

THE SAVIOUR'S GREAT INVITATION TO THE WORLD

ISAIAH 55:01–13

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 55:06–13 The Invitation to Seek the LORD

The second invitation is a strong imperative to seek the LORD. *To seek* means to look for and search for, inquire about, investigate, pursue, strive after. It also means to plead and cry for something to the point of struggling. Only a person who senses a deep need will seek the LORD with such urgency. And this is exactly the objective of God's invitation. There is an urgent need for every human being to seek the LORD. Note the Scripture and outline.

1. This second invitation includes a warning: people can wait too long. They fail to seek the LORD while He is near and still can be found. **Opportunities** are not always available to seek the LORD. Throughout the day, people's minds have to be focused on their work and other duties. A far greater opportunity to seek the LORD is found in the quietness of one's home or in the setting of the church. It is far easier to sense the LORD's presence in a quiet atmosphere than in the hustle and bustle of noisy surroundings. It is also not always easy for people to find God. People can harden their hearts to such a degree that they feel God is far off, completely out of reach. Add the fact that people are creatures of conditioning, which means the more they misbehave, the more acceptable their sinful behaviour appears. For example, if people repeatedly commit immoral acts, their consciences can become dead, insensitive to sin. In that frame of mind they will naturally not seek the LORD as readily as they would if their hearts were not hardened but instead were open and sensitive to God. More important, God will have nothing to do with sinful behaviour. He is holy and
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cannot look upon sin; therefore, if people continue in their sinful ways, the LORD is forced to withdraw His presence. Thus, God gives this strong exhortation: "Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on Him while He is near." Do not wait too long. Do not wait until your heart becomes hard and insensitive to the convictions of God's Spirit. God's warning is clear and it is directed to the entire human race: Do not wait until it is too late.

Gen 6:3 *Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever."*

Rom 2:5-9 *But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

Heb 3:12-13 *See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.*

Prov 29:1 *A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed — without remedy.*

Prov 28:14 *Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble.*

2. Those invited to seek the LORD are the wicked of the earth (v. 7). No matter how much wickedness people commit, the LORD still reaches out to them, encouraging them to seek Him. What is involved in seeking? Repentance. Simply and plainly, repentance means to forsake an evil way of life to turn to the LORD. People who truly repent turn away from their wicked behaviour, banish evil thoughts from their minds, and turn to the LORD. They believe Him and obey His commandments. When people truly repent, the LORD has mercy upon them and forgives their sins. They are freely, abundantly pardoned.

Eph 1:17 *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*

Titus 3:4-7 *But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour; so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

3. The need to seek the LORD is urgent, for God's thoughts and ways are far beyond our comprehension (vv. 8-9). God is holy and dwells in perfection, and no one could ever come close to understanding His ways. Why would God create the world and then allow sin to cause so much devastation and the death of every human being? The answers to this question and so many more are partially revealed in Scripture, but only partially. God's thoughts and ways are perfect and righteous, far beyond our understanding. On the other hand our thoughts and ways are blemished, imperfect, wicked and simplistic. Therefore, we must never try to "second-guess" God (Warren W. Wiersbe. *Be Comforted*, p. 147). Although many people try to diminish God's image into nothing more than a superman, a person whose thoughts and ways are only a *little above* man's, nothing could be further from the truth. God's thoughts and ways are as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth. Imagine the incomprehensible distance between the highest star in existence and the earth. God's thoughts and ways exceed man's by a far greater distance than even that because He created the highest star. God clearly does not think or act like we do. Although Scripture does not give us complete answers to all questions, it does give us enough information to enable us to trust God and to know right from wrong. Through the truths revealed in Scripture, we can know much about God, and we can have assurance that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. Therefore, when God extends to people the invitation to seek Him, people must seek Him. The LORD knows that the issue involves life and death, eternity in heaven or eternity in hell. But it is up to every individual to accept or reject Him.

Rom 11:32-36 *For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.*

Rev 15:3 *And sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of ages."*

4. What will stir the wicked to repent of their sins and return to the LORD for salvation? God's Word (vv. 10-11). God's Holy Word is the point of contact between Him and the people of earth. Without the Word of God, people would have no way to know the LORD. If the Holy Bible did not exist, the LORD would have to personally appear or verbally speak out in order to communicate with people. But by giving us the Holy Bible, the LORD has given us continued access to what He wishes to teach us. It is the Word of God that convicts the wicked of their sins and stirs them to repent. It is the Word of God that tells people to cleanse their minds of evil thoughts and correct their wicked behaviour. Note what Scripture says: God's Word is as powerful as the rain

and snow that water the earth and causes the seed to grow (v. 10). God's Word will not return to Him empty. His Word will bear fruit, will accomplish His purpose. It will convict sinners, lead them to Christ, and instruct them in the way of righteousness.

Mat 24:35 *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."*

Col 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

2 Tim 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

2 Tim 3:16 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*

Heb 4:12 *For the word of God is living active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

1 Pet 1:25 *But the word of the Lord stands forever. And this is the word that was preached to you.*

1 Pet 2:2-3 *Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

2 Pet 1:19-21 *And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

Psa 119:9, 11 *How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word....I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

Psa 119:105 *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*

Psa. 119:130 *The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.*

5. The results of seeking the LORD show what great things God does for His people. When God set His people free from the Babylonian captivity, He made three wonderful promises to them, promises that are applicable to believers of all generations (vv. 12-13).
 - a. The people who were set free — repentant sinners — would live in joy and peace (v. 12). Their new life would begin as soon as they were released from their captivity, and it would continue on throughout their lives. A sense of fullness — inner joy and inner peace — would continually flood the hearts of faithful, obedient believers.

John 14:27 *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

John. 15:11 *“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”*

John 16:24 *“Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”*

John 16:33 *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

John 17:3 *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”*

Rom 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Phil 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

1 Pet 1:6-9 *In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

Psa 29:11 *The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.*

Psa 119:165 *Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.*

Isa 12:3 *With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*

Isa 26:3 *You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.*

Isa 48:18 *If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea.*

- b. The repentant sinners were also given the wonderful promise of a great future, a time when the earth would be transformed, made perfect (vv. 12-13a). This is a clear prophecy of the Messianic kingdom, the kingdom that Christ will establish on earth when He returns. In that day all nature will rejoice, for the creation will be delivered from its corruption, its struggle and its suffering (see notes, Rom 8:18-27). All thorns will be removed from the earth and all vegetation will become fruitful, producing its maximum capacity. There will be a new earth, as well as a new heaven.

2 Pet 2:10-13 *This is especially true of those [the wicked] who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings, yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from the Lord. But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish. They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, revelling in their pleasures while they feast with you.*

Rev 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*

Rev 22:3-5 *No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city [New Jerusalem], and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.*

Isa 65:17 *“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”*

Isa 66:22 *“As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,” declares the LORD, “so will your name and descendants endure.”*

- c. The transformation of the universe will be for the purpose of honouring the LORD (v. 13). It will be a sign of God's wonderful love for His people and of His great power that works for the good of His people.

Rom 15:5-6 *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus. So that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rev 19:7 *Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.*

Psa 29:2 *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness.*

Psa 34:3 *Glorify the LORD with me; let us exult his name together.*

Psa 57:5 *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.*

Psa 107:32 *Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.*

Isa 25:1 *O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvellous things, things planned long ago. ■*