

Enlarge The Place Of Your Tent.

Isaiah 54:1-5.

Sunday evening, July 13, 2008.

I. The barren and the married woman. Vs. 1.

The Apostle Paul quotes and explains this verse in Galatians 4:21-31.

- A. There are two people contained in Israel, just as there are two people contained in the church. The wheat and the tares. Matt. 13:36-43.
- B. Similarly there is "Israel after the flesh." That is those who only outwardly belong to Israel. Paul calls that "Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." Gal. 4:25. She is the married woman. Married to the Lord by covenant ratified at Mt. Sinai. She has a fair number of children, namely all those who are Jews after the flesh.
- C. But within them there is the godly remnant in whom the Spirit of God dwells. Those who are possessed of the new birth. John 3: 3-5.
She is the one who would bring the promised Messiah into the world, and with Him a host of spiritual children.
She is called "Jerusalem above which is the mother of us all." Gal. 4:26.
- D. She became the mother of us all in giving birth to Christ.
Until she brought forth Christ she was barren, or at best a "lady in waiting," but nevertheless childless and therefore desolate.
Nevertheless, her children will be many more than that of "the married woman."
- E. She is told to sing and to break forth into singing and to cry aloud. This is a cry for joy. This means that she is to behave totally unlike a barren or desolate woman. The reason is the many children she will bring into the world; far more than the "married woman."

Application: Here we see that outward forms are not enough; at the same time we should see that outward forms are important. Let us never rest until we sincerely embrace the inward and the outward forms of true religion. The heavenly and the earthly; the visible and the invisible; the spiritual and the tangible. To be a part of "Jerusalem above" you need both aspects of the Kingdom of God as it has broken into history.

II. Enlarge the place of your tent. Vs. 2,3.

- A. What follows in these verses is the great missionary call to the godly remnant. It is uttered in prophetic language.
- B. These verses set the soul of William Carey on fire, and they formed the text of a sermon he preached in London which sparked the great missionary movement of the Christian Church, beginning in the late seventeenth hundreds.
- C. "Jerusalem above," now no longer "the barren one," is pictured as dwelling in a tent. Not in a house and not in a city, but in tents like to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. After all, she is a pilgrim, and her people are a pilgrim people who await the better country and city.
- D. She is told to enlarge the place of her tent.
No longer is the tent to sit on the land of Israel alone. Now it is to include the

- nations of the earth and the (spiritually) desolate cities.
- E. She is told to stretch out the curtains of her dwellings;
To lengthen the cords;
To strengthen the stakes;
And not to do so sparingly.
 - F. She is to expand to the right and to the left;
Her descendants will inherit the nations;
And make the (spiritually) desolate cities inhabited (with the Lord's people).
"The meek will inherit the earth." Matt. 5:5.
"He who overcomes shall inherit all things." Rev. 21:7.

Application: How timid we are not to spare. How sparingly we reach out compared to bygone generations whose lives were wrapped up in enlarging the tent, and in bringing the nations of the earth under her curtains. May God again bring home to us the meaning of this passage and give us of His Spirit as he did with William Carey.

III. Do not fear. Vs. 4,5.

- A. The fear of failure is a paralyzing fear.
We fail to attempt many things in life for fear of failure, or the shame associated with public failure. "What will others say?" "Will they laugh at me?"
- B. Such failure and the shame associated with it are not options or possibilities in this case.
- C. In fact any memory of shame and reproach for past failures will be erased.
Israel had many such memories from times of unfaithfulness all the way to the captivity in Babylon.
- D. The reason for there being no possibility of the shame of failure is this.
 - 1. He who is our Maker is also our Husband.
 - Our Maker.
That is He who formed and preserved us to this very end.
 - Our Husband.
That is He who walks by our side; He who watches over us and provides for us, and He who causes His truth and His cause to triumph through us.
 - 2. He is the Lord of Host. That is the God of armies. God's military name.
 - 3. He is the Redeemer; the Holy One of Israel.
That is the Holy One of the "Israel of God." Gal. 6:16 and "the Jerusalem above which is the mother of us all" Gal 4:26.
 - 4. He is the God of the whole earth. That is of all the nations of the earth.

Application: If we look on missions as our errand, it is indeed a fool's errand. If we look on it as the Lord's agenda and overarching purpose in history, then we simply and humbly take our place beside Him in this great work, and in obedience we enlarge our tent, knowing that we can not fail for He can not fail, and all the nations of the earth belong to Him.