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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## Isaiah 55.

(2015)

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The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

***Teach it, don't demand it.***

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## Isaiah 55.

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### Topics.

- Come, to the waters everyone who thirsts, buy wine and milk without price.
- I will make you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.
- Seek the LORD while He maybe found, call upon Him while He is near.
- My word shall succeed Israel shall go out in joy for an everlasting sign.

**FOR INFORMATION:** concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

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**INTRODUCTION:** Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).
3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22).

The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

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**Come, to the Waters Everyone who Thirsts, Buy Wine and Milk without Price.**

Isaiah 55:1-2 ----- <sup>1</sup>"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. <sup>2</sup>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 (let your soul delight itself in fatness in the KJV).

**Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters:** (v1) water satisfies thirst, refreshes and washes one clean in this context it not only refers to that which satisfies the heart and washes the mind clean of sin, but also embraces the idea of washing away the guilt from the conscience of the mind. It is interesting to notice that the call is to those who are thirsting for something better, this carries the idea that they realise they are spiritually lacking.

They maybe rich wealthy living a good family life and have a sense of happiness or be living in poverty and hardship, but regardless of their circumstances (good or bad) they have a consciousness and awareness that within they are lacking, it is to these people that the LORD'S call to come to the waters is going out.

**He who has no money, come, buy and eat:** (v1) the word, buy comes from the Hebrew word (*shabar*) and carries the idea of buying grain, corn, victuals and by extension anything else to make it your own. While the word eat comes from the Hebrew word (*'akal*) and literally means to freely eat any type of food for one's nourishment and well-being.

In the book of Proverbs it is written: -

- Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. <sup>6</sup>Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight. (Prov. 9:5-6).

Jesus said to his disciples: -

- I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast. (Matt. 22:4).
- Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. (John 6:53).

The expression, "he who has no money, come, buy and eat," (v1) does not refer to strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or keeping religious customs and traditions, though these things are not bad in themselves they can be very deceptive, harmful and damaging should anyone be trusting in them for their spiritual well-being, their salvation and eternal life, because none of these things have the power to bring true life to the human heart or to bring about salvation and eternal life.

Rather the expression, "he who has no money, come, buy and eat," carries the idea of being invited to partake of that which is truly everlasting and good and nourishes the inner spirit and fills it with joy. It refers to listening to the call of the Good News of the Gospel and the invitation to accept God's great gift the Lord

Jesus Christ for one's own. After listening and receiving (i.e., eating and digesting) the Good News of the Gospel by faith with an open, honest, humble and repentant heart Christ is made one's own and joy and rejoicing wells up within the inner nature which is true life for the well-being of the human heart and the well-being of one's mind.

**Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price:** (v1) water revives the thirsty (without it the body dies), wine gladdens the heart and milk nourishes the body. These signify the spiritual life that can be found in the Lord Jesus Christ, all that anyone needs for the spiritual well-being of their heart and mind and that brings joy and eternal life is found in Christ.

**Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread:** (v2) bread comes from the Hebrew word (*lechem*) it literally refers to food and victuals (i.e., food of all kinds) for man or beast, without healthy food the body suffers, likewise without healthy spiritual food the spirit suffers. Bread in the context of this verse signifies that which sustains and fulfils the heart and the mind with true life, happiness and contentment. It is symbolic of whatever contributes to support and comfort life.

The expression, "you spend your money for that which is not bread," carries the following two ideas: -

1. People are giving all their strength, labour, effort, time and money to find inner contentment and happiness by chasing after the following things: -
  - Material possessions and worldly pleasures.
  - Fulfilling obsessive ambition, vanity, ego and pride.
  - Riches and wealth or power, fame and importance.
  - Iniquity and wickedness (all summed up in the word sin).
  - Immorality orgies and wild parties and sinful pleasure.
  - Craving after the latest inventions and technologies etc.

Those who chase after these things always want more, the chase is never ending because these things only satisfy for a time and therefore the cycle of pursuing happiness and contentment never ends it goes from craving to craving for more or for something better. As long as a person is able to continue in this chase they rarely ever thirst for the things of God. This is why it is difficult for the rich to come to God, their wealth allows them to forever spend, buy, travel etc., to fulfil the void of the human heart and therefore they seldom thirst. Those who have wealth and riches rather than say, "Enough," almost always want more.

However this principal is not limited to the rich only, since it matters not what level of income a person maybe on the same principal applies. Those who labour and spend all their time, money and efforts seeking and chasing after these things are not satisfied, but left with a lingering void in the heart which these things cannot fill.

This is because there is a consciousness (however faint) that the inner spirit was made for higher and nobler purposes, and that nothing, but God can meet its boundless desires. The lure or voice (especially through today's TV commercials) of the world that we will find true joy in possessing more is the great deception of this world.

2. The principal of spending money for that which is not bread (v2) is not limited to worldly possessions, pleasures riches and wealth, but also embraces the following religious things: -
  - Chasing after religious superstitions and idolatries.
  - Lavishing away time, opportunities, and strength, in reading and hearing false teachings and doctrines that appeal to self, pride and ego.

- Attempting to obtain righteousness by self-effort and the works of the law or by strictly adhering to ceremonial rites and holy days or by keeping religious customs and traditions.

Though these may taste like wholesome bread that tastes good to those who practise them, they cannot nourish the spirit and are also harmful and destructive. Those who adhere to these things in the belief that they are following the true way of the Lord may feel some sense of satisfaction, but it is a deception that instead of leading them to God's love, grace and salvation in Christ is leading them to destruction.

Jesus said: -

- Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. John 6:32
- I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. John 6:35

True happiness, contentment and joy is not found in chasing after worldly riches wealth and pleasures or in strictly adhering to any form of ceremonial rite, or keeping religious customs or traditions, but in trusting in the true bread of life the Lord Jesus Christ for our righteousness and trusting in God's grace. God willingly offers His gifts free of cost and of price and they cannot be received except by faith, any other way no matter how good it may appear or feel is a way of deception.

The lure of false religion is that one can obtain righteousness by self-effort, good works and strictly adhering to religious practises, since these things appeal to self, ego and pride and make us feel that we are doing something deserving of reward they are the deception of false religion. Truly there never has been a truer description of this entire world than in the expression of Isaiah that people are spending their money, their labour and their time chasing after that which does not satisfy.

**Why do you labour for that which does not satisfy?** (v2) this refers to those who give all their energy to the work of gaining and owning more and never give any time or thought to God. Though they have more than enough they continue to toil day and night to possess and gain more.

They never arrive at a place of saying, "Enough." This is because wealth, riches and material possessions though they do make life a lot easier and can make it more enjoyable and solve a multitude of problems they lack the power to fulfil the inner spirit, the heart and the mind with true joy, peace and contentment

In the book of Ecclesiastes it is written: -

- All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. (Eccles. 1:8).
- There is no end to man's toil, and his eyes are never satisfied with riches, so that he never asks, "For whom am I toiling and depriving myself of pleasure?" This also is vanity and an unhappy business. (Eccles. 4:8).

**Riches and wealth:** is a woe to those who set their hearts and minds on the wealth of the world, however this does not mean that it is sinful for those who own a house to purchase another for investment, the fault lies in the fact that those who set their hearts and minds upon riches and wealth (the love of money) never know when they have enough and therefore never give God any thought or time.

It is interesting to notice that nearly all New Testament verses that speak about literal riches and wealth speak about it negatively, but this does not mean that it is wrong for a Christian to be rich and wealthy. When the Bible speaks of money negatively it is not the money that is sinful (it is neither good nor bad since it is just paper) rather it is the love of money that is sinful for two reasons: -

1. Because the affections are set on money and profit rather than on God and those who love money trust in their abundant wealth rather than upon God for their inner joy, contentment, comfort and security.
2. Because the outward manifestation of the love of money is selfish-ambition, greed and indulgent luxurious living, those who love money spend it to gratify self, ego, pride and greed rather than use their abundance to help the poor and less fortunate

Money is not sinful or evil it can be used for good or for bad, to help the poor or to spoil and pamper oneself in an indulgent lifestyle. It is the purpose it is used for that determines whether the money is good or bad, not the money itself. There are no-doubt certain brothers and sisters in the global family of Christ who God has blessed with a business mind and the skills needed to turn everything they do into great success and great wealth.

For those who are humble before God and have the Spirit of Christ this is a great blessing since they are then not only able to extend the Kingdom of God by supporting those gifted in proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel of Christ, but are also able to help the poor in ways that many of us are unable to do. When riches and abundance of money is used in this fashion it is storing up eternal treasures in heaven for those who have not set their hearts upon greed and profit, but used their blessing to advance God Kingdom and help the poor.

**Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food:** (v2) (let your soul delight itself in fatness in the KJV). The word fatness comes from the Hebrew word (*deshen*) it literally means fat and to be fat, figuratively it carries the idea of being satisfied with abundance.

- You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with abundance (thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness in KJV). (Psalm 65:11).
- On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food (of fat things in KJV) , a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food (fat things in KJV) full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. (Isaiah 25:6).
- Bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. (Luke 15:23).

In these verses fat refers to rich food, well-aged wine and celebration which signify prosperity, joy and happiness. The idea is that if they listened to God's word with an open and humble heart and received and embraced His offers they would find without money the joy and happiness they were seeking.

These verses can be applied to the following two historical events, the second being a far wider, greater and majestic fulfilment: -

1. The immediate application is the LORD'S call to the people of Israel held in captivity to Babylon. They are destitute of everything, Jerusalem and the temple of God is in ruin, their land lays waste and they are in bondage to a foreign nation. This has come about because instead of Israel honouring God and heeding the word that His prophets brought to them they set their hearts diamond hard against them and forsook the LORD their God to chase after foreign gods and worldly riches and prosperity.

This resulted in the LORD using Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon as His servant (Jer. 25:9), to bring judgment on them and take the people in chains captive to Babylon. Now after years in captivity the LORD is calling them to forsake their past life of chasing after other gods and worldly riches and wealth (and perhaps the riches of Babylon) and seek after the true riches which of course are God's word, His laws, His will, His promises and His salvation.

2. The call of the LORD, "Come to the waters everyone who thirsts and he who has no money come, buy and eat without money and without price," (v1-2), echoes God's universal call to the world to come to the Gospel and diligently listen to those who proclaim it and eat what is good and delight themselves in rich food. It is echoing God's invitation going out to all mankind inviting them to

share the blessings of the Gospel that are received not with money and worldly riches, but by repentance and God's free grace. It carries the idea that the blessings of the Gospel and of Christ depends on nothing in us, but an awareness and consciousness that we are spiritually empty and the willingness to humble ourselves, repent and accept. It is in this way that we buy Christ and are filled with his fullness. Jesus interpreted the meaning of the expression, "come to the waters" when He said: -

- I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (John 6:35).

It is foolishness to lavish all efforts, time and money on what is not bread, yet most give more effort to chasing after that which is temporary and does not fulfil than accept the heartfelt satisfaction and eternal life that is waiting to be theirs that God freely provides. Mankind toils and continues unsatisfied never learning that what they spend a lifetime chasing after is not what fulfils and comforts the human heart.

Those who have eaten of the fountain of waters found in Christ's love and grace are by it readily equipped and called to invite others to, "Come to the waters," and experience the preciousness of Christ's love and grace and find contentment of mind and peace of heart which comes from receiving his salvation.

It is God's great desire that we find Him and to find him it only needs us to ask in order to receive. In the same way that a mother hears her child's faintest cry, likewise the LORD hears the faintest voice that calls out to Him. However if this seeking is not accompanied with repentance and a willingness to forsake self and wickedness and return to God with a change of mind, purpose, and conduct it is not genuine seeking and will result in finding nothing.

The heart and mind turned toward the world and away from God must be turned toward God and away from the world. Whoever seeks God with these attitudes can be confident of finding God's love and forgivingness and being received into His Kingdom.

The author of Hebrews wrote: -

- You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Those satisfied with the world do not thirst nor do they consider their final end and therefore see no need of Christ. All are welcome to the blessings of the waters that flow from the fountain opened by Christ the Rock smitten on the bloodstained cross of Calvary and resurrected and seated at the right hand of God. Christ outdoes our expectations those who know his love and grace find that no price can be set upon the gifts that are already fully paid for by the price of his own blood.

There is no coming to the Father but by Christ, God is the Holy One of Israel true to His promises and He has promised to glorify Christ by giving Him a Bride, a Kingdom and a family for his eternal inheritance. Those who have Christ have the rich food found in Christ and of heaven and see themselves forever indebted to God's free grace in Christ. In contrast to this the wants of those who chase after the riches of this world are never ending and have nothing to fulfil the lack in the human heart.

**I will Make You an Everlasting Covenant, My Steadfast, Sure Love for David.**

Isaiah 55:3-5 ----- <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. <sup>5</sup>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.

The everlasting covenant refers to the covenant that was first made by God to Abraham and his seed and then to David.

The general meaning of the expression, "the sure mercies of David," is that the great promises of God's unfailing mercy, made to David the historical founder of the royal house, will be transferred and continued, with unbreakable faithfulness, to those who receive the Gospel with an open heart and receive by faith God's gift, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The call of David, (the redeemed son of Jesse), the ransomed of Israel and the Christian church was and still is to be witnesses to the world, however not one of them have been perfect witnesses. The only one who can claim that title is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why those seeking God and Judging God should not judge Him according to the behaviour of Israel, the church or believers in general, but rather set their eyes upon His Son the Lord Jesus Christ who sealed the everlasting covenant by his blood and is the only man who can claim to be without sin.

**I made him a witness, a leader and commander to the peoples:** (v4) refers to David, but echoes the Lord Jesus Christ the true witness and leader, commander and King of the people, especially when he returns in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom and establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in this first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish.

The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce (Isaiah 65:17-25). All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote: -

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

**It should be noted:** that as glorious as Christ's millennial reign will be it is not the final stage of God's eternal plan for mankind's salvation that he planned and purposed in His eternal mind before the world began.

At the end of Christ's millennial reign God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done.

Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its eternal perfect fullness and majestic royal glory.

**For further information see titles: -**

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second Resurrection or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

**The Commonwealth of Israel:** the nation that Israel will call that they do not know and that does not know them (v5) refers to the Gentiles. The fulfilment of these prophetic words of Isaiah began in the New Testament with the apostles who came from the nation Israel and through their preaching called the Gentiles to the Lord Jesus Christ making them adopted sons of the LORD God of Israel the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and joint heirs with the Commonwealth of Israel and the promises of God.

Isaiah says that the Gentiles will run to Israel because of the LORD their God, and the Holy One of Israel, the Holy One of Israel in this context is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ.

This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew). This means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—<sup>12</sup>remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup>But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup>For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup>by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, <sup>16</sup>and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). <sup>17</sup>And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). <sup>18</sup>For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. <sup>19</sup>So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, <sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone <sup>21</sup>in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup>In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

### **Seek the LORD while He maybe Found, call upon Him while He is Near.**

Isaiah 55:6-9 ----- <sup>6</sup>"Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Though Isaiah is speaking to the captives in Babylon what he is saying applies to all mankind. It is a universal invitation extended to all humanity to seek after God. The commencement of seeking the LORD begins in the heart with an earnest desire to know Him. The expression, "seek you the Lord," implies the following four things: -

- 1 People by nature are separated from God.
3. To obtain God's favour and His salvation it must be sought.
4. The invitation to seek God is made to all nations (Jews and Gentiles alike).
5. The knowledge of God is of immeasurable value.

Seeking the LORD, means searching after Him with all our heart, mind and strength, practically it means listen to those who have knowledge Him and whose outward behaviour testifies to their salvation and love for Christ; read God's word, (especially the New Testament); seek Him in prayer and plead for His mercy. Those who seek God in this manner with an honest, humble and repentant heart will find Him and those who do find Him He will not forsake.

- Seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. (Deut. 4:29).
- If you will seek God and plead with the Almighty for mercy, <sup>6</sup>if you are pure and upright, surely then he will rouse himself for you and restore your rightful habitation. (Job 8:5-6).
- Those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you. (Psalm 9:10).
- The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. (Psalm 14:2).

**While he is near and maybe found:** before looking at this expression in detail it should be noted that God can be found in all places and at all times throughout all generations and in all circumstances, however in this context the expression carries the idea of seeking God in times of His favour: -

- Let everyone who is godly offer prayer to you at a time when you may be found; surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him. (Psalm 32:6).

God's favour is found when we take the time to step aside from the rush and business of life, turn off our mobile phones and quieten our minds before the LORD and in peace and quiet direct our thoughts toward Him.

- Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. (Matt. 25:13).

Here Jesus tells the five foolish virgins that they do not know when their master will return, and because of this they should always be watching and ready for him. In this context the time when God maybe found is now. It could be rightly said that at this present time we are living in the long day of death and the long day of grace. Jesus is saying, "Seek God before death comes or he returns," since no one knows when either of these events may happen.

- In a favourable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you. Behold, now is the favourable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (2 Cor. 6:2).

In this context a favourable time refers to those times we feel the call of God upon our lives, there are many who have been witnessed to or sat in a church or attended a revival and felt the call of God tugging at their heart, but did not respond.

- Exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. (Heb. 3:13).
- Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." (Heb. 3:15).

Here the time of the LORD'S favour refers to that time, before our hearts are hardened against the LORD by sin, hurts, lies and deception.

**To seek the Lord:** embraces the following two things: -

- Forsaking any wicked and corrupt way and all that is offensive to God and brings a bad testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Labouring to get the knowledge of God and His plan of salvation. It could be likened to a young man who upon seeing a girl that he is attracted to, does everything he can to find out more about her, it is in this same way we are to seek the LORD.

Jesus said: -

- I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. (Rev. 3:20).

Jesus desires that we would make ourselves his friend, he is waiting to receive us now, today this very moment. He has done all he can do to make the way open for us to come to him. He gave his life for us, he paid the highest price that we might be redeemed, all we have to do is: -

- Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (Matt. 7:7) (Luke 11:9).

Though finding the Lord requires no worldly treasure and is freely given their must be a genuineness of heart in desiring to know him, this sincerity of heart is evidenced by outward actions that testify that a person is making some kind of effort to know God. Again it could be likened to the young man who upon seeing a girl that he is attracted to desires to know and date her, if he makes no effort to learn of her he is never going to bring the desire of his heart to pass, he must do all he can to make the date a reality.

When we come to the Lord with this same determination to learn of him and his Gospel and confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved. (Rom. 10:8-9).

- For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Rom. 10:13).

**NOTICE:** no matter how unrighteous a sinner may have been, if they truly repent, and grieve over their unrighteous acts and call upon the Lord he will have compassion on them and abundantly forgive all the unrighteous acts they have done. If anyone has any doubts about this, simply look at how bad Israel and Judah became and yet during all their time of rebellion, the worship of pagan Gods, child sacrifices and gross wickedness God was hoping they would return to Him, such is God's amazing and wonderful mercy and astounding compassion.

**My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways:** (v8) this statement has following three applications: -

1. Firstly to the the captives in Babylon. There was no way Israel could have known that God would use Cyrus the king of Media Persia as his anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) to bring the Empire of Babylon to ruin and set the people of Israel free from their captivity in Babylon.

Not only did God call Cyrus (the secular king of Persia) His anointed shepherd and called him by name, but also said He would equip Cyrus and take him by the right hand and go before him. Israel could never have foreseen that God would take Cyrus by the right hand and go before him opening all doors that no man could shut while Cyrus the king of Persia subdued all nations and set God's people free from their bondage in Babylon.

2. Secondly to the Lord Jesus Christ (the Holy One of Israel) there was no way that Old Testament Israel could have fully comprehended how God would cause the Gentiles to come running to them (v5). Even the apostles didn't fully understand what Jesus meant when he told them that: -

- The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. (Luke 9:22)

It wasn't until Jesus appeared to them in his resurrected body that their eyes were fully opened and they truly understood.

3. Finally to any situation or circumstance in life that is beyond the understanding of our limited and mortal human mind. In the book of Ecclesiastes it is written that man cannot find out God's works upon earth: -

- God has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. (Ecclesiastes. 3:11).
- Man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. However much man may toil in seeking, he will not find it out. Even though a wise man claims to know, he cannot find it out. (Eccles. 8:17).
- The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to the intelligent, nor favour to those with knowledge, but time and chance happen to them all. (Eccles. 9:11).

This means that no one no matter how intelligent or how much a person may study they cannot find out the works of God upon the earth. This is because there are far too many contradictions in the world, (i.e., the young die before the old; the righteous suffer while the wicked prosper; the life of a kind person is taken far before their time while an oppressor lives to old age and list goes on. The LORD has designed the universe this way so that no human whether righteous or wicked can find out their future or know what will happen to them tomorrow.

**My word shall Succeed Israel shall go out in joy for an Everlasting Sign.**

Isaiah 55:10-13 ----- <sup>10</sup>"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, <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>"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. <sup>13</sup>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."

At the time of this prophecy Israel has been in captivity for almost seventy years. During that time their land has laid waste and because there was no man to till the ground thorns and thistles had come up.

Throughout the previous chapters the LORD through Isaiah has been telling Israel that at the appointed time they will be set free from their captivity and bondage to Babylon. Now in this chapter the LORD is emphatically reinforcing this promise that they will be set free by telling them that the word that He has spoken will not return to Him empty, but will accomplish that which He purposed and it will succeed in the thing for which He sent it. This promise embraces the following two things: -

1. The people of Israel being set free and returning to their beloved city Jerusalem and their homeland. Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob. Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing.

When the temple of God was completed and their faith was once again established. Their livestock multiplied and farmers tilled the ground and planted crops. God sent showers from heaven so that their orchards vineyards, forests and all that they had put their hand to prospered and provided bread for the sower and a golden period of peace followed.

Israel's return to Zion is believed by some to be the first time in human history where a people exiled from their homeland by the force of a foreign ruler had returned to their native soil to re-establish their own joint national home and thereby further encourage the concept of a distinct national identity for the Jewish people.

2. The LORD's statement, "My word shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off carry and echo of God's promise that the Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom or righteousness, justice joy and peace during his glorious millennial reign on earth.

For further information concerning this glorious age and Jesus return see the notes under the title, "I made him a witness, a leader and commander to the peoples," following verses (3-5) (above).

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End.