

Adam Clarke:**Introduction**

This chapter first displays the fullness, freeness, excellence, and everlasting nature of the blessings of the Gospel, and foretells again the enlargement of Messiah's kingdom, Isaiah 55:1-5. This view leads the prophet to exhort all to seize the precious opportunity of sharing in such blessings, which were not, however, to be expected without repentance and reformation, Isaiah 55:6, Isaiah 55:7. And as the things now and formerly predicted were so great as to appear incredible, the prophet points to the omnipotence of God, who would infallibly accomplish his word, and bring about those glorious deliverances which he had promised; the happy effects of which are again set forth by images beautiful and poetical in the highest degree, Isaiah 55:8-13.

Verse 1

Ho, every one that thirsteth - **Water**, says Zimchi, **is** a metaphor for the law and wisdom: as the world cannot subsist without water, so it is impossible that it can subsist without wisdom. The law is also compared to wine and milk: to wine because wine rejoiceth the heart, as it is written: **The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart**, Psalm 19:8. It is compared also to milk, because milk is the subsistence of the child; so are the words of the law the nourishment of his soul who walks in the Divine teaching, and grows up under it.

Come, buy wine and milk - In ancient times our forefathers used what is now called the old third person singular, ending in eth, for the imperative mood. We have a fine example of His in the first verses of this chapter. I shall present them as they stand in my old MS. Bible: - Alle gee thirstinge cummeth to wateris: and gee that han not sylver, goth forth and bieth, and etith. Cummeth, bieth without silver, and without eny chaungyng, wyn and mylc. Heerith gee, heering me and etith gode thinge, and deliten schal in fatnesse your soule. Bowith in your eie and cummeth to mee, heerith and liven schal your soule. And I shall smyten with gou, everlastynge covenant, the faithful mercies of David.

Verse 2

Wherefore do ye spend - Why should ye be so zealously attached to a doctrine from which your souls derive neither comfort nor nourishment?

Verse 3

I will make an everlasting covenant - Hebrews **x•x•x''x^ax'' xœx•x• x'x''x^TMx^a x¢x•xœx** (echrethah lachem berith olam), **œl** will cut the old or everlasting covenant sacrifice with you. That covenant sacrifice which was pointed out of old from the very beginning; and which is to last to the consummation of ages; viz., the Lamb of God that was slain from the foundation of the world.

The sure mercies of David - That is, says Kimchi, **The Messiah**, called here David; as it is written, **David my servant shall be a prince over you**.

Verse 6

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found - Rab. David Kimchi gives the true sense of this passage: **Seek ye the Lord, because he may be found: call upon him, because he is near. Repent before ye die, for after death there is no conversion of the soul.**

Verse 9

For as the heavens are higher - I am persuaded that **x** (caph), the particle of comparison, is lost in this place, from the likeness of the particle **x•x^TM** (ki), immediately preceding it. So Houbigant and Secker. And their remark is confirmed by all the ancient Versions, which express it; and by the following passage of Psalm 103:11, which is almost the same: -

d x''x•x''x¢ x¢xœ x©xžx^TMx• x•x''x'' x•x^TM

d

d (haarets) (al) (shamayim) (chigoah) (ki)

d

d

d x^TMx''x•x^TMx• x¢xœ x—xjx''x•x''x''

d

d (yereav) (al) (chasdo) (gabar)

d

d

â€œFor as the heavens are high above the earth,
So high is his goodness over them that fear him.â€•

Where, by the nature of the sentence, the verb in the second line ought to be the same with that in the first; x'x'x" (gabah), not x'x'x" (gabar): so Archbishop Secker conjectured; referring however to Psalm 117:2.

Verse 12

The mountains and the hills - These are highly poetical images to express a happy state attended with joy and exultation.

Ipsi laetitia voces ad sidera jactant
Intonsi montes: ipsae jam carmina rupes,
Ipsa sonant arbusta.

Virg. Ecl. 5:61.
â€œThe mountain tops unshorn, the rocks rejoice;
The lowly shrubs partake of human voice.â€•

Dryden.

Verse 13

Instead of the thorn â€œinstead of the thorny bushesâ€• - These likewise (see note on Isaiah 55:12, and on Isaiah 54:11 (note)) are general poetical images, expressing a great and happy change for the better. The wilderness turned into a paradise, Lebanon into Carmel: the desert of the Gentiles watered with the heavenly snow and rain, which fail not to have their due effect, and becoming fruitful in piety and righteousness: or, as the Chaldee gives the moral sense of the emblem, â€œinstead of the wicked shall arise the just; and instead of sinners, such as fear to sin.â€• Compare Isaiah 35:1, Isaiah 35:2; Isaiah 41:19.

And instead of - The conjunction x• (vau) is added, x•x^ax—x^a (vetachath), in forty-five MSS. of Kennicottâ€™s several of De Rossiâ€™s, and five editions; and it is acknowledged by all the ancient Versions. The Masoretes therefore might have safely received it into the text, and not have referred us for it to the margin. But this is no uncommon case with them. Even in our own Version the best reading is very often found in the margin.