

Lesson IV.

THE GRACIOUS INVITATION

July 23, 1905

Isaiah 55 : 1-13. Commit to memory vs. 6-8. Read ch. 54.

GOLDEN TEXT—Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.—Isaiah 55 : 6.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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.

Revised Version.—1 peoples; 2 a nation; 3 and giveth.

8 For my thoughts are: not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

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

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:

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.

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.

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.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—Isaiah prophesied during the last half of the eighth century, B.C.; Jerusalem.

Connection—Last Lesson pictured the coming Messiah. This sets forth the blessings He brings.

I. A GLORIOUS OFFER.—1, 2. **Ho**; a call to earnest attention. Every one that thirsteth. How eager the loving God is to supply His people's need! (Compare John 7: 37.) **Waters**; plural, because the supply is so abundant. The gospel offers enough for all. **He that hath no money . . . buy.** The way to "buy" salvation is to give up everything that comes between us and Christ, Matt. 13: 44-46; Luke 12: 33; Rev. 3: 18. He has bought it for us, and we have but to receive it. **Wine and milk.** As these cheer, strengthen and nourish the body, so does the gospel the soul. Wherefore, etc.? The world demands our money and toil, and gives in return nothing that satisfies; Christ asks no price, and fills our souls with gladness. **Hearken . . . unto me, and eat . . . good.** We find joy by doing God's will.

3-5. **An everlasting covenant**; a promise that will never fail. **The sure mercies (loving-kindness) of David.** The lovingkindness (what a beautiful word!) which the Lord promised to David and to His people Israel for ever (Read 2 Sam. 8-16). **Behold . . . him . . . a witness . . . leader . . . commander.** David was a witness, making known God's character and will, and he was a great ruler. He was only a forerunner, however, of the coming Messiah descended from him, who should make God fully known, and be the true King of Israel and of all men. **Behold, etc.**; spoken either to the church, or to Christ Himself, its Leader. In any case, the meaning is that the (Gentile) nations, as well as the Jews, shall be gathered into Christ's kingdom.

II. A SIMPLE REQUIREMENT.—6, 7. **Seek ye the Lord**; as the prodigal sought his father, only to find how lovingly the father had been looking for him, Luke 15: 20. **While he may be**

found. No other time is so good as the present time. 2 Cor. 6: 2. **Call ye upon him**; trusting in His mercy. **While he is near.** "Only a step to Jesus." The way for the sinner to come back to God is very plain. He has just to forsake his way; give up all that is evil in his life, and also in his thoughts—we must go deep into our hearts—and return unto the Lord; resolved to love and obey Him. And what will God do? Oh, His forgiveness is so full and free! **Abundantly** means like great flowing waves, so plentiful is the supply offered by divine grace.



Eastern Water Skins

III. A BLESSED CERTAINTY.—8, 9. We do not always find men ready to forgive. They are sometimes hard and stern. But God's thoughts and ways are different. How much different? As different as the heavens are higher than the earth. It is so very sure, then, that He will pardon.

10, 11. God does three wonderful things in nature: (1) He sends the rain . . . and the snow from heaven to water the earth; (2) He so arranges that the earth gives its strength to the seed, causing it to grow; (3) He forms our bodies, so that they are nourished and strengthened by bread made from the grain that grows in the earth. Now, it is just as certain that God's word, if we trust Him, will do for us all that He intends, and He intends that we should be saved and made blessed forever.