

**CALVARY PANDAN
BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 49

ISAIAH

CHAPTER 49

Theme: "The LORD will Always
Remain Faithful!"

THEME VERSES

Isaiah 49:15-16 (KJV) "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. **16** Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of *my* hands; thy walls *are* continually before me."

INTRODUCTION

Christ is the main person in this chapter. This is the traditional view in understanding this chapter. The evidence inside this chapter speaks for itself. It cannot refer to Isaiah who is the speaker as verses like verse 3 and verse 5 speak of "Thou art my servant, O Israel" and "yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD" respectively. Isaiah will not indulge in such self glory.

Here, God turns His attention to the LORD and His relationship with Israel and the Gentiles. It is a sudden switch from focussing on Babylon and

Assyria, yet when we look at the prophetic genre, this manner of writing is quite common for one theme to shift to another that is very different from the chapters before it. Those who are familiar with epistles or narrative might find this manner of writing a little disconcerting. But this is the way of prophetic genre and interpreters have to be aware of this important distinction in order to ensure right understanding of the prophetic genre found in many portions of the Bible.

Israel will be chastised as a disappointment to the LORD who had entrusted Israel with the privilege of honouring God by being a godly and holy witness. However, Israel failed the LORD over and over again. The LORD said that He will turn His attention to the Gentiles to raise up His witness if Israel keeps on failing and disappointing the LORD. Israel will not be completely forsaken by the LORD even when Israel is replaced by the Gentiles as His witness on earth. The LORD will never forsake Israel, the chosen nation through whom the Messiah will ultimately come to be the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Like a woman who can never forget her sucking child, the LORD will never forget Israel.

Israel has failed the LORD and forgotten the LORD many times by her years and generations of idolatry. Yet the LORD will always remain faithful regardless of how unfaithful Israel has been to the LORD. Israel must not take the privilege of bearing a witness for God on earth for granted as if God will always let Israel be His only

witness on earth regardless of how she lived her life. God can and will replace Israel in the future. But as far as God's plan of salvation is concerned, the Messianic lineage will be preserved and protected by God until the first coming of Christ becomes a reality. The many promises of God pertaining to the first coming of Christ cannot fail! God has placed His name on the line when He made the covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15.

OUTLINE

1. Christ Laboured in Vain In Israel! (vv.1-6);
2. Christ will Raise up Gentiles (vv. 7-12);
3. Christ will Comfort Israel! (vv. 13-17);
4. Christ will Deliver Israel (vv. 18-26).

COMMENTARY

Christ Laboured in Vain In Israel! – 49:1-6

The work of God in Israel began with Abraham. He was the seed of the nation of Israel. Israel has been tasked with the privilege of becoming the only nation designed by God and cared for by God in a manner never seen before in all the world. It was a nation of light. The LORD placed His home and witness in Israel. He walked with Israel and was literally in Israel. Israel had to be that light that shines forth this honour and privilege of being called the people of God.

The LORD Jesus Christ was the one Israel had to tell the world of. Appealing to the rest of the world with the truth of Christ being called and chosen by God from His mother's womb to be the Saviour of the world, the LORD testified against Israel's stubborn and unrepentant testimony and her failure to do what is right. Here the LORD made clear His disapproval through Christ.

Israel was the servant of Christ. In her, Christ was to be glorified. Israel was to live a holy and exemplary life as clearly described and ordered by God in the Pentateuch. Israel was not allowed to live any way she likes. Her role as God's witness was purely spiritual. She points people to the one living and true God. Israel is not allowed to chart her own destiny or course of existence like other nations of the world. Other nations exist according to the whims and fancies of their leaders but not Israel.

Christ had been working in and through Israel for all of Israel's existence. However, it has been in vain. Israel had failed the LORD. The fault lies with Israel entirely and not with Christ. Christ had done all that the heavenly Father had sent Him to do. Even in times when Israel failed the LORD repeatedly and had to be exiled, Christ will always be and has been glorified in the eyes of the LORD. The LORD's ultimately goal and plan for salvation will still come to pass and Israel will still be a light to the Gentiles and through her the LORD Jesus Christ will be born.

Christ will Raise up Gentiles – 49:7-12

The faithfulness of Christ is persistent and immutable. It will accomplish all that the LORD has promised. Nothing will fail. Man may despise Him and mock Him and all the appearance of failure might be seen on earth as He works through the broken witness of Israel but ultimately all that the LORD does and has promised will be clearly seen and the glory of God would continue to be the final outcome.

Kings and princes shall arise and worship Christ. These have to refer to the Gentiles as the plural is used here. The faithfulness of the LORD is the key in the fulfillment of God's prophecies and not Israel's. The world will come to know Christ through Israel. This has always been the plan of God and this will surely become a reality as stated in these verses.

These believers will come from all over the world. Jews and Gentiles alike will become the people of God. They will come from far; from the north and from the west even from the Land of Sinim. Sinim refers to China.

Christ will Comfort Israel! – 49:13-17

Even in the midst of rebuke and chastisement, the LORD's hand of restoration is stretched forth to Israel. This was due entirely to the mercies of the LORD. When the LORD stretches His hand to Israel it is always based upon His mercy. Sinful man does not deserve the LORD's help and blessing. Zion murmured and complained that the LORD had

forsaken and forgotten her. But the LORD never will. The discipline of the LORD must not be equated with not caring and the chastisement must not be seen as having forgotten. If the LORD did not discipline Israel when she sinned then the LORD does not care. It is because the LORD cares that He disciplines! Israel misunderstood the meaning of a covenantal relationship.

The LORD used the mother's love for her baby as an illustration of His love and care for Israel. (see verses 15-16). The LORD said that perhaps even a mother might forget her sucking son but the LORD will never forget Israel. God has graven Israel upon the palms of His hands. It is sad that some pastors would use this to justify Christian having tattoos on their bodies. This is figure of speech that was not meant to be understood literally. God is Spirit, He has no hands. Such anthropomorphic terms are common throughout the Bible. These terms are used by God to help man understand Him better. Tattooing is marring the body and it is expressly forbidden in the Bible by God. **Leviticus 19:28** (KJV) "Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I *am* the LORD."

These persecutors of the people of God will soon come to an end. In fact based upon the theology of the Bible, chastisement from God ends the moment repentance begins. There are only two kinds of persecutions in the believer's life. The first is to chastise or discipline the believer

because he has gone astray. The LORD does this because of His love for His child. He wants the child to stop sinning and return back to Him in holiness and repentance. The second is to grow the faith of the believer to the next level. This is the only way to learn patience and trust in the LORD that the faith of the believer will not only be real in times of plenty but also in times of adversity. The most clear cut and well known example is that of Job. Job said in **Job 42:5** (KJV) "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." Job's walk with the LORD increased tremendously through his time of testing.

Christ will Deliver Israel – 49:18-26

When in trials and distress, it is normal and common, even for Israel to feel that God has deserted them. But the LORD's assurance to Israel is that Israel will face the most devastating time of their lives as they were sent into exile by God. They would feel totally destroyed and will never return again as a nation. The superpowers that will occupy the Land of Promise will not relinquish their strangle hold over this piece of prime real estate. Everything will appear hopeless to Israel in exile.

However such myopic perspective of life that is based entirely upon sight rather than faith is not how the LORD works. The LORD has said that Christ would be born an Israelite. This means that the nation of Israel will return and be in existence when it is time for the birth of Christ, which is a certain and absolute future reality.

Israel will find that the narrow strip of land that is Israel will seem to narrow for the many that the LORD will bring back to occupy it one day.

The Gentiles are looking after God's people in distant lands all over the world. When it is time – God's time, these Gentiles will do the will of God and send God's people back home to the Promised Land. Kings and queens will be like nursing fathers and mothers to Israel. They will bow themselves to Israel in the future. This is how powerful the LORD is! Israel and all of God's people must realize the awesome power of God almighty forever more. This will give them the right perspective of life. They will not live like defeated foes but as conquering saints in Christ Jesus! Amen.

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Isaiah 49:1-12

TUESDAY: Isaiah 49:13-26

WEDNESDAY: Isaiah 49:1-26

THURSDAY: Isaiah 49:1-26

FRIDAY: Isaiah 49:1-26

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think that local churches today are like the Israel of old, thinking that God will not remove them as His witnesses on earth regardless of how they have

misrepresented Him? Do you think Pandan has misrepresented Christ or is misrepresenting Christ today by her witness?

2. How does the church glorify Christ today? Please explain.

3. If the LORD is not glorified in the eyes of man today would you consider that the LORD is a failure? For example when a sinner rejects Christ and dies in his sin, would you consider Christ a failure?

4. If God is glorified ultimately but is not glorified immediately or presently would you say that God has failed? Is the glory of God a continuous affair or is it only an "end game" affair?

5. Do you think that church discipline is important? When a local church strays away, how does the LORD discipline? Please explain and cite current examples.

6. Is there any other way than the way of trial for faith in the LORD to grow? Please explain.

7. Do you feel like a defeated foe when you live as a Christian every day?

8. What lessons have you learnt from this chapter about God's Word and about yourself?
