

Isaiah Lesson 16 Articles

The nation was “married” to Jehovah at Mt. Sinai, but she committed adultery by turning to other gods; and the Lord had to abandon her temporarily. However, the prophets promise that Israel will be restored when Messiah comes and establishes His kingdom.

What kind of a restoration will it be? For one thing, it is a restoration to *joy* and therefore an occasion for singing (Isa. 54:1a). Isaiah is certainly the prophet of song; he mentions *songs* and *singing* more than thirty times in his book. The immediate occasion for this joy is the nation’s deliverance from Captivity, but the ultimate fulfillment is when the Redeemer comes to Zion and the nation is born anew (59:20).

It will also be a restoration to *fruitfulness* when the nation will increase and need more space (54:1b–3). The nation had been diminished because of the Babylonian invasion, but God would help them multiply again. At the end of this age, only a believing remnant will enter into the kingdom; but the Lord will enlarge the nation abundantly. Israel may feel like a barren woman, unable to have children; but she will increase to the glory of God. God will do for her what He did for Sarah and Abraham (49:18–21; 51:1–3). The tents will need to be enlarged, and the desolate cities will be inhabited again!

Paul quoted Isaiah 54:1 in Galatians 4:27 and applied the spiritual principle to the church: Even as God blessed Sarah and the Jewish remnant with children, so He would bless the church, though she is only a small company in the world. Paul was not equating Israel with the church or suggesting that the Old Testament promises to the Jews are now fulfilled in the church. If we claim the Old Testament Jewish prophecies for the church, then we must claim *all* of them, the judgments as well as the blessings; and most people do not want to do that!

Israel’s restoration to her land will also mean *confidence* (Isa. 54:4–10). Isaiah gives another one of his “fear not” promises and explains why there was no need for the nation to be afraid. To begin with, *their sins were forgiven* (v. 4). Why should they fear the future when God had wiped out the sins of the past? (43:25; 44:22) Yes, the people had sinned greatly against their God; but He forgave them, and this meant a new beginning (40:1–5). They could forget the shame of their sins as a young nation, as recorded in Judges and 1 Samuel, as well as the reproach of their “widowhood” in the Babylonian Captivity.

Another reason for confidence is *the steadfast love of the Lord* (54:5–6). Jehovah is their Maker and would not destroy the people He created for His glory. He is their Redeemer and cannot sell them into the hands of the enemy. He is their Husband and will not break His covenant promises. As an unfaithful wife, Israel had forsaken her Husband; but He had not permanently abandoned her. He only gave her opportunity to see what it was like to live in a land where people worshiped false gods. God would call her back and woo her to Himself (Hosea 2:14–23), and she would no longer be “a wife deserted” (Isa. 54:6, NIV). She felt forsaken (49:14), but God did not give her up.

A third reason for confidence is *the dependable promise of God* (54:7–10). God had to show His anger at their sin; but now the chastening was over, and they were returning to their land. (On God’s anger, see 9:12, 17, and 21.) “With great mercies will I gather thee,” He promised. “With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.”

Whenever we rebel against God and refuse to listen to His warnings, He must chasten us; and He does it in love (Heb. 12:1–11). Our Father cannot permit His children to sin and get away with it. But the purpose of His chastening is to bring us to repentance and enable us to produce “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” (v. 11). When God “spanks” His erring children, He may *hurt* them; but He never *harms* them. It is always for our good and His glory.

God kept His promise concerning the Flood (Gen. 9:11–17), and He will keep His promises to His people Israel. They can depend on His love, His covenant, and His mercy. ¹

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Comforted* (pp. 141–145). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.