

Is. 49:5 ¶ And now says the Lord, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, in order that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honored in the sight of the Lord, And My God is My strength),

In verses 5-13, the Servant relates the Father's answer to His prayer of verses 1-4. It is indeed an encouraging answer.

Jesus was *formed...from the womb* for His mission as *Servant*, just as He was *called...from the womb* according to Isaiah 49:1. (Note: The second Person of the Trinity has always been deity, as evidenced by Philippians 2:6-8; therefore, the word "*formed*" has to do with His taking on flesh and becoming God-man. This verse, by no stretch of the imagination, teaches that the Son in His totality was *formed* in Mary's womb.)

It is obvious from Isaiah 49:5, as well as Romans 9-11, that one of the main reasons the Lord *formed...His Servant* (Jesus) was for the purpose of bringing Israel *back to Himself* in a state of belief. The *Servant* will also be the catalyst through which the individual members of the nation will *be gathered to...the Lord* from throughout the world (once they are spiritually redeemed at the end of the Tribulation). This will occur in association with Jesus's Second Coming, after which the Gentile *nations* will assist the Jews in their return to their homeland (Isaiah 14:1-2; 49:22). All of this is accomplished as a result of two things:

1. The Servant is *honored in the sight of the Lord* (*honorable* in the ASV).
2. God's *strength* is His *strength*. (There is no doubt as to the source of Jesus's *strength—the Father Himself—John 14:10*).

Is. 49:6 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 make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

It was *too small a thing that the Servant* be used to bring *salvation* and restoration to the Jewish nation alone. Therefore, not only would the *Servant* eventually bring *salvation* and restoration to Israel; but through Israel's initial rejection of the *Servant...*, *salvation* would reach to the Gentiles as well (*reach to the end of the earth*). In fact, the *Servant* would be *a light of the nations*, the Gentile nations; it was for this reason He could say, "*I am the light of the world*" (John 8:12; 9:5). Verses such as Isaiah 56:6-8 and Isaiah 65:1 give additional input concerning the blessings to be poured on the Gentiles as a result of Israel's initial rejection of the *Servant*.

The principles taught in Isaiah 49:6 have a counterpart in the New Testament. Paul, in Romans 11:11-32, describes how *salvation* came *to the Gentiles* as a result of Israel's rejection of the Son. There, we also find that the church's special relationship with Christ will eventually provoke the Jews to jealousy (Romans 11:11), causing them to return to the Father in a state of submission, awe, and adoration. In fact, *all Israel will be saved* (Romans 11:26); that is, every Jew alive at the end of the Tribulation. Consider the following as well as it relates to this subject matter.

Jesus said during His First Coming that He was *the light of the world* so long as He was *in the world* (John 9:5). Does this mean that after His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, He no longer functions as such? Of course not! He is present in the world today, serving as *light* to the world (Ephesians 5:8; 1Thessalonians 5:5; 1Peter 2:9) through the presence of the church, His body. Therefore, it will be Christ, working through His body, the church, that will provoke the Jews to jealousy (Romans 11:11). Consequently, it is the Messiah that the Jews rejected at His

First Coming, working through His body, the church, who is responsible for wooing the Hebrew people back to the Father so they might be reunited as husband and wife (the notes associated with Isaiah 50:1 add much flavor to this subject). Only an all-knowing, all-powerful, sovereign God could come up with such a plan. This is even more mind boggling when we consider that it is accomplished with every man and every woman possessing a free will to choose as they please. Truly, what a mighty God we serve!

It is obvious that the Father's plan includes Israel's eventual acceptance of the Savior they once rejected. Consequently, Jesus's ministry at His First Coming was overwhelmingly successful. It most definitely was not ineffective and *vain*, as Jesus momentarily viewed it according to Isaiah 49:4. What then encouraged Him when things looked so bleak and out of control? The promise that the rejection by His own people was something the Father understood beforehand and would use for good. After all, not only would Jesus's life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension bring salvation to the believing remnant of Jews throughout history, and culminate with every Jew alive at the end of the Tribulation accepting Him as Savior; but salvation would come to the Gentiles as well, confirmed by the number of Gentiles who have accepted Christ since the church's inception in Acts 2. Consequently, the rejection by His own people, each of which had the freedom to choose Him as Savior, actually resulted in a greater opportunity for the Jews and Gentiles alike.

With this in mind, how do you and I persevere when tempted to base the effectiveness of our calling upon the number of people who are buying the message? We must, first off, know that the ultimate calling is to know Jesus intimately, from which springs forth the most exciting adventure imaginable. In fact, when knowing *Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings* (Philippians 3:10) is the issue rather than how many are accepting the message, we can understand His *will* (Romans 12:2) and truly live. This is how Jesus came out of His temporary state of the doldrums, for He had spent a wealth of time enjoying truth at the feet of His Father (Isaiah 50:4-5). Therefore, when He was tempted to measure success based upon improper criteria, He had the words of Isaiah to spur Him on. Can you imagine opening God's word and finding Scriptures that describe your experience in ministry? Obviously, Jesus could do so; but so can we! What then can we expect? Consider the following.

I view Revelation 2:1—3:22 as describing the different stages of church history. Therefore, Revelation 2:1—3:22 is not a description of any individual church, but rather a general outline of the history of the "visible" church while on earth. For instance, *the church at Ephesus* (Revelation 2:1-7) is a picture of the early visible church when she was alive and vibrant. *The church at Laodicea* (Revelation 3:14-22); however, "*Laodicea*," meaning "people ruling," is a picture of the final state of the visible church. This means that a time will come when the Lord no longer rules the visible church, for it will be a man-ruled institution. This explains why Jesus, according to Revelation 3:20, is described as knocking on *the door* of the visible church seeking to get in. It also helps us interpret Paul's words to Timothy, recorded in 2Timothy 3:12—4:4, verses that warn against false *teachers* and speak of a time when man will be more interested in hearing error than the truth of the Scriptures. I deem this to be the last state of the visible church before all "true" believers are taken up at the Rapture. Consequently, the visible church, as we know it, will eventually lose her spirituality and become reprobate. How much time transpires before this occurs is uncertain, but what a day it will be when it comes to pass.

Because the visible church is made up of people, fewer individuals within the visible church will pursue the truth as history unveils itself. Yes, seasons of spiritual awareness will break forth, especially during times of crisis; but enduring interest in the things of God will be anything but the norm. Only in knowing this will the redeemed, the true church (many of which will serve as

missionaries to the visible, reprobate church), be capable of interpreting the signs of the times and remain encouraged. What an adventure awaits those who allow the truth to intensify their passion for the One who has gone before us.

Is. 49:7 Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and its Holy One, To the despised One, To the One abhorred by the nation, To the Servant of rulers, "Kings shall see and arise, Princes shall also bow down; Because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You."

Jesus truly is *the Redeemer of Israel*, the kinsman *Redeemer* of the nation (read the notes associated with Isaiah 43:1). He is also the *Holy One*, meaning that His character is flawless in every respect. Being all of this and more, He is described as "*the despised One*" among Jews and Gentiles alike, "*the One abhorred by the nation*" (of Israel) even today. This will continue within the Jewish nation until all Jews alive at the end of the Tribulation accept Him as Messiah (Matthew 23:39; Hosea 5:15). Even though He was, and is, rejected by a majority of the Jews, there has been a remnant of Jewish believers throughout history who have come to know Him as Savior. Jesus was also *the Servant of rulers*, meaning that He, even though God-incarnate, submitted Himself to the God-ordained rulers of the earth. Otherwise, Pilate would have been incapable of carrying out His crucifixion. With this said, Isaiah ceases describing Christ's rejection and begins addressing His acceptance, the subject of the last half of Isaiah 49:7. Let's examine what lies ahead for the *faithful...Servant*.

There will be a time when *Kings* and *Princes* will honor Christ. This will occur during the Millennium as Jesus rules over the nations from Jerusalem, and it will come to fruition due to the Father's faithfulness *To the Servant* whom He *has chosen* (for more input concerning the Servant's chosenness, read the notes associated with Isaiah 42:1). After all, the Old Testament is filled with truth relating to the Messiah's future reign on earth. Consequently, the Father will see to it that every promise is fulfilled according to plan and that Christ's rejection mentioned in verses 4 and 7 of this chapter will surrender to exaltation (confirmed also by Isaiah 52:13-15). So, in Isaiah 49:7 we have a summary of the entire ministry of the Messiah, beginning with rejection and ending with acceptance and adoration.

Is. 49:8 ¶ Thus says the Lord, "In a favorable time I have answered You, And in a day of salvation I have helped You; And I will keep You and give You for a covenant of the people, To restore the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages;

As we discovered in Isaiah 49:5-6, the *Servant* will one day *restore...Israel*. This is the theme of Isaiah 49:8-13, where more details are presented that confirm the certainty of the event. Something must occur, however, before Israel can experience this restoration. Jesus must be given *for a covenant of the people*, which occurred on the cross of 30 AD, the *covenant* being the *new covenant* of Jeremiah 31:31-34. According to the conditions of this *covenant*, there will be a day when every Jew on the earth will submit to Christ and be spiritually regenerated. After this national regeneration of the nation, Jesus will return, freeing every Jew to enjoy *the land* originally promised to Abraham and his offspring in Genesis 13:14-15, the parameters of which are listed in Genesis 15:18. This series of events will complete the restoration, and Israel will *inherit the desolate heritages* (Isaiah 49:8). This is also the *favorable time* in which the Father answers the Servant's prayer relating to the restoration of the nation, a restoration that the Jews rejected at His First Coming (Matthew 23:37-39) but will eventually experience during the Millennium.

Is. 49:9 Saying to those who are bound, 'Go forth,' To those who are in darkness, 'Show

yourselves.' Along the roads they will feed, And their pasture will be on all bare heights.

Once Christ returns and defeats the armies of the Antichrist, all Jews, even those who have previously been imprisoned, will be free to return to the land of their forefathers.

Is. 49:10 "They will not hunger or thirst, Neither will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; For He who has compassion on them will lead them, And will guide them to springs of water.

As the Jews return to their homeland, Jehovah will see to it that food and water are provided along with protection from the heat and sun.

Is. 49:11 "And I will make all My mountains a road, And My highways will be raised up.

Roadways will be built on which the returning Jews will travel.

Is. 49:12 "Behold, these shall come from afar; And lo, these will come from the north and from the west, And these from the land of Sinim."

The Jews will return from throughout the world: *from afar...*, *from the north and from the west*, even *from the land of Sinim*, which is China. Just think! It will be the redeemed Gentiles who bring them back (Isaiah 14:1-2; Zechariah 8:20-23).

Is. 49:13 Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the Lord has comforted His people, And will have compassion on His afflicted.

Creation is personified as rejoicing when the Jews return to their homeland, a return in which *the Lord* will comfort *His people* on whom He has shown *compassion*.

These events will fulfill Jehovah's promise to the Servant; for the restoration of the nation which once rejected the Servant, their initial rejection resulting in the salvation of a multitude of Gentiles, will complete the process guaranteed by the Father.

Is. 49:14 ¶ But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, And the Lord has forgotten me."

Just as the Father encouraged the Servant during a moment of discouragement (vv.4-13), Jehovah will encourage *Zion* (Jerusalem) during her season of feeling *forsaken* and *forgotten* (vv.14-26).

Is. 49:15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you.

Though it *may* happen in certain cases, it is difficult for *a woman* to show so little *compassion* that she forgets *her* offspring. Jehovah *will* never forget Jerusalem.

Is. 49:16 "Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.

God has *inscribed* (engraved or tattooed) *Zion* (Jerusalem) *on the palms of both His hands* so He might have her *walls...continually before Him*. He has also *appointed watchmen* (angels) on the *walls of Jerusalem* to continually (*All day and all night*)...*remind Him* to make *Jerusalem a praise in the earth* (Isaiah 62:6-7)—which will be fulfilled during the Millennium. Psalm 87 also describes the degree to which Jehovah loves Jerusalem—*More than all the other dwelling places*

of the Jews. Psalm 48 describes God's passion for *the city* as well.

Is. 49:17 "Your builders hurry; Your destroyers and devastators Will depart from you.

The *builders* of Jerusalem will *hurry* to return while the enemies of Jerusalem *Will depart*.

Is. 49:18 "Lift up your eyes and look around; All of them gather together, they come to you. As I live," declares the Lord, "You shall surely put on all of them as jewels, and bind them on as a bride.

The returning population of Jerusalem will adorn the city, much like the *jewels* worn by *a bride*.

Is. 49:19 "For your waste and desolate places, and your destroyed land-- Surely now you will be too cramped for the inhabitants, And those who swallowed you will be far away.

Jerusalem *will be too cramped* to accommodate all its *inhabitants*. At the same time, the enemies of Jerusalem will depart.

Is. 49:20 "The children of whom you were bereaved will yet say in your ears, 'The place is too cramped for me; Make room for me that I may live here.'

As we discovered in verse 19, Jerusalem will be *too cramped* to house its inhabitants. This return of the Jews must occur after the Second Coming of Christ in preparation for the Millennium; for a relatively small group of Jews returned to Jerusalem from Babylon in the book of Ezra. The Jerusalem of today is far from being overrun by Jewish inhabitants.

Is. 49:21 "Then you will say in your heart, 'Who has begotten these for me, Since I have been bereaved of my children, And am barren, an exile and a wanderer? And who has reared these? Behold, I was left alone; From where did these come?'"

After feeling *barren* and *left alone*, Jerusalem will stand amazed as the Jews return to the city to enjoy the Millennium. She will wonder where all her inhabitants are coming from.

Is. 49:22 ¶ Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations, And set up My standard to the peoples; And they will bring your sons in their bosom, And your daughters will be carried on their shoulders.

The believing Gentiles of the Tribulation, the *sheep* Gentiles of Matthew 25 who enter the Millennium in their physical bodies, will carry the Jews back to Jerusalem.

Is. 49:23 "And kings will be your guardians, And their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth, And lick the dust of your feet; And you will know that I am the Lord; Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame.

The Gentiles will also serve as *guardians* and *nurses* and even *bow down* to the returning Jews. These Jews will know that Jehovah is *the Lord* because the entire nation (living in their physical bodies) will have entered into the *new covenant* of Jeremiah 31:31-34.

Is. 49:24 ¶ "Can the prey be taken from the mighty man, Or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?"

The unbelieving Gentiles of the Tribulation (*the goats* of Matthew 25) are dealt with in verses 24-26. The Jews who have been captured by these unbelieving Gentiles will be *rescued*.

Is. 49:25 Surely, thus says the Lord, "Even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away, And the prey of the tyrant will be rescued; For I will contend with the one who contends with you, And I will save your sons.

The Jews who are *captives* will be *taken away*, even *rescued* from their Gentile captors. It is possible that these *captives* will be the Jews taken from *Jerusalem* by the Antichrist and his Gentile armies during The Campaign of Armageddon (mentioned in Zechariah 14:2). You might want to read the notes associated with Isaiah 13:3 that relate to **Stage 3 of The Campaign of Armageddon**.

Is. 49:26 "And I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh, And they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine; And all flesh will know that I, the Lord, am your Savior, And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

The Gentile *oppressors* of the Jews (*the goats* of Matthew 25) will be destroyed and forced to recognize that Jehovah is *Savior...*, *Redeemer*, and *the Mighty one of Jacob*.