

first cataract of the Nile in Egypt:cf. Ezek 29:9-11. Jeremiah 44:12-29 refers to Jews of his day living in this area of Lower Egypt. So the Lord comforts His people.

Now, beginning at v. 14, Isaiah visualizes the people actually back in Jerusalem. First for contrast he paints the picture of Jerusalem during the time of exile. The people complain that the Lord has forsaken them. He replies: Sooner could a mother forget her own child. We think of the lament of Our Lord over Jerusalem in Mt 23:27 where He says He wanted to gather them as a hen gathers her chicks, but they refused. St. Augustine (<Tract on John> 15) makes a fine remark that the hen is the most motherly of animals. Even when the chicks are not following her, one can still see that she is a mother.

Then Isaiah changes the image, saying He has engraved them in the palms of His hands. This would be tattooing, which was prohibited in Israel: Lev 19:28.

After that: See, your sons are hurrying back, they will be like ornaments on a bride. Yes, Jerusalem was ruined, but now it will be too small for all those who come. Those there will marvel: Where did these come from? The Lord replies: I will call the gentiles. Kings shall be your foster fathers and queens your nursing mothers.

They will bow down before you. -- A prophecy of the conversion of the gentiles. At that time, and much later, the Jews thought it meant all gentiles would become Jews, not knowing that God intended to call the Gentiles (Eph 3:6) as gentiles to be part of His people.

Someone objects: Who can take plunder away from an armed warrior? He replies: Yes, the all powerful Lord can do all things. He will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, i.e., destroy one another in civil war.

Now, at the start of the next chapter (poor chapter division), He imagines them saying: Where is the bill of divorce, for He had renounced Israel. He replies: You were sold because of your sins. I called, and no one answered. I could have ransomed you, I can dry up the sea, but I needed to punish you.

End of Chapters 49-50: 1-3



"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME".....ISAIAH 61:1

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THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

CHAPTERS 49-50: 1-3

AND HIS NAME
WILL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER,
PRINCE OF
PEACE.
ISAIAH 9:6

Isaiah is called "The Book of Salvation." The name *Isaiah* means "the salvation of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation." Isaiah is the first book containing the writings of the prophets of the Bible. And the author, Isaiah, who is called the Prince of Prophets, shines above all the other writers and prophets of Scripture. His mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill have earned him the title, "Shakespeare of the Bible." He was educated, distinguished, and privileged, yet remained a deeply spiritual man. He was committed to obedience over the long haul of his 55-60 year ministry as a prophet of God. He was a true patriot who loved his country and his people. Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two.

Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem, urging the people to repent from their sins and return to God. He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord. Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).

In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not man. God alone is Savior, Ruler and King.

Commentary on the book of Isaiah is by noted theologian Rev. William G. Most (1914-1999). His contributions to theology have been recognized all over the world. He published 12 books and a host of articles on topics ranging from biblical studies to Mariology and Latin grammar.

Book of Isaiah

Summary of Chapter 49-50: 1-3

Second Servant Song. 49:1-9a. Summary and Comments

Who is the Servant here? At times it seems like an individual, at times it is all Israel. This fits the Hebrew pattern we mentioned above, where an individual stands for and embodies a group. So at times, such as 49:6, the Servant has a mission for Jacob or Israel, at other times, he is an individual.

The Targums do not mention this passage as messianic, nor does the NT. Yet since the servant is in close continuity with the servant of the first song, and especially because of the prediction of suffering by him, when he is despised and abhorred by the nation, the nation of Israel, it seems the same as the suffering servant of the 4th song.

The servant speaks to the far away lands, or islands. He says that before he was born the Lord called him from the womb of his mother - a thought like that of Jer 1:5 or of 44:2 above.

The servant says the Lord made his mouth like a sharpened sword, or he was a polished arrow. His words, it seems, are like the two-edged sword that the word of God is (Hebrews 4:12). God concealed Him, that is, did not make him known at first, like the Lord in His 30 years hidden life.

The servant groans: I have labored for no purpose - the people of Israel are stiff-necked, as we saw above, and as Jesus saw when He preached to them. But His reward is from the Lord --like that of the suffering servant of the fourth song, in 53:10 -11. So he is sent to bring back Jacob and gather Israel.

But that alone is not enough for his mission: he is to be a light to the gentiles. We saw this in 42:6, and in the canticle of Simeon in the NT, saying he will be a light to the gentiles. Through him salvation is to come to the ends of the earth, that is, to even the most distant places. Again, an indication of the universality of the mission of Jesus.

After he is despised and abhorred by the nation - which must be the Jewish people, as happened to Jesus. (Here the singular <goy> is used. When the gentiles are meant it is normally <goyim>, the plural) - after that Kings will see and bow down before Him - the later honor paid to Jesus too.

It is then that it is said that he will be a covenant for the people and will free captives - like the words of 42:7.

The Return from Exile: 49:9b - 50:3

On their return, they will find food even besides the roads, and on barren hills. There will be no hunger or thirst, nor will the desert heat strike them. In fact, God will turn the mountains into roads and raise up the highways -- we think of course of the opening words of chapter 40.

They will come from afar, some from the north, and some from the west, and some from the land of Syene. (We are not sure of this last name. The Hebrew has <sinim>. Some have thought it meant <Chinese>, but there were no Jews in China then. From Qumram, the old text of Isaiah, 1 QIsa, reads: <swnyym>. That could mean Jews living at Aswan or Syene, the