

Isaiah Chapters 54-55 Summary - John Karmelich

Title: It's a great big, beautiful tomorrow!

For those of us who grew up going to Disneyland, you may know my lesson title from a ride called the "Carousel of Progress". Its theme song was, "A Great Big Beautiful Tomorrow". As I studied Chapter 54, that tune got stuck in my head. Chapter 55 then continues Isaiah's request to "Trust God, He is still working in our world, so bet on the winning horse!" This section follows chapters that Christians refer to as, "The Gospel According to Isaiah" (Chapter 53). The key point is if God is going to pay the price for sin Himself, then rule one day in the future, what do we do until then? To me the key point on that topic is He wants us to have faith that no matter what we're dealing with, we're on "the winning team"! OK John, most of us go to church regularly and believe Jesus is God. Why should we read further? In short, think of this section as about encouragement for us! I realize we all battle problems. Remember God has a wonderful eternal plan for us Christians and for the nation of Israel! That fact should remind us that whatever we're dealing with, at the most last will last only for this lifetime.

I admit one of my favorite Bible verses is Chapter 55:11: In essence it says, "God's Word never returns void". Meaning it's NEVER a waste of time to share the Bible with someone. When God called me to this ministry the basic instructions were "I write and post the lessons, and the rest is His problem!" My point is all these decades I have NEVER seen His Word return void and having thousands of people all over the world read this is my proof. Not saying we each must have a writing ministry. Just saying it's a simple reminder what God says is true and this ministry is proof of that! So, it's a great big, beautiful tomorrow (again a tune stuck in my mind from a Disney ride) is literally true for believers.

With that said, Chapter 54 changes topics from Chapter 53, that described in detail how Jesus suffered for our sins and how he was buried. It implies He rose from the dead as it describes His ruling as well as His suffering. From there, Chapter 54 is a message to the Israelites (and us) things will be better so we might as well plan for a better tomorrow! The message is in effect, "The price for sins was paid by God Himself, and He has wonderful eternal plans for us, so be encouraged no matter our situation!"

Chapter 54 opens with a cry as if Israel was like a barren woman who wanted children but did not have any! For what it's worth some women suffer that way. There's a great ministry for women dealing with an inability to have children (www.hannah.org). For most of us these verses speak metaphorically. We are seeing Isaiah effectively say great blessings are coming to believers, so have an eternal perspective about life! Verse 3 tells the Israelites to "enlarge their tents" implying God will bless them so much, it will require more space to live! In Genesis 15:18, God promised Abraham about 10 times the land area Israel will have one day! That means when Jesus comes back to rule, the land of Israel will include all of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and parts of Iraq and Iran! All this means is God is encouraging His people to trust Him! I realize that's hard given Israel's history from the Babylonian Captivity to the Romans to the Holocaust! Despite all that Israel still exists as an entity today and God is asking them to trust Him (believe in His Son and use our lives for His glory)! God has wonderful eternal plans for Israelites that believe in Jesus as well as us Christians!

OK John, you're preaching to choir again. I'm asking us Christians to realize that the first 8 verses here in Chapter 54 are for those who haven't made that commitment. If we as Christians are going to use our lives as a witness for Him, we must understand our eternal blessings so we can share those with others. We all go through times when we're struggling, and we don't see things getting better. God's not saying

commit suicide (that's murder and violates of one of the 10 Commandments), but just to realize we are blessed for trusting God far more than we could ever realize.

By Verse 9 Isaiah reminds us God has limits to His anger. I pondered a few lessons back if He has any emotions. The answer is yes in terms of how we can understand Him! For example, He will not punish us eternally for sin if we're trusting in Jesus' payment. He will punish us in this lifetime if that's what it takes to draw us closer to Him. He allows suffering ultimately for His glory! I'm not saying if we don't sin, life will be perfect. I'm just saying He allows bad things to happen to us, or even group level to get our attention on Him. Isaiah sites the flood story to state the fact that just as He swore never to flood all the earth again, so in eternity, we'll never have to deal with sin consequences there! The text says other things may change and there's things we think will never change (e.g., a mountain location) but God is saying in effect, He's in charge and promises forgiveness for all our sins! OK John, again we know all that. Remember when we think our world is falling apart or we falsely think we sinned too much to be redeemed, God still cares for us, and He wants to restore His relationship with us! That's the key point of the text of the rest of Chapter 54.

The later part of Chapter 54 focuses on Jesus ruling from Israel one day. There's a few mentions of the nation of Israel returning from Babylonian captivity as well. When Isaiah lived, Babylon was not even an empire, just a small city! Isaiah's saying I know Israel will suffer as an entity and despite that it is a matter of "future fact" God will rule the world one day from Jerusalem. In effect, it's a reminder of the "Great Big Beautiful Tomorrow" will happen!

Speaking of encouraging people to come to God, I present Chapter 55. It's as if God is saying I'll bless the Israelites that trust in Jesus' sin payment, but that promise isn't just for Jewish people, it's for all the world to chose to trust God to guide their lives. The opening verse encourages people to come to God. It uses the idea of free water (what we need to survive), free wine (biblically associated with joy) and a reference to milk which is what children need to grow healthy. God wants all people to be a part of His kingdom, which of course is why we witness to people. There's an expression I love, "Salvation is free but the annual dues cost you everything". (Heard it from John MacArthur). The idea is a commitment to follow Jesus literally costs us nothing, but once we make that commitment He wants to be in charge of every aspect of our lives. Jesus calls us to be a witness to all people since we have no idea who will be saved. In effect, that's what Chapter 55 is telling us, so it's not just "A New Testament thing"!

The middle verses of this short chapter are a reminder to seek God "when He can be found". Many go through life thinking, "I'll do that one day when I'm older!" Obviously, none of us know when our life will end. Again, I realize I'm preaching to devout Christians. Think of this section as a reminder why God saved us to share this salvation message to others. Not saying we must stand on a street corner to preach. Still the topic of God and eternity may come up and passages like this remind us why God did save us in the first place!

This leads me to one of my life verses, "So my Word that goes out of Me will not come back empty!" I use that for my ministry to remind myself that teaching God's word is NEVER a waste of time. I don't know how God will use me, but He does. Verse 10 uses the water cycle as a metaphor: Steam rises up to the clouds, which will eventually lead to rain! The point is God's word never returns void, and is as definite as the water cycle! Remember it's not up to us to save people, but He works through people to lead others to Him. Bottom line this section encourages believers to share the good news, as there is a "Great Big Beautiful Tomorrow" (eternity) for those who put their trust in Him. The question is what's God calling you to do to make that difference for Him? Pray for how God can use you today!

With that said, hope you like this study. I wrote a more detailed one some years back. If you want to read that, click on one of the links below. It is still a joy to study this stuff and again I'm grateful for you reading this. The rest of this email is links to questions you may have. If you're new here, realize you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again for reading this!