

Isaiah Chapter 49

Verses 1-2

The “servant” is a person who shall come forth from the Servant-Nation Israel.

He is the Messiah who was “formed ... from the womb to be his servant” and to “bring Jacob again to him”.

He is further commissioned to be a “light to the Gentiles” (quoted in Acts 13:47 as being fulfilled by Jesus Christ).

The reference to the “covenant of the people” is to the New Covenant (Testament), by which Christ will gather believers “from far.”

Isaiah 49:1 "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name."

“From the womb ... the bowels of my mother”:

The whole world, including the Gentiles (“island,” “peoples from afar”) are called to recognize two significant points:

- (1) The Messiah/Servant will be a human being, born as others are of a woman, yet virgin born (7:14; Luke 1:30-33); and
- (2) He will be an individual as distinct from a personified group such as the nation of Israel, which has also been called the LORD’s servant, see (41:8-9; 42:19; 43:10; 44:1-2, 21, 26; 45:4; 48:20; 50:10).

The mention of the isles, and the people from afar, in this, indicate to me that this message is for the whole world.

The reason this message is to the whole world, is because salvation through Jesus Christ is offered to the whole world.

This is definitely speaking of Jesus Christ, who was intended to be the Savior of the world even from the time He was in His mother’s womb.

Usually the father is mentioned in something like this, not the mother.

In this case, Jesus was seed of the woman, so the mother would be mentioned.

The angel told Mary that the baby was to be named Jesus which means Savior.

Isaiah 49:2 "And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;"

“My mouth like a sharp sword”:

The LORD has given power to His servant to speak effectively and thereby to conquer His enemies (11:4; Psalm 2:9; Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15).

His Word is always effective.

“Hid me”:

The Messiah, before His appearing, was hidden with God ready to be drawn out at the precise moment (Gal. 4:4-5).

The Word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword.

Jesus is the Word of God.

John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Verse 2 above, leaves no doubt that this is speaking of the Word of God proceeding out of the mouth of Jesus Christ.

The mention of being hid was the fact that Jesus was hid from the earth and its people, until the fullness of time came and He was revealed to mankind.

The Word of the Lord Jesus is so keen and pure that it pierces the heart of man.

Look, with me, at exactly what the sword is.

Ephesians 6:17 "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:"

Isaiah 49:3 "And said unto me, Thou [art] my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

“Thou art my servant, O Israel”:

That the Lord’s use of the name “Israel” refers here to the Messiah (42:1; 49:5-7; 52:13; 53:11), is explained through the intimate relationship that exists between the nation and her King.

The cross of Jesus glorified the Father.

John 17:1 "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:"

We will see, also, how we can glorify God.

1 Corinthians 6:20 "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Jesus Christ is the head of all Israel, both physical, and spiritual Israel.

Isaiah 49:4 "Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: [yet] surely my judgment [is] with the LORD, and my work with my God."

"In vain ... strength for nought, and in vain":

At His first coming, the Servant met with rejection by His nation.

It may have appeared to some that His mission was a failure because of the suffering and rejection He endured (John 1:9-11).

The last two Servant-songs also emphasize the Servant's suffering (50:4-11; 52:13 - 53:12).

But, though rejected by men, the Servant expresses His strong assurance that He is doing God's work and will be rewarded with complete success.

Of course, the labor of Jesus was not in vain.

This shows us the humanity of the flesh of Jesus.

Jesus is the Judge of all the world.

He sees the few who truly repent and come to Him.

Isaiah 49:5 "And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb [to be] his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength."

"Again to him ... not gathered":

The Servant's mission will include the priority of bringing Israel to the Lord.

He will complete this at His second advent (Zech. 12:10 – 13:1).

The sadness of all this was the rejection of Jesus by the house of Jacob.

Jesus came to the Jew first and then to the Gentile.

God sent His Son to the physical house of Israel, but few received Him as their Savior.

The early church was made up primarily of Jews.

The masses of the Hebrew people did not come to Christ, however.

The priests, scribes, and Pharisees were the very ones who rejected Jesus.

Jesus did not choose His apostles from among the teachers, or those in authority in the temple.

He chose common laborers.

He taught them His ways.

Paul was an exception to this calling.

Paul was a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

Even though he had been taught of Gamaliel, he had to be retaught by the Holy Spirit, the grace of God.

It took Paul three years to learn.

The glory in the eyes of the Father was for those who did believe.

Isaiah 49:6 "And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

“Raise up the tribes of Jacob ... my salvation unto the end of the earth”:

The Servant’s goal is the salvation and restoration of Israel for the fulfillment of the covenant promise.

But not limited to Israel, He is to function as a light bringing salvation to the Gentiles.

Israel’s mission had always been to bring the nations to God (19:24; 42:6).

This she will finally do very effectively in the tribulation after the conversion of the 144,000 witnesses (Rev. 7:1-10; 14:1-5) and when she is restored to her Land at the Servant’s return to earth.

Paul applied this verse to his ministry to the Gentiles on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:47).

Jesus is the Light of the world.

Since Jesus was the Creator of the earth, He would, also, be the Savior of His creation.

1 Timothy 4:10 "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe."

Jesus provided salvation for all.

Some do not receive that salvation unto themselves.

Matthew 4:16 "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."

John 1:4-5 "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

John 8:12 "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

There are many more Scriptures that speak of Jesus as the Light of the world.

This would be a fun word search for you to do.

Isaiah 49:7 "Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, [and] his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, [and] the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee."

“Despiseth ... abhorreth”:

This speaks to the humiliating treatment of the Servant at His first advent, a theme emphasized by Isaiah.

The “nation” is used collectively for all who reject Him, particularly Gentiles, who are the rulers, kings, and princes referred to as someday giving exalted treatment to the Servant at His second advent.

Former oppressors will bow down to Him as in 52:15, because of the salvation of Israel.

The unsaved world despiseth Jesus, because they realize they are doomed.

We know just how far the hatred went, when they cried out for Jesus to be crucified.

Some would like to blame the Romans for the crucifixion; some would like to blame the Jews.

Truly every human who ever lived caused the crucifixion of Jesus.

Our sin nailed Jesus to the cross.

From the smallest to the greatest, each person can obtain salvation in just one way, and that is to repent of our sin and come to Jesus.

We all were sinners, and Jesus gave His body on the cross to save us.

The Scriptures say that Jesus was despised of men, but in Him we live or die.

Our eternal life is through faith in Jesus.

There is no other way.

Jesus was obedient to the Father even to the death of the cross.

He submitted to the will of the Father that all might be saved.

Just belief in His name brings salvation.

Jesus was equal with God, yet submitted to the humiliation of the cross.

All, who open their hearts and eyes to the truth of Jesus, can be saved.

You may be a king, or a pauper, Jesus has the gift of salvation for you.

We believe and receive, it is that simple.

Isaiah 49:8 "Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;"

“Acceptable time ... day of salvation”:

Messiah is represented as asking for the grace of God to be given to sinners.

God gives His favorable answer in a time of grace (61:1), when salvation’s day comes to the world (Gal. 4:4-5; Heb. 4:7).

At His appointed time in the future, the LORD will, by His Servant, accomplish the final deliverance of Israel.

Paul applied these words to his ministry of proclaiming the gospel of God’s grace to all people (2 Cor. 6:2).

“A covenant of the people”:

When the Lord saves and regathers Israel, they will return to the Land, to which Joshua brought their ancestors after their exit from Egypt, now restored and glorious (44:26; Joshua 13:1-8).

From the foundation of the earth, God had chosen a time for the salvation of man to be furnished through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

God made a covenant with faithful Abraham that all the people of the earth would be blessed.

The covenant is kept in Jesus.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Jesus was all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

He was One with the Father and the Spirit.

This was a plan they had made from the foundation of the earth.

The desolate heritages would be those who, up until now, were not thought of as being God's people.

The salvation offered through Jesus was not because you were a certain nationality, but because you had faith in Jesus.

Verses 9-10

"Prisoners ... darkness ... feed ... pastures":

At the Messiah's Second Advent, Israel's condition will change from captivity and oppression to contentment and prosperity such as that enjoyed by a well-fed, protected, and watered flock of sheep.

These ideal conditions will be enjoyed by the faithful remnant returning to their kingdom in Israel.

John reveals that this condition is a foretaste of heaven (Rev. 7:16-17).

Isaiah 49:9 "That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that [are] in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures [shall be] in all high places."

These prisoners were prisoners of sin.

They were living in darkness, until the Light of Jesus shone upon them and brought hope.

Jesus defeated Satan and sin on the cross at Calvary.

Jesus took the sin of the world upon His body on the cross and sin (for those who believe in Jesus), died on the cross.

Jesus is the great Shepherd, and we believers are His sheep.

He is our Protector, as well as our Provider.

Isaiah 49:10 "They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."

Notice that beginning (with verse 9 above), how similar this is to the 23rd Psalm.

He (Jesus) leads all believers to green pastures and to “springs of water”.

Take a look at the special care Jesus takes of His own, as a Shepherd would His sheep.

This shows the divine care He gives all believers.

Notice, that it is the same One who had mercy on us that feeds us and protects us from the elements.

Isaiah Chapter 49 Questions

1. In verse 1, who are told to listen?
2. The mention of these people, and the people from afar, causes the author to believe what?
3. Why is this given to them?
4. His mouth was made like a _____.
5. What is spoken of as a two-edged sword?
6. This message is proceeding out of whose mouth?
7. The Word of God pierces the _____ of man.
8. The _____ of Jesus glorified the Father.
9. What does verse 4 show us?

10. What is the sadness in verse 5?
11. The early church was made up of whom?
12. Who were the very ones who rejected Jesus?
13. The apostles were chosen from what group?
14. Who was an exception to that?
15. How long did Paul spend learning of the grace message?
16. I will also give thee for a _____ to the Gentiles.
17. What does the author believe would be an interesting word study?
18. Who despises Jesus?
19. What is an example of just how far the hatred went?
20. Who really caused the crucifixion of Jesus?
21. Our eternal life is through _____ in _____.
22. Jesus was _____ with God, yet suffered the humiliation of the cross.
23. In verse 9, the prisoners are whom?
24. What 2 things did Jesus defeat on the cross?
25. Who is the great Shepherd?
26. In verse 10, what are some of the beautiful things promised to those who believe?