

Isaiah 55:2-11

This is the haftarah for **Deuteronomy 27**, which contains a list of curses for not heeding God's commandments. Here, the blessings of obedience and faith are described, with a call for repentance.

The commandments and God's Law are pictured as spiritual sustenance and nourishing food and drink.

Isaiah 55:1 - "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."

"Ho" is an expressing of calling, an invitation.

Targum: "he that hath no silver, come, hear and learn; come, hear and learn, without price and money, doctrine better than wine and milk."

Isaiah 55:2 - "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."

What are the things we spend time and money on, that we take in to ourselves, that don't satisfy us? Our self-focused activities, philosophies, traditions, false doctrines, all are chaff, not grain - and destructive rather than nourishing.

Blessings of the New Covenant

Isaiah 55:3 - "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."

An everlasting covenant... the sure mercies of David" - This is Messiah and the new covenant described by the prophets.

Quoted in Acts referring to Jesus:

- **Acts 13:34** - "And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

- **Ezekiel 34:23** - "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd."

- **Jeremiah 31:31-34** - "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with

the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Isaiah 55:4 - "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people."

"him" = the Messiah, according to many of the rabbis.

Targum: "behold, I have appointed him a Prince to the people, a King, and a ruler over all kingdoms."

- **Isaiah 55:5** - "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."

The call of the Gentile nations by the power of God, and is irresistible, unfrustrable, and irreversible. The Gospel has called people from every tribe and nation into His church, to be grafted in to the olive tree of Israel.

A Call to Repentance Now

Isaiah 55:6 - "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

Targum: "seek the fear of the Lord, while ye are alive."

Rashi - Before the verdict is promulgated, when He still says to you, "Seek Me."

The rabbis linked this passage to **Ecclesiastes 9:10** - "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

Isaiah 55:7 - "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."

His evil way, as the Targum paraphrases it, his wicked course of life; and which is his own way, of his own choosing

"the unrighteous man" = *aven* - self-exertion, wickedness

Targum: "and let him turn to the worship of the Lord"

This is clarified by Jesus - it means going to the cross with Him, and letting go of yourself completely, abandoning yourself to God:

- **Luke 9:23** - "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."

Isaiah 55:8 - "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD."

Rashi - "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways": [the laws of men say] whoever confesses in judgment is found guilty, but, as for Me, whoever confesses and gives up his evil way, is granted clemency (**Proverbs 28:13** - "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.")

Isaiah 55:9 - "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

God's ways are not only different, but superior and out of reach by man except for grace.

Rashi - you are intent upon rebelling against Me, whereas I am intent upon bringing you back.

God's Word Will Accomplish its Purpose

Isaiah 55:10-11 - "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: 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."

Hosea uses the same imagery:

- **Hosea 6:3** - "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."

- **Acts 3:19** - "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you"