

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #72

Isaiah 49:14-26

Back in the days when Adolph Hitler was butchering the Jews, one religious Jew was reported to have said, "God, will You please pick another nation as Your people." We certainly can empathize with the sentiment of the Jewish people, but the fact is God will never pick another nation to be His people for He has chosen Israel.

When we presently look at Israel we may make the following observations:

- 1) She is an organized nation.
- 2) She lives in a small portion of the land God has promised to her.
- 3) She is surrounded by military threat on every side, which means she is not at peace.
- 4) She is not flourishing right now as the nation and people of God.
- 5) Her land is not blossoming like a rose.

That is why when we consider what God says in these verses of Isaiah, it is like reading a mind-boggling almost unbelievable fairytale. Right now in this world, the only Gentile power that is known to be a good friend of Israel is the United States, and recently that friendship and relationship has been brought into question because we have politicians who seem to be more interested in the Arab nations than God's nation.

On May 26, 2005, President George W. Bush and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas met for a press conference in the White House Rose Garden and announced some points they had agreed on against Israel that Hal Lindsey called "the greatest betrayal of Israel committed by any American president in history" (*One Big Betrayal*, June 5, 2005). In effect, what President Bush agreed to do was to reverse American policy in favor of cutting Israel's land in half and giving it to the Arabs. Bill Koenig, a leading author and Washington correspondent, said that "President George W. Bush is rapidly moving himself and our nation on a collision course with God over Israel's covenant land" (*Koenig's Eye View*, May 27, 2005).

When your supposedly best political friend, the United States, seems to turn against you in favor of your biggest enemy, the Arabs, what hope does Israel have for ever getting her land? **Israel's hope has been and will always be in the God of the Bible.** What God predicts here in Isaiah is that He will eventually do something absolutely amazing and miraculous and He will do it not only in front of all the nations of the world, but He will actually use all nations of the world to accomplish His purposes. God's point here is this:

GOD WILL NEVER FORGET ISRAEL, AND ONE DAY HE WILL CAUSE ALL . THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD TO ESTEEM HER AND HELP HER GET INTO HER PROMISED LAND.

In the previous section, we saw an amazing conversation between members of the Godhead. In that conversation it was predicted that Israel would be in her land shouting for joy (49:11-13). Obviously the majority of the Jews were having a hard time believing this, so in this section of Scripture we see an amazing conversation between God and Israel. There are at least four encouraging realities that God communicates to Israel in these verses:

ENCOURAGING REALITY #1 – God is always concerned with Israel. **49:14-16**

The proper noun “Zion” became a synonym for Israel and specifically Jerusalem . This was the place where David actually built a home (II Samuel 5:7-11), an altar (II Samuel 24:18-25), and the place where Solomon built the temple. Isaiah uses the noun Zion to refer to Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3). He prophetically saw a time when this would be the permanent capital of the world in which the Jews would be living and enjoying their land (Isaiah 1:26; 2:3; 4:1-6).

It is clear from **verse 14** that one of the real concerns of Israel is the concern that God has forsaken her and forgotten her. When you look at the negative things that have happened to Israel and her capital city, Jerusalem, we can certainly understand how Israel could think this way.

David Rausch in his book *A Legacy of Hatred* said that, “By the end of World War II, two thirds of European Jewry (over one third of the world’s Jewish population) had been murdered ...” (p. 176). On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly came out with Resolution 181 which said, “To protect and to preserve the unique spiritual and religious interests located in the city of the three great monotheistic faiths throughout the world, Christian, Jewish and Moslem; to this end to ensure that order and peace, and especially religious peace, reign in Jerusalem” (Dore Gold, *The Fight For Jerusalem*, p. 287). The world doesn’t get it. Jerusalem is not to be a city of all people of the world; it is to be a city where Israel is honored at a place where her righteous King, Jesus Christ, reigns. It is no wonder that Jews wonder if God is still on her side because there are a lot of questions in Zion.

In this passage God gives Israel three very encouraging messages:

Encouraging Message #1 - Most mothers could not ever forget about their little children, but even if the potential to forget is there, it is not possible with God. **49:15**

There is much in the Bible that deals with the “fatherhood” of God, but as Warren Wiersbe said, “There is also a ‘motherhood’ side to God’s nature that we must not forget” (*Be Comforted*, p. 124). God is a compassionate and comforting God to Israel just like most mothers are to their children.

In these days there are various agencies available that will literally track down a family member who has been separated from their families. Oftentimes it is a mother who initiates the search for her child. There are programs that document some of these stories. One story was of a young woman who had a baby that she truly loved. But she was in such a terrible condition that she felt she could not give her child a good life, so she gave up the child for adoption to a wonderful family. It was a loving sacrificial thing for her to do, kind of like what Moses’ mother did for him.

As the years went on this mother never forgot about her child and prayed for her and ultimately wanted to meet her, so she contacted an agency and they were reunited. That mother never forgot about that girl even though she had other children.

God uses that very analogy and says to Israel, “I will never forget you.” You are always on My mind. Even if a mother could temporarily forget about her baby, I will never forget Israel. It is impossible for God to ever forget about one of His children. He knows them all and He cares for them all.

Encouraging Message #2 - God has so inscribed Israel on His Person that she is continually on His mind. **49:16a**

God required that the high priest actually wear the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, which had been engraved on two onyx stones, on the shoulder pieces of his robe (Exodus 28:6-12). Everything the high priest did always had Israel in view.

God uses anthropomorphic language here to make a powerful point. Anthropomorphic language is language in which God uses physical imagery and physical terms so we can understand certain things about Him. But I believe this is more than just anthropomorphic language, it is prophetic.

In this verse God describes Himself as “inscribing” Israel on His hands. The word “inscribe” speaks of an actually cutting into something and carving or engraving something to the point that you leave some permanent mark (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 301). This would be like God giving Himself a tattoo on the palms of His hands. What God is saying to Israel is this, “I have marks on the palms of My hands and have inscribed you there, which means whenever I do anything, you are always on My mind.” No matter what work God does, Israel is always in the forefront of His thinking.

I do not think this reference to marks on the palms of God’s hands is a coincidence. There are literally two nail scars in the hands of Jesus Christ where He was literally cut because nails were pounded through His palms. By the way, the marks are in His palms, not His wrists. Those palm marks testify that God will not ever forget His people.

Encouraging Message #3 - God has Israel’s physical program continually before Him. **49:16b-17**

This is a reference to the fact that God does have a plan that will include a secure Jerusalem and secure land. Walls protect people and God says to Israel your protection and preservation are continually before Me. The glorious city of God is continually on the mind of God.

God says one day you will hurry to this land and your enemies will hurry out of the land. God would bring builders to reconstruct Jerusalem and He will see to it that all her destroyers and devastators are removed.

ENCOURAGING REALITY #2 – God calls Israel to look and see what He has promised to do in Israel’s land. **49:17-21**

John Calvin said in these verses God calls His people to “survey this magnificent work” that He will do (*Isaiah*, Vol. 8, p. 33). Biblical prophecy is very practical in that it can help God’s people focus on the glorious things He will eventually do. What God predicts in these verses is amazing:

Prediction #1 - All of Israel's enemies will depart from her land. **49:17**

Any enemy who has ever done anything negative against Israel will be gone.

Prediction #2 - So many Jews will come to the land that they will be cramped for space.
49:18-19

In Israel it was always considered to be a blessing of God when a woman had many children. They were said to be her jewels. God describes a time when His blessings will be so on Israel that she will have so many Jews in her Promised Land that her land will seem small and cramped. Even the desolate and waste areas of the land will be filled with the people of God.

Prediction #3 - Israeli families will be reunited in massive numbers. **49:20**

This speaks of a time when God will resurrect Israel and fill her land boundaries with His nation. God's people will be so numerous that they will say, "Give me some elbow room." What God tells Israel is, I am going to bring Israel into this land and there will be so many of you in the land that people will look for some place to live.

Prediction #4 - Israel will be amazed that this could actually happen. **49:21**

At the time God does this, Israel will stand in awe and say, "Who can do this? Who is able to bring so many of our people into this land?" The next section gives us the answer:

ENCOURAGING REALITY #3 – God will cause all these blessings to come to Israel.
49:22-23

There is only one who can possibly do this and it is the God of the Bible. There are three blessings that God promises to give Israel:

Blessing #1 - God will lift up His hand to the nations and show the importance of Israel.
49:22a

God will lift up His hand and set up His standard to the people of the world. This standard is none other than Jesus Christ who will exalt Israel in front of all the nations of the world (Isaiah 11:10, 12; 18:3). Jesus Christ will literally and physically return with His nail-scarred hands and He will establish Israel in her land for all the nations of the world to see.

When all these blessings come upon Israel, there will be no doubt in their minds about who Jesus Christ is!

Blessing #2 - God will cause nations to esteem Jewish sons and daughters and help them get into their land. **49:22b-23a**

F. C. Jennings said, we see Jews going back to their land now, but not like this (*Studies in Isaiah*, p. 575).

Nations of the world will rally around Israel. They will promote Israel being in her land. Just think what is predicted here; all the leaders of the world want Jews to be in their land and they will actually help Jewish people to get there.

Blessing #3 - God will cause the nations to bow down before Israel realizing she is special to Almighty God. **49:23b**

What a day it will be when all of these proud arrogant nations who mocked Israel are bowed down before her with their faces in the dust.

John Calvin said this very verse has been “tortured” by the Roman Catholic Church and it is from this verse that they devised the practice of “kissing the pope’s feet” (John Calvin, *Isaiah*, Vol. 17, p. 41). This verse has nothing to do with kissing the pope’s feet or bowing down to some shrine in Mecca; it has to do with all people of the world honoring and bowing down to Israel.

When Jesus Christ is in Jerusalem the next time, you can count on the fact that this will happen.

ENCOURAGING REALITY #4 – God will destroy any enemy of Israel. **49:24-26**

God promises that He will wipe out any who contend with Him or against Israel. He will feed Israeli oppressors with their own flesh and blood.

Now, of course, the ultimate enemy of Israel is Satan. What is predicted in this context is that Israel will be enjoying the blessings of God as never before, and the tyrant who was responsible for making Israel prey will be gone.

We know from Revelation 20:1-7 that during the wonderful millennial reign of Jesus Christ, Satan will be confined in the abyss. At that time everyone in the world will know that God is Israel’s God, Jesus Christ is Israel’s Savior and Redeemer, and He is the Mighty One of Jacob.

What a message for Israel to know and what a message for Israel to see.

PARTING THOUGHTS:

- 1. Israel is always very special to God.**
- 2. God’s love for His people is proved by the marks in the palms of Jesus Christ.**
- 3. There is coming a day when God’s people will be honored by all leaders of the world.**
- 4. There is coming a day when Jesus Christ will be seen as the only Savior and Redeemer and as Mighty God.**