

C. PROGRAM OF THE LORD'S SERVANT,  
CHAPTERS 49 - 53

1. RESCUE, CHAPTER 49

a. DESPISED SERVANT

TEXT: 49:1-6

- 1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye peoples, from far:  
Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of  
my mother hath he made mention of my name:
- 2 and he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the  
shadow of his hand hath he hid me: and he hath made me a  
polished shaft; in his quiver hath he kept me close:
- 3 and he said unto me, Thou art my servant; Israel, in whom  
I will be glorified.
- 4 But I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength  
for nought and vanity; yet surely the justice due to me is with  
Jehovah, and my recompense with my God.
- 5 And now saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be  
his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be  
gathered unto him; (for I am honorable in the eyes of Jehovah:  
and my God is become my strength;)
- 6 yea, he saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be  
my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the  
preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the  
Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of  
the earth.

QUERIES

- a. Who is this Jehovah "hath called from the womb"?
- b. Why is he disappointed that he has labored in "vain"?
- c. Why increase his burden to "the end of the earth"?

## PARAPHRASE

Listen to Me, all you peoples in far distant parts of the earth, Jehovah called Me to be His servant long before I was ever born. From within the womb of My mother I was given My name by Jehovah. Jehovah is going to make My words His weapon, like a sharp sword. I will be the greatest weapon in His hand. He will make Me like a finely polished and sharpened arrow, ready in His quiver for His warfare. Jehovah said to Me, You are My Servant, My Prince, and people will praise Me because of You. But I replied, My work as Your instrument seems fruitless. I have spent My strength and it appears I have accomplished nothing! Nevertheless, I will commit it all to Jehovah—I know He will do what is just and give Me the reward I should have. And now, says Jehovah—the One who is is going to incarnate Me in a woman's womb to be His Servant, to gather Israel unto Him, the One who has honored Me with this task and gives Me strength to do it, He says to Me, I have a greater task for You than gathering just a remnant of the Jews to Me; I will also make You a revelation of My truth to the Gentiles and You will be My salvation to the whole world.

## COMMENTS

v. 1-3 CALL: Who, other than the Messiah-Servant, could be speaking in these verses? Note the following:

1. Called from the "womb" (he is to be born of a woman) (cf. Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Micah 5:2, etc.).
2. Named while still in the womb (Mt. 2:18-25; Lk. 1:30-35; Isa. 7:14; 9:6).
3. His mouth a "sharp sword" (Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15; Heb. 4:12)
4. He is hid in shadow of Jehovah's hand (Col. 3:3)
5. He is called "Israel" (Prince of God) (Isa. 9:6; Dan. 9:24-27; Lk. 1:30-35, etc.).

6. Jehovah is to be glorified in Him (cf. Jn. 12:27-36; 17:1-5)
7. He is to bring Jacob back to Jehovah (Lk. 1:33)
8. He is honorable in the eyes of Jehovah (Jn. 12:27-36; Lk. 3:21-22; Mt. 17:5-8; Acts 2:22-36; Acts 3:17-26, etc.).
9. He is to be a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 9:1-2; Mt. 4:12-17; Lk. 2:29-32, etc.)
10. He is Jehovah's salvation to the end of the earth

A new emphasis is begun by the prophet Isaiah. From this point on Babylon and Cyrus are not directly mentioned. The Messiah-Servant and the glory of His future kingdom will be pre-eminent. Everything the prophet has to say to his contemporaries will, from this point on, be in relationship to the future messianic glory.

Note the absolute authority with which the Servant addresses the world, commanding the isles and all afar off to listen to Him. Jehovah has made the Servant His instrument of conquering warfare. The Servant is a "polished arrow" and His words are a sharp sword. The Servant is kept in Jehovah's "quiver" until the proper time for battle. The word of Christ is more powerful than any sword or arrow or any other carnal weapon. The word of Christ converts the mind and soul—carnal weapons only subdue bodies (cf. II Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-20; Heb. 4:12). It is imperative that the people of God today remind themselves they are engaged in the *warfare* of God. God sent His Son as a sword and an arrow! God so loved the world that He sent His Son, but He was sent to engage in a "life and death" struggle, a war, with the devil and his henchmen. The devil has been defeated and bound, but he still struggles against his "chain" and will devour all who willingly put themselves within his sphere of influence. God does not see the world, the flesh and the devil as a "good place, every day and every way getting better and better." The world, the flesh and the devil are condemned, doomed, judged. Only those who bring every thought into captivity to obedience of

Christ will survive the final judgment of the world.

The Messiah-Servant is also called to be anointed "Israel" (Prince of God). The Hebrew word *yisrael* means "Prince of God." Jesus was descended from David according to the flesh (Rom. 1:1-6), and promised the throne of His earthly father and His Heavenly Father—therefore, Prince (cf. Isa. 9:6; Dan. 9:24-27; Lk. 1:30-35, etc.). To glorify is to honor. The highest form of praise or compliment is imitation and impersonation. Jesus reflected the very image of God (Heb. 1:3); to see Jesus was to see God (Jn. 14:8-10); in Him dwelt all the Godhead bodily (Col. 1:15-20; 2:9); Jesus was the Word become flesh (Jn. 1:1-18); He glorified the Father on earth (Jn. 12:27-36; 17:1-5).

v. 4 COMMITMENT: This verse is one of the most unique verses of all the Bible! It predicts, in the words of the Servant-Messiah Himself, a point in the Servant's ministry when He will cry out in frustration and disappointment. Edward J. Young comments, "The expression of discouragement is no thought of unbelief, but simply of a genuine modesty borne from a consciousness of one's own weakness." Jesus, the Eternal Son, pre-existent with the Father, humbled Himself, emptied Himself and took upon Himself the form of flesh (cf. Phil. 2:5-11). He partook of the same nature as man (Heb. 2:10-18) and was tempted in all points like we are tempted (Heb. 4:14-16) yet without sinning. It was in this incarnation that He partook of human weaknesses. Part of that weakness was the frustration and disappointment men know when they love other men and want to lead them to God's redeeming grace and when sinful, rebellious men refuse to be led (cf. Mt. 19:16-22; Mt. 23:37-39; Mk. 3:1-6; Lk. 19:41-44; Jn. 12:27-36; Mt. 26:36-46). Did Jesus agonize? Did He have to cry out to God in prayer? Yes! (cf. Heb. 5:7-9). Jesus was "astonished" at the unbelief of His countrymen (Mk. 6:6); He wept at the grief of Mary and Martha (Jn. 11:35); He even despaired of finding faith on the earth at His second coming (Lk. 18:8). The earthly ministry of Jesus was not spectacular in its personal results—judged by human standards. He made

more enemies, per capita, than friends. He convinced only 12 men to follow Him, one of them was a traitor, and the others disavowed Him at His death. He came unto His own and His own received Him not (Jn. 1:9-11). This was predicted (Isa. 52:13—53;12)!

In spite of the fact that the Messiah experienced discouragement and disappointment and was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," He realistically committed His cause to Jehovah for vindication, justification and reward. The Christian must be a realist also! If they persecuted the Master they will persecute the disciple (cf. Jn. 15:18-27; I Pet. 4:12-19, etc.). There will be emotional lows as well as emotional highs for the Christian. The implication that believers should have a constant, happy glow about life is a form of Christian schizophrenia. Christian emotional dishonesty often can lead to deep despair and other psychological problems. A Christian psychologist says: "God allows us to experience the low points of life in order to teach us lessons we could not learn in any other way. The way we learn those lessons is not to deny the feelings but to find the meanings underlying them. . . . Emotional dishonesty may be creating problems for others . . . Emotional honesty is necessary for one's own spiritual growth and it also helps others to get the right perspective on their own experience." Commitment to God is not built on human feelings as a basis—they are too subjective, biased and vacillating. Christ did not "feel" like going to the cross (" . . . let this cup pass from me . . ."). Commitment to God is built on faith in the facts about who God is as they are objectively revealed in the Scriptures and in the Person of Jesus (" . . . nevertheless, not my will but thine be done . . ."). Even the Messiah, in His incarnate humiliation, knew emotional depression and could overcome it only by commitment and faith in the knowledge of who the Father is. The Messiah knew He could depend upon the faithfulness of Jehovah to see that justice was ultimately done and that His ministry would receive its eventual reward. Eventually the work of the Messiah would produce a "great multitude" of believers "which no man could

number" (Rev. 7:9f); but not in the earthly lifetime of the Messiah. Christians need to learn the lesson of the parable . . . "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear" (Mk. 4:26-29).

v. 5-6 COMMISSION: The Servant is born incarnate to accomplish a specific mission. He is to bring back Jacob and gather Israel to Jehovah. *Ye'seph* is the Hebrew word translated *gathered* and means, "to be brought in; placed in safety." His commission was to go to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." This He did. And He brought to safety all of the true Israel (cf. Gal. 6:16; Rom. 11:25-32). The parenthetical statement is the Messiah-Servant's reiteration that He has committed His cause to Jehovah and He is sure Jehovah will vindicate His ministry with honor and strength.

The Messiah-Servant's commission is much broader than physical Israel, although in the sovereign plan of God that is where redemption began (Acts 1:8). The Messiah was for the whole world. He was to gather sheep not of Israel into the flock of God to become part of the true Israel (cf. Jn. 10:16). Paul the apostle quotes Isaiah 49:6 in Acts 13:47 to give us the inspired interpretation of this prophecy. Jesus Christ is no provincial Messiah; He is not just a prophet of the Jews—He is Savior of the whole world. He is the Light of the world (Jn. 8:12f). One religion is not as good as another—not even to Isaiah. There is salvation in no other name (Acts 4:12). Isaiah is the prophet of world missions. Strangely enough, Isaiah says more about the salvation of the Gentiles than any O.T. book, and yet he is the one most read in the Jewish synagogues! Of course, most of the Jews have a different view of what God has in store for the Gentiles than Isaiah predicted (cf. Lk. 4:16-30).

## QUIZ

1. How may we be certain this passage is a prediction of the Messiah?

2. How was the Messiah to be used as God's instrument?
3. Does the N.T. support the idea that the Messiah may have been disappointed in His earthly ministry?
4. Why can't we base our relationship to God on our feelings?
5. What N.T. scriptures indicate that the Gentiles were to be given an opportunity to become part of "true Israel."?

#### b. DESIRABLE SAVIOUR

TEXT: 49:7-13

- 7 Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall worship; because of Jehovah that is faithful, even the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee.
- 8 Thus saith Jehovah, In an acceptable time have I answered thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages;
- 9 saying to them that are bound, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and on all bare heights shall be their pasture.
- 10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them will lead them, even by springs of water will he guide them.
- 11 And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.
- 12 Lo, these shall come from far; and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.
- 13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for Jehovah hath comforted his people, and will have compassion upon his afflicted.

## QUERIES

- a. Why the change from abhorrence to worship (v. 7)?
- b. How is a person given for a covenant (v. 8)?
- c. When did Jehovah "comfort" His people (v. 13)?

## PARAPHRASE

Jehovah, Redeemer, and Holy One of Israel speaks to the One whom men will at first despise, for whom His own nation will feel revulsion, and whom men in high places will esteem lower than a slave, His Servant, and says: Do not be discouraged, kings and princes will one day recognize Your deity and will respectfully worship You. This will happen because Jehovah is absolutely faithful to fulfill His divine purpose of redemption in You. Jehovah also says, At the time acceptable to Me, at the time when, according to My sovereign will, I decide to accomplish My salvation of the world, I will deliver You from those who would try to thwart Your mission and I will make You, personally, My covenant. Through You My people shall receive the inheritance I promised to their forefathers; through You I will say to those in bondage—you are freed; to those in blindness—you may now see. My people, like sheep, shall be fed in green pastures and on grassy hill-sides. They shall not be hungry or thirsty for righteousness; nothing will be allowed to hurt them any more for they will be led by One who loves them to an everlasting source of living water. I will remove all obstacles in their way and smooth out all the rough places. Behold, these people of Mine will be coming from the farthest reaches of the world—even from the far east. All of creation is invited to sing praises unto Jehovah because, when He has done what He here predicts through His Servant, He will have comforted His afflicted people as He promised to do.



## COMMENTS

v. 7-8 VINDICATION: Jehovah calls Himself "Redeemer of Israel." Redeemer is from the Hebrew word, *go'el*, which means, *avenger, vindicator, ransomer, retributor, recoverer* (often translated, *kinsman*, esp. in Ruth). Jehovah is going to redeem mankind through His Servant, and when He does His Servant will be vindicated. During His earthly tenure, the Servant, because of His humble station and His sinless purity, will be despised by rebellious, sinful men. In order to destroy the wisdom of the wise and thwart the cleverness of the clever, God chose what is weak, low, despised and foolish to the world in order to save the world. Man must learn to trust *completely* in God. If man is given any margin for egotism or boasting in self, he cannot trust God completely (cf. I Cor. 1:18-31). So God chose to send the Messiah, born in a Bethlehem barn, of poor parents, not tutored in the rabbinical schools, reared in Galilee (circuit of the Gentiles), a friend of fishermen, tax-collectors and harlots. He was abhorred by His own people. They called Him, "Samaritan," "demon-possessed," "friend of sinners." He had no "form or comeliness . . . that they should desire Him," (cf. Isa. 53:1f). They were sure no good thing could come out of Nazareth (Jn. 1:46). Finally, they murdered Him (cf. Acts 2:22-24; 3:13-16; 13:26-32, etc.). But Jehovah raised Him from the dead and exalted His name above every name (cf. scriptures just cited plus Phil. 2:9-10; Rev. 1:5; 5:5; 15:3-4; 19:11-16). After the exaltation of the Servant, kings and princes and men in high places became His followers and worshipped Him (cf. Acts 13:7; 17:32-34; 18:8; Rom. 16:23; Phil. 1:13). In succeeding centuries many kings and national leaders have become Christians. The Son was, for a little while, made lower than the angels (cf. Heb. 2:9). After He suffered the necessary humiliation and accomplished atonement for sin, He was enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3f) and was restored to the glory He had with the Father from the beginning (Jn. 17:5). All this was according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23f)

and God kept His word (Acts 3:12-26).

The "acceptable time" (Heb. *be'eth ratzon*) means literally, "delightful, pleasing, gracious, satisfying time." It is the "time" pre-figured in the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8ff), when tribal inheritances were restored and bond-slaves were set free—a time for great rejoicing. Jubilee was a type of the time of delight and grace that would come when the Messiah appeared (cf. Isa. 61:2) to release captives, etc. "Day of salvation" (Heb. *yom yeshu'ah*) is, interestingly, "day of Jesus" or "day of Joshua." The apostle Paul apparently quotes this verse in II Cor. 6:2 and applies it to the N.T. dispensation. In the fulness of time, God sent His Servant (Gal. 4:4) to bring salvation and, in person, be a "covenant" of the people. Isaiah has already revealed that the Servant will Himself be given as a *covenant* to the whole world (cf. Isa. 42:6). How does the Servant *become* a covenant? Girdlestone says in his, *Synonyms of The Old Testament*, "The Lord Jesus is called the mediator of the New Covenant, because He is the medium wherein the Disposition of God is carried into effect, whether as regards the individual or the race as a whole (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). The inheritance which was given by *promise* to Christ (Gal. 3:16) was conveyed by *covenant* (through His blood-shedding) to all believers (Gal. 3:17, 29), who are made *one* with Him by faith; and it is this union of God with man, and of man with God, in Christ, which is summed up in the N.T. sense of the word *berith*." Jesus, in the offering of Himself to die the "second death" for all sin, became personally a covenant. Covenant relationship is relationship to Christ, the Person, not to a legal system. He said His blood (death) was the covenant (Mt. 26:26-29). All the promises of God find their Yes in Him (II Cor. 1:20). Christ became a servant . . . to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given . . . (Rom. 15:8). When God could find nothing higher to swear by in order to show the unchangeable character of His purpose, He interposed (Himself) with an oath (Heb. 6:17). Malachi calls Him the "messenger of the covenant" (Mal. 3:1-2). Daniel says the "prince, the anointed one" who is to

be cut off will make a strong covenant with many (Dan. 9:24-27). The renovated "land" of verse eight is all part of the imagery of the fulfillment of Jehovah's covenant with Abraham and his spiritual descendants, and is not to be understood literally. We come into covenant relationship with God by being "joined" in discipleship to Jesus. Disciples of Jesus are those who have been baptized into Him and keep His word (Mt. 28:18f; Jn. 8:31f).

v. 9-11 VIVIFICATION: The Servant will give Jehovah's people back their life. Men will be released from their bondage to sin and delivered from their blindness (darkness) (cf. Isa. 61:1-3; Lk. 4:16-30; Jn. 8:12; 9:39; I Jn. 1:7; 2:10; etc.). Furthermore the Servant will shepherd Jehovah's people (see comments on Isa. 40:11). God's people will not have to wander in the deserts of unbelief and sin aimlessly. They will be led by the Incarnate Messiah-Son who has partaken of their nature in order to become The Good Shepherd (cf. Jn. 10:1f). They will pasture in ways that formerly would not provide or were inaccessible. The Servant will change everything! The Servant's people will not want (Psa. 23); when they hunger or thirst after righteousness, they will be filled (Mt. 5:6). The Hebrew word *sharav* may be translated *heat*, *drought*, or *mirage*. It is the same word used in Isa. 35:7 and there translated "glowing sand" which would seem to mean *mirage*. The mirage was a common experience of the thirsty Palestinian traveler, who often thought he saw water where there was none. The Servant will not delude the many dying of spiritual thirst—He will provide living water and that in abundance. The Hebrew word *mabbu'ey* is translated *springs* and means, *to gush out*, *effervescent*, *bubbling out*, *abundant*. It is also found in Isa. 35:7, translated *springs*. The final thing the Servant will do will be to make mountains into highways and raise the roads through deep valleys up to where they are safe and easily accessible. Apparently the mountains and valleys here stand for obstacles that are to be overcome by the Servant on behalf of His people (cf. 40:4). Faith in Christ makes mountains into mole-hills (cf. Mt. 17:20; 21:21; Mk. 11:23). Every obstacle to the knowledge

of God may be destroyed with the weapons of the Servant (II Cor. 10:3-5).

v. 12-13 VERIFICATION: The Servant will also verify that God has kept His promise (Isa. 40:1-2) to "comfort" His people and bring their "warfare" to an end (see comments on Isa. 40:1-2). The Servant's people are to come from the far reaches of the world. We have again the universal nature of the messianic salvation. The return from exile in Babylon is no longer the focus. The prophet's revelation is now expanded to the whole world. The word *Syniym* (Sinim) means, some commentators say, people of the wilderness of Sin, or the Sinites, a people of Canaan (Gen. 10:17; I Chron. 1:15). Gesenius says it means *Chinese*. Kyle and Delitzsch also believe it refers to people of the ancient land of China. The word *Tsin* can be traced back to about 1122-1115 B.C. as a name (in many different forms) of small states into which the empire of China was divided after the reign of Wu-wang. *Tsin*, according to the Sinologist Neumann, was the name of a feudal kingdom of some importance in Shen-si, one of the western most provinces of the land of China, and *Fei-tse*, the first feudal king of *Tsin*, began to reign as early as 897 B.C. It would be quite possible then for Isaiah to have heard of the land of the *Sinese*. Of course, there were no exiles in China from the Babylonian dispersion. However, there is documentation that there were Jews who immigrated from Persia to China during the Han dynasty (205 B.C.—220 A.D.). If Isaiah is speaking of the messianic era, as we think he is, then there is no problem with some people from China (Sinim) becoming followers of the Messiah. Since the emphasis is on distance from Palestine, China is more acceptable than the first two suggestions. Whatever the case, the whole universe is commanded to acknowledge in a hymn of praise that Jehovah has comforted His people and shown compassion to the afflicted. He has done it in the Person of the Servant who, despised and abhorred, tested in the crucible of incarnate weakness and disappointment, is now the exalted and desirable Savior.

## QUIZ

1. What does the word Redeemer encompass?
2. Why was the Servant abhorred?
3. Can you name some of the kings and princes who worshiped Him?
4. What is the "acceptable" time?
5. What do you know about the Servant becoming a covenant?
6. Where do all the people come from to be comforted through the Servant?

## c. DEJECTED ZION

TEXT: 49:14-21

- 14 But Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me.
- 15 Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, these may forget, yet will not I forget thee.
- 16 Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.
- 17 Thy children make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth from thee.
- 18 Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith Jehovah, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament, and gird thy self with them like a bride.
- 19 For, as for thy waste and thy desolate places, and thy land that hath been destroyed, surely now shalt thou be too strait for the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.
- 20 The children of thy bereavement shall yet say in thine ears, The place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell.
- 21 Then shalt thou say in thy heart, Who hath begotten me

these, seeing I have been bereaved of my children, and am solitary, an exile, and wandering to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where were they?

### QUERIES

- a. Why would Zion think Jehovah had forsaken her?
- b. How would Zion "clothe" herself with those coming to her?
- c. Why does she ask, "Who hath begotten me these"?

### PARAPHRASE

But those in Zion who have been listening to these predictions of their glorious future say, How can all this come to pass if we are to go into captivity? Surely Jehovah is showing that He has forsaken us and forgotten us if we must go away to Babylonian exile! So Jehovah answers, As incredible as it may seem, occasionally a mother may disown her own baby, but I will never disown My true Zion. Look! I have cut your name deeply into the flesh of the palms of My hands. Your walls may be broken down from time to time but I see them ultimately and eternally built up. When the time of the Servant comes I want you to observe that many of those who have previously been your destroyers will cease opposing you and will come to you and become a part of Zion. Your beauty will be enhanced by their joining you. You will look as lovely as a bride dressed for her wedding. You think your population will be decimated by the captivity, and your nationhood destroyed. I tell you you will become so populous you will think there is no room for all the people joining themselves to you and your destroyers will be made powerless. The descendants of those who shall go into exile will one day shout to you, Zion is not large enough for all these people; it must be enlarged. Then you will say in amazement; Where did all these children of Zion come from,

seeing I have suffered so much destruction and death of my own children? I have spent most of my existence wandering to and fro, so how could I have produced all these children? Look, I was left all alone in captivity and no one seemed to come forth to help me, so where have all these children been hidden all this time?

### COMMENTS

v. 14-18 **MELANCHOLIA:** The people of Zion are represented as being in a state of deep despondency. This is anticipating the nation of Judah in exile in Babylon. The Psalmist of the exile wrote: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion . . ." (see Psa. 137:1f). The promises of the prophets were glorious but only the most thoroughly committed believer put much hope in them. All recent history taught the Jews was that nations taken captive into Mesopotamia disappeared or lost their national identity. The great empires had never allowed a conquered nation to return to its own homeland. Judah was certain Jehovah had forsaken her (cf. Lam. 5:1f).

The Lord left His people in Babylon for 70 years (two generations would have been born and reared in a foreign land). Some of those who were taken down to Babylon as captives of war undoubtedly died there without ever seeing their homeland again (perhaps Daniel and his three friends). It was a great temptation for many Jews to despair and to spread their discouragement among others. The Lord works slowly, as men are prone to count time, but He is absolutely faithful to keep His promises. One of the most beautiful promises of the Old Testament is pictorialized in verses 15-16. The Hebrew word *'ulah* is translated "sucking child" but means more literally an *infant* (newly born). On rare occasions one learns of a mother deserting her new-born child, but it is very unusual. The Lord's love for Zion is indestructible! He *cannot* forget her—it is not in His nature at all to forget His promises. He

is preparing to sacrifice His only Son for her. True Zion is precious to Him. He has *khakak*, graven, them on the palms of His hands (not tattooed, but carved, etched deeply). He is constantly reminded of Zion! Her walls may be torn down by her enemies but in God's sovereign vision, they are constantly before Him as built up forever. Whatever God dreams or envisions comes to pass. God's dreams are not sand-castles. He has proven this through dreams and visions He manifested to the world by the instrumentality of His prophets. They all came to pass! So when God envisions the wells of Zion built forever, they shall be built forever! Maybe not in the lifetime of Isaiah, or the returned exiles, but when the Messiah arrives, He shall build the eternal walls of Zion (cf. Heb. 12:25-28, "a kingdom that cannot be shaken" is already being received by the recipients of the Hebrew epistle)!

Those contemporaries of Isaiah who read his prophecy should look and see that what God has promised about Zion is already beginning to happen, and believe. Already the *true* Zion is beginning to take shape. Already the sifting process is taking place. True believers in the long-range program of God are starting to separate themselves from those who are "destroyers" of Zion (unbelievers). Already Isaiah's teaching had begun to form a small band of "disciples" (Isa. 8:16-18), a "remnant," which would eventually include all "those who walked in darkness" even the Gentiles (Isa. 9:1-7). Jehovah swears by His own life (which is, of course, never ending and absolute) that Zion shall one day wear these few, faithful believers (of Isaiah's day) as a bride would her wedding finery (cf. Eph. 5:26-27; Rev. 12:1; 19:7-8; 21:2).

v. 19-21 **MARVEL:** Zion's melancholia would eventually turn to *marvel*. These verses indicate Isaiah is predicting a "spiritual" land of Zion. Zion's literal land has never been too small for her. She has never thought she had too many literal, physical "children." There were times, however, after the establishment of the New Testament church that some of the Jewish Christians (even Peter) wondered about the amazing and rapid growth of the new Zion (the church). Many were



wondering how God could make room in "Zion" for Gentiles from all over the world! There has never been a time (especially after the return from exile) that the enemies ("those who swallowed up") the Jews were literally far away. Enemies of the Jews have always been near and have continually oppressed them and "swallowed them up" (e.g., Sanballat, Alexander the Great, Antiochus IV, Pompey, the Moham-medans; in our lifetime, the Germans, Russians and Arabs). But spiritually, the Messiah defeated the arch-enemy of Zion, the devil, and bound him for a thousand years so that Zion's enemy is "far away." It is a constant source of wonder and amazement that Jehovah could take the small minority of believers exiled in Babylon and preserve them through centuries of "indignation" and eventually make of them a world-wide Zion (cf. Acts 11:1-8; 15:1-21, etc.).

We quote from Edward J. Young, "Even during the exile the tide was turning. God was raising up Cyrus, who would make it possible for the exiles to return to their home. In this return there is seen the first fulfillment of this promise, but in the deeper sense the fulfillment takes place in the distant future when the Gentiles are brought into the Church of Christ. Zion is bereaved, but she has children, so many that there is no room for them."

The remainder of this chapter confirms the messianic intent of the prophet.

### QUIZ

1. What are other scriptures to indicate the despondency of the exiles?
2. Why is God unable to forget Zion?
3. When did they "remember" Zion?
4. How could the land be "too strait" for Zion?
5. Why can't this be literal Zion?

## d. DELIVERED SOCIETY

TEXT: 49:22-26

- 22 Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and set up my ensign to the peoples; and they shall bring thy sons in their bosom, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.
- 23 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their faces to the earth, and lick the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah, and they that wait for me shall not be put to shame.
- 24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captives be delivered?
- 25 But thus saith Jehovah, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.
- 26 And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I Jehovah, am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

## QUERIES

- a. Why put up a signal for the "nations"?
- b. How does God contend with those who contend with Zion?
- c. When did Jehovah take the "prey" away from the mighty?

## PARAPHRASE

Now this is what the Lord Jehovah says, Look! I will give directions to the Gentiles and point out to them the sign I have set among the covenant people of My presence among men

and they shall bring Zion's sons and daughters to her in gentle safety. Gentile kings and queens will be like foster-fathers and foster-mothers to you. They will humiliate themselves to Zion and serve her like slaves. Then you will acknowledge that I am Jehovah and realize that trusting in Me with faith and patience will result in victory. Now you are despondent, saying, It is utterly impossible for us to be rescued from mighty Babylon—the righteous usually do not escape from the unrighteous. But Jehovah replies, Quite to the contrary, and as incredible as it may seem, I will do as I have promised and rescue my people from the giant. They shall be the prey of the tyrant no longer. I, Jehovah, will make war against those who make war upon you. I will make your enemies feed upon one another—they will make war upon one another, until they stagger and reel with defeat like drunken men. When all this comes to pass then all mankind will have evidence to know that I am the One Sovereign Lord who saved His people and sets them free. This will be the revelation to all the world that I am the Mighty One of Jacob.

### COMMENTS

v. 22-23 SIGNAL: Two different Hebrew words are used to denominate the recipients of Jehovah's "ensign"—*goim* (Gentiles, or nations) and *'ammim* (peoples). Girdlestone says, ". . . the word *goim* primarily signifies those nations which lived in the immediate neighborhood of the Jewish people; they were regarded as enemies, as ignorant of the truth, and sometimes as tyrants . . . If *goi* denotes a nation regarded from without, *'am* signified a people as viewed by one of themselves. Sometimes it (*'am*) is used in the familiar and domestic way in which we speak of 'folk' . . . It is often brought into direct . . . contrast with *goi*. Thus Moses, speaking to God concerning Israel, says, 'This nation (*goi*) is thy people (*'am*),' Exodus 33:13. *'Am* is used by Isaiah (and other prophets) to distinguish Israel as God's people, and to mark them off from the heathen

*gaim*." Often Isaiah predicts that the *gaim* who had not been 'ammim should become the people of God through the messianic redemption. Psalms 18:43; for example, reads, "Thou hast made me the head of the heathen (*gaim*); a people ('am) whom I have not known shall serve me." This will come to pass when Jehovah shall be acknowledged as holding rule as "King of the *gaim*" (Jer. 10:7; Hos. 1:9-10; 2:23).

This by-play upon the words *gaim* and 'ammim in verse 22 seems to indicate the delivered society referred to, although it may begin with deliverance from exile by Cyrus, has its ultimate goal as the messianic society (the church). The setting up of an "ensign" (a battle standard upon a pole; a rallying flag) is one of Isaiah's favorite pictures of the coming Messiah (11:12; 18:3; 62:10). When God sends His Messiah to the world, the pagan nations are going to deliver up (by the preaching of the gospel) all whom God in His omniscience knows are His (both Jew and Gentile). The Lord once told Paul "I have many people in this city . . ." That city was Corinth (Acts 18:9-11). "Nursing fathers" is from the Hebrew word 'omenayik (root word is 'man) which means "foster-father" and its root meaning is "to stay, to support." The Hebrew word *yanak* ("nursing mothers") means literally "to suckle" and therefore may be translated "foster-mother." The whole idea is that kings and queens of the *gaim* (heads of state of heathen nations) will one day become, as it were, parents or supporters of Zion! And the once haughty, domineering *gaim* will come to Zion in all humility to serve as slaves of Zion and her King. This is the only way anyone can join Zion—humility and service. When Jehovah begins the great work He is predicting here then many will begin to acknowledge Him as Sovereign and look forward in faith to the completion of it all in the messianic kingdom (just when the completion is to come they will not know; cf. I Pet. 1:10-12). Those who thus "wait" in patient faith upon Jehovah's promises, even though they do not live to see them accomplished, (Heb. 11:13-16), will not be put to "shame" but will "stand at their allotted place at the end of the days . . ." (Dan. 12:13).

v. 24-26 SPECTACLE: Zion is not yet convinced. If Zion is taken captive by the mighty (*gibbor*) one (Babylon) how is it possible that she shall ever see kings and queens coming to her in humble service? The *lawful* captives are, in Hebrew, the *tsadiyk* or *righteous* captives. They are righteous compared to Babylon. The "righteous" are Jews essentially non-warlike as compared to "unrighteous" Babylon. It was historically unheard of that a nation taken from its homeland into exile by such self-serving empires as Babylon should ever reappear again in its own homeland. Jehovah predicts that Zion shall not only be returned to her homeland but her enemies shall serve her. Incredible as it may seem, Zion is going to be delivered from her mighty and terrible enemy. These verses apply to the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile at the decree of Cyrus the Persian. This is a prelude to the signal to the *goim* of verses 22-23 and their becoming foster-parents to Zion (the church). Zion needs first to believe that Jehovah will deliver her from Babylonian captivity. This is the first obstacle in the way to the formation of a remnant which will in turn perpetuate the true Zion through the centuries until the King of Zion appears. So God says, I will make war upon those who contend with Zion. This is one of the fundamental warnings of the Bible; "Leave God's people alone—do not harm them—for He is jealous for them." Whoever would attack the people of God attacks God! God even holds the world responsible for "standing aloof" when His people are being set upon (cf. our comments, Obadiah, v. 10-14, *Minor Prophets*, Butler, College Press). All God has to do is give pagan empires up to their own paganism and they turn on one another and bite and devour one another (cf. Rom. 1:24-32). The history of the unbelieving world of human governments is one long tale of war, tyranny, destruction and politico-socio cannibalism. Man, in his perverse rebellion against God, goes on devouring himself! It is a matter of history that when Cyrus took up the conquest of Babylon some of the satrapies of the Babylonian empire revolted and fought with the Persians against their former rulers. Isaiah's prediction came to pass specifically and generally.

## ISAIAH

### QUIZ

1. Who are the "nations" and "peoples"?
2. Who is the "ensign"?
3. How will kings and queens become "nurses"?
4. How will those who wait upon Jehovah not be put to shame?
5. Why does Zion still think they may not be delivered from captivity?
6. How does Jehovah "feed" oppressors with their own flesh?

### SPECIAL STUDY

#### PEOPLE OF THE PROPHETIC PROMISES

by Fred Long

##### I. Pre-Assyrian Prophets

###### A. Obadiah

1. v. 15-21 "The Kingdom shall be Jehovah's"
  - a. Who: House of Jacob means God's covenant people (Acts 15:13-18, 13:29-37).
  - b. When: Christian age, when Gentiles were added to kingdom (Acts 15:13-18).
  - c. Where: Mt. Zion is the Church (Heb. 12:18-29).

###### B. Joel

1. 2:28-32 Promise of Holy Spirit
  - a. Who: Twelve Apostles (Acts 2:14-21)
  - b. When: Day of Pentecost—Christian age (Luke 1:68-75)
  - c. Where: In Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22)
2. 2:30—3:3 "Great and Terrible Day of the Lord"
  - a. Who: Children of promise (Rom. 9:6)
  - b. When: Second coming of Christ (Matthew 24:29)
  - c. Where: Valley of Jehoshaphat—symbolic of Last Judgment

## PEOPLE OF THE PROPHETIC PROMISES

3. 3:17-21 Jerusalem shall be holy
  - a. Who: Jerusalem—symbol of Church, Christians
  - b. When: Messianic age (Hebrews 6:17-20)
  - c. Where: Zion, Jerusalem is the Church (covenant people)

### C. Jonah

1. 1:17 Jonah—symbol of Christ's death (Luke 11:30)
  - a. Who: Christ (Matthew 12:40, 41—Matthew 16:4)
  - b. When: Messianic age
  - c. Where: Jerusalem (literal), Nineveh is type of Gentiles

### D. Amos

1. 9:11-15 Raise up the Booth of David
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Acts 15:14-18)
  - b. When: Messianic age
  - c. Where: Church

### E. Hosea

1. 1:10-11 Great shall be Day of Jezreel
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Romans 9:24-26; I Peter 2:9, 10)
  - b. When: Messianic age (John 10)
2. 2:21-23 Pity on Not Pitied
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Romans 9:25, 26)
  - b. When: Messianic age
3. 3:4, 5 Israel shall return and seek Lord
  - a. Who: Israel—Church (Hebrews 12:22)
  - b. When: In latter days (Messianic)

## II. Assyrian Prophets

### A. Isaiah

1. 2:1-4 Mt. of the house of the Lord established as highest
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Luke 24:47)
  - b. When: Messianic age (Hebrews 12:22, 23; Col. 1:23)
  - c. Where: Jerusalem (Church) (Romans 10:18)
2. 6:9, 10 Jews reject the Gospel
  - a. Who: Jews (Matthew 13:14, 15; Mark 4:12)

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- b. When: Jesus' ministry (parables) (Luke 8:10; John 12:40) (Romans 11:8)
- 3. 9:1, 2 Gentiles of Zebulun and Naphtali see Great Light
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Matthew 4:13-17)
  - b. When: Jesus traveled to Zebulun and Naphtali (Luke 1:32)
- 4. 10:21-23 Only remnant of Jacob will return
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Romans 9:27, 28)
  - b. When: Christian age
  - c. Where: Church
- 5. 11:1-6 Shoot from the Stump of Jesse
  - a. Who: Christ (Acts 13:23)
  - b. When: Messianic age (Romans 15:12; Romans 12:12)
- 6. 29:13, 18, 19 Deaf shall hear, Blind shall see
  - a. Who: Hypocrisy of Jews (Matthew 11:5; 15:8-9)
  - b. When: Jesus' ministry (Mark 7:22)
- 7. 35:8-10 Highway called the Holy Way
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Matthew 13:14)
  - b. When: Christian age
  - c. Where: Zion—symbol of Church
- 8. 42:1-4 My Servant Brings Justice to the Nations
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Matthew 11:4-5; 12:18-20; 3:16, 17)
  - b. When: Jesus' ministry (Matthew 17:5)
- 9. 49:6 Light to the Nations
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Luke 2:32)
  - b. When: Christian age (Acts 13:47; 26:23)
  - c. Where: Ends of the earth
- 10. 54:1, 13 Children of the desolate
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Gal. 4:27)
  - b. When: Christian age (John 6:45)
- 11. 55:3 Everlasting Covenant
  - a. Who: Covenant People (Christians) (Romans 10:5; Acts 13:34)
  - b. When: Christian age (Luke 22:37)



## PEOPLE OF THE PROPHETIC PROMISES

12. 56:8 I will gather others
  - a. Who: Gentiles (John 10:16)
  - b. When: Jesus' ministry
13. 61:1, 2 Day of Vengeance
  - a. Who: Jesus (Luke 4:18; Matthew 5:4)
  - b. When: Jesus' ministry (read in synagogue) (Mark 4:17-21; Luke 21:21-28)
  - c. Where: Nazareth
14. 65:1, 2 Jews rebellious
  - a. Who: Jews (Romans 10:20, 21)
  - b. When: Messianic age

### B. Micah

1. 4:1-7 Mountain of the House of the Lord (Isa. 2:2-4)
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Luke 24:47)
  - b. When: Messianic age (Heb. 12:22; Col. 1:23)
  - c. Where: Jerusalem (Church) (Romans 10:18; Luke 1:33; Rev. 11:15)

### C. Nahum

## III. Chaldean Prophets

### A. Zephaniah

1. 2:7 Seacoast shall become possession of remnant of the house of Judah (Luke 1:68)
  - a. Who: Covenant people (remnant of Judah)
  - b. When: Birth of Christ
  - c. Where: Bethlehem

### B. Habakkuk

1. 1:5 Unbelief of Jews
  - a. Who: Jews (Acts 13:41)
  - b. When: Christian Age
2. 2:4 Righteous shall live by Faith
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Hebrews 10:38, 39)
  - b. When: Christian age (Romans 1:17; Gal. 3:11)

### C. Jeremiah (and Lamentations)

1. 3:14-18 Jerusalem called Throne of the Lord
  - a. Who: All nations

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- b. When: Christian age (Acts 20:28)
- c. Where: Jerusalem and Zion—symbol of Church
2. 6:10 Jews reject the Gospel
  - a. Who: Jews (Acts 7:51)
  - b. When: Christian age
  - c. Where: Jerusalem
3. 9:25 Punishment of “uncircumcised” in heart
  - a. Who: Jews (outwardly) (Romans 2:8, 9, 28)
  - b. When: Christian age
4. 17:25 Jerusalem inhabited forever
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Christians) (Luke 1:32)
  - b. When: Christian age (Hebrews 12:22)
  - c. Where: The heavenly Jerusalem (Church)
5. 31:1 All Israel will be saved
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Romans 11:26-28)
  - b. When: Christian age
6. 31:31-34 Promise of a New Covenant
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Gentiles) (John 6:45)
  - b. When: Christian age (Hebrews 8:8-12; Romans 11:27; I Thes. 4:9)
7. 33:16-18 Judah will be saved
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Hebrews 13:15; Phil. 3:9)
  - b. When: Christian age (Luke 1:32, 33)

### IV. Exilic Prophets

#### A. Ezekiel

1. 39:29 Promise of Holy Spirit
  - a. When: Pentecost (Acts 2:17)
2. 47:21-23 Aliens shall be allotted an inheritance
  - a. Who: Gentiles (Romans 10:12)
  - b. When: Christian age (Eph. 2:12-14; 3:6)
  - c. Where: In the Church (Col. 3:11)

#### B. Daniel

1. 2:44-45 God's Kingdom set up—never be destroyed
  - a. Who: Christians (I Cor. 15:24)
  - b. When: During Roman Empire (Iron Kingdom)
  - c. Where: Heavenly Kingdom

PEOPLE OF THE PROPHETIC PROMISES

2. 9:24-27 Promise of Coming Kingdom
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Christians) (Matthew 9:12; Luke 19:43)
  - b. When: After seventy weeks of years—Christian age
  - c. Where: Jerusalem (heavenly)—Church (Matthew 24:15; Luke 21:20)

V. Post-Exilic Prophets

A. Haggai

1. 2:6, 7 I will shake the heavens and the earth
  - a. Who: New Covenant people (Hebrews 12:26)
  - b. When: Christian age
  - c. Where: Heavenly Kingdom—Church

B. Zechariah

1. 13:1 Fountain opened for the House of David
  - a. Who: Covenant people (Hebrews 9:14)
  - b. When: Christian age
  - c. Where: Jerusalem (heavenly)—Church

C. Malachi

1. 4:5, 6 Return of Elijah the Prophet
  - a. Who: John the Baptist (Matthew 11:14)
  - b. When: Before Jesus' ministry (Mark 9:11)
  - c. Where: Israel (literal) (Luke 1:17)

VI. New Testament scriptures that show the Gentiles taking part in prophetic promises:

Acts 26:17-23	Romans 11:11, 25
Acts 28:25-29	Romans 15:12
Romans 2:28, 29	Ephesians 2:11-16
Romans 9:6-8	Galatians 4:24-31
Romans 9:24-31	Hebrews 12:18-24
Romans 10:13	