

**T**he Children of the Desolate One, Isaiah 54  
*Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child; break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; for the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous than the sons of the married woman, says the Lord.*  
*Isaiah 54:1*

*The most striking characteristic of Israel and its national history is not the heroism nor the shame of its kings, not the greatness of its standing in the history of the world, nor its particular record of righteousness: these barely ruffle the fabric of recorded history. Rather, that which is most noteworthy in its history is the record of despair and destruction, captivity and desolation. Israel has been the perpetual fugitive.*

**Milestones in Israel’s history: a record of desolation**

- Abraham and Sarah: \_\_\_\_\_
- The Egyptian captivity: \_\_\_\_\_
- Early failure in Canaan: \_\_\_\_\_
- The failure of its two early kings: \_\_\_\_\_
- The kings of Israel and Judah: \_\_\_\_\_
- Perpetual regional threats: \_\_\_\_\_
- Captivity and dispersion of Israel: \_\_\_\_\_
- Captivity of Judah: \_\_\_\_\_
- Half-hearted attempts to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple: \_\_\_\_\_

**Human nature in Israel’s failures**

- The “Egypt” effect: \_\_\_\_\_
- Adulterousness: \_\_\_\_\_
- Faithlessness: \_\_\_\_\_
- The arrogance of wealthiness: \_\_\_\_\_
- Indifference to the plight of others: \_\_\_\_\_
- Weak ambition: \_\_\_\_\_
- Rejection of the truth: \_\_\_\_\_
- The indolence of the elect: \_\_\_\_\_

*The most common characteristic is the failure to believe the promise.*

**God’s promise in the face of these failures:**

*Fear not, for you will not be put to shame . . . for a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you.*  
*Is. 54:4-8*

**Us in Our World**

*The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped by unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work. But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.*

*Henry David Thoreau, Walden*

- **Our behavioral similarities to Israel**
  - The usual stuff: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Indolence: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Arrogance: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Indifference: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Taking “It” for granted: \_\_\_\_\_
- **The cumulative effect: Avoiding Grace**
  - **Not** believing the promise: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Trusting in our own self sufficiency: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Fear of what God might call upon us to do, rather than the “fear of God.” \_\_\_\_\_
- **The Promise**
  - *I hid my face from you for a moment; but with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you. Is 54:8*
  - *My covenant of peace will not be shaken: Is. 54:10*
  - *No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. Is. 54:17*
- **The Lesson?** \_\_\_\_\_

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