

Isaiah's Book of Consolation (Isaiah 40-55)
(#22) "The World-wide expansion of the Messiah's Kingdom" (Isaiah 54:1-17)

(The outline of Isaiah 40-55 is placed at the end of these notes.)

Let us turn to consider today the message of Isaiah 54.

We have considered through our study of Isaiah's Book of Consolation (Isa. 40-55) a number of passages that speak to the truths of our New Testament faith. The Old Testament foretold what we presently enjoy as Christians. What we now call the books of the Old Testament were "the oracles of God" to the early church-- the written authoritative Scriptures. Prior to the writing and dissemination of the New Testament books, the "Old Testament Scriptures" were the only Bible that the church held and proclaimed. We have already considered many verses in Isaiah that are quoted by New Testament writers to substantiate, validate their New Testament Christian experience. And we will see some more examples of that this morning.

The Apostle Peter had written that the Old Testament prophets had declared long before of the salvation that Christians enjoy through Jesus Christ. We read in **1 Peter 1:10-12**:

¹⁰Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, ¹¹searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand *the sufferings of Christ* and *the glories that would follow*. ¹²To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

Last Lord's Day we considered the Fourth Servant Song in which "*the sufferings of Christ*" were prophesied in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Today we will begin to consider "*the glories that would follow*" the sufferings of Christ, even the expansion of the Kingdom of God throughout the world.

Throughout the Book of Consolation (Isa. 40-55), we have read of God's intention to save a remnant of Israel, enabling them to return unto Him. They would come forth from "exile", returning to the Lord to the city of "Zion", that He promised to restore and cause to be inhabited.¹ We have also seen intimations of multitudes of Gentiles joining with "returning" Jews to take part in the Kingdom that the Messiah would establish and cause to greatly expand.² Before us in Isaiah 54 we read more clearly of God's enlargement of Zion and the great increase in the number of its "citizens." We read of the everlasting "covenant of peace" that God would establish with His people as a result of, and through the work of the Suffering Servant. This is a prophecy of what God has been doing through Jesus Christ these last two thousand years.³

¹ See Isaiah 40:9-11; 43:1-8; 16:21; 44:24-28; 48:1-11

² See Isaiah 42:1-6, 49:1-6; 52:10

³ In our study of Isaiah's Book of Consolation (Isa. 40-55) we have sought to interpret these prophecies consistent with the view of eschatology known as amillennialism (which is also in many ways similar to what is known as a historical premillennial return of Christ). Amillennialism is the belief that the promised kingdom of the Messiah was inaugurated upon the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ to the throne of God in heaven, even to the throne of David. Jesus Christ rules as the Son of David over His kingdom that has expanded to encompass Jewish and Gentile believers from all over the world. This view of the Kingdom is in conflict with the popular dispensational view of the Messiah's kingdom, which teaches that the promised Messiah's kingdom will be an earthly political kingdom over which Jesus will reign during a future 1,000 year millennium. The differences between the two views are numerous, but may be summarized as follows: (1) The amillennialist understands this church age as a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy;

The opening of this chapter conveys the metaphor of a woman who had been barren preparing to have many come forth to fill her “tent”, that is, her dwelling. This is a portrayal of formerly “barren”, or uninhabited Zion under the judgment of God, but that through the work of the Messiah, she experiences God’s blessing. Zion, or the Kingdom of God, grows in the number of its citizens, encompassing redeemed people from all over the Gentile world.

Here is our outline by which we will examine this passage:

- I. Zion is assured of a population explosion (54:1-3)
- II. Zion is assured of a restored relationship with God (54:4-10)
- III. Zion is assured of God’s blessing and security (54:11-17)

Let us take these points in turn:

I. Zion is assured of a population explosion (54:1-3)

*“Sing, O barren,
You who have not borne!
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,
You who have not labored with child!
For more are the children of the desolate
Than the children of the married woman,” says the LORD.*

²*“Enlarge the place of your tent,
And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings;
Do not spare;
Lengthen your cords,
And strengthen your stakes.
³For you shall expand to the right and to the left,
And your descendants will inherit the nations,
And make the desolate cities inhabited.*

We read of two women, one who has children and the other who is barren; she was childless. In the Old Testament world a barren woman was regarded as cursed of God. This barren woman is a metaphor for the people of Israel, even the city of Jerusalem, after it had suffered God’s judgment for its sin. But **verse 1**

dispensational premillennialism does not, but believes the prophets foretold a future 1000 year millennium on earth. (2) The amillennialist sees one people of God, all those redeemed by Christ, including all Old Testament true “believers” and New Testament Christians. The dispensationalist premillennialist understands the Bible to teach of two separate peoples—Israel and the Church, for which God has two different plans with two different futures. (3) The amillennialist sees the one promised mediatorial kingdom in Scripture, that being the kingdom of God ruled by our Lord Jesus Christ. The dispensational premillennialist teaches that there are two kingdoms of God, which are the Kingdom of God during this church age and the kingdom of David in a future 1,000 year millennium. (4) The amillennialist believes that Jesus Christ is now ruling as the King over the Kingdom of God, although His Kingdom will be manifested before everyone to see at His Second Coming, when He puts down all rebellion. Traditional dispensational premillennialism teaches that because of the Jews’ rejection of Jesus as their king, God postponed His kingdom; He will not become the King as the Son of David until his Second Coming, at the beginning of the 1,000 year millennium. (5) The amillennialist understands the prophets to foretell spiritual promises for a spiritual people—the church—in this current age. The dispensational premillennialist teaches that the Old Testament prophets foretold physical promises to a physical posterity of Jewish people in a Jewish state—“Israel.” (6) The dispensational premillennialist claims they interpret the Old Testament prophets literally. The amillennialist understands the Old Testament prophets to be veiled as to their true meaning and that they can only be understood when one sees Christ proclaimed through them, even as the New Testament writers provide an inspired interpretation of the prophets. The amillennialist argues that the Old Testament means what it says, but that the New Testament says what it means. The divine order is first the natural which gives way to the spiritual. The Old Testament is filled with types which give way to their anti-types in the New Testament, or that which was physical in the Old Testament gave way to that which is spiritual in the new.

has God declaring good news to this barren woman. God will see to it that she will have many more children than the woman who presently has children.

One can think of several women of the Old Testament who could have identified with this good news. Sarah who was childless even when Hagar had given birth to a son to Abraham. Rachael was barren when her sister Leah bore several sons to Jacob. Elkanah had two wives, who were Peninnah and Hannah. While Peninnah bore children to Elkanah, Hannah was barren, that is until she gave birth to Samuel. But Isaiah probably intended to depict before us Sarah, who had given birth to Isaac, through whom God had promised the realization that Abraham would be the father of many nations. And so, Sarah is a metaphor for Zion while under the judgment of God, having been cursed for having broken its covenant with God that had been enacted through Moses. But barren Sarah would give birth to many children. After a prolonged period of barrenness, affliction, feeling accursed of God, Zion will experience a population increase. This would be regarded as the blessing of God. For God, the husband of “Zion” had been estranged from her, there had been no fellowship between them. Propagation had not been possible. But God had restored His estranged wife to himself, and she would afterwards bare many children.

Here is a good explanation of this analogy set before us in verse 1:

After the “Servant of God” has expiated (i.e. removed) the sin of His people by the sacrifice of Himself, and Israel has acknowledged its fault in connection with the rejected One, and entered into possession and enjoyment of the salvation procured by Him, the glory of the church, which has thus become a partaker of salvation through repentance and faith, is quite ready to burst forth. Hence the prophet can exclaim, verse 1, “Exult, O barren one, thou that didst not bear; break forth into exulting, and cry aloud, thou didst not travail with child: for there are more children of the solitary one than children of the married wife, saith Jehovah.” The words are addressed to Jerusalem, which was a counterpart to Sarah in her barrenness at first, and her fruitfulness afterwards (ch. 51:1-3)... She was rendered *shomemah*, rendered solitary (2 Samuel 13:20; the allusion is to her depopulation as a city), whereas formerly she enjoyed the fellowship of Jehovah her husband. But this condition would not last (for Jehovah had not given her a divorce): she was therefore to exult and shout, since the number of her children which she would now have, as one desolate and solitary, would be greater than the number of those which she had as a married wife.⁴

Now as we then read in **verse 2** records, more room was needed for their tent dwelling. The old tent was simply not large enough to house the number of new born ones who are coming into this glorious family. Room additions were to be added, a nursery was now needed. Curtains for the tent would need to be added. The larger tent would need stronger tent pegs and chords that hold up the structure.

We see in **verse 3** the explanation of the metaphor. Zion, the city of God, which is also an emblem of the kingdom of God, would experience the blessing of God. There would be a great increase in the number of citizens of the city of Zion. Although Zion—Jerusalem—had formerly been desolate with very few inhabitants, the “city”, that is the kingdom of God which the city represents, would grow to encompass great land areas to “*the right and to the left.*” The kingdom would grow to such an extent that “the children” of Zion, that is, the citizens of the kingdom, would include multitudes of Gentiles. “*And your descendants will inherit the nations.*” The city state of Zion, the kingdom of God would “*make the desolate cities inhabited.*” And so, the people of God expand their territory and influence. The nation becomes numerous again, and spills out into Gentile lands, having repopulated former cities that had undergone destruction. It was not a physical city of Jerusalem/Zion, but it is the people redeemed by God through His Suffering Servant that increase in numbers to the extent that cities formerly made desolate due to God’s judgment are repopulated. Thus, the curse of God is removed; even Gentiles will be citizens in this kingdom. These people are blessed of God, having been redeemed by the suffering Servant of God.

⁴ C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament, vol. VII, Isaiah* (William B. Eerdmans, reprinted 1978), second part, pp. 342f.

This the promise be fulfilled, that “the meek shall inherit the earth,”—a promise not confined to the Preacher on the mount (i.e. Jesus), but also found in Psalm 37:9-10, and uttered by our own prophet in chapter 60:21, 65:9.⁵

Here are those verses mentioned in this quotation:

“For evildoers shall be cut off;
But those who wait on the LORD,
They shall inherit the earth.
For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more;
Indeed, you will look carefully for his place,
But it shall be no more. (Psalm 37:9)

Also your people shall all be righteous;
They shall inherit the land forever,
The branch of My planting,
The work of My hands,
That I may be glorified. (Isa. 60:21)

I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,
And from Judah an heir of My mountains;
My elect shall inherit it,
And My servants shall dwell there. (Isa. 65:9)

I appreciate also application by **John Calvin** of the metaphor of a tent to the church of God. Perhaps he stretches the meaning of the metaphor a bit, but it is edifying to consider nevertheless:

All these things must be taken together, if we wish to learn the Prophet’s real meaning. In this way Zechariah 2:5 Malachi 4: 2 and Haggai encouraged the people by the hope of their future condition, when they saw that little progress was made in building the temple; for they promised that “the glory of the latter temple should be greater than the glory of the former” (Haggai 2:9). This was not at all visible, and therefore they extended those promises till Christ; and by hope and confidence in him the people must have been encouraged to build the temple. Consequently, this consolation was common to the Jews who lived under the Law, and to us who see more clearly in Christ this restoration of the Church.

The curtains of thy tents. The metaphor is borrowed from tabernacles, which were extensively used in that country. The Church is compared to them, because it has no solid building in the world; for it appears to be wandering and unsettled, in consequence of being necessarily moved from one place to another on account of various changes. But still I am fully persuaded that the Prophet had in his eye that former deliverance (as we have stated to have been customary with the prophets) when, being led through the wilderness, they dwelt in tents for forty years; for which reason they kept a public festival every year by the command of God (Leviticus 23:39-43). It will be objected that the building which is erected by the ministers of the Word is so solid that it ought not to be compared to “tabernacles.” But I reply, this metaphor of “tabernacles” relates rather to the outward aspect of the Church than to its spiritual and (what, may be called) it’s internal condition; for the actual building of the Church is nothing else than the kingdom of God, which is not fading or similar to tents. Yet the Church does not cease to be conveyed from one place to another; for it has no stable or permanent habitation. In short, its solid firmness is such that it surpasses the best fortified citadels; for, relying on the invincible power of God, it

⁵ Ibid, p. 345.

scorns all danger. On the other hand, it resembles “tents,” because earthly wealth, forces, and strength are not its support.⁶

II. Zion is assured of a restored relationship with God (54:4-10)

⁴*“Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed;
Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame;
For you will forget the shame of your youth,
And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.*

⁵*For your Maker is your husband,
The LORD of hosts is His name;
And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel;
He is called the God of the whole earth.*

⁶*For the LORD has called you
Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,
Like a youthful wife when you were refused,”
Says your God.*

⁷*“For a mere moment I have forsaken you,
But with great mercies I will gather you.
⁸With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment;
But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,”
Says the LORD, your Redeemer.*

⁹*“For this is like the waters of Noah to Me;
For as I have sworn
That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth,
So have I sworn
That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.*

¹⁰*For the mountains shall depart
And the hills be removed,
But My kindness shall not depart from you,
Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,”
Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.*

Verse 4 speaks comfort to “Zion”, that she need not fear, for she will no longer have cause for shame. The prophet declared that she would never again be disgraced, as in the days of the “shame of youth” that Zion had formerly experienced. This describes the people of God when they were in bondage in Egypt. Moreover they will forget those difficult days when they were in bondage in Babylon. Verse 4 reads that she “*will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.*” God’s people will have been in the Babylonian captivity. God had abandoned her in a foreign land and she had been left alone as a widow is left alone by her departed husband. She was left to fend for herself.

In verse 5 we read that it was the “Lord of hosts” who would affect this change on her behalf. God is presented as Zion’s “Maker”, that is, “Creator”, as well as “Husband.” He is the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. God had redeemed His people from their guilt and bondage of sin. God is described in this way in order to assure His people that He will bring to pass His promises to His people.

But further, God is also called “The God of all the earth.” This describes God as the Sovereign Ruler over all, suggesting also the world-wide expansion of His people. He is not only the God over Jews, but also over all the Gentiles from which He will form His people. “Is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also” (Rom 3:29). God is sovereign. His power is not limited.

⁶ John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, vol. 8 in *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Baker Book House, reprinted 1993), pp. 136f.

Verse 6 declares the reason that Zion is redeemed: *“For the LORD has called you.”* It was this sovereign God who had taken the initiative to call His people unto Himself, restoring them to a relationship with Him.

Salvation is ultimately due to the sovereign grace of God that He exercises in calling people to Himself. It is true that we call on Him for salvation. But before we ever called on Him, He issued a divine summons to us. For only those who are bidden are given entrance into His presence.

Zion is likened unto a “wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even like a wife of one's youth when she is rejected.” Israel, had been called to be the wife of Jehovah; but she was found to be impure, unfaithful, playing the harlot repeatedly by having her affections constantly focused on other gods and other things. She had forsaken Him. He in turn forsook her.

But we read in **verse 7** that God's rejection of her was temporary. *“For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you.”* God had forsaken her with the purpose of curing her completely of her defections, her backslidings from Him. God had brought judgment upon Israel and Judah and the people had suffered exile and were in bondage for a time.

He explained further in **verse 8**: *“With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment.”* Of course her estrangement from God was for much longer than a “moment.” But it was but a “moment” in comparison to the eternity in which she will enjoy her restored relationship with God. This is expressed in the next clause: *“But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you, says the LORD, your Redeemer.”*

And so God describes His abandonment of His people in Babylon as “a brief moment.” This was designed to encourage His suffering people. For them it was a long 70 years exile in Babylon. And it would be many hundreds of years later until their Redeemer would arise to secure their covenant relationship through His sufferings on Calvary. But it would be worth it to them if they could see that their hardship was “momentary” in comparison with the length to which they would enjoy their relationship once the suffering ended.

We Christians, as God's people, are to view our suffering in this way.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

In **verse 8** God describes His affection as His “everlasting kindness.” The Hebrew word translated is *hesed*, which speaks of God's covenant love for His people. It is shown in His everlasting lovingkindness toward them. He does not have “lovingkindness”, that is, *hesed*, for any but His people. He is indeed kind and loving to all, even His enemies, because it is His nature. God is love. He is loving in His actions toward all in spite of who they are. But God has a special love for His people, which is likened to that of the love of a husband for His bride/wife. Of course the only reason that He has this kind of love for His people and not for those who are not His people is that He regards His people to be in union with His Son, Jesus Christ, whom He loves supremely.

And so, God is loving to all people alike, but He does not love all people alike. He refers to His people as His “beloved” for they stand in filial relationship to Himself. To those who He sees in Christ He has compassion and has mercy so as to do whatever is necessary to affect their salvation. If you are a Christian, it is because Almighty God has made you an object of His choice, not because of any merit on your part. He has saved you by His grace. He did whatever was necessary to secure any eternity with Himself. He has and shows His *hesed* toward you. There is no ground for boasting here on our part, but there is a great basis for rejoicing. He could have left us in our sin to experience His just condemnation.

We next read in **verse 9** that just as God had once promised Noah that He would never again destroy the earth through His judgment of a flood, here He assures His people that His wrath would never come upon them again.

⁹*“For this is like the waters of Noah to Me;*

***For as I have sworn
That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth,
So have I sworn
That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.***

Now here is a powerful argument for the spiritual nature of Zion. The promise of God was that after the Servant of the Lord had borne the punishment of the transgression of His people (Isa. 53), there would be no more judgment for “Zion” (Isa. 54). Zion is spiritually the true people of God redeemed by God’s Servant. This “Israel” or “Zion” is not a reference to the physical city of Jerusalem, as some have sought to teach, for that city never experienced the total cessation of God’s judgment upon it even after the Suffering Servant had redeemed His people. For what happened to the physical Jerusalem in A.D. 70? The Lord Jesus had pronounced its desolation due to the judgment of God (cf Matt. 23:38). But further this cannot be applied to earthly Jerusalem which now is, for it is anything but a holy city. The record of the New Testament and the first century is that the earthly Jerusalem experienced a horrible destruction at the hands of Titus in A.D. 70. Furthermore, this destruction in A.D. 70 had been due to the judgment of God (cf. Matt. 23:37-38). In the Book of Revelation the earthly city of Jerusalem is spiritually called Sodom (Rev. 11:8). For the earthly Jerusalem, only desolation was determined (Luke 21:20).

No, the loving kindness that God has for Zion is for the people of God who had been redeemed by the Suffering Servant. God had established a covenant with them through Christ. It is called a “covenant of peace.”

***¹⁰For the mountains shall depart
And the hills be removed,
But My kindness shall not depart from you,
Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,”
Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.***

In order for God to assure His good designs for “Zion” He gave these words. Again, the only Zion that has this promise is the city whose King is Jesus, whose people worship and serve Him in love.

Please take note of the important covenant language. The only ones who enjoy a state of peace with Him are those that are in covenant relationship with Him in Christ. “He is our peace.” When He states, “*But My kindness shall not depart from you*”, He is again using the word *hesed*. It is an everlasting love that He has for His people. Mountains may wear out, hills removed, but God’s love for His people will never diminish, never fail.

But for all those outside of Christ God resists. They are under His wrath and are regarded as His enemies (Rom. 5:10; James 4:4; Col. 1:21). And Jesus Christ the King is fighting not for them but against them. He is bringing His enemies to encounter His destruction of them. He will overturn them and consign them to everlasting punishment for they are aligned with everything that He and His Father oppose.

III. Zion is assured of God's blessing and security (54:11-17)

***¹¹“O you afflicted one,
Tossed with tempest, and not comforted,
Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems,
And lay your foundations with sapphires.
¹²I will make your pinnacles of rubies,
Your gates of crystal,
And all your walls 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.*

¹⁵*Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me.
Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.*

¹⁶*“Behold, I have created the blacksmith
Who blows the coals in the fire,
Who brings forth an instrument for his work;
And I have created the spoiler to destroy.*

¹⁷*No weapon formed against you shall prosper,
And every tongue which rises against you in judgment
You shall condemn.
This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,
And their righteousness is from Me,”
Says the LORD.*

Now the city of Zion is spoken of as being arrayed in beauty, reflecting a time of prosperity, a time of enjoying peace and the blessing of God. Formerly she had been the object of His wrath. He had afflicted her, she had been as a ship that was “Tossed with tempest, and not comforted.” This not only describes the former condition of the people of God before having been redeemed, but it describes all those who are outside of Jesus Christ. There is no security, no safety, from the destroyer. But for us who are in Christ our defences and gates are not only impenetrable, but adorned in beauty. As one once beautifully applied this to Christians:

This earnest address is exceedingly well fitted for soothing the grief of believers; for it represents the Church, which was ready to be drowned, as being now rescued by him from shipwreck. Whenever therefore we shall see her violently shaken by tempests, and weighed down by a load of distresses, and deprived of all consolation, let us remember that these are the very circumstances which induce God to give assistance.⁷

And within the confines of this walled city we enjoy unbroken fellowship with our Lord. God Himself instructs us. This is expressed in **verse 13**.

¹³*All your children shall be taught by the LORD,
And great shall be the peace of your children.*

We read this verse in John’s Gospel. Our Lord Jesus described all true Christians as having been taught by God to come to salvation. We read in **John 6:45f**,

“It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.”

Our Lord applied the words of Isaiah 54:13 to the people whom God the Father taught to come to Him in repentance and faith. The fulfilment of this verse as stated by the Lord Jesus confirms to us that this passage of Isaiah 54 is prophetic of God bringing salvation to His people in this church age.

This statement of the prophet and also as it was proclaimed by our Lord Jesus, teaches that salvation is wholly due to the grace of God, due to the work of God, not our own.

⁷ Ibid, p. 145.

Besides, we are taught by this passage that the calling of God is efficacious in the elect. Augustine examines this passage judiciously, and applies it skillfully against the Pelagians, who extolled man's freewill in opposition to the grace of God. They appeared, indeed, to ascribe something to the grace of God, but in such a manner that, when they brought it forward, they gave to it an inferior place to man's freewill; just as the Papists do, who assert that any person can either receive or reject it. "But" (says Augustine) "all shall be taught by God. Now, God's disciples are efficaciously taught, and follow his calling." He likewise adds that passage of John's Gospel which we have quoted. This shows clearly that it is not from free choice made by man, and which is capable of being bent in either direction, that it proceeds.⁸

In **verse 14** we read that the security of the city of God is invulnerable to any who would seek to come against His people. The judgment of God will not come upon them. They are safe in the confines of the city because they are the people of God.

***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.***

They are secure and established forever. They need have no fear for God will protect them from harm. That it is security secured by God is apparent from the next verse.

***¹⁵Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me.
Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.***

No effort to destroy you can succeed. The Apostle Paul expressed it this way:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:35-40)

God describes His sovereignty in **verse 16**:

***¹⁶"Behold, I have created the blacksmith
Who blows the coals in the fire,
Who brings forth an instrument for his work;
And I have created the spoiler to destroy.***

God is seen in His sovereignty. He has control over all forces, limiting their capabilities. They are mere instruments in His hands to effect His purposes. God has created the one who makes the weapons of destruction that wreaks destruction and death upon people. He has also created the ones who employ those weapons to destroy. God uses unsaved people to bring judgment on others and even to chasten His own people.

"And yet we must not, on that account, lay blame on God, as if He were the author of unjust cruelty which dwells in men alone; for God does not give assent to their wicked inclinations, but regulates their efforts by His secret providence, and employs them as the instruments of His anger" (Calvin).

⁸ Ibid, p, 147.

But He declared in **verse 17** that He had not created a weapon or an enemy that might employ a weapon that would be capable of destroying His people whom He has redeemed unto Himself. There is not even a voice who can bring a just charge against His people. God has fully exonerated them of all charge of sin, all warrant for God’s judgment upon them. He has regarded them as righteous, as ones unassailable by enemy or accuser.

***17No weapon formed against you shall prosper,
And every tongue which rises against you in judgment
You shall condemn.
This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,
And their righteousness is from Me,”
Says the LORD.***

God Himself defends and vindicates His people. They are His and He will stand in front of them to shield them from harm; and stand before them in their defence when accusations are levelled against them. Not only “every weapon” which might threaten them but “every tongue”, which would level a slander, which seeks to defame or revile the saint of God, will be treated with contempt by Him who defends His servants. “This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their vindication is from Me, declares the Lord.”

We are His servants, we are responsible to serve Him faithfully. As our Master, He assumes the responsibilities of a righteous Owner. He provides for us. He protects us. He watches over us. And when one of His own is affronted by someone He views Himself as having been affronted. He comes to stand on behalf of His own and vindicates them; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith-- to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen (Rom 16:25-27)

Outline of Isaiah 40-66
SECTION THREE: ORACLES OF REDEMPTION AND CONSUMMATION

I. The Book of the Consolation of Israel (Chs. 40-55)

- A. The Prophet is to Announce God’s Coming (40:1-11)
- B. The Creator of the Universe (40:12-31)
- C. God Promises to Deliver His People from Babylon (41:1-29)
- D. The First Servant Song (42:1-9)
- E. Sing to the Lord a New Song (42:10-13)
- F. God declares His resolve to battle on behalf of His people (42:14-17)
- G. Israel, the Blind and Deaf Servant of God (42:18-25)
- H. God’s Commitment to Save His People by His Grace (43:1-7)
- I. The Servant Israel is the Lord’s Witness (43:8-13)
- J. The Redemption and Restoration of Israel from Babylon (43:14-44:8)
- K. Satire against Idolatry (44:9-20)
- L. Israel is Forgiven and Redeemed (44:21-23)
- M. God Commissions the Persian Emperor Cyrus to Deliver His People (44:24-45:13)
- N. The Conversion of the Nations (45:14-25)

- O. Worthless Idols vs. the Living God (46:1-13)
- P. The Defeat and Humiliation of Babylon Predicted (47:1-15)
- Q. Israel Refined and Redeemed (48:1-22)
- R. The Second Servant Song (49:1-13)
- S. God's Restoration of "Zion"--His People—Who are Redeemed by His Servant (49:14-26)
- T. God Assures His People that He will Save Them unto Himself (49:14-26)
- U. The Third Servant Song (50:1-11)
- V. The Lord Comforts Zion (51:1-52:12)
- W. The Fourth Servant Song (52:13-53:12)
- X. The World-wide Expansion of the Messiah's Kingdom--Zion (54:1-17)
