

READ

Isaiah 54:1-10

CONSIDER

Another topic for our deep pondering in the Advent Series is The Unfailing Love of God revealed through His Son Jesus Christ. Many books in the OT contain prophecies of the coming Messiah; Isaiah includes several. Isaiah 53 contains the most striking section of messianic prophecies, often called the Suffering Servant passage – Jesus would come as the Suffering Servant to take away the sins of the world. Chapter 54 reflects the future glory of the land through the **love of God** to His people.

In the OT times, people would offer animals as sacrifices for their sins. Here, the sinless servant of the Lord offers himself for our sins. He is the Lamb, offered for the sins of all people (John 1:29; Rev.5:6-14). The Messiah suffered for our sake, bearing our sins to make us acceptable to God. What can we say to such **love**? How will we respond to him? (Isa.53:11) tells us that believers are made right with God, not by their own works, but by the Messiah's great work on the cross, justified by claiming Jesus, the righteous servant, as their Savior and Lord (Rom.10:9; 2 Cor.5:21). Their life of sin is wiped away as they are clothed with Jesus' goodness (Eph.4:22-24).

The description of the unfailing love of God continues in Ch.54 with the image of a childless (barren) woman. To be childless in the ancient world brought a woman great shame and disgrace, and guaranteed a future of poverty for her. Families depended on children for survival, especially when the parents became elderly. Israel (represented by Jerusalem) was unfruitful, like a childless woman, but in the future restoration, God would permit her to have many children and would change her into singing. God said (54:6-8) that he had abandoned Israel for a brief moment, so the nation was like a young wife rejected by her husband. But God still called Israel his own. The God we serve is holy, and he cannot tolerate sin. When his people blatantly sinned, God in his anger chose to punish them. Sin separates us from God and brings us pain and suffering. But if we confess our sin and repent, God will forgive us, showing us with love and compassion. Think of someone being separated from a loved one and then experienced joy when that person returned. That is like the joy God experiences when you repent and return to him. Heaven rejoices when a lost person returns to God (Luke 15:7). In (Isa.54:9-13), God made a covenant with Noah that he has never broken (Gen.9:8-17). Likewise, God made a covenant of peace with the Israelites promising that the time would come when he would stop pouring out his anger on them, and would restore their wealth, and he would personally teach their children. (Isa.54:11-12) displays a picture of the future new Jerusalem; see also Rev.21:10, 18-21).

Deacon Samuel Chan

PRAY

Father God, I thank you deeply for your grace of forgiveness of my sins. Like the Israelites, I have committed things against your will many times, yet your love and forgiveness have pulled me back to you,

and you have graciously forgiven me. Guide me today that as I follow you on the pathways to be a mature Christian in Christ in my deeds and speech. Help us understand what we should do to continue fervently the salvation work started since your ascension, and how we would extend it to be proclaimed to the ends of the earth for the redemption of your people before your coming back. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide us to live a holy life so that your light of glory and truth will direct people to you as they seek you.

In the name of Jesus we pray,
Amen.

DIVING DEEPER

Discuss how we would reflect the unfailing love of God practically in our life so that people would see God changing us in our character.

Tell us how we would be joyful in our character, and why?

Count ten blessings God has given you which may have affected you greatly. Why?