



FROM BARRENNESS TO BOUNTY FROM BEREAVED TO BLESSED

The Reality of Pain ... The Wonder of Reconciliation

"'EUCATASTROPHE': the sudden happy turn in a story which pierces us with a joy that brings tears. It produces this peculiar effect on us because 'eucatastrophe' is a sudden glimpse of Truth. Our whole nature chained in material cause and effect, the chain of death, feels a sudden relief as if a major limb out of joint had suddenly snapped back. We perceive that this is indeed how things really do work in the Great World for which our nature is made. And I realized that the Resurrection was the greatest 'eucatastrophe' possible in the greatest Fairy Story – filling in us that essential emotion: a joy which produces tears because it is qualitatively so like sorrow, for it comes from those places where Joy and Sorrow are at one, reconciled, as selfishness and altruism are lost in Love." Tolkien



The Fruits of the Servant's Suffering

ISAIAH 54

FILLING THE WORLD WITH WELCOME

- ❖ 1 **SING**, barren woman who has borne no child;
break forth into singing and cry out,
you who were never in labor,
for the children of the wife who has been deserted will
be more numerous than the children of the married, says
the Lord.
2 Enlarge the site of your tent,
and stretch out the drapes of your dwellings;
don't hold back.
Lengthen your tent ropes and strengthen your stakes.
3 To the right and to the left you will burst out,
and your children will possess the nations' land
and settle their desolate cities.



“ALL WILL BE WELL”

❖ 4 **DON'T FEAR** because you won't be ashamed; don't be dismayed, because you won't be disgraced.

You will forget the shame of your youth; you'll no longer remember the disgrace of your widowhood.

5 The one marrying you is the one who made you—the Lord of heavenly forces is his name.

The one redeeming you is the holy one of Israel, the one called the God of all the earth.



COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST

- ❖ 6 As an abandoned and dejected woman the Lord has summoned you;
as a young wife when she is rejected,
says your God.
7 For a brief moment I abandoned you,
but with great mercy I will bring you back.
8 In an outburst of rage,
I hid my face from you for a moment,
but with everlasting love I have consoled you,
says your redeemer, the Lord.



NEVER AGAIN

❖ 9 These are like the days of Noah for me,
when I promised that Noah's waters would never again
cover the earth.

Likewise I promise not to rage against you or rebuke
you.

10 The mountains may shift,
and the hills may be shaken,
but my faithful love won't shift from you,
and my covenant of peace won't be shaken,
says the Lord, the one who pities you.



A close-up photograph of a stone Buddha statue. The Buddha's face is on the left, looking down with a serene expression. The right hand is visible, resting on the chest. The stone is weathered and has a greyish-brown color. The background is blurred.

COMFORT ... OH COMFORT

- ❖ 11 Suffering one, storm-tossed, uncomforted,
look, I am setting your gemstones in silvery metal
and your foundations with sapphires.
12 I will make your towers of rubies,
and your gates of beryl,
and all your walls of precious jewels.

A PLACE OF TIKUN



❖ 13 All your children will be disciples of the Lord—
I will make peace abound for
your children.

14 You will be firmly founded in
righteousness.

You will stay far from oppression
because you won't fear,
far from terror because it won't
come near you.

THE LORD HAS SPOKEN

- ❖ 15 **If anyone attacks you, it's none of my doing.**
Whoever attacks you will fall because of you.
- 16 Look, I myself created the metalworker who blows the
fire of coal and who produces a tool for his work.
And I myself created the looter to destroy.
- 17 No weapon fashioned against you will succeed,
and you may condemn every tongue that disputes with
you.

This is the heritage of the Lord's servants,
whose righteousness comes from me, says the Lord.

