

# God Foretells Redemption

Isaiah 49:1-13

SS Lesson for 06/12/2022

**Devotional Scripture:** Isa 53:2-12

## OUTLINE

### LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

*Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

*Key Verse: Isaiah 49:8*

*Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### REDEMPTION THROUGH THE CALLING OF GOD (ISA 49:1-3)

##### *Called before being born (1)*

Called by God who chose us before the creation (Eph 1:4-5)

Called according to God's purpose (Rom 8:28-29)

Called by grace (Rom 11:2-5)

Called through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (2 Thess 2:13)

Called through God's predestination and justification (Rom 8:30)

##### *Called to be sustained by God (2)*

God sustains from birth (Ps 71:6)

God sustains through a willing spirit (Ps 51:12)

God sustains because He will never forsake His own (Ps 55:22)

God sustains because He promised to do so (Ps 119:116)

God sustains because He always finishes what He starts (Phil 1:6)

##### *Called to glorify God (3)*

Glorify God through unity (Rom 15:5-6)

Glorify God through living a godly life (1 Peter 2:12)

Glorify God through doing good works (Matt 5:16)

Glorify God in our bodies (1 Cor 6:20)

Glorify God through suffering for Christ (1 Peter 4:16)

#### REDEMPTION THROUGH THE STRENGTHENING OF GOD (ISA 49:4-5)

##### *Strengthened for work (4)*

Work with sincerity of heart and with all the ability that God provides (Eph 6:5-8)

Work that God created us to do (Eph 2:10)

Work so that we can share with those in need (Eph 4:28)

Work should be done prompted by love and produced by faith (1 Thess 1:3)

Work so we don't depend on others (1 Thess 4:11-12)

##### *Strengthened to serve (5)*

Serve by helping God's people (Heb 6:10)

Serve faithfully (1 Cor 4:1-2)

Serve by being God's fellow worker (1 Cor 3:8-9)

Serve as serving God (Eph 6:7)

Serve by using the gifts God has provided (1 Peter 4:10)

#### REDEMPTION THROUGH WITNESSING FOR GOD (ISA 49:6-7)

##### *Witness about restoration (6)*

Restoration that cannot be hindered by distance (Deut. 30:4)

Restoration that proves God's grace (2 Chron. 30:9)

Restoration that is promised (Acts 3:21)

Restoration of the soul (Psalm 23:3)

Restoration of joy (Psalm 51:12)

Restoration of God's pleasure (Psalm 85:4)

##### *Witness about salvation (6)*

Salvation through the gospel (Rom 1:16)

Salvation through repentance (2 Cor 7:10)

Salvation sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13)

Salvation through sanctification by the Holy Spirit (2 Thess 2:13)

Salvation through the renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)

##### *Witness because of being chosen (7)*

Chosen to bear fruit (John 15:15-16)  
Chosen by grace (Rom 11:5)  
Chosen in Jesus (Eph 1:11)  
Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God (1 Peter 1:2)  
Chosen to be a royal priesthood belonging to God (1 Peter 2:9-10)

#### REDEMPTION THROUGH THE RESTORATION OF GOD (ISA 49:8-13)

##### *Restoration in God's timing (8)*

Timing that is always at the right time (Rom 5:6)  
Timing where God always has a chosen remnant (Rom 11:5)  
Timing that is according to God's good pleasure (Eph 1:8-10)

##### *Restoration through God's provisions (9-10)*

Provisions through God using others (2 Cor 8:14)  
Provisions through God's supplying directly (2 Cor 9:10)  
Provisions that should evoke thanksgiving to God (2 Cor 9:12)  
Provisions through God's glorious riches (Phil 4:19)

##### *Restoration through God's gathering (11-12)*

A gathering that God longs for His people (Matt 23:37)  
A gathering of God's people for redemption (Ps 107:2-3)  
A gathering of God's people one by one (Isa 27:12)  
A gathering of all groups and types of God's people into one (Isa 56:8)

##### *Restoration that brings joy (13)*

Joy through the refreshing of God (Acts 3:19)  
Joy through liberation (Rom 8:19-21)  
Joy through reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17-20)

## CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM THOMAS CONSTABLE  
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY  
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

## Lesson Background and Key Verse

### Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Young people are constantly in a state of impatiently waiting for “the right time,” which often feels like it will never come. They wait with eager anticipation for the day they can attain a learner’s permit as a step to having a driver’s license and maybe even a car. This taste of freedom may also come with new responsibilities as the new driver begins working and paying for gas and insurance. High school graduation looms large—and with it the need to successfully complete entrance exams, essays, and other prerequisites to begin college, trade school, or a chosen profession. Awaiting the right time (and the right person) to marry is also a source of anxious waiting. In all, young people desire to have the independence and freedom of adults—although whether they still want that when they also receive the responsibilities is open to debate! Israel was also waiting impatiently, waiting for God to act (1 Peter 1:10–13). And while their freedom in him would certainly come with responsibilities, that day would also be one of great joy. All this would be accomplished through one servant eager to do God’s will. In the book of Isaiah, there are four poems about the Messiah (Isaiah 42:1–9; 49:1–7; 50:4–9 [or through 50:11]; and 52:13–53:12). They are called “Servant Poems” or “Servant Songs.” A fifth passage, Isaiah 61:1–4, is sometimes added to the list because its content is very similar to the others, even though the word servant is not used in it. Our text today is from the second Servant Song. It is more than a poem about a servant. It is a prophecy about the work of Jesus, the Messiah. It is he who is the servant in the Servant Poems. This Servant Song begins and ends with an appeal, not only to Israel but also to the nations of the world. The last three verses of Isaiah 48 exhort the people to flee from Babylon, and assurance is given that God will care for them as they travel.

### Key Verse: Isaiah 49:8

*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*

## Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

The previous nine-chapter section (chaps. 40-48) dealt mainly with Cyrus and his mission in the Jews' restoration. These nine chapters (49-57) deal primarily with the Servant-Messiah fulfilling His ministry of restoring the covenant people to the land just before the Millennium will begin. Neither person would fail in his mission. Because of the similarity of their missions, several of the same expressions and figures of speech are used in the two nine-chapter sections. Chapters 49-57 may be divided into four parts: (1) The Servant, being rejected by His people, will take salvation to the Gentiles (chaps. 49-50). (2) The believing remnant will be exalted (51:1-52:12). (3) The Servant, however, will be abased and then exalted (52:13-53:12). (4) Salvation through the Servant will come to Jews and Gentiles in the Millennium (chaps. 54-57).

**49:1-3.** God's **Servant** (vv. 3, 5-6) is the speaker in verses 1-5; God addressed Him in verse 6. Like **the LORD**, He called on the **islands** (see 41:1) and the **nations** to **listen** (see 46:3) to Him because of His special "calling" from the Lord. His **mouth** was **like a sharpened sword**, that is, it was a weapon to destroy the disobedient (cf. 1:20; also note Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16; 19:15). He was also likened to a sharp **arrow**. The Servant was to **display** God's **splendor** (Isa. 49:3; cf. 60:21; 61:3). Why is the Servant here called **Israel**? This cannot refer to the nation because the Servant is to draw that nation back to God. The Messiah is called Israel because He fulfills what Israel should have done. In His person and work He epitomizes the nation.

**49:4.** The Servant saw little visible reward for His service. No change was evident in the nation by which the Servant could claim He had accomplished what He set out to do (cf. John 1:11). However, this did not bother Him for He trusted that in due time **God** would **reward** Him.

**49:5-6.** **Formed... in the womb** as God's Servant (cf. v. 1), the Messiah's commission is to restore **Jacob** and **Israel** (see 40:27) to **the LORD**. With **God** as His **strength**, He would also be **a light for the Gentiles** (cf. 42:6; Luke 1:79) so that **salvation** from the Lord would extend to people in **the ends of the earth** (see Isa. 5:26).

**49:7.** **The LORD** assured the Servant—**despised and abhorred** by His people—that He would succeed in His ministry to the Gentiles. **Kings** and **princes** will bow down to Him because He has been **chosen** by **the LORD**. In His first coming Jesus Christ was rejected by His own people (John 1:10-11), but at His second coming all will **bow** before Him (Phil. 2:10-11).

**49:8-12.** In the Millennium, here called **the time of God's favor** and **the day of salvation**, the Lord will enable the Servant **to be a covenant for the people** (cf. 42:6; i.e., to fulfill God's covenant promises to Israel; see Jer. 31:31-34 on the New Covenant). When **the land** is restored **the captives** will return to the Promised Land from various places around the world (Isa. 49:9; cf. v. 12). The land will be fertile with **pasture** (v. 9) and **water** (v. 10) and **mountains** and valleys will be changed (v. 11). As in 40:3-4, this may signify a change in the people's lives. The location of **Sinim** is uncertain, but many think it is the Aswan region of Egypt (NIV marg.).

**49:13.** As the prophet spoke, he called on nature, personified, to **rejoice** (on the **mountains** rejoicing see 44:23). The reason for rejoicing is that **the LORD comforts** and has **compassion** (cf. 49:10) on those who need help, including Gentiles.

**49:14-16.** In verses 14-21 the prophet recorded a dialogue between Israel and God. **Zion** (i.e., the people in Jerusalem) felt as if God had **forgotten** her (v. 14). But God replied that He certainly had **not** forgotten Israel. He could not possibly do so because He is like **a mother** to the nation. Furthermore, the nation was inscribed, as it were, on His **palms**. Therefore whenever He, figuratively speaking, lifts up His hands He sees the nation's name which reminds Him of her.

**49:17-21.** Judah's captors will **depart** (v. 17) and **be far away** (v. 19) and Judah's **sons** will begin to return (vv. 17-18). This will brighten up the nation as **a bride** enjoys **ornaments**. This return will be so great that the land (personified by **you** and **your**, vv. 19-21) will not be large enough for all the inhabitants, called its **children**. But when the people returned from the Babylonian Captivity they were a comparatively small, struggling band. The return mentioned in verses 19-21 seems to be much larger and therefore probably refers to Israel's return at the beginning of the Millennium.

**49:22-26.** When Israel returns to the land in the future **the Gentiles** will worship before **the LORD** and will be friendly toward Israel. In fact the Gentiles will even help transport Israelites to Palestine. Gentile leaders will be subservient to Israel, which will cause her to realize that **the LORD** really is in control of the world (v. 23). It is unusual for **captives** to be **rescued**, but God will see that it is done for Israel. Israel's enemies

will be destroyed, which will cause the whole world to acknowledge that **the LORD** is Israel's God and her **Savior** (cf. 42:11), **Redeemer** (cf. 41:14), and **the Mighty One of Jacob** (cf. 60:16).

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Redemption through the Calling of God (Isa 49:1-3)**

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.

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."

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

#### **Called before being born (1)**

*Called by God who chose us before the creation (Eph 1:4-5)*

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

*Called according to God's purpose (Rom 8:28-29)*

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

*Called by grace (Rom 11:2-5)*

2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah — how he appealed to God against Israel: 3 "Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me"? 4 And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.

*Called through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (2 Thess 2:13)*

13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

*Called through God's predestination and justification (Rom 8:30)*

30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

#### **Called to be sustained by God (2)**

*God sustains from birth (Ps 71:6)*

6 From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you.

*God sustains through a willing spirit (Ps 51:12)*

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

*God sustains because He will never forsake His own (Ps 55:22)*

22 Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.

*God sustains because He promised to do so (Ps 119:116)*

116 Sustain me according to your promise, and I will live; do not let my hopes be dashed.

*God sustains because He always finishes what He starts (Phil 1:6)*

6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

### **Called to glorify God (3)**

*Glorify God through unity (Rom 15:5-6)*

5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Glorify God through living a godly life (1 Peter 2:12)*

12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

*Glorify God through doing good works (Matt 5:16)*

16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

*Glorify God in our bodies (1 Cor 6:20)*

20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

*Glorify God through suffering for Christ (1 Peter 4:16)*

16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

### **Redemption through the Strengthening of God (Isa 49:4-5)**

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.'

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),

### **Strengthened for work (4)**

*Work with sincerity of heart and with all the ability that God provides (Eph 6:5-8)*

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

*Work that God created us to do (Eph 2:10)*

10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

*Work so that we can share with those in need (Eph 4:28)*

28 He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

*Work should be done prompted by love and produced by faith (1 Thess 1:3)*

3 We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Work so we don't depend on others (1 Thess 4:11-12)*

11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

### **Strengthened to serve (5)**

*Serve by helping God's people (Heb 6:10)*

10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

*Serve faithfully (1 Cor 4:1-2)*

4 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.  
2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

*Serve by being God's fellow worker (1 Cor 3:8-9)*

8 The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.

*Serve as serving God (Eph 6:7)*

7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men,

*Serve by using the gifts God has provided (1 Peter 4:10)*

10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.

### **Redemption through Witnessing For God (Isa 49:6-7)**

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.'

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."

### **Witness about restoration (6)**

*Restoration that cannot be hindered by distance (Deut. 30:4)*

4 Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back.

*Restoration that proves God's grace (2 Chron. 30:9)*

9 If you return to the Lord, then your brothers and your children will be shown compassion by their captors and will come back to this land, for the Lord your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him."

*Restoration that is promised (Acts 3:21)*

21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

*Restoration of the soul (Psalm 23:3)*

3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

*Restoration of joy (Psalm 51:12)*

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

*Restoration of God's pleasure (Psalm 85:4)*

4 Restore us again, O God our Savior, and put away your displeasure toward us.

### **Witness about salvation (6)**

*Salvation through the gospel (Rom 1:16)*

16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

*Salvation through repentance (2 Cor 7:10)*

10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

*Salvation sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13)*

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

*Salvation through sanctification by the Holy Spirit (2 Thess 2:13)*

13 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

*Salvation through the renewal by the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5)*

5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

### **Witness because of being chosen (7)**

*Chosen to bear fruit (John 15:15-16)*

15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

*Chosen by grace (Rom 11:5)*

5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.

*Chosen in Jesus (Eph 1:11)*

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

*Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God (1 Peter 1:2)*

2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

*Chosen to be a royal priesthood belonging to God (1 Peter 2:9-10)*

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

## **Redemption through the Restoration of God (Isa 49:8-13)**

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.

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.

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.

### **Restoration in God's timing (8)**

*Timing that is always at the right time (Rom 5:6)*

6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

*Timing where God always has a chosen remnant (Rom 11:5)*

5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.

*Timing that is according to God's good pleasure (Eph 1:8-10)*

8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

### **Restoration through God's provisions (9-10)**

*Provisions through God using others (2 Cor 8:14)*

14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality,

*Provisions through God's supplying directly (2 Cor 9:10)*

10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

*Provisions that should evoke thanksgiving to God (2 Cor 9:12)*

12 This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

*Provisions through God's glorious riches (Phil 4:19)*

19 And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

### **Restoration through God's gathering (11-12)**

*A gathering that God longs for His people (Matt 23:37)*

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

*A gathering of God's people for redemption (Ps 107:2-3)*

2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say this — those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, 3 those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.



*A gathering of God's people one by one (Isa 27:12)*

12 In that day the Lord will thresh from the flowing Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you, O Israelites, will be gathered up one by one.

*A gathering of all groups and types of God's people into one (Isa 56:8)*

8 The Sovereign Lord declares — he who gathers the exiles of Israel: "I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered."

### **Restoration that brings joy (13)**

*Joy through the refreshing of God (Acts 3:19)*

19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

*Joy through liberation (Rom 8:19-21)*

19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

*Joy through reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17-20)*

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### **Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable**

#### **Verse 1**

Using the same terminology with which the Lord had appealed to Israel to listen to Him (cf. [Isaiah 41:1](#); [Isaiah 46:3](#); [Isaiah 46:12](#); [Isaiah 48:1](#); [Isaiah 48:12](#)), someone called the world's population to pay attention to what he had to say. He claimed a divine calling from his birth; God had commissioned him to announce what he would reveal (cf. [Jeremiah 1:5](#); [Matthew 1:21](#); [Luke 1:31-33](#); [Luke 1:41](#); [Luke 2:21](#); [Galatians 1:15](#)). There was more to announce than just that Yahweh would redeem Israel from Babylonian captivity (cf. [Isaiah 48:20](#)). Who is the speaker? What follows, which this description of Him corroborates, is that the Servant Messiah is speaking, not Israel, [Note: Watts, Isaiah 34-66, p. 187.] or the believing remnant in Israel, or Cyrus, or Isaiah. Several of the Messiah predictions, including this one, refer to His mother (cf. [Isaiah 7:14](#); [Genesis 3:15](#); [Psalms 22:10-11](#); [Micah 5:2](#)).

"When Assyria was coming to prominence Isaiah predicted the coming of the King, the virgin's Son [[Isaiah 7:14](#)]. Now that the world power is exercising its might and will take God's people captive, Isaiah announces the Servant of the Lord as the true Deliverer. Thus the two epochs point us to the Messiah, first to His Person and then to His work." [Note: Young, 3:268.]

"The first [biographical Servant] Song was a word from the Lord to the world about his Servant: 'Your plight is known, my Servant will deal with it' [[Isaiah 42:1-4](#)]; but the second [autobiographical] Song is the Servant's testimony how that world-wide task devolved upon one who was already commissioned to minister to Israel." [Note: Motyer, p. 384.]

"If . . . the first song can be viewed as contemplating the ministry of Jesus the Servant in prospect from the perspective of his baptism, this second song seems to be looking back on that ministry from its close." [Note: Grogan, p. 285.]

This first segment focuses on the anticipation of salvation. Israel needed to believe the promises of God concerning the coming salvation. The possibility of a restored relationship between Israel and her God becomes increasingly clear as this section unfolds. Likewise, the cosmic dimension of this salvation becomes increasingly obvious. The section reaches its climax with the announcement that God has won victory and the people are free ([Isaiah 52:7-12](#)).

"These chapters present God's Servant, Messiah, in three important relationships: to the Gentile nations ([Isaiah 49:1](#) to [Isaiah 50:3](#)), to His Father ([Isaiah 50:4-11](#)), and to His people Israel ([Isaiah 51:1](#) to [Isaiah 52:12](#))."

[Note: Wiersbe, p. 54.]

Isaiah began this pericope by clarifying the calling and ministry of the Servant. He referred to this Servant earlier ([Isaiah 42:1-9](#)), but now he reiterated and reinforced what he had revealed in preparation for further revelation about this key figure. [Note: See F. Duane Lindsey, "The Commission of the Servant in Isaiah 49:1-13," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139:554 (April-June 1982):129-45.]

## Verse 2

Cyrus' calling was to liberate Israel with the sword, but this speaker's calling was to announce words from God, piercing, incisive words that would cut like a sword (cf. [Isaiah 1:20](#); [Hebrews 4:12](#); [Revelation 1:16](#); [Revelation 19:15](#)).

"His is an office of the mouth, his task a declaration of the Truth; for he is a prophet *par excellence*, and his word is the Gospel . . ." [Note: *Ibid.*]

The Servant would be available for His Master's use whenever needed. He would not be prominent at all times but would be protected and hidden until summoned into use. Both the sword and the arrow were offensive weapons, the former used at short range and the latter at longer range. Likewise this Servant's words would be instruments that would defeat enemies. Jesus Christ was the embodiment of this word from God (cf. [John 1:14-15](#)).

## Verse 3

Yahweh called His Servant Israel. Israel would indeed prove to be an instrument of God by which He demonstrated His glory, but in the context, the Servant appears to be an individual. Messiah was Israel, in that, He was the personal embodiment of ideal Israel, what the nation should have been but never attained. Furthermore, He was the Prince with God that neither the nation nor its namesake ever fully became. When God referred to His Servant as Israel He was referring to the Servant's function, not His identity. Throughout this book we have seen that the nation Israel was not able to carry out her function of being a light to the nations because she was blind, deaf, and rebellious. God would provide an individual to do what the nation had failed to do.

"Faced with Israel's failure, God does not wipe out the nation; he simply devises another way in which Israel's servanthood could be worked out: through the ideal Israel." [Note: Oswalt, *The Book . . .* 40-66, p. 291.]

This description eliminates Isaiah or any other simply human prophet as the possible Servant in view (cf. [Isaiah 49:5-6](#)).

## Verse 4

In spite of the Servant's calling it would appear, even to Himself, that He was less than successful (cf. [John 1:10-11](#)). If the previous verse describes a more than human Servant, this one presents a fully human Servant. When Jesus Christ died it appeared that He had accomplished very little. Most people regarded His life as a waste. He even prayed on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ([Matthew 27:46](#)).

"God does not approach the arrogance and oppression of the world with greater arrogance and greater oppression. Rather, he comes with the humility, the vulnerability, and the powerlessness of a child." [Note: *Ibid.*]

Nevertheless, the Servant's work would please God, if not men. Man's justice gave Messiah the Cross, but God's justice gave Him the crown. The Servant would commit His work to God and would trust Him for a just reckoning.

This verse clarifies that feelings of futility and faith in God need not be mutually exclusive. The Servant trusted God for the final outcome of His ministry, though as He was carrying it out, it appeared to be ineffective. The Apostle Paul took the same view of his ministry (cf. [Romans 8:31-39](#); [1 Corinthians 4:1-5](#)).

". . . dependency arises through listening to ourselves and our self-assessment *etc.*, instead of looking to God, recalling his purposes, living according to our dignity in him and rediscovering in him our source of power."  
[Note: Motyer, p. 387.]

### Verses 5-6

The Servant's calling would be more than bringing Israel back to God in repentance and revival, a calling we have yet to see, since this was not Israel's response to Jesus' earthly ministry. It would include bringing the light of the knowledge of God and His salvation to people all over the world (cf. [Isaiah 5:26](#)). The preaching of the gospel accomplishes both of these goals only partially. They will be fully attained in the Millennium when all Jews and Gentiles will turn to the Lord (cf. [Philippians 2:10-11](#)).

Clearly the Servant cannot be Israel in the light of these verses, neither can the believing remnant within Israel. Neither group has saved or can save the world. No merely human Hebrew prophet, including Isaiah, could be the savior of the world either. Cyrus' calling was to restore Israel to the land of Judah, but Messiah's calling, from His very birth, was to restore Israel and the Gentiles to God. Indeed, it was to *be* salvation (cf. [Luke 2:32](#); [Acts 13:46-47](#)). The Servant marveled at God's grace in choosing Him for this calling and affirmed His dependence on God to accomplish such a great salvation (in the parenthetical statement in [Isaiah 49:5](#)).

Watts understood this servant to be Cyrus. [Note: Watts, [Isaiah 34-66](#), p. 187.] He interpreted "the nations" to be the other nations of Palestine. He believed the Book of Isaiah was written about the time of Ezra (ca. 435 B.C.). [Note: Idem, [Isaiah 1-33](#), p. xxx.] Thus he believed the writer of Isaiah was looking back on history, not forward in prophecy.

### Verse 7

Yahweh, Israel's Redeemer and Holy One, assured the Servant—who the Israelites and the Gentiles, whom He came to save, would despise—that eventually even rulers would bow before Him. This would happen because Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, who had called Him, was faithful to fulfill what He had set out to accomplish through His Servant. Again, the success of a servant of the Lord, any servant of the Lord, is due to the Lord because He enables the servant to be successful (cf. [Isaiah 48:15](#)). Watts' interpretation was as follows:

"This oracle accurately predicts the rapid, if violent, rise of Darius [I, Hystaspes] to power in Persia and claims credit for Yahweh who *chose* him for the office." [Note: Idem, [Isaiah 34-66](#), p. 188]

This verse distinguishes two aspects of the Servant's ministry: the first characterized by rejection and humiliation (cf. [Isaiah 49:4](#); [Isaiah 52:13](#) to [Isaiah 53:12](#)), and the second marked by acceptance and glorification. The first advent of Christ fulfilled the first aspect and His second advent will fulfill the second aspect. All that Israel had experienced—being despised, abhorred, and used—the Servant would experience (cf. [Isaiah 49:25-26](#)). And all that God intended Israel to be—admired, respected, and served—the Servant will become.

". . . to be the chosen of God does not mean glory along the way, but it does mean glory at the end of the way."  
[Note: Oswalt, [The Book . . . 40-66](#), p. 295.]

### Verse 8

In response to the Servant's feelings of frustration ([Isaiah 49:4](#)), the Lord promised that at the appointed hour of salvation, He would support and enable His Servant (cf. [Psalms 22:19-21](#)). Watts interpreted this servant too as Darius. [Note: Watts, [Isaiah 34-66](#), p. 188.] He would make the Servant a covenant of the people, namely, He would make a new covenant with His people that the Servant would embody (cf. [Isaiah 42:6](#); [Jeremiah 31:31](#); [Jeremiah 32:40](#); [Ezekiel 37:26](#); [Luke 22:20](#); [1 Corinthians 11:25](#); [2 Corinthians 3:6](#); [Hebrews 8:8-12](#)). The Servant would fulfill God's covenants with Israel.

"To speak of the Servant as the covenant means that while, as we know, it is through his work that covenant blessings become available, it is only in him, in the union of personal relationship, that these blessings can be enjoyed. Prophets preached the covenant and pointed away from themselves to the Lord; the Servant will actualize the blessings and point to himself." [Note: Motyer, p. 391.]

The Servant would restore the land, make the Israelites inherit desolate areas, and ([Isaiah 49:9](#)) free captives. The terms used in this verse recall the relief that came to the Israelites in their Jubilee Year (cf. [Leviticus 25:8-22](#)). The salvation in view will appear in the Millennium, which the Jubilee Year anticipated. Then too the Servant will represent Israel.

The Apostle Paul quoted this verse in [2 Corinthians 6:2](#). To him the present day was the day of salvation that Isaiah predicted. I take it that Paul meant that the day of salvation had begun because Christ had died on the

cross, not that everything that will mark that day had arrived. Clearly God has not yet restored the land to Israel. The day of salvation will come to its glorious climax in the future Millennium.

Isaiah now announced more about the work of the Servant (cf. [Isaiah 42:5-9](#)). He will enable people around the world to return to God, similarly to how the Israelites would return to Jerusalem after the Exile. The response to God's saving work will be universal joy (cf. [Isaiah 42:10-13](#)).

#### **Verse 9**

Part of the salvation to appear in that favorable time will involve the liberation of captives, physical and spiritual (cf. [Isaiah 61:1-4](#)). God's sheep will enjoy feeding, even on the roads and formerly barren heights of their land (cf. [Isaiah 17:2](#); [Isaiah 40:10-11](#); [Isaiah 41:18](#); [Isaiah 43:19](#); [Isaiah 63:11](#)). This is a picture of abundant pasturage, and it represents millennial blessings.

#### **Verse 10**

The picture continues along the lines of the Good Shepherd providing for and protecting His flock, compassionately leading them and supplying all their needs (cf. [Exodus 12:21](#); [Exodus 17:6](#); [Psalms 23](#); [Revelation 7:16-17](#)).

#### **Verse 11**

God will also make His mountainous barriers as flat as a road so His people can come to His habitation. He will also build His highways so they will be thoroughfares for His people (cf. [Isaiah 11:16](#); [Isaiah 19:23](#); [Isaiah 36:8](#); [Isaiah 40:3-4](#); [Isaiah 42:16](#); [Isaiah 62:10](#)).

#### **Verse 12**

People will come from all over the world to worship God (in Jerusalem) at that time (cf. [Isaiah 49:22](#); [Isaiah 43:6](#)). What Isaiah described was more than just the return from exile in Babylon. Sinim may refer to Aswan in southern Egypt, which marked the southern border of the civilized world in Isaiah's day. Some older commentators suggested that "Sinim" may be a reference to China. [Note: See Delitzsch, 2:267; Young, 3:294; and The New Scofield . . . , p. 755.]

#### **Verse 13**

Isaiah concluded by calling on the whole created universe to rejoice because the Lord had comforted His people (cf. [Isaiah 40:1](#); [Isaiah 47:6](#)) and had shown compassion on His formerly afflicted nation (cf. [Isaiah 42:10-13](#); [Isaiah 44:23](#); [Isaiah 45:8](#); [Isaiah 52:8-9](#); [Isaiah 55:12-13](#)). This is rejoicing over deliverance from sin, not just exile. When the Servant completes His work of salvation, the whole creation, not just humankind, will experience liberation from the effects of the Fall (cf. [Romans 8:19-22](#)).

*(Adapted from URL:<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dcc/isaiah-49.html>)*

### **Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

At the right time, God sent Jesus to earth to offer salvation to all who accept him as Lord and Savior (Romans 5:6-8; Galatians 4:4-5). The call is to those who are in our families and communities and also in far distant villages we will never visit or even know exist. Our responsibility in the time of salvation is twofold: to proclaim the good news to all (Matthew 28:18-20) and to worship God with all creation. We are comforted, and we experience mercy. Therefore sing to God! And spread the good news throughout the earth.

## ***Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary***

The Book of Isaiah is filled with predictions about the coming of Christ. God sent Jesus to be His instrument, giving direction to anyone willing to walk in His light.

Savior - Isaiah's prophecy pointed to the Savior, Jesus, being born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14). God sent Him to fulfill His plans and purposes. Jesus was already given the name Immanuel—Savior, Redeemer of all humanity. Truth—The Father delivered His message through Christ. Isaiah described Jesus' mouth as a sharp two-edged sword and a weapon used to discern and pierce the hearts of men. The Father protected the Son as He spoke the truth and exposed the inner motivations of men.

Trust - For 30 years, Jesus stayed out of the limelight, but at a specific, appointed time, He came forth and announced Himself as the Son of God. Isaiah compared the Savior's ministry to a polished, well-oiled arrow. An arrow is swift, decisive; it travels far with a specific target in view. Similarly, Messiah came ready to address the world's needs, just at the right time.

Redemption - One of God's main objectives in sending His Son was to bring His wayward people back to Himself. Initially, Jesus ministered almost exclusively to the Jews. God used the nation as His instrument to bring forth Jesus and also spread the Gospel, but many Jews rejected Him. At the end, when Jesus returns to Earth, every knee will bow, and all will acknowledge Him as God's chosen.

Light - In the Old Testament, God made a covenant with the Jewish nation. When Jesus arrived, He fulfilled all things concerning Him. Jesus went about His Father's business, setting the enslaved free from sickness, oppression, demonic forces, legalism, and sin. God doesn't forget anyone. He wants to gather the lost from every corner of the world. If your way seems dark right now, be encouraged. God has sent Jesus, the Messiah, to light your way.