

# God's Promise to those who seek Him by Repentance, Isaiah 55:1-13

By Jay Wegter

1. "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. 2. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance. 3. Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *according to* the faithful mercies shown to David. 4. Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. 5. Behold, you will call a nation you do not know, and a nation which knows you not will run to you, because of the LORD your God, even the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you."

6. "Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. 8. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares 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 and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; 11. so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding *in the matter* for which I sent it. 12. For you will go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, and all the trees of the field will clap *their* hands. 13. Instead of the thorn bush the cypress will come up, and instead of the nettle the myrtle will come up, and it will be a memorial to the LORD, for an everlasting sign which will not be cut off" (Is 55:1-13).

## I. "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters" (v. 1). How strong is your spiritual hunger and thirst?

**It greatly depends upon how content or discontent one is in this world.** Where God is going to give grace, He first gives spiritual thirst. His Spirit breaks up the fallow, apathetic ground in the soul in preparation to receive the good seed of the gospel. The immediate question of application in this verse is: *How important is God's favor to you? Are you toiling under a weighty sense of your sin?* The Savior bids: "Come to Me all who are weary and heavy laden," **Mt 11:28-30**). Are you truly longing to know where you stand with God? Those being prepared by the Holy Spirit for God's grace *insist on knowing*, and those who have tasted God's grace *do know* where they stand with God.

**Notice in verse one that these 'spiritual staples of life' (wine and milk) are bestowed out of God's own generosity ('without money, without cost') (see Rev 3:17-18; 22:17).** This is so significant—the living, healing waters are offered on Christ's terms—they are free—He makes the recipients of these gifts to be objects of His mercy, compassion, and pity.

**The grace He bestows in giving Christ transforms the lives of those who receive Him.** Men and women 'made new' by Christ delight to do God's will: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome" (**1 Jn 5:3**). God made the infinite purchase, paying all the cost through His Son, now He is glorifying His grace in bestowing it freely on whomsoever He will. Those who thirst will find their *all and all in Christ*—He will outdo their expectations. "Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If

anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink' 'He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water'" (Jn 7:37-38).

## **II. "Why do you spend your money on what is not bread?" (v. 2). The problem with 'fake' bread is that it is worthless, yet it consumes your resources.**

**Isaiah uses a 'soul food' analogy (what the soul 'eats').** Isaiah's listeners were living on substitute bread, and not the Lord who is our true bread (Jn 6:32-35, 51). 'Bogus bread' is not able to nourish. It is like a man dreaming he is eating and then he wakes up famished. The world's 'marketplace' has nothing for your soul to eat, not a crumb. And, the problem with fake bread is that it draws upon, or costs you your time, talent, resources, and affections. That is why our text says, "why do you spend your wages for what does not satisfy?" You work so hard for the bread that perishes, you need the bread that gives eternal life (Jn 6:27). Don't hesitate to receive this feast of provision for your souls.

## **III. The urgent call is to receive spiritual nourishment without cost (vv. 4-5).**

**How we must listen diligently to this offer, pour over its words with patience, for our Savior has said that the words He has spoken 'are spirit and are life' (Jn 6:63).** It is unspeakable kindness to your own soul to comply with this offer. For, the Lord is offering covenant mercies that are perfectly suited to your miseries. Christ is the Mediator of the treasures He has purchased—the Mediator of the New Covenant. He dispenses that grace; there is nothing we can do to merit this gift of God. God is willing to receive us on the 'gospel terms' of faith and repentance. Remember, we saw earlier in the book of Isaiah that **the covenant the believer has with God is Christ Himself**—Christ is our covenant (Is 42:6; 49:8). It is His perfect obedience and perfect sacrifice on our behalf that is the foundation of our unchanging right-standing with God. We rest on Christ, our 'continent' of rock.

**The 'faithful mercies' shown to David (v. 3) are a model of what is promised to the believer.** "Just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account' " (Rom 4:6-8). We plead with the unbeliever; 'Let your proud heart stoop in order to receive freely, why oppose yourself? Your weariness under sin's heavy yoke is your only 'qualification' for this divine mercy' (Mt 11:28-30).

**Regarding the faithful mercies shown to David, how amazing it is that repeated human failure of the men in the line of Christ could not thwart the eternal rule of Christ.** Messiah, a descendent of David, would be born over 1000 years after this famous king. Yet, between David and Christ, there would be many apostate Jewish kings. But, in 'the faithful mercies shown to king David', it was promised in the Davidic Covenant (**2 Sam 7**) that the enthronement of Messiah, David's descendent, would not be thwarted by the failure of Judah's leaders. God's love for elect sinners is guaranteed by His Son who has full eternal approval in His work on their behalf.

In speaking of the eternal **covenant of redemption** made between the Father and the Son, the words of 17<sup>th</sup> C. Puritan, John Flavel are fitting: The Father to the Son, "*The people I am giving to you have undone themselves, and are exposed to My justice which must be satisfied. They will perish forever unless their debt is satisfied.*" The Son of God replies: "*I will become their surety; I will suffer the wrath that they deserve to suffer; I will assume their debt and pay it all.*" "*My Son, I will not spare You if You undertake this.*" The Son replies, "*charge it all to Me, though it make Me poor, I am*

*content to undertake it*" (paraphrase). No doubt when he wrote those words, John Flavel had this Scripture text in mind: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich" (**2 Cor 8:9**).

**Our salvation flows from a decision made in eternity past in which Christ was decreed to be the Savior of His people.** "He promised [the gospel] beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ" (**Rom 1:2-6**).

**How rich is this grace that God makes Himself known within the safety of a covenant.** Those who know Him through gospel faith, He meets in fellowship. The gospel reveals God by communicating what God has done with the sins of believers: "For I will be merciful to their iniquities and their sins I will remember no more" (**Heb 8:12**). **Think of it: the work of redemption which the Father appointed Christ to complete has been welded into a covenant**—and so much so that the shed blood of Christ forms the very terms of the new covenant. This is why believers are safe and going to heaven. It is because Christ, their covenant Head and righteous Representative is answering for their sins in His own Person. Therefore, this covenant made *in Christ's blood* is the sure foundation guaranteeing that the believer's love relation with God cannot be lost (**Jn 10:27-30**).

**This covenant in Christ's blood answers the question:** *how can such imperfect, but forgiven sinners, who still at times commit sin, have full assurance that God's favor and acceptance will not change?* Answer: God has 'sworn' that believers shall have perfect, priestly representation forever! (see **Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 6:13-20**). Christ pleads the merits of His blood on behalf of believers in order to quiet accusations made against them (see **1 John 2:1-2; Romans 8:31-34**).

**In the O.T. Levitical system of worship, the concept of a suffering, dying substitute was continually taught.** In the Levitical system, it was the Law identifying specific transgressions, then the worshipper laying his hands on the head of a lamb and confessing his sin, then the slaying and shedding the blood of the lamb, then the granting of forgiveness. This provision of a guilt-transfer was driven into the consciousness of believing Jews: 'without the shedding of blood there is no remission/forgiveness of sin' (**Lev 17:11, 14; Heb 9:22**). This continual symbolic practice of a guilt exchange anticipated the coming of the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world—**John 1:29**.) O.T. worshippers were imbued with the concept of a pardon by means of a suffering substitute (in **Isaiah 53** alone there are 11 references to salvation through substitution).

**The words in Isaiah 55:1, 'come to the waters, eat, buy without cost, eat what is good' pose a question to us all: 'are you sick of your 'poison puddle water' and of your 'bogus bread'? Are you ready for the water of life?** You may obtain it 'without money, and without cost'. In our men's Bible study, a man from the Philippines stood up to give his testimony. He shared that in Manila he had received awards for teaching the Roman Catholic Catechism to youth. But, once he found Christ, everything changed. He described it this way, "I used to think of the Christian life as a kind of 'store'—I would do good works in order to 'buy' the things I needed in my spiritual life. But once I found Christ, I came to understand that by His obedience for me, He has bought everything in the store, now as a believer, all I have to do is receive from Him what I need!"

In **Isaiah 55:4-5**, we see that those who receive this 'living water'—this super-abounding grace

of God are not ‘end-users’—by their testimonies, ‘they will be a witness to the peoples’ (v. 4), and ‘you will call a nation you do not know’ (v. 5). God will use redeemed Israelites to call Gentiles. That certainly began to be wonderfully fulfilled in the accounts given in the book of Acts (see **Acts 10; 11; 13; 15**). Believers act as lights, and are appointed to bring the message of God’s free grace to others.

#### **IV. Receiving ‘true bread’ requires repentance in acting and thinking (vv. 6-10).**

**A. The command is to seek Him diligently ‘while He is near’ (v. 6).** ‘To seek’ is to be devoted to it; to stop dawdling. ‘Seeking’ is a whole-life, realignment to Christ as ‘Source Person’ (source of light, and salvation, and the knowledge of God). He is not distant and not unwilling to receive you, but you must come closer; still nearer—near enough to have your heart searched, your sin identified, that you might know what to repent of. If you seek Him in this way, you will find a pardoning God.

**The gospel is an urgent call for a response.** In the dinner or banquet parable of Jesus in **Luke 14:15-24**, all of the middle and upper class guests **made excuses** for not attending. They had no sense of their need. Therefore, the householder gives this urgent message to his servant; ‘*Go to the poor, the blind, the disabled, and compel them to come in—that my house may be filled!*’ The door is still open wide now, but it will close. Mercy is offered now, but judgment is coming without mercy.

**B. The necessary response in order to receive divine mercy is ‘repent’ (v. 7).** To repent is to break off from evil practices and unbelieving thoughts. Leave the broken cisterns of your carnal appetites and receive *living water*, for God is a *fountain of life* (**Jer 2:13**). It is to admit we are sinners who have offended a holy God. We are to reject our self-will; to cancel the treaty we have made with sin which has allowed us to tolerate it. For, in our sin, we have exalted ourselves and trivialized God.

**Therefore, to repent is to say the same thing about our sin as God does—especially that it is against God and that sinners deserve eternal condemnation.** We are to *repent* of powerless, sentimental, ‘Sunday religion’ that poses no threat to our lusts and sins, or to the powers of darkness. God is calling for a complete overhaul in which we consciously place ourselves under His scrutiny, “Lord examine me, search me” (**Ps 139:23-24**). That is the very opposite of an unsanctified heart which seeks to shelter itself from the holy light of God’s piercing omniscient gaze.

**C. The promise of pardoning grace is given to those who forsake wicked thoughts and deeds (v. 7).** We are to repent with a view to believing the promise that He will not deal with us as our sins deserve. For, ‘He will have mercy and compassion, and will abundantly pardon’ (v. 7). **He will make us objects of His mercy.** Though our sins have been very great, and our backslidings frequent, and though we are still prone to offend, He will welcome back His children who return to Him in sincerity. We are to leverage all the weight of our souls upon this promise of His gracious invitation. But this free offer of mercy does not mean that God is all love and compassion, and that the sinner may continue on the broad road to destruction. No, do not fall into that error; if the world has your heart, do not imagine that heaven is your home. Repentance means hating and forsaking sin as that which opposes and defies God, repenting of the sin which Christ came to destroy (**1 Jn 3:8**).

**D. ‘The thoughts of God are not our thoughts’—the reasons for God’s grace are found within Himself and not within us (vv. 8-9).** Repentance is not only a change of actions, it is a radical *change in our thinking*. God’s counsels, or ‘thoughts’ are infinitely above ours. Sinners are prone to reason that if their hearts have been in such a lengthy state of straying and rebellion (NOT desiring to be reconciled to God), why would God desire our reconciliation? But, our text says, *forsake your*

**thoughts!**—not only your wicked and vile imaginations, but also your doubts that God will pardon, and fully receive you. Our text bids us to seek God and to repent (v. 6). The only believing response to this unending wealth of grace is to part with the sin and fleshly lusts which oppose your souls (1 Pet 2:11). And, to part with all opinions which would place your sin beyond the reach of God's grace. And, also to repent of opinions of your own righteousness which stand in competition with the righteousness of Christ and thus oppose the free grace of God.

**Christ is the Mediator of what He has purchased.** He will receive sinners, even the worst—but He only receives sinners on gospel terms: through repentance and faith. Christ dispenses the grace that He has purchased and won by His obedience (Heb 9:11-15). And, for those who go to Him, He outdoes their expectations, for in His matchless love, He has a disposition to give.

**God meets returning sinners with overflowing pardoning mercy.** These are not our thoughts, but His thoughts. This is why there is such **urgency in repentance**. It is because there is such a gap between God's thoughts and ours. Our intuitions about things are too conditioned by our fears, or by our apathy. And, as a result, we have small expectations about God's grace. **The fact that 'God's thoughts are not our thoughts' is in our highest possible interest.** This is because God has made the rescue of sinners the highest possible expression of His glory. The recovery of His own perfect image in man through Christ, His Son is infinitely dear to His own heart (see Jn 17:22-26).

**There are many ways that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, consider that: 1)** He quenches His own wrath against sin in the work of Christ, our Substitute. **2)** In order to do so, Christ the Judge and Lawgiver, removes His judicial robes, and clothes Himself in human flesh that He might become sacrificing Priest—**both offeror and offering**. He gives His flesh for the life of the world (Jn 6:48-58). **3)** So fully does He substitute Himself for His people, that by His work on their behalf, He cleanses them, declares them righteous, clothes them in His own righteousness, reconciles them to God, and adopts them as His own children. **4)** And, again, wonder of wonders—He receives the church as His reward for His work of substitution! Again, these are God's thoughts, not ours.

**None of those thoughts are our thoughts; we could not have conceived of even one of them on our own.** But now, even as believers who have the Word of God, we find these grace truths difficult to comprehend. How can God, who punishes impenitent unbelievers so severely, without mercy in the lake of fire forever—how can He forgive and welcome the repenting sinner so freely? **The apostle Paul opens this up this marvelous love of Christ in Romans chapter five verse eleven:** "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom 5:11). **The Son of God took on our sin debt while we were defiled, hostile to God's holy character, while were immersed in our idolatry.** We were in that state when Christ died for us. God made a purchase of infinite cost, and He takes great pleasure in pouring out the wealth of grace that He has purchased upon undeserving sinners. How we need to feed upon these truths every day, **for His thoughts are not our thoughts.**

**Is it any wonder then that our Isaiah text bids us to 'incline our ear and come' (v. 3)?** To 'incline' is to pour over the words of Christ diligently—'pray for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him' (Eph 1:17-18ff.). Christ's words are 'spirit and life' for the sin-weary, for those toiling under the weight of their enslaving lusts (Jn 6:63). His Words birth faith by the Spirit's power.

**This is all counter-intuitive, we don't tend to reason in this manner that His mercies are perfectly suited to our miseries.** But, indeed they are, our Savior meets our ruin with His redemption. He brings cleansing for the polluted, covering for the naked, purity for the impure,

reconciliation for the alienated, adoption for those orphaned by their sin. ***Now, these treasures are not passing feelings or moods, like a wispy clouds on the breeze which may evaporate.*** No, these are concrete blessings found in Christ (**1 Cor 1:30**). They are resident in Him and bestowed upon those who are in union with Him. Think of it, not one of these blessings is a free-floating spiritual commodity. They are found in, and flow from, our immutable Savior who is our Fountain of life.

**Pardon, righteousness, sonship, and favor are the believer's promised possessions because they are 'deeded' to the believer in an unbreakable covenant.** When Christ came to earth, He inaugurated the eternal covenant of grace by signing it in His own blood. That accomplishment is expressed in the **benediction in the book of Hebrews**: "Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen" (**Heb 13:20-21**).

**The logic of divine grace does not compute with our natural understanding of things, and realizing that really humbles us.** God's sentiments about reconciliation are so different from ours. He invites us sinners to return to Him by giving us lucid and brilliant views of His generous, welcoming heart (**Jer 31:20**). **Jesus reveals this in ways that move us to tears as we read the story of the Prodigal Son in which the father waits with eagerness for the wayward son to return home (Lu 15:11-32).** In Isaiah we find these important texts which speak of God's willingness to forgive His people if they would but repent of sin, "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins" (**Is 43:25**).

In forsaking 'our thoughts', and placing our faith in 'His thoughts' (**Is 55:7**), we are consenting to be objects of His grace and pity. Certainly we ought to marvel at His compassion as we consider questions such as these: *How can He forget our sins when we do not? How wonderful and breathtaking that God can forgive the penitent sinner so fully and freely.*

## **V. "My word which goes forth from My mouth will not return to Me empty." God's Word to believers is a promise of *comprehensive life* (vv. 10-12).**

'The rain and snow which God sends cause the earth to sprout and to bear fruit' (**v. 10**). Thus, the promises of mercy and grace in the gospel shall have as real an effect upon the souls of believers for their sanctification and comfort as the rain does on the earth—making it fruitful. **The gift of everlasting life fulfills the glorious purpose of God to share His life with His people.** His delight in granting life makes us more than conquerors (**Rom 8:37**). **It is through His Word that God will bring His saving purposes to fulfillment.** By His promises, He urges us on to run the race set before us with endurance, for the glory of Christ is at the 'finish line' (**Heb 12:1-2**).

**The verses in Isaiah 55:12-13 describe a planet restored from the curse.** In **Romans 8:17-22**, we discover something remarkable about this restoration. God has synchronized the public revealing of the sons of God with the renewal of the entire creation. The renewed creation will be enjoyed by a renewed humanity—and over all will be Christ the Lord, ruling and reigning. This *comprehensive salvation*, extending to the cosmos—in which the curse is reversed—displays who God is. The Word of God in promising believers complete newness of life is the divine testimony concerning the Son of God. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life" (**Jn 5:24**).

## **Conclusion: God ‘wills to be known’ through the message of the gospel of Jesus**

**Christ.** His self-revelation provides a saving knowledge of Himself in the form of a covenant. The statement, ‘God wills to be known’ means that He has a particular way of revealing who He is. It is through the satisfaction of His unchanging standard of righteousness through a Substitute whom He has appointed. There is no other way that the favor of our holy God can be known. It is by a covenant He makes with believing sinners through this work of a Substitute.

**God’s self-revelation in this matter is needed, for we never would have envisioned the biblical plan of salvation on our own.** According to **Romans 1:16-17**, the gospel is the *revelation*, or ‘uncovering’ of God’s righteousness. For in the gospel, ‘God’s way of man’s right-standing with Him is uncovered’ (**Rom 1:17**, *Williams Translation*). For, it is not inherent in our reasoning to embrace the paradoxes which accompany God’s plan of salvation. In other words, it is a wonderful paradox that in order to remove the guilt of our transgressions, the eternal Son of God became a man in order to bear the penalty of our sin. This is why the gospel is able to fully answer man’s greatest dilemma: *how can the unrighteous be right with God’s absolute righteousness?* Answer: *It is through the perfect work of a Substitute.* In Christ, man’s greatest need has become God’s greatest deed.

**God’s grace is not leniency. His grace is poured out because of the satisfaction He has made of His unchanging standard of righteousness through the work of the perfect Substitute He has appointed.** “But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were *committed* under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance” (**Heb 9:11-15**).

**God is absolutely committed to the glory of His own holiness.** Therefore, those whom He brings into fellowship with Himself are given righteous affections so that they too are committed to the glory of His holiness. God’s commitment to His own holiness and moral majesty permeates the gospel. For, consider this, that God will not compromise a single beam of His holiness in order to keep a sinner out of hell. God remains perfectly holy when He saves a wicked person because of the propitiation which He wrought through Christ at Calvary. By Christ’s substitutionary atonement, God’s perfect justice is meted out in the case of each believer’s sins. “Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (**Rom 3:25-26**). Therefore, in knowing God as He truly is, a genuine believer exalts God’s justice by fully taking God’s side in regard to the divine justice due his own sins.

**Thus, one of the evidences that a sinner has believed savingly is that his controversy with God’s absolute justice has ended.** The converted man is jealous for the honor of God’s holy justice. As a result, he knows in the depths of his conscience that he deserves to be miserable in eternal hell. And, he knows that every bit of his favor with God rests upon the work of his righteous Redeemer.

When speaking of his own conversion from the legal system of Judaism, Paul proclaimed: "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, ***not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law***, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith" (Phil 3:8-9).

**Carnal reasoning is unable to reconcile the unbending justice of God with the lovingkindness and mercy of God.** Is it any wonder then that the Scriptures describe the grace of God in the gospel as a 'mystery' (Eph 3:4-10; Col 1:26)? The immensity of God's love is witnessed in His purpose to send His Son to pay the debt of all who would ever believe. That plan had been hidden in the bosom of God through the ages, but was revealed in Christ's coming: "Join with *me* in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim 1:8b-10).

**It is one thing to know that these are true propositions, it is quite another to fall at the feet of Christ in genuine repentance. We are warned in Scripture not to neglect 'so great a salvation'.** Central to the theme of salvation is urgency in proclaiming the message, and urgency in believing and obeying the message. It is the divine remedy refused which exposes the unbeliever to eternal wrath. *Remedy refused is wrath*: "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard" (Heb 2:1-3). The doors of mercy are wide open, but the length of time for heeding this opportunity is limited. Let us express our love to others by our willingness to admonish them. "But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13).