

**Text: Isa 49.1-13**

Today we turn to the second Servant Song in Isaiah.

In the first Song, we saw the worldwide mission of the Servant to bring justice to the nations. We also saw a hint of his suffering... just a hint.

In the second Song, we hear different voices speaking.

- The Servant himself
- The Lord (YHWH) [the Father, NT perspective]
- The prophet

Noticing these “voice” changes help us to understand the passage better. I can’t fit the whole text on the screen at once, so I hope you have your Bible in hand as we read the passage so you can see what I am talking about.

Another Bible study note is to think about what I call the “parallelism pattern.” As we approach each verse, it is helpful to notice what lines are parallel – the pattern changes through the passage, but it helps us when we are thinking about it. I’m not going to go through the whole passage and show you these, but I’ll show you a couple so you can see what I mean. This is “by the way,” just a little tip for Bible study on your own.

Read Isa 49.1-6, Voice of the Servant

Notice the Parallelism Patterns in v. 1 and v. 2

Read Isa 49.7-12, Voice of the Lord

Read Isa 49.13, Voice of the prophet

The ideas presented in this song are powerful and, in a way, astonishing. We see outlined for us the ministry of Christ among men from beginning to end. It is a ministry you must listen to; you will have no hope without it.

“The preceding chapters have just indicated that Babylon was not the answer to this world’s problems (46–47; 48:20). Israel also failed to listen to God and receive his blessings (48:17–18), so what hope do God’s people and the nations have? Their only hope is that God would graciously redeem Jacob (48:20b) and that the nations would turn to God and be saved (45:22). But how will God accomplish this?”<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 15B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2009), 341–42.

Tom Constable adds:

“In the previous section of Isaiah (chs. 40–48), the prophet revealed that God would redeem His servant Israel from Babylonian captivity by using one of His servants, Cyrus. Israel’s sin had resulted in her going into the furnace of Babylon for a period of refinement.

“In this section, the prophet revealed that God would also deal with the more serious problem of sin in Israel that had resulted in her captivity. He would do this by using another Servant of His, the Messiah. This Servant would not only take care of Israel’s sin problem but that of the whole world. Thus Isaiah passed from dealing mainly with physical deliverance to dealing with spiritual salvation, and from Cyrus to Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

The big thing to notice here: the Servant’s focus is *Spiritual Problems*.

**Proposition:** The voice of the Servant cuts through all the problems caused by sin, bringing eternal salvation to men.

## I. The voices and their audience

### A. The Servant (1-6)

#### 1. Identify the voice

a. “The Lord called me” (1)

b. “You my Servant, Israel” (3)

1) Note on “Israel” — not the nation here, but an individual

2) See v. 5, “to bring Jacob back to him” — the individual brings the nation back

3) Jesus = “the ideal Israel,” the true “Prince with God”

#### 2. The audience: “O islands ... you peoples from afar”

a. The message is not to Israel

b. The message is to the nations

---

<sup>2</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Isa 49.1.

## B. The Lord (7-12)

1. In vv. 5-6, the Servant quotes the Lord: “Now says the Lord who formed Me” — but it is still the Servant speaking
2. The Lord picks up in v. 7
3. The Lord speaks “To the despised One, To the One abhorred by the nation, To the Servant of rulers” (in the text, three parallel lines)

## C. The prophet (13)

1. Seen as the prophet by the translators: notice the quotation marks in v. 12 and through the passage
2. The prophet again speaks far past Israel: “O heavens ... O earth ... O mountains” — *i.e.* the universe

# II. The life of the Servant (1-6)

## A. His humanity (1)

1. The calling “from the womb” clearly points to a human figure
2. The New Testament teaches us that the babe of Bethlehem had a call from before conception
  - a. To Mary (Lk 1.30-33)

Lk 1.30-33 The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.<sup>31</sup> “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.<sup>32</sup> “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;<sup>33</sup> and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”

- b. To Elizabeth (Lk 1.43)

Lk 1.43 “And how has it *happened* to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me?

## c. To Joseph (Mt 1.18-23)

Mt 1.20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

We cannot linger here, though there is much to interest us.

## B. His voice (2)

## 1. His weapon is his voice "He has made my mouth like..."

- a. "a sharp sword"
- b. "a select arrow"

Mt 7.28-29 ¶ When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; <sup>29</sup> for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

## 2. His obscurity

- a. He is "concealed" and "hidden"
- b. This could refer to God's protection
- c. Probably refers to his preparation for a time and his humble surroundings
  - 1) Isaiah writes in the 700s BC
  - 2) Many long years pass
  - 3) Even after his birth, he is hidden away until the fulness of time
    - a) Hidden in Egypt
    - b) Hidden in Nazareth
  - c) Put forward as a carpenter's son (not a Rabbi, not a prince, not a priest, not a nobleman)

d. He is the perfect Servant, whose mission is to show the Father's glory (3)

### C. His seeming failure (4)

1. All his labour seems for nothing
2. And what of his ministry in the New Testament?

Jn 1.11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

Mk 6.3 "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him.

Mt 21.38 "But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'

### D. His full commission answers failure (5-6)

1. His first purpose: to bring Israel back to the Lord

"The purpose of the Servant's mission as stated in this verse is *spiritual*—to bring Israel back to God Himself (cf. Isa. 55:7; Jer. 4:1), not to bring them back from Babylon."<sup>3</sup>

2. His full purpose: to do the bigger thing, make the Servant a light to the Nations

- a. But this is not plan B

Isa 42.6 "I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations,

Isa 9.2 The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.

<sup>3</sup> F. Duane Lindsey, "Isaiah's Songs of the Servant Part 2: The Commission of the Servant in Isaiah 49:1-13," *Bibliotheca Sacra: Dallas Theological Seminary* 139, no. 553 (1982): 136-37.

Isa 11.10 ¶ Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.

- b. But note: there is still a *political* purpose for the tribes of Jacob (6)

### III. The future of the Servant (7-12)

#### A. The one the nation rejected the nations will receive (7)

1. Earlier, v. 1, we emphasized humanity
2. Notice that the Servant receives worship from kings and princes (the nations)

Isa 52.15 Thus He will sprinkle many nations,  
Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him;  
For what had not been told them they will see,  
And what they had not heard they will understand.

#### B. The Lord will keep you and give you for a covenant of the people (8-12)

1. This is a word for Israel (8)
2. To restore the land: Israel (8)

Note on restoring the land: This couldn't be the restoration from Babylon simply because the Servant did not come "from the womb" until hundreds of years later.

3. To shepherd Israel (9-10)
4. To break down the barriers, to ease their way to him (11)
5. To gather his people from every direction

"Sinim" = "Aswan" in Egypt, furthest distance in that direction that Israel knew about

Isa 11.10 ¶ Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.

Isa 27.13 It will come about also in that day that a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were perishing in the land of Assyria and who were scattered in the land of Egypt

will come and worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

#### IV. The joy of the universe (13)

- A. The prophet calls the whole universe to shout for joy
- B. Why? The Lord has comforted his people
- C. How? Recall v. 2: with his powerful voice

Rev 19.11-16 ¶ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it *is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes *are* a flame of fire, and on His head *are* many diadems; and He has a name written *on Him* which no one knows except Himself. <sup>13</sup> *He is* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and **His name is called The Word of God.** <sup>14</sup> And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> **From His mouth comes a sharp sword,** so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. <sup>16</sup> And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

#### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** The voice of the Servant cuts through all the problems caused by sin, bringing eternal salvation to men.

A lot of people didn't listen to him the first time he came

A lot of people aren't listening to him now

There will be a day when every man will listen to him, but the power of his voice will be no comfort if you don't receive him now.