

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

THE COMING SERVANT (3): ISAIAH 49, 50



T. M. Moore

A Scriptorium Study

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Coming Servant (3): Isaiah 49, 50
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Introduction to *Isaiah 49, 50*

God is at pains to comfort His people, even as He is preparing to discipline them for wandering from Him. He has neither abandoned nor forsaken His people, and He will be with them during their time of captivity in Babylon. But they must put aside all their idols and hope in the Lord and His promised redemption.

That redemption will come with the Servant Isaiah has been speaking about throughout this section of his book. These two chapters give us more details about His work and the salvation that He brings. And God calls His people to trust Him, to look beyond their suffering, and even beyond the temporal deliverance Cyrus will accomplish for them, to the coming day of a salvation greater than anything they've ever known.

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T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 Mouth like a Sharp Sword

Pray Psalm 149.1.

Praise the LORD!

Sing to the LORD a new song,

And His praise in the assembly of saints.

Read Isaiah 49.1-6.

Reflect.

1. Who is the Servant speaking in these verses? What does God promise to do through Him?
2. Verse 4 is Isaiah speaking about himself. How was he feeling about his work?

Meditate.

Suddenly, the Servant of the Lord (vv. 3, 5) breaks out in glorious proclamation and promise! This passage is so startling, that we have to wonder why God decided to insert it here.

Look at verse 4. Isaiah was not feeling very hopeful about his ministry. He was worn out, and evidently few people were listening. But he knew not to trust in these outward indicators of success. His reward was with the Lord; and I find it so precious that, at this nadir of his ministry, God enveloped His faithful servant in these glorious words about the coming Servant, Who will restore Israel and bring the light and salvation of God to the Gentiles (v. 6).

This passage would have lifted Isaiah, as I'm sure he would have recalled previous promises of the Lord that he could not have fully understood at first, but would now start becoming more clear. God begins to enlarge on those previous words, and He will continue to do so throughout the rest of the book of Isaiah.

Who has a mouth like a sharp sword (cf. Ps. 45.3; Rev. 1.12-16)? The Speaker in these verses is the Servant of the Lord Who is to come *after* Cyrus, He Who will bring salvation to Israel and the world. He will be born of a woman (v. 1) – a virgin, as Isaiah would have recalled (Is. 7.14). And He will come to rule over all Israel and all the nations, the wonderful Counselor, mighty God, and everlasting Father Whose Kingdom of righteousness will increase without end (Is. 9.6, 7). Those earlier, mysterious words which God spoke through the prophet would now have come to Isaiah's mind – just as they do to ours – in the context of the coming Servant of the Lord. Through Him the people of God will glorify Him (v. 3). He will gather the people of God from Israel and all nations (vv. 5, 6). In the strength of the Lord, He will bring the light and salvation of God to the ends of the earth (v. 6).

And the power by which He will accomplish all this is the sharp sword that goes out of His Word (v. 2).

So do you think Isaiah was lifted by hearing these words? I'm sure he was, because he trusted in God (v. 4) and held fast to His promises.

Prepare.

1. How can you see that this Servant is both God and man?
2. Prior to these words, the people who had heard Isaiah would have considered all Gentile nations to be their enemies. How were they to begin thinking about them now?

3. Note the words used to refer to the Lord's salvation: "gathered" (v. 5), "raise up" (v. 6), "restore" (v. 6), "light" (v. 6), "salvation" (v. 6). How does each of these lead us to think about what God is going to do through this Servant and the Sword of His mouth? According to Psalm 149.5 and 6, who wields that Sword now?

*So he reveals the ministry of his incarnation, that he was formed as a slave by the Father from the womb so as to gather Israel and Jacob. If anyone says that these are the Jewish people that are meant, he has not strayed from the intention of the text. For Christ said, "I have come to save the lost sheep of Israel." But if anyone decides it is all those saved by faith who are called Israel and Jacob, he is right to do so. Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD), *Commentary on Isaiah 4.4.49.5-6**

Raise me up, Lord, and gather me to Yourself! Restore my joy and hope! Make me the light of salvation today! Use me to...

Pray Psalm 149.

Praise and rejoice in the greatness and salvation of the Lord! Go forth wielding the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of truth, and commit your day to the Lord for His Kingdom and glory.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 149 (*Toulon: I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art*)

Sing to the Lord a glorious song and new!

Praise Him you people, to Whom praise is due!

Let us rejoice, let us be glad in Him

Who has created us and cleansed our sin.

Praise Him with dance, with tambourine and lyre!

To be so praised is God's one great desire.

Lord, beautify Your holy ones with grace;

Show us the mercy of Your saving face.

Sing to the Lord, exult with great delight!

Sing on your beds with joy to God by night!

Sing praise and take His Word into your hand;

Publish His grace and wrath in every land!

2 Bringer of Comfort and Joy

Pray Psalm 22.27, 28.

All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the nations
Shall worship before You.
For the kingdom *is* the LORD's,
And He rules over the nations.

Read Isaiah 49.7-13.

Reflect.

1. How many ways can you see that this passage points forward to Christ?
2. What are the effects of the Servant's – Christ's – coming?

Meditate.

This passage is definitely looking past Cyrus to the Servant Who comes with healing and salvation for His people. He is the *Redeemer* of His people, the *Holy One*, despised by the nations, even though He is the *Servant* of them all; He will be worshiped by kings and princes when He comes faithfully to fulfill the Lord's promise to His chosen people (v. 7).

He comes with the strength and the help of God to bring in "the day of salvation" (v. 8). He is God's covenant with His people (cf. Is. 42.6), and He brings a treasure trove of blessings with Him (vv. 8-12). What a great and glorious salvation this coming Servant will achieve! Restoration, recovered heritages, freedom from darkness and sin, feeding in lush pastures, protection from harm, guiding and leading, and a stream of people walking the high ground of glory from every part of the world!

All creation breaks forth in song at the salvation brought by God's Redeemer (v. 13). The comfort, joy, and mercy God's people sorely need will be theirs in the day of salvation, and will extend through them to the ends of the world.

Like the people of Isaiah's day, we must endure many tribulations before we see this fuller and more glorious coming of the rule of King Jesus (Acts 14.22; Is. 9.6, 7). And like them, we must bear up under our trials, keeping our eye focused on the ever-unfolding and increasingly glorious, precious and very great promises of God, which are ours in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1.20).

Prepare.

1. How do you typically think of the salvation which is ours in Jesus Christ? Does this passage expand your understanding of that salvation in any ways?
2. Since God's Redeemer brings such a package of blessings to the world, why do so many despise Him? Did their despising Him deter Him? Should it deter us?
3. God loves the *world* so much that He gave Jesus for its salvation. How can you see in this passage that more than merely the souls of God's people benefit from the saving work of Christ? How does this instruct us in working out our salvation (Phil. 2.12)?

God made the abundance of his grace, help and spiritual consolation available to them. "For they shall not hunger or thirst." For

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once they were without spiritual consolation and did not have godly law or prophet or schoolmaster or tutor or teacher, or any spring of water of understanding. After God took mercy on them, however, a feast has been prepared for them in the choir school of spiritual good things. The food there will profit their souls. For they will eat bread from heaven and drink living water, of which the Christ himself said to the Samaritan woman: "Anyone who drinks from this water will thirst again. But whoever drinks the water I give will never be thirsty." Cyril of Alexandria (375-444 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 4.4.49.8-12

Help me to work out my great salvation more fully, Lord, so that...

Pray Psalm 22.22-31.

This second half of Psalm 22 celebrates the victory of the suffering Servant and the coming of His salvation and Kingdom. Rejoice in the blessings it lists, and devote yourself to the commitment it prescribes.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 22.23-28 (*Darwall: Rejoice, the Lord is King*)

All you who fear the Lord, now praise His holy Name!
You children of His glorious Word, declare His fame!
We stand in awe of our eternal God, and on His mercy call.

For He has not despised the anguish of our King,
Nor from Him hid His eyes, Who knew such suffering.
Let praise arise from all who love and serve the Ruler of the skies!

The suffering King shall eat and praise with us the Lord.
Forever we His praise repeat and trust His Word.
Praise God above, all you who keep His vows and who His mercies love!

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord;
All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.
The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

3 Unforsaken, Unforgotten

Pray Psalm 126.3, 4.

The LORD has done great things for us,
And we are glad.
Bring back our captivity, O LORD,
As the streams in the South.

Read Isaiah 49.14-20.

Reflect.

1. God continues to ready His people for their time of suffering and captivity. What does He want them to keep in mind?
2. What does God promise His people at the end of their suffering?

Meditate.

God knows what His people will shortly be facing. He knows the fears, doubts, and despair that will come upon them. He knows that many will say, “The LORD has forsaken us” (v. 14). But God remembers His covenant at all times; He knows the sorrows and sufferings of His people (Ex. 2.24, 25), and He will never forsake or forget them (v. 15).

God says He has inscribed His people on the palms of His hands (v. 16). That might not have meant much to the people of Judah and Jerusalem then, but believers today understand the deep significance of that glorious truth (Jn. 20.27-29). Even as Jerusalem’s walls come down at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, God can see them new and more expansive again (v. 16). The people must nurture the same vision of their city rebuilt, their sons and daughters hastening to return there, and all their enemies turned aside (v. 17). God calls them to lift up their eyes (v. 18). Look beyond the present time of trial and suffering to the days of the Lord’s great in-gathering of His people (v. 18), and of the rebuilding of their city (v. 20), and of the great expansion of their numbers (v. 20).

God leads His people by vision – a vision packed with His exceeding great and precious promises. He calls us to keep our eyes on those promises, to cherish that vision like a dream shortly to come true, and in the midst of our sufferings and His discipline, to sow hope for the future, and to live as His chosen children in the fullness of His grace (Ps. 126).

It is only through many tribulations that we realize more of the presence, promise, and power of God’s Kingdom (Acts 14.22, 23). In the midst of our trials, we must seek the Kingdom and promises of God, knowing that we are unforsaken and unforgotten, and that soon and very soon, a great harvest will come from the hope, prayers, and witness we have sown, albeit with tears.

Prepare.

1. Do you ever feel like God has forsaken or forgotten you? What should you do when you feel that way?
2. Can we seek the Kingdom of God without a clear and compelling vision of what that Kingdom looks like in its coming? Explain.
3. God gave His people a vision to sustain them through their time of trial. What vision should we be nurturing to guide our lives in the here and now?

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Only let us put the rudders of our lives in his hands, and we shall encounter an unfailing providence. God's guardianship will be surer than that of any person, for his are the words, "Can a woman forget her nursing child? Will she not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yet I will not forget you." God is nearer to us than a father and mother, for he is our Maker and Creator. Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD), Letter 14

What should Your Kingdom look like as it comes in my Personal Mission Field, O Lord? And how can I live toward that vision? Help me today to...

Pray Psalm 126.

Is there any sense in which God's people today – His Church – is enduring a time of captivity and discipline? What vision should we be nurturing in the midst of such a time? What should we be "sowing"?

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 126 (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns!*)

When God restored our fortunes all, we were like those who sweetly dream.

Our mouths with joy and laughter filled, made Him our constant song and theme.

Then the astonished nations said, "The Lord has done great things for them!"
Indeed, great things our God has done, Whose Name we praise, Amen, Amen!

Restore our fortunes, Lord our King! Let grace like flowing streams prevail.
All they with tears of joy shall sing who sow while yet they weep and wail.

They who in tears of sorrow sow and cast their seed on every hand,
With joy shall reach their heav'nly home, and bring the harvest of their land.

4 All Flesh Shall Know

Pray Psalm 33.1-5.

Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous!
For praise from the upright is beautiful.
Praise the LORD with the harp;
Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.
Sing to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a shout of joy.
For the word of the LORD *is* right,
And all His work *is done* in truth.
He loves righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

Read Isaiah 49.21-26.

Reflect.

1. Review Isaiah 2.1-4. How does Isaiah 49.21-26 recall and enlarge on the teaching of that passage?
2. In this passage, how can you see that God is anticipating and addressing the questions of His people (cf. vv. 21, 24)?

Meditate.

The promise of deliverance keeps getting better and better. Indeed, what God is promising His people, as they prepare to go into captivity in Babylon, seems unlikely, if not incredible. “Where are all these new people of God going to come from?” some will ask (v. 21). “How likely is it that Babylon will give up its captives?” others want to know (v. 24).

God is undeterred by their lack of faith. He invites our questions, but He insists that we hear His Word and trust Him. God promised that the nations of the world, which heretofore had been His people’s nemeses, would, in “that day” – the context of chapters 49 and 50 – nurture, sustain, and add to their ranks (vv. 22, 23). How likely was that? Nevertheless, when you see it happen, then you will know that God is the LORD, and all who trust in and wait on Him will know His blessing and favor (v. 23).

But if Babylon the mighty is “righteous” to serve as God’s chastening rod, how likely are they to give up their prey (v. 24)? God says it will happen, because He will intervene on behalf of His people (v. 25). Then He will turn the enemies of His people on themselves, to devour one another (see Daniel 8, 10, 11). Meanwhile, His people will grow strong and be nourished on the strength of God’s grace and salvation. And as the people of God continue to increase like a great mountain or a mighty stone (Dan. 2.44, 45), the world will know that the LORD they profess is indeed their Savior, and that He is the Mighty One of Jacob (v. 26).

But His people must be willing to wait on Him (v. 23) – to hear and obey His Word, turn from their idolatrous and unbelieving ways, look to His promises, and live in His covenant until salvation comes.

Prepare.

1. What does it mean to *wait* on the Lord? How do you wait on Him? Toward what ends?
2. Should we expect churches to continue growing in our day? How does that happen (review Is. 2.1-4)?

3. God refers to Himself as the *Savior* and *Redeemer* of His people. What's the difference between these two terms? Why is each important?

In consoling his people through the prophet, God accordingly promises to judge their enemies... For the wickedness of the evil ones who customarily tear at the chosen of God with their own teeth. When this happens, the life of the unrighteous is undone while that of the righteous is not, but rather it flourishes. Isidore of Seville (50-636 AD), Three Books of Thoughts 3.57.8-9

Lord, teach me to wait on You, to focus on Your promises, and to live each day so that...

Pray Psalm 33.

Rejoice in the Lord's salvation. Renew Your commitment to His Word. Rest in His gracious care. And wait on Him for His blessings.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 33 (*Truro: Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

Sing with rejoicing in the Lord, for praise becomes His righteous ones!

With harps and songs raise grateful words, and let new songs of praise be sung!

Joyfully shout! His Word is true; He does His work in faithfulness.

His love prevails the whole world through; the Lord loves truth and righteousness.

God spoke and heaven came to be, and all its hosts His Spirit wrought.

He heaps the waters of the sea; the deeps their dwelling place are taught.

Let all below now fear the Lord; let all in awe of Him abide!

The worlds exist by Jesus' Word; let all on earth in Him confide.

He nullifies the nations' plans; forever stands His sov'reign Word.

All they are blessed who with Him stand – the chosen people of the Lord.

God from His throne looks down on men; He knows our works and made our hearts.

Let not Your Church, let none depend on strength or skill or human arts.

God watches those who fear His Name, who hope upon His grace and love;

He keeps their souls from death and shame who trust in Him Who reigns above.

God is our Helper and our Shield; upon us let Your grace descend!

We hope in You; to You we yield; we trust in Jesus to the end.

5 The Suffering Servant

Pray Psalm 88.1, 2.

O LORD, God of my salvation,
I have cried out day and night before You.
Let my prayer come before You;
Incline Your ear to my cry.

Read Isaiah 50.1-6.

Reflect.

1. In Israel's sense of being separated from God – forsaken and forgotten – who moved? How?
2. The Servant is coming to restore Israel. How does He do that (vv. 4-6)?

Meditate.

The people of Judah and Jerusalem were feeling abandoned by God, as if He had divorced them (v. 1) or passed them along to one of His “creditors” in payment of a debt (v. 1). The ludicrousness of such possibilities is patent, and Isaiah puts it to the people as such.

Still, they know they are separated from God, because they are going into captivity in Babylon. But whose fault is that (v. 1)? Their own sins have cut them off from God. That being the case, only the removal of those sins will suffice to restore His people to Him. And this is a work only God can accomplish (vv. 2, 3). He called them to repentance, but no one heard, and no one answered His call. But He Who rules the vast cosmos is able to do what hardened sinners cannot. Israel's time of captivity in Babylon will be a *type* of that removal of their sins, but the full accomplishment of that great work must await the coming of the Servant.

The Servant comes to speak God's truth to His people, to strengthen and refresh them day by day (v. 4). He hears the Lord and does not rebel or turn away from God's Word – unlike Israel (v. 5). Sounds like that should be about all it takes to restore God's people to Him?

But no, the Servant must take the punishment of those sins upon Himself (v. 6), and all the shame and sorrow that go with them. Israel's suffering in Babylon is a type of the suffering of God's coming Anointed One. As they suffer, they must remember God's Servant, and look forward to the day when, by His suffering, all their sins will be at last removed.

Prepare.

1. What can keep us from hearing God as He calls us to repentance?
2. Why can we not pay for our own sins? Why does God have to pay for our sins?
3. Our sins caused the suffering of God's Servant. How often do you reflect on that, and with what result?

“The Lord God has given me the tongue of the doctrine.” These words refer to Christ as well, who preached his new doctrine to all the peoples. And therefore all the peoples listened to it and were converted. Ephrem the Syrian (fl. 363-373 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 50.4

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for bearing my sins, taking my punishment, and redeeming me so that I...

Pray Psalm 88.

As you pray this psalm, recall all the ways Jesus suffered for your sins. Thank and praise Him for each one, and renew your commitment to hear and obey His Word.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 88 (*Picardy: Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*)

Lord of my salvation, hear me, as cry by night and day;
Hear my plea, O Lord, bend near me; O, receive me when I pray!
For my soul is weak and weary, and my life draws near the grave.

Like a person thought to be dying, like a man whose strength is gone;
Like one with the slain now lying, like a dead and buried one:
For Your mercy I am sighing, cut off from Your hand and gone.

In the lowest pit You have set me, in a deep and darkening place;
All Your holy wrath has beset me, overwhelming me in waves.
All my former friends forget me; on me now they look with hate.

All day long I cry in vain, Lord, as my eye is wasting away.
Can a dead man sing Your praise, Lord? Can I testify from the grave?
Will I tell Your love again, Lord? Will I sing Your pow'r and grace?

Morning comes and, Lord, I am crying: Why do You my soul reject?
From my youth have I been dying; pain and terrors sore afflict.
Fear and anger, sorely trying, overwhelm, destroy, reject.

All day long my foes surround me, like a threat'ning, rising flood.
Circling round they sought and found me, taking from me all that is good.
Friend and lover gone, they hound me – all my friends in darkness stood.

6 The Lord God Will Help

Pray Psalm 46.1.

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.

Read Isaiah 50.7-11.

Reflect.

1. The Servant is commenting on His work in this passage. How does He conceive that work? What is His work?
2. What is the state of those who do not obey the voice of the Servant?

Meditate.

In this passage, the Servant is the primary speaker. In verses 7-9 He is contemplating His work. It will be difficult, but He knows that the Lord will help Him (vv. 7, 9). There is the danger of being disgraced (v. 7), of coming into conflict with an enemy (v. 8), and of coming under condemnation (v. 9). We can see in all these glimpses of the work of Christ: His passion, the shame of the cross, His struggle with the devil (“Let him come near Me”), and His bearing the wrath of God.

But the Servant has set His face “like flint” to go forward in His appointed work (v. 7, cf. Lk. 9.51). And whoever fears the Lord will listen to the voice of the Servant (v. 10). Who are they who do not? Those who walk in darkness and have no light (this should not be in the form of a question; in the Hebrew, there is no *be* interrogative beginning the sentence). To hear the voice of the Servant is to “trust in the name of the LORD” and to “rely upon his God” (v. 10).

Verse 11 probably describes a pagan safety ritual; all who choose this route rather than trusting in the Lord and listening to the voice of the Servant “shall lie down in torment” (v. 11).

It's not hard to see in this passage the close connection between the Servant and the LORD, and the voice of the Servant and the fear of the LORD.

Prepare.

1. What kinds of rituals do people turn to in order to ensure their safety and wellbeing, rather than to trust in the Lord?
2. How would you summarize the work of the Servant, as it is hinted at in this passage? Do you see how this matches up with the work of Christ? Explain.
3. How can you know when you fear the Lord?

For the railings, and insults, and reproaches and gibes inflicted by enemies and their plots are compared with a worn-out garment and moth-eaten wool when God says, “Do not fear the reproach of people, neither be afraid of their revilings, for they shall grow old as does a garment, and like moth-eaten wool so shall they be consumed.” Therefore, let none of these things that are happening trouble [you], but stop asking for the aid of this or that person and running after shadows (for such are human alliances); persistently call on Jesus, whom [you serve] ... and in a moment of time all these evils will be dissolved. John Chrysostom (344-407 AD), Letter to Olympias 7.2

You are my help, O Lord, in all my struggles and trials, so help me always to...

Pray Psalm 46.

What's troubling you today? Where are you tempted to seek refuge, other than in the Lord? As you pray this psalm, let it steer you into the safe harbor of our strong and loving Savior.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 46 (*St. Chrysostom: We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought*)

God is our refuge and our strength; He is our help in times of need.

Thus though the earth beneath us should change, the sea consume the mountain range;
Waters may roar with raging speed; yet God will rescue us at length.

God's everlasting, joyous grace gladdens the city where He dwells.

Safely in Him, we will not be moved; when morning dawns, His love will be proved.

Fears and distresses Jesus dispels for His beloved, chosen race.

Kingdoms arise and rage and roar, threat'ning the earth with sore distress;

Nations may fall, earth melt away, His Word is yet our hope and stay.

God is among us, ever to bless; He is our stronghold evermore.

Come see the works of God's Right Hand! He breaks the nations of the earth,

Shatters their foolish weapons and pride, sets all their sinful strength aside;

Them He will show His infinite worth as they before His judgment stand.

Rest in the Lord and be at peace, all who are mired in sore travail:

Lift up our God, praise Jesus our Lord; proclaim to all the earth His Word!

God is our stronghold, never to fail: thus may our hope and joy increase!

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7 Redemption through Suffering

Pray Psalm 118.1.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever.

Review Isaiah chapters 49, 50.

Reflect.

1. How do you understand the salvation God promises to bring to His people in these chapters? How much does it encompass?
2. What is the role of God's Servant in securing this salvation for His people?

Meditate.

In these chapters Isaiah brings the comfort of the Lord to His people by pointing them beyond the work of Cyrus, His anointed one, to the greater deliverance and salvation which will come by His anointed Servant. God is bringing such a great salvation to His people that their old tribal boundaries will not be able to contain all the offspring who are to be born. Even the Gentiles will be included by the light and salvation of the Lord. The whole earth will rejoice in the salvation of the Lord when the Servant comes to accomplish it.

God is sending His Servant as a covenant to His people, to deliver them into His glorious salvation, and thereby to bring great glory to Himself. He has not forgotten His people, who are about to be carried away captive into Babylon, and He will never forsake them. Their suffering is a type of the suffering God's Servant will endure as He accomplishes the redemption and deliverance God is preparing for His people.

The people of Isaiah's day must put aside all their idols, repent of all their sins, submit to the Lord's chastening under the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, wait on the Lord, and keep focused on the promised deliverance of the Lord, of which Cyrus will provide a type, and the suffering Servant will achieve the reality.

All who fear the Lord and trust in Him will find peace in His promised salvation, even though the fulfillment of that promise is yet many years in the future.

Prepare.

1. God wanted His people to find peace in the midst of suffering by clinging to the promise of a great future deliverance. Isn't this what He also wants for us? Explain.
2. The people of Israel would have to suffer in Babylon before Cyrus would come to deliver them back to Jerusalem. The work of the coming Servant would be similar to this. In what ways?
3. What's your primary takeaway from Isaiah 49 and 50?

*"The Lord gives me a tongue, that I may know when I ought to speak." And his words, "You are my God, depart not from me," teach us to put all our trust in God, the Creator of all things, and to seek aid and salvation from him alone; and not to imagine, as other [people] do, that we can attain salvation by means of birth, or wealth, or power or wisdom. Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165 AD), *Dialog with Trypho* 102*

Show me the greatness of Your salvation, Lord, and help me today to...

Pray Psalm 118.

Praise the Lord for His glorious salvation, gained by the sacrifice of Christ, Who has become the Cornerstone of His Church.

Sing to the Lord.

Psalm 118 (*St. George's Windsor: Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*)

Thank the Lord, His love endures! All to whom His love is sure,
all who fear Him day by day, let them thanks and praise now say!
Out of my distress I cry; He will hear me from on high.
He will free me from all fear. What can man do to me here?

For the Lord stands next to me; He will give me victory!
Over all who hate my life I will triumph through the strife!
In His grace I refuge find; in His steadfast love so kind.
Trust not princes, trust not men – Christ shall be our haven then!

Praise the Lord, in whose great Name all His foes are brought to shame!
Though they swarmed on every side, in God's Name He dashed their pride!
Like a fire His judgment goes to consume His ardent foes;
Though they pushed against Him hard, He was rescued by the Lord.

In the Savior we are strong! He is all our strength and song!
To His grace now raise your voice; in His righteousness rejoice!
For the Lord does valiantly; we shall live eternally.
Praise His works with all your breath, you whom He redeems from death.

All who know Christ's righteousness His great Name now thank and bless!
Though His gate full righteous is, He our saving mercy is.
Cast aside and left alone, Christ is now our Cornerstone!
God has made His Son and Word our salvation: Praise the Lord!

Blessed are they who in His Name come and Jesus' grace proclaim.
God His light upon us shines in the Savior's sacrifice.
Praise and thanks to You, O Lord; we extol Your holy Word!
Thanks to You for You are good! Thanks to our great loving God!

The Coming Servant (3): Isaiah 49, 50

Questions for reflection or discussion

1. These chapters encourage the people of God to focus on the far horizon of their salvation. Explain.
2. How would the coming Servant of the Lord be a “covenant” for the people of Israel? What was involved in entering a covenant relationship with the Lord? Who would be included in that covenant?
3. How great – how all-encompassing, how powerful, how glorious – would the salvation be that the Servant would bring? How do you experience this great salvation?
4. The people of Israel could know peace by hoping for the promised salvation of the Lord. In what ways is our experience of trusting the Lord like this?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from Isaiah 46-48? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.