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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Isaiah 49.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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Isaiah 49.

Topics.

- God called me from the womb, he said, "In you I will be glorified."
- I will make you a light for nations; salvation will reach the end of the earth.
- Kings shall prostrate themselves; because of God the Holy One of Israel.
- I will give you as a covenant to people to apportion the desolate heritages.
- Sing for joy, O heavens, exult, O earth; the LORD has comforted His people.
- I engraved you on the palms of my hands; you are continually before me.
- You will say in your heart, "Who has borne me these when I was barren."
- Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers.
- All flesh shall know I am the LORD your Saviour, the mighty one of Jacob.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).

3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22).

The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

Previous chapters: having some knowledge of the primary focus of the previous chapters helps understand the focus of this chapter and where it fits within the history of Israel. From Isaiah chapter forty up to chapter forty-eight the constant theme and primary focus of Isaiah's visions has been upon: -

- God's love for Israel and the utter foolishness of worshipping idols.
- God using Nebuchadnezzar the secular king of Babylon as His servant (Jer. 25:9) to take Israel into captivity for seventy years.
- The LORD telling Israel their nation will not be annihilated from the face of the earth (by Babylon), because God will bless their descendants.
- The LORD stirring up Cyrus the king of Persia and using him as His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) who He will equip and take by his right hand to conquer Babylon and set Israel free from their seventy year Babylonian captivity.
- The people of Israel being set free from their seventy years in captivity and their glorious return to their beloved city Jerusalem and the restoration of their kingdom and in the previous chapter being told to go out of Babylon and joyfully proclaim to the whole earth that the LORD has redeemed His servant Israel (Isaiah 48:20).

However these amazing prophecies are not limited to Babylon, Cyrus and the restoration of Israel during their generations, but prophetically reach forward to the whole Gospel age from the coming of John the Baptist, the ministry of Jesus and to his return in glory as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

God called Me from the Womb, He said, "In you I will be Glorified."

Isaiah 49:1-3 ----- ¹Listen to me (Isaiah), O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. ²He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. ³And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

The coastlands: refer to the nations along the Mediterranean Sea.

Isaiah says that the LORD: -

- Called him and named him from the womb.
- Called him to be God's servant and a servant to Israel.
- Made his mouth like a sharp sword and a polished arrow.
- Called him to bring Israel back to God (v5).

Isaiah also states that the LORD said, "He would be Isaiah's strength and glorify him in Israel and has honoured him in the eyes of God. These all apply to Isaiah, but contained within the language of this prophetic chapter is an echo of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything stated in these first few verses can be applied to Jesus who God planned and purposed His eternal mind before the world began to be the Saviour of mankind and called him to not only save the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but also to save all people of all nations who came to him.

I will make You a Light for Nations; Salvation will Reach the End of the Earth.

Isaiah 49:4-6 ----- ⁴But I (Isaiah) 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." ⁵And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; 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— ⁶he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my 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."

Isaiah knows that he has been called by God to save the people of Israel, by calling them to repentance and to turn from their rebellion and wickedness, but rather than heed his message they set their hearts diamond hard against the word of the LORD. This is why Isaiah feels that he has laboured in vain, all that he had proclaimed to them, brought forth no fruit.

However he was confident that he was in the right with the LORD and acting according to His will and honoured in His eyes. The LORD responds to Isaiah's feeling that he has laboured in vain, by telling him that he will not only be God's servant to raise up the preserved tribes of Israel, but will also be a light for the nations so that God's salvation will reach to the end of the earth.

NOTICE.

The LORD does not promise Isaiah that his message will save the current rebellious and corrupt generation most of them would have died during their seventy year captivity, but does promise him that his prophetic messages will save their descendants and offspring that came out of Babylon.

I am honoured in the eyes of the LORD: (v5) Isaiah is made aware that his prophetic message is not limited to Israel only, but will reach out to the whole human race and break down all national barriers because God has many who are not born of Israel's race amongst the Gentile nations to be saved.

John in the New Testament spoke of this in the following verse: -

- I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. (John 10:16).

Isaiah considered it a great honour to be called to proclaim God's salvation to Israel and an even greater honour to extend it to the Gentile nations and to all people of all tongues and languages in all parts of the world. To be trusted to take God's salvation to the end of the earth (v6) was a great honour that was bestowed upon Isaiah, but more perfectly and fully bestowed upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

It should be noted: that the statement, "salvation will go to the Gentiles in all the parts of the world," does not mean that Isaiah himself would take God's message of salvation to the Gentile nations, but that the messages he spoke would.

There are many prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ throughout the book of Isaiah that have ministered and blessed not only the Jewish people, but also the Gentile nations of all generations. The most commonly known of these (from the many) that speak of Jesus are the following: -

- He grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. (Isaiah 53:2).
- He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 53:3).
- He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5).
- Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7).
- He poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:12).

Kings shall Prostrate themselves; because of God the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 49:7 ----- ⁷Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: "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."

These verses apply to both Isaiah and the Lord Jesus Christ. Isaiah was a faithful prophet who brought a message of repentance and salvation to the people of Israel, but instead of heeding his words rejected and treated him with scorn. Likewise Jesus brought a message of salvation to both Israel and the Gentile nations and was at the beginning greatly received, but at the end of his life on earth despised and rejected.

Kings and princes shall prostrate themselves: (v7) this is true of Isaiah's era and will certainly be true of Christ when he returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's kingdom of righteousness justice, joy and peace on earth. At the end of Israel's seventy years in captivity God used Cyrus the king of Media Persia who He called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) and called him by name and also equipped him and took him by the right hand to bring the Empire of Babylon to ruin and set the people of Israel free from the bondage and captivity of Babylon. (Isaiah 45:2-3) (Isaiah 45:5-6) (Isaiah 45:14).

After this Cyrus the great king of Media Persia declared that the LORD God of Israel is the God of Jerusalem and the God of heaven.

- Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem." (2 Chron. 36:23) (Ezra 1:2-3).

Cyrus built his empire by firstly conquering the Median Empire, then the Lydian Empire and eventually the Neo-Babylonian Empire. He led an expedition into central Asia (either before or after Babylon), which resulted in major campaigns that were described as having brought "into subjection every nation without exception." (He never entered into Egypt himself as he was killed in battle).

He respected the customs and religions of the lands he conquered and at the end of his rule, the Achaemenid Empire (also called the First Persian Empire) stretched from Asia Minor in the west to the north-western areas of India in the east. It is said that in universal history, the role of the Achaemenid Empire founded by Cyrus lies in its very successful model for centralized administration and establishing a

government working to the advantage and profit of its subjects. When such a great king declares that the LORD God of Israel is the God of heaven it is certain many others followed his lead.

I will Give You as a Covenant to People to Apportion the Desolate Heritages.

Isaiah 49:8-11 -----⁸Thus says the LORD: "In a time of favor I have 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,⁹saying 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;¹⁰they 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.¹¹And I will make all my mountains a road, and my highways shall be raised up.

They shall not hunger or thirst: (v10) carries the idea that all the people's needs and longing desires for freedom and their hungering and thirsting after righteousness will be abundantly satisfied and provided for. This firstly applies to the freedom that came to the Babylonian captives and the prosperity and spiritual hunger and thirst that was satisfied when they returned to Jerusalem, rebuilt their temple and established their true faith. However it also echoes a future time. Jesus said: -

- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (Matt. 5:6).

The love and mercy of God; the precious promises; the Gospel of grace and salvation in Christ not only satisfies the inner man as no other thing can, but also fulfils all places of spiritual emptiness in the heart.

Neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them: (v10) carries the idea that enemies, persecution, trials afflictions, the condemnation of the law and God's wrath will not harm them. It is an image of refreshment, protection and joy most likely taken from a man travelling over the burning sands of a desert and upon finding the shade of a rock or of trees is truly grateful and filled with abundant joy. It means that they will not be exposed to any suffering like that of the intense heat of the burning sun upon the barren and dry deserts.

He who has pity on them will lead them: (v10) carries the following idea God, Jesus or a shepherd who has pity on the people will guide and lead them with safety and comfort in the way of truth, faith and righteousness.

By springs of water he will guide them: (v10) (or fountains of water) the picture presented in this verse is of a faithful shepherd who guards and guides his flock to places where they can abundantly feed in safety. The image is no doubt taken from a shepherd leading his sheep to cool and refreshing streams of water that abundantly satisfies their thirst.

I will make all my mountains a road: (v11) carries the following two ideas: -

1. The use of the word "my" expresses God's claim of ownership of the mountains and therefore carries the idea of His universal rule and that the whole earth is His.
2. Mountains also refer to difficulties, troubles, obstructions and hardships that stand before a person's freedom and before a sinner seeking God.

The reason God refers to them as His Mountains maybe because they are the mountains of Judah that stand before Babylon and Jerusalem or because God used Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon as his servant (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) to bring His judgment upon Israel and to take them into captivity for seventy years. In this context Nebuchadnezzar can be seen as a mountain God used for His purposes. There are times when God uses difficulties and obstructions to accomplish His plans and purposes in an individual or a nation. However for those who endure in faith there is no mountain that can prevent them from reaching the end of the road and obtaining the crown of life. The apostle Paul expressed the same thought with the following words: -

- Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:35-39).

Following are four verses selected from Job chapter six to chapter thirty that highlight the truth that Job not only saw God as the one who brought his afflictions, suffering, sorrow and loss upon him, and that he remained faithful to God, but also show that not one of them dented or shattered his faith even though he felt God was working against him.

1. The arrows and terrors of the Almighty are set against me (Job 6:4).
1. He breaks me, he runs upon me like a giant (Job 16:14).
2. He has kindled his wrath against me and counts me as his enemy (Job 19:11).
3. You have become cruel to me and have opposed yourself against me (Job 30:21).

These verses (there are many more) shine a spotlight on the truth that Job credited God with being the one who brought about his affliction, suffering and loss. Here is the great faith of Job even knowing that God had brought all his great suffering upon him he still makes the two following fantastic statements: -

- Though he slays me, yet will I trust in him (Job 13:15).
- I know that my redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:25-26).

Job's words are gloriously stunning and prophetic, "My Redeemer lives," this statement shows that Job understood the following two things: -

1. When he did die his body would decay in the grave until a redeemer came at the end of the worldly age we live in and he would be resurrected to eternal life.
2. He would not be raised from the grave as a spirit, but as a complete person with a body of immortal flesh and that he will see God.

For further information see the following title: -

- Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The prophet Habakkuk: in prayer begins by saying, "Even though his body trembles at the power of the LORD and he feels weak and feeble because of the enemies who are coming to invade his land, he will quietly wait for the day of trouble."

He then ends his prayer with the following great words of faith.

- Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, ¹⁸yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. (Hab. 3:17-19).

We make the Lord our fortress and refuge, in the same way that Habakkuk did, which is by making him our greatest love, our best thought and the passion of our heart and mind and rest in the knowledge if everything fails in this life we will be raised to be with the Lord in eternal glory where happiness everlasting dwells and in this life rest in the confidence and faith that the Lord is with us by his Spirit, his love and his grace.

My highways shall be raised up: (v11) the picture here is taken from a highway that is raised up above the muddy ground to be built upon a solid foundation. It carries the idea that all hindrances and obstructions will be removed from those seeking God and salvation and that they will be raised above the mire and dirt of sin and corruption.

The following verses show that a highway in Scripture can symbolise a literal highway or a spiritual highway. Here it refers to the safe and secure way for the redeemed to follow that leads to righteousness and eternal life and is free of any obstacle or power that can hinder or harm a believers faith or prevent them from being united to God's love, grace and favour and being crowned with eternal life and inheriting everlasting happiness in glory.

- In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria will come into Egypt, and Egypt into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. (Isaiah 19:23).
- A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. (Isaiah 35:8-9).
- It shall be said, "Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way." (Isaiah 57:14).
- Go through, go through the gates; prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway; clear it of stones; lift up a signal over the peoples. (Isaiah 62:10).
- A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. (Isaiah 40:3-4).

The highway symbolises the Gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ he is the great highway for all believers and the only way that leads to holiness and righteousness.

It matters not what trials and losses may come those who walk upon the highway the Gospel lays out will be kept by Christ's righteousness and God's grace for eternal salvation. This highway is spoken of as being exalted for the following two reasons: -

1. It is the only highway that leads to God and eternal life
2. It cost the life of God's most beloved Son to build it and raise it up above all other highways.

The Christian faith never turns aside from this highway, but looks up, regardless of the difficulty and marches toward the promised glory waiting at the end of this great eternal and exalted highway.

At the beginning of this chapter the LORD said the following five things: -

1. In a time of favour and salvation He will answer the prayers of those in darkness and in prison.
2. One who has pity on them will safely lead and guide them by springs of water through barren deserts.
3. The LORD Himself will make all His mountains a highway.
4. Those who come out of darkness will not hunger or thirst and nothing will harm them.
5. The barren land will become fruitful and those who came out of darkness will establish the inherited land that is lying desolate.

These verses can apply to the following three major events, with each event increasing in magnificence and being greater and more wonderful than the previous one: -

1. In this first scenario, the time of favour and salvation when God will answer the prayers of those in darkness and in prison, would refer to the time when His favour will be shown to the Jewish prisoners held captive for seventy years in Babylon. They can be spoken of as being in spiritual darkness, because they were not only separated from their temple the place of their true worship before the LORD and unable to offer their sacrifices to Him, but also dwelling amongst a people that worshipped idols and foreign gods.

The one who had pity on them would refer to Cyrus who the LORD used as His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon and set His people free. The highway would of course refer to the path they took as they triumphantly travelled with great joy and rejoicing safely through the hills and deserts to their beloved city Jerusalem. The barren land that became fruitful in this context refers to the land of Israel. After they had rebuilt the temple and established their faith a golden age of peace and prosperity followed.

2. In this second scenario, the time of favour and salvation when God will answer the prayers of those in darkness and in prison would refer to the birth of the LORD Jesus Christ. God's favour not only came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but also to the Gentiles who were held prisoners to the condemnation of the law. The Jews were in spiritual darkness because their religious leaders (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) were so prideful and extremely legalistic they were leading the people away from God instead of toward Him. The Gentile were in spiritual darkness, because they knew nothing of God, even the Jews at this time considered the Gentile races to be and unclean people without God, while they viewed themselves the holy race with God.

The one who had pity on them would of course refer to the Lord Jesus Christ who God also anointed as His shepherd (Luke 4:18) (Acts 4:26) (Acts 10:38) and who came to set those captive to the law of sin and death free. The barren land refers to the lack of true and faithful believers in the Kingdom of God. When Jesus began his ministry and after his death and resurrection multitudes of sinners from all nations tongues and languages were draw to him so that today faithful believers are found in every country of the world.

The highway in this context refers to the message of the bloodstained cross of Calvary and the Gospel of grace whoever walks through life upon this highway will triumphantly and with great joy and rejoicing safely enter the eternal Kingdom of God and hear the words of their Master say: -

- Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. (Matt. 25:21) (Matt. 25:23).

3. In this third scenario, the time of favour and salvation when God will answer the prayers of those in darkness and in prison, would refer to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to destroy the antichrist and his kingdom and establish God's Kingdom on earth during his glorious millennial reign.

The dead in Christ (Old and New Testament) and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6) to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish.

The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce (Isaiah 65:17-25). All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

In Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

The great prophet Isaiah wrote: -

- They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:9).

God's favour will come to all the faithful who are at this present time living in the spiritual darkness of this corrupt and fallen world. The one who had pity on them would of course refer to the Lord Jesus Christ who gave his life to a brutal, bloody and cruel death that they could be saved by his righteousness and God's grace, while the barren land would refer to the lack of true and faithful believers in all nations of the world.

When Christ is ruling as King of kings and Lord of lords upon earth multitudes of sinners from all nations' tongues and languages will submit to his rule, his authority and his government.

The fullness of eternity: at the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev. 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory.

- They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. (Rev. 7:16-17).
- They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Rev. 7:16-17).
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (Matt. 5:6).

Sing for Joy, O heavens, Exult, O earth; the LORD has Comforted His People.

Isaiah 49:12-13 ----- ¹²Behold, these (the prisoners in darkness) (v9), shall come from afar, and behold, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene." ¹³Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! for the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

Syene: is an Egyptian city, the name appears twice in the Old Testament of the King James Bible and both times are in prophecies against Egypt. (Ezek. 29:10) (Ezek. 30:16).

When reading this chapter it should be kept in mind that this is a prophetic vision of future events that Isaiah by the inspiration of God is seeing. He not only sees in his mind (like a dream) or as a vision (like a hologram before his eyes) Israel (the prisoners in darkness) (v9), being set free from their seventy year Babylonian captivity and their triumphant and joyful return to Jerusalem their beloved city, but also sees multitudes of Jews that had be scattered amongst Egypt and nations in the north and the west returning with singing and rejoicing to their homeland. It is in this way the LORD will comfort and have compassion on His afflicted people.

I Engraved You on the Palms of My Hands; You are Continually Before Me.

Isaiah 49:14-16 ----- ¹⁴But 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. ¹⁶Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

Zion: is God's holy mountain that God's holy city Jerusalem is built upon. The statement, Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me," primarily embraces the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but by extension encompass all the people of Israel.

Isaiah in the previous verses has just proclaimed a wonderful future vision of Israel's deliverance from their seventy year captivity, no doubt to encourage those who after spending such a long time in captivity feel that God had forsaken them. The LORD responds by saying, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb?" (v15). He tells Israel that they are not only His suckling child and that He would never forget them, but also that He has graven them upon the palms of His hands. This is clearly an echo of God's Son the Lord Jesus Christ, being crucified on the cross of Calvary.

NOTE: the words, "I have engraved you on the palms of my hands" is often used to support the theory Jesus is God, but that is reading more into the verses than what Isaiah is actually saying. God is the invisible, immortal, eternal Almighty God and being immortal He cannot die. The following are two ways in which God's words, "I have engraved you on the palms of my hands" can be harmonised with the entire Bible: -

1. The words, "I have engraved you on the palms of my hands" are an echo of the following New Testament verse, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). It is in the sense of giving His own Son that God is saying He has engraved Israel on the palms of His hands.
2. Since Christ is often spoken of as God's right hand it is right and proper for God to say, "He has graven Israel upon the palms of His hands."

Words of comfort and encouragement: since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states: -

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim: -

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

For further information see the title: -

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity) in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The LORD says something absolutely beautiful to those He loves: "I have engraved you on the palms of my hands" referring to the nails driven cruelly into the hands of Jesus. Though much of Traditional Christianity do use this verse to support the mistaken theory that Jesus is God, it should be kept in mind that this is not a doctrinal teaching, but a vision that God is giving to Isaiah which contains an amazing echo of the brutal, cruel and bloody death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, it is in this sense that God has engraved all who trust in Him on His Hands it is the hands of Jesus we are all engraved on. God sacrificed His Son and Jesus gave up His life to save everyone who seeks after God and eternal life.

For anyone who disagrees take the time (before getting lost in the detail of doctrine) to see the magnitude of God's love, the beauty and wonder of what God is saying to stubborn, obstinate and rebellious Israel. Though He was forced to discipline them He will never forget or forsake them, this principal applies to everyone who belongs to God. God's discipline does not mean He has stopped loving those who He is moulding.

You will say in your Heart, "Who has borne me these when I was Barren."

Isaiah 49:17-21 ----- ¹⁷Your builders make haste; your destroyers and those who laid you waste go out from you. ¹⁸Lift up your eyes around and see; they all gather, they come to you. 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 those who swallowed you up will be far away. ²⁰The children of your bereavement will yet say in your ears: "The place is too narrow for me; make room for me to dwell in." ²¹Then 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; from where have these come?" "

Your builder make haste: (v17) this is a future vision of the very end of Israel's captivity, God through Isaiah is telling the captives to get their builders ready to rebuild their city, their homes and their temple, because those who destroyed them will be laid waste.

Lift up your eyes: (v18) here those in captivity are told that multitudes of faithful believers will come and gather to them and that they will embrace them with the same great joy that a bride receives a precious ornament.

Your land will be too narrow: (v19) Israel's enemies will be swallowed up; this came about by Cyrus the king of Media Persia. God used Cyrus as His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon and set the people of Israel free. Not only did they return to their homeland, but multitudes of Jewish families that had been scattered amongst the nations also returned in such vast numbers that they felt that their land would be too small to accommodate all of them.

Though these prophetic words of Isaiah primarily refer to the captives and those who had been scattered returning to Jerusalem, they also transcend this period of time to embrace a future group of people (the Gentiles) who the apostle Paul states are to become part of the Commonwealth of Israel and joint heirs in all the promises through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility (between the Jews and the Gentiles) ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Christ) might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace. (Ephes. 2:11-15).

For further information concerning the Commonwealth of Israel see the title: "The Commonwealth of Israel," at the end of this study.

You will say in your heart: "Who has borne me these?" (v21) there is a beautiful principal we can all lean and be encouraged by contained in these words of bewilderment. Israel was in captivity to Babylon for seventy years, many of them would have died in captivity. They had very little contact with other Israelites and therefore would have naturally believed they were the only remaining remnant of Israel.

But prior to the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions God had scattered multitudes of Israelite families into the surrounding nations, over the seventy years these families greatly multiplied and even though they were dwelling in foreign nations amongst worshippers of other gods they remained faithful to the God of Israel.

When those in captivity were set free, and returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt their homes, the temple, established their true faith, and turned their waste land into prosperous farmland for crops and livestock, these families from the surrounding nation also returned to their homeland. They came in such vast numbers that those who had returned from captivity in joyful astonishment exclaim, "Behold, I was left alone; from where have these come?" (v21).

The practical application for the faithful today: there maybe times when an individual, or a church feels much like those in captivity did, in that they are not achieving much and that the Kingdom of God is very small, but just as God had multitudes of faithful believers that those in captivity were unaware of there are multitudes of faithful believers in every country and nation of the world today that we will not know of until that glorious day when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory to gather the faithful to himself and on that day those in small churches, isolated places or felt like they are alone, will like Israel of old, exclaim in joyful astonishment, "Behold, I thought I was alone; from where have all these come?" (v21).

Kings shall be Your Foster Fathers, and their Queens Your Nursing Mothers.

Isaiah 49:22-23 ----- ²²Thus says 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 bosom, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders. ²³Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame."

I will raise my signal to the peoples: (v22) refers to Cyrus and the Lord Jesus Christ. God raised up Cyrus to be a mighty king that established a great world kingdom embracing multitudes of nations that embraced his leadership, likewise God raised up the Lord Jesus Christ to be a mighty king that will establish God's global Kingdom made up of Jews and Gentiles of all nations.

They shall bring your sons and your daughters carried on their shoulders: (v22) refers to the scattered Israelite families returning to their homeland and to the apostles taking the Gospel to the Gentiles and all who respond to it becoming children of God's Kingdom.

Kings shall be your foster fathers and their queens your nursing mothers: (v23) this is to be understood of secular kings and queens of the earth and not of the apostles and the faithful considered to be kings and priests to God who feed the people of God with the milk of the word.

The sense is that secular kings and princes would show the same tender care and affection for the interests of the people of God that a parent or a nurse does for a child.

It is thought to have had its fulfilment in part in: -

- Cyrus who the LORD used as His anointed shepherd to overthrow the Empire of Babylon and set God's people free.
- King Ahasuerus during the time of Queen Esther who favoured the Jews and prevented Haman from carrying out his evil plot to utterly annihilate the entire Jewish race from the face of the earth. (The entire amazing story is told in the book of Esther)
- Other kings and queens throughout history who have shown Israel favour.

However it is more fully fulfilled in the New Testament days when Jesus message spread throughout all nations and kings and emperors of the Gentile world who embraced the Gospel and established laws that protected Christians in their cities, towns, villages and farms, such as Emperor Constantine the Great and his mother Helena (also called Helen), Theodosius who used his power to officially enforce orthodox Christianity and placed his power under that of the church and others throughout history that showed Israel favour and will certainly have a much greater fulfilment in the glory of the latter days.

They shall bow down to you and lick the dust of your feet: (v23) the allusion here is taken from the practise of the eastern nations, especially the Persians, who, in the adoration of their kings, used to kiss the ground their kings stood on and therefore it appeared as though they were licking the dust of the desert sands that they were kneeling upon.

Neither the Bible or history records any of the Persian kings or kings that followed after them bowing down to Israel in such a humble and submissive manner and therefore this is a future prophetic vision of those kings, princes and nobles who are to be converted to the Christian faith in the times of the Gospel and of the generations following who humbly give Christ honour as their head and use their authority and power to protect and extend Christ's Kingdom.

It expresses the humble submission and respect of kings and princes to the people of God and their reverence to the Lord and willingness to serve Him for the good of his Kingdom and especially during Christ's millennial reign on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Those who wait for me shall not be put to shame: (v23) carries two ideas: -

1. Those who worship God will not be ashamed to show their reverence for Him even the most highly exalted kings, princes and nobles will be willing to humble themselves with honest heartfelt expressions of adoration.
2. Those who patiently wait for the return of the Lord and endure in faith through the hardships, troubles and sorrows of life will not be put to shame, meaning that they will not be disappointed in the hope they set their heart upon and it will matter not how high their expectations were they will not be disillusioned, but rather abundantly surprised with overwhelming joy and excitement far beyond what they could possibly have imagined.

All Flesh shall Know I am the LORD your Saviour, the Mighty One of Jacob.

Isaiah 49:24-26 ----- ²⁴Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued? ²⁵For 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. ²⁶I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine. Then all flesh shall know that I am the LORD your Saviour, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

The people of Israel were naturally concerned for the safety of their own life; however they had a greater concern for the survival of their nation as a whole. For them to have their nation annihilated forever would be worse than their own death. This is because the primary focus of their heart was the inheritance of the Land God promised their father and the survival of their nation for their offspring. They were in captivity for seventy years which means many of them would have died while in captivity, they are weak, feeble and have absolutely no strength to overcome the might and power of Babylon.

This is why the LORD asks, "Can prey be taken from one of great strength, (i.e., can a lamb be taken from a lion) the normal answer is no. The prey in these verses is the people of Israel held in captivity, while the mighty one refers to the tyrant king of Babylon. Clearly in this context the prey cannot be taken from one of such great strength, but God is on Israel's side.

Here He is telling them that whoever afflicts and oppresses them He will not only utterly destroy, but will also rescue them from such a powerful enemy in such a dramatic and specular manner that people of all nations will know that the LORD is their Saviour and Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel.

These verses were fulfilled (with limitations) when the LORD rescued Israel from the tyrant king of Babylon at the end of their seventy years in captivity, but the ultimate fulfilment of Isaiah's words will be when the Lord Jesus Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

For further information concerning Christ's glorious return, see the title: -

- Future Kingdom of God in the New Testament.

In, Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The Commonwealth of Israel.

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only, but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ. This is because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew). This means that Jews and Gentiles become one new nation in Christ (also called a new man, a new creation, the church, the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God).

The Apostle Paul said: -

- Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands—¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and

might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit (Ephes. 2:11-22).

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles).

In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God since in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world. The practical application of what this means to those who belong to Christ is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to them. The book of Revelation states: -

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

End.