

# Pentwater Bible Church

*Isaiah Message 123*

*August 8, 2021*



*King David playing the harp ahead of the Ark by Jan de Bray Cir 1670*

Daniel E. Woodhead – Pastor Teacher

# Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

One-Hundred-Twenty-Three

GOD'S THOUGHTS ARE HIGHER THAN OURS

August 8, 2021

Daniel E. Woodhead

Isaiah 55:5–13

*<sup>5</sup>Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of Jehovah thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee <sup>6</sup>Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: <sup>7</sup>let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. <sup>8</sup>For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. <sup>10</sup>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, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; <sup>11</sup>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. <sup>12</sup>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 fields shall clap their hands. <sup>13</sup>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 Jehovah for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off (ASV, 1901).*

THE GENTILES WILL RUN TO THE JEWS

Isaiah 55:5

*<sup>5</sup>Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of Jehovah thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee (ASV, 1901).*

Behold, you will summon a nation you had not known (Isaiah 45:14, 22-24; 49:6,12, 23). You will summon them to serve you, provided that you indeed listen well to Me and keep My commandments. They will run to you when they hear of the wonders God did for you and because of which they will fear you, and they will come to you to learn God's Law for the sake of Jehovah, your God. God will make you the head of the world's nations and not the tail (Deuteronomy 28:13). The application to the calling out of the Gentiles in the Church age is implied, but it was not explicitly revealed to Old Testament saints. This is one of the eight mysteries of the church revealed to the apostle Paul that were not revealed in the Old Testament (Ephesians 3:5). The Lord addresses here redeemed Israel in the final Kingdom blessing, which the apostles asked about at His ascension (Acts 1:6). It will be a time when Israel is restored to the Lord and eager to share the good news of the Lord. This is a reference to the success of the gospel invitation in Israel's

own conversion, and her remarkable evangelistic and missionary witness to the surviving millennial nations after her own acceptance of the glorious message of redeeming grace at the Messiah's second advent. It also is a prophecy of the eagerness of the nations of the Kingdom to embrace Israel's Lord and Savior. The apostle Paul alluded to this time when all Israel will have a ministry to the nations such as he, as a saved Israelite, had individually and, in a sense, early for God's purposes, in his day (1 Corinthians 15:8).

SEEK GOD NOW

Isaiah 55:6–9

*<sup>6</sup>Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near: <sup>7</sup>let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. <sup>8</sup>For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (ASV, 1901).*

Isaiah speaks to Jews in every era of persecution and vicariously the Gentiles in the Church age and urges them to come closer to God so that they will be redeemed. The rest of this chapter and the first eight verses of Chapter 56 constitute the Haftarah, which is a reading from the Prophets the Rabbis read after the reading from the Torah on Sabbaths, festivals, and fast days. As such it is an eloquent call for repentance and awareness of God's readiness to be merciful to those who seek Him. Even though it is well known that God is able to be found at all times, the intent here is that He makes Himself available to those who seek Him through repentance and a desire to become close to Him before He gives them over to a reprobate mind and are unable to seek Him (Romans 1:28). The command to repentance continues in verse 7 but there is a change here. Verse 6 was positive, here the Lord's commands turn negative. The command is a complete change which does not merely constitute a turning away from what was evil but a turning to God with complete sincerity and commitment regarding accepting His promises of salvation. God demands a complete abandonment of all evil, both of outward manner of living and our thoughts within. Humanity is to return to God in belief, and having returned will discover that God will show mercy. He will *abundantly pardon* that is, completely. In His pardon there is an abundance of mercy shown; as the apostle Paul writes for "*where sin did abound, grace did much more abound*" (Romans 5:20).

A person's ways are one's patterns of behavior, and those must be changed if one is ever to live within the grace of God. He makes it plain that faith in Him without a life like His is not faith at all. At the same time genuine change of behavior must originate from a change of thoughts (Philippians 2:12–13). We are then led by the Spirit (Romans 8:4) and see Him working to change our behavior as His fruits become evident in our manner of living. When the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth enters the believer his thoughts change significantly. Sin is ultimately a matter of attitude. However superficially "righteous" a person may be, if one persists in imagining that one can live independently from God, then that person is profoundly unrighteous. At the same time genuine change of behavior without an accompanying change of values and perceptions is impossible. One can try and act according to God's moral order but without the Spirit's presence it is impossible. Sin is ultimately a matter of attitude. However superficially "righteous" a person may be, if one

persists in imagining that one can live independently from God, then that person is profoundly unrighteous, because the imputed righteousness of God given at the point of genuine belief is absent.

God says that human thoughts are not what His thoughts are. For example, we would say that forgiveness is impossible for many sins, but God's thoughts are not human. Therefore, it follows with human thinking that God's covenant promises to Israel have been nullified by Israel's sin. The Scripture teaches that God will keep those promises. All humans should turn from their sinful *ways* and *thoughts* because those are not God's ways and thoughts. This same point is made in Proverbs 16:1–3 and also Proverbs 3:5–6; 21:2, using the same words (*drackim*, “ways,” *machshavot*, “thoughts,”). Our ways and thoughts have been perverted by original sin, and it is only as we turn from them to God and His mercy that we can ever have peace with Him and live lives in accordance with His morality that will bring a blessing from Him. So, the primary point here is to warn that the ways of iniquity and wickedness must be rejected precisely because they are not God's ways. This does not rule out the recognition that forgiveness and pardon are not normally human thoughts and ways either (Ezekiel 18:25–29). Nevertheless, it is crucial to not forget that the text asserts clearly that it is about the pardon for sin that is a result of divine action in breaking the sin barrier and coming near, and of human turning away from sin and wickedness and turning to the ways and thoughts of God.

This is the beginning of a life walking according to the Law of God. The Bible speaks frequently for us to seek for God, to inquire for his ways (Deuteronomy 4:29; Job 5:8; 8:5; Psalm 9:10; 14:2; 27:8). “While he may be found” (Psalm 32:6). It is known from the New Testament that a time will come when the offer will be withdrawn. If a man will not do so simple a thing as *seek* for mercy, as ask for pardon, he according to God, *will* perish (I Timothy 4:2). This is true, that every particular repeated act of sin of the unrepentant person draws him one advance nearer to an eternity in hell. He has plans for accomplishing His purposes which are different from ours. His thoughts and ways for us are to live in the eternal realm. Therefore, He plans our welfare by designs that are not our own. He disappoints our worldly hopes, frustrates our expectations, removes our possessions or our friends, and prevents our purposes in life. He leads us in a path we had not intended, and secures our ultimate happiness in manners which we would not have thought of, and which are contrary to all our designs and desires. But in the end by drawing near to Him in belief we are on the path for our lives that He has planned.

#### GOD'S WORD ACCOMPLISHES HIS INTENT

Isaiah 55:10–11

*<sup>10</sup>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, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; <sup>11</sup>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 (ASV, 1901).*

The Lord uses an image of rain and snow to make a point regarding His Word, our Bible. Since the rain brings fertility to the ground, it serves as a good comparative analogy with God's Words.

Rain and snow come down from the clouds in the heavens, and do not return again until they have done what they are sent to do. In addition, rain can symbolize God's blessing (Deuteronomy 28:12; 1 Kings 8:35–36; Isaiah 30:23; Ezekiel 34:26; Joel 2:23), and Deuteronomy 32:2 compares rain to God's word (Psalm 147:15–18). Although Israel has little snow, except on the mountains, both rain and snow represent precipitation and both come down from heaven just like God's word. Both rain and God's word are intended to have an impact on the earth and the people who live there. The rain causes the flowers to bud, crops to grow and produce fruit and seeds, but the ultimate purpose of all of this activity is to provide food for and to produce the effects on us which is intended by God. All the truth which God reveals is as much adapted to produce an effect on the hard and sterile hearts of men as the rain is on the hard dry needy earth. When the Lord says *it shall not return unto me void*, He says that it shall not return to Me without accomplishing that which I intend. It is never spoken in vain, and never fails to produce the effect which He intends. The Gospel is no more preached in vain than the rain falls in vain. And though that often falls on barren rocks, or on sands, on extended plains where no vegetation is produced, or in the wilderness where no man is, and seems to our eyes in vain, yet it is not so. Consider the Lord Jesus' parable of the sower.

Matthew 13:1–23

*That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears, let him hear."*

*Then the disciples came and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:*

*You will indeed hear but never understand,  
and you will indeed see but never perceive."  
For this people's heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears they can barely hear,  
and their eyes they have closed,  
lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart  
and turn, and I would heal them (Isaiah 6:9–10)*

*But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. "Hear then the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty (ESV)."*

God has a particular design in giving His Word to this earth. Just as Jesus explained in this parable His Word goes out to the whole earth just as He has accomplished in sending down rain upon the earth. That whatever is His design in giving the Gospel, it shall be accomplished. It is never spoken in vain, and never fails to produce the effect which He intends. The Gospel is no more preached in vain than the rain falls in vain. And though that often falls on barren rocks, or on sands, on extended plains where no vegetation is produced, or in the wilderness where no man is, and seems to our eyes in vain, yet it is not so. God has a design in each drop that falls on sands or rocks, as really as in the copious shower that falls on fertile fields. The Gospel often falls on the hard and barren hearts of men. It is addressed to the proud, the sensual, the greedy, and the unbelieving, and seems to be spoken in vain, and to return void unto God. But it is not so. He has some design in it, and that will be accomplished. It is validation of his mercy. It leaves men without excuse, and justifies Himself. It ultimately becomes successful, and sinners are at last brought to abandon their sins, and to turn unto God unless they sin so much and never confess belief. It is indeed often rejected and despised. It falls on the ears of men apparently as the rain falls on the hard rock, and there are, so to speak, large fields where the gospel is preached as barren and unfruitful of any spiritual good as the extended desert is of vegetation, and the gospel seems to be preached to almost entire communities with as little effect as is produced when the rains fall on the deserts of the world. But there will be better and happier times. In the timing of God, it will be ultimately successful when the whole world shall be filled with the knowledge and the love of God and His government over the earth in the Messianic Kingdom.

ALL THE EARTH WILL REJOICE

Isaiah 55:12–13

*<sup>12</sup>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 fields shall clap their hands. <sup>13</sup>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 Jehovah for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off (ASV, 1901).*



The chapter closes with an exclamation of Israel's final restoration that combines the various characteristics of righteousness, holiness, peace, security, joy, and gladness. The Lord expresses this joy that will be realized in the Messianic Kingdom with a personification of the mountains, trees and hills.

In many places as here the Old Testament Scriptures teach that there will be an earthly, visible Kingdom over which the Son of Man is to rule (Daniel 7:13–14, 2:34–35, 44–45; Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 14:9). At the time of Jesus' birth there was a widespread expectation of the coming of the Messiah. For example, Simeon and Anna waited in the Temple for the "Consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25–38).

When six hundred years of the Times of the Gentiles had been completed God sent Himself, The King to the earth. He had the angel Gabriel announce to Mary that she would give birth to that King. The Church is not the Kingdom. The Kingdom is an outward visible political theocracy yet to be set up on earth (Daniel 2:44) whereas the Church is a spiritual organism that will be taken out of the world at the rapture (Matthew 24:40-41; Luke 21:34-36; I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

The impact of Christianity over this world is diminishing as the Prince of this World gains more control and adherents. Whereas many western world governments were influenced by Christianity causing them to adopt laws and social practices patterned after the Bible's teaching this is coming to an end. The influence of Christianity on this world, which is called Christendom, is referred to in Matthew's Gospel as the Kingdom of Heaven.

The form of Government will be a "Theocracy." Christ will reign through a "King" or "Prince" called David (Hosea 3:5; Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:24, 37:24), whose Throne shall be at Jerusalem. The Temple will be rebuilt, and the "Aaronic Priesthood" reestablished (Ezekiel 44:15–31). There will be a revival of the Land of Israel (Joel 3:18), and the length of human life extended (Isaiah 65:20–22. Zechariah 8:4). The general characteristics of the Kingdom are revealed through a great many of the Old Testament prophets. In general, they are:

1. Man will be rightly related to God
2. Universal peace between men
3. Animals will return to their Edenic state
4. Renovation of the heavens and earth
5. Elimination of infant mortality
6. Minimum human longevity is one hundred years
7. Death in the Kingdom is limited to unbelievers
8. The incentive for sin will be greatly reduced
9. Many of the effects of the curse will be removed
10. Warfare and inter-human calamity will be removed
11. The Church Age saints as well as Tribulation and OT saints will have glorified bodies
12. God will control the entire government from Jerusalem

Next message: REWARDS FOR OBEDIENCE TO GOD

E-mail: [Pentwaterbiblechurch@scofieldinstitute.org](mailto:Pentwaterbiblechurch@scofieldinstitute.org) Call: 877-706-247