

THE SAVIOUR'S GREAT INVITATION TO THE WORLD

ISAIAH 55:01–05

Introduction

The human race has the most unique opportunity imaginable, that of having worldwide peace, economic prosperity and justice. Peace among all people is possible. A society in which need has been eliminated is possible. A society in which citizens live in comfort and joy, treat others fairly and always do what is right is possible. Incomprehensible! Unimaginable! Yet this is the very offer that God extends to the world — the salvation of society. His great invitation to every society and group of people of the world is to receive His gift of peace, prosperity, joy, justice and righteousness. This is the great message of the present Scripture As seen earlier, God's very special Servant, His Son Jesus Christ, died for the sins of the entire world (Isa 52:13-53:12). He died to offer salvation to the world. This is, *The Saviour's Great Invitation to the World*, Isaiah 55:1-56:8.

- I. The invitation to come to the LORD (vv. 55:1-5).
- II. The invitation to seek the LORD (vv. 55:6-13).
- III. The invitation to live righteously and to worship the LORD (vv. 56:1-8).

Isaiah 55:01–05 The Invitation to Come to the LORD

The first invitation is a cry from the depth of God's heart: Come! Everyone come. The invitation is not extended only to the Jews. God does not call only the religious and righteous to come. He calls everyone, including the ungodly and unrighteous. Note the Scripture and outline:

1. The people invited to come are those who have thirsty souls and poverty-stricken hearts. To thirst means to desire, crave, long after, yearn for, eagerly seek. To those whose souls are like a desert — dry and barren, eagerly seeking and yearning to have their thirst quenched — God says, "Come to me!"

To be poverty-stricken means to be poor, impoverished, distressed and in desperate need. To those whose souls are poverty-stricken — utterly famished, destitute, unable to find anything that will satisfy their emptiness — the LORD cries out, "Come to me!" Let all who are thirsty and poor come to the LORD.
 2. The offer of the LORD is salvation (v. 1). The thirsty, hungry soul can be saved and delivered from its thirst and hunger. The LORD offers streams of *living waters* to satisfy the dry, thirsty soul, and He offers wine and milk to satisfy the hungry heart. Keep in mind that water and food are the most valuable commodities in a dry, barren country. When travelling through desert areas, people will perish unless they have prepared themselves by securing water and food. So it is with the human soul. As people walk through life, they must secure the water and food that the LORD provides or else they will perish. What is the water and food that God provides?
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=> Jesus Christ is the living water of God.

John 4:10 *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

John 7:37-38 *On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."*

=> Jesus Christ is the bread of life.

John 6:35 *Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."*

John 6:48-52 *"I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"*

3. What is the cost for God's water and food? Astoundingly, they are free, absolutely free. This fact suggests several points:

First, God's salvation is a *free gift*. It cannot be secured by money or by giving religious offerings or by working for it. If salvation were by works, the good deeds of people would put God in debt to them. God would owe them. If that were the case, God would be *subjected* to them, owing them salvation to pay His debt. But God cannot be *subjected* to any man. God is the LORD of the universe, ruling and reigning over all. All creatures are in debt to Him; He is in debt to no creature. Whatever He gives is from grace, *freely* given. He restates the point: God's salvation — the water and food that satisfy the human soul — is *freely* given. It is a gift.

Acts 13:39 *Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.*

Rom 3:23-24 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*

Rom 4:3-7 *What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered."*

Rom 5:15 *But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!*

Rom 5:18-19 *Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.*

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Gal 3:10-14 *All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*

Eph 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Second, the LORD cares deeply for us. He longs to meet the hunger and thirst of our hearts by freely giving us the living water and the bread of life. When a gift is given without any expectation of payment, the gift reveals a caring heart. God is interested in our welfare He is concerned about us, cherishes us and holds us in the highest esteem. And He has proven His love by *freely* offering us the gift of salvation.

Third, the price of salvation was extremely costly to God. Salvation cost God the death of His very own Son. Christ paid the ransom for our sin. Through His death we are redeemed, set free from the bondages of sin and death, and given eternal life. Although we receive salvation freely, God paid an enormous price for our redemption.

John 1:29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

Acts 2:23 *This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.*

Rom 5:8-10 *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Rom. 5:19 *For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.*

1 John 3:16 *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.*

4. The plea of God for people to come is urgent and compelling (v. 2). Come is an imperative that demands immediate attention. The life or death of the human soul is at stake, for the soul is as thirsty as a barren desert, and as empty as a starving man. Thus the appeal by God is pressing, requiring our utmost and immediate consideration. God makes a twofold plea:
 - a. Do not waste money or labour on things that do not satisfy. Note that God puts this plea in the form of a question, focusing on the fact that many people do just that. They spend their money on things that do not satisfy the human soul, things such as...
 - worldly pleasures and activities
 - immoral and illicit sexual behaviour
 - material possessions
 - fleeting and worthless adventures
 - acquiring or buying position, authority, power or fame

Carnal pleasures and worldly possessions cannot satisfy the human soul. Stimulating the flesh and securing the possessions or fame of this world will leave a person empty inside. This world with its bright lights, cheap thrills and get-rich-quick schemes will only make an individual more destitute. The person's soul will be like a *wasteland*, hungry and starving for something that will give it a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction.

Think of all the people whose primary objective in life is to get more — more money, more cars, more houses, more property and so on. They work as hard as they can, labouring day and night to make more money to buy even more things. Once people have enough to meet the necessities of life, they accumulate more money for one of at least three purposes:

- => to hoard it to satisfy the emptiness within their souls
 - => to become recognized as persons of wealth, authority and power
 - => to use it to meet the needs of the world and to carry the gospel of Christ to every living soul. (This is the only purpose that is truly justified in the eyes of God.)
- b. God's second plea is "Listen, listen carefully to me! Eat what is good! Be filled with my nourishment!" In most cases, excess money is used for worldly, carnal and selfish purposes. For this reason, God pleads with all of us to ask ourselves this question: Why do we spend money on things that do not nourish us and feed us spiritually? And why do we labour to purchase material things that do not satisfy? God provides the Water and Bread of life, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Everyone who truly comes to God receives the fullness of Christ. Christ floods the thirsty, hungry soul with the fullness of His Spirit:

=> love	=> goodness	=> fulfilment	=> joy
=> faithfulness	=> satisfaction	=> peace	=> meekness
=> assurance	=> patience	=> confidence	=> purpose
=> self control or discipline	=> gentleness or kindness		

When Jesus Christ fills a person's soul, the individual walks victoriously in life, conquering and triumphing through all the trials and temptations that arise. Day by day the person is filled with assurance and confidence in the LORD's presence and guidance. This is the nourishment that Christ brings. He alone is the Water and Bread of life. He alone can meet every need to fill the human soul. He alone can keep man from dying of thirst and hunger.

5. God makes a wonderful promise to those who come to the LORD (v. 3). However, before the promise is stated, God again stresses how critical it is for people to come to Him. Two times in this one verse the LORD urges people to *hear*, to open their ears, because the issue involved is the life or death of the human soul. If people will listen and then heed what God says, that is, come to the LORD, God promises them two things:
 - a. Their souls will live. They will be given *real life*, the Water and Bread of God Himself. They will receive all the fullness of Christ described above (v. 2).

John 10:10 *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

2 Tim 1:10 *But it [God's purpose] has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

1 John 5:11-13 *And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.*

- b. They will receive all the mercies and love God promised to David (see notes, 2 Sam 7:11-17). God will make the same covenant with those who truly come to Him that He made with David. His covenant with David included the great promise of an eternal descendant, a throne and a kingdom, all of which are fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Luke 1:30-33). Jesus Christ is the covenant, the fulfilment of the promises that God gives to man. Any agreement between God and man is based solely upon Christ. If people wish to approach God, they must approach Him through Christ and Christ alone (John 14:6).

Luke 1:30-33 *But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."*

John 14:6 *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

Acts 13:32-39 *"We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers, he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: 'You are my son; today I have become your father.' God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said, 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.' So it is also stated elsewhere: 'You will not let your holy one see decay.' For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay. Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses."*

6. The agent of salvation is the Saviour Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 4-5). It is the Messiah who fulfils God's promises to David, the Messiah who secures salvation for every living soul of every generation. Note that God has sent the Messiah to be His Witness to the people as well as their Leader and Commander. As their Leader and Commander, Christ has been given all authority throughout the universe: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Mat 28:18; also see Num 24:17-19; Isa 9:6-7; Rev 12:5; 19:15-16). As God's witness, the Messiah will issue the call for all the Gentile nations of the earth to come to the LORD (v. 5).

While Christ was on earth, He ministered only in Palestine. No other nation felt the *direct impact* of His ministry during His lifetime. In addition, there were many nations that did not even exist while Christ was on earth. Yet Isaiah predicts that the day will come when nations will rush to Christ and see Him glorified. Since His death on the cross, Christ has been bearing strong witness to the nations of the earth. As a result, multitudes of people have rushed to Him for the salvation He purchased through His death on the cross of Calvary. This prophecy is being carried out day by day as people from all nations hear God's invitation to come to Him for salvation. But the ultimate fulfilment will take place when Christ returns to set up God's kingdom on earth. On that day, every human being will either come to the Lord or else face His terrifying judgment. For all men will worship Him as He sits on the throne of God's glory in the Holy City, Jerusalem (54:11-17). However until that day, the invitation of the LORD is extended to every human being:

Isa 55:1-2 *"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare."*

Mat 11:28-30 *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

Mat 22:2-3, 8-10 *"The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come....Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests."*

Rom 10:12-13 *For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

1 Tim 2:3-5 *This is good, and pleases God our Saviour; who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

Rev 22:17 *The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.*

Isa 1:18 *"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."*

Isa 45:22 *"Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other." ■*