

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 55:1-9

A crust eaten in peace is better than a banquet partaken in anxiety. —Aesop

For the past two years, America has not really been in a partying mood. But as we seem to be returning to our lives as we used to live them, invitations of a more formal nature may be required when we want to throw a party.

Granted, perhaps those days are behind us. Yet, let's say we wanted to host something quite simple in our room, or home. Not too many people, just close friends.

In what we would call the "olden days" — what our grandchildren would call "ancient history" — formal invitations would be sent to an engraver for calligraphy treatments and engraving. Cards would be hand-delivered or sent through the U.S. Postal Service.

Today, unless we inhabit a social stratosphere occupied by only the upper half percent of the population, we send invitations *electronically* for graduation and wedding ceremonies, bridal and baby showers, birthday parties, quinceañera celebrations, sorority soirees, housewarming parties or even a fancy-schmancy dinner party. Well, we used to, anyway. Perhaps those days are behind us.

Now, there are online businesses which cater to those who need to be the inviter of invitees. Our problems are solved!

Of course, God does not have these kinds of issues to deal with. When God wants to say something, *something* is said. When God wants to invite someone, *someone* is invited. When God extends a hand to a group of people, or even a nation, or even the world, God extends that hand and is pleased when the providential and salvific hand is grasped in the grip of faith.

In the Bible reading above, God uses a different method: a *prophet*. In verses 1-3, the prophet utters a dozen imperative verbs, a full one-third of which are the command to "come." Come to the waters; come, buy and eat; come, buy; come to me, he cries. And then in verse 9, he adds, "Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; ... return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on [you], and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (vv. 6-7).

Sounds like an invitation ... an invitation to feast at a banquet at God's lavishly-laden table!

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord Jesus, may I always be eager to sit down at the table that has been prepared for me! Help me to enjoy the blessings that you have prepared. In your name. Amen.



Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Numbers 18-20
- Monday:** Numbers 21-24
- Tuesday:** Numbers 25-27
- Wednesday:** Numbers 28-30
- Thursday:** Numbers 31-33
- Friday:** Numbers 34-36
- Saturday:** Psalms 31-32

VERSE TO REMEMBER

*Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.*

—Psalm 32:1

FIND THE MESSAGE

Directions: The readings in Numbers this week describe some of the events the children of Israel experienced while on their long sojourn in the wilderness. Below, using the clues provided, write the words in the spaces to the right of the clues. **The first letter of each word**, when read from top to bottom, should reveal a hidden message that relates to the wilderness experience. Write the message on the line below.

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. To rip into shreds | _ _ _ _ |
| 2. To track wild game | _ _ _ _ |
| 3. Home to Adam and Eve | _ _ _ _ |
| 4. Middle Eastern tree | _ _ _ _ |
| 5. A form of precipitation | _ _ _ _ |
| 6. Columbus is its capital | _ _ _ _ |
| 7. Another word meaning "Christ" | _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ |
| 8. Old Testament book with 66 chapters | _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ |
| 9. The first king of Israel | _ _ _ _ _ |
| 10. Also known as "wapiti" | _ _ _ _ |
| 11. This river forms part of the western border of New Jersey | _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ |
| 12. Smaller than an ocean or sea | _ _ _ _ _ |
| 13. Noah put animals into this | _ _ _ _ |
| 14. First name of astronaut Armstrong | _ _ _ _ _ |
| 15. The capital of Colorado | _ _ _ _ _ |

Hidden Message:

Answers:

- 1. tear
- 2. hunt
- 3. Eden
- 4. palm
- 5. rain
- 6. Ohio
- 7. Messiah
- 8. Isaiah
- 9. Saul
- 10. elk
- 11. Delaware
- 12. lake
- 13. ark
- 14. Neil
- 15. Denver

Hidden message: The promised land