

for any nation. A nation that bases its life on the Bible can look forward to prosperity and will be established in righteousness. This has been fulfilled many times in the history of God's people.

The remainder of chapter 54 reads as follows:

(14b-c) You will be far from Oppression, for you will not fear, and from terror, for it will not come near you. (15) On occasions when someone continually stirs up strife, it will not be from me; the one who strives with you will fail because of you. (16) Behold, I am the one who created the smith that blows the fire of coals and brings out a weapon for its purpose, and I have created the destroyer to lay waste. (17) No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; and you will condemn every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is from me, says the LORD.

This portion of the chapter looks at the miseries of God's people and declares that they need not fear. Troubles will come, but God will not Himself cause them. The prophet's vision looks into situations far beyond his time, and it is difficult to pinpoint precisely the time of fulfillment. In principle, the passage has found expression in the lives of all who recognize the suffering Servant as their Saviour and also, to a very definite extent, in the experience of the descendants of the people of Israel.

In verse 15, our translation, "continually stirs up strife," differs from that found in most Bibles but is equally possible from the Hebrew ⁵² and fits the context somewhat better.

The promise that terror "will not come near" has never yet been fully realized. Almost every group of God's people has had to go through periods of oppression and fear. This passage promises that such oppression will not go on indefinitely. Sometimes it is produced by Satan; in many cases it results from sin. Yet God uses it for His own purposes in developing His people, and He promises that eventually He will bring it to a complete end. Although verse 15 recognizes that there will be times when God's people will undergo prolonged opposition, it