

ISAIAH 55 | *God's Thoughts Are Higher*

Free Wine and Milk

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. 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, eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. 3 Incline your ear and come to me. Hear, that your soul (נַפְשׁ) may live. And I will cut (כרת) with you an everlasting covenant (בְּרִית עוֹלָם), my permanent/enduring (אמן) loyal love (חֶסֶד) for David. 4 Behold, I made him a witness (עֵד) to the peoples, a leader (נְגִיד) and commander (צוה) for the peoples. 5 Behold, you shall call a nation (גוֹי) that you do not know, and a nation (גוֹי) that did not know you shall run (רוץ) to you (masc. sing.), because of Yahweh your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified (פאר) you (masc. sing.).

God's Thoughts and Roads

6 Seek Yahweh while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. 7 Let the wicked abandon his road (דֶּרֶךְ), and the unrighteous man his thoughts (מַחְשְׁבָה). Let him return to Yahweh, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly forgive (סלה). 8 For my thoughts (מַחְשְׁבָה) are not your thoughts (מַחְשְׁבָה), neither are your roads (דֶּרֶךְ) my roads (דֶּרֶךְ), declares Yahweh. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my roads (דֶּרֶךְ) higher than your roads (דֶּרֶךְ) and my thoughts (מַחְשְׁבָה) than your thoughts (מַחְשְׁבָה).

God's Word Will Succeed

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 (דְּבַרִי) 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.

The Trees Shall Clap Their Hands

12 For you [Israel] 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 Yahweh, an everlasting sign (אֵיזוֹת עוֹלָם) that shall not be cut off.

Commentary

1. Isaiah 55.

- a. Is 54-55 celebrate the atoning work the Servant accomplished in Is 53.
- b. Israel (and man in general) may respond positively or negatively to the Servant and his work. The Servant has paid the entire cost for Israel's redemption, but Israel must come of her own free will. This is the gospel offer in a nutshell.
- c. The blood atonement of the Servant Messiah has changed the entire picture for Israel and the nations. See *Atonement*.
- d. Grace is all God the Father is free to do for us based on what his Son has accomplished. It is God's Riches At Christ's Expense. The Servant's sacrifice has unlocked the rich mercy and blessing of God towards all who choose to come.

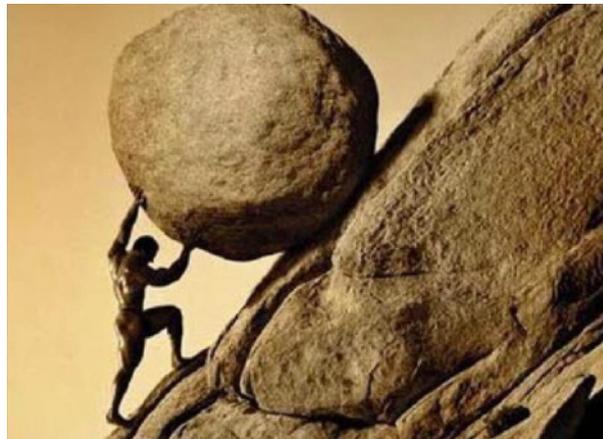
2. Run to "David" (Is 55:1-5).

- a. **Is 55:1-5** 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. 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, eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. 3 Incline your ear and come to me. Hear, that your soul (נַפְשׁ) may live. And I will cut (כרת) with you an everlasting covenant (בְּרִית עוֹלָם), my permanent/enduring (אמן) loyal love (חֶסֶד) for David. 4 Behold, I made him a witness (עֵד) to the peoples, a leader (נְגִיד) and commander (צוּה) for the peoples. 5 Behold, you shall call a nation (גוֹי) that you do not know, and a nation (גוֹי) that did not know you shall run (רוּץ) to you (masc. sing.), because of Yahweh your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified (פָּאֵר) you (masc. sing.).
- b. Yahweh invites:
 - (1) Every thirsty person to come to the waters (v. 1a).
 - (a) In Isaiah, water represents the Holy Spirit and blessing.
 - 1) **Is 32:14-16** 14 For the palace is forsaken, the populous city deserted. The hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks, 15 until the Spirit is poured upon us [like rain] from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. 16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.
 - 2) **Is 44:3** 3 For I [Yahweh] will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon your [Israel's] offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.
 - (b) The God of the Bible is a hospitable, inviting God. He loves to provide food for the hungry and drink for the thirsty.
 - 1) **Pr 9:5-6** 5 Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. 6 Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight.
 - 2) **Mt 5:6** 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
 - 3) **Re 22:17** 17 The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let the one who hears say, Come. And let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

- (c) Jesus is able to give us spiritual food and drink, which we need even more than physical food and drink.
- 1) **Jn 4:10-14** 10 Jesus answered her, If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, Give me a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water. 11 The woman said to him, Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock. 13 Jesus said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.
 - 2) **Jn 6:32-35** 32 Jesus then said to them, 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. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. 34 They said to him, Sir, give us this bread always. 35 Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.
 - a) Are we spiritually hungry and spiritually thirsty?
 - 3) **Jn 7:37-39** 37 On the last day of the feast [of Booths], the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
- (2) The poor are to come, buy grain, wine, and milk, and eat without price (v. 1b).
- (a) The Hebrew word שָׁבַר (“buy”) is associated with the purchase of grain.
 - 1) **Ge 41:57** 57 ...All the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain (שָׁבַר), because the famine was severe over all the earth.
 - a) This typifies Jesus providing spiritual food to the nations.
 - 2) **Ge 42:5** 5 Thus the sons of Israel came to buy grain (שָׁבַר) among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.
 - a) This typifies Jesus provided spiritual food to Israel.
 - (b) God loves to feast man with abundant food and drink.
 - 1) **Ex 3:8** 8 and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey....
 - 2) **Is 25:6** 6 On this mountain [Zion] Yahweh of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
 - (c) “It was the Servant’s payment for sin that made salvation free for those who count His ‘money’ good.”¹ The Servant’s money is his precious blood.

¹ Thomas Constable, *Notes on Isaiah*, 382.

- 1) **1 Pe 1:18-19** 18 ... You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Messiah....
- (d) Participation in the New covenant is totally free and conditioned only on faith.
 - 1) **Eph 2:4-9** 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Messiah—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Messiah Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Messiah Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
 - 2) God freely offers to us a relationship that will never end.
- c. The thirsty and hungry are not to:
 - (1) Spend their money for that which is not bread (v. 2a).
 - (2) Labor for that which does not satisfy (v. 2b).
 - (a) This is what we do when we spend our money, time, and effort on temporal things.
 - (b) “People can either work for nothing or receive for nothing. ... This contrast between working for nothing and receiving for nothing is at the heart of the Christian understanding. Labor to justify oneself in God’s sight produces only death, but ceasing from one’s own efforts and receiving the free gift of Christ’s atoning death is to have eternal life (Rom. 6:23).”²
 - (c) Don’t be a Sisyphus!



- d. Instead the thirsty and hungry are to:
 - (1) Listen diligently to Yahweh (v. 2c).
 - (2) Eat what is good (v. 2d).
 - (3) Delight themselves in rich food (v. 2e).
 - (4) Incline their ear and come to Yahweh (v. 3a).
 - (5) Hear, so that their *soul* may *live* (v. 3b).

² John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 436.

- (a) **Dt 8:3** 3 ...Man does not *live* by bread alone, but man *lives* by every word that comes from the mouth of Yahweh.
- (b) In Hebrew, the word “soul” sums up a person’s real self, being, heart, spirit—his whole person.³
- e. Yahweh promises to cut with the remnant of Israel an everlasting covenant (v. 3c).
 - (1) **Is 54:10** 10 For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my loyal love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of shalom shall not be removed, says Yahweh, who has compassion on you.
 - (2) This covenant is very probably the New covenant, which is closely connected to the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. The Servant Messiah, the Son of David, is the one who makes possible the New covenant.
- f. This covenant is based upon Yahweh’s permanent loyal love to David (v. 3d).
 - (1) **2 Sa 7:16** 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.
- g. Yahweh made “David” a witness to and leader and commander of the peoples (v. 4).
 - (1) This is probably a reference to Messiah, who David prefigured.⁴ Jesus, the Servant, is the ideal Israel and the ideal David.
 - (2) We should remember what Isaiah has previously said about the Davidic covenant.
 - (a) **Is 9:6-7** 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of shalom there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.
 - (b) **Is 11:1-10** 1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall produce fruit. 2 And the Spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh. 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of Yahweh. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, 4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.... 10 In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.
 - (c) **Is 16:5** 5 ...Then a throne will be established in loyal love, and on it will sit in faithfulness in the tent of David one who judges and seeks justice and is swift to do righteousness.
- h. “David” will call a “nation” with whom he has no previous relationship, and this “nation” will run to him (v. 5a).
 - (1) **Is 50:10** 10 Who among you fears Yahweh and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of Yahweh and rely on his God.
 - (a) See *God’s General Call* and *God’s Special Call*.

³ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 437.

⁴ Thomas Constable, *Notes on Isaiah*, 382.

- (2) A remnant from the nations will respond to Messiah's call.
- (a) **Is 2:3** 3 ...And many peoples shall come and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.
 - (b) **Is 11:10** 10 In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.
 - (c) **Is 42:4** 4 [The Servant] will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands wait for his law.
 - (d) **Is 49:6** 6 [Yahweh] says: It is too light a thing that you should be my Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel. I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.
 - (e) **Is 66:21** 21 And some of them [from the nations] also I will take for priests and for Levites, says Yahweh.

(3) Could the “nation” (sing.) be the church?

- (a) **1 Pe 2:9-10** 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy *nation*, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were *not a people*, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.
- i. This is because Yahweh has glorified “David,” his Servant (v. 5b).
 - (1) **Is 66:18** 18 ...The time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and shall see my glory....

3. God's Thoughts and Ways (Is 55:6-9).

- a. **Is 55:6-9** 6 Seek Yahweh while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. 7 Let the wicked abandon his way (וְדַרְכֵי), and the unrighteous man his thoughts (מַחְשְׁבֵהוּ). Let him return to Yahweh, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly forgive (סָלַח). 8 For my thoughts (מַחְשְׁבֵהוּ) are not your thoughts (מַחְשְׁבֵיכֶם), neither are your ways (דַּרְכֵיכֶם) my ways (דַּרְכֵי), declares Yahweh. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways (דַּרְכֵי) higher than your ways (דַּרְכֵי) and my thoughts (מַחְשְׁבֵהוּ) than your thoughts (מַחְשְׁבֵיכֶם).
- b. People are to seek Yahweh and call on him while he may be found (v. 6).
 - (1) God is ready to be sought by us.
 - (a) **Is 65:1** 1 I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me. I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me.
 - (2) He is not far from each one of us.
 - (a) **Ac 17:26-27** 26 And [God] made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should *seek* God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us....
 - (3) Our opportunity as human beings is to seek God and to call on him.

- (a) **Ac 2:21** 21 And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- (b) **Ac 15:17** 17 ...That the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things....
- (c) **Ac 17:27** 27 ...That they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us....
- (d) **Ac 22:16** 16 And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.
- (e) **Ro 10:14** 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?
- (4) If we seek him, we will find him.
 - (a) **Mt 7:7** 7 Seek, and you will find.
- (5) Jesus came to seek us.
 - (a) **Lk 19:10** 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.
- (6) We are to seek God himself, not the gifts he promises to give us.⁵
 - (a) **Jn 17:3** 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Messiah whom you have sent.
- (7) God's offer is a limited time offer. His patience does run out.
 - (a) **2 Co 6:2** 2 Behold, now is the favourable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.
 - (b) **Jn 12:35** 35 So Jesus said to them, The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you
- (8) See *Positive Volition* and *Phase One Faith*.
- c. The wicked person is to abandon his ways and thoughts (v. 7a).
 - (1) Seeking God involves a willingness to depart from sinful ways and thoughts.
 - (2) Repentance is a component of faith, not an additional requirement of faith. Faith in Jesus requires a change of worldview. See *Repentance*.
 - (3) We cannot abandon our sinful actions and attitudes without justification and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in sanctification. In phase one, we recognise our need to abandon our ways and thoughts. In phase two, we are empowered to progressively abandon our ways and thoughts.
- d. He is to return to Yahweh, who will have compassion and abundantly forgive (v. 7b).
 - (1) All sinners may return, not just "good" ones.
 - (2) The Servant's sacrifice has made possible Yahweh's forgiveness.
 - (a) **Is 53:12** 12 ...He poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.
 - (3) Yahweh's compassion will last much longer than his anger.
 - (a) **Is 54:8** 8 In overflowing anger for a moment I [Yahweh] hid my face from you [Israel], but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says Yahweh, your Redeemer.
- e. Yahweh's ways and thoughts differ greatly from man's ways and thoughts (v. 8).

⁵ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 443.

- (1) Ways (דָּרָוּ): patterns of behaviour.
- (2) Thoughts (מַחְשְׁבֹתָהּ): values, perceptions, attitudes.
- f. Yahweh's ways and thoughts are much higher than man's (v. 9).
 - (1) "As Alexander points out, one can understand v. 8 (and 9) in three ways. The first is that although human thoughts would say that forgiveness is impossible, God's thoughts are not human. The second is that although human thoughts would say that God's covenant promises to Israel have been nullified by Israel's sin, God will keep those promises anyway. The third is that humans should turn from their sinful ways and thoughts because those are not God's ways and thoughts. Each of these may be paralleled with other passages in the Bible, so it is not a matter of what is in keeping with biblical theology."⁶
 - (2) Our ways and thoughts are corrupted by our inherent sinfulness. See *Total Depravity*.
 - (3) We often mislead ourselves about the goodness of our own ways and thoughts.
 - (a) **Pr 21:2** 2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the heart.
 - (4) We are to scrutinise our ways and thoughts to see if they align with God's.
 - (a) **Pr 16:1-3** 2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but Yahweh weighs the spirit.
 - (5) We are to acknowledge God in all our ways.
 - (a) **Proverbs 3:5-6** 5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.
 - (6) The Christian journey is learning and living out God's ways and thoughts rather than our own. The journey of autonomous humanism is just the opposite.

4. God's Word Will Succeed (Is 55:10-11).

- a. **Is 55:10-11** 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 (דְּבַרִּי) 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.
- b. Rain and snow water the earth and cause plants to sprout and provide food (v. 10).
 - (1) "In the ancient Near East rain spelled the difference between life and death."⁷
 - (2) **Heb 6:7** 7 For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God.
- c. Likewise God's word is effective and will succeed and accomplish his purpose (v. 11).
 - (1) All God says is reliable, whether it is about himself, the nature of reality and the sinfulness of sin, or the human predicament and the necessity of repentance.⁸

⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 444-445.

⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 446.

⁸ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 445.

- (2) God speaks intelligibly to us. He is not silent. He communicates to us in space-time history through human language. See *Special Revelation*.
 - (a) “God is there; he is not silent, but rather he has made himself known to us in space and in time and in history.”⁹
- (3) God has an eternal purpose for history that will be accomplished. No one can stop him from carrying out the plan he has chosen to reveal to us.
 - (a) **Is 46:9-11** 9 Remember the former things of old. For I am God, and there is no other. I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my *purpose*.... 11 I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass. I have *purposed*, and I will do it.

5. The Trees Shall Clap Their Hands (Is 55:12-13).

- a. **Is 55:12-13** 12 For you [Israel] shall go out in joy and be led forth in shalom. 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 Yahweh, an everlasting sign (אָזוֹת עוֹלָם) that shall not be cut off.
- b. God’s people will go out out in joy and shalom (v. 12a).
 - (1) This describes the regathering of Israel as the Millennium begins.
 - (a) **Is 35:1-2** 1 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad. The desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus. 2 It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.
 - (b) **Is 41:18-19** 18 I will open rivers on the bare heights and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. 19 I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive. I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together....
 - (c) **Is 44:3** 3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground.
 - (d) **Is 43:19-20** 19 Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. 20 The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people....
 - (e) **Is 48:21** 21 They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts. He made water flow for them from the rock. He split the rock and the water gushed out.
 - (f) **Is 49:9-10** 9 They shall feed along the ways. On all bare heights shall be their pasture. 10 They shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.
- c. Nature will sing and clap (v. 12b).
 - (1) How literal or figurative is this imagery? Hills do not usually shout, and trees do not usually clap, but anything is possible with God. At the very least, a real change in nature will occur.

⁹ Francis Schaeffer.

- (a) **Is 42:10-11** 10 Sing to Yahweh a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants. 11 Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits. Let the habitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the top of the mountains.
- (b) **Is 44:23** 23 Sing, O heavens, for Yahweh has done it. Shout, O depths of the earth, Break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For Yahweh has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel.
- (c) **Is 49:13** 13 Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth, Break forth, O mountains, into singing! For Yahweh has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.
- (2) Unfortunately, some commentators Platonise these promises and apply them spiritually to the church. This is what replacement theology always does.
- (a) “The prophet is not talking about the literal return. It is not even certain that he is speaking about some eschatological time. This is imagery from start to finish, and it is imagery to express the joy of all creation at the possibility of sinners being made holy through the Word of God.”¹⁰
- d. Stately trees will replace thorns and thistles (v. 13a).
- (1) This is a reversal of the curse. Creation will be renewed and get a fresh start.
- (a) **Ge 3:1-19** 17 And to Adam [God] said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, You shall not eat of it, *cursed* is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. 18 *Thorns and thistles* it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.
- (b) **Ro 8:19-22** 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.
- (2) This is the fourth stage in the biblical story of creation, fall, redemption, and *restoration*.
- e. The restored earth will be an everlasting sign of Yahweh’s character (v. 13b).
- (1) There are three everlasting “things” in these chapters.
- (a) **Is 54:8** 8 In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with *everlasting love* I will have compassion on you, says Yahweh, your Redeemer.
- (b) **Is 55:3** 3 Incline your ear, and come to me. Hear, that your soul may live. And I will make with you an *everlasting covenant*, my loyal, sure love for David.

6. Application.

- a. Come to the waters (v. 1).
- b. Don’t spend your labor for that which does not satisfy (v. 2).

¹⁰ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 448.

- c. Listen diligently to God and eat what is good (v. 2).
- d. Run to “David,” the witness, leader, and commander of the peoples (v. 5).
- e. Seek God while he may be found (v. 6).
- f. Abandon your wicked ways and thoughts and return to God (v. 7).
- g. Believe God’s word will succeed (v. 11)