

# Isaiah 48-49 • A Light for the Nations

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Isaiah chapter 48 and we will get started tonight. We have been seeing a lot of really incredible prophecies throughout the course of the Book of Isaiah and we're not done. There are lots more to come. In fact the first chapter we're going to do tonight is really kind of the end of what we've been dealing with, which God has been talking about the deliverance of His people from their bondage in Babylon.

Now, He's talking about it a couple of hundred years before it takes place. That's the whole prophetic element of the Book of Isaiah. But He's already been mentioning who it is that He will raise up to affect that deliverance. And it was a Gentile Persian king by the name of Cyrus. God even mentions him by name about 150 years before he was born. And so that's one of the things that makes the Book of Isaiah so amazing.

Chapter 48 is really going to be the final chapter where the Lord speaks of Cyrus as the, deliverer. And as we get into chapter 49 and a few chapters following it, about the next 8 chapters after that, God is now going to be switching gears from talking about Cyrus as the, deliverer. And He's going to begin to more specifically prophesy about His next anointed one, who of course, is the Messiah that we know of as Jesus Christ.

Some really incredible prophecies that are to come here. Let's pray and ask the Lord's grace to guide us in our study.

Father, open our hearts to the ministry of Your Word tonight. And let that word just wash over us. Let it speak to us. Even though Lord, You spoke these things to the nation of Israel, we pray that You would speak to each heart tonight, because You can do that.

You can take Your Word, Lord, and make it very personal to those who are here tonight. You can speak to them about what's going on in their lives. You can apply Your Word, and we pray that You would do that tonight. That You would speak personal messages of encouragement and enlightenment.

We ask it Father, in Jesus precious name, amen. Amen.

Isaiah chapter 48, beginning at verse 1:

*“The LORD speaks to Israel, (and He says,) Hear this; O house of Jacob, (You) who are called by the name of Israel, and who came from the waters of Judah, who swear by the name of the LORD and confess the God of Israel, (That all sounds really good up to that point, doesn't it? But then He adds this at the end) “but not in truth or right.” Or as some Bibles say, “not in truth or righteousness.” (ESV)*

Let me read another verse and then we'll see what God's saying here. *“<sup>2</sup> For they call themselves after the holy city, and stay themselves (which means to lean upon) ...the God of Israel; the LORD of hosts is his name.”*

Now you'll notice that in verse 1, God says to them that I want you to hear this. He says, *“Hear this; O house of Jacob...”* and so forth. But He hasn't begun to even speak His message. Well, not really. He hasn't given the crux of His message, but He's already talking to them. And He's already saying important things to them.

Because you'll notice He refers to them in several different ways by saying that, you are they who are called by the name of Israel, He says. He says, you are they who came from the waters of Judah. You are they who swear by the name of the Lord. You are they who confess the God of Israel. But then He adds this at the very end, *“but not in truth.”* You do it, but you don't do it in truth. Nor do you do it in righteousness.

Ah, it's pretty incredible, isn't it? When you think about the nation of Israel and all that they have. All the incredible things that Israel received that no other nation upon the face of the earth ever received. I mean, there have been other nations, even the United States, that have been very blessed by God. But we still haven't received what they have received.

To carry the name of God's chosen people. I mean, the powerful history that is theirs. They received their own revelation of His Law, which no other nation has received. All the wonderful promises that went along with the Law that were given to Israel and so forth. And yet God says here, there's no genuineness to it. And nothing about it that is good or righteous in God's sight.

You think to yourself, how in the world can that be? How in the world can it be that you have so many blessings going on and that there's no genuineness to that relationship?

Look what He goes on to say in verse 3.

<sup>3</sup> *“The former things I declared of old; (He says,) they went out from my mouth, and I announced them; then suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.*

<sup>4</sup> *Because I know that you are obstinate, and your neck is an iron sinew and your forehead brass,*

<sup>5</sup> *I declared them to you from of old, before they came to pass I announced them to you, lest you should say, ‘My idol did them; my carved image and my metal image commanded them.’” (ESV)*

So God is saying here in these verses that, over the years He had given the nation of Israel irrefutable evidence of His foreknowledge and His power. But He tells them here, I did it for a reason. I told you things ahead of time for a reason. And the reason was because I knew you, as an obstinate people, being headstrong and willful, would give credit to your idols if I didn't tell you ahead of time these sorts of things came from me.

So in verse 6, he goes on:

*“You have heard; now see all this; and will you not declare it? From this time forth I announce to you new things, hidden things that you have not known.*

<sup>7</sup> *They are created now, not long ago; before today you have never heard of them, lest you should say, ‘Behold, I knew them.’*

<sup>8</sup> *You have never heard, you have never known, from of old your ear has not been opened. For I knew that you would surely deal treacherously, and that from before birth you were called a rebel.”*

Now I want you to stop there for just a moment. Because in these chapters that we've been dealing with, the last several chapters, the last actually, this and the last 8 chapters, God has been talking about His ability to deliver His people from their exile in Babylon, which hasn't happened yet. Historically speaking, okay, God is... He's already told them, you are going to go into exile, but I'm going to bring you back from exile. I'm going to be gracious to you. I'm going to be merciful to you.

But He's telling them now that I've been talking to you about this man that I was going to raise up. And here's the reason I've been telling you. It's because I know how hard hearted you are. You never would have believed this was me if

I hadn't told you ahead of time. That's why He personally and specifically named Cyrus so that people wouldn't look back later and say, well, that can't be God. And why would the Jews say that? Why would the Jews deny that Cyrus was the man who was their deliverer? That's because he was a pagan. He was a Gentile. And the Jews would have never believed that God would raise up a Gentile to deliver them from their Babylonian exile. Never in a million years!

He said, I knew that you would even deal treacherously with this whole matter. Because, I've known from before your own birth that you were rebels. This is pretty incredible. But, God is speaking to them and He says that, from birth you were sinful and rebellious.

Now, let me just say something. I want you to keep this in mind. That statement is not unique to Israel, okay? Don't start thinking that Israel was sinful and rebellious before they were born and you're not. Because the fact of the matter is that it is not unique to the Jews. The Bible makes it very clear that we are all sinners from the womb. We don't start off innocent.

We, think people are sinful because they commit acts of sin. That's what we think. But what God tells us in the Word is that we are sinners by descent. We are sinners because of our first parents who fell into sin and since that time have given birth to sinners. As David said, from the time my mother conceived me, I was sinful. (Psalm 51:5) And that's not something we particularly like to hear. But it is something that God tells us that we're sinful right out of the box. No assembly required. It's just the way it is.

So God goes on saying in verse 9, now this is interesting and this is rather humbling, too. He says,

*“For my name's sake I defer my anger; for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off.”*

Now, I want you to stop and I want you to think about what God has just said to the Jews. He says, after having revealed how deeply sinful these people actually are, the question could be raised, well, if they're so sinful then why don't you just wipe them out? Right? Why don't you just wipe them out? Well, why show mercy at all?

God says right here, the reason that I show you mercy is to bring glory to myself. Did you catch that? That's what He's saying in that verse. The reason I show you mercy, and He doesn't use the word mercy there, but He says the

reason I defer my anger and I don't pour out my wrath on you right here, right now, is because by extending mercy, I bring glory to myself.

And that truth goes for us, too. None of us, not one of us in this room, or anybody listening to us online, not one of us deserved God to send His Son to come and die on the cross. We didn't deserve that, okay? And all of... not only that, but all of the daily expressions of goodness that God gives to us on an ongoing basis is not given to us because we deserve it. It is because of His mercy and His kindness. Why does He do it? Because it highlights His glory. It highlights His glory.

I've had people say to me in the past, well, I don't know about you, but God kind of sounds a little bit like an egomaniac to me. I mean, it seems like everything's for Him. He is the center of the universe, you guys. I don't know if you're aware of that. We like to think that we are. We're not. We are not the center of the universe. God is the center of the universe. It all revolves around Him. And if anybody has the right to say, I do it for My glory, it is God.

And the reason you and I might, and I'm not saying we are, but we might be offended by that statement, is because we don't truly understand how great He is, and how small we are. But when we consider the greatness of God, in the power of God, it begins to make more sense.

Somebody wrote me a letter just today. Gal from India wrote me and she said, "Pastor Paul, why did God include Tamar and Rahab and Ruth in the genealogy of the Messiah?"

Do you remember those three ladies? Tamar? I mean, none of them really had a great historical kind of background. Tamar seduced her father-in-law, who was Judah the son of Jacob. And had a child with her father-in-law. That's not terribly impressive.

We have Rahab, who was a prostitute, right? Who then was taken in marriage by one of the men who came into the city of Jericho. And she was basically, she... Her name is in the lineage of Jesus Christ.

And then you've got Ruth, who was a Moabitess. And the Moabites were cursed. And yet, here's Ruth, bless her heart, right there in the lineage of Jesus. And she (letter writer from India) said to me, "pastor Paul, why? Why did God do that?"

And I just shot her back a quick, simple answer. “To highlight His glory; His mercy and His glory. Simple as that.”

God's plan, when you look at God's workings among mankind, we see His glory. And it really is truly amazing.

Look with me now as we continue on in verse 10. He says,

*“Behold, I have refined you; but not as silver. (In other words, I haven't refined you with literal fire, but I have refined you. How has He done it? He says,) I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.”* In other words, the fires of difficulty and trials and so forth.

And He's referring to the upcoming exile, which they haven't experienced yet. But that is a refining. And by the way, it did work. It worked to refine the Jews to send them into exile.

Verse 11:

*“For my own sake, (look at what He's saying there.) for my own sake, (he repeats,) I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.”*

So this is interesting. Here God says that He shows, He allows rather, afflictions to come into the lives of his people for the very same reason that He shows mercy. And that is, that He might be glorified. He says, for my sake, it's for my sake that I do it, right?

I know that some people struggle with that idea. Particularly the idea that God uses trials or allows trials in our lives that are for His sake. And that's not to say that those trials don't benefit us because they do. God uses those in our lives. But, and then we can look at other passages in the Bible and we can see that. But they do benefit us. But ultimately, since God is the center of the universe, since He is the one not us, those things are done for His sake.

Now you understand a little bit, don't you, why Paul used to say, when he would start his letters: Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Even though he was in prison but at the hand of the Romans, Paul knew that he was there for the sake of the Lord. For His sake that God would be glorified, that God's purpose would be fulfilled.

Have you ever stopped to think about your trials, your difficulties, your problems, your challenges, and to ask yourself the question, has God allowed this in my life for His sake? I know it's hard. It's probably nothing that you would ever ask for in a million years. And yet I wonder. I just wonder when we get a chance to look back on these things, when we are in the presence of the Lord, how will we look back?

How will we see the things that have happened in our lives that perhaps we looked upon with great disdain while we were going through them. Perhaps we even prayed against them. Oh, Lord, deliver me like Paul did that thorn in his flesh. God spoke to Paul and said, well, that's actually..., son that's there for a reason and I'm going to leave it there.

Okay, Lord. For Your glory. For Your glory. Right? Changes the whole way you think about that whole idea.

Verse 12 let's keep going. He says,

*“Listen to me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I called! I am he; I am the first, and I am the last. (We've talked about this before. He has made that remark in the past in these chapters. He says,)*

*<sup>13</sup> My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand forth together.”*

Now, why is God saying this? Is He just bragging? No, He's about to say something important. Whenever God is about to say something important, He kind of lays out his right to do so.

And in this couple of verses, 12 and 13, He's telling again, He's telling the Israelites, because He refers to them as Jacob, He says, *“Listen to me,”* He's about to say something. But they're kind of, I mean somebody I suppose, could come back and say, well, what gives Him the right to speak to us this way?

And so He says, first of all, I called you. I am the first and the last. He says, *“My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; (and) when I called to them, (He says they hearken) they stand forth together.”* Anybody else have that kind of a pedigree? Anybody else make that kind of a claim? I don't think so. Okay, in that case, let's listen. Let's listen to what He has to say.

He says in verse 14:

*“Assemble, all of you, and listen! Who among them has declared these things? The Lord loves him; ( Now, He doesn't say who this him is yet, but we have to keep reading.) he shall perform his purposes on Babylon, and his arm shall be against the Chaldeans.”*

Oh! He's talking about Cyrus again. He's referring to the man whom he is going to raise up to conquer the Babylonian Empire. And one of the first things he's going to do, once he gains control is, he's going to release the Jews to go back home because their 70 years of exile is up.

And so look at what God says, and this is really important that we look at this. Well, let me read the next 2 verses before we, we comment a little bit further. Verse 15 and 16:

*“I, even I, have spoken and called him; (called Cyrus) I have brought him, and he will prosper in his way.*

*Draw near to me, hear this: from the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there.”* Wow!

Okay. Now did you notice what He said about Cyrus back in verse 14? This is, and He's saying this because He knows the Jews are so stiff necked they never would've believed it had He not said it ahead of time.

But if you look back in verse 14, He says of Cyrus, *“The Lord loves him.”* What?! A pagan Gentile king? Are you joking? That's what the Jews would have said. I mean, this was unthinkable. God expressing love for a pagan king? That's not possible. That's not possible. That's what they would have said.

And yet God says, again in verse 15, I've spoken and I've called him. I've brought him, and He says, *“and he will prosper in his way.”* You know why? Because God says, I'm going to make sure he does. He will prosper in all that he does. Okay.

And now I, you'll notice I didn't read the very end of verse 16 yet, because I wanted to highlight it for you. Because what you see in verse 16, or the end of verse 16, is a picture of the Trinity. He says, *“And now the Lord God has sent me, and his Spirit.”*

Notice you got 3 people there who are in view in the last part of that verse. You've got the Lord God; you've got the One - the speaker who is called Me, who refers to themselves. And then He refers to His Spirit, right? And you'll



notice in the previous verses, the One who calls himself Me, is the same One who says in verse 15, *“I, even I have spoken and called him.”*

So this is the Lord who says, I am calling Cyrus. And then He speaks and says, *“...now the Lord has sent me, and his Spirit.”* Interesting picture of the Trinity, is it not, even in the Old Testament. It's not a perfect picture. I mean, we get a perfect picture in the New Testament. But it's a very important picture nonetheless.

Verse 17 as we continue on.

*“Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you to profit, (In other words, He says, I teach you the things that are to your profit. In other words, what is good for you? And that's why He ends that verse by saying,) “who leads you in the way that you should go.”* God declares here that everything that He has told them in the past was for their good. And sometimes we don't believe that, do we?

God tells us things in His word like, *“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.”* We get that one from 2 Corinthians. *“Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.”* (2 Corinthians 6:14)

And yet sometimes we just think God's just trying to rain on our parade. Really? I can't do that? Oh, man! And we pout and mope around. God's not letting me have any fun at all. And God's Word is given for us, for our profit. He says, I give you my word to lead you in the way that you would go so that it would be to your profit. And He's not talking about financial profit. He's saying that it would be for your good, for your benefit. I do these things so that you will benefit from them. I'm not trying to ruin your day.

Verse 18:

*“Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments! (Now He begins to speak to the Israelites about how they just refuse to listen.) Then your peace would have been like a river, (Now He's talking about all the profit they would have received had they paid attention.) and your righteousness like the waves of the sea;*

*<sup>19</sup> your offspring would have been like the sand, and your descendants like its grains; their name would never be cut off or destroyed before me.”*

So God is actually lamenting here all of the blessings that went unfulfilled for the nation of Israel, because they were given covenant promises through the Mosaic covenant. And God said, If you keep my covenant and do not worship other gods, (right?) I will bless you. I'll bless you in the land. Your children will be blessed. Your crops will be blessed. No nation will be able to stand against you. You will spread out, and you will fill the land. And there will be great blessings upon you. And the sicknesses that came upon the Egyptians will not come upon you. And there will be no famines; and the sun will shine and the rain will fall. And there will be great blessing. Right?

And God says here, if only you'd paid attention. If only you'd paid attention all these things would have manifest. All the promises I gave you would have been fulfilled.

Now, again, those promises were given to Israel. They were not given to the church. You guys remember in Ephesians, we are told that we have been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies, not earthly promises. (Ephesians 1:3) That doesn't mean God doesn't bless us in an earthly way, He does. He blesses, but it's not a covenant promise.

He made covenant promises to Israel that were all very physical. He makes, spiritual promises to the body of Christ, which are part of our covenant, "every spiritual blessing in Christ. Okay? So just to make a distinction there.

But I have to ask the question here, when God says to them, if only you'd paid attention to my Word. I have to wonder if one day, God is going to allow you and I to see how perhaps, our unbelief has hindered what would otherwise have been His intention of blessing us for our life? I just have to wonder. I don't know, I'm just wondering out loud.

I think it's safe to say that few people probably live up to their potential. At least the potential that God has for them as far as how their lives could have been; had not sin been dogging them and unbelief tripping them up along the way.

Now let's go on. Verse 20. The Lord says,

*"Go out from Babylon, (Remember, they're not even in exile in Babylon yet. This is 200 years before they're going to be released that he's saying this. So He says,) "Go out from Babylon, flee from Chaldea, declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it, send it out to the end of the earth; say, "The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob!"*

And of course, here the Lord is just foretelling the release of His people from their captivity in Babylon. And He tells them to rejoice as they go. And then He goes on to say how He's going to take care of them on their way home.

He says,

*“<sup>21</sup> They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts; he made water flow for them from the rock; he split the rock and the water gushed out.”*

And what He's saying there is, just as the Lord cared for his people in the wilderness when they were making their way from Egypt to the promised land, He says, so now He will also take care of them on their way home. And He's basically calling people to an obedience to return home when their time is up.

So the Lord ends this chapter by simply saying, *“There is no peace, says the LORD, for the wicked.”* And so He's basically saying that for those who refuse to walk in obedience and leave their bondage in Babylon, there's no peace. There's no... And this statement stands on its own.

You guys know you can take certain scriptures out of context. People say all the time, well, you can't take that out of context. Well, sometimes you can. Sometimes you can. And there are some things that are true regardless of context. We've talked about this before. I've told you, any...

First of all, anything that talks about God and His nature can be taken out of context. Because God... it's always true, right? If the Bible says God is love, He's love in any context. If the God says that He is a God of judgment and righteousness, then He is that regardless of the context. Doesn't matter because God is who He is, and that never changes.

And there are other things that don't change. And that is, there's no peace for the wicked. And it was true of the Israelites, and it's true of us. There's no peace for the wicked. For those who make a determination, I'm not going to follow God. I'm not going to live my life for God. I'm not going to... I don't care about His word and I'm going to cast it behind me and just do my own thing and go my own way. That's fine. They can do that in their weird sort of perverted sense of what it means to be free, but they will have no peace.

And we hear that over and over and over in testimonies that people give. They'll talk... Boy, I tell you; how many times have you heard somebody say, well, I was raised in church. But when I was a teenager, I just started kind of thinking, oh, this is pretty stupid. And then I left home, and I went to college. And I filled

my head full of all kinds of worldly things. And I decided the whole Bible thing was outdated and needed to be kicked to the curb.

And then I just started living my own life, and I got a good job. And I was making all kinds of money and I was buying things. And I was living the life that the world offers you. But I realized I had no peace. I had no peace.

And then finally they'll talk about how something happened in their life to just absolutely ring their bell, get their attention in a way that was undeniable. And they turn back to the Lord and they're like, oh, there's the peace! There's that peace I've been missing.

We hear about it all the time. Hey, Jesus is the Prince of Peace and without Him, there's no peace. So this is a statement that is true, regardless of the context.

All right, chapter 49, we'll get through this. This is where we signal a change in our study of the Book of Isaiah. Because as I said when we started off, the last several chapters have been speaking prophetically about the rise of a man named Cyrus, whom God would raise up to release His people from their bondage and exile, return them to their homeland, to rebuild the temple, and get started on all that.

But as we get now to chapter 49, here in Isaiah, we begin to see that Cyrus has been for us a type. And now we're going to, we're going to keep talking about a deliverer. We're going to keep talking about an, anointed one, but we're not going to talk about Cyrus anymore.

We're going to begin to speak about, Messiah, which is basically, I mean, that's what anointed one means. But we're going to start talking about the Messiah, right, as we get into these verses. So I think you're going to see Jesus Christ all through these verses.

Verse 1. We start with that familiar, "*Listen to me,...*" But this time God says,

*"Listen to me, O coastlands, (Right?) and give attention, you peoples from afar."* Now, He's not talking to the Jews this time, right? He's talking to Gentiles. He's talking to what the Bible refers to as, the nations, right? He says, *"The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name."* Who's He talking about? We'll find out.

<sup>2</sup> *He made my mouth like a sharp sword; (and that means He gave me His Word) In the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me like a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.*

<sup>3</sup> *And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified."* Well, now we know who he's talking about in these first few verses, don't we. He's talking about Israel.

But the word is going out to the nations, okay? And so to the nations He says, here is how Israel got started. But did Israel succeed in their mission? Did you ever stop to think about that? Did Israel succeed? God gave them his Law. He gave them His Word. Did they succeed in reaching the nations? They did not.

Look what it says in verse 4. This is Israel speaking,

*"But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the Lord, and my recompense with my God."* So Israel, as the servant of the Lord, labored in vain.

Now, having established that, we begin to talk now about another servant who will accomplish all that Israel was unable to accomplish.

Look at verse 5:

*"And now the Lord says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, (Look what the purpose is of this coming servant.) to bring Jacob back to him."* Stop there. I know I'm in the middle of a sentence. I apologize for that. But it's important that you see this.

The purpose of this servant of the Lord is to bring Jacob back to him. It is not to, as Cyrus was given to bring Jacob back to their homeland. This servant is going to bring Jacob back to God. Okay, back to him. Are you with me? For I, excuse me, *"and that Israel might be gathered to him for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength-*

<sup>6</sup> *he says: "It is to light a thing that you should be (a) servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."*

Guys, this is how we know we're no longer talking about Cyrus. Because it goes beyond Jacob now. Cyrus was great. He was a good king. Thank you, God, for

raising up Cyrus. You laid it on his heart to let Israel go back to their land after 70 years of exile. Wonderful.

But the coming of Messiah, who is Jesus, is given a much broader, much larger task of bringing Jacob back to God. Then God says, it's too small of a thing that this would be limited just to Jacob. I am going to make you a light. Did you catch that? *"...a light for the nations..."*

Guys, focus on that phrase for just a moment, would you? A light for the nations. *"...a light for the nations, (and the reason is so) ...that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."*

See, Israel didn't bring salvation to the end of the earth. Jesus, as the next servant of the Lord, comes to bring salvation to the end of the earth. But did you... again, again *"...a light for the nations,..."*

Do you guys remember when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to be circumcised on the eighth day? It says, that there was a man in the temple precincts, who was waiting on God and for the redemption of Israel, and his name was Simeon. You remember? And moved by the Spirit He came to Mary and Joseph and He spoke some very important words. Let me put it on the screen for you, so you can see it. It's from Luke chapter 2. It says,

**Luke 2:27-32 (ESV)**

*"...[Simeon] came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."*

*"...[Simeon] came in the Spirit (and that means he came prompted by the Spirit) into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him according to the custom of the Law, (Okay?) he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you prepared in the presence of all peoples, (Look at this next line and you'll remember it from Isaiah) a light for revelation to the Gentiles, (or if you will, the nations) and for glory to your people Israel."*

You get the connection? That's why we know that this prophecy, this word here is, goes right there in connection with the prophecy that we read here in Isaiah

about Jesus being “*a light for the nations.*” It's beautiful picture and a beautiful connection of scripture to show us that consistency.

Verse 7:

*“Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers; (Here's what He says, God says, to that one) “Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.””*

Now verse 7 is one of those interesting verses that frankly could apply to both Israel and to the coming Messiah. Abhorred by the nations and yet who will be worshiped. Although Israel is not going to be worshipped, but the nations are going to flock to Israel. And they will prostrate themselves before even Israel, saying, your God is God, and so forth.

Now, in verse 8 and following, the Lord speaks of the ministry of Messiah. Read along with me here.

*“Thus says the Lord: “In a time of favor I... answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages,*

*<sup>9</sup> saying to the prisoners, ‘Come out,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Appear.’ They shall feed along the ways; on all bare heights shall be their pasture;*

*<sup>10</sup> they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.*

*<sup>11</sup> And I will make all my mountains a road, and my highway shall be raised up.*

*<sup>12</sup> Behold, these shall come from afar, and behold, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene.”*

Your Bible may say Sinim. It really doesn't matter because we don't know either place, frankly. We don't know. So it's fine. But he's just saying from far off places the Lord will call his people to return at that time.

And He calls them to rejoice, saying,

*“<sup>13</sup> Sing for joy, O heavens, and exalt, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.”*

Now, check out verses 14 and following here. This is great.

*“But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.”*

*15 Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.*

*16 Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.*

I want you to stop there for just a moment. Because right here, God connects his love and compares it with a nursing mother and the compassion that she has for her baby, which is a pretty powerful thing.

Do you remember that Paul used that picture to the Thessalonians? He said, when we were there among you, we treated you so gentle as like a nursing mom with her children. (1 Thessalonians 2:7)

God says here, you would say I have forgotten you. And why would Israel say that? Why would Israel say, "you have forgotten me?" That's easy. Hard times, difficulties, challenges, afflictions. Why do we say God has forgotten us? Hardships, trials, persecutions, afflictions, right? It happens all the time.

And yet God says, can a mother forget her baby? And then He goes on to say, even if she could, I can't; I can't forget you. I can't forsake you. God cannot forsake His people.

Now, there are a lot of Christians who believe that Israel has been forsaken. And that the church, the body of Christ, has now taken that position that Israel once had as God's chosen people. Now, it is true that we are called chosen even in the New Testament. That word is elect. And I get that.

You've got so many statements in the Bible, and this is one of them. You have to believe that God would go back on this word right here, if in fact, He did forsake Israel. God still has a purpose for Israel. It's not right now. We're not in the middle of this time when Israel is really the focus of God's redemptive program. Right now it's the church. He is working through the church.



Jesus said, you are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth. You, the church, the body of Christ, you're the one. You are His body on the earth right now. But there's coming a day when you and I are going to be caught away to be with our Lord. And when that happens, the clock for Israel is going to start once again.

The Bible refers to that period of time as, The Time of Jacob's Trouble. It is also referred to as, the Great Tribulation. And there is going to be the outpouring of wrath on the earth, although Israel is going to be largely protected to a degree. But God is going to pour out His wrath upon the earth at that time and the institutions of man.

And then at the end or toward the end of the Tribulation Period, when it looks like the nations are all amassing against Israel and ready to pounce on her, Jesus is going to return to the earth to fight for Israel. He is going to put down her enemies and He's going to establish His kingdom there on Mount Zion for a period of 1,000 years, which is what we call, the Millennial Kingdom.

So it's important for us to understand that God's statement here when He says, listen, even though a mother could possibly, I mean it goes against nature, but even though she could possibly forget her young, I can't forget you. I cannot forsake you."

He says, "*I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.*" That's obviously figurative, but He's saying that you are continually before me. And you have to know that God has not gone back on His Word for his people Israel. And they still have a place in God's timetable.

He's going on now and talking about what's going to happen when the Lord returns and sets up His kingdom. He says,

*"<sup>17</sup> Your builders make haste; your destroyers and those who laid you waste go out from (among) you. (They're going to run for their lives. He says,)*

*<sup>18</sup> Lift up your eyes around and see; they all gather, they come to you."* Because see, after they run, then the nations of the world are going to flock to Israel. And they are going to come, and they are going to... so they can hear the word of the Lord.

He says, I'm in the middle of verse 18:

*“As I live, declares the Lord, you shall put them all on as an ornament; you shall bind them on as a bride does.*

*19 Surely your waste and your desolate places and your devastated land- surely now you will be too narrow for your inhabitants, and (check this out) those who swallowed you up will be far away.”* In other words, the enemy is going to put their enemies, enemies of Israel away from them.

And look what He says here now in verse 20:

*“<sup>20</sup> The children of your bereavement will yet say in your ears; “The place is too narrow for me; make room for me to dwell in.”*

*21 (And) Then you will say in your heart; “Who has borne me these? I was bereaved and barren, exiled and put away, but who has brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; (but) from where have these come?”*”

Isn't this interesting? God says, I'm going to bring back your children. You're, you will have thought yourself bereaved. You will have thought yourself lost and barren. You will have thought yourself gone. And then I am going to rescue you at the last minute and you... And then I'm going to bring your children home to you.

I'm going to bring the Jews from all places where they've been scattered and I'm going to bring them home. And you're going to look at them and say, where did these come from? I thought there was none left. I thought we were dead. I thought we were gone. And it's going to be a great time of rejoicing.

*“Thus says the Lord, (verse 22, the Lord) God: “Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.*

*<sup>23</sup> Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, (God is speaking to the Jews) and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am (YAHWEH) the LORD; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame.”*

This is what God has in plan, in store for the Israelites, for the Jews, for Israel as a nation. This is what He has planned for them. It's a wonderful plan.

Verse 24 says,

*“Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued? (No, it usually doesn't happen.)*

*<sup>25</sup> For thus says the Lord: “Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children. (God says, this is a promise to Israel)*

He says,

*“<sup>26</sup> I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine. (And) Then all flesh shall know that I am the Lord your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.” Notice that, “the Mighty One of Jacob.”*

It's interesting as a Christian, as a born again believer myself, I have such a love and appreciation for the nation of Israel now. And there's no jealousy. There's no jealousy with the idea that they remain His chosen nation on the earth.

There's no jealousy with the fact that God has a plan to bless them and establish His kingdom in Israel. Because we are the bride of Christ. We are the bride. And we are, according to the Bible, joint heirs with Jesus.

So there's no jealousy here. There's no problem, there's no issues here where we're like, ah, Israel, they don't deserve anything. Neither do we. And yet, look at all that we get. What a wonderful blessing that God has planned for His people.