

The Servant/Warrior, Part One (Isaiah 49:1–7)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (10/14/2016)

Introduction

1. The second half of Isaiah (chapters 40–66) focuses on the true Servant (49:3), the Messiah Emmanuel (7:13, 14) who is to rule the earth (9:1–7).
 - a. Chapters 40–48 address national Israel, the servant whom the Lord called to glorify God and be a light to the Gentiles, but the nation failed in its mission.
 - b. Chapters 49–57 reveal the Messiah, the suffering Servant whom the Lord calls to fulfill His mission.
 - c. Chapters 58–66 shows the future under the true Servant, King Jesus.
2. The church is the means that the Christ will use to glorify God and be His light to the nations (Matthew 5:14–16; Acts 13:46–49).
3. Many argue that the church, like Israel, is failing in its commission.
 - a. To the contrary, the church will succeed where Israel failed because the church is “*in Christ*,” a spiritual extension of Christ (His body) (Ephesians 1:15–23).

Note that Paul identifies the marks of a true believer: *faith* (full confidence and trust) in the Lord Jesus and *love* (the fruit of faith) toward all the saints.
 - b. Thus, true saints as servant/warriors have all things under their feet (since Christ is given that authority) because they are His body, “*the fullness of Him who fills all in all*.” It is not what anyone is able to achieve by just setting themselves to do it. It is Christ working in and through them by His Word and Spirit to accomplish His will (Philippian 2:12, 13; Ephesians 6:10, 11, 17).
4. “This chapter is full of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the words quoted could not possibly have their complete fulfillment in any other save in our Savior” (Alan Redpath).

I. Call and Preparation

1. Announcing good news to the nations (v. 1a)
 - a. Christ announces good news to the whole world as a consequence of His first coming. He was first sent to the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24). They rejected Him (Acts 13:46).
 - b. The audience in the text is no longer Jacob but all the earth (*cf.* 48:12). Gospel hope for the Gentiles is now announced.
2. Preparing salvation for all who hear (v. 1b)
 - a. The covenant Lord called Jesus to fulfill His purpose even before His birth. Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:5) and Paul (Galatians 1:15, 16) also testify to this calling in their own ministries.
 - b. The covenant Lord also named Him before His birth (Luke 1:31; see Matthew 1:21, 23).
3. Preparing the means of salvation, the Word of God
 - a. Jesus speaks with power and authority. He is the Word of God (v. 2a; John 7:46; John 1:14; Revelation 1:16; 19:15).

“The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). Jesus is the living Word, and the written Word is living because the Spirit of Christ has breathed it out. Never underestimate the power of the Word of God.

b. Jesus was prepared and presented for His work (2b).

1) Jesus was raised in obscurity but grew up prepared for the task before Him (Luke 1:40).

2) When He was presented, the Holy Spirit came upon Him to take control as He taught and ministered (Luke 3:22).

This presentation fulfills the Word spoken in Psalm 2:7; *“I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”*

II. Messiah’s Mission

1. The Lord’s identification of the true Israel (v. 3)

This statement of the Lord’s confidence in His servant cannot refer to ethnic Israel because the whole argument is that ethnic Israel has failed as His servant. A new and faithful Servant is brought forth from the natural line, through whom the Lord’s purpose is accomplished.

2. The Servant’s complaint but confidence in the Lord (v. 4)

The Jews rejected Jesus as Messiah and turned Him over to the Romans to crucify, which looked like failure for the Christ. However, the Lord was confident in the ultimate goal to bring salvation to the ends of earth. He was victorious in His sufferings.

3. The Lord’s honoring of the Servant

a. Honoring the Servant with confidence (v. 5)

It was Israel’s rejection that provided the opportunity for Gentiles to be included in the kingdom. This is the argument of Romans 15. A remnant of Jacob will be gathered to Him along with a multitude of Gentiles (Revelation 5:9).

b. Honoring the Servant with enlargement (v. 6)

4. The Servant’s suffering and reward (v. 7)

What Can We Take Away?

1. The great lesson that can be learned from Humans fail when left to their own resources, even when the Lord takes extra measures to reveal Himself to them. *“Without me,”* Jesus said, *“you can do nothing”* (John 15:5).

2. It is not individual believers that will do great exploits, but believers united in Jesus Christ and under His Headship through whom the Spirit of God accomplishes God’s will.

3. *“It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister [servant] is an awful weapon in the hand of God”* (Robert Murray McCheyne).