

The Restoration of Israel and Salvation of the Gentiles

Isaiah 54-55

Isaiah 54:1-8 - *“Sing, O barren, you who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman,” says the Lord.*
² *“Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings. Do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes.* ³ *For you shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will inherit the nations, and make the desolate cities inhabited.*
⁴ *“Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame. For you will forget the shame of your youth, and will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.* ⁵ *For your Maker is your husband - The Lord of hosts is His name - and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. He is called the God of the whole earth.*
⁶ *For the Lord has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife when you were refused,”* says your God. ⁷ *“For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you.*
⁸ *With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,” says the Lord, your Redeemer.”*

Background Notes

The Suffering Servant was the subject of Isaiah 53. The substitutionary nature of His sufferings on the cross was clearly prophesied, and the chapter included the prediction of the bodily resurrection of the Lord.

In chapters 54 and 55 there are further predictions of the good results of the Suffering Servant's great work of dying on the cross for the sins of the world.

Doctrinal Points

1. Because of the Servant's work, Israel will be restored.

In verses 1-8, Israel was seen as an unfaithful wife whose husband - the Lord Himself! - was forgiving her and restoring her. No wonder the chapter began with a joyous shout! The unfaithful and barren wife would become the mother of so many children that she would have to enlarge her tent (v2-3)! The time of her shame and disgrace will come to an end (v4). She will be restored only because of **God's grace** (v5-6). As a Righteous Husband, God had to turn away from Israel because of the people's sin. But in His great compassion and loyal love, the Lord will forgive and restore His people!

When will all of this restoration take place? Was this prophecy fulfilled when Israel came back from her Babylonian captivity? Verses 9-10 indicate that the fulfillment of this prophecy will take place in the future - when the Lord returns. These verses predict that Israel's restoration will be **complete** and **permanent**. This could certainly not be said of Israel today - or at any time in the past.

Isaiah 54:9-17 - *"For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth. So have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. ¹⁰ For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has mercy on you.*

¹¹ "O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, and not comforted. Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. ¹² I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones.

¹³ All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children. ¹⁴ In righteousness you shall be established. You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.

¹⁵ Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me. Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.

¹⁶ "Behold, I have created the blacksmith who blows the coals in the fire, who brings forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the spoiler to destroy. ¹⁷ No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me," says the Lord."

As God's covenant with Noah guaranteed that the world would never again be flooded with water, so God's covenant with Israel was guaranteed. Mountains and hills may split apart, but **God's loyal love and unconditional covenant with Israel will never fail** (v9-10)!

In verses 11-17, the illustration of a restored wife changed to a restored city. Once again, these prophecies were not fulfilled when Israel returned from her Babylonian captivity - but they will be fulfilled when the Lord returns to this earth and establishes His millennial kingdom, with Jerusalem as His capital city.

Verses 15-16 emphasized that everything is under the sovereign control of God. He cannot be blamed for any form of anti-Semitism - but, in His sovereignty, He has allowed hostile nations and evil anti-Semitic organizations to oppose Israel and her people. In fact, in His sovereign will He not only allowed new weapons to be used against Israel, but He has allowed the "blacksmiths" to make the weapons. But when Israel is restored and the people finally become the servants of the Lord they were meant to be (v17), then no weapon that is formed will be a threat to Israel - including nuclear bombs and warheads! Because of the Servant's work, Israel will be restored.

2. Because of the Servant's work, Gentiles will be redeemed.

Isaiah 55:1-5 - *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts - come to the waters! And you who have no money - come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ² Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. ³ Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you— the sure mercies of David.*

⁴ Indeed I have given him as a witness to the people, a leader and commander for the people. ⁵ Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you shall run to you because of the Lord your God, and the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you."

Isaiah 55 is one of the great gospel chapters of the Bible. Of course the open invitation for anyone to "Come!" is only possible because of the finished work of God's Servant – the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the sins of the world. The invitation in this chapter is for **everyone** who thirsts and is hungry to come and freely partake of the living water and food of life.

Based on the phrases "*covenant with you*" and "*sure mercies of David*" (v3), we might get the idea that only Israel was included in this invitation. But this message of good news was not only for Israel, but for the entire world as well. Verse 4 says that the Servant Messiah will be a witness, a leader, and a commander of *many people*.

Through restored Israel, Gentile nations will turn to the Lord. From other prophetic Scriptures we know that this will take place specifically during the future great Tribulation period, leading up to the Lord's return to earth. It will be part of our Lord's program for setting up His millennial kingdom (Revelation 7 and Zechariah 14). Because of the Servant's work, Gentiles will be redeemed.

Practical Application

Don't say, "It's too good to be true!"

Isaiah 55:6-13 - *"Seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*

⁸ "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord ⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰ "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth. It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

¹² “For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands! ¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

When some people hear the good news of Isaiah 55, they say, “It can’t be true! You mean salvation is **free**? I don’t have to “work” for it in any way? The God of the universe can be known, and He has compassion on me, and He will abundantly pardon all my wrong thoughts and actions (v6-7)? That’s too good to be true!” But it’s the truth!

Not too long ago a very successful lawyer said exactly that to me when I explained the gospel to him. He would have loved to believe it, he said, but to believe it he would have to kiss his brains goodbye. He thought - it’s just too good to be true!

Verses 8-9 explained this lawyer’s thinking: God’s thoughts are not man’s thoughts. And God’s ways are higher than man’s ways. Man’s thoughts and ways are selfish and evil, and we have the idea that we can make it to Heaven on our own merit. By his own natural thinking, mankind simply cannot comprehend the amazing grace of God.

Further good news was given in verses 10-11: “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth. It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please.” Just as the rain and snow water the earth and make it fruitful, so God’s Word will bring forth fruit. It will accomplish that which God has planned.

Recently a new believer wrote to us from Pakistan. He explained how he became a believer through our Growing Christians website - growingchristians.org. If you’ve been to our website you know that it’s not designed for unbelievers – it’s primarily Bible teaching for believers (thus the name “*Growing Christians Ministries*”). But just by hearing the Word read aloud, and then hearing it explained, this man came to know Christ as his Savior! In verse 11 the Lord said, “My word will not return to Me empty.”

In verses 12-13 the word of the Lord also declared that the sad effects of sin on this natural world will be lifted, and nature itself will rejoice. “The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.”

When will this take place? This prophecy will be fulfilled when the Lord returns and establishes His glorious kingdom here on the earth. This is the truth. The **word of the Lord has declared it - and it will happen.**

All of this is part of God’s good news – so don’t say, “It’s too good to be true!”