

Part II, Lesson 26

Isaiah

The Lord is Salvation

God's
Gracious
Invitation

Isaiah
55:1-7

*Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex
Curriculum*

Isaiah Part II, Lesson 26

God's Gracious Invitation

Isaiah 55:1-7

We have a wonderful lesson for today. We will hear God's invitation to come. God's people are urged to take God up on His generous offer of peace and success. Read Isaiah 55:1-7.

We are told by the great Jewish historian, Josephus (JO-see'-fus), that many of the people in Babylon did not want to return to Jerusalem. After all, it has been more than forty years since the Israelites had been marched to Babylon. Some of them had made homes; a few of them even had businesses. Many had friendships and other relationships there. Some of them were too young when they left Jerusalem to remember or they had never been to Jerusalem. Josephus said that many of them chose to stay in Babylon because they were "not willing to leave their possessions." The fear of leaving what they knew and going to what was unknown made them hesitant to leave. This is the background for chapter fifty-five.

Isaiah issues a loving invitation from God, pleading with them not to resist this opportunity to go home. He sounds a bit like a salesman...or a recruiter. He knows what wonderful things wait for them back in Judea. He knows that God will bless them beyond their hopes and dreams if they will only let go of what they think is safe in Babylon and trust God to do something spectacular in their future.

Water has always been scarce in the middle east. There is a lot of desert and drought. So the opening call is one that would be very appealing. "Come to the waters..." is a call that they would surely respond to, especially since it is waters, not just water. When God offers something, He always offers enough...most often more than enough. Then the offer is upped. He said come buy wine, milk, and something to eat. You don't even need to bring your purse. It is free. There is no price tag. Of course this is not about getting just water, food and something to drink, it is about being sure God is going to take care of you.

He said, why are you working so hard in Babylon to buy things that are not food...things that aren't necessary? He basically asks, are you really satisfied with all the getting of stuff? Is all that making life wonderful for you, or are you still needing something else?

He said, don't waste your time and energy on something that can't make life good and can't satisfy your need for joy and peacefulness. Even though many of the Israelites were no longer slaves, some even were successful businessmen, they were strangers in a foreign land and needed to be at home in the land God had given them. The joy and peacefulness they needed was back in Judah, and God was inviting them home again.

We could also see here a most important lesson about God and humans. The water is a symbol of God's presence in the world...especially in this part of Isaiah. Humans are thirsty, not for what God can do or give, but for God Himself. To the people to whom Isaiah is writing, there is no worse fate than to be left without water. Humans without God are thirsty...we are parched, with dry mouth, chapped lips, and unable to swallow.

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God's Gracious Invitation

Only God coming into our lives will quench the spiritual thirst. All the things we can get on earth, the stuff that only the richest can buy, will not satisfy like a relationship with God will satisfy.

Think about all the words that are imperatives or instructions: Verse one: *come, buy, eat*; verse two *listen, eat, delight*; verse three, *give ear, come, hear*; verse six, *seek, call*; verse seven, *forsake, turn*. This is a strong, direct word from God. God's invitation is always strong. He may use a small voice, even close to a whisper at times, but it will always be a very sure, convincing, sound.

We can know that God expects a response from us. He waits for our response. God's gifts to us cannot be purchased, you can't buy God's blessing, but you must hold out your hand and heart to receive His gracious gifts. That is faith. It is also our willingness to obey His instructions.

Let's look at all God's promises to an obedient Israel: Verse one, *come and buy without money*; verse two, *your soul will delight in the richest of fare*; verse three, *your soul may live, I will make an everlasting covenant*; verse five, *nations that do not know you will hasten to you, He has endowed you with splendor*; verse seven, *He will have mercy on him...for He will freely pardon*. What a happy future was offered!

Some, including the writer of these lessons, see verses three through five as God's shifting His covenant from David's heirs to the nation of Israel. Where God had charged David with being a leader and commander (a military leader) of the people, He was now charging Israel with being a witness to all the nations. To what were they a witness? They were messengers of the truth that God was who He said He was, and that there was hope. The hope would be fulfilled in the Messiah, who we now know to be Jesus.

In verses six and seven, we find the urgency of God's call. God was near. They had been separated from God, at least that's what it seemed like while, they were far away from home in Babylon. Now God is making His presence known and saying that the time of decision is now.

King Cyrus was about to let the people go. It was time to decide to go home. But, first they must forsake their own ideas of what to do next. They had to change their minds about what was good and right. They had to look to God for guidance. And that is true today. God has a plan for each of us. What we need to do is let go of our sin, and let God be in control of our lives.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

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Scripture Memory: "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near." Isaiah 55:6

Lesson Goal: To encourage students to know that God is loving and kind, that He takes care of His own and that He will bless us if we will look to Him for guidance.

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God's Gracious Invitation—Isaiah 55:1-7

Student Worksheet

Listen during the lesson for this information:

1. Why did some of the people not want to leave Babylon?
2. God said, don't waste your time and energy on something that can't make life _____ and can't satisfy your need for _____ and _____.
3. What is water the symbol of, especially in this last part of Isaiah's prophesy?
4. What quenches the spiritual thirst in humans?
5. What are the imperatives in verses one, two, three, six and seven?
6. What are God's promises to an obedient Israel?
7. And that is true today. God has a _____ for each of us. What we need to do is let go of our _____, and let God be in _____ of our lives

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Scripture Memory: "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Isaiah 55:6

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.