

Sermon Notes & References
Messiah, Suffering Servant
Isaiah 49:1-7
June 19, 2011

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^A Isaiah 48:22, 57:21
^B Isaiah 44:2, Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:21, Luke 1:31
^C Hebrews 4:12-13, Revelation 1:16, 2 Kings 13:16, Psalm 64:7, Zechariah 9:14, Galatians 4:4-5
^D John 13:31, 32; 14:13; 15:18; 16:14; 17:1, 4, 5, 10, 22, 24; Ephesians 1:3-4

^E Matthew 27:42
^F Matthew 15:24, Hebrews 1:3, Romans 11:5
^G Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:20, John 1:9
^H Philippians 2:10-11

A. Introduction

1. From Background to Foreground – Context

a. The book of Isaiah divides naturally into 3 sections

(A) in Chapters 1-35, Assyria is the major threat facing God’s people, Judah; with prophecies about Assyria and other nations; as well as of the true King, Messiah

(B) Chapters 36-39 is an historical transition recording the deliverance from Assyria and the prophecy of the coming threat of Babylon and Judah’s exile

(C) Chapters 40-66 tell of deliverance by Cyrus from exile in Babylon; and deliverance by Messiah from sin

b. we have just completed chapters 40-48 in this last section which ends with these words, “**There is no peace for the wicked,’ says the Lord.**” (Isaiah 48:22). In the foreground of those chapters is the work of God’s servant, Cyrus, King of Persia; but never far in the background is the work of God’s Elect Servant, Messiah, the Christ

c. today we begin the subsection of chapters 49-56 which also end with the words, “**There is no peace,’ says my God, ‘for the wicked.’**” (Isaiah 57:21). In these chapters, God’s Elect Servant, Messiah, the Christ is front and centre, in the foreground – He is Messiah, Suffering Servant

2. The News Broadcast 1a

a. through the lips and pen of Isaiah, Messiah Himself now speaks: **Listen to Me, O islands, And pay attention, you peoples from afar....**

b. the term ‘broadcast’ was originally used to describe the casting of seed in broad swaths over a very wide field; in the early days, radio engineers used it to describe the broad dissemination of radio signals

c. Messiah’s words are broadcast here

d. the term ‘isles’ or ‘islands’ in Scripture meant first those places that boarded on the sea coast, and then the places that you had to cross the sea to reach, being at first islands as we know them, and then those countries beyond the sea

e. hence, the people addressed here are not just those of a neighbouring country, nor even those merely

beyond Babylon, but those beyond the sea: really all the earth

- f. for the One speaking is the One who has authority to give a command to which the whole world must listen, and words to which all must pay attention; that can be ignored only at one's own peril
- g. Messiah is telling about His coming and His ministry

B. Messiah's Coming 49:1b-3

1. His Humanity 1b

- a. ... **The Lord called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me.**
- b. As Cyrus was called by God from afar to conquer Babylon and to deliver Judah, so Messiah, too is called, given His vocation by the Lord, the God of Israel
- c. some rabbis contend, using verse 3, that it is the nation of Israel personified who is speaking. It is true that '**called Me from the womb**' could be thus interpreted. The term womb is used of this nation, as in Isaiah 44:2, "**Thus says the Lord who made you And formed you from the womb, who will help you, 'Do not fear, O Jacob My servant; And you Jeshurun whom I have chosen.'**" But the nation's mother, a pagan concept, is never used in such references.
- d. moreover, Jacob was a grown man before, after struggling with God, when God, not his mother, named him Israel
- e. so Messiah was to be born of a mother – promised from the first to be of the seed of the woman, Eve (Gen 3:15) – truly human; 'very man of very man'
- f. but this calling and naming from before Messiah's birth shows it as a very special birth, the accomplishment of the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, '**Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.**' – '**God with us**'
- g. and again, to both Mary and Joseph, another name for this very special child was given: 'Jesus' (Mat. 1:21, Lk. 1:31) – the one who shall save His people from their sins
- h. which brings us to ...

2. His Deity 2

- a. **He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver.**

- b. in the equipping of Messiah there are given to Him the sword and the arrow which can only be wielded by God
- c. it is the sharp sword of His mouth – that the word which Messiah speaks is the word that will be accomplished
- d. it is the sword of His mouth spoken of in
 - (A) Hebrews 4:12-13: 'For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.', and,
 - (B) Revelation 1:16: 'In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.', describing Christ, the Son of God
- e. and Messiah is the arrow of the Lord
 - (A) an arrow that speaks of deliverance – 2 Kings 13:17
 - (B) an arrow that speaks of punishment and judgement – Psalm 64:7, Zechariah 9:14
- f. Messiah is divine in His nature as well as His equipping
- g. He has not yet been born; and yet here He speaks
- h. He has not yet entered into the world, but even at that time He is intimately present with Lord
 - (A) He is the sword concealed in God's hand, ready to be stretched out and sent forth
 - (B) He is the arrow hidden in God's quiver, at hand to be sent shooting forth to bring deliverance
 - (C) 'But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.' Gal. 4:4-5)
- i. in Jesus of Nazareth, the humanity and deity of Messiah were united in order to accomplish ...

3. His Ultimate Objective 3

- a. He said to Me, 'You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom I will show My glory.'
- b. in our human, self-centred way, we as Christians often tend to see Messiah's – Christ's – ultimate objective as being the salvation of man from sin; his deliverance from hell

- c. but in John 13-17, the comforting words of Jesus as He partakes of the last supper with His disciples and then talks to them – and to His Father God – over and over His discussion turns to the God’s glory: that He has glorified the Father; that the Father glorify the Son; that disciples glorify God – Messiah’s ultimate purpose is God’s glory
- d. this Servant; this Messiah; is named Israel; a few moments ago I mentioned how some of the rabbis interpreted this. Let me share with you a slide that I showed you when we started this series, and, I believe, at one other time since.
 - (A) here you see the constitution over time of God’s Elect, His Chosen People, according to His eternal purposes,
 - (B) first Abraham, and then down through Jacob or Israel, then the true remnant in Israel until we come to the cross, where Israel – as in this verse – is found in but one Man, the obedient Servant, Jesus Christ, dying on the cross, with all of His disciples having fled
 - (C) since that time, God’s elect (chosen) are those who through faith are in Christ: Ephesians 1:3-4, ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love’ ... for what ultimate objective? ...verse 6: to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.’
- e. that leads us to ...

- C. Messiah’s Ministry. 49:4-7
 - 1. His Apparent Failure 4
 - a. But I said, ‘I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity; Yet surely the justice due to Me is with the Lord, And My reward with My God.’
 - b. at the beginning of Christ’s ministry, the people flocked to hear Him, especially in Galilee, as crowds of 5,000 and 4,000 men were miraculously fed by Him
 - c. but as the implications of His teaching sunk in, the message of self-denial for the sake of Christ; the need for a heart change in reality, not a lip change in pretense; disciples drifted away – only 120 were in the room at Pentecost
 - d. from a human standpoint, it appeared as though He were but another passing popular figure

- e. thus as He hung upon the cross, the religious rulers mocked him, saying, 'He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe in Him.' (Matthew 27:42)
 - f. yet, Messiah states that what was an historical fact was not spiritual reality: when the work of the cross was done, His ministry finished, Jesus the Messiah would be vindicated
 - g. God would pronounce justice – right – on behalf of the Lamb of God who bore the sins of mankind – God would reward His faithful Servant and Son
 - h. let us look at that ministry for a moment; in the gospel period He described it as being
2. 'Unto the Lost Sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 15:24) 5
- a. And now says the Lord, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honoured in the sight of the Lord, And My God is My strength), « – if anyone wonders why the AV says 'Israel be not gathered,' ask me after and I will try to explain; the NKJV has it right: no 'not' »
 - b. why is Messiah vindicated?
 - (A) though the religious rulers mocked, in God's eyes He is honoured and acclaimed; so that 'He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;' (Hebrews 1:3)
 - (B) by the strength of God He finished His work
 - c. yes; only eleven of the twelve disciples were true
 - d. yes; there were only 120 in the upper room awaiting the Promise of the Holy Spirit
 - e. yes; only about 500 saw the resurrected Saviour
 - f. yet from these, there emerged from the Jews, first 3,000 then thousands, forming a 'remnant according to God's gracious choice.' (Romans 11:5), the beginning of the church of Jesus Christ
 - g. but this did not end Messiah's ministry, for after being raised from the dead He gave the command ...
3. 'Go Ye into All the World' (Mark 16:15, AV) 6
- a. to which He attached the promise, 'and lo, I am with you always' (Matthew 28:20, AV), showing that this too, is part of Messiah's ministry, although through His chosen ones
 - b. here is prophesied: "He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes

of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.'

- c. if the previous verse tells of the gospels, then this verse tells of the Acts of the apostles
- d. the ministry to the Jews was not a small thing; it was, and it continues to be a great labour
- e. but Jesus the Messiah had a larger honour, a broader task – that of the evangelization of the world
- f. Israel had had the light – the message of the one true God – from their start, but hid that light under a bushel on the supposition that it was a privilege that was only for them
- g. Messiah, the true Israel and true Light, 'There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.' (John 1:9) – sends that light out into the world of darkness – through His disciples; through you; through me

4. His Ultimate Triumph 7

- a. 'Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One, To the despised One, To the One abhorred by the nation, To the Servant of rulers, "Kings will see and arise, Princes will also bow down, Because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You.'"
- b. we will speak to this verse further come September, when, Lord willing, we will recommence this series from Isaiah
- c. but just note that this Jesus, whom some Jews call 'Tolvi,' 'the hanged one,' rejected by His own, bonded and bound by both Jewish and Gentile rulers and sent to His death
- d. one day will be seen by the kings of this world who will arise from their thrones to honour His presence, and by the important people of this world who will fall to the faces in worship – 'so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.' (Philippians 2:10-11)
- e. that in Messiah's ultimate triumph, Messiah's ultimate objective is achieved

D. Conclusion

- 1. let us then learn these lessons from these verses
 - a. Israel is the first born of the household of faith and it is the responsibility of the Church of Christ – of us – to engage in bringing the gospel message to the Jews

- b. our world – the 'Gentile world' lives in pagan darkness, and only the message of Jesus, Messiah, the one true Light, can bring salvation from sin to lost mankind
- c. and as Greg said last week, only in Christ can true unity and peace exist with both God and man; are you in Christ? have you received His offered salvation through faith?

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