

# Isaiah 49-50

Bible Study

Section: The Servant's work  
Chapters 49-55

## Review

### Chapter 46—Prophecy of deliverance; Babylon falls

The gods of Babylon could not deliver Babylon as Cyrus of Persia conquered them

The lesson for Israel—God will deliver them

- Cyrus fulfills God's plan to release the Jews from Babylonian captivity (539 BC)
  - A type of Christ who is coming in power to deliver His people (Future)

### Chapter 47—Prophecy concerning Babylon, its fall (Dual prophecy)

- 1) Its fall to Cyrus
- 2) The fall of end-time Babylon (Rev. 17-18)

Babylon is to fall suddenly...God is her judge  
Pride and false religion are reasons for its fall

### Chapter 48—The call to Israel to listen (Focus turns to Israel)

v. 1-8 Describe the sinfulness of Israel

Section (v. 12-22) : God's plan to redeem Israel—sets us up for chapter 49

- The My servant/Messiah who will redeem Israel and the world

## Review of the “My Servants”

### Two My Servants in Isaiah

#### 1) My servant—Israel the nation (Isa. 41:8)

*Isa. 41: 8* "But you, Israel, *are* My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend.



The My servant Israel **failed**, they were not the light that God intended them to be (Isa. 42: 18-25)

*Isa. 42: 24* Who gave Jacob for plunder, and Israel to the robbers? Was it not the Lord, He against whom we have sinned? For they would not walk in His ways, Nor were they obedient to His law.

#### 2) My servant—Messiah/Christ (Isa. 42:1-4)

*Isa. 42: 1* “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.



The My servant Christ **succeeds**, He is the light to the world (Isa. 42: 6-7)

*Isa. 42: 6* “I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles,  
7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.

## Chapter 49

The Lord's servant—a light to the Gentiles  
“My servant”—**Christ**

v. 1-7-- Describe the work of the servant

v. 1—5 God's servant is the speaker

**1** Listen, O coastlands, to Me, And take heed, you peoples from afar! The Lord has called Me from the womb; From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name.

“O coastlands...you peoples from afar”

- Israel and all the world is to hear the message from the Servant

[Mid. Part] “The Lord has called Me from the womb”—a special calling (Isaiah 7: 14)—Messiah promised

- Christ called to His mission long before His actual birth as a human

Isaiah 7: 14 (Prophecy of the Messiah)

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (God with us)

Matthew 1: 18 (Fulfillment)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

[Last Part] “From the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My Name”

Matthew 1:21 “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

The work of the servant continued

A prophetic task/special work—Christ and scripture

2 And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, And made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me.”

Heb. 4: 12 (A special task, God’s word as a sharp sword)

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

“My mouth like a sharp sword”—a weapon that destroys those who disobey

(Rev. 19: 15) “Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.”

“In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me”—God is the defender of the Messiah and His words

➤ When sent Christ would be effective

“polished shaft”: ‘polished’= pointed; fitted to execute God’s plan

‘shaft’= arrow—His words and doctrine pierce the hearts of men

“In His quiver He has hidden Me”—like an arrow in a quiver, to execute the Father’s will at the right time

## The work of the servant continued

3 And He said to me, 'You are My servant, O Israel, In whom I will be glorified.'

4 Then I said, 'I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; Yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, And my work with my God.' "

v. 3 The messiah/servant is called Israel—He fulfills what Israel should have done

"In whom I will be glorified" –in the kingdom when they have learned righteousness through Christ, Israel will be the light for other nations to follow

v. 4 (1<sup>st</sup> part) (Paraphrase) "I replied, But my work for them seems all in vain; I have spent my strength for them without response..."

John 1:11

"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him."

Christ's first efforts were unrewarded, but His just reward is His destiny to bring Israel back to God (v. 5)



A prophetic description of the work of the Servant/Messiah

5 “And now the Lord says, Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, So that Israel is gathered to Him (For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, And My God shall be My strength),

6 Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’ ”

v. 5 Christ is destined to bring Israel back into fellowship with God

[last part] (Paraphrase) “who has given me the strength to perform this task and honored me for doing it”  
“strength”—for victory

v. 6 “a light to the Gentiles”—Christ will be...also, Israel will learn righteousness from Christ and finally fulfill their role to be a light to the nations...and salvation will be extended throughout the earth

“My salvation to the ends of the earth”—will ultimately be completed at the time of the great resurrection...billions will be given their opportunity for salvation

- What we picture on the 8<sup>th</sup> day (Last Great Day)

The promise to the servant  
He will succeed in His ministry to the world—future

7 Thus says the Lord, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, To Him whom man despises, To Him whom the nation abhors, To the Servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, Because of the Lord who is faithful, The Holy One of Israel; And He has chosen You.”

v. 7 Although Christ was despised the first time He came to earth, by the People of His day

➤ When He returns, He will be honored/worshipped by all, even kings and princes

The promise of success in His mission will be fulfilled because He has been chosen



v. 8-12 Israel's restoration in the millennium

8 Thus says the Lord: "In an acceptable time I have heard You, And in the day of salvation I have helped You; I will preserve You and give You As a covenant to the people, To restore the earth, To cause them to inherit the desolate heritages;

9 That You may say to the prisoners, 'Go forth,' To those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' "They shall feed along the roads, And their pastures shall be on all desolate heights.

v. 8 A day of salvation awaits those in the millennium when the earth is restored by Christ, and Israel and the world inherit the desolate places as they are restored

v. 9 Those who had been in spiritual prison and the darkness of this world will be set free to feed spiritually under Christ

10 They shall neither hunger nor thirst, Neither heat nor sun shall strike them; For He who has mercy on them will lead them, Even by the springs of water He will guide them.

11 I will make each of My mountains a road, And My highways shall be elevated.

v. 10 the time of ultimate deliverance...coming out of tribulation

The people will be fed physically and spiritually and Christ will lead them

Rev. 7: 14, 16-17

14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

16 They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;  
17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters.  
And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

v. 11 Israel and Judah return from captivity after Christ returns by means of highways from many nations (v.12)

➤ Also spiritual highways to return to God

Rest of the chapter: The return from captivity of Israel and Judah

12 Surely these shall come from afar; Look! Those from the north and the west, And these from the land of Sinim.”

13 Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted His people, And will have mercy on His afflicted.

v. 12 Exiles return from lands north and west of Palestine (Central Europe)

- Sinim was located on the frontier of southern Egypt



Isaiah 27: 13

13 So it shall be in that day: The great trumpet will be blown; They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria, And they who are outcasts in the land of Egypt, And shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

v. 13 [last part] “And will have mercy upon His afflicted” —God’s mercy on Israel having gone through tribulation  
Sets up the next verses

Israel assured of its return (v. 14-26)

14 But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me, And my Lord has forgotten me.”

15 “Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you.

v. 14 “forsaken me...forgotten me” — statement about receiving punishment/exile

➤ A figure of a wife who has been abandoned

v. 15 A woman does not normally forget her child

Perhaps a woman could forget...but God will not forget Israel (Isa. 44:21)

“Yet I will not forget you” —a symbol of God’s mercy/love for His people...

- He will not forget them no matter how disobedient—give them a chance to repent

Lesson: Applies to us—God’s mercy

16 See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.

17 Your sons shall make haste; Your destroyers and those who laid you waste Shall go away from you.

18 Lift up your eyes, look around and see; All these gather together and come to you. As I live," says the Lord, "You shall surely clothe yourselves with them all as an ornament, And bind them on you as a bride does.

v. 16 Israel symbolically inscribed on God's hands, not to forget them

- God's "walls" of protection will be there

v. 17 The oppressors and destroyers of Israel will go away

v. 18 Israel's descendants will return to the promised land and Jerusalem, and their return will glorify the land as a bride enjoys her bridal clothing

- 19 “For your waste and desolate places, And the land of your destruction, Will even now be too small for the inhabitants; And those who swallowed you up will be far away.
- 20 The children you will have, After you have lost the others, Will say again in your ears, ‘The place is too small for me; Give me a place where I may dwell.’
- 21 Then you will say in your heart, ‘Who has begotten these for me, Since I have lost my children and am desolate, A captive, and wandering to and fro? And who has brought these up? There I was, left alone; But these, where were they?’ ”

v. 19 The return will be so great that the land will not be large enough for Israel after the return of Christ

v. 20 “The children you will have”—those born during the millennium, will be given other lands to dwell in  
“After you have lost the others”—in the tribulation

v. 21 [last part] “But these, where were they?”

Rev. 7: 13-14

13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”

14 And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The nations help Israel in their return

22 Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, And set up My standard for the peoples; They shall bring your sons in their arms, And your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders;

23 Kings shall be your foster fathers, And their queens your nursing mothers; They shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, And lick up the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the Lord, For they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.”

24 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, Or the captives of the righteous be delivered?

v. 22 The nations will help transport Israel on their way back home

v. 23 Leaders of the world will respect and pay homage to Israel as they learn that God is control of the world

v. 24 Although it is unusual for captives to be rescued from oppressors, God will see that it is done

25 But thus says the Lord: “Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, And the prey of the terrible be delivered; For I will contend with him who contends with you, And I will save your children.

26 I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh, And they shall be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine. All flesh shall know That I, the Lord, am your Savior, And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”

v. 25 Israel’s captors will be gone and Israel will be delivered

v. 26 [last part] “All flesh shall know”—the future

- All nations will know that God has redeemed/delivered Israel from their captivity  
Divine titles—assurance of the prophecy

“the Mighty One of Jacob”

(Gen. 49: 24) One of God’s titles prophesied by Moses as the power/protector of Israel



## Chapter 50

### Israel's sin and the servants obedient work

v. 1-3 Reasons that Judah/Israel go into exile...And the promise to redeem

- v. 1 reflects back to the complaint in 49:14 (“Zion said, The Lord has forsaken me”)

1 Thus says the Lord: “Where is the certificate of your mother’s divorce, Whom I have put away? Or which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you? For your iniquities you have sold yourselves, And for your transgressions your mother has been put away.

(TEV) The Lord says, “Do you think I sent my people away like a man divorces his wife? Where, then are the papers of divorce? Do you think I sold you into captivity like a man who sells his children as slaves? No, you went away captive because of your sins; you were sent away because of your crimes.”

Mother refers to Jerusalem—God had divorced the northern tribes of Israel (Jer. 3:8), but He did not divorce Judah, but allowed them to go into captivity for their sins...modern descendants of Israel as well

“For your iniquities...for your transgressions”—they had gone into captivity

2 Why, when I came, was there no man? Why, when I called, was there none to answer? Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Indeed with My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness; Their fish stink because there is no water, And die of thirst.

3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, And I make sackcloth their covering.”

v. 2 “when I called”--God sent His messengers but no one would listen

Did they not believe that God could not redeem/deliver them?

- He has the power to perform miracles for them

v. 2-3 “Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem?”

- God brought back a remnant of the Jews to their land from Babylon
- The Lord as the creator of the universe (v. 3) can and will redeem His people

v. 4-9 The servant speaks

4 “The Lord God has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.

“The tongue of the learned”—the tongue of instruction...the qualifications to teach others

John 12: 49

For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

The servant speaks in season to comfort those who are weary...He is able as a qualified teacher to meet the needs of the people

5 The Lord God has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away.

6 I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.

v. 5 “opened My ear”—to the work and will of the Father

The servant did not turn His back on the instructions nor rebel

v. 6 He allowed Himself to be persecuted and struck  
What Christ went through to redeem us all

Mark 14: 65

Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, “Prophecy!” And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.

7 “For the Lord God will help Me; Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.

8 He is near who justifies Me; Who will contend with Me? Let us stand together. Who is My adversary? Let him come near Me.

9 Surely the Lord God will help Me; Who is he who will condemn Me? Indeed they will all grow old like a garment; The moth will eat them up.

v. 7 The servant knows that He will be vindicated in the battle

v. 8 Those who contend and falsely accuse the servant will face God’s judgment

v. 9 Those who condemn the servant will come to nothing like a garment eaten up by moths

v. 10 Exhortation to the followers of the servant

10 “Who among you fears the Lord? Who obeys the voice of His Servant?

Who walks in darkness And has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord And rely upon his God.

“Who walks in darkness, And has no light?”

“darkness” (Heb. *hasheka*) fig. of difficult times and suffering

Those who follow the Lord, are exhorted to trust God and walk by faith, even in times of darkness/trials

## Exhortation to those against the servant

11 Look, all you who kindle a fire, Who encircle yourselves with sparks: Walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks you have kindled— This you shall have from My hand: You shall lie down in torment.

“who kindle a fire”= to those against God (not the normal word for lighting a fire)

➤ These are the fires of self made trials

“sparks”—fiery darts (trials)



Those who walk in their own light (their own path) will suffer torment...not the path to go down

## Lessons

“Yet I will not forget you”—God will not forget His people no matter how far they go



God is merciful to forgive us if we have a repentant attitude

The followers of the servant are exhorted to trust in God and walk by faith



We are to trust in God and walk by faith no matter what trials we encounter