

“Come, all you who are thirsty”

1. What dreams do you have for taking the Gospel to others?

The last chapters of Isaiah's great work are rich in promise. They begin with an invitation to experience redemption and conclude with a picture of the glory that will come with history's end (Isaiah 60-66). Chapters 54-55 bring to a conclusion the whole panorama that opened at 40:1. The present passage leads us to the fulfillment of all that was promised to Israel through the covenants and to the promises the Gospel makes to all.

Invitation to pray: Ask God to help you understand and apply this passage to your life. Pray fervently that God will empower you with His Holy Spirit to do His will.

2. Now that the Servant's mighty work is complete, the expectancy that has been building through previous chapters explodes into song. **Read 54:1-55:13** and let your heart sing with Isaiah's music. Jot down the key words, phrases, and themes that you see in this section.

The image in chapter 54 is that of God, the faithful husband, forgiving Israel, the unfaithful wife, and restoring her to the place of blessing. Within this imagery there is the idea of blessing being provided by another's efforts through supernatural means. The barren woman sings, not because she has ceased to be barren, but because the Lord has acted in His Servant with the effect that His *seed* becomes her children—her *sons*.

3.
 - a. Scan 54:1-5 and note the commands in verses 1ab, 2abcd, and 4ab. Then, notice the reasons for obedience in verses 1b, 3, and 4cd.
 - b. What are the individual commands in these verses speaking of? (Note: “Tent” is used here as an illustration.)
 - c. How can verses 1-4 be applied to believers today?

Verse 1 is quoted by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 4:27, in reference to the miraculous “birth” of those under the New Covenant. Please note that Paul is not equating Israel with the church or suggesting that the specific Old Testament promises to the Jews are fulfilled in the church.

Figurative language does not change the overall literal fulfillment of prophecy.

4. How does verse 5 explain the cause of this reversal of fortunes for the woman?

5. Take a few minutes to **meditate on verse 5**. How does this passage speak to you personally? (Re-write this verse in your own words.)

As we continue our study of chapters 54-55, remember the results of the Servant’s work are unfolding before our very eyes.

Re-read 54:6-10 and enjoy the rich imagery of the marriage-covenant metaphor. Although Israel is the primary focus of this prophecy, the deliverance of all humanity from sin by the Servant is also in view.

6. How do you see the Lord expressing His passionate devotion for His people in verses 6-10?

7. a. Isaiah 54:10 points us to the incredible new arrangement the Lord will make with mankind. From Isaiah 53:5, explain the connection between the Servant of the Lord and the “covenant of peace.”
 - b. To get the full impact of what Isaiah is revealing about “peace” in these chapters, start with 53:5 and follow the thread in 54:10, 54:13, and 55:12 using the NIV. Then review Isaiah 9:6, 7. How do these verses minister to your needs?

Note: “Peace (*shalom*) is one of the richest words in the Hebrew language. It stands for complete wholeness, soundness, and well being; the sum total of covenant blessing, the full enjoyment of all that God has promised.” (Webb) In the New Testament, *peace* is the ultimate result of the Gospel.

8. Are there circumstances in your life where you lack peace? Take time to reflect on these NT words written for you by the God of all Peace. Romans 5:1-2, John 14:27; Ephesians 2:14; Galatians 5:22; Philippians 4:6-7; Hebrews 13:20-21. How could the *application* of these truths change your perspective?

In summing up verses 1-10: The women in this section are used as pictures of Israel, but they also show how God will help those who are described here.

9. As you look at the promises of verses 1-10, what could encourage women today?

In the next segment Isaiah changes his illustration from a restored wife to a rebuilt city (54:11-17). Jerusalem, the afflicted city, had been through many troubles, but now God promises to restore and beautify her. The Lord will build up the city with stones made of precious gems, *symbolic* of His care and esteem for the value of the city. The scope of this magnificent restoration extends beyond Israel's return from Babylon to include all the spiritual offspring of the Servant of the Lord.

10. **Re-read verses 11-17** and tell what this section reveals about the restoration of God's Kingdom. (Compare Revelation 21:10-14, 22-27.)

The blessings that the Servant achieved for His people were set forth abundantly in chapter 54. Now, God calls out to His people with *great urgency* to **return** to Him and enjoy life and relationship. Chapter 55 contains one of the warmest gospel invitations in the whole Bible. It provides a fitting climax to this section that deals with the magnificent work of the Servant.

11. a. **Review chapter 55.** Then look closely at verses 1-3. Who is being invited, and what are they invited to?
 - b. What does the fact that one can "come," "buy," and "eat" *without money* suggest about this invitation?
 - c. What reality is suggested by the images of water, wine, milk, the good, lush, and abundant food? (See John 6:35; Matthew 5:6 and Revelation 22:17.)

Re-read Isaiah 55:6-7. These verses give us the terms on which we may find our way back into a relationship with God.

12. Reflect on what it means to “seek the Lord.” (Notice the qualifying statement in v. 6a.) How do these verses outline the nature of true repentance?

13. According to 55:8-13, what transformations do God’s thoughts and words achieve?

14. Share a time when you experienced the abundance of what God has to offer. You might want to reflect again on question 11c.

15. a. In chapters 54-55 Isaiah mentions three things that will be *everlasting*. What are they?

b. Examine each promise and tell what they reveal about God’s great redemptive plan.

Taken by themselves, chapters 50-55 might suggest that the experience of salvation nullifies the necessity for godly living; however, chapters 56-66 lay that fallacy to rest immediately. The last major section of Isaiah deals with the necessity of living out the righteousness of God. These chapters emphasize what the characteristics of the servants of the Lord should be.

With this background in mind, **read chapters 56-57.** Reflect on the following New Testament references that speak about godly living: Romans 12:1, 6:22; II Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 4:7; 1 Timothy 2:8; II Timothy 2:8-9; I Peter 1:15-16, 2:5.

16. What specific actions can you engage in to train yourself to be a godly individual?

Finish by meditating on the marvelous truths in Isaiah 57:14-21. Be sure to notice the recurring themes from earlier chapters.

17. As you think back over chapters 54-57, what truths about God have impacted your life the most?