

ISAIAH: Prophecies of Messiah
SEVANT SERANADE

Wednesday, August 12

Reading: Isaiah 49

Isaiah 49:6 *"It is too small a thing for You to be My Servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make You a Light for the Gentiles, that My salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."*

I'm a Christmas person. I enjoy listening to holiday music and watching all those cheesy Hallmark Christmas movies all year long! Isaiah has a lot to say about the coming of the Messiah. In chapters 42-53 we have a series of "Servant Songs" which give us some highlights of the Person and ministry of Jesus 700 years before He came.

Isaiah 49 begins with the Servant-Messiah Himself speaking, as He calls for the nations' attention to listen to why He will come.

1. He comes to reveal God's EVERLASTING PURPOSE (49:1-2). Jesus did not begin in Bethlehem. He has eternally been God the Son. The name spoken by God and given to Mary and Joseph was JESUS, which means "God saves." This mission of redemption had been planned from eternity past. Many of its aspects had been hidden only to be fully revealed when Jesus came (cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Timothy 1:9-10, Colossians 1:25-27; Ephesians 3:4-6).
2. He comes to BRING SALVATION TO ALL PEOPLE (49:3-7). The light of God's glory and splendor would be revealed in Israel through the coming of the Messiah (John 1:1-5, 14). That He "labored in vain" and "for nothing" reminds us that many would not receive Him when He came. He was "despised and abhorred by the nation." His mission seemed to end in defeat on a cross. But this "defeat" was God's plan to bring ultimate victory, not just to the Jews but for all peoples.
3. He comes to RESTORE HIS PEOPLE (49:8-26). Because of the salvation made possible by Jesus' death and resurrection, the promises God made to Abraham and his descendants will be fulfilled (Genesis 12:1-3). He will make Israel a great nation. They will be a blessing to the nations. And God will bring joy and comfort to His people (49:13-15). Like a loving mother, God will never forget His people. He has their names permanently "engraved on the palms of My hands" (49:16).

The ultimate purpose for the coming of Christ is described in the concluding verse of the chapter: "Then all mankind will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (49:26).

God's people thought they had been forsaken and forgotten by God (49:14), but God assures them that their troubles and judgment have all been part of His loving plan to redeem them. The idea of God engraving them on the palms of His hands stirs in me the image of the risen Christ showing His disciples the nail scars in His hands. When we feel forgotten and alone, all we have to do is remember the scars in Jesus' hands – scars that prove His love for us and the price He paid for our salvation.

POINTS TO PONDER:

The Christmas season is full of images of Jesus as a Baby in a manger. But let us not forget that the Baby crying in the hay became the Man who cried out on the cross: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Jesus was forsaken by the Father so that we might never be forsaken by Him. Rejoice in His coming all year long!