

Week 10: Isaiah Chapters 54 to 55
And an overview of the structure of 56 to 66
The Birth of the Global Church

- In this session we will see how Isaiah 54 and 55 points from the Servant to His servants.
- Then we will take a look ahead and see the ending structure of Isaiah as it culminates in a concentric structure pointing to the prophetic vision of the messianic kingdom, and the LORD's return.
- This ending bullseye of 55 to 66 mirrors the beginning of the book from chapters 1-5.

Chapter 54

¹"Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the LORD. ²"Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. ³For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities. ⁴"Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. ⁵For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. ⁶For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. ⁷For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. ⁸In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer. ⁹"This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you. ¹⁰For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you. ¹¹"O afflicted one, storm-tossed and not comforted, behold, I will set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires. ¹²I will make your pinnacles of agate, your gates of carbuncles, and all your wall of precious stones. ¹³All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children. ¹⁴In 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. ¹⁵If anyone stirs up strife, it is not from me; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you. ¹⁶Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals and

See Galatians 4:27 What does it mean in this context that Paul says that we gentiles are "children of promise"?

O barren one: the redeemed of the Servant from Ch 53. Israel is depicted as a barren woman, who now has children who will "possess the nations". In 53:10 the Servant is promised offspring. In the Servant's fulfillment of all required of Israel, we see that fulfillment of the promise of his offspring.

Widowhood – this is the theme of Israel's exile. Like one who is no longer with her husband. But the **LORD** has promised his Hesed "Everlasting love" in covenant to his redeemed.

See John 6:45 What does Jesus mean when He says that "Everyone who has listened to and learned from the Father comes to me"?

produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy; ¹⁷no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. **This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD** and their vindication from me, declares the LORD.”

Chapter 55

¹“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. ²Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? **Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good,** and delight yourselves in rich food. ³Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, **that your soul may live;** and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. ⁴Behold, **I made him a witness** to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. ⁵Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know, and **a nation that did not know you shall run to you,** because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you. ⁶“**Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;** ⁷let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. ⁸“**For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.** ⁹For 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 and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹“**so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.** ¹²“For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. ¹³Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

No longer the disconnected “we” from Ch53 but “servants of the LORD”. The “inheritance” (heritage נַחֲלָה) belongs to those born of the LORD (vs 1) through the work of the Servant in Ch 53. To receive inheritance the servants must become sons and daughters.

This is an **invitation** to a feast for your soul. No indication this is targeted just at Israel, but rather an invitation to the nations (vs5). Remember Jesus’ “highways and hedges” wedding parable.

See Acts 13:34 as Paul begins the mission to the Gentiles.

Isaiah sees a nation that doesn’t know the LORD coming in faith and repentance.

The context of this familiar passage points us to the reality that God’s thoughts are toward salvation and covenant.

God’s sovereign Word will accomplish all that He intends for it to accomplish in bringing the nations to Himself.

Isaiah 56-66 follows the same literary pattern of Isaiah 1-5 called a “chiasmus” for the Greek letter “X” (Khi). It follows a pattern of repeating themes mirroring each other but centered around the main idea. D-C-B-A-B-C-D. In Isaiah 1-5 the central idea was to be “Judgement”. In Isaiah 56 – 66 the central idea will be “The Messianic kingdom and the return of the Lord to His people.”

56:1-8 - The inclusion of gentiles into the LORD’s covenant people

56:9-58:14 – Contrast between the fate of the servants and the wicked

59:1-14 – The servants confess Israel’s sin and call for the LORD’s salvation

59:15-21 – The LORD brings justice and salvation

Central Idea 60-62 – The Messianic kingdom and the return of the Lord to His people.

63:1-6 – The LORD brings justice and salvation

63:7-64:12 – The servants confess Israel’s sin and call for the LORD’s salvation

65:1-66:17 – Contrast between the fate of the servants and the wicked

66:18:24 – The inclusion of gentiles into the LORD’s covenant people

There is very tight symmetry leading up to the central idea that God’s justice will bring about salvation.

59:16-18 - The LORD’s Justice

63:1-6 - The LORD’s Justice

‘He looked and there was no one’

‘I looked and there was no one to help’

‘he was astonished that there was no intercessor’

‘I was astonished that there was no one to support’

‘his own arm worked salvation for him’

‘my own arm worked salvation for me’

‘he clothed himself in garments of vengeance’

‘the day of vengeance is in my heart’

BEFORE NEXT WEEK:

- Read Isaiah 56:1 – 66:23
- Suggested reading from *Isaiah: God Saves Sinners* – Chapters 40 thru 41
- Spend some time praying about God’s heart to have the Nations come to faith and repentance. What might God want you to do in relation to that?