INTRODUCTION
If I were to ask you to summarise the benefits of the gospel in one word, what word would you pick? A number of words come to my mind, and I am sure to yours: salvation, forgiveness, reconciliation, atonement, and there are many others. But what word would have come to the mind of an Israelite in Isaiah’s time? I think the word would be: peace. In Hebrew shalom. To us today the word peace means ‘an absence of conflict,’ ‘the cessation of hostilities’ or ‘a state of tranquillity.’ To the Old Testament people of God it meant these things but also much more. It meant ‘completeness’, ‘soundness’, and ‘well-being.’ It encompassed material prosperity, physical safety and spiritual well-being. It stood for the sum total of covenant blessing, the full enjoyment of all that God had promised. Even today when pious Jews meet, they greet each other with the word, “Shalom” “Peace.”

THE FULFILMENT OF THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM (verses 1-3)
Abraham was born into a pagan family in southern Mesopotamia, in what is now Iraq. God gave him a number of promises including this one: “I will make of you a great nation.” (Genesis 12:2) When Abraham was 99 years old he and Sarah, his wife, still had no children; not one. Abraham was very old to become a father and Sarah was well past her childbearing years. But God promised that they would have a child: and they had a child. Isaiah alludes to this story in verse 1 of chapter 54. Many of the people of Israel had been killed when the Babylonians conquered Judea and no doubt many of them died during their resettlement into Babylonia. From a human point of view their history as a people was over. The nation was barren, even as Sarah had been barren. But just as Abraham and Sarah had received the promise of a child while living in tents as aliens in the land of Canaan, so Israel was to receive the promise of descendants while living in exile in a foreign land.
THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COVENANT WITH MOSES (verses 4-8)
With the reference to God as Israel’s “Maker” “husband” and “Redeemer” the focus shifts to the covenant made with Moses at Mount Sinai. In her youth Israel had suffered the shame of slavery in Egypt; she is now suffering the shame of widowhood in Babylon. But as God took Israel to be his bride at Mount Sinai, so he remains her husband while she is in captivity in Babylon. Israel became God’s bride at Mount Sinai. As Christians we have been grafted into Israel and so we too, as the church, are the bride of Christ. God will not cast us off. He may need to discipline us. Certainly in this sinful world we will suffer tribulation. But God will not divorce us; he will not cast us out. This is the fulfillment of the covenant with Moses.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COVENANT WITH NOAH (verses 9-17)
In verse 7 the focus shifts again, this time to the covenant with Noah. Now this seems strange, because Isaiah had been working forward in time – the covenant with Abraham came before the covenant with Moses – now he goes back to a covenant made before the time of Abraham. But it is not illogical, because the covenant with Noah was made with the whole earth. And so Isaiah is teaching us that there is a widening in God’s redeeming purposes. Just as God preserved Noah’s family during the Great Flood so he will preserve the people of Israel during the exile and as Noah’s family then spread out to bring life and blessing to the whole earth so the people of Israel will become a blessing to the whole earth. The covenant of peace mentioned in verse 10 seems to be the same as the New Covenant spoken about by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 31:31-34. In verse 11 Isaiah breaks into beautiful description of the privileges of the people of God. There are three things emphasized here:

1. Prosperity – material and spiritual (verses 11 & 12). Isaiah is looking forward to the New Jerusalem in heaven. His imagery is taken up in the Book of Revelation chapter 21. The message is: better days are coming. The best is yet to be.

2. Fear vanquished (verses 13 & 14) God is with us and will protect us and our children.

3. Safety (verse 15-17) God watches over his own and protects them.

These precious promises look forward to the New Jerusalem in the new heavens and the new earth. They are the greater fulfillment of God’s covenant with Noah.