

# Isaiah 55:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

## Analysis

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**Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.** This verse describes remarkable reversals: Israel calling unknown nations, and unknown nations running to Israel. "Call" (tqra, תָּקַרְא) suggests summoning, inviting. "Knowest not" (lo yeda'ta, לֹא יְדַעַּת) indicates nations previously outside covenant relationship. The response—"shall run" (yarutsu, יָרַצֵּח)—depicts eager, swift approach.

The dual motivation: "because of the LORD thy God" and "the Holy One of Israel"—Gentiles come not for Israel's sake but because of Israel's God. The concluding explanation—"for he hath glorified thee" (ki pe'arekha, קִי פָּאָרֶךְ) —indicates God's glorification of Israel attracts the nations. Israel becomes exhibit of divine grace, drawing others to the source.

From a Reformed perspective, this prophesies the Great Commission and Gentile ingathering. Romans 9-11 explains how Israel's role facilitates Gentile salvation, provoking Israel to jealousy (Romans 11:11). The church, comprised of Jew and Gentile, fulfills this summons. The ultimate attractiveness is Christ Himself (John 12:32—"if I be lifted up...will draw all men unto me"). This verse teaches that God's glorification of His people serves missionary purpose—others are drawn to the God who redeems.

## Historical Context

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Israel's original calling included being "a kingdom of priests" mediating God to nations (Exodus 19:6). Yet Old Testament period saw limited Gentile inclusion. Isaiah promises future reversal where nations actively seek Israel's God. Post-exilic period saw some Gentile proselytes, but nothing matching this prophecy's scale.

The New Testament demonstrates fulfillment: Pentecost included "devout men out of every nation" (Acts 2:5); Ethiopian eunuch sought truth (Acts 8:27); Cornelius sought God (Acts 10); Philippian jailer was converted (Acts 16:30-34). Church history shows continuous running of nations to Christ—Roman Empire, Germanic tribes, Slavic peoples, African nations, Asian countries. The missionary movement demonstrates nations that "knew not thee" now eagerly embracing the gospel.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does your life exhibit God's glory in ways that attract others to Him?
2. What unknown 'nations' (unreached groups) is God calling you to summon?
3. How can the church better demonstrate God's glorifying work to draw the nations?

## Interlinear Text

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וְהַיְתָה כְּנָסֶה לְאַנְשֵׁים  
H2005 H3808 H3045 H1471 H7121 H1471 H3808 H3045

תִּבְחַר אֶת־בָּנָה  
Behold thou shalt call a nation

לֹא תַּרְצַח אֶל־בָּנָה  
H413 H7323 H4616 H3068 H430

לֹמַע־עַל־בָּנָה יְהִי־הָעֵד  
unto thee because of the LORD thy God

וְלֹא תַּרְצַח אֶל־בָּנָה  
and for the Holy One of Israel H3588 H6286

לְכָל־בָּנָה כִּי־יְשַׁרְאָל פָּאָרָה  
for he hath glorified

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 60:9** (Glory): Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

**Isaiah 60:5** (Parallel theme): Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

**Zechariah 2:11** (References Lord): And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

**Romans 15:20** (Parallel theme): Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

**Isaiah 56:8** (References God): The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him.

**Isaiah 55:4** (Parallel theme): Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

**Isaiah 45:23** (Parallel theme): I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

**Acts 3:13** (Glory): The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

**Acts 5:31** (References God): Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

**Psalms 18:43** (Parallel theme): Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people whom I have not known shall serve me.

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