

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

ISAIAH 46-49

In ancient times war was seen not only as a military struggle, but as a spiritual confrontation. The conflict was not only between armies, but between gods. The prevailing army was thought to have the stronger gods.

Thus, when Babylon fell it not only brought disgrace on the army and its leaders, but it also discredited and humiliated its gods. In Chapter 46 Isaiah mocks the gods of Babylon - *and in doing so he mocks all idolatry* - since Babylon was the seat and the center of paganism.

Chapter 46, “Bel bows down, Nebo stoops; their idols were on the beasts and on the cattle. Your carriages were heavily loaded, a burden to the weary beast.”

“Bel” is a shortened form of “Beelzebub” - a name Jesus used for Satan. The power and pull behind all pagan and idolatrous involvement is demonic.

In 1 Corinthians 10:20-22 Paul is explaining our liberty in Christ. We know that an idol is nothing but a block of wood, thus we’re free to eat meat sacrificed to one. Don’t be bound by superstition and guilt by association.

But we’re not free to eat a portion of a sacrifice at the altar of the idol. For by participating in its worship we’re opening ourselves up to demons and their influences.

Paul writes, “What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?” The Corinthians were free to eat meat sacrificed to idols in the context of their home, or in their church, or maybe at a restaurant.

But not in an idol-worshipping Temple. Context is vital. And the same is true with the exercise of our liberties.

You might be free to drink a glass of wine with your spouse at home - but at a party where the god of hedonism is being toasted - you should restrain. The pull behind all idolatry - ancient and modern - is demonic.

The word “*Nebo*” meant “*speaker, prophet.*”

Remember in Acts 14, when Paul and Barnabas healed the lame man in Lystra, the locals thought the gods had visited them. They thought Barnabas was “*Bel*” or the chief god, and Paul was “*Nebo,*” because he did all the talking. Baal and Nebo were their Babylonian names. Zeus and Hermes were their Greek names.

Verse 2, “*They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but have themselves gone into captivity. “Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been upheld by Me from birth, who have been*

carried from the womb...” Notice the contrast. The idols of Babylon were carried into captivity by the people they failed to save.

Whereas, the God of the Hebrews had done the carrying. God had carried His people from birth... “even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” I love the expression, “*even to gray hairs I will carry you.*” As I get older and start to face my growing physical limitations - *that I’m not what I use to be.* It’s good to know that the same God who’s carried me this far, will carry me even into my gray hair years.

Here’s the question, “**Is your religion carrying you or are you carrying it?**” For some folks Christianity is a burden they carry. It’s a duty. It’s rules to keep and expectations to meet. There’s a pressure to perform.

Realize, **Christianity is not what you can do for God, but it’s what God has done and can do for us!** It’s not us carrying God - what a silly thought. It’s God carrying us.

Living in Christ without the Holy Spirit is like lying on a raft stuck in the sand. But when you’re filled with the love of Christ, the tide rolls in, and carries you out to sea.

You’re now riding on the resources of another.

Christianity is *trusting* not *toiling* - *resting* not *rowing*. I love the poem by Hudson Taylor, “**Bear not a single care thyself, one is too much for Thee; the work is Mine, and Mine alone; Thy work - to rest in Me.**” **Is your religion carrying you or are you carrying your religion?**

Verse 5, “To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal and compare Me, that we should be alike? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver on the scales; they hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god; they prostrate themselves, yes, they worship. They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it and set it in its place, and it stands; from its place it shall not move. Though one cries out to it, yet it cannot answer nor save him out of his trouble.” Notice the kind of god idol-makers create...

It’s a god they buy. They weigh silver on the scales.

It’s a god they design. They hire a certain goldsmith.

It’s a god they support. They bear it on their shoulders.

It’s a god they establish. They put it in its place. And notice he says, “*it shall not move.*” It stays in its set spot.

There’re people today who attend Christian churches, and claim to worship the one true God, but in reality they’ve created their own God - *its nothing but an idol.*

They buy its loyalty with their tithes or good deeds.

They design it around a lifestyle comfortable for them.

They keep it up on the shoulder of their own service.

It never moves from the place they’ve designated.

It’s sad, their God is one they own, and create, and keep up, and relegate to a manageable place in their life.

Whereas, the true God is bought off by no one. He owns us... He's not created in our image, we're made in His... He doesn't *need* our support, we need Him... And rather than tucked away in a relegated spot, God's jurisdiction spills over into every area of our lives...

It may be true that a self-made god is easy to manage, but when you've got a problem expect no help from him. Only the true God can answer and save us from trouble.

In verse 8 God continues, **“Remember this, and show yourselves men; recall to mind, O you transgressors.**

Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,’ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.”

God proves His sovereignty by His ability to tell the end of a thing from its beginning. Only a God who sits outside of time can predict the future at 100% accuracy.

God says, ***“I will do all My pleasure...”*** *Who does as He pleases all the time? I don't. You don't.* No one does all He pleases all the time! We all have our limitations.

Yet whatever God wills He does - whatever God wants He gets - whatever God promises He performs. And it's evidenced by His *“declaring the end from the beginning.”*

Here again, He references His prediction of Cyrus, *“the man... from a far country.”* In Chapter 45, 100 years before the man was even born, God called him by name.

Verse 12, *“Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, who are far from righteousness: I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, for Israel My glory.”*

Israel was far from righteousness. On their own there was no way for them to make themselves right with God.

But here God promises to bring righteousness to them. *“I will place salvation in Zion.”* This is His amazing grace, and here He introduces His Suffering Servant that He'll talk about over the next several chapters, climaxing in Chapter 53 and the prophecy of Jesus' crucifixion.

In Chapter 47 Isaiah predicts judgment on Babylon.

Remember, in antiquity Babel was the seat of Satan. It was the hub of all unholiness and false worship.

In fact, Revelation 17 anticipates a Babylon of the last days that perpetuates this evil legacy. The Antichrist's religious and commercial centers are called Babylon.

Actually, we'll find the judgments in Isaiah 47 parallel those in Revelation. A lot of what we're about to read may still be future - prophetic of the last days.

“Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, take off the skirt, uncover the thigh, pass through the rivers. Your nakedness shall be uncovered, yes, your shame will be seen; I will take vengeance, and I will not arbitrate with a man.” Isaiah begins by calling Babylon a “*virgin*” - but those days are passed. She's been uncovered, naked, and shamed.

Babylon has disgraced and prostituted herself spiritually. The city had sunk into the depths of idolatry.

In the eyes of our Supreme Court nudity is a freedom of expression. According to Isaiah it's a sign of disgrace.

Verse 4, “As for our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is His name, the Holy One of Israel. “Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no longer be called the Lady of Kingdoms.”

In fact, Revelation 17:5 gives Babylon the name “*mother of harlots.*” The book of Revelation teaches that in the last days there will be a revival of the old Babylonian-ism - the ancient paganism and idolatry.

Ironically, for years it was Roman Catholicism that kept much of this paganism alive. It was incorporated into the worship and practices of the Church - *the veneration of Mary, the celibacy of priests, the worship of the saints...*

Today, the paganism and idolatry of Babylon lives on not only in Romanism, but in Eastern and New Age religions. It's really a lot more prevalent than you think.

And what's God's reaction to His people's flirtation with this "*Lady of Kingdoms?*" "*I was angry with My people; I have profaned My inheritance, and given them into your hand.*" God used Babylon to judge Israel.

"*You showed them no mercy; on the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily. And you said, 'I shall be a lady forever,' so that you did not take these things to heart, nor remember the latter end of them.*" Babylon showed God's people no mercy. They had no fear of God.

"*Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children...'*"

Here's the brag of Babylon. She won't be a widow or lose her children. She'll prosper. She won't be judged.

"*But these two things shall come to you in a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood.*"

They shall come upon you in their fullness because of the multitude of your sorceries, for the great abundance of your enchantments. “For you have trusted in your wickedness; you have said, ‘No one sees me’; your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; and you have said in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one else besides me.’” Listen to the phrase, *“your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you.”* That could be said of a lot of people. They’re too smart for their own britches.

“Therefore evil shall come upon you; you shall not know from where it arises. And trouble shall fall upon you; you will not be able to put it off. And desolation shall come upon you suddenly, which you shall not know.”

This certainly describes the fall of ancient Babylon.

Prideful Belshazzar thought he was invincible. He partied with vessels from God’s temple. He mocked God, all the while the Persians were launching a surprise invasion. They conquered Babylon without firing a shot.

And this description also fits the destruction of the future Babylon. It too will be sudden. Revelation 18:19 predicts, *“For in one hour she is made desolate.”*

Verse 12, *“Stand now with your enchantments and the multitude of your sorceries, in which you have labored from your youth - perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you will prevail. You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels; let now the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you.”* Ancient Babylon were the first astrologers. They

looked to the sky - the stars and constellations for guidance. The infamous Tower of Babel, God destroyed, was an astrological observatory.

Here, Isaiah mocks Babel. She trusted in the stars and horoscopes - let them now save her. In Deuteronomy 4:19, 17:3, 18:10 God forbids all dabbling in astrology.

“Behold, they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame; it shall not be a coal to be warmed by, nor a fire to sit before!” Babylon will be burned by astrology. As will anyone who dabbles in it and follows its predictions.

“Thus shall they be to you with whom you have labored, your merchants from your youth; they shall wander each one to his quarter. No one shall save you.”

Chapter 48, “Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and have come forth from the wellsprings of Judah; who swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth or in righteousness...” Israel are God’s people in name only. They use His name, but ignore His nature.

“For they call themselves after the holy city, and lean on the God of Israel; the Lord of hosts is His name: “I have declared the former things from the beginning; they went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it.

Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass. Because I knew that you were obstinate, and your neck was an iron sinew (talk about stiff-necked), and your brow bronze, even from the beginning I have declared it to you; before it came to pass I proclaimed it to

you, lest you should say, 'My idol has done them, and my carved image and my molded image have commanded them.'

One of the Bible's most misunderstood phrases is uttered by Jesus three times in Revelation 22, "I am coming quickly." Skeptics read His words and scoff, "It's been 2000 years since He said this, well where is He?"

But the phrase doesn't mean "soon" as much as "suddenly." The Greek word translated "quickly" is "tachus." A tachometer is a gauge that measures acceleration - not mileage or even sustained speed.

A better translation would be, "When I come it'll be suddenly." Or as Isaiah says in verse 3, "*I have declared the former things from the beginning... Suddenly, I did them...*" Expect the prophetic events of the last days to occur in rapid-fire succession. When the dominos start to fall it'll be a landslide. And yes, it also could be soon...

The Jews are in their land. Russia has aligned with the Muslim nations. Europe is under one banner. Plans are progressing for a rebuilt Temple... The players and pieces are all in place, waiting for the starting gun - when the Jesus returns in the clouds to rapture His Church.

Verse 6, "You have heard; see all this. And will you not declare it? I have made you hear new things from this time, even hidden things, and you did not know them.

They are created now and not from the beginning; and before this day you have not heard them, lest you should say, 'Of course I knew them.' Surely you did not hear,

surely you did not know; surely from long ago your ear was not opened.” God had faithfully warned His people of judgment in their past, and they claimed not to know.

He told them. They just didn’t listen. They didn’t want to hear. “For I knew that you would deal very treacherously, and were called a transgressor from the womb. “For My name’s sake I will defer My anger, and for My praise I will restrain it from you, so that I do not cut you off.” Though Israel deserved God’s judgment, He chose to “*defer*” and “*restrain*” His anger toward them.

Verse 10, “Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; for how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another.” Israel will be refined in the future. God will not allow anyone to deny His name with impunity. A “*furnace of affliction*” awaits all God’s backslidden kids.

“Listen to Me, O Jacob, and Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last. Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand up together.” God is the architect of the universe.

He is the Cosmic Creator! Yet, He cares about people. He is offended when they don’t listen to His Word.

“All of you, assemble yourselves, and hear! Who among them has declared these things? The Lord loves him; He shall do His pleasure on Babylon, and His arm shall be against the Chaldeans. (Another name for the Babylonians.) I, even I, have spoken; yes, I have called him, I have brought him, and his way will prosper.”

And the “*him*” here is the conqueror of Babylon, the Persian, Cyrus the Great. After conquering Babel, Cyrus delivered the Jews, and allowed them to return to their home. God raised up Cyrus and made “*his way prosper.*”

In the next few verses another Deliverer comes into focus, of which Cyrus was in many ways a type or model. This Deliverer will save His people from their sin!

Verse 16, “Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, I was there.” The Deliverer Isaiah will describe was from the beginning. The Savior was from eternity past.

Jesus didn’t begin at His incarnation. He existed before Bethlehem. John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word (or Jesus) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”

“And now the Lord God and His Spirit have sent Me.” An appointed time is set for God to send His Deliverer.

And here He speaks, “Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: “I am the Lord your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go. Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have

been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.” If Israel had embraced Jesus, her Deliverer, what blessings she would’ve enjoyed - *peace, righteousness.*

Instead, according to Romans 11 Israel has been put on the shelf - set aside for a season - so this outpouring of peace and righteousness can flow to the Gentiles.

I love the old chorus, “I’ve got peace like a river, I’ve got peace like a river, I’ve got peace like a river in my soul.” Trust in Jesus, for that river of peace still flows.

Someone described the Christian life as, “Out of the strain of the doing, into the peace of the done.” The reason God’s peace is possible, is because Jesus has done all that was needed to make us right before God.

Verse 19, “Your descendants also would have been like the sand, and the offspring of your body like the grains of sand; His name would not have been cut off nor destroyed from before Me.” If the Jews had trusted Jesus as their Deliverer, rather than 14 million Jews in the world, today’s population would be innumerable.

“Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! With a voice of singing, declare, proclaim this, utter it to the end of the earth; say, “The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob!” And he remembers when... “And they did not thirst when He led them through the deserts; He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them; He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out.”

“There is no peace,” says the Lord, “for the wicked.” There’s no peace apart from Jesus, the Prince of peace.

In 48:20 Isaiah refers to Israel as God's "*servant Jacob.*" In the OT Jacob or Israel was God's servant. But they failed to please Him, and be a witness to His truth.

Thus, in the NT God sends another Servant, Jesus.

In the next few chapters Jesus is portrayed as Yahweh's Suffering Servant. Isaiah reveals truths and details about Jesus we don't even find in the Gospels.

Chapters 49-53 are certainly high ground - even holy ground - in the Scriptures. And the summit is Isaiah 53.

Chapter 49, "*Listen, O coastlands, to Me, and take heed, you peoples from afar! The Lord has called Me from the womb; from the matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name.*" Remember, the book of Isaiah is a prophecy. Here I believe Jesus is speaking...

From His mother's womb the Lord made mention of His name. Remember what the angel said to Joseph...

Matthew 1:20, "*Do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a son, and you shall call His name Jesus...*" While in the womb God named Him.

"And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver He has hidden Me."

Every now and then a book comes out full of myth, and imagination, and conjecture as to what Jesus did and where he went during His first thirty years on Earth.

I don't think it matters, for whatever He did we know He pleased His Father. Remember it was at His baptism that the Father in heaven spoke, **“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”** Obviously, whatever Jesus had done it met with God the Father's approval.

Here we're told Jesus lived those silent years in **“the shadow of God's hand.”** Like an arrow in the archer's quiver, Jesus was hidden. He lived in obscurity - the Father was *preparing Him, polishing Him, readying Him.*

And this may be where God has you - hidden in His quiver. You want to be sailing through the air, striking targets, winning victories. But God has you in obscurity.

God isn't ready to use you, until you're ready to be used. Jesus spent 30-plus years in the quiver preparing for a ministry that lasted 3.5 years. Don't get impatient.

It seems **“the longer the preparation the more glorious the work.”** Don't long for the spotlight, when God has you in His quiver. Before an arrow is shot it's first shaped.

“And He said to me, ‘You are My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.’” Since Jesus took Israel's place, and since He was a Jew, here He's also called **“Israel.”**

Another OT passage where Jesus is called **“Israel”** is in Hosea 11:1. **“When Israel was a child, I loved Him, and out of Egypt I called My son.”** At first glance you might see in that verse a picture of the nation's exodus.

But in Matthew 2:15 the Gospel writer interprets Hosea 11:1 as a prophecy of the family's sojourn into Egypt to flee Herod's attack on the babies of Bethlehem.

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

When Jesus ascended back heaven, ending His earthly ministry - from a human perspective His ministry was a flop. The very people He'd been sent to reach killed Him. All He had to show for His efforts were a meager 120 disciples - huddled away in someone's attic.

Look no further than the founder of our faith to realize **you can't judge someone's ministry or testimony by human measurements** - *buns in the seat, and bucks in the bank, and buildings on the grounds* can deceive.

Faithfulness is the only true criteria for success.

"And now the Lord says, Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel is gathered to Him (For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength), indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Jesus will minister to the Jews who return from Babel to their Promised Land.

But Jesus is for the whole world, not just Israel.

He'll also be a light to the lost and pagan Gentiles. He'll bring salvation to the uttermost ends of the earth.

As a historical footnote, Verses 1 and 6 inspired two parents in Spain to name their son, “**Christopher,**” or “**Christ bearer.**” They believed the boy’s destiny was to take Christ to the heathen, and be a light to the Gentiles.

Christopher Columbus’ voyage to the New World was set in motion by God even from his mother’s womb.

Verse 7, “**Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors...**” It reminds us of John 1:11, it was said of Jesus, “**He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.**” Isaiah says the nation, the Jews, abhorred Jesus. They despised and rejected Him.

Yet, He’s also called “**to the Servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel; and He has chosen You.**” Jesus was God’s chosen. Eventually that truth will be seen by rulers, by kings, by princes.

Thus says the Lord: “In an acceptable time I have heard You, and in the day of salvation I have helped You...” Here’s a passage quoted by Paul, 2 Corinthians 6:2, and he applied it to the age of grace. His own day!

Which by the way, is our day as well.

To the Corinthians, and to us, a “light to the Gentiles” has come. Our day - today - is also the day of salvation.

God has put salvation on the table. We take it by faith.

Isaiah continues, “I will preserve You and give You as a covenant to the people, to restore the earth, to cause them to inherit the desolate heritages...” Jesus will be given as a covenant to the people. His blood was the blood of the New Covenant for both Jews and Gentiles.

“That You may say to the prisoners, ‘Go forth,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Show yourselves.’ Those Gentiles who see the light. Who follow Jesus out of the darkness, He promises... “They shall feed along the roads, and their pastures shall be on all desolate heights. They shall neither hunger nor thirst, neither heat nor sun shall strike them; for He who has mercy on them will lead them, even by the springs of water He will guide them.

I will make each of My mountains a road, and My highways shall be elevated. Surely these shall come from afar; look! Those from the north and the west, and these from the land of Sinim.” which is actually “China.”

This is interesting, the Gentiles who follow Jesus won’t just be Europeans, but Africans, Latinos, even Chinese.

Remember, before Jesus ascended, He said to His disciples, in Acts 1:8, “But you shall received power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be

witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” And it’s exciting to see the ends of the earth being reached in our day!

In the first decade of the 21st century, the Church is growing everywhere except North America and Europe.

Realize, around the world 25 million new Christians are added to the Church every year. That’s more new converts than the population of Australia or Texas.

In 1900, there were 10 million Christians on the continent of Africa. By 2000, there were 360 million. By 2025, conservative projections estimate 633 million.

In Latin America there were 50,000 Christians in 1900. By 2025 there’ll be 640 million Latin American Christian.

And China... In the early 80s it was said that 20,000 Chinese were coming to Christ each day. By 2030 China will have more Christians than any other nation on earth, eclipsing the number of Christians in the United States.

Isaiah said, those from *“the land of Sinim”* will come.

Verse 13, *“Sing, O heavens! Be joyful, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted His people, and will have mercy on His afflicted.”* After the Jews are tested and judged, and pass through their *“furnace of affliction”* God will comfort them.

This sees past the final 7 years of Great Tribulation to the Kingdom Age when Jesus reigns over planet Earth.

In the end God will have mercy on His people.

“But (His people, Israel, want to argue) Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.”

The Jews claim to have been abandoned by God.

But God answers them, and His words here should silence forever those who try to say that God has rejected Israel and transferred His promises elsewhere.

He asks, verse 15, “Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you.”

My wife nursed four babies, and I observed one of the strongest bonds on earth. A woman is never more needed and a child is never more attentive than when both are nursing. I also saw that it was impossible for my wife to forget her kids for more than four or five hours. She’d start filling up with milk. *Her cup runneth over!* It was an impossibility for her to forget her nursing child.

And this is how God feels about His people, Israel.

“See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.” This is amazing to me, God has the names of His children tattooed in His palms. He’d have to cut off His hands to forget His kids... *And that includes your name, and my name!*

Like living in a walled city, there's nowhere for a citizen to turn where he or she won't see the walls... Likewise, there's nowhere God can turn without seeing His kids.

Like a mom, God is always conscious of His kids.

A dad gets wrapped up in his work at times. Or he forgets everything while he's watching the game. But a mom can never forget her kids - never abandon them.

A dad might get frustrated and wash his hands of his kids, *but not mom*. She bore them. She'll never turn her back on them. A mom will never turn her back on a kid.

And here's the truth Isaiah is teaching - God is a Father, but a Father with a mother's heart. *He's tough, but He's also tender. He's strong, but sensitive. He's challenging, but compassionate.* In ways He's a Father, but in other ways He's has the tender touch of a mom!

Remember Romans 2:4, "Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance." It's God's tenderness, and motherly side, that assures us we can repent and He'll accept us.

And this is the kind of dad I've tried to be with my kids. I wanted to be strong, but also tender. A pillar of strength, but not a concrete pillar that couldn't bow and bend.

When my kids get into trouble I want them to know their dad is quick to forgive, and extends to them grace.

Verse 17, “Your sons shall make haste; your destroyers and those who laid you waste shall go away from you. Lift up your eyes, look around and see; all these gather together and come to you.” In the end, many of Israel’s wayward sons will come home to God.

“As I live,” says the Lord, “you shall surely clothe yourselves with them all as an ornament, and bind them on you as a bride does. “For your waste and desolate places, and the land of your destruction, will even now be too small for the inhabitants; and those who swallowed you up will be far away.” Israel’s oppressors will leave. Her exiles will return. The land won’t be big enough. In a sense this is happening today in Israel...

The Jews are building settlements in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. The land of Israel proper is tiny. It’s the size of New Jersey. More land is needed.

On a trip to Israel I saw a clever T-shirt, that read, “Attack us again we need more land.” Every time the Arabs have attacked, Israel’s boundaries have grown.

One day, Israel will get more land. In Genesis 15:18 God originally promised Abraham all the land from the Euphrates to the Nile. Practically the whole Middle East.

Verse 20, “The children you will have, after you have lost the others, will say again in your ears, ‘the place is too small for me; give me a place where I may dwell.’

Then you will say in your heart, ‘Who has begotten these for me, since I have lost my children and am desolate, a captive, and wandering to and fro? And who has brought

these up? There I was, left alone; but these, where were they?” In the Kingdom Age the nation Israel will grow at a miraculous rate. *They’ll wonder how...*

“Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for the peoples; they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders; kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers; they shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, and lick up the dust of your feet.

Then you will know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.” For the last 2000 years the Jews have roamed the earth. They were the object of most nation's hatred and scorn. Every epidemic, catastrophe, political or economic crisis was blamed on the Jews and set off a wave of persecution.

Mark Twain wrote, "Yet in all countries from the dawn of history, the Jew has been persistently and implacably hated..." In the Middle Ages Jews were driven out Spain and England - then driven out of Western Europe...

In modern times, Germany, Russia, and now the Arabs have become the chief enemies of the Jews.

One day though, the situation will turn topsy-turvy.

When Jesus returns and sits on the throne of David, Gentile kings will aide the Jews. They’ll help them.

They’ll be like a *“foster father”* or *“nursing mother.”*

They'll even *"lick up the dust of your feet"* or bow to the Jews and pledge their submission. Never forget Jesus will return to sit on the throne of David, a Jewish throne. Christ's Kingdom includes the Kingdom of Israel.

Verse 24, *"Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of the righteous be delivered? But thus says the Lord: "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible be delivered; for I will contend with him who contends with you, and I will save your children."* God will contend with those who contend with the Jews. Pick on His kids and you'll face their Dad.

It sounds like God's promise to Abraham, *"I will bless those who bless you, and curse him who curses you."*

Isaiah wraps up Chapter 49, *"I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine."*

"All flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."