**“Insights into Isaiah”—Chapters 54-56**

**Chapter 54—A Perpetual Covenant of Peace**

In this chapter, the Lord speaks to Israel as His wife, and the promise is inherent… Israel will be restored like a barren woman who bears many children.

1. **Read Hosea 1 and 2.**
2. **Discuss how barrenness in ancient Israel brought with it an enormous amount of shame. “Sing, O barren, you who have not borne**:” In ancient Israel, the **barren** woman carried an enormous load of shame and disgrace. Here, the Lord likens captive Israel to a **barren** woman who can now **sing** - because now **more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman**.
   1. **Equate the shame of barrenness mentioned with the captivity brought about by Babylon.**
   2. **Compare this passage to Galatians 4:17.** This passage is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 4:27, in reference to the miraculous “birth” of those under the New Covenant. Paul 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.
3. **In verses 4-6, God compares the reproach of widowhood with Israel’s disgrace and humiliation of their captivity. Compare this with verses 1-3’s reference to barrenness.**
4. **Who is the husband of Israel? 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**.
   1. **Discuss the idioms, “like a woman forsaken” and “a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit.”**
5. **Explain the theme: “for a mere moment I have forsaken you.” Relate this thought to the captivity of God’s people…..Assyria, Babylon, etc.** 
   1. **Discuss how this was not a permanent condition (God will redeem a remnant.)** The contrast is between the **moment** of feeling forsaken and the **everlasting** nature of the kindness that will come. When we feel tried and forsaken, we should recognize that it is just for a **moment**, and the **everlasting** blessing will certainly come.
      1. **Read Romans 9:27 and 11:5.**
      2. **See also Isaiah 10:22.**
      3. **Refer to Zechariah 13:8.** 1/3 of Israel will be saved.
6. **Verses 9-10 bring an interesting comparison to Israel’s captivity and Noah’s flood. Elaborate. For this is like the waters of Noah to Me**: 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.
   1. **How is God’s covenant of peace a sure promise for His people?** The **kindness** of the Lord is more certain than the **mountains** and the **hills**, and His **covenant of peace** is more sure.
   2. **Refer to Revelation 6:14, 16 and16:20, “where the mountains depart and the hills are removed.” Comment on the similarity.**
7. **Verses 11-17 paint a picture of the Millennial Kingdom. List some of the descriptors.**
   1. **Where else in the Bible do we see the reference “stones with colorful gems, foundations of sapphires, gates and walls with crystal and stones?”**
      1. **Compare to Revelation 21:18-21 and Revelation 18:11-12.**
      2. **See also 2 Samuel 12:30 and I Samuel 17:47.**
      3. **Review Zechariah 9:16.**
      4. **Look at Isaiah 54:11.**
   2. **Who are the “blacksmith” and the “spoiler” cited in verse 16?** 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.
   3. **Re-state Isaiah 54:17….”no weapon formed against you shall prosper….”**“Behold, I ….17No 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.
      1. **Parallel with Luke 10:19, Exodus 12:13, I Corinthians 5:7, Hebrews 8:6, 2 Thessalonians 3:3 and John 10:10.**
8. **Consider the final statement of this chapter….** “This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,” says the Lord…..elaborate on how the meaning translates to today.

**Chapter 55—An Invitation to Abundant Life**

1. **Discuss the interesting salutation in the first verse**. “Ho! - this is the gospel note; a short, significant appeal, urging you to be wise enough to attend to your own interests
   1. **Consider verse 1, “If anyone thirsts,” in comparison with Jesus’ words in John 6:35, 7:37-38 and Revelation 22:17.**
   2. **Parallel also Isaiah 41:17-18,**
2. **Who is spending money foolishly according to verse 2?** 
   1. **Apply this to Americans today.**
3. **According to verses 3-5, what is the benefit of “inclining your ear to God?” Hear, and your soul shall live**: The *benefit* from inclining your ear to God is impressive. When we do it, we have life for our **soul**.
4. **What is the everlasting covenant in verse 3?**
5. **Compare the everlasting covenant to the Davidic Covenant in Jeremiah 30:9, Ezekiel 34:23-25, and Luke 19:12-19.** As well, the **mercies of David** are **sure**. They are certain. God never gave up on David, never stopped showing him mercy. We can count on God when He promises to us the **sure mercies of David**. . These prophecies are fulfilled *spiritually* when God gives wonderful, David-like leadership to His people. **They will be fulfilled *ultimately* when David - literal King David in his resurrection body - reigns over Israel in the millennium, the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ over this earth. Of that time, Jeremiah 30:9 says, *But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them*. In Ezekiel 34:23-25 the Lord promises, *I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them; My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever*. We have indications that as God’s people rule with Jesus over the millennial earth, people will be entrusted with geographical regions according to their faithfulness (Luke 19:12-19).** ***It seems that David’s glorious portion will be to rule over Israel.***
   1. **Review 1 Samuel 13:14.**
   2. **See also Amos 9:11-12.**
6. **Why do the nations flock to Israel in verse 5? See Isaiah 60:5 and 9.** This is the Millennium… **Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, and nations who do not know you shall run to you**: Is this addressed to Israel, or to David, as the leader and commander of God’s people? Possibly both. Certainly, its ultimate fulfillment is in the millennium, when the nations will flock to Israel (Isaiah 60:5, 60:9).
7. **Explain why verse 6 seems to be the “heart” of this passage.**
   1. **Compare this with I Chronicles 16:11, 22:10, Psalm 14:12, Acts 15:16-17 and Hebrews 11:16.**
8. **Verses 6-7 seem to be offering an invitation. Re-state it.**
9. **Parallel with 2 Corinthians 10:5 and Romans 12:2**. The battleground for a righteous walk with the Lord is often found in our minds, in our **thoughts**. Paul knew this also when he wrote of *bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ* (2 Corinthians 10:5), and how we must *not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind* (Romans 12:2).
   1. **What is the promise in verse 7?**
10. **Verses 8-9 seem to echo loudly throughout all the scripture. Discuss.**
    1. **Why does Romans 8:29 appear to mimic this passage?** Gloriously, in Jesus Christ, heaven has come down to earth, and we can have our thoughts and ways transformed to be *more like* God’s thoughts and ways. This is what it means *to be conformed to the image of His Son* (Romans 8:29). The distance will never be closed; God will always be God, and we will always be human. But when our salvation is complete, and we are united with the Lord in glory, the distance will be as close as is possible.
11. **Is there a reference in verses 10-11 to the parable of the sower/reaper in Matthew 13?**
12. **Why is Isaiah 55:11 so vital in witness? The word will not return void... message about the word** 
    1. **Compare I Peter 1:23, John 6:63, and Hebrews 4:12**.
13. **The Messianic promise of verses 12-13 seems to center on joy and singing. Where else do we hear this language? See Psalm 9:11, Isaiah 44:23, 49:13, 52:9, and Romans 15:11.**
14. **Verse 13 offers a description of the Millennial Kingdom. Discuss the vegetation, the restoration of the earth, and the everlasting sign.**
15. **What is the heart and message of Isaiah 55? Can it apply to us today?**

**Chapter 56—Salvation for the Gentiles**

1. **What are the promise and the command in verses 1-2?**  Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation is about to come: This prophetic Word is directed to God’s discouraged people, who have slacked in obedience and righteousness. They see no reason to repent as long as things look down. God shakes them out of this by calling them to keep justice, and do righteousness in *anticipation* of what He will do.
2. **What is the blessing implied in verse 2? Compare with Jeremiah 17:7, Psalm 1:1, James 1:12, and Philippians 4:19.**
3. **Verses 3-8 lay out the promises of God to the foreigner and the outcast. Discuss.**
   1. **Review why the idiom of the eunuch is used for explaining outcasts. Refer to Leviticus 21:18-20**. Nor let the eunuch say, “Here I am, a dry tree”: The eunuch is cited as an example of an *outcast*. Eunuchs were denied full participation in temple rituals (Leviticus 21:18-20). God didn’t want them to accept their feelings of being cast out. Though they may *feel* that way, God’s Word is higher than their feelings.
      1. **Review how this statement prophesies the passing of the dominance of the Levitical order.** This also prophesies the passing of the dominance of the Levitical order. Clearly, giving eunuchs **a place and a name** in God’s house contradicted the command of Leviticus 21:18-20. But under a coming New Covenant, there is a higher principle at work than the shadows of the Levitical law.
4. **Parallel how verse 7 (my house shall be called a house of prayer) with Jesus’ actions in Matthew 21:13. The violation of this principle made Jesus angry. When He came to the temple and found the outer courts - the only place where the Gentile nations could come a pray - more like a swap meet than a house of prayer, He drove out the moneychangers and the merchants (Matthew 21:13).**
5. **Who are the “outcasts of Israel” in verse 8? What is their outcome?** The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, “Yet I will gather to him others”: Because of the pain of exile and captivity, Israel had become intensely self-focused. They believed God only really cared about them, and the rest of the nations (many of whom treated Israel cruelly) did not matter. But God wanted to expand the vision of Israel beyond her own borders, so they would know that God loved the perishing world and wanted them to love them also.
6. **Verse 9 seems to shift the scene before us to the Tribulation period. Review Revelation 19:17, the calling of the birds and the beast to the “Supper of the Great God**.” All you beasts of the field come to devour: The Lord God invites the beasts of the field to a great feast - to eat up the corpses of His enemies after they lay on the field of battle. The same picture is used in Revelation 19:17: *Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.”*
   1. **See also Ezekiel 19:17 and Isaiah 56:9.**
7. **Who are the blind watchmen in verses 10-11? The shepherds who cannot understand?** His watchmen are blind: The leaders of God’s people are blind; judgment is on the way, but they don’t see it and warn God’s people. They don’t fulfill their purpose as watchmen. They are ignorant, like dumb dogs, simply sleeping. They are shepherds who cannot understand: These ungodly leaders are a sad contrast to the godly leadership personified by King David in Isaiah 55:3-5. These are unfaithful shepherds, who only look everyone for his own gain.
   1. **Compare with Isaiah 55:3-5.**
8. **Israel’s unfaithful leaders have a curious response in verse 12. Elaborate on it**. We will fill ourselves with intoxicating drink: Worse than being passively ignorant and blind, they are actively wicked. As judgment approaches, they simply drink and get drunk.
   1. **Relate their response with 56:9 and to the earth dwellers in Revelation 6:15, 18:9-11.**
   2. **Compare with Isaiah 2:19, 24:21; Psalm 2:10-12 and 110:4-6.**
   3. **See also I Corinthians 15:32.**
9. **How can you sum-up the theme of Chapter 56? Does it remind you of the story in Revelation?** 
   1. **How can there be an application of the chapter to today’s time?**

**And, here are “The Promises”……**

**Isaiah 54:17, “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 the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.”**

**Isaiah 55:6-7, “Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. 7Let the wicked forsake his way, 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.”**

**Isaiah 55:8-9, ““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.”**

**Isaiah 55:11, “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.”**

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