



ISAIAH 55

INVITATION TO AN ABUNDANT LIFE ~ GOD’S MERCY GREATER THAN MAN’S

This is a beautiful Chapter of scripture! At face value, Chapter 55 sounds an awful lot like the Gospel, the “Good News of Jesus.” All the ingredients are there: God’s invitation for his people to return to him with all their hearts, the promise of a new life with him, his heart of mercy to those who could never gain access any other way, the glorification of the one who is calling them “home,” and the response of all the earth to this amazing gift they have been given.

Chapter 54 was an invitation to the nation of Israel to return to God. In Chapter 55 we find the invitation is opened to “everyone.”

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 55:1 Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.</p> <p>² Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. ³ Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.</p> <p>⁴ Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. ⁵ Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.</p>	<p>a 55:1 See Ps. 23:2; John 4:14; 7:37–39; Rev. 22:17.</p> <p>b 55:1 See Matt. 4:4.</p> <p>c 55:1 See Song. 2:4; Neh. 8:10. This wine can symbolize the joy-filled blessings of God.</p> <p>d 55:1 See 1 Peter 2:2. This milk can symbolize the spiritual nourishment we receive from God’s Word.</p> <p>e 55:2 See Ps. 107:9.</p> <p>f 55:2 Matthew 11:28–30 is Jesus’ commentary on this verse.</p> <p>g 55:2 See John 6:48–63.</p> <p>h 55:3 Or “Listen to me so that your soul may live.”</p> <p>i 55:3 See Heb. 13:20.</p> <p>j 55:3 See Acts 13:34.</p> <p>k 55:5 See 2 Sam. 22:44–46; Song. 1:4; John 12:19.</p>	<p>Invitation to an Abundant Life</p> <p>Isaiah 55:1 Listen! Are you thirsty for more? Come to the refreshing waters and drink. a Even if you have no money, come, buy, and eat. b Yes, come and buy all the wine c and milk d you desire—it won’t cost a thing. ² Why spend your hard-earned money on something that can’t nourish you e or work so hard for something that can’t satisfy? f So listen carefully to me and you’ll enjoy a sumptuous feast, delighting in the finest of food. g ³ Pay attention and come closer to me, and hear, that your total being may flourish. h I will enter into an everlasting covenant with you, i and I will show you the same faithful love that I showed David. j ⁴ See! I made him a witness to the nations, an example of leadership, as prince and commander of peoples.”</p> <p>⁵ Look! You will summon nations you’ve never heard of. Nations who have never heard of you will come running to follow you k because Yahweh, your God, the Holy One of Israel, has glorified you!</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>⁶ Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; ⁷ let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.</p> <p>¹⁰ “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.</p> <p>¹² “For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. ¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.</p>	<p>l 55:6 Or “while he lets himself be found.” See 1 Tim. 6:16: “the immortal God, living in the unapproachable light of divine glory!” It is “the true man, Jesus, the Anointed One” who makes himself approachable (1 Tim. 2:5).</p> <p>m 55:7 See 2 Cor. 10:3–6.</p> <p>n 55:8 In the context, the thoughts of God are in reference to compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. Man’s thoughts of mercy are not God’s. Man’s mercy runs out, but God’s mercy is higher than the heavens. God’s mercy and forgiveness are generous and abundant.</p> <p>o 55:10 In the language of biblical metaphor, snow is a picture of mercy blanketing the earth. Rain is a frequent symbol of revelation-teaching that soaks the heart (soil) and makes us fruitful. Note the seven terms for God’s Word in vv. 8–10: thoughts, ways, snow, rain, water, seed, bread. These same terms can be used to describe the Lord Jesus. <u>He is the seed of the woman, living bread, the way and the life that sprouts in us. He is the Word that was sent</u> (as our Apostle, Heb. 3:1), <u>and he will not return to heaven without accomplishing all God’s pleasure.</u></p> <p>p 55:11 In the context, God’s word is his promise to show love, compassion, and forgiveness to all who turn to him.</p> <p>q 55:11 Or “empty.”</p> <p>r 55:11 The Septuagint adds a phrase not found in the Hebrew: “And I will make your way prosperous.”</p> <p>s 55:12 See Rom. 14:17.</p> <p>t 55:12 See Rom. 8:14.</p> <p>u 55:12 Isaiah was a master poet. With beautiful metaphors, he describes the return of God’s people out of captivity. What once limited God’s people as a barrier (mountains and hills) now celebrates with singing as the redeemed leave their captivity and come into God’s full purpose for them. See Rom. 8:19–21.</p> <p>v 55:13 Thorns are a symbol of the curse of sin. See Gen. 3:18; Matt. 27:29; Gal. 3:13–14.</p> <p>w 55:13 There is a hint of the Lord Jesus in these trees. Jesus is the blessed man who is like a tree (Ps. 1); he replaces the briars and thorns of our flesh with the flourishing tree of life in us.</p> <p>x 55:13 Or “memorial (as a reminder).”</p>	<p>God’s Mercy Greater than Man’s</p> <p>⁶ Seek the Lord Yahweh when he makes himself approachable; l call upon him when you sense he is near. ⁷ The wicked need to abandon their ways, and sinful ones need to banish every evil thought. m Let them return to Yahweh, and they will experience his compassionate mercy. Yes, let them return to God, for he will lavish forgiveness upon them. ⁸ “For my thoughts about mercy n are not like your thoughts, and my ways are different from yours. ⁹ As high as the heavens are above the earth, so my ways and my thoughts are higher than yours.”</p> <p>¹⁰ “As the snow and rain that fall from heaven o do not return until they have accomplished their purpose, soaking the earth and causing it to sprout with new life, providing seed to sow and bread to eat. ¹¹ So also will be the word p that I speak; it does not return to me unfulfilled. q My word performs my purpose and fulfills the mission I sent it out to accomplish.” r</p> <p>¹² For you will leave your exile with joy s and be led t home wrapped in peace. The mountains and hills in front of you will burst into singing and the trees of the field will applaud! u ¹³ Cypress trees will flourish where there were only thorns v and myrtle trees instead of nettles. w These will stand as a testimony to Yahweh’s renown, everlasting signs x that will not be cut off.</p>

Bible Knowledge Commentary

JOHN A. MARTIN

- SALVATION FOR THE GENTILES (chap. 55)

- **An invitation to come to the Lord.**

- **55:1-2.** God invites people in need to come (this word occurs four times in v. 1) to Him. By coming they indicate that they are trusting in and relying on Him for salvation and are agreeing to obey His commandments. The blessings God gives them are available without cost. Salvation is a free gift of God, whether it refers to spiritual redemption or physical deliverance. Probably both are intended here. The Lord asked the people how they could be interested in other things besides Himself as He is the only One who can bring genuine satisfaction. Throughout all history people have tried to find satisfaction through many things other than God.

- **An Everlasting Covenant.**

- **55:3.** By coming to the Lord people will have life and the benefits of God's everlasting covenant with David (2 Sam. 7:11b-16) in which the Lord promised that David's line would continue forever. Some interpreters say the "everlasting covenant" refers to the New Covenant (Jer. 32:40; Heb. 13:20). That is possible but the reference to David points to the Davidic Covenant, which also is said to last forever (2 Sam. 7:16). Just as God promised to keep His good hand on David, so He assured those who come to Him that He will never remove His good hand (His blessings) from them. He will always be with them and consider them His people.

- **Nations to Be Under Messiah's Leadership.**

- **55:4-5.** The word Him refers not to Israel, but to the Messiah (David's "Son"; cf. Matt. 1:1) for He will be the world's Leader and Commander. The word you (Isa. 55:5) probably refers to Israel, to whom many nations will go to worship the LORD. They will recognize the Lord's splendor ("glory"; cf. 35:2; 46:13; 49:3; 60:9, 21; 61:3; 62:3).

- **Salvation Available to All (55:6-13).**

- **55:6-7.** The wicked (v. 7) are commanded to seek and call on the LORD (v. 6), and to do so while He may be found, because when His judgment comes it will be too late. Such seeking and calling means that an individual will turn from his former evil way and thoughts. Turning to the Lord one receives mercy and pardon. In every dispensation the Lord has required the same thing for salvation: trust in Him. Israelites, though God's covenant people, were saved only by believing in the LORD.
- **55:8-9.** God's compassion on those who turn to Him (vv. 6-7) comes because His thoughts and ways are far superior to human thoughts and ways, which in fact are evil (cf. v. 7). God's plan is something people would have never dreamed of.
- **55:10-11.** Having spoken of the future time of blessing (the Millennium) and the salvation which leads to it, the Lord then assured believers that His Word ... will accomplish what He says it will. His word is like rain and snow that water the earth and help give it abundant vegetation. In the Near East dry hard ground can seemingly overnight sprout with vegetation after the first rains of the rainy season. Similarly when God speaks His Word, it brings forth spiritual life, thus accomplishing His purpose.
- **55:12-13.** Because of salvation the effects of sin will be reversed in the Millennium, including the provision of inner joy and peace (see comments on 54:10) and changes in the physical creation. After Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden thorns and thistles began to choke out the good vegetation and Adam's work to grow good crops was increased (Gen. 3:17-19). But in the future even nature will be joyful (Isa. 55:12b). The trees personified as clapping with hands (branches moving in the wind) suggests the joy people will have because of the changes in nature. Various kinds of

trees will grow instead of the thornbush and briars. Fertility on the earth will be a sign that God is in control. Many interpreters say this imagery (v. 13a) symbolizes what God does in a person's heart at salvation. True, God does change individuals. But the earth will indeed be unusually fertile during the whole Millennium (cf., 35:1-2, 41:18-19; 44:3a).

TONIGHT'S DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Do we really understand the magnitude of the invitation has given to us to come home to the Father? Think about the story of the Prodigal son. He was a member of the family who had access to everything, gave it up for temporary pleasures and returns home broken. Yet, he was still a member of the family. In this chapter of Isaiah, God throws the doors to redemption open to "everyone." What is it that stops people from accepting this invitation? Why don't more people respond to it with an excited "Yes, Lord!"

2. If all you had to work with was Isaiah Chapter 55, how would you use it's contents to lead someone to salvation in Jesus? Pick three phrases you think would help form a compelling invitation to someone giving their heart to Jesus.
 - 1.

 - 2.

 - 3.

3. Verse eight says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." What would be an example of his "thoughts?" What might be considered his "ways?" How would your life change if you had his thoughts and operated in his ways?

4. God says, through the prophet Isaiah, that he will bring his people out of exile "wrapped in peace." Describe (in detail) what you think it would feel like to be wrapped in God's peace.

5. In salvation and our eventual destination in eternity, we've ALL been invited into something we aren't quite sure we really deserve to enjoy. You may even go so far as to feel that everyone else belongs but you! What would you say to yourself that might convince you to "show up" for this experience? How do you convince yourself to receive something you don't think you deserve? When you're giving something important to another person, what do you say to them to encourage them to accept your gift? Why is it so hard to receive gifts from God?