

V. God's Righteousness Provides Hope in His Glory.

1. The time is coming when the heavens will declare his righteousness.
2. When the Sun of Righteousness appears with healing in his wings (Malachi 4:2) accompanied by all the heavenly saints, what a glorious consummation that will be of his work on our behalf.
3. The ultimate blessing of righteousness by faith is eternity with Him who is our righteousness. This is the glad hope of the righteous (Malachi 3:17-18).
4. "Hope of righteousness" is the sight of the righteous One himself, who promised to return for his own (John 14:3).

VIII. COMMUNION THROUGH GOD'S COVENANT CHAPTERS 54 - 59

A. WED TO THE LORD IN COVENANT RELATIONSHIP CHAPTER 54

1. RECONCILED

TEXT: 54:1-8

- 1 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith Jehovah.
- 2 Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not: lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.
- 3 For thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall possess the nations, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.
- 4 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou

confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth; and the reproach of thy widowhood shalt thou remember no more.

- 5 For thy Maker is thy husband; Jehovah of hosts is his name: and the Holy One of Israel is thy Redeemer; the God of the whole earth shall he be called.
- 6 For Jehovah hath called thee as a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even a wife of youth, when she is cast off, saith thy God.
- 7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.
- 8 In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting lovingkindness will I have mercy on thee, saith Jehovah thy Redeemer.

QUERIES

- a. Who is the "barren" one?
- b. Why "enlarge" the place of her tent?
- c. When did God "forsake" her?

PARAPHRASE

When the Suffering Servant of God accomplishes His work, O Zion, My covenant people you will sing and shout for joy. You have not been able to produce spiritual offspring; you have been like a childless woman. You have been cast off by your Husband-God because you sinned against Him, but through the reconciling work of the Messiah you shall have more children than you had when you were married. Prepare yourself to accept the expansion of God's kingdom beyond your present nation because through the Messiah, God is going to establish a kingdom that stretches to the ends of the earth. The offspring that shall be given you through the Servant will include people from every nation on the earth. The Servant

will also take away the humiliation of your present barrenness. You will not suffer the reproach of spiritual barrenness again, because the God who created you is also your Husband. The Faithful Covenant God, Jehovah—the Holy One of Israel—The Sovereign, Omnipotent God of all creation—He is your Redeemer. This is the God who has promised to betroth you to Himself through the Servant, even though He has forsaken you and cast you off because of your unfaithfulness. I will cast you off into captivity for only a short time, but My mercy extended to you through the Servant will be great. In a flood of wrath I will turn away from protecting you for a short time, but I will love you and be kind to you forever through the Servant.

COMMENTS

v. 1-4 REPOPULATED: The result of the Suffering Servant's redemptive work (52:13—53:12) shall be a prolific spiritual offspring. He is to "bring many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:10-13). That is why Zion (God's faithful remnant in the O.T. which will become His church in the N.T.) is told to "break forth into singing." The physical descendants of Abraham (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; 17:2-8, etc.) did not produce spiritually as they should have. Most of his offspring turned to idolatry and ungodliness. Jerusalem, the "holy" city, was barren of spiritual children except for a small remnant of faithful (cf. Isa. 8:16). But when the Servant shall have completed His work Israel shall produce spiritual offspring prolifically (cf. Gal. 3:29). Jerusalem cannot produce because God, her Husband has forsaken her on account of her sins. She will be given over to captivity for a season. But the time will come when she will produce more children than a woman who had never been forsaken (cf. Isa. 49:18-26; 51:1-3; Zech. 2:1-5; Hosea 1:10-12). She will produce a "great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues . . ." (Rev. 7:9).

Inasmuch as the "new" Jerusalem (the Messiah's kingdom, the church) is to produce an innumerable offspring, she will need to "enlarge" her "tent." Jehovah instructs the people of Isaiah's day to stretch their faith to accept an expanded concept of the Messiah's kingdom. God is going to extend covenant relationship to more than Jews; He is going to include "the nations." Ezekiel's vision of the glorified temple, land, city and priesthood (Ezek. 40—48) is a graphic, figurative prophecy of the immense enlargement which will be necessary for the coming messianic kingdom. Ezekiel's "temple" was never intended to be literally built. It is hyperbole. The *terumah* ("most holy place" RSV, Ezek. 48:12) measures about 2500 square miles, nearly twice as large as the whole area of geographic Judea! The rebuilt temple (Ezek. 40:2) of Ezekiel was 500 reeds (4500 square feet), larger than the literal Jerusalem of Ezekiel's day or our day. Ezekiel's exaggerated temple, land and city are visionary predictions of the "enlargement" of the messianic age. Micah predicts, "A day for the building of your walls! In that day (the messianic age) the boundary shall be far extended . . ." (Micah 7:11f).

Jehovah's people are to take comfort in the fact that their redemption draws nigh. The finished work of the Servant is now on the prophetic horizon (Isa. 53); therefore, Zion need no longer look upon her temporary captivity and "indignation" with hopelessness. She shall forget all her shame when the Servant comes and takes her shame upon Himself. The reproach associated with barrenness will be forgotten when she begins to produce spiritual children through the gospel. She will then be the church of Christ "without spot or blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

v. 5-8 REUNITED: Through the Servant, Jehovah will reclaim His "wife." Jehovah will be reunited, remarried to His people in a new covenant relationship (cf. Isa. 56:6-8; Jer. 31:27-34; Ezek. 37:24-28; etc.). The Old covenant will pass away and be remembered no more (cf. Jer. 3:15-18). They must remember that the prophet Isaiah is speaking the promise of Almighty God. They must find their reasons for singing and

shouting and for overcoming their shame and hopelessness in the fact that these are promises of Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth! Jehovah will call back His forsaken wife (cf. Ezek. 16:53-63; Hosea 1:10-12; 2:14-23; 3:1-5), through the messianic covenant. The Lord will forsake Zion for only a short time (during the "indignation"; see our comments, *Daniel*, Dan. 8:19; 11:36, College Press) compared with the time He will show His great mercy to Zion. The "indignation" will last only 600 years (from the captivities until the Christ). But Jehovah will show *everlasting* lovingkindness to Zion.

The interesting thing about this passage in which the Lord refers to His reconciliation to His "wife" is that it is to include the "nations" (*goiym*, Gentiles). The Gentiles will be called into the new covenant relationship and be a part of the "bride of Christ." Although the prophets predicted it and the Christ taught it, many of the Jews could never accept it. It took even some of the apostles a few years to understand and accept it (cf. Acts 10, 11, 15; Gal. 2, etc.).

QUIZ

1. What is the basis for Zion's singing and shouting?
2. Where in the Prophets do we have a visionary picture of the "enlargement" of Zion to receive the messianic multitudes?
3. What is the basis of Zion's being able to forget her shame?
4. How long did God forsake her?

2. REGALED

TEXT: 54:9-17

9 For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee,

nor rebuke thee.

- 10 For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed; but my lovingkindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith Jehovah. that hath mercy on thee.
- 11 O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will set thy stones in fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.
- 12 And I will make thy pinnacles of rubies, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy border of precious stones.
- 13 And all thy children shall be taught of Jehovah; and great shall be the peace of thy children.
- 14 In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee.
- 15 Behold, they may gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall because of thee.
- 16 Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the fire of coals, and bringeth forth a weapon for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy.
- 17 No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness which is of me, saith Jehovah.

QUERIES

- a. What do the "waters of Noah" have to do with this text?
- b. Why mention her "stones"?
- c. How shall their righteousness be from Jehovah?

PARAPHRASE

Your redemption from captivity and salvation through the coming Servant is certain. The covenant relationship through

the Servant is as sure as the covenant I made in the days of Noah when I swore that the waters would no more destroy the earth. So I have now sworn to turn away My anger from you through the atoning work of the Servant. In fact, My covenant through the Servant is even more certain than that! Even if the mountains and hills and the earth pass away, My covenant of reconciliation in the Servant shall never pass away. O you helpless and oppressed Zion, I am going to make you beautiful. I will lay your foundations with sapphires, your towers with rubies, your gates will be built of stones that shine and glow like fire and I will build your walls with precious stones of all kinds. All of your children shall have the privilege of being taught by God Himself. He will come directly from heaven to earth in the flesh. He will bring great peace and prosperity to all your children. You shall be vindicated and declared righteous, O Zion, and you shall be delivered from spiritual oppression and fear; the terror of guilt and judgment shall never come to you again. You will survive all your enemies even though they may conspire to destroy you; they do so against My will and I will destroy them. I create and control those who build weapons; I also create and control those who use weapons against My people. I will not let any weapon or any army completely destroy My Zion. There will be no accusation permitted to stand against you then, because your righteousness shall be imputed to you from Me. This is what I am going to give you, Zion, says the Lord.

COMMENTS

v. 9-10 PERMANENCE: The future reconciliation promised in 54:1-8 is, of course, predicted on the condition that Zion will enter into covenant relationship with Jehovah through the Suffering Servant who is to come. This covenant relationship will be as intimate and precious as a marriage; for that, in fact, is what it will be—the Lord married to His bride (the church) Zion. In the verse before us now, the *permanence* or

certainty of that relationship is declared. When the Lord predicts that He will enter into a covenant of reconciliation with Zion, it is as certain to come to pass as His promise not to destroy the world by a flood again.

God's covenant sign to Noah was the rainbow. God's covenant sign of reconciliation was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The Jews of Jesus' day were not satisfied by the evidence of His miracles that He came to fulfill the covenant promises made through the prophets. Jesus told them that *one* great sign would be given them (the sign of Jonah; Mt. 12:38-42; Lk. 11:29-32) confirming that He was the Messenger of the Covenant (cf. Mal. 3:1-4). The writer of Hebrews said that when God desired to demonstrate the immutability of His promise of covenant reconciliation, He "interposed" (*emesiteusen*, Gr., Heb. 6:17) with an oath. What God actually did was "interpose" *Himself* as that oath, incarnate in Jesus Christ. All the promises of God find their verification, validation, confirmation and authentication ("Yes" or "Amen") in Christ (cf. II Cor. 1:18-20). The new covenant is one of a "living hope" by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Pet. 3:3-5). The surety of God's new covenant does not originate subjectively within man. It does not have its basis in man's ability to earn surety through self-righteousness. The surety of God's reconciliation is in God's objective, historical "interposition" in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We appropriate it by faith and may experience it subjectively, but its certainty is in its objectivity and historicity! The confirmation of God's new covenant is even more certain than the confirmation of the covenant made to Noah. Mountains and hills, heaven and earth, rainbows and clouds may pass away (and most certainly will), but Christ conquered death and lives forever. The Word of God, confirmed by the resurrection of Christ, abides forever (Mt. 5:17-20; 24:35; I Pet. 1:22-25). God through Isaiah, is promising Zion that she shall be cast off for a little while but she will be reconciled to Him later (through the Servant) in an eternal marriage. He has sworn it will come to pass. God does not lie. His word is sure!

v. 11-12 **PRECIOUSNESS:** When this "marriage" takes place between God and His new Zion, the bride (the church) will be regaled in beauty. The old Zion, having degraded itself with idolatry and paganism (Jer. 18:12-17, etc.), is about to be taken captive and made a "byword" among the nations. The old Zion will suffer shame, humiliation and mocking. The old Zion will be loathed as a harlot (cf. Ezek. 16:1-52), but Jehovah will restore her fortunes and make her the beautiful, new Zion (Ezek. 16:53-63).

The Hebrew word *puk* in verse 11 is translated "fair colors" but might be more accurately translated "antimony" because the Hebrew word apparently refers to a mineral powder used as an eye pigment (cf. II Kings 9:30) which was also mixed with a liquid to make a cement or paste in which stones or jewels might be set. This *puk* would make a setting that would enhance the beauty of the jewels. That is the point of the passage. *Peniyaniym* is the Hebrew word for *rubies* (they are red); *sappiyriym* are *sapphires* (they are blue-green); *aekeddakh* is Hebrew for *carbuncles* (they are also brilliant red) and the word more literally means simply, *sparkling*. The new Zion will be beautiful and precious. Peter must have had this in mind when he wrote I Pet. 2:4-10! Christ's church is precious and pure (Eph. 5:25-27). The best human words available to John to describe the extravagant beauty of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9-21) were words describing jewels and precious stones. Of course, the "precious stones" will be purified, sanctified Christians who are "living stones" in whom the Spirit of the living God abides (cf. Eph. 2:19-22).

v. 13-17 **PROTECTION:** The phrase, ". . . taught of Jehovah" is quoted by Jesus (Jn. 6:45) in His sermon on The Bread of Life. It is therefore a prediction of the Messiah. Isaiah was predicting the Incarnation! Jesus Christ was "the bread come down out of heaven." The new Zion would be established and continually sustained by "eating" the incarnated Bread from Heaven. The new Zion would have the privilege of being taught directly by God in the flesh. The old Zion had only "divers portions and divers manners" of God's revelation through the

prophets (Heb. 1:1), but in the messianic age the new Zion would be spoken to by God Incarnate in the Son. Anyone taught by Jesus is taught by God Himself.

The protection God is promising Zion here is essentially spiritual. It should be clearly understood by any student of the New Testament that Christians are never promised complete deliverance from wars, sicknesses, trials and tribulations. All who live godly in this world will suffer persecution (II Tim. 3:12). The prophets never promised the Jewish people a time when they would be free of physical tribulation on this earth. The promise that Zion shall be "far from oppression" is a promise of freedom from spiritual oppression (guilt, fear of judgment). The new Zion will be founded in righteousness (cf. Isa. 2:1-4; 9:6-7; 11:1-16, etc.). The imputed righteousness of God because of the atoning death of Christ will free the new Zion from guilt and fear of judgment. The Lord will protect His church and the gates of eternal death shall never prevail against it because Christ will partake of flesh and blood and destroy the power of the devil which is the fear of death (cf. Heb. 2:14-18; Isa. 25:6-9). In verses 15-17 the prophet clearly predicts that Zion will suffer physical attacks as well as judgmental accusations (probably referring to the chief slanderer himself, the devil), but none of it shall prevail against God's new Zion. God is the Creator of everything and everyone. He is able to control all His creation and use it to fulfill His ultimate purpose which is the redemption of those who come into covenant relationship to Him through the Servant. And He will do so! Zion's future righteousness cannot be gainsaid. The accuser of all mankind cannot hurt God's new Zion with his accusations. The heritage of new Zion shall be the perfect righteousness of God Himself, which God has given her by His grace through His Servant. The Hebrew word *tsedek* is able to be translated righteousness or justness. The meaning in this text apparently has more of the flavor of justification, vindication or exoneration. God's new Zion will be cleared of all guilt and be given God's righteousness through her covenant marriage in the Servant.

QUIZ

1. Upon what is the future reconciliation of Zion to the Lord predicated?
2. How certain is the Lord's promise of reconciliation toward Zion?
3. What is the sign of that reconciliation?
4. How did God swear an oath of that reconciliation in the New Testament?
5. How does Isaiah speak of the future beauty of new Zion?
6. How will God vindicate and justify and protect the new Zion?

B. WORD OF THE LORD IS BOND AND BOUNDS
OF COVENANT, CHAPTER 55

1. EVIDENCE

TEXT: 55:1-5

- 1 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.
- 2 Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.
- 3 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.
- 4 Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples.
- 5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and a nation that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of Jehovah thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.