

Covenant of Peace

Isaiah 54

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**BIG BEND
BIBLE
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Isaiah 54:1-8 – Israel as God’s wife (NIV)

“Sing, barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband,” says the Lord. ² *“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.* ³ *For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities.* ⁴ *“Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.* ⁵ *For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.* ⁶ *The Lord will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit—a wife who married young, only to be rejected,” says your God.* ⁷ *“For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back.* ⁸ *In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,” says the Lord your Redeemer.*

v1 – Why should the barren woman sing?

Israel will be restored like a barren woman who bears many children.

- In ancient Israel, the barren woman carried an enormous load of shame and disgrace.
- Captive Israel is likened to a barren woman who can now sing — because *now more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman.*

Why was the Babylonian exile of Israel so bad?

Their captivity meant more than oppression; it meant shame, disgrace, and humiliation. God promises a glorious release from not only the exile and captivity, but also from the shame, disgrace, and humiliation.

Why did the Apostle Paul quote this passage?

Galatians 4:27-28 – *For it is written: “Rejoice, O barren, you who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children than she who has a husband.” Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.*

Paul used this in reference to the miraculous “birth” of those under the New Covenant. Paul also probably intended the phrase *more are the children* to also indicate that the children of the New Covenant would outnumber the children of the Old Covenant.

v2 – Why was it comforting for God to tell Israel to enlarge the place of your tent?

The curse and shame of barrenness would be so completely broken, and Israel would be so fruitful, that they would have to expand their living space.

- This would be of particular comfort to the returning Babylonian exiles, who felt themselves small in number and weak.

v3 – How is it Israel would inherit the nations (NKJV)?

During the Millennial Kingdom Israel will be the most preeminent nation on earth...

Isaiah 2:2 – *Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.*

When would Israel settle in their desolate cities?

They did when they returned from Babylon and even more so when they returned from the Diaspora.

v4 – How could Israel be likened to a widow?

Just as God compared the disgrace of Israel to the shame of barrenness, now He compares their humiliation to the reproach of widowhood. Here, the LORD promises rescue from Israel’s shame.

- It was as if Israel did not have God as her husband when she was taken off to captivity.

v5 – Who is Israel’s husband?

For your Maker is your husband: Though Israel might have been regarded as forsaken as a widow, the LORD promises to stand in the place of her husband.

What is the principle of God being as a spouse to us?

Through the centuries, many a hurting woman has taken this promise for herself. Forsaken by a husband, or forsaken of a husband, they have found beautiful comfort in the promise that God would be a husband to them, when all others forsook them.

- The principle is true; God will supply and meet our emotional needs, and rescue us from our disgrace and shame, when others have forsaken us.

What significance is there to the names of God here?

Lord Almighty— Israel's husband is the most powerful
Holy One of Israel— Israel's husband is also the Messiah
Redeemer— Israel's husband is also her Savior
God of all the earth— Israel's husband is also God of all

- The promise that the LORD will meet our needs when others forsake us does not leave us to a place of "second best."
- The LORD God can be a greater husband than any man can be.
- An earthly husband can never fulfill every need that the great Heavenly Husband can.

v6 – How was Israel like a wife deserted?

When Israel was in captivity in Babylon and also when she was scattered among the nations during the Diaspora.

What does it mean the Lord would call Israel back?

It is like Israel was divorced by God when she was exiled from the land but their relationship was restored when they were called by God back to the land.

v7 – What does it mean God abandoned Israel?

God never really abandoned Israel, yet He recognized that they felt forsaken. Effectively God was saying, "for a mere moment I allowed you to feel that I have forsaken you."

What was the mercy of God?

But with great mercies I will gather you: The forsaken is in the present tense; the great mercies are in the future tense. But they are real, and give Israel cause to set their hope and trust in the LORD, though they feel forsaken at the moment.

v8 - What is the contrast here?

I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you: The contrast is between the moment of feeling forsaken and the everlasting nature of the kindness that will come.

What is the principle that we can apply to our own lives?

When we feel tried and forsaken, we should recognize that it is just for a moment, and the everlasting blessing will certainly come.

Where else are we taught to think of God as being a husband to His people?

The church is referred to as the bride of Christ. Christ, the Bridegroom, has sacrificially and lovingly chosen the church to be His bride...

Ephesians 5:25–27 – Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Just as there was a betrothal period in biblical times during which the bride and groom were separated until the wedding, so is the bride of Christ separate from her Bridegroom during the church age.

- Her responsibility during the betrothal period is to be faithful to Him (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:24).
- At the rapture, the church will be united with the Bridegroom then the official "wedding ceremony" will take place and, with it, the eternal union of Christ and His bride will be actualized (Rev 19:7–9; 21:1-2).

Isaiah 54:9-17 – Comfort to restored Israel (NIV)

⁹ "To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. ¹⁰ Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you. ¹¹ "Afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will rebuild you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with lapis lazuli. ¹² I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones. ¹³ All your children will be taught by the Lord, and great will be their peace. ¹⁴ In righteousness you will be established: Tyranny will be far from you; you will have nothing to fear. Terror will be far removed; it will not come near you. ¹⁵ If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing; whoever attacks you will surrender to you. ¹⁶ "See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work. And it is I who have created the destroyer to wreak havoc; ¹⁷ no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and this is their vindication from me," declares the Lord.

v9-10 – What is the promise God makes to Israel?

Just as God promised that the flood waters of Noah's day would not cover the earth forever, so will His anger recede from Israel.

Did God forget his promise when Israel was dispersed after Rome destroyed the temple?

No, this promise was forward looking to the Tribulation and Millennial Kingdom when Israel as a nation would be faithful to God. The reference to mountains departing brings to mind the Tribulation...

Revelation 16:18-20 – *there was a great earthquake... then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.*

What is this covenant of peace?

Ezekiel 37:26-27 – *Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

This is peace between God and Israel that will start during the Tribulation and be realized during the Millennial Kingdom.

Since Israel was booted from the land by Babylon and Rome, will another Gentile authority do so again?

No, makes this clear...

Amos 9:15 – *I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God.*

The context of this is following the Diaspora when God will sift the house of Israel among all nations (Amos 9:9).

- That has occurred in our life-time... Israel is back in the land for good!

v11-12 – Who is God seeking to comfort here?

O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest and not comforted: God cares about the afflicted one. He cares about the one tossed with tempest. He cares about the one who is not comforted. When someone is in this place — afflicted, tossed, and not comforted — it is easy for them to believe God doesn't care. But He does, and He gives precious promises to give strength.

What will God do for the afflicted?

Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems...sapphires...rubies...crystal: God will lavish riches upon the hurting and afflicted. When someone feels afflicted, tossed, and not comforted, they feel poor, no matter how much money they have in the bank. God promises to make the afflicted truly rich.

Is this prosperity gospel?

No, the riches here are representative of spiritual wealth.

What is the prosperity gospel?

This is the idea that financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of God for them, and that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious causes will increase one's material wealth.

- Material and especially financial success is seen as a sign of divine favor.

Is the prosperity gospel biblical?

No. Paul warned about this:

1 Timothy 6:5 – *useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.*

These men of "corrupt mind" supposed godliness was a means of gain and their desire for riches was a trap that brought them "into ruin and destruction" (v. 9).

How is covetousness idolatry?

Ephesians 5:5 – *no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God*

It is trusting in wealth instead of God... trusting in the creation rather than the Creator.

What is the danger of the prosperity gospel?

It is not the good news. And if your prosperity fails, so does your faith.

Matthew 6:24 – *You cannot serve both God and money*

What is the problem with word of faith that often goes along with the prosperity gospel?

The Word of Faith movement grew out of the Pentecostal movement in the late 20th century. Mind science (where "name it and claim it" originated) was combined with Pentecostalism, resulting in a peculiar mix of orthodox Christianity and mysticism.

- It is belief that words can be used to manipulate the faith-force, and thus actually create what they believe Scripture promises (health and wealth).

God alone is the Sovereign Creator of the Universe and will not be manipulated by incantations. At its core is the same lie Satan has been telling since the Garden: "*You shall be as God*" (Genesis 3:5).

- Our faith comes from God in the first place (Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2) and is not something we create for ourselves.

v13 – What comfort does God give about the future?

All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children: When we are afflicted, tossed, and not comforted, we feel bad not just for ourselves, but also for our children. God gives precious assurance not only for us but also quiets our fears for our children.

What is the comfort for parents of young children as they consider the disturbing trends of today?

Children going to heaven will not miss out on a thing. The joys of heaven far exceed any of the joys of this fallen world...

1 Corinthians 2:9 – *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”*

Certainly, young children of Christians will be in heaven...

1 Corinthians 7:14 – *the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.*

Is the concept of an age of accountability biblical?

2 Samuel 12:23 – *Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*

The context is that King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, with a resulting pregnancy. The prophet Nathan was sent by the Lord to inform David that, because of his sin, the Lord would take the child in death.

- David’s words might indicate that infants who die are safe in the Lord.
- David could have simply been referring to the fact that his child was in the grave, but he seemed to be comforted by the knowledge.
- The peace he felt suggests that he believed he would see his baby son again (in heaven).

God’s extending grace to those who cannot believe would seem consistent with His character.

v14-15 – What promise does God make here?

In righteousness you shall be established...you shall not fear...whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake: God promises those who are afflicted, tossed, and not comforted will find protection and security in Him.

When will this promise be realized?

This will ultimately be realized in the Millennial Kingdom. The prerequisite for the fulfillment of this is Israel accepting Jesus as the Messiah which they will during the Tribulation.

v16 – What does God create?

Everything... the blacksmith who builds useful things as well as *the destroyer to wreak havoc.*

Why point out that God is the creator of all here?

This adds force to His promises... they will be realized.

Why would God allow evil people to cause chaos?

It serves His purpose. It is necessary if we truly have a free will. And God can even bring good from evil (e.g., the cross). As people see the consequences of evil, this drives many of them to Him. God has the big picture, we don’t.

Romans 8:28 – *all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose*

v17 – What is God promising here?

No weapon formed against you shall prosper: The sovereign God — who created it all — also has the power to protect. Whatever weapon is raised against God’s people is destined to be destroyed.

- Sometimes this means the LORD takes the weapon out of the hand of the enemy of His servants.
- Sometimes it means that God allows the weapon to strike but brings a greater good out of it than the pain of the immediate blow.

What does God promise regarding accusations against His people?

Sometimes the tongue is worse than the weapon raised against us. God will help us know what to say...

Matthew 10:18-20 – *You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.*

To whom is this promise made?

The LORD specifically says, this is the heritage of the servants of the LORD. The LORD also says that this is a promise for those whose righteousness is from Me — from the LORD Himself — and not from themselves.

What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- God will be closer to us than a spouse when all others forsake us.
- Our being tried and forsaken is just for a moment, the everlasting blessing will certainly come.
- God promises those who are afflicted, tossed, and not comforted will find protection and security in Him.
- The prosperity gospel is false, have no part of it.
- God is not the author of evil but He uses it to serve His purpose; God has the big picture, we don’t.