

Isaiah Chapter 55

Verses 1-7: God's free gift of salvation is offered to all who will receive it. Those who are spiritually hungry and thirsty may come to eat and drink "without money" (or freely). He promises an "everlasting covenant" to the Gentiles like the one He established with Israel. His invitation to all men is clearly stated by the appeal, "Seek ye the Lord" and "call ye upon him."

Isaiah 55:1 "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

"Every one": The Servant's redemptive work and glorious kingdom are for the benefit of all who are willing to come (53:6). The prophet invites his readers to participate in the benefits obtained by the suffering of the Servant (in chapters 53 and 54).

"No money ... without money ... without price": Benefits in the Servant's kingdom will be free because of His redemptive work (53:6, 8, 11; Eph. 2:8-9).

"Wine and milk": Symbols for abundance, satisfaction, and prosperity (Song of Solomon 5:1; Joel 3:18).

In the last lesson, we were speaking of the New Jerusalem. The lesson has suddenly switched back to the present. It is not only the present for the people of Isaiah's time, but for ours as well. Jesus told the woman at the well she would never thirst again, if she drank the water He gave her. This is the same water He offered her. He is the Water (John 7:37-39).

"Water" many times symbolizes the Word of God. Jesus is the Word, so that would be reasonable. This supernatural wine and milk is from the Lord Himself. He sustained the children of Israel 40 years in the wilderness. He will make provision for you, as well.

Isaiah 55:2 "Wherefore do ye spend money for [that which is] not bread? and your labor for [that which] satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye [that which is] good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

"Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?": Lavishing away time, opportunities, and strength, in reading and hearing false doctrine, which is not bread, but chaff, is not wholesome, does not nourish, but is harmful and destructive. Infected as a canker, instead of feeding and refreshing; as the vain philosophy of the Gentiles, the traditions of the Jews, and the errors and heresies of false teachers.

"And your labor for that which satisfieth not": Laboring to seek happiness in worldly things, which is not to be had; or to obtain righteousness by the works of the law, which is not to be attained to in that way; all such labor is in vain, no satisfaction is enjoyed, nor peace and comfort had, nor any solid food; these are husks which swine eat.

"Hearken diligently unto me": Not the prophet, but the Lord himself. The Targum renders it, "my Word"; the essential Word, Christ Jesus, hearken to his doctrine, which is bread, and of a satisfying nature.

"And eat ye that which is good": not the law, as the Jewish commentators; but the good word of God, the Gospel, which being found and eaten by faith, or mixed with faith by them that hear it, and so digested, is the joy and rejoicing of the heart.

"And let your soul delight itself in fatness": In the goodness and fatness of the Lord's house, attending on the word and ordinances with spiritual pleasure and delight. And which is the way to become fat and flourishing in spiritual things; (see Psalm 36:8).

Isaiah 55:3 "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, [even] the sure mercies of David."

"Everlasting covenant": This is the New Covenant that God will give to Israel.

"Sure mercies of David": The Davidic Covenant promised David that his seed would be ruler over Israel in an everlasting kingdom (2 Sam. 7:8, 16; Psalm 89:27-29). Paul connected the resurrection of Christ with this promise (Acts 13:34), since it was an essential event in fulfilling this promise.

If Jesus had not fully satisfied God by His atoning death, He would not have risen; if He had not risen from the dead, He could not eventually sit on David's earthly throne. But He did rise and will fulfill the kingly role (verse 4). The whole world will come to Him as the great King.

"The new covenant" spoken of here, is the covenant of grace that God provides for man. Man was unable to keep the law. God seeing the weakness of man provides a solution to man's problem. God sends His only begotten Son to fulfill the law of sacrifice.

The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross fulfilled the law for all time for everyone.

Romans 6:10 "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."

Salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ is so simple, many miss it altogether.

Matthew 10:32 "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We are saved because of our faith, like faithful Abraham.

Isaiah 55:4 "Behold, I have given him [for] a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people."

This, of course, is speaking of Jesus (their Messiah). Jesus came to bear witness of the Truth. He is, in fact, the Truth. Look with me at the following Scripture.

John 18:37 "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

He is the Leader of all believers. To be a Christian is to be a believer in and a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 55:5 "Behold, thou shalt call a nation [that] thou knowest not, and nations [that] knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee."

We mentioned previously that the other nations besides Israel received the message of Jesus more readily than the Jews did. The law had been given just to the Jews, but the covenant of grace is for all mankind. Many things in Jesus' ministry brought glory to the Father. Look with me at just a few.

Matthew 15:31 "Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel."

Luke 7:16 "And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people."

John 12:23 "And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."

John 13:31 "Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him."

Jesus always gave glory to God in everything He did. The Sermon on the Mount continues to glorify God even unto this day.

Verses 6-7: Here is one of the clearest Old Testament invitations to salvation now and kingdom blessings later. It gives an excellent example of how people were saved during the Old Testament period.

Salvation, grace and mercy were available to the soul that was willing to:

- (1) Seek the Lord (Deut. 4:29; Chron. 15:4); and

(2) Call on Him while He is still available (65:1; Psalm 32:6; Prov. 8:17; Matt. 25:1-13; John 7:34; 8:21; 2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 2:3; 3:13, 15).

Such true seeking in faith is accompanied by repentance, which is described as forsaking ungodly ways and thoughts and turning from sinful living to the Lord. A sinner must come, believing in God, recognizing his sin and desiring forgiveness and deliverance from that sin.

At the same time he must recognize his own inability to be righteous or to satisfy God and cast himself on God's mercy. It is then that he receives a complete pardon. His sin has been covered by the substitution of the Messiah in his place (chapter 53). This Old Testament pattern of salvation is illustrated in Luke 18:9-14.

Isaiah 55:6 "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:"

Today is the day of salvation. This is one thing in a person's life that they should never put off. This could be spoken to the physical house of Israel, who soon will (on the whole), reject their Messiah. It is also, addressed to every person who has put off being saved.

Isaiah 55:7 "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

“Forsake”: An integral part of seeking the Lord (verse 6) is turning from sin (1:16).

John the Baptist had the message that was needed by all of these people. His message was repent and prepare for the coming of the Lord. Jesus' message was similar, as we see in the next verses.

Matthew 4:17 "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Mark 1:15 "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

We see in the following verse, that the disciples continued with the message of repentance.

Acts 2:38 "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Verses 8-13: God's sovereignty and omniscience are extolled by the statement that His "thoughts" (i.e., purposes and intentions), and "ways" (derakim, "directions"), are "higher" than ours.

While God may certainly be known by men, He is still incomprehensible in the totality of His person and purposes. Therefore, he reveals Himself to men by "His word," which shall "not

return” to Him “void” (in vain). The Word of God, therefore, accomplishes His purpose in announcing salvation to all mankind.

Isaiah 55:8 "For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD."

“My thoughts ... my ways”: Some may doubt such willingness (as described in verse 7), but God’s grace is far beyond human comprehension, especially as manifested toward Israel.

We know that man uses only a small part of his brain here in this life. Even if we could use all of our brain, we would still not be able to think like God. The Creator is greater than His creation.

God thinks a thought, speaks the Word and whatever it is, it happens. It is as simple as that. God is not a man that He should sin. Man has a carnal mind, until he takes on the mind of Christ. God's mind is spiritual.

Isaiah 55:9 "For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

God's ways are beyond the comprehension of man. God is all knowing. Man knows only a fraction of the here and now. God lives in eternity. He knows all, because everything is part of His plan.

Verses 10-11: “Rain ... snow ... my word”: Moisture from heaven invariably accomplishes its intended purpose in helping meet human physical needs. The Word of God will likewise produce its intended results in fulfilling God’s spiritual purposes, especially the establishment of the Davidic kingdom on earth (verses 1-5).

Isaiah 55:10 "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:"

The rain ministers to the people upon the earth. God controls the rain and the snow, as He does everything else. Without the rain, we would not have crops to grow, or flowers that bloom. The rain is a gift from God to mankind.

The sun draws it back up into the heavens in a vapor, then it rains again. Without the rain, we would not have bread for our table. Nothing grows without sunshine and rain.

Isaiah 55:11 "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it."

My statement is that the two powers in this world are the Spoken and the Written Word. The world was created by the Word of God.

John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The same was in the beginning with God." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

We know the Word of God was Creator. We also know that to speak the Word of God is a high calling.

1 Corinthians 1:18 "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

1 Corinthians 1:21 "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

We see from this, the power of the spoken Word. The written Word is the Bible. No one can study the Bible and remain the same. It will change your life.

Isaiah 55:12 "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap [their] hands."

“Go out with joy ... led forth with peace”: Exiled Israel will return from her dispersion rejoicing in her deliverance and unbothered by her enemies.

This is speaking of the joy that comes from victory. This applies to the Jews being released from Babylon, and the Christian when they are released from sin.

Mountains, hills, and trees are all part of nature which God put here for the enjoyment of man. This means even nature rejoices at the victory.

Isaiah 55:13 "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign [that] shall not be cut off."

“Instead of the thorn ... myrtle”: In the Davidic kingdom positive changes in nature, including the reverse of the curse (Gen. 3:17), will be an ongoing testimony to the Lord’s redemption of His people (44:23; Romans 8:19-23).

The wrath of God is removed. The ground is no longer cursed. Jesus removed the curse. Thorns sometimes symbolically mean sin. Jesus defeated sin, when He nailed it to the cross. The blessings of God are on His people.

Even all of nature is at peace with mankind. The following Scripture says it better than I can.

Proverbs 16:7 "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

Isaiah Chapter 55 Questions

1. What did Jesus tell the woman at the well?
2. What does "water" many times symbolize?
3. What is the bread in verse 2?
4. What is the "Bread" that brings eternal life?
5. What is the "new covenant"?
6. What law does Jesus fulfill?
7. Who will Jesus confess before His Father?
8. Jesus came to bear _____ of the Truth.
9. What is a Christian?
10. Who is the covenant of grace for?
11. Name some things in Jesus' ministry that brought glory to the Father.
12. What continues to glorify God even unto this day?
13. _____ is the day of salvation.
14. What was John the Baptist's message?
15. What did Jesus preach?
16. What was Peter's message?
17. What is the difference between God's mind and the mind of man?
18. God is not a man that He should _____.
19. Who controls the rain?
20. What are the two great powers in the world?
21. It pleased God by the foolishness of _____ to save them that believe.