

Isaiah 55:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. This urgent invitation—"Ho" (הֹי)—calls universal attention. The address to "every one that thirsteth" includes all who recognize spiritual need. Water, wine, and milk symbolize life-sustaining resources, here representing spiritual sustenance (salvation, wisdom, God's word). The paradox "buy...without money and without price" emphasizes grace—what's infinitely valuable is freely offered.

The dual mention "without money and without price" intensifies gratuity. Kesef (כְּסֵף, money/silver) and mechir (מְחֵיר, price/cost) are synonyms reinforcing that salvation cannot be purchased—it's gift, not commodity. Yet the verb "buy" (shivru, שִׁבְרָו) suggests acquisition, responding, receiving. The invitation requires action (come, buy, eat) while offering free provision, holding together divine grace and human responsibility.

From a Reformed perspective, this illustrates the gospel offer: salvation is free yet requires response. Christ invites, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). Revelation 22:17 echoes this: "let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The chapter grounds assurance not in ability to pay but in God's free offer. This verse refutes works-righteousness while calling for faith-response to grace.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern markets involved buying and selling; Isaiah's paradox would jar hearers. Water sellers in Jerusalem cried out inviting customers (John 7:37 reflects this practice during Feast of Tabernacles). Wine and milk represented abundance and prosperity (Joel 3:18, Isaiah 7:21-22). Offering these free was economically absurd, highlighting grace's scandal.

This invitation addressed post-exilic returnees who were economically impoverished but spiritually needy. It extends to all ages—the early church offered salvation freely (Acts 8:20—"thy money perish with thee"). The Reformation's recovery of *sola gratia* (grace alone) opposed medieval indulgence sales, returning to Isaiah's principle: salvation is free gift. Contemporary prosperity gospels that commodify blessing contradict this foundational truth.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What spiritual thirst drives you to Christ's free provision?
2. How does 'buying without price' challenge your attempts to earn God's favor?
3. What prevents you from accepting God's free offer—pride, self-sufficiency, or misconception?

Interlinear Text

ל	וְ	אֵין	אָשֵׁר	ר	לְמַעַן	וְ	לְכָל	הַ	וְ
Ho	H3605	every one that thirsteth	H1980	ye to the waters	H834	H369	H0		
	H1945		H6771		H4325				
בְּלֹא	שָׁבֵר	וְ	לְכָל	אָכֵל	לְכָל	שָׁבֵר	וְ	לְכָל	כָּסֶף
and he that hath no money	H1980	buy	H7666	and eat	H1980	buy	H3808		
	H3701				H398		H7666		
וְ	כָּסֶף	וְ	וְכָל	וְאָ	מִיחַד	וְרַ	וְיַיִלְלָבָה:		
and he that hath no money	H3808	and without price	H4242	wine	H3196	and milk	H2461		
	H3701								

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 21:6 (Parallel theme): And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

Revelation 22:17 (Parallel theme): And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Isaiah 44:3 (Parallel theme): For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:

Psalms 143:6 (Parallel theme): I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.

Revelation 22:1 (Parallel theme): And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Matthew 10:8 (Parallel theme): Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Psalms 63:1 (Parallel theme): O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

Matthew 13:44 (Parallel theme): Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Joel 3:18 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the LORD, and shall water the valley of Shittim.

Isaiah 52:3 (Parallel theme): For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.