

Isaiah – Chapter 55

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Theme: The gospel offers a joyful feast with David's Son with free and full pardon and certain promises.

Outline:

- 1-2 Gospel of Jesus Compared to a Free, Fat Feast
- 3-5 Gospel Promises David for Jews and Gentiles
- 6-9 Gospel Promises Free Pardon for Repentance
- 10-11 Gospel Promises Will Fulfill God's Purposes
- 12-13 Gospel Prosperity of the Elect for God's Glory

Preparatory Reading: Isaiah chapters 11, 25, 35, 50; Acts 13; Romans 15.

Related Links:

- 1. [Exposition of Isaiah 11](#) (*Root of David*).
- 2. [Exposition of Isaiah 25](#) (*future blessing*).
- 3. [Exposition of Isaiah 35](#) (*future blessing*).
- 4. [Son that Became King](#) (*Is 9:6*).
- 5. [Declare His Generation?](#)

Introduction:

- A. A previous chapter, Isaiah 53, detailed in fifteen glorious verses the work of redemption by Messiah.
 - 1. All religious and spiritual favor and goodness from God for His people requires Christ's salvation.
 - 2. The next chapter prophesied of the redeemed church, Gentiles, and future prosperity and safety.
 - 3. The chapter now before you is very comforting of the gospel, Messiah, forgiveness, and prosperity.
- B. While Isaiah's 40s chapters have their own unique appeal and glorious content, the 50's do as well.
 - 1. Isaiah chapters 50 and 52 give a great introduction to Isaiah 53 for those that love the Lord Jesus.
 - 2. Isaiah 54 is the church's growth with Gentiles; the 50s last verses are in the N.T. (Is 59:20-21).
 - 3. While the 40s exalt God's prophetic power and His use of Cyrus the Persian, the 50s are of Christ.
- C. The universe exists for a great drama the LORD Jehovah will play out through His Son and church.
 - 1. The God of heaven created you for His pleasure. Your existence is not your own, now or ever.
 - 2. He alone knows what you need to be happy in life; if you listen to the devil's lies, you will lose.
 - 3. Walking with God is the only way of happiness and success in life as Enoch, Noah, Abram, etc.
 - 4. Though He offers a blessed and happy life to those who will hear, He will not offer it forever.
 - 5. It requires conditions of hearing diligently, repenting of sin, and turning to God with all your heart.

6. We want to consider the forensic and legal facet of salvation called pardon. Though it may simply mean forgiveness, it was chosen by the Holy Spirit for legal implications and sense.
7. We could emphasize the *need* for pardon, the *phases* of pardon, or other aspects – but let us apply ourselves to fully grasp the significance of *abundant* pardon, and how that should affect our lives.
8. The word *pardon* does not occur in the New Testament, yet the concept is implied there by virtue of unblameable, unprovable (Col 1:22), without charge (Rom 8:33), faultless (Jude 1:24), etc.

Gospel of Jesus Compared to a Free, Fat Feast – Verses 1-2

1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

1. This gospel invitation begins with *Ho* to get your attention for life's greatest choice.
 1. **Ho.** An exclamation to attract attention. It is comparable to Southerner's, *Hey!*
 2. This exclamation is in the Bible only three times, once here (Ruth 4:1; Zech 2:6).
 3. When God by inspiration uses an exclamation, Does the Spirit get your attention?
2. This exclamation points out the fantastic fare, the superior menu, of the gospel of Jesus.
 1. The gospel of Jesus Christ offers free wine and milk to any thirsty and hungry souls.
 2. Are you thirsty in your soul? Do you feel bored, confused, discontented, dried up, empty, frustrated, lonely, missing out, perplexed, sad, unfulfilled, and/or wasted?
 3. The God of heaven offers sweet refreshment and nourishment for you entirely free.
 4. Isaiah foretold a gospel feast of fat things of refined wine and marrow (Is 25:6-8).
3. Consider the nearby context to fully appreciate the invitation here for a free feast of fat.
 1. Isaiah 53 described in fifteen verses the finished work of redemption by Messiah.
 2. Isaiah 54 described in seventeen verses the promises of God calling for shouting.
 3. Your soul can only live and delight itself in fatness by learning of Christ (Is 55:2-3).
4. What is the gospel of Jesus? It is the good news and glad tidings of the greatest things.
 1. There is no other information or food for thought or ideas for the heart to match it.
 2. It includes the origin, fall, recovery, and future inheritance of God's elect in Christ.
 3. It includes the details of the most glorious Person that has ever graced this earth.
 4. It includes all the truth and wisdom to grow in favor both with God and with man.
 5. It includes warnings against all other ideas and thoughts that steal joy, peace, hope.
 6. It promises good for both life in this world and for what life will be like in the next.
5. If you are thirsty, and all born again persons are thirsty in a dried-out, sin-cursed world.
 1. There is water of life – eternal life – that you may drink of for your soul (Rev 22:17).
 2. There is the Spirit of the living God promised by Jesus' finished work (Jn 7:37-39).
 3. If you cannot appreciate water, though you should by the above, think oil (Heb 1:9).
6. Wine and milk are the nutritious and luxurious pleasures of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. Recall the description of Canaan for Israel – a land flowing with milk and honey.
2. Recall the best nutrition for an infant – including Jesus – butter and honey (Is 7:15).
3. Recall the constant presence of wine for a feast (Gen 14:18; II Sam 6:19; Ps 104:15).
7. What Christians gather to hear every week is a splendid, true feast of fat and free things.
 1. Isaiah foretold a gospel feast of fat things of refined wine and marrow (Is 25:6-8).
 2. If you do not delight in the gospel message, you have a terrible spiritual problem.
 3. You must train yourself to prepare, pray, and participate for maximum hearing.
 4. Jesus gave the parable of the sower to help His apostles learn to hear (Luke 8:18).

2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

1. The problem is man's depraved heart looks elsewhere for its soul delight and misses it.
 1. The first verse was a bold declaration and invitation for you to have a free, fat feast.
 2. This second verse has two questions and an admonition to set your priorities right.
2. It is possible for a man to experience good in life and his soul delight itself in fatness.
 1. This is the opposite of a dried-up, discouraged, frustrated, lonely, and miserable life.
 2. David danced mightily, Habakkuk danced on high places, and Paul sang in prison.
 3. When the Spirit blesses the gospel to your heart and mind, there is nothing better.
 4. Your soul can only live and delight itself in fatness by learning of Christ (Is 55:2-3).
 5. Paul wrote the church at Ephesus to wake up and start living in Christ (Eph 5:14).
3. Men put forth enormous efforts and expense to find something to satisfy their souls.
 1. They spend a fortune and work themselves quite sick to find happiness in this world.
 2. But Solomon already proved all things possible to be vanity and vexation of spirit.
 3. A very stupid choice is to endure a gospel sermon and then look for joy in the world.
 4. God identified three categories of things men seek that do not compare (Je 9:23-24).
 5. *Exposition of Proverbs 8:11* .
4. The necessary condition for this free feast of fat things is to listen diligently to the word.
 1. The text here describes it as *hearkening diligently* unto God speaking by the prophet.
 2. If you do not prepare, pray, and participate in preaching with focus, you are a loser.
 3. Listening cannot be casual, lazy, or partial – it must be very diligent (Luke 8:18).
 4. *4. Parable of the Sower.*
 5. *Doers of the Word.*
 6. *6. The Bible Cannot Profit.*
5. If you are not fully experiencing the best (cannot imagine better), you should repent.
6. What is the chief lesson of the gospel that brings the most delight – the Son of David.

Gospel Promises David for Jews and Gentiles – Verses 3-5

3 *Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.*

1. The good life – a free feast of fat things – is obtained by going to God to hear His word.
 1. You must incline your ear, which is to hearken diligently or to have focused hearing.
 2. You must shut down your thoughts, and humbly turn your hearing to His revelation.
 3. You must leave your thoughts and ways to go to Him to hear His true offer and ways.
 4. Isaiah foretold a gospel feast of fat things of refined wine and marrow (Is 25:6-8).
2. If a person will humble themselves, seek God, and hear His word, He will share secrets.
 1. God will show His covenant promises to those that properly pursue Him (Ps 25:14).
 2. The satisfying life of walking with God depends on hearing and believing the gospel.
 3. But you must repent and seek Him with all your heart and no less (Jer 29:10-14).
 4. You must train yourself to listen, learn, and change far more than most Christians.
3. The everlasting covenant and sure mercies of David are Jesus Christ – the seed of David.
 1. Our Jesus, the true shepherd of the sheep, came to bring abundant life (John 10:10).
 2. God does not make this covenant due to faith, but reveals it to faith (Rom 1:15-16).
 3. He had made it with Himself in eternity, for even Jacob knew about it (Gen 49:10).
 4. He made it with David, and it was known well 300 years before Isaiah (Ps 89:1-4).
 5. He makes it with us by the gospel when we claim it and are baptized in this David.
4. The sure mercies of David are God's promise to David that his Son would reign forever.
 1. There is one thing you can count on – God's promise to David for his Son as king.
 2. You have a King unlike any other – called a leader and commander next. Celebrate!
 3. God's promised mercies to David (Christ) are so sure He raised Him (Acts 13:34).
5. There is one king and leader that Israel and God loved – and it was David of Bethlehem.
 1. His spirit from the start was exceptional; his name was much set by (I Sam 18:1-30).
 2. Everyone loved David for his wonderful combination of character traits and conduct.
 3. **David** (*all the details about the man*).
6. Psalm 89:1 describes the sure mercies of David in a chorus that needs explanation.
 1. These are not general mercies and faithfulness we observe and give thanks for daily.
 2. This is God's mercy in Christ **Psalm 89:1 Exalted**.

4 *Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.*

1. Now we have the common exclamation, *Behold*, to get your attention for David's Son.
2. The person of Jesus Christ is the greatest gift and most delightful Man in the universe.
 1. Jesus is the Faithful and True Witness and the glory of the church (Rev 3:14; 19:11).
 2. What did Jesus witness? What record did He bear? The full covenant of salvation.

3. The scriptures testified of Jesus, and He fulfilled every jot and tittle of Moses' law.
4. John got things started, but Jesus detailed the gospel to the twelve and then to Paul.
5. The apostles, all of them, never had anything to preach that He had not told them.
6. His doctrine was not His own, but rather revealed truth His Father had given Him.
7. He testified and witnessed a great improvement in doctrine (Heb 2:1-4; 10:28-31).
3. Do you love authority, glory, leaders, and power? He is King of kings and Lord of lords.
 1. Watching leaders and rulers of this world, there are usually one or more weaknesses.
 2. Great commanders of American history – Washington, MacArthur, Patton, Schwarzkopf – have deficiencies that make them infinitely inferior to David's Son.
 3. Great sports teams have great coaches, captains, leaders – but so what in comparison.
 4. This glorious Son that God gave to the Gentiles has a name called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6)!
 5. Some Greeks had the right attitude about Jesus at a feast in Israel (John 12:20-21).
 6. Mary chose the right thing to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear Him (Luke 10:38-42).
4. These titles – *leader and commander* – are either not used or rarely used in the Bible.
 1. *Leader* is used two other times – Jehoiada leader of Aaronites and David's leaders.
 2. *Commander* is found only here. It is not used for any other man in any other place.
 3. **Commander**. One who commands. One who commands or orders anything. One who exercises authority, a ruler or leader.
 4. Recall how the apostles were terrified of His command of the elements (Mark 4:41).
 5. The people were shocked by His authoritative command of devils (Luke 4:31-41).
 6. **What a Word Is This!**
5. With Jesus, there is nothing to fear – He is your Leader and Commander for eternity.
 1. If you need a picture of Him now, then find John's record (Rev 1:9-18; 19:11-16).
 2. If you need a testimonial, read Paul about appearing before Nero (II Tim 4:16-18).
 3. If you need a declaration, read what He will soon show the world (I Tim 6:13-16).
 4. He will appear to the eternal ruin of some and eternal joy of others (II Thess 1:7-10).
 5. It is right to marvel about His ability to call forth all dead bodies (John 5:28-29).
 6. The world is terrified by a modest pandemic (2019/20), but He commands the virus!

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

1. The Gentiles would come running to Israel to get a glimpse of David's Son in the gospel.
 1. This collective nation and plural nations are the Gentiles running to restored Israel.
 2. This prophecy has been given at various times throughout Isaiah's chapters this far.
 3. The chapter before this one has a declaration of many Gentile converts (Is 54:1-3).
 4. Elect Gentiles would flock to the sign of David by the gospel (Is 11:10 cp Ro 15:12).

5. This is a large part of the incontrovertibly great mystery of godliness (I Tim 3:16).
6. Acts of the Apostles details Paul's exploits doing this (Acts 13:44; 17:18-20; etc.).
2. How would the LORD Jehovah glorify Israel that Gentile nations would seek unto it?
 1. He would give them the greatest Man, the greatest Leader and Commander, ever.
 2. The Lord Christ would call Gentiles among the nations to Himself by the gospel.
 3. Here is the seed of Abraham, Messiah, with blessings for all nations (Gen 22:17-18).
 4. He is no longer in a manger or hanging on a cross; He sits at the right hand of God.
 5. Jesus is the glorious gift of God to the Gentiles (Romans 15:8-13, 18-21; 16:25-27).
 6. He highly exalted Jesus for the church (Ep 1:19-23; Phil 2:9-11; Heb 1:5-9; 2:9-13).
3. The greatest exaltation of a nation is to worship Jehovah, the Holy One, and His Son.
 1. Wherever the influence of Christianity has gone, the people know and live far better.
 2. The knowledge of the one true God and the only way of salvation sets men free.
 3. The divine library of the Bible inspired and preserved by this God is ultimate truth.
4. Reader, you are likely a Gentile. How well do you fulfill running to the source for Jesus?

Gospel Promises Free Pardon for Repentance – Verses 6-9

6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

1. The gospel for soul fatness and Commander of all nations has conditions and promises.
 1. Thus far in the chapter, the condition was to hearken diligently, hear, and pursue.
 2. Now it will require repenting of your sins and foolish ideas to embrace God's truth.
 3. Many love the fabulous offer of the first verses but neglect the key conditions here.
2. Seek ye the LORD is the command and offer of your glorious Prince. Will you do it?
 1. It is to believe on Him, draw near to Him, walk with Him, delight in Him, obey Him.
 2. It must include confession and repentance if needed, because they are identified next.
 3. It is done by reading and hearing the Bible, meditating on Him, pursuing a closer walk with God, praying for heart revival, and delighting in Him and things He loves.
 4. You are told to seek His face for a personal walk (Ps 27:8; Am 5:6; Matt 11:28-30).
 5. Have you sought God in your heart by confession, humility, and love (II Chr 19:3)?
 6. He will be found of those who sincerely seek (Is 45:19; Jer 29:13; I Chron 28:9-10).
3. While He may be found describes time limits of His gracious offer. Will you risk today?
 1. God offered Canaan's rest, but He withdrew the offer to swear in wrath (He 3:7-19).
 2. God will judge those who waste offers of mercy like now (Prov 29:1; Rev 2:21-23).
 3. Note the horrible words of Lady Wisdom to those she offered wisdom (Pr 1:20-33).
 4. God can leave you like Hezekiah or David, so take His offer (II Chr 32:31; Ps 51:11).
 5. If God gives you what you want without Him, you will be miserable (Ps 106:13-15).

6. If you have any faith in God's great mercy to forgive, there is still time (Ps 32:5-6).
4. Call ye upon him is the command and offer of your glorious Prince. What will you do?
 1. Forget your past, reject your present, and beg for your future by confession and love.
 2. Stop wasting prayer time asking for things: confess your sins; beg for His
 3. Call upon Him for salvation now and later (Gen 4:26; Deu 4:7; Ps 18:3; 50:15; 55:16; 80:18; 86:5,7; 91:15; 99:6; 116:2,13,17; Isaiah 12:4; Zeph 3:9; Rom 10:12-13).
5. While he is near describes time limits for God's gracious offer. Will you risk today?
 1. If God draws afar off, you will lose His wonderful presence and blessings (Ps 10:1).
 2. The LORD is near all them that call upon Him in truth, so do so today (Ps 145:18).
 3. It is possible to receive the grace of God in vain and lose the offer (II Cor 6:1- 2).
 4. Do not be like Esau – he could not restore a blessing with many tears (He 12:14-17).
6. **The 'R' Factor** (*about repentance*).

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ from John forward called men to repent for abundant pardon.
2. What is real and true godly repentance? Before learning its results, learn real repentance.
 1. You must *forsake the way* you are now living, for it displeases God your Creator.
 2. You must *forsake your thoughts* you now think, for they are contrary to a holy God.
 3. Then you must *return to Jehovah God* in full humility and submission to do His will.
 4. It is very different from worldly sorrow and completely clears men (II Cor 7:10-11).
 5. Elihu explained to Job about a real confession of sin and repentance (Job 33:27-28).
 6. Zacchaeus instantly knew what he needed to do to properly repent (Luke 19:1-10).
 7. It is the ministry's work and responsibility to blast all your thoughts (II Cor 10:4-6).
 8. If you have left the LORD for the vanity and vexation of this world, return today.
3. What is a pardon? God will have mercy and abundantly pardon any properly repenting.
 1. **Pardon.** To remit the penalty of (an offence); to pass over (an offence or offender) without punishment or blame; to forgive. *Pardon* is a more formal term than *forgive*, being that used in legal language; also often in theology. (OED).
 2. Pardon is a *forensic and legal* act declaring a guilty party free from charges and innocent before the law by the executive order of a sovereign with such authority.
 3. Presidential or gubernatorial pardons totally free convicted criminals from charges.
 4. In spite of great crimes, failed court attempts, or legal issues, a pardon erases crimes.
 5. Retrying a case is no sure relief or pleasant prospect ... but a pardon certainly is.
 6. Whether a pardon is received or not, it is a pardon, lifting charges and freeing you.
 7. A pardon is free, full, complete, final, clearing, acquitting, remitting, and freeing.
 8. We say, "Pardon me," when asking to be forgiven or excused for improper actions.

4. What is God's pardon? Since He will give abundantly pardon those properly repenting.
1. It is His complete and free forgiveness of our sins and declaration that we are freed from all charges and without blame in His sight by the satisfaction of Jesus' death.
 2. Our God cannot simply pardon, acquit, or clear without payment (Ex 34:7; Nah 1:3).
 3. It is by God's faithfulness to His justice by Christ's death (I Jn 1:9; Rom 3:24-26).
 4. There is none in heaven or earth to charge or condemn us with any sin (Ro 8:31-34).
 5. This is a faithful saying and worthy of acceptance – Jesus pardons sinners (I Ti 1:15).
 6. Men may pay for pardons on earth; our sovereign God Himself paid for your pardon.
 7. What price did He pay to grant a pardon to enemies? The life of His beloved Son!
 8. We cannot pardon ourselves or hope to buy one (Job 9:30-31; Jer 2:22; Ps 49:7-9).
5. What is abundant pardon? Since God promises to abundantly pardon the truly repentant.
1. Do not casually read the verses here. Devour them, meditate on them, and rejoice.
 2. Abundant pardon is faster, fuller, easier, painless, longer lasting than you can dream.
 3. To illustrate God's thoughts and ways of pardon and forgiveness being higher than ours, think *gross and repeated infidelity* by a whorish wife (Jer 3:1; Ezekiel 16:60).
 4. God comforted Israel by John with news of pardon by Jesus, through whom she received *double for her sins*; and all flesh, us Gentiles, saw this truth (Is 40:1-11).
 5. There is no God like our God, who pardons iniquities of His people through His *delight in mercy*, among other glorious expressions of forgiveness (Micah 7:18-20).
 6. Our God is *ready to pardon* and of *great kindness*, and other wonderful expressions, like the father running to meet his returning prodigal son (Neh 9:17; Luke 15:20).
 7. He has *manifold mercies* (many and varied), in spite of great sins (Neh 9:18-25).
 8. When God pardons, there are no sins remaining, and *no sins can be found* (Je 50:20).
 9. He even ... *rejoices with joy, rests in His love, and joys with singing* (Zeph 3:17).
 10. Our God is of *great kindness*, if we go to Him to pardon and bless us (Joel 2:12-14).
 11. God pardons so as to *get Himself a name* for great mercy and goodness (Jer 33:8-9).
 12. God proves rightness by *freely loving* the repentant; wise men love it (Hos 14:1-11).
 13. He rejoices over pardoned persons like *a bridegroom with his bride* (Isaiah 62:1-5).
 14. It is good to know God calls chastening and judgment His *strange work* (Is 28:21).
 15. It is good to know God takes *no pleasure in the death* of sinning children (Ez 18:32).
 16. He would rather pardon and bless you; He does *not afflict willingly* (Lam 3:31-33).
 17. God can forgive and pardon our black sins to make us *whiter than snow* (Ps 51:7-9).
 18. It is so good that God calls us to come and *reason with Him* about equity (Is 1:18).
 19. His *mercy and truth* meet, *righteousness and peace* kiss (Ps 85:10; John 1:14-17).
 20. It is publicly rebuking a religious Pharisee while pardoning a sinner (Luke 7:36-51).
 21. See a condemned thief; he was fully pardoned just before his death (Luke 23:42-43).

22. How much did David argue and suffer to be pardoned for great sins (II Sam 12:13)?
23. Our great God even pardoned wicked King Ahab for many sins (I Kings 21:27-29).
24. Our great God even pardoned wicked King Manasseh for his sins (II Chr 33:11-13).
25. God is full of compassion; He restrains His anger against sinning children (Ps 78:38).
26. God pardons sins by much mercy and infinite distance in two ways (Ps 103:8-12).
6. How should pardon affect us toward God? Since He has been gracious, we should repay.
 1. Do not casually read the verses here. Devour them, muse on them, and then do them.
 2. How can you not run in guilt to such a forgiving and loving Father (Matt 11:28-30)?
 3. God's abundant pardon should cause bold, confident confession for full forgiveness.
 4. It should give boldness with God for holy reasons, as Hezekiah (II Chron 30:18-20).
 5. It should give us confidence with God for holy reasons, as Naaman (II Kgs 5:18-19).
 6. Moses asked to see God's glory, so He declared His mercy, grace, and forgiveness, which Moses used later in holy reasoning (Ex 33:12-23; 34:5-9; Num 14:17-19).
 7. We may pray for God to pardon us practically, and we can believe that He does with faithfulness, justice, and joy (Ex 34:9; Num 14:19-21; Ps 25:11; Isaiah 55:7; Jer 5:1).
 8. Disbelief is a wicked culprit, for we believe God must be like us, not very forgiving.
 9. Disbelief is very wicked, but He told us His thoughts of pardon are far above ours.
 10. Your thoughts, which can destroy you, by doubting God's pardon, will torment – so take up the shield of faith by believing what is written to quench Satan's darts.
 11. Jesus said those forgiven the most and understand it will love most (Luke 7:36-50).
7. **The 'R' Factor** (*about repentance*).
8. **The Facets of Salvation**.

8 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.*

1. As in all places, we gladly and humbly submit to context as our master of interpretation.
 1. The context is God's mercy and abundant pardon He will grant to the truly repentant.
 2. There is nothing here of God's ordinary or usual intelligence being superior to ours.
 3. God forgives and restores repentant sinners in ways we cannot grasp or ever perform.
 4. The encouragement to hope and expect pardon is based on God differing from men.
2. God can and will show mercy and abundant pardon far better than we can forgive others.
 1. Human nature holds thoughts of bitterness, grudges, hatred, vengeance for wrongs.
 2. Abundant pardon is faster, fuller, easier, painless, longer lasting than you can dream.
 3. Human nature is slow and backward to forgive offences large, frequent, malicious.
 4. Men state forgiveness yet retain in their hearts secret grudges to raise offences again.
3. This text has little glory to most Christians as they think wisdom rather than forgiveness.

9 *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than*

your thoughts.

1. As in all places, we gladly and humbly submit to context as our master of interpretation.
 1. The context is God's mercy and abundant pardon He will grant to the truly repentant.
 2. There is nothing here of God's ordinary or common character being superior to ours.
 3. God forgives and restores repentant sinners by mercy and pardon infinitely over us.
2. How high are the heavens? Instead of fretting if God forgave you, calculate the distance!
 1. This distance is no different than how far the east is from the west (Ps 103:10-12).
 2. The distance is infinite – it cannot be measured – there is no limit to His forgiveness.
3. If these solemn and joyful declarations are true, then what should be the holy response?
 1. You should believe Him! You should confess sins and rise to take your sword again.
 2. If you doubt or fret or pity, then you call into question the integrity of God's words.
 3. If you doubt or fret or pity, then you call into question the sufficiency of Jesus' death.
4. It is the devil and his fiery darts of doubt and unbelief that would question this promise.

Gospel Promises Will Fulfil God's Purposes – Verses 10–11

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

1. A new lesson here – God's promises shall never be annulled or negated, but fulfilled.
2. Incredible promises have been made building in this very context (Is 52:13 to Is 55:9).
3. God has ordained the water cycle to provide nourishment that results in all your food.
 1. This is the first half of a simile: God's blessing on His word is compared to nature.
 2. While rain and snow do return to heaven eventually, they fulfill a purpose on earth.
 3. Without a water cycle, we could not eat; water causes things to happen for our food.
 4. Water is the certain ingredient to bring buds, seeds, and eventually bread for food.
4. God does not need to deal with every fact when using a metaphor – water cycle here.
 1. Rain and snow return to heaven, as the Bible teaches (Eccl 1:7; Job 36:27-28; etc.).
 2. The wages of sin is death, and men are appointed to it, but not Enoch and Elijah.
 3. God is not bound by your ideas or rules inspiring scripture; He expects us to think.

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

1. God's promise of spiritual blessings, here in context, would certainly all come to pass.
 1. They include the everlasting covenant, sure mercies of David, and call of Gentiles.
 2. The previous chapter is filled from beginning to end with God's grand commitments.
 3. And the chapter before the previous one foretold details about His Servant's death.
 4. Not only would the promises be fulfilled, they would be for the benefit of the elect.

5. Readers were to diligently hear – what from whom? – promises of God (Is 55:2-3).
6. It is the word that went out of God's mouth, not out of the mouths of His prophets.
7. Hearers were to go to God, not to Isaiah, for he could not make covenant promises.
2. The gospel tidings of good news have already been referred to in the context (55:3-7).
 1. Everything promised in context about Messiah and His kingdom will come to pass.
 2. The point is this: God's words are not empty; they shall all be fulfilled (Luke 21:33).
 3. God makes no empty or vain promises when declaring His intentions and blessings.
 4. The following verses indicate it is His kingdom blessing that is the idea at this point.
 5. The intent of the prophet is not to describe the converting effect of proper preaching.
 6. This is not a soteriological text about the effectual call by Spirit-sanctified preaching.
3. While it is true that preaching always triumphs (II Cor 2:14-17), it is not taught here.

Gospel Prosperity of the Elect for God's Glory – Verses 12-13

12 For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

1. God by the prophet described joyful blessing of the New Testament by O.T. symbols.
 1. This kind of language – mountains singing and trees clapping hands – are metaphors.
 2. Poetic language will often use language like this – prophetic similitudes (Hos 12:10).
 3. Nothing literal happened like this at all – a literal approach to such words is folly.
 4. The context may include leaving Babylon to Christ, with the emphasis on the latter.
 5. The chapter began with the Gentiles running to the Jews, which was after Pentecost.
 6. See [exposition of Isaiah 35](#).
2. The peaceful prosperity and protection of the elect had been given (Is 54:1-17; 55:4-5).
 1. By grand metaphorical language describing blessings, the gospel era is prophesied.
 2. Judah surely needed national and political deliverance, but these are spiritual favor.
 3. Though they would return from Babylon, there was a greater fulfillment in Christ.
 4. The world, Jews and Gentiles, elect by God, rejoiced for the gospel going to all men.
 5. The feast of fat things was made known to all men, causing soul delight in fatness.

13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

1. The prophet described the happy situation of the church as a perpetual kingdom to God.
2. Using plant metaphors, He promised peaceful prosperity rather than painful difficulties.
 1. Thorns and briars are part of God's curse, but He would remove them for His people.
 2. Rather than thorns and briars, God would cause fir and myrtle trees to grow instead.
3. The church of Jesus Christ is for His name ... a kingdom never changing (Heb 12:28).

1. The church is the body of Christ, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all (Eph 1:23).
2. God has done all things for His own glory, but especially saving the elect (Eph 3:10).
3. The great mystery of godliness is God's work of salvation by His Son (I Tim 3:16).
4. The whole creation groans in pain waiting for the final manifestation of God's sons.