



• Deliverance – the Servant will be the guilt-offering for the sins of the world

Isaiah has been describing the great and successful deliverance that the Servant of Yahweh will bring to the whole world. The Arm of the Lord will come down to save. By his knowledge he will bring righteousness to many. The cup of God's fury against sinners will be drunk to the bottom by a Substitute. The Servant will be the guilt-offering for the sins of the world. So what remains? The sacrifice for sin must be received.

1. An invitation to come to the Servant goes out to anyone anywhere

1. An invitation to come to the Servant goes out to anyone anywhere. The sinner is pictured as a person who is hungry and thirsty. An invitation is given to him.

1'Hey! All you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and the one who has no money, come, buy bread and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.'

• A sinner – someone hungry or thirsty

The rich blessings of salvation (not water only, but milk and wine) are free, and yet the one who wants the free gift must come and take it. The gift is free and yet is not given unless it is sought and taken.

• The rich blessings of salvation are free but must be taken

2'Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy?'

• There is a danger that the sinner will look for something that does not meet his needs

The danger is that the sinner will look for something that does not meet his need.

'Listen persistently to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare. 3Incline your ear and come to me; hear, that your soul may live. And I will make an everlasting covenant for your benefit, my unfailing kindnesses promised to David.'

• The 'coming' is a coming to God Himself

The 'coming' is a coming to God himself. The salvation that is given consists of life, and a freely given covenant-relationship with God himself, in which God is swearing to give us an abundance of unfulfilling kindnesses. 'David' is a name for the Messiah-Saviour-Servant. The Saviour is a new David, coming in his line, like David anointed with the Spirit, like David king over all Israel and conqueror of the nations.

• The Saviour is a new David

2. The invitation to come to the King goes out to anyone anywhere

2. The invitation to come to the King goes out to anyone anywhere. The Servant is also the King. Isaiah 1–37 spoke of the Saviour as God's King. Isaiah 38–55 has built up the picture of him as God's Suffering Servant. But here the two pictures are brought together.

4'Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander of the peoples. 5Behold, you will summon nations you know not, and nations that do not know you will run to you, because of Yahweh your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with beauty.'

• The Servant is also the King – he will conquer the world with His salvation

The King is the Servant. The Servant is the King. The Servant calls to the world. King David calls to the world, testifying to God's salvation. God's King

• The gospel will eventually succeed

3. The details of the call are given to us

• The recovering people of God (and all who join them) must seek Him by turning from their sins

• This leads to forgiveness

• We shall find God amazingly generous in forgiving us

• God's forgiveness is different and greater than human forgiveness

4. The word of God is powerfully effective

• Isaiah predicts salvation to come in 800 years – and it happens!

• God's word is like rain:

(i) Once it comes you cannot send it back!

(ii) It is effective

(iii) It shapes history

5. God's salvation

David – the Saviour – will conquer the world with his salvation. And the world will come! They will find God's Saviour supremely attractive. The gospel will eventually succeed!

3. The details of the call are given to us. Isaiah goes on to tell us what it will mean to come to the Servant-King.

⁶Seek Yahweh while he permits himself to be found; call on him while he is near.

⁷Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn back to Yahweh, so that he may have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

The recovering people of God (and all who join them in finding God for the first time in their lives) must seek him by turning from their sins (verse 7 is the way we obey verse 6). When we turn from our sins we find forgiveness because the Servant of Yahweh has paid the price of their forgiveness¹. We shall find God amazingly generous in forgiving us. Justification² and forgiveness are not precisely the same. Justification is an act in the heart of God; forgiveness is an experience in our own hearts.

⁸'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways' – it is an oracle of Yahweh.

⁹'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'

Isaiah 55:8 is often quoted as a general statement about God. It is indeed a general truth and yet Isaiah explicitly has God's forgiveness in mind. God forgives in a way that is different and greater than human forgiveness. He is more generous, more overruling. He forgives greater sins than men and women might be willing to forgive. He provides the sacrifice that makes the forgiveness possible. His ways of forgiveness are greater than ours.

4. The word of God is powerfully effective. Here is Isaiah writing in the eighth century BC, predicting a salvation that is to come eight hundred years ahead of his own time. Will it really happen? Yes, it will!

¹⁰'As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.'

God's word is like rain. (i) Once it starts coming you cannot send it back! (ii) God's word is effective in one way or another. If it is not effective to save it will be effective to condemn. It will bring life or it will bring judgement – but it will always be effective. God's word is creative; it creates the very thing it says. 'Lazarus come forth!' says Jesus – and immediately the voice of command enables Lazarus to do as Jesus says. (iii) God's word shapes history, collectively and individually. 'My word'¹ partly means 'my message', but it also means 'my word of command', 'the decisions that I am making'. God's decisions about the future shape what will happen

5. God's salvation eventually leads to an 'exodus' out of the world of sin and wickedness and into a new heavens and new earth. The language of Isaiah 55:12 is the language of the exodus in the days of Moses¹. Before the

1 53:6
2 53:11

1 55:11

1 see Exodus 1-12

eventually leads to an 'exodus' out of the world of sin

• Isaiah uses the same language as Exodus

• God's people are led out of sin and bondage

• Yahweh – Jesus, the Saviour – who saves His people from their sins!

people were redeemed they could not get out of bondage. Once the people were redeemed by the blood of the lamb they could not remain where they were. God's people are led out of sin and bondage altogether. Their ultimate destiny is a new heavens and new earth. The very universe around them is rejoicing with them.

¹²You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

¹³Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree, and instead of briers the myrtle will grow. This will get Yahweh a name; it will be an everlasting sign, which will not be destroyed.'

In the original exodus God got himself a name ('Yahweh', the God who saves by the blood of a lamb). It will happen again. We realize the character of God in a deeper way than ever. He is Yahweh! It is his everlasting name which will never be destroyed. He is Jesus – the Saviour who saves his people from their sins!