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas (which is translated, A Stone)” (John 1:35-42).

Introduction

1. In this passage, Jesus invites two religious men - **John** and **Andrew** - to *consider* what has been said about Him. This passage highlights the condition of man and the compassion of the Savior. Jesus says seven words in these verses. He says “What do you seek?” and “Come and see”. Jesus is inviting all those who do not know Him to come to Him and to examine Him. He wants lost men to know Who He is and what He can do for them.
2. In these verses we find another of the great invitations of the Bible. In this lesson we shall consider some of the blessings contained in these verses as we study together The Invitation To Consider.

I. CONSIDER THE CLAIMS

A. This simple statement by John the Baptist is full of meaning. In these words, John sets forth two important truths regarding the Lord Jesus Christ:

1. He is the Savior of sinners. The definite article “the” identifies Jesus Christ as “the one and only” Lamb of God.
 - a. Man has a problem and Jesus is the only solution to that problem (Acts 4:12). Sin, of course, is the problem. Paul says, “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one [Psalms 14:1-3]. Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips [Psalms 5:9]” (Romans 3:10-13). It is our sin that results in physical death (Psalms 9:17) and eternal spiritual death (Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 6:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:9). Indeed, all sinners shall be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 21:8).
 - b. Jesus Christ is the only solution to man's sin problem (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:12). That sounds narrow minded in this day and age, but it is the truth! The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the Most Rev Katharine Jefferts Schori told members of the Diocese of Quincy, that to insist Jesus is the only way to God is to “limit God.” She said that God was at work in the lives of other faiths. “God is, at the very least, a mystery”. She said, further, “God's intention is for a restored relationship with all humanity. My job is to proclaim the good news of Jesus, but I cannot deny God is not at work in other ways”⁹. Jesus Himself said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). Who do you believe?

Consider the claims the Bible makes regarding Jesus. Have you trusted Him as your Savior? In the words of that old hymn, “Have you been to Jesus for the cleansing power? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you fully trusting in His grace this hour? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? Are you washed in the blood, In the soul cleansing blood of the Lamb? Are your garments spotless? Are they white as snow? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?”

⁹ See <https://geoconger.wordpress.com/2009/04/17/presiding-bishop-jesus-is-not-the-only-way-to-god-cen-41709-p-7/>

2. He is the sacrifice for sin. John called Jesus “the Lamb of God”.

- a. This description pictures Jesus as a sacrificial animal. It was a lamb that was offered as the first sacrifice in the Bible (**Genesis 4:2-4**). It was a lamb that redeemed the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt (**Exodus 12:1-3**). It was a lamb that had been promised to Isaac as Abraham led him up to Mount Moriah (**Genesis 22:8**). Countless lambs had been slain in Israel as sin offerings down through the centuries.



- b. The prophet Isaiah pictured the coming Messiah as a slain lamb (**Isaiah 53:4-6**). When Jesus came into this world, He came for the sole purpose of going to the cross to offer Himself as the propitiation for our sin (**Mark 10:45; John 18:37**). Only His death can satisfy God (**1 John 2:2; 4:10**). Only His blood can cleanse the sinful soul (**1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5**). Jesus is God’s final answer to the question Isaac posed to Abraham as they climbed that mountain all those long years ago, “Where is the lamb?” Jesus is the Lamb! He is the only Lamb God will accept.

B. Jesus is the Lamb of God; the sacrifice for our sins. Can this be said of any other person that has ever lived? No! And neither will it be said of any other man that is yet to be born because “There is no salvation by anyone else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved” (**Acts 4:12 ISV**).

1. Those that have not obeyed the gospel are invited to consider what is said of Jesus – He is the Savior of sinners and the sacrifice for our sins. If you believe this, then do not delay in obeying the gospel today. To obey is to choose salvation, and to disobey is to choose eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord. There is no middle ground.
2. Those that have obeyed the gospel must be careful to maintain their faith and trust in His blood to save and cleanse from sin (**1 John 1:7-10**). Only those that are faithful unto death will receive the crown of life (**Revelation 2:10**).

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. And again, the Lord will judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (**Hebrews 10:24-31**).

II. CONSIDER THE CALL

A. The interest of the disciples.

1. These two disciples heard John’s public declaration concerning Jesus (**John 1:19-34**). Now, they are given some private direction concerning Jesus (**John 1:35**); John is saying to them, “Go follow Him, He is the One.” They heed his voice and they begin to follow Jesus.
2. What they have heard about Jesus has made them curious. This is how some people come to know the Lord: they hear about Him and they become curious, and those with a good heart go to Him to learn more about Him (**cp. John 1:43-46**). It is in coming to Him and learning of Him that one is drawn to Him (**John 6:44-45**). Through the word of God, the Spirit convicts one of sin and Jesus is set forth as the sacrifice for our sins in the gospel. Being convicted of one’s sins is a horrible feeling, but what a day of rejoicing it is when our sins are washed away by His blood (**Mark 16:16 > Acts 2:38 > 8:39**); it is a day you will never forget!

B. The investigation of the disciples.

1. Seeing the two disciples of John following Him, Jesus asks, “What do you seek?” These men are hungry for a relationship with God. This is clear from the fact that they have been disciples of John who has been teaching them that the Messiah is coming.
 - a. When Jesus asks them “What do you seek?” He is asking them to examine their motives for wanting to follow Him. Regarding Jesus’ question, Barnes comments, “It was a kind inquiry respecting their desires; an invitation to lay open their minds, to state their wishes, and to express all their feelings respecting the Messiah and their own salvation.”
 - b. If they were looking for a revolutionary leader who would throw off the yoke of Rome and liberate the Jews, then they were following the wrong man. If they were looking for one who would carry on the traditions of Judaism and dead religion, then they were following the wrong man. If, however, they were looking for a new life; for eternal life; for salvation and hope for the future, then they were following the right Man. These two men had no idea how their lives were about to change!
2. What are you expecting as you follow Jesus?
 - a. If you are looking for someone who will make your life easier in the world, Jesus isn’t for you (**Acts 14:22**). If you are looking for someone who will solve all your problems, Jesus isn’t for you (**Matthew 10:34-39**). If you are looking for someone who will make you feel better about yourself, Jesus isn’t for you (**Jeremiah 17:9; John 8:34**). If you are looking for a little religion on Sunday so that you can feel better about the way you live Monday through Saturday, then Jesus just isn’t for you (**1 Timothy 6:11; Hebrews 12:14**).
 - b. However, if you are looking for a Savior who can save your soul (**1 John 1:7; 3:5**) and give you eternal life (**John 10:27-28**), then Jesus **is** for you. Following Jesus will transform your life (**2 Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 4:20-24; Colossians 3:9-11**).

C. The invitation to the disciples.

1. These men respond to Jesus’ question with one of their own, “Rabbi, where are you staying?” This is a telling question: (i) They call Him “Rabbi”, which means “Teacher”; it was a term of respect. It is clear that these men held Jesus in high regard, (ii) When they ask, “Where are you staying”, they are expressing their desire to visit with and be instructed by Him. They are requesting an extended interview with Jesus. Jesus’ response is simple, yet profound: “Come and see”. This simple phrase literally means “Come with me and you will see!” This is an invitation for them to examine Him for themselves. They have heard about Him from others; now they are invited to see for themselves.
2. This invitation still stands. Perhaps you are thinking that there must be more to life than gaining wealth (**Luke 9:25**) and accumulating possessions (**Luke 12:15**); maybe you have become more concerned with your spiritual well being than your physical well being. Perhaps you have heard about Jesus and want to know more about Him. Jesus invites you to come to Him: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (**Matthew 11:28-30**).

III. CONSIDER THE CHANGES

- A. When these two men met Jesus for themselves, their lives changed forever. Two of these changes are highlighted in these verses.
 1. They wanted to stay with Jesus.
 - a. John tells us that it was “about the tenth hour” (if John is going by Jewish mode, then it would be 4pm. If he uses Roman mode, then it would be 10am) John and Andrew remained in the presence of Jesus for the rest of the day. They spent the rest of their lives in His service!



1) In his latter ministry, it is believed that Andrew went to the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains (present day Georgia in Eastern Europe). While there, he preached to the Scythians as far as the Caspian Sea. He also went to Byzantium which is present day Istanbul in Turkey and from there, to Greece. In fact, he traveled to Thrace and Macedonia, down through the Corinthian Gulf to Patros; it was in Patros that Andrew was martyred. In the church of St. Andrew in Patros, Greece, there is a book written in Greek which sheds light on his martyrdom. The following is written: "Aigeatis who was the governor of Patros became enraged at Andrew for his preaching and ordered him to stand before the tribunal in his attempt to do away with the Christian Faith. When Andrew resisted the tribunal, the governor ordered him crucified. Andrew remained tied to the cross with thick tight ropes for three days and his last words were: 'Accept me, O Christ Jesus, whom I saw, whom I love, and in whom I am; accept my spirit in peace in your eternal realm.'" An ancient writer also speaks of the apostle's martyrdom as such: "Andrew hung upon the cross three whole days, suffering dreadful pain but continuing constantly to tell the people around him of the love of Jesus Christ. The people, as they listened to him, began to believe his words and asked the governor to let him be taken down from the cross. Not liking to refuse them, he at last ordered the ropes to be cut but when the last rope was severed, the body of the apostle fell to the ground quite dead."¹⁰

2) John had a close relationship with Jesus and was known as the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (**John 13:23**). John laid his head on the breast of our Lord at the last supper (**John 13:25**), he was there when Jesus stood trial before the Jewish High Priest (**John 18:15**), he was at the foot of the cross when Jesus died (**John 19:26**), and he was the first disciple to the tomb the day Jesus rose from the dead (**John 20:45**). John lived well into his nineties and wrote the Book of Revelation while he was in exile on the Isle of Patmos for his testimony of Jesus Christ (**Revelation 1:9**).

b. Those that sincerely seek to know Jesus and get to know Him have their lives changed forever, and the New Testament contains many examples; some are very remarkable (e.g., Saul, Simon the sorcerer, the man of Gadara that was possessed by a legion of demons, etc).

2. They wanted to share Jesus. Having spent time in the presence of Jesus, they became convinced that He was the Messiah, and they wanted others to know the good news. John says, "He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, We have found the Messiah (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus" (**John 1:41-42**). An example all sincere believers ought to follow (cp. **Acts 8:1-4**).

B. Those that seek to fill the spiritual void; those that hunger and thirst after righteousness (**Matthew 5:6**), need to seek Jesus. When you come to know Him and spend time in His presence, then you will see that He is the only one that can truly satisfy (**Matthew 11:28-29**). When you have experienced what Jesus has done for you, there will be a strong desire in your heart to share Jesus with everyone you meet. This desire to share the Savior with others is a good indication of your relationship with Him.

Conclusion

1. John and Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist who believed the Messiah was about to appear. When the Baptist identifies Him as the Lamb of God, the disciples begin to follow Jesus. Seeing them following, Jesus asks, "What do you seek?" The disciples then ask where He is staying and Jesus invites them to "Come and see".
2. In this lesson we have focused on several things that a seeker ought to consider:
 - a. The claims. John identified Jesus, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Two important truths are set forth here:
 - (i) Jesus is the Savior of sinners. It is essential that every man acknowledge his sin and recognize Jesus as the Lamb of God; the sacrifice for our sins.
 - (ii) The world is full of false teachers and various ways of salvation are set before the world, but Jesus himself declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (**John 14:6**).

¹⁰ This was taken from BiblePath.com. See www.biblepath.com/andrew.html

- b. The call. The two disciples lived in expectation of the imminent appearing of the Messiah, and they recognized John the Baptist as a prophet who was preparing the way for Him. When He is identified by John, they follow Him. Jesus asks, "What do you seek?" "It was a kind inquiry respecting their desires; an invitation to lay open their minds, to state their wishes, and to express all their feelings respecting the Messiah and their own salvation" (Barnes). The disciples ask Jesus where He is staying, not because they are curious, but because they desired to be in His presence and learn at His feet. Jesus says, "Come and see!" It is an invitation for them to examine Him for themselves. They have heard about Him from others; now they are invited to see for themselves.
 - c. The changes. Two changes are noted here: (i) The two disciples visited with Jesus and they ended up remaining with Him forever! John and Andrew became His disciples and followed Him until He was taken up and continued to follow Him until their own deaths. (ii) They had a desire to let others know about Jesus. It was Andrew that brought his brother Simon to Jesus.
3. Perhaps you have heard about Jesus and you're wondering "Who is this Jesus?" and "What does He teach?" and "Does Jesus have the answers that my soul longs to hear?" If so, then Jesus invites you to "Come and see!" You can learn all about Jesus and get to know Him by reading the gospel accounts of His life, works, and mission.

LESSON 8

THE INVITATION OF CONFIDENCE

John 6:37-40

“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:37-40).

Introduction

1. What a profound passage this is! These verses contain truths that will never be fully comprehended by the mind of man until we stand complete in His image in glory (Romans 8:29; Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 1:21-22; 1 John 3:2). Jesus uses the simple language to teach us a deep truth that is difficult to comprehend. Yet, it is truth so simple that even children can grasp the heart of it.
2. In these verses we find yet another invitation from our Lord. It is an invitation that inspires great confidence. These words (i) speak of the confidence that rested within the heart of our Savior as He looked toward Calvary, (ii) they speak of the confidence that sinners can have as they see the horror, and understand the penalty, of their sins, and (iii) They speak of the confidence that can be possessed by the saints of God as they journey toward their home in Heaven.
3. This is The Invitation Of Confidence and it has much to say to us today. Let's take some time and consider together the great blessings that our Savior has embedded for us in His words.

I. THE SAVIOR'S GIFT

- A. Jesus has just declared His identity to the Jews. He has declared Himself to be the Bread of Life (John 6:35). He tells them very clearly that any one who will receive Him will neither hunger nor thirst. He then makes a sad statement, “You have seen Me and yet do not believe” (John 6:36). This statement brings into sharp focus the fact that the Jews had rejected Jesus as their Messiah. In fact, John went so far as to say, “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him” (John 1:11). Some people might have seen this rejection by the Jews as an indication that the ministry of Jesus Christ was a failure. The very people to whom He had come rejected Him as their Messiah. If anyone thinks the ministry of Jesus was a failure, they are missing the big picture (Jesus was “delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God” - Acts 2:23).



- B. The passage opens telling us of the Father's gift to the Son. It is given to Jesus as His reward as Savior of the world (John 6:37a), and it is a promise that serves as the proof that His mission was not in vain. This gift, though hard to comprehend, is a greater blessing than we can fathom. Let's examine it for a moment:
 1. The character of this gift.
 - a. “All that the Father gives Me...” The character of this gift is seen in the word “all”. That word encompasses every sinner who will ever be saved. That word speaks of every redeemed sinner from the one that has sinned very little to the one that has lived a life of wickedness and committed unspeakably vile sins (cp. 1 Timothy 1:15-16). That word speaks to all of those who would ever place their faith in Jesus for salvation.
 - b. If you are saved, or if you will ever be saved, you are God's gift to His Son. You are God's love gift to Jesus for coming into this world and dying on the cross. Who are the one's given to the Son? “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Romans 8:29-30).

2. The contributor of this gift.

- a. “All that **the Father gives Me...**” God is the One behind the gift. Yet, the entire Godhead is involved in this great gift of salvation. The Father gave us His Son in eternity past (**John 3:16; Ephesians 1:4; 1 John 4:10**), Jesus died for us on the cross (**1 Peter 2:24**), and the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin (**John 16:8**) and draws us and invites us to believe through the gospel (**John 3:5-7; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14**); He explains the significance of Jesus’ death (**1 Corinthians 2:10-14; Acts 2:1-37**). “The covenant of grace was planned by the Father (**Ephesians 1:4-5; Romans 8:28-29, 33; 2 Timothy 1:9**), executed by the Son (**Ephesians 1:7; Romans 8:3-4, 34; John 6:37**), and applied by the Spirit (**Romans 8:2, 9, 15**). From start to finish, salvation is of the Lord” (Michael L. Gowens).
- b. Whom has God given to the Son? How does God make His choice?
 - 1) We ask these questions because there are many people that subscribe to the teachings of John Calvin. Calvinism is a series of theological beliefs that are summarized under the acrostic TULIP. To put it very simply, Calvinists believe that all of mankind would have ended up in Hell were it not for the fact that God, from all eternity, chose certain *individuals* to be saved (a remnant), and it is these individuals that God gives to the Son; and those individuals that are not on the list – regardless of whether they want to be saved or not – are destined to go to Hell.
 - 2) We don’t have time to study this topic in any depth, but here are a few points: (i) God desires “all men to be saved” (**1 Timothy 2:4; cp. Matthew 18:14**). If God desires “all” men to be saved, then why aren’t all men saved? I would suggest it is because there are conditions to be met with which many refuse to comply. (ii) Jesus is “the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe” (**1 Timothy 4:10**). In this verse we can see that while Christ is the Savior of “all” men, there is something that sets apart the lost from the saved... faith! Faith is one of the conditions of salvation. (iii) It is said we are elected or chosen. This is true! Paul says that God “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (**Ephesians 1:4**). Yes, individuals are elected unto salvation but it is individuals that are “**in Him**”. Before the foundation of the world, God determined that those “in Christ” would be saved. This is why we preach the gospel, because it is God’s power to save (**Romans 1:16**). If a person believes the gospel, repents of his sins, confesses that Jesus is Lord, and is baptized for the remission of sins, then he is saved (**Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38**). It is at the point of baptism that we contact the blood of Christ. Also, it is through baptism that we are put into Christ. Paul says, “For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ” (**Galatians 3:27**).

3. The consequences of this gift.

- a. “All... shall come to me”. As we have seen, all that the Father gives to the Son are those who believe, repent, and are baptized for the remission of sins. Who are those that the Father has given to the Son? Those that “come to Me”. This is what the Father has determined from all eternity: “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (**Ephesians 1:4**), and we are baptized into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**). If you wonder who the one’s are that the Father has given to the Son, then look at those that have come to Christ... they are the ones!
- b. There can be no doubt that salvation is based on God’s choice (because God chose the plan by which men can be saved). Salvation is a matter of grace. But there is also no denying the fact that man is responsible to believe in Jesus and to receive Him as Savior. Here is the truth: if anyone is saved it will be because of God’s grace (**Ephesians 2:8**). God will get all the glory! If anyone goes to Hell it will be their own fault (**cp. Matthew 23:37**). They will have no one to blame but themselves. God makes a universal offer of salvation to all people (**Mark 16:15-16**). He cries that “whosoever will” may come! Anyone who will come to Jesus will be saved. Those who will not come to Jesus will never be saved.
- c. This is a verse brimming with confidence. It looked, from a human perspective, like the ministry of Jesus was a failure. Jesus knew, however, that God had given Him many sheep. He could face the rejection and go to the cross to die knowing that His death would not be in vain, but that He would actually save every one that the Father had given to Him (**cp. John 5:24; 1 John 5:13**).

II. THE SAVIOR'S GRACE

- A. Jesus had confidence because of the Father's gift; He knew that His death would accomplish salvation for those that come to Him. And all sinners can have confidence in coming to Him for salvation. We can have confidence because of the Savior's grace.

1. The extent of His grace.

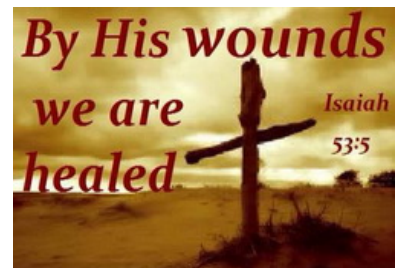
- a. "... the one who comes to Me". The phrase "comes to Me" is essential to understand because it declares the way of salvation. We are not saved by joining a local church, being a good person, doing good works, etc. We are saved by coming to a Person – Jesus! We are saved by coming to Jesus Christ by faith. This means believing that He is the Son of God (**John 3:36; Romans 10:8-10**), believing that He died for our sins (**1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Peter 2:24**), and believing that He was raised for our justification (**Romans 4:25**).
- b. The Lord's grace is seen in providing a way of salvation and also in its simplicity - we are not asked to suffer torments and perform some great feat in order to be saved... Jesus says, "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (**John 6:40**).

2. The energy of His grace.

- a. "I will by no means cast out". We don't know how many people Jesus healed during His ministry, but it was staggering! Look at these statements from Luke's gospel alone:
 - 1) "When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them" (**Luke 4:40**).
 - 2) "However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities" (**Luke 5:15**). Though not specifically stated, it is highly likely that Jesus healed them.
 - 3) "And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all" (**Luke 6:17-19**).
 - 4) "But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing" (**Luke 9:11**). In him was fulfilled the prophecy, "Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (**Isaiah 53:4**). Do you see the energy involved?

- b. Likewise, as the healer of the soul (**Matthew 11:28-30; Isaiah 53:5**), all those that come to Him for salvation, He will by no means cast out.

- 1) You do not have to make an appointment, you don't have to stand in line, and you don't have to worry that you'll be too late or that God's house will be full. As was true with respect to those that came to Jesus for physical healing, so it is true in respect to those that come to Him for spiritual healing... "I will by no means cast out".
- 2) Your past sins are no hindrance to His saving grace! Your present condition is no hindrance to His saving grace! Your future failures are no hindrance to His saving grace (**John 1:7-10**). If you will come to Him, He will not turn you away, but He will save your soul.



III. THE SAVIOR'S GUARANTEE

A. The truth that “All the Father gives Me will come to Me” gives the Savior confidence – for He knows that His death will not be in vain. The truth that “the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out” gives confidence to the repenting sinner. The remainder of the verses gives great confidence to the saints of God. In these verses we find the personal guarantee of our Savior to all those who come to Him.

1. Confirmed by His plan.

- a. God's plan is to save the sinner by “grace through faith” (**Ephesians 2:8**). When a lost person comes to Jesus for salvation, God will save him. When He saves them, He saves them for all eternity (**John 5:24**). It is the Father's will that Jesus should “lose nothing”. The word “lose” has reference to being lost in Hell. When Jesus saves a soul, the saved person will never, ever be lost again (as long as we remain in Him)! Jesus said, “And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand” (**John 10:28-29; cp. Romans 8:38-39**).
- b. As long as we continue to exercise faith and remain faithful, we are secure in Jesus (**Revelation 2:10**). However, what if **we** deny Him and what if **we** turn away from Him? There were those that fell: Adam and Eve (**Genesis 3:1-7**), Judas (**Acts 1:15-26**), Simon the sorcerer (**Acts 8:13-24**), Demas (**2 Timothy 4:9-10**), some angels (**Jude 1:6**), and some Jewish brethren (**Hebrews 10:23-25**). The writer issues this warning for those that fall away: “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. And again, The Lord will judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (**Hebrews 10:26-31**).

2. Confirmed by His promise.

- a. “May have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day”. What a promise! Jesus says to all those who trust Him that they are secure in this world and in the world to come. If we remain faithful then our salvation is secure because we have His promise of eternal life (**John 3:16; 5:24; 10:28; 1 John 2:25**) and we are “kept by the power of God” (**1 Peter 1:5**).
- b. But, again, we must balance this out with a warning – “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame” (**Hebrews 6:4-6**).

3. Confirmed by His performance.

- a. It is clear from this passage that God desires all those that He has given to His Son to be secure, and every step has been taken to ensure this security (i) by making the plan of salvation simple (by faith), (ii) by promising us eternal salvation (for God cannot lie), and, (iii) by paying for our sins Himself (we have nothing to contribute). The last words of the Savior on the cross were “It is finished” (**John 19:30**). Jesus perfectly completed the task that had been assigned to Him – our redemption.
- b. But in order to enjoy such security we must come to Christ and remain in Him. Consider: God was about to destroy all life on the earth with a worldwide flood, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God then provided a blueprint for an ark and Noah built it. It was robust enough to survive the flood and there were enough provisions to keep them alive for the duration. Noah and his family would be secure as long as they remained in the ark – their salvation was guaranteed. But supposing one of Noah's sons jumped overboard? Likewise, God only guarantees salvation for those that remain in Christ.

Conclusion

1. There are several things that give us great confidence in our salvation: (i) We are God's gift to His Son, (ii) the grace of the Lord is higher, wider, and deeper than we are able to comprehend, and (iii) we have the Savior's guarantee that He will by no means cast out any that come to Him. This is confirmed by the simplicity of God's plan of salvation, the divine promise of eternal life, and by the Savior's completed work in redeeming us from our sins.
2. We can have great confidence in our salvation.
 - a. God has done everything possible to secure it: He has placed us in Christ (**Galatians 3:27**) and provided everything we need in Him (**Colossians 2:10**).

“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us” (**2 Corinthians 1:20**).

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (**2 Corinthians 5:21**).
 - b. It is essential, then, to remain in Him if we hope to see our salvation. This is why John says, “And now, little children, **abide in Him**, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming” (**1 John 2:28**).
3. If you are not in Christ, then you are lost. But the invitation we have considered today still stands – come to Jesus and He will welcome you and save you. Jesus has paid the price to redeem you from death and promises us eternal life. Jesus loves you more than your mind can comprehend – come to Him. Jesus is Holy, righteous, and just, and He does not lie – it is this Jesus that has promised us eternal life.

LESSON 9

THE INVITATION OF CONVERSION

Revelation 22:17

“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**).

Introduction

1. The book of Revelation draws to a close with an invitation from the Holy Spirit and the church to “come” – to come to the Savior for salvation (**22:17a**). Those that “hear” (i.e., those that become Christians) also join in the general invitation to sinners (**22:17b**). The invitation to “come” or be converted is to him that “thirsts”, i.e., him that is convicted of sin and longs for the salvation of God (**22:17c**). The invitation is extended to “whoever desires” – not to a select few, but to anyone that seeks the salvation of God (**22:17d**). For God desires the salvation of all men (**1 Timothy 2:4**).
2. Sin entered the world through one man, Adam (**Romans 5:12**), and all men since have sinned (**Romans 3:23**). But God desires all men to be saved; He cares for us and loves us. How do we know God cares for us and loves us? We know God cares because He sent His Son to save us: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (**John 3:16**). We know He loves us because He demonstrated it: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (**Romans 5:8**).
3. Yes, God loves us, but that doesn’t mean that sinners are automatically saved (as the Universalists teach). A person must believe and obey the gospel to be saved (**Mark 16:15-16**). This is what it means to “come” to Christ. If we refuse the Spirit’s invitation, then we will remain in that miserable lost state because Jesus is the only way (**John 14:6**; **Acts 4:12**).
4. In this lesson we shall examine the text and highlight a few details of The Invitation Of Conversion.



I. THE CAUSE OF THIS INVITATION

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come!”

A. In these two sentences there is a two-fold invitation:

1. There is some disagreement among commentators as to whether the statement to “come!” in the first sentence is inviting the Lord to return or inviting sinners to be converted.
 - a. (i) The first view is based on the fact that, a few verses earlier, Jesus says, “And behold, I am coming quickly” (**Revelation 22:12**). This would mean that the Holy Spirit and the Bride of Christ (the church) are inviting the Lord Jesus to return. Jesus is coming to bring about the consummation of all things. (ii) The second view is based on a consistency of thought within the verse itself. It is argued that the whole of the verse is an invitation to lost sinners to come to Christ. “The Holy Spirit has revealed the message of the truth from God (**John 16:13**), and the church of Christ, the bride, is God’s medium for spreading this message of redemption” (Robert Harkrider). I believe this is the correct view.
- b. The second sentence is an invitation for those who do not know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior to come to Him and be saved. These are invited by those that have heard and now invite others to “come!” We have an example in Acts: Saul had instigated a great persecution against the church, which resulted in many Christians being scattered abroad. These Christians (those that had heard) also preached the word (**Acts 8:1-4**).

2. Every local congregation has a responsibility to preach the gospel, which can be done by sending out preachers (Acts 13:1-3), supporting preachers in the field (Philippians 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 11:7-8), or by holding gospel meetings¹¹. Also, every individual member of the church has a responsibility to share the gospel with those whom he comes into contact. We are living in a world that is growing spiritually darker by the day (2 Timothy 3:1-5). We hold the light in our hands and in our hearts. We must take it to a world that needs to hear about the One who can save their souls! Jesus is the only way (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). The gospel is the only power of God that can save souls (Romans 1:16).
- B. The reason for this invitation is likely linked to what Jesus said a few verses earlier: “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work” (Revelation 22:12). We are, of course, responsible to preach the gospel at all times, but being reminded that He *comes quickly* helps to maintain our zeal.
1. When Jesus left this world over 2,000 years ago, He promised that He would return some day (Acts 1:8-11). As Christians, we long for this day because we will be reunited with our redeemer. The return of Jesus is the blessed hope of all those who know Him as their Savior (Titus 2:13).
 2. There is, however, a sad side to His return. When Jesus comes, He is coming for His people to be with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:17). But, when He is “revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire”, He will take “vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
- C. This invitation is given because Jesus is coming and only those who know Him are going to Heaven with Him. Are you in that number?

THERE'S A GREAT DAY COMING

These are two verses from the song that reveal the Lord's coming as a day of joy for the saints, but a day of terror for the lost.

There's a bright day coming.

A bright day coming;
There's a bright day coming by and by.
But its brightness shall only come
To them that love the Lord.
Are you ready for that day to come?

There's a sad day coming.

A sad day coming;
There's a sad day coming by and by,
When the sinner shall hear his doom:
Depart, I know you not!
Are you ready for that day to come?

II. THE CANDIDATES OF THIS INVITATION

“And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires ...”

- A. This invitation to come to Jesus is made available to two types of people:
1. “Him who thirsts.” This refers to those who are sick of drinking from the stagnant pools of this world and long for something more refreshing and lasting.
 2. “Whoever desires.” This speaks to anyone who is willing to come to Jesus. The invitation is held out to all men, but each one must desire or will to come to Him – no one will be forced.
- B. This world and its allurements promise satisfaction to those who pursue them. But neither this world nor anything it can offer will ever be able to provide complete satisfaction. The pools of sin and self-satisfaction offered by the world offer the promise of unending pleasure and satisfaction, but they only deliver disappointment and death. John says, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15-17).
1. Many have sought to fill their spiritual void by drinking from the pools of sin: materialism, drugs, sexual excess, etc. Many pay a heavy price for such a life of indulgence and abuse, and others seem to revel and glory in sin and suffer no adverse consequences. So it may *appear* (but see Psalm 73:1-17)! Yet the stagnant pools of this world do not offer anything lasting to fill the spiritual void.

¹¹ While I can think of no examples in the New Testament of gospel meetings being held, I believe such are authorized under the general authority “preach”. How we preach is a matter of expediency and a gospel meeting is a good expedient. The church at Corinth certainly had unbelieving visitors that heard the gospel (1 Corinthians 14:23-25).

2. The lost are the people being addressed; people that have looked for fulfillment, satisfaction and happiness in the world but have found none of these things. They are invited to come to Jesus to find the things they desire – true satisfaction.
- C. According to this verse anyone who is willing to come to Jesus is a candidate for salvation. This invitation is extended to “whosoever will” – Jesus will never turn anyone away (**John 6:37**).
 1. Any person from any place, any race, any class, and regardless of the sins they have committed can be saved if they will come to Jesus. He isn’t concerned about your background, your level of education, your social standing, etc. He only wants you to come to Him to receive mercy and forgiveness. Indeed, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (**Galatians 3:28**).
 2. Are you a candidate for this invitation? Are you thirsty? Are you willing to come to Jesus? If so, you can be saved, if you will come.

III. THE COST OF THIS INVITATION

“Let him take the water of life freely”

- A. Strong defines the word “freely”, saying, “without a cause, freely, for naught, in vain”. It refers to “a gift that is given to someone without reason. It speaks of something that is given just because the giver can give it.”
- B. The gift of salvation we have been talking about is offered to “him who thirsts” and to “whoever desires” without charge. God presents His gift of salvation to all those who will receive it without charge. God is able to offer Salvation as a free gift because Jesus has already paid the price to redeem us from our sins (**Isaiah 53:4-5**; **1 Peter 2:24**). Salvation may be free for us, but God paid a high price to achieve it (**1 Peter 1:18-19**). When Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood, He forever satisfied God’s demands regarding sin (**1 John 2:2**). He paid the price for sin, and now there is nothing for the lost sinner to do but accept the invitation and come to Jesus. Salvation may be free, but it is anything but cheap. When the gift of salvation is received, it offers the recipient more than he or she can ever imagine. A brief look at some of the benefits of salvation makes this truth crystal clear.
 1. All our sins are immediately forgiven and forgotten (**Psalms 103:12**), and the blood of Jesus continues to cleanse us (**1 John 1:7-10**).
 2. We are adopted into the family of God (**Romans 8:15**); we become children of God (**1 John 3:1-2**).
 3. We have the promise of eternal salvation (**John 6:47**; **10:28**; **1 John 2:25**; **5:11, 13**).
 4. We are made a citizen of Heaven (**Philippians 3:20**) and have a mansion waiting for us there (**John 14:1-3**).
 5. We are promised His provision in this life (**Matthew 6:25-34**; **Philippians 4:19**; **2 Timothy 3:16-17**; **2 Peter 1:2-3**).
 6. We have true peace (**Romans 5:1**; **8:6**; **Philippians 4:6-7**; **Colossians 3:15**).
 7. Made a new creature (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) and given a new life (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**).
 8. Our names are written in the Lamb’s book of life (**Luke 10:20**; **Philippians 4:3**).
 9. We are seated with Christ in heavenly places (**Ephesians 2:6**).
 10. The Spirit dwells in us (**Romans 8:9, 11**; **1 Corinthians 3:16**; **6:19**).
- C. We have listed just some of the wonderful blessings that God has bestowed upon us through His Son. In fact, Paul says that God has blessed us with **all** spiritual blessings in Christ (**Ephesians 1:3**). If you desire to partake of all these spiritual blessings then come to Christ and “take the water of life freely”.

IV. THE CATCH OF THIS INVITATION

“Let him take the water of life...”

- A. The old adage says, “If it seems too good to be true, then it probably is”. Responding to an unbelievable offer, one might ask, “Where’s the catch?!” The water of life that God offers is free (**Revelation 22:17**). “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (**Isaiah 55:1**).
1. If there is a “catch” then it is in the word “take”. God freely offers the waters of life to all those that thirst, but we must take, embrace, lay hold on – we must come to the waters and drink. Can a man’s thirst be quenched unless he drinks?
 2. The phrase “water of life” refers to the gospel message. The gospel message is a clear, simple message; it is the power of God to save (**Romans 1:16**). Paul sets forth the gospel, saying, “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (**1 Corinthians 15:3-4**).
- B. Every time you hear the gospel preached, you are hearing God call you to come and drink the water of life (**2 Thessalonians 2:13-14**). How many times have you heard God calling and refused to hear? God gave everything He had to save your soul (**John 3:16**). Will you not heed His call today? As Ananias said to Saul, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (**Acts 22:16**).

Conclusion

1. Jesus had said, “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work” (**Revelation 22:12**). Such a statement is likely to fill any saint with both excitement at such a prospect and zeal to promote the gospel of Christ. It has been over two thousand years since Christ promised to return and there is a tendency for the zeal and watchfulness of people to wane, somewhat (**cp. 2 Peter 3:1-10**). Is the Lord slack concerning His promise? Certainly not! As Peter says, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (**2 Peter 3:9**). While the longsuffering of the Lord endures, let us be zealous in fulfilling our duty – both corporately and individually – in preaching the gospel. As it is written: “And let him who hears say, Come!”
2. Jesus commissioned His disciples to “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to *every* creature” (**Mark 16:15**). We must never withhold the gospel from any creature because God desires all men to be saved (**1 Timothy 2:3-4**). Indeed, *anyone* who thirsts and *whoever* desires may “take the water of life freely” (**Revelation 22:17**).
3. It will not cost us anything to come and drink the water of life because Jesus has already paid the price. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (**Romans 5:8**). This is why God is able to offer salvation as a free gift: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (**Romans 6:23**).
4. If you thirst, then you are invited to come and take freely of the water of life.

There’s A Fountain Free

There’s a fountain free, ’tis for you and me:
 Let us haste, O haste to its brink;
 ’Tis the fount of love from the source above,
 And He bids us all freely drink.

LESSON 10**THE INVITATION OF COMPLETION**

Revelation 22:20

“He who testifies to these things says, Surely I am coming quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).

Introduction

1. A short verse but precious because it contains the last promise of Jesus, and the last prayer of the New Testament.
 - a. The one who testifies (Christ) to all the things previously said in this book promises “I am coming quickly”, i.e., His coming at the end of the age to judge the world.
 - b. John himself then adds his own prayer and desire for the Lord Jesus to come quickly as He promised. “In John’s words, we can hear the echo of the heart-cry of every saint of God down through the ages. There is a desire within the heart of every child of God to leave this world to be with the Lord Jesus (Philippians 1:23). There is a hunger within our hearts for the Lord Jesus to come again, so that we can leave this world of tears, death, sickness and pain to go to Heaven where none of those things will ever be found” (Alan Carr).
2. Let’s take a look at the last invitation in the Bible and examine the thoughts found in The Invitation Of Completion.

I. THE BASIS OF THE INVITATION

- A. John is not praying for something that may or may not happen; he bases his invitation to the Lord Jesus on two great foundations or realities.
 1. It is based in the Lord’s own promises.
 - a. The Lord Jesus makes a clear promise in this verse, “Surely, I come quickly.” He makes the same great promise in verse 7 and 12. Jesus is letting John, and the rest of His saints, know that He is coming again. Jesus had given the same promise during His ministry (John 14:2-3; Matthew 24:44). As Jesus ascended back to Heaven, two angels spoke to the Lord’s disciples and reaffirmed His promise to return (Acts 1:9-11). The Lord’s return was the hope of the Apostles (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28). His return has been the blessed hope of the believer for over 2,000 years (Titus 2:11-13). Jesus is coming, and those who are wise are looking for Him!
 - b. The several statements of the Lord that He will return “quickly” disturbs some Christians because it has been over 2000 years! How can we possibly reconcile the concept of “quickly” with so much time having already elapsed? Someone might suggest, “Perhaps ‘quickly’ isn’t a very good translation of the Greek word!” The Greek word is defined, “Quickly, speedily, with haste” (CWSD).
 - 1) Skeptics and preterists ridicule the idea that “quickly” could mean thousands of years in the future. In fact, the Holy Spirit was well aware that mockers would arise because of such a long delay: “Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation. For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:1-9).

- 2) We are looking at things from a human perspective, but God sees things quite differently. From God's perspective the time is short and He is giving men the opportunity to repent. When the time is right Jesus will return.
2. It is based in the Lord's purposes.
 - a. John calls for Jesus to return because he is thinking like Jesus. John had been exiled on the island of Patmos "for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (**Revelation 1:9**). It was while there that he had visions of "things which must shortly take place" (**Revelation 1:1**) – things that were fulfilled in that generation (e.g., **Revelation 2:10**) and things pertaining to the end of the age (**Revelation 21:1-5**).
 - b. John knows that God has a plan and a purpose that He is bringing to a conclusion in His Son – John has seen it! No wonder he cries out, "Come, Lord Jesus!"
- B. When Jesus comes again, He will complete God's plan for the ages and He will be glorified. To see Him honored, loved, lifted up, magnified and glorified should be the desire of every child of God. To see the eternal purposes and plans of God brought to pass should be the prayer of every saint. We, too, pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

II. THE BURDEN OF THE INVITATION

- A. Even as John adds His "Amen" to the promise of the Lord Jesus, he knows the return of Jesus will not be a blessing to all men. The phrase "even so" literally means, "Yea; yes; verily". It shows strong agreement with something that has been said. Yet that phrase has always seemed to express an underlying burden.
 1. The Old Testament prophets sometimes described the message they preached as a "burden" (**Isaiah 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1; Ezekiel 12:10; Nahum 1:1; Zechariah 12:1; Malachi 1:1**). Preaching the word can be a burden in several senses:
 - a. In the sense of bearing a responsibility (**1 Corinthians 9:16**).
 - b. In the sense that one must preach the truth whether people want to hear it or not (**Acts 20:18-21; 26-27; Jeremiah 1:1-10**).
 - c. In the sense of bearing heartache when the message is one of punishment against God's people (**Lamentations 1:16**).
 2. The message that John preached must have been a burden because: (i) as well as seeing the destruction of the enemies of the church, he saw the suffering the saints had to endure, though he was also comforted in seeing their final victory, and, (ii) he saw the destruction of the wicked. Yes, the destruction of the wicked might be seen as a good thing, but as we meditate on the fact that they will be eternally separated from God and suffer torments forever, then surely we are saddened?

"Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord Jehovah, and not that he should turn from his ways and live?" (**Ezekiel 18:23**).

"Say to them: As I live, says the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?" (**Ezekiel 33:11**).

"Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; lest Jehovah see it, and it displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him" (**Proverbs 24:17-18**).
- B. On average, about one hundred and fifty thousand (150,000) people die each day, which is about fifty-four million (54,000,000) per year. I suppose it is impossible to know how many die in the Lord and how many die in their sins and find themselves in eternal torment. All that scripture says is, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (**Matthew 7:13-14**). We can say, then, that the majority of people that die each day are lost and that only a few are saved.

1. Such statistics are overwhelming and we cannot comprehend so many millions of people going to Hell every year.
 - a. Someone might cry out, “Why doesn’t God do something about this?! Doesn’t He care that so many people are going to Hell?!” God desires *all* men to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9) and He “done something about it” from all eternity, in that, He foresaw and foreknew that man would sin and planned man’s redemption - Paul explained to the Ephesians about the “dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you” (Ephesians 3:2). The particular grace to which he alludes is the matter of the acceptance of the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:4-5). Paul explained that “the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel” (Ephesians 3:6). In this vein, Paul is speaking of salvation. All men would be saved in Christ by the gospel (Ephesians 3:1-10). This plan was conceived “according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:11). This “eternal purpose” was in God’s mind from the beginning.
 - b. God’s plan was to provide a perfect sacrifice for our sins – even Jesus; God’s only begotten Son. Before Jesus was born, the angel of the Lord said to Joseph, “He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21), when John the Baptist saw Jesus he said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29), and Paul’s message was, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3).
2. But I suppose it is only natural to be concerned for the members of our family and our friends. What a great burden we bear when a loved one dies in their sins. Isn’t there anything we can do to prevent our loved ones dying in their sins? If we have a genuine love and concern for lost souls, then we will share the gospel with them. Only hearing and believing the gospel will save a person. As Paul says of the gospel, “For it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).
- C. Jesus has promised to return but no one knows the day or hour (Matthew 24:42-44), but come He will at an unexpected time and catch many by surprise (2 Peter 3:10). Know this for certain: (i) If you die in your sins before His return, there will be no second chances – your chance is now! (ii) If you remain alive until His return and you are in a lost state, then you will remain in that state forever. In other words, you will not be able to repent at His appearing; it will be too late. Millions of people die in their sins every year, don’t be one of them. Save yourself today – repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

III. THE BLESSING OF THE INVITATION

- A. There is a positive side to the return of Jesus.
 1. John has been allowed to see to the end of time. He knows what is waiting for God’s children (Revelation 21:1-5; 22:1-6). John also remembers what it was like to be with Jesus: (i) He remembers the teaching (John 6:29-40), the miracles he witnessed (John 2:1-11; 4:43-54; 5:1-9; 6:1-5, et al), and the joy of coming to realize His true identity (John 6:66-69), (ii) He remembers their closeness (John 13:23), (iii) He remembers the horror of being at the cross and watching Jesus as He died (John 19:28-30), the thrill of going to the tomb to find that Jesus had risen from the dead (John 20:1-8), and watching as Jesus ascended back into Heaven (Acts 1:9-11). And now he longs to be with Jesus once again. So, when he hears Jesus say, “Surely, I come quickly”, he cries, “So be it!” One can almost hear the excitement as he anticipates His return!
 2. You and I haven’t had all these experiences, but we remember when He saved us by His grace (Titus 3:4-7; Psalms 40:1-3), His promises (Titus 1:1-2; Hebrews 4:1; 9:15; James 1:12; 2:5; 2 Peter 3:13; 1 John 2:25) and His providence. We remember that He promised to come again and we long for that blessed hour when He will appear and deliver us from this world and from this flesh (2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Corinthians 15:46-53).
- B. When Jesus returns it will be a time of blessing for the saints. Let’s remind ourselves of some of the blessings that we will enjoy:
 1. The blessing of resurrection. When Jesus comes, all of us who have died in faith will be raised from the dead and our bodies shall be changed instantly; we will be given new bodies that are adapted to a spiritual life (1 Corinthians 15:46-53).

2. The blessing of rapture. When Jesus returns many of the saints will be alive and not experience death. Instead, their bodies will be changed (**1 Corinthians 15:51-52**) and they will be “caught up”¹² (raptured) together with the saints that the Lord brings with Him and meet Him in the air (**1 Thessalonians 4:14-17**). The saints of God are leaving this world in an instant one day to be with the Lord forever. Are you ready to go? You need to be because Jesus will not send an announcement; He will simply show up and take His people away with Him.
3. The blessing of reunion. When Jesus returns, He will “bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus” (**1 Thessalonians 4:14**). This is said in response to the brethren’s concern regarding loved ones that had already died in the Lord... they supposed that they wouldn’t see them again. The answer is, “You will see them again because the Lord will bring them with Him”.

C. Jesus is coming! He is coming soon! He is coming for His people, a people who have made their preparations to meet Him. He is coming for a redeemed people. He is coming for those who are saved by His grace. Are you among that number? Have you trusted Jesus as your Savior? Will you be ready when He comes?

Conclusion

1. (i) During His ministry, Jesus spoke several times of the day when He would return, (ii) As He ascended into heaven the angels said He would come again in the same manner, (iii) Throughout the epistles, the writers speak of Christ’s return, and, (iv) In the book of Revelation, the glorified Jesus promises that He will come quickly.
2. The day Jesus returns will be (i) a day of resurrection and all the saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (**1 Corinthians 15:47-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**), and so we will be with the Lord forever (**1 Thessalonians 4:17**), (ii) a day when those that did not obey the gospel will be punished (**2 Thessalonians 1:3-10**), (iii) a day when the universe will be annihilated (**2 Peter 3:10-12**), and, (iv) a day when God creates a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness (**2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-7**).
3. Can you also say, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (**Revelation 22:20**). We are certainly looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, but Peter asks, “Since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?” (**2 Peter 3:11**). It is not good to just think of ourselves as holy and godly, we must be actively pursuing both holiness and godliness (**1 Timothy 6:11; Hebrews 12:14**).

¹² When the Greek New Testament was translated into Latin, the Greek word, “arpadzo” (“caught up”) was translated “rapto”, which is the word from which “rapture” comes.