

Isaiah 55:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. The threefold invitation—"Incline your ear" (hattu 'aznekem, הַתּוּ אֶזְנָכֶם), "come," "hear"—emphasizes responsive action. Inclining the ear suggests attentive, deliberate listening, not casual hearing. The promise "your soul shall live" (ticheye nafshekem, תִּחְיֶה נַפְשָׁכֶם) offers spiritual life, not mere existence but abundant, eternal vitality.

The "everlasting covenant" (berit 'olam, בְּרִית עוֹלָם) recalls Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants, now offered to all who respond. "Sure mercies of David" (chasdei David hane'emanim, חֶסֶד דָּוִיד הַנְּאֶמְנִים) references God's unconditional promises to David (2 Samuel 7:12-16) regarding eternal dynasty. Chesed (חסֵד) means covenant loyalty/faithful love; ne'eman (נְאָמָן) means faithful/reliable. These Davidic promises find ultimate fulfillment in Christ.

From a Reformed perspective, this prophesies the new covenant in Christ's blood (Luke 22:20, Hebrews 8:6-13). The everlasting covenant isn't earned but received through hearing and coming to God. The sure mercies are Christ's resurrection and reign (Acts 13:34 quotes this verse regarding Christ's resurrection). This verse grounds assurance in covenant promise—God's oath regarding David's heir (Christ) guarantees believers' eternal life and security.

Historical Context

The Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7) promised David an eternal dynasty and kingdom. This seemed broken by exile—no Davidic king ruled after Zedekiah's removal (586 BCE). Yet Isaiah promises these mercies remain "sure" (reliable, faithful), extending beyond David's physical descendants to all who respond to God's invitation.

Post-exilic return didn't restore Davidic monarchy, creating theological tension. How are the promises sure? Acts 13:32-34 answers: Christ's resurrection fulfills this, establishing eternal Davidic reign. The early church understood Isaiah 55:3 as gospel promise—all who come to Christ receive the covenant mercies promised to David. Church history demonstrates the dynasty's perpetuity through Christ's unending kingdom, not earthly political restoration.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How are you 'inclining your ear' to God's word in daily life?
2. What does it mean practically that your soul shall live through hearing and coming to God?
3. How does Christ's fulfillment of 'David's sure mercies' strengthen your covenant confidence?

Interlinear Text

נִפְשַׁךְ	מִ	וְתַחַ	יְשִׁמְעָ	וְ	אֶל	וְ	אֶלְכָּ	וְ	אֶזְתָּכָם	הַט	וְ
Incline	your ear	H1980	H413	unto me hear	H8085	shall live	H2421	and your soul	H5315		
H5186	H241										
וְ	אֶתְכָּתָה	לְכָם	בְּרִית	עֹזֶל	מִ	עֹזֶל	מִ	מִצְמָדָה	לְ	דָּוִיד	וְ
and I will make	H0	covenant	H1285	an everlasting	H5769	mercies	H2617	of David	H1732		
H3772											
בְּנֵיכֶם:											
with you even the sure											
	H539										

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 32:40 (Covenant): And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Proverbs 4:20 (Parallel theme): My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.

Matthew 11:28 (Parallel theme): Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

John 10:27 (Parallel theme): My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Acts 13:34 (References David): And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

Genesis 17:7 (Covenant): And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Isaiah 61:8 (Covenant): For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Psalms 78:1 (Parallel theme): Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

John 6:37 (Parallel theme): All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Isaiah 54:8 (Eternal Life): In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

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