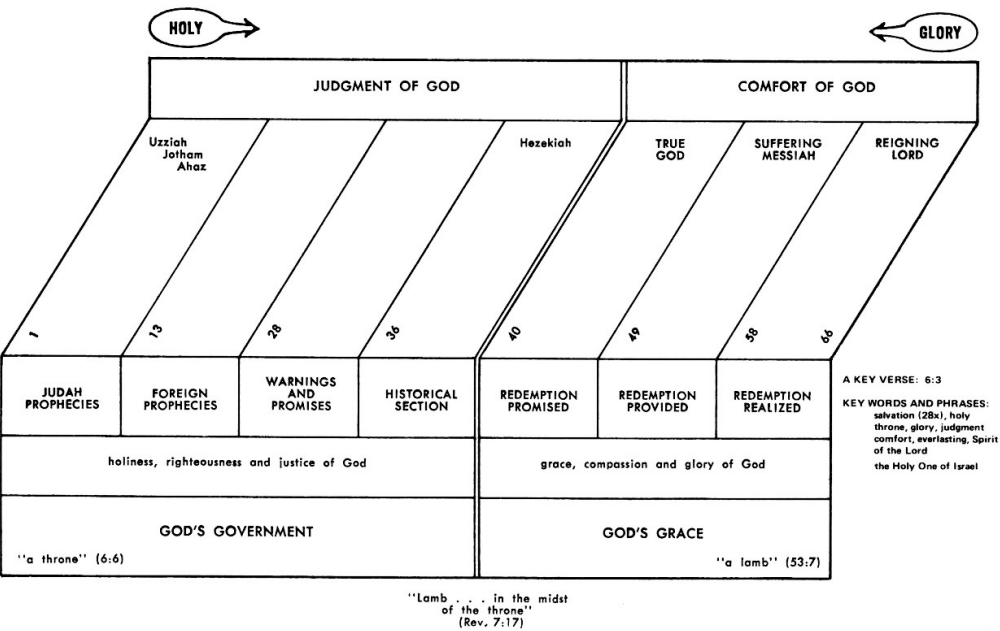


# Isaiah 49 Commentary



**NOTE:** This Verse by Verse Commentary page is part of an ongoing project to add notes to each verse of the Bible. Therefore many verses do not yet have notes, but if the Lord tarries and gives me breath, additions will follow in the future. The goal is to edify and equip you for the work of service (Eph 4:12-13-[note](#)) that the Lord God might be glorified in your life and in His Church. Amen (Isa 61:3b, Mt 5:16-[note](#))



ISAIAH						
("Jehovah is Salvation")						
<a href="#">See Excellent Timeline for Isaiah - page 39</a>						
JEHOVAH'S Judgment & Character (Isaiah 1-39)				JEHOVAH'S Comfort & Redemption (Isaiah 40-66)		
Uzziah Jotham Ahaz			Hezekiah's Salvation & Blessing	True God	Suffering Messiah	Reigning Lord
1-12	13-27	28-35	36-39	40-48	49-57	58-66
Prophecies Regarding Judah & Jerusalem Is 1:1-12:6	Prophecies Against the Nations	Warnings & Promises	Historical Section	Redemption Promised: Israel's Deliverance	Redemption Provided: Israel's Deliverer	Redemption Realized: Israel's Glorious Future
Prophetic			Historic	Messianic		

Holiness, Righteousness & Justice of Jehovah	Grace, Compassion & Glory of Jehovah
God's Government "A throne" Is 6:1	God's Grace "A Lamb" Is 53:7
Time 740-680BC	

Isaiah 49:1 **Listen** to Me, O islands, And **pay attention**, you peoples from afar. The LORD called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me.

- **Listen**: Isa 41:1 42:1-4,12 45:22 51:5 60:9 66:19 Zep 2:11
- **Pay attention**: Isa 55:3 57:19 Eph 2:17 Heb 12:25
- **The LORD**: Isa 49:5 Ps 71:5,6 Jer 1:5 Mt 1:20,21 Lu 1:15,31-31 2:10,11 Joh 10:36 Ga 1:15 1Pe 1:20

## MESSIAH CALLED TO A WORLDWIDE MISSION

As you read this section keep in mind that God's **Servant** (cf Isa 49:3, 5), Who is the Messiah (see notes below), is the Speaker in Isaiah 49:1-5. This is not the nation of Israel! Then in Isaiah 49:6 God the Father addresses His Son, the Messiah.

**Moody Bible Commentary** summarizes Isaiah 49:1-13

1. Depicts the Servant's call to go to Israel (Isa 49:1-4)
2. Reveals the expansion of the Servant's ministry to the Gentile nations (Isa 49:5-7)
3. Indicates the Servant's ultimate deliverance of Israel (Isa 49:8-13).

Paul Apple outlines this chapter (and includes as part of this pericope the section from Isaiah 50:3)

### Isaiah 49:1-57:21 Servant of the Lord-Suffering Precedes Glory

1. (Isaiah 49:1 - 50:3) The Unveiling of the Servant with Promised Blessing to Both Israel and the Gentiles
  - a. (Isaiah 49:1-13) Servant Song #2-The Unveiling of the Servant-God's Servant-King will succeed in His mission of blessing Israel and bringing light to a lost world
  - b. (Isaiah 49:14-50:3) **God has not abandoned the nation Israel**
2. (Isaiah 50:4-11) Servant Song #3 -- The Marks of an Obedient Servant -- The victorious Servant/Disciple has God as his helper in effective communication and persevering commitment

**John Phillips** has a broader outline from Exploring the Scriptures

### Isaiah's Prophetic Stature (40-66)

1. Judah's Miseries (40-48)
2. Judah's Messiah (49-57)
3. Judah's Millennium (58-66)

### Hannah's Bible Outlines

#### The person of the deliverer (redemption) (Isa 49:1-57:21)

1. The mission of the servant (Isa 49:1-26)
  - a. The commission of the servant (Isa 49:1-6)
  - b. The humiliation and exaltation of the servant (Isa 49:7)
  - c. The restoration by the servant (Isa 49:8-13)
  - d. The comfort of the servant (Isa 49:14-26)
    1. **His faithfulness to Israel** (Isa 49:14-21)
    2. **His judgment on Israel's foes** (Isa 49:22-26)
2. The submission of the servant (Isa 50:1-11)

- a. The bill of divorcement (Isa 50:1-3)
- b. The humiliation and suffering of the servant (Isa 50:4-11)

Here are several comments on the **context** of Isaiah 49...

**Teed** introduces Isaiah 49 - God's Servant, a Light to the Gentiles - Ever feel like giving up? Do you think that after 70 years in captivity in a foreign land, people, specifically the Jews, would feel like giving up? God understood this, and we will find that much of Isaiah 49 is aimed at giving the people encouragement so that they would not give up. Beginning in Isaiah 48, we saw how Israel had stubbornly resisted the true God, preferring to worship idols of their own creation instead. This blasphemy forced God to defend His name by sending Israel into a "furnace of affliction" (Isaiah 48:1-11). Yet all this was leading up to yet another revelation of God's grace. God gives them new hope in Isa 48:12-16, expresses His longing for Israel in Isa 48:17-19, and dramatically announces the good news of coming redemption in Isa 48:20-22.

**Now in Isaiah 49** the true Servant of the Lord, the Messiah, Jesus, steps forward. He tells of His mission to Israel and to all humanity (Isa 49:1-7). Jesus repeats the promises God made to Him and to Israel (Isa 49:8-13). Israel may feel God has forsaken her, but God can no more abandon the Jews than a mother can forget the baby at her breast (Isa 49:14-21). God will restore and exalt His chosen people. He will punish their enemies, for God is the Savior and Redeemer of His people (Isa 49:22-26). (Ron Teed Commentary – [Isaiah 49 Commentary](#))

**F. C. Jennings** observes this chapter "brings us to the very heart of this book of Isaiah, to the very heart of 'the Salvation of God', nor surely do we need to know whom we may expect to find there!"

**Gilbrant** - Isaiah begins a new section where the Servant of the Lord is exalted. He will bring a greater deliverance than the deliverance from Egypt and from Babylon. He will actually bring a deliverance from sin. Nothing more is said of Babylon or Cyrus, or of the conflict with pagan gods and occult practices. The Servant-Messiah begins with another court scene that calls on all the peoples of the world to pay attention. What he is about to tell is of extreme importance to the Gentiles. The Messiah is here in view as the head or representative of ideal Israel. He is called from the womb (see Matt. 1:20-23; Luke 1:31ff). (The Complete Biblical Library – Isaiah)

**Constable** sets the context - Anticipation of salvation Isa 49:1-52:12 - This first segment focuses on the anticipation of salvation. Israel needed to believe the promises of God concerning the coming salvation. The possibility of a restored relationship between Israel and her God becomes increasingly clear as this section unfolds. Likewise, the cosmic dimension of this salvation becomes increasingly obvious. The section reaches its climax with the announcement that God has won victory and the people are free (Isa 52:7-12).

**Listen to Me, O islands, And pay attention, you peoples from afar.** - Who is speaking? From the context this is the Messiah, Jesus Christ, addressing this message to the entire world. His message is an exhortation which is universal in scope, which as we shall see involves the Servant's mission is also has worldwide ramifications. He begins by teaching the crucial doctrine of the incarnation. He is teaching that He will come to earth as a Man, born of a woman (See Mt 1:20-21, Mk 1:10-11, Mk 9:7).

**Barnes on islands** - This word properly means **islands**...But the word also is used to denote maritime countries; countries that were situated on sea-coasts, or the regions beyond sea. The word is applied, therefore, to the islands of the Mediterranean; to the maritime coasts; and then, also, it comes to be used in the sense of any lands or coasts far remote, or beyond sea (see Ps. 72:10; Isa. 24:15; Jer. 25:22; Da 11:18). Here it is evidently used in the sense of distant nations or lands; the people who were remote from Palestine, and who were the worshippers of idols. The argument is represented as being with them, and they are invited to prepare their minds by suitable reverence for God for the argument which was to be presented.

**Islands** in Isaiah - Isa. 11:11; Isa. 20:6; Isa. 23:2; Isa. 23:6; Isa. 24:15; Isa. 40:15; Isa. 41:1; Isa. 41:5; Isa. 42:4; Isa. 42:10; Isa. 42:12; Isa. 42:15; Isa. 49:1; Isa. 51:5; Isa. 59:18; Isa. 60:9; Isa. 66:19

It is notable that in beginning this last great section of Isaiah, the prophet begins in (Isa 40:1) with the call "Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God." Now in Isaiah 49:1, the "horizons" are enlarged as he now addresses "**O islands...you peoples from afar.**" Yes, the message is primarily intended for Israel, but it is also for the nations, for the entire world as is clearly shown by the words in Isaiah 49:6b ("**So that My salvation shall reach to the end of the world**").

**John Martin on islands...peoples** - The Lord confronts the nations and the **islands** (the remotest places where humans live) face to face in judgment. Of the 15 occurrences of "**islands**" in the Old Testament, 14 are in Isaiah. Together the **islands** and (peoples) suggest all the world's peoples. (BKC)

**Listen** is a frequent call in Isaiah -

Isa. 1:2; Isa. 1:15; Isa. 7:13; Isa. 28:12; Isa. 28:23; Isa. 30:9; Isa. 32:3; Isa. 34:1; Isa. 36:16; Isa. 37:17; Isa. 41:1; Isa. 42:23; Isa. 44:1; Isa. 46:3; Isa. 46:12; Isa. 48:12; Isa. 48:14; Isa. 48:16; Isa. 49:1; Isa. 50:4; Isa. 51:1; Isa. 51:7; Isa. 52:8; Isa. 55:2; Isa. 55:3; Isa. 66:4;

**Pay attention** is less common in Isaiah - Isa. 5:12; Isa. 10:30; Isa. 49:1; Isa. 51:4;

**J Vernon McGee** - Christ is calling upon the nations of the world to hear. He was given the name of Jesus before He was born, and this name is to be proclaimed throughout the world because it is the name of the Savior, and the world needs a Savior.

**The LORD called Me** - This is the Messiah, the Son, describing His calling by God the Father. In short, the Father **predestined** the Servant's ministry.

**Called from the womb** - God's prophet **Micah** tells us He was **called** before, even from **eternity** (ponder that thought - John 3:16 was in the Father's heart in eternity! "How great a love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called children of God" - 1 Jn 3:1+)...

"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, **From the days of eternity.**" (Micah 5:2+)

This reminds us of God's call to His prophet **Jeremiah**

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5)

In the NT **Paul** gives a similar description of himself

But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased (Gal 1:15+)

It strikes me that we have all been called from eternity past, set apart from this world and each given a specific mission to accomplish for our Father. Are you aware of His mission for your life? Are you accomplishing His mission for your life?

This passage parallels Isaiah's earlier prophecy and is clearly a reference to the One born of a virgin **Immanuel-Emmanuel!** Jesus Who from eternity past has always been **God with God**, now becomes **Immanuel-Emmanuel**, **God with us!** Hallelujah!

"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.** (Isaiah 7:14+)

**From the body of My mother He named Me** - Messianic prophecy of Jesus birth and His mother Mary. This prophecy is fulfilled in Luke 1:31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus."

**Keil and Delitzsch** point out that the **mother** is prominent in many of the Messianic prophecies - Ge 3:15+; Isa. 7:14+; Mic. 5:2+; Ps. 22:10

**Isaiah 49:2 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.**

- Zec 9:9 Mt 11:29 Mt 12:16-20 Lu 17:20 2Ti 2:24 1Pe 2:23

**NET** Isaiah 49:2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword, he hid me in the hollow of his hand; he made me like a sharpened arrow, he hid me in his quiver.

## **MESSIAH IS QUALIFIED FOR HIS MISSION OF SALVATION**

**NET Note** - The figurative language emphasizes the servant's importance as the Lord's effective instrument. The servant's mouth, which stands **metonymically** for his words, is compared to a **sharp sword** because he will be an effective spokesman (**ED**: THE SERVANT IS A PROPHET) on God's behalf (see Isa 50:4). The LORD holds His hand on the Servant, ready to draw and use Him at the appropriate time. The Servant is like a sharpened arrow reserved in a quiver for just the right moment.

In Isaiah 49:1 the Servant is called for the Mission. In Isaiah 49:2 He is equipped for the Mission and kept for the Mission.

**J Vernon McGee** - The **sharp sword** that went out of His **mouth** is the Word of God...It is the judgment of the nations by the Word of God.

**Barnes** explains that God the Father "had qualified Him for a convincing and powerful eloquence—for the utterance of words which would penetrate the heart like a sharp sword."

**THOUGHT** - And dear preacher of the Word of God, it follows that His Word proclaimed still has heart piercing power! Are you preaching His Word or your words? Do you select a passage and use it as a "launching pad" to further an agenda, like a building program, etc? If you want to pierce hearts, Preach the Word in season and out (2 Ti 4:2+).

**He has made My mouth like a sharp sword** - **He** who makes His mouth like a sharp sword is Jehovah. This description is never used of nation of Israel. What is this picture? **Mouth** stands for discourse or speaking. A sword speaks of power, in this context power when Jesus speaks - it is pointed, pungent, pithy, probing, pricking, penetrating, powerful, prevailing. John records the reaction of the officers "Never did a man speak the way this man speaks." (Jn 7:46, cf Mt 7:28, Mt 13:54, Lk 19:48+, Jn 7:15) Messiah's incisive words will pierce hearts, even as a sword cuts (cf Peter's words, speaking God's words in Acts 2:37+. When you preach and teach do you do so with God's Word?). Jesus is the Word (Jn 1:1-4+, John 1:14+) and when He speaks His Word is like a sword, even "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph 6:17+).

The writer of Hebrews says that "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. (Heb 4:12-13+)

**Solomon** writes

"The words of wise men are like [goats](#), and masters of these collections are like well-driven nails; they are given by one Shepherd. (MESSIAH, cf Ge 49:24) (Eccl. 12:11)

For those who do not submit when pierced by His words offering redemption, the only alternative is retribution, which John describes at the Messiah's Second Coming as King of kings and Lord of lords in which His "sharp sword" will vanquish ALL His enemies

**From His mouth comes a sharp sword**, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. (Rev. 19:15<sup>+</sup>)

**John** also mentions a similar description of Jesus as He stands in the midst of His Church (an appearance that caused him to fall "at His feet like a dead man" - Rev 1:17)

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. (Rev. 1:16<sup>+</sup>)

**Barnes** - The bold and striking metaphor of the sword and arrow applied to powerful discourse, has been used also by heathen writers with great elegance and force. A similar metaphor occurs frequently in Arabic poetry. 'As arrows his words enter into the heart.' In the passages quoted by Lowth, it is said of Pericles by Aristophanes:

'His powerful speech  
Pierced the hearer's soul, and left behind  
Deep in his bosom its keen point infixt.'

So Pindar, Olym. ii. 160:

'Come on! thy brightest shafts prepare,  
And bend, O Muse, thy sounding bow:  
Say, through what paths of liquid air  
Our arrows shall we throw?'  
WEST.

**In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me** (cf. Ps 17:8; 27:5; 31:20; 64:2; Jer 36:26) The Septuagint translates concealed with [krupto](#) which means literally to keep something from being seen and figuratively from being known. The other meaning of [krupto](#) is preventing someone from being harmed by anything and thus kept safe and protected. And so a believer's life is safe, for our "life is hidden with Christ in God." (Col 3.3+)

**Young** writes "Whether the reference is to protection or to concealment is difficult to determine, and it may be that both are

intended." (The Book of Isaiah – Volume 3)

I agree with **MacArthur** who writes that "Messiah, before His appearing, was hidden with God, ready to be drawn out at the precise moment." (The MacArthur Study Bible)

Paul writes "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)

**And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver**- Messiah is an "**arrow**" in His Father's quiver, ready to shot forth at the proper time.

**Oswalt on arrow...hidden** - Like the sword of his mouth, the arrow of his words is said to be hid. Commentators have been divided over the implications of this idea. Some have emphasized the element of **protection**, while others (e.g., Whybray) have emphasized **hiddenness**. But it seems unnecessary to choose between the two. A number of implications from the metaphor are surely apt: like an arrow, sharpened and polished in the quiver, or a sharp sword resting under the hand, the Servant is available for his master's use at any moment; the weapons are protected from the elements so that they can be most useful; they are out of sight until the right moment for them to be displayed. All of this speaks about utility, preparedness, and effectiveness, the very opposite of a casual or haphazard use of the weapon. (NICOT-Isaiah)(Bold added)

**Gilbrant** - Like a polished arrow He is held close in God's quiver, that is, in intimacy with the Father, and reserved for a future use where He will be effective and irresistible. (Ibid)

**Wiersbe** - All of God's servants should be like prepared weapons. "It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus," wrote Robert Murray McCheyne. "A holy minister [servant] is an awful weapon in the hand of God."(Be Comforted - Isaiah).

While this passage clearly refers to the Servant, the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, the truth is applicable to us who have placed our faith in Him, because by so doing we are IN CHRIST, hidden in Him (Col 3:3+) and so we can sing "Under His Shadow" by M A Spiller...

**"Under His shadow,"** with Christ alone

Here, love He whispers in tenderest tone,  
Treasures unfolding, riches of grace  
Thus for life's battle my soul doth He brace.

**"Under His shadow,"** a near page of life.

Opens before me, apart from the strife  
Oh! will Thou show me Master and King  
How I may glory unto Thee bring!

**"Under His shadow"** may life be passed

Daily and hourly on till the last,  
Then no more shadows, all shall have fled  
When we awake like Jesus our Head.

**Isaiah 49:3 He said to Me, "You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom I will show My glory."**

- Isa 42:1, 43:21, 44:23, 52:13, 53:10 Zec 3:8 Mt 17:5 Lu 2:10-14 John 12:28, Jn 13:31,32, Jn 15:8, Jn 17:1,4 Eph 1:6 Php 2:6-11 1Pe 2:9

## **GOD'S SERVANT "ISRAEL" IS THE MESSIAH**

**He said to Me** - Yahweh addresses the Messiah, His Servant. He refers to Him as Israel, for He was representative of Israel and the fulfillment of all that Israel as God's Chosen People should have been to the heathen world. The Servant Israel will succeed in all the ways that Israel the nation had failed because of her continued rebellion, wanton [whoring](#) and unwavering unfaithfulness to her Husband Yahweh (Isa 54:5, Jer 31:32+). In defense of the fact that this is not the nation of Israel but the Servant (Messiah) is the description that this Servant Israel is "abhorred by the nation" (Isa 49:7), clearly indicating that this cannot refer to the nation of Israel as some suggest.

While **Young's** commentary on Isaiah is a classic, it saddens my heart that he interprets this as "the true Israel" and thus the Church. The great theologian Calvin made the same mistake (I say that with deep humility and ready acknowledgment of Calvin's greatness) writing "In a word, the Lord honours by this name **the Church**, which is the spouse of Christ, just as the wife is honoured by bearing the name and title of her husband."

**Oswalt** explains that "the term **Israel** is used not so much as a name as it is a parallel term to servant. It is as though the Lord had said, "You are my Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Thus it is the function, not the identity, of Israel that is emphasized. This **Servant** is going to function as **Israel**. What was Israel's task, as indicated throughout the entire book, from ch. 2 onward? To be the means whereby the nations could come to God. But how could a nation that could not find its *own way* to God, a blind, deaf, rebellious nation, show *anyone* else the way? This is the dilemma that the Servant has come to solve. He will be for Israel, and the world, what Israel could not be. Faced with Israel's failure, God does not wipe out the nation; he simply devises another way in which Israel's servanthood could be worked out: through the ideal Israel. (NICOT-Isaiah)

Beloved, **My Servant Israel** is EMPHATICALLY not the Church! In the context this is Messiah. Notice how Isa 49:5-6 speaks of the Servant restoring Israel to God! Clearly, if one interpreted this as the nation of Israel, it would simply not make sense. So once again context enables us to make the correct interpretation (see [Keep Context King](#)). The nation of Israel had failed in her mission to be a light to the nations. Yahweh now summons His Servant Who will not fail in His mission!

While the **NAS** does not begin with an "**and**", the original Hebrew text does have "**and**" as does the Septuagint ("kai" = and). What is interesting is that even Young comments on the fact that the Hebrew text has this "**and**" explaining that this **and** is "more than a mere continuation of the discourse; it serves rather to set forth the more detailed preparation of the servant for his public ministry." That is a fascinating comment by Young because he does see the present verse (Isa 49:3) as connected to the previous passages. What is fascinating about this is Young has this comment on Isaiah 49:1-2 "He who speaks with such compelling authority is the Messiah!" And yet here in Isaiah 49:3 he seems to disregard his previous comment in the immediate context which he interprets as clearly references to the Messiah, not Israel and not the Church! And keeping in mind that context is always "king" in interpretation, My Servant Israel is clearly in the context of Isaiah 49:1-2. Can you see the point? If one holds to allowing the context to guide the interpretation, it would be absurd to switch from Messiah in verses 1-2 and interpret My Servant Israel in verse 3 as the Church. It simply does not make good sense.

The highly regarded **Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament** interprets **My Servant Israel** as the Messiah, not the nation and not the Church

Isa 49:3 describes, without any figure, what Jehovah has made Him. He has said to Him (cf., Ps 2:7b): "Thou art my servant; thou art Israel, in whom (in quo, as in Isaiah 44:23) I glorify myself."...The **Servant** himself is called **Israel**. We call to mind here the expression in Mt 16:18, "Thou art Peter;" and the use of the name "Israel," as the individuation of a generic name, reminds us of the fact that the kings of a nation are sometimes called by the name of the nation itself (e.g., Asshur, Isaiah 10:5ff.). But **Israel** was from the very first the God-given name of an individual. Just as the name **Israel** was first of all given to a man, and then after that to a nation, so the name which sprang from a personal root has also a personal crown. **The servant of Jehovah is Israel in person**, inasmuch as the purpose of mercy, upon the basis of which and for the accomplishment of which Jehovah made Jacob the father of the twelve-tribed nation, is brought by him into full and final realization....In the present instance, where He is called distinctly "**Israel**," the fact is clearly expressed, that the Servant of Jehovah in these prophecies is regarded as the kernel of the kernel of Israel, as Israel's inmost centre, as Israel's highest head. He it is in Whom (i.e., on Whom and through Whom) Jehovah glorifies Himself, inasmuch as He carried out through Him the counsels of His love, which are the self-glorification of His holy love, its glory and its triumph.

**John Martin** - Why is the Servant here called Israel? This cannot refer to the nation because the Servant is to draw that nation back to God. The Messiah is called Israel because He fulfills what Israel should have done. In His person and work He epitomizes the nation. (BKC)

**W A Criswell** - It is clear that the **Servant** in this passage is Jesus of Nazareth, for He brings salvation to Israel as well as to the whole world.

**Hindson** - Though He is called **my servant, O Israel**, it is clear that the national title is used as a designation for the Messiah who shall come forth from that nation. (King James Bible Commentary)

**Gilbrant** comments "God names the **Servant "Israel."** The Servant personifies ideal Israel, summing up in himself the servanthood that God intended for Israel. Thus He becomes God's Israel, God's Prince and Warrior, when natural Israel fails. God's purpose in using Him is to bring glory to himself as He displays God's divine splendor." (The Complete Biblical Library – Isaiah)

**NET Note** - This verse identifies the **servant** as **Israel**. This seems to refer to the exiled nation (cf. Isa 41:8–9; 44:1–2, 21; 45:4; 48:20), but in Isa 49:5–6 this **servant** says he has been commissioned to reconcile Israel to God, so **he must be distinct from the exiled nation**. This **servant** is an ideal "Israel" who, like Moses of old, mediates a covenant for the nation (see Isa 49:8), leads them out of bondage (Isa 49:9a), and carries out God's original plan for Israel by positively impacting the pagan nations (Isa 49:6b). By living according to God's law, Israel was to be a model of God's standards of justice to the surrounding nations (Deut 4:6–8). The sinful nation failed, but the **servant**, the ideal "Israel," will succeed by establishing justice throughout the earth.

**Wiersbe** - The Jewish nation was called to glorify God and be a light to the Gentiles, but they failed in their mission. This is why Messiah is called "**Israel**" in Isaiah 49:3: He did the work that Israel was supposed to do. Today, the Church is God's light in the dark world (Acts 13:46–49; Matt. 5:14–16), and like Israel, we seem to be failing in our mission to take the Good News to the ends of the earth. We cannot do the job very effectively when only five percent of the average local church budget is devoted to evangelism! (Be Comforted).

**Servant** (05650) ('ebed from 'abad = work in any sense) means a slave or bondservant. This noun is used of Messiah, Yahweh's Servant, four times in Isaiah 49 (Isa 49:3, 5, 6, 7).

**W E Vine** adds that "Of prime significance is the use of **My Servant** for the Messiah in Isa 42:1–7; 49:1–7; 50:4–10; 52:13–53:12. Israel was a blind and deaf **servant** (Isa. 42:18–22). So the Lord called **My righteous Servant** (Isa 53:11 = "**My Servant** will justify the many" cf Isa 42:6) The "servant" was not a free man. He was subject to the will and command of his master. But one might willingly and lovingly submit to his master (Ex 21:5), remaining in his service when he was not obliged to do so. Hence it is a very fitting description of the relationship of man to God."

The **Septuagint** translates **Servant** ('ebed) with **doulos** which describes one who bound to another. **Doulos** conveys the idea of the slave's close, binding ties w/ his master, belonging to him, obligated (and desirous) to do his will, one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, HIS WILL BEING ALTOGETHER CONSUMED IN THE WILL OF THE OTHER (Mt 8:9; 20:27; 24:45, 46). Jesus the Messiah was the ultimate Servant, the ultimate Doulos, declaring in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before He is to bear the sins of the world

"Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; **yet not My will, but Yours be done**" (Lk 22:42+).

**In Whom I will show My glory** - Jesus is the "Israel" in Whom the Father would be glorified. The nation should have been and could have been, but she continually proved rebellious and unfaithful and failed to demonstrate to the pagan world a proper opinion of Yahweh! When the Servant accomplishes His mission of providing redemption of sinners who can now be reconciled back to the Father, the Father will be glorified and honored. This is repeatedly alluded to in the Gospel of John...

"Father, **glorify** Your name." Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both **glorified** it, and **will glorify** it again." (John 12:28)

Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus said, "**Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately**" (Jn 13:31,32)

Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, 2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. 3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 "**I (THE SERVANT) glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work (THE MISSION DESCRIBED IN ISAIAH 49) which You have given Me to do.** 5 "Now, Father, **glorify** Me together with Yourself, with the **glory** which I had with You before the world was. (Jn 17:1–5)

**Isaiah 49:4 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."**

- **I have toiled in vain** - Isa 65:2 Eze 3:19 Mt 17:17 23:37 Joh 1:11 Ro 10:21 Ga 4:11
- **I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity** - Lev 26:20 2Co 12:15
- **Yet surely the justice due to Me is with the LORD**- Isa 53:10–12 Ps 22:22–31 Lu 24:26 Joh 17:4,5 2Co 2:15 Php 2:9,10 Heb 12:2
- **And My reward with My God** Isa 40:10 Isa 62:11

**NET** Isaiah 49:4 But I thought, "I have worked in vain; I have expended my energy for absolutely nothing." But

the LORD will vindicate me; my God will reward me.

**NLT** Isaiah 49:4 I replied, "But my work seems so useless! I have spent my strength for nothing and to no purpose. Yet I leave it all in the LORD's hand; I will trust God for my reward."

## THE SERVANT'S FRUSTRATION

**But - Term of contrast.** Note the strong contrast of previous verse where the Servant will show God's glory. Now He describes His feelings of futility. It is as if (at least initially) He is not able to bring glory to God.

**I said** - The Servant (Messiah) is still speaking.

**Keil and Delitzsch** note that in this verse "the speaker meets the words of divine calling and promise (Isa 49:3) with a complaint, which immediately silences itself, however (**ED**: AS SHOWN BY THE WORD **"YET"** WHICH MARKS A CHANGE OF DIRECTION AWAY FROM THE COMPLAINT)."

**J Vernon McGee** - Though the Lord was rejected, and it may look as if He labored in vain, His confidence is in God. Even the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was a victory; in fact, it is the greatest victory the world has seen up to the present time. The emphasis in this section, therefore, is on the suffering Servant.

At His first coming He did not gather Israel, as they rejected Him. At His first coming He did something far more wonderful—He wrought salvation for the world. Therefore, God's purposes were not thwarted by man's little machinations. (Thru the Bible)

**Warren Wiersbe** - As Jesus Christ ministered on earth, especially to His own people Israel, there were times when His work seemed in vain (Isa. 49:4). The religious leaders opposed Him, the disciples did not always understand Him, and those He helped did not always thank Him. He lived and labored by faith, and God gave Him success. (Be Comforted).

**THOUGHT** - Perhaps this describes your ministry. You know you are in His will and yet you see no fruit. You have to remember that your Father is trustworthy and He will reward you in due time, if not this life, in the life to come. No work done for the Lord in His will and way will ever remain unrewarded!

**I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity** (Hebrew also means "breath, vapor") - **NET** translation says "I have expended my energy for absolutely nothing." During His earthly ministry the Messiah saw little return on the "investment" He made into the people of first century Israel. We have alluded to this above quoting Jn 1:11+ where John states "He came to His own (ISRAEL = THE JEWS), and those who were His own did not receive Him."

We get a glimpse of Messiah's frustration in Mt 17:17 when Jesus declared "You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you?"

**Oswalt** comments "No Christian can read these words without relating them to the ministry of Jesus Christ. When He died, what had He accomplished? To all appearances, nothing. By every measure of the world, His life had been futile. Well could He cry, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46)." (NICOT-Isaiah)

**Vanity** (01892) (**hebel**) means to vanity, emptiness, meaninglessness; idols. The first OT use refers to **idols** (Dt 32:21, cf 1 Ki 16:13, 26, Jer 8:19; Jeremiah 10:8, 15; Jer 14:22 Jer 51:18; Jonah 2:9; Ps 31:6), a fitting word picture for the worthlessness of idols!

In Jer 2:5 Judah "walked after **emptiness** (**hebel**) and became empty" refers to Judah's pursuit of idols (cf similar use Jer 10:15, 2 Ki 17:15 "the followed **vanity** [**hebel**] and became vain [worthless])

**Hebel** refers to breath because of its transitory fleeting character, as in Job's figurative use "my days are but a **breath**." (Job 7:16, cf similar idea Ps 39:5, 6, 11; Ps 62:9; Ps 78:33 where **hebel** parallels **behālā** from root **bāhal** "to hasten": Ps 94:11; Ps 144:4) **Hebel** "generally appears in contexts where it is used as a simile emphasizing the transitory state of an object, never as descriptive of the biological function. A prime example would be "Humanity is like a breath (Ps. 144:4). Not only is breath ethereal and of short duration, but all things which breathe will die." (Gilbrant)

**Gilbrant** notes that another sense is "the concept of "vanity" or "worthlessness" is a slight extension of the concept. Things which are transitory are not on a par with eternal concerns. Even things which are indeed desirable do not last, such as: wealth (if ill gotten, Job 27:12; Ps. 62:10; Prov. 21:6); physical beauty (Prov. 31:30); youth (Ecc. 11:10); trusting in human justice (Ecc. 10:11); and trusting in the notion of immediate divine retribution on earth (Ecc. 8:12f)."

**Vine's** summary of **hebel** - **First**, the word represents human "breath" as a transitory thing: "I loathe it; I would not live always: let me alone; for my days are vanity [literally, but a breath] (Job 7:16). **Second**, **hebel** means something meaningless and purposeless:

"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Eccl. 1:2). **Third**, this word signifies an "idol," which is unsubstantial, worthless, and vain: "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities ..." (Dt. 32:21, the first occurrence). See SPIRIT usage notes.

**Warren Baker** adds that **hebel** "refers to the vanity and ultimate emptiness and meaninglessness of all things in this life, whether they seem good or bad (Eccl. 1:2, 14; 2:11, 15, 3:19; 4:4, 7, 8; 5:7[6]; 6:2, 4, 9; 7:6, 15; 8:10; 9:9; 11:8). Combined with itself in the plural, it means absolute meaninglessness (Eccl. 1:2). Idols and the vain religious customs associated with them are all delusions (Jer. 10:3, 15). It denotes an empty, vain life (Eccl. 6:12). Used with the verb *hābal*, it means to carry out vain talk or action or what is empty (Job 27:12). As an adverb, it means to talk in vain, emptily (Job 35:16). To walk after *hebel* means to go after or follow vanity (2 Ki. 17:15; Jer. 2:5). Anything obtained through evil is vain, such as wealth (Prov. 13:11)." (Complete Word Study Dictionary— Old Testament)

**Victor Hamilton** on **hebel** in Ecclesiastes - the cluster of references found in Ecclesiastes (thirty-six). These may be grouped into several subdivisions. First are those passages in which the author states his inability to find fulfillment in work, both in his failure to be creative and in his lack of control over the privilege of free disposition of his possessions; this is "vanity": Eccl 2:11, 19, 21, 23; Eccl 4:4, 8; Eccl 6:2. Second are those verses in which the author struggles with the idea that the connection between sin and judgment, righteousness and final deliverance is not always direct or obvious. This is an anomaly about life and it is vanity": Eccl 2:15; Eccl 6:7-9; Eccl 8:10-14. The meaning of *hebel* here would be "senseless." Thirdly are those verses in which the author laments the shortness of life; this is vanity": Eccl. 3:19; Eccl 6:12; Eccl 11:8, 10. Life, in its quality, is "empty" or "vacuous" (and thus unsubstantial), and in its quantity is "transitory." (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

**Hebel** - 62v - breath(5), delusion(2), emptily(1), emptiness(2), fleeting(2), fraud(1), futile(1), futility(13), idols(7), mere breath(2), nothing(1), useless(1), vain(3), vainly(1), vanity(19), vanity of vanities(3), vapor(1), worthless(2).

Deut. 32:21; 1 Ki. 16:13; 1 Ki. 16:26; 2 Ki. 17:15; Job 7:16; Job 9:29; Job 21:34; Job 35:16; Ps. 31:6; Ps. 39:5; Ps. 39:6; Ps. 39:11; Ps. 62:9; Ps. 78:33; Ps. 94:11; Ps. 144:4; Prov. 13:11; Prov. 21:6; Prov. 31:30; Eccl. 1:2; Eccl. 1:14; Eccl. 2:1; Eccl. 2:11; Eccl. 2:15; Eccl. 2:17; Eccl. 2:19; Eccl. 2:21; Eccl. 2:23; Eccl. 2:26; Eccl. 3:19; Eccl. 4:4; Eccl. 4:7; Eccl. 4:8; Eccl. 4:16; Eccl. 5:7; Eccl. 5:10; Eccl. 6:2; Eccl. 6:4; Eccl. 6:9; Eccl. 6:11; Eccl. 6:12; Eccl. 7:6; Eccl. 7:15; Eccl. 8:10; Eccl. 8:14; Eccl. 9:9; Eccl. 11:8; Eccl. 11:10; Eccl. 12:8; Isa. 30:7; Isa. 49:4; Isa. 57:13; Jer. 2:5; Jer. 8:19; Jer. 10:3; Jer. 10:8; Jer. 10:15; Jer. 14:22; Jer. 16:19; Jer. 51:18; Lam. 4:17; Jon. 2:8

## THE SERVANT'S CONFIDENCE

**Yet surely** - Term of contrast. This marks an "about face" from the previous comment by the Servant regarding the vanity of His efforts, to His trust in Jehovah and His ability to bring about the Mission for which He was sent. And so the Servant is confident in His reward once the Mission is accomplished.

**Oswalt** explains this next contrasting statement noting that "here is where the Servant's certainty of calling and identity came into play. If it was true that the Servant would enter into the experience of humanity to the fullest extent, it was also true that he knew who he was and whose he was, and that he trusted God. This certainty is introduced by an even stronger particle of contrast than the opening disjunctive *waw*, But. That is the particle *'ākēn*, **Nevertheless**, or "**but surely**." Too often we miss the two-sidedness of what is being said here. On the one hand, we think that to admit feelings of futility is not to trust God. On the other hand, we often believe that if we really trusted God, we would never have feelings of futility. The Servant shows us that neither reality is incompatible with the other. Trust has ultimately to do with the final outcome, and of this the Servant is fully confident. It is God, the God who called him, equipped him, and is using him, who will make the final adjudication (*mišpāt*, justice) concerning the Servant's work." (NICOT-Isaiah)

**The justice due to Me is with the LORD, and My reward with My God.**" - NLT paraphrases it "Yet I leave it all in the LORD's hand; I will trust God for my reward." **Yet** marks a change in tone of the statement. The former somewhat despondent declaration now shifts to a declaration of confidence that God is with Him and will **vindicate** Him and reward Him. Note the assurance He expresses -- **MY** reward with **MY** God. "God, not the world, not even the Servant, will make the final decision concerning the worth of that work....God is his judge, no other." (Oswalt)

**Keil and Delitzsch** - In the midst of his activity no fruit was to be seen, and the thought came upon him, that it was a failure; but this disturbance of his rejoicing in his calling was soon quieted in the confident assurance that his *mishpāt* (JUSTICE) (i.e., his good right in opposition to all contradiction and resistance) and his "work" (i.e., the result and fruit of the work, which is apparently in vain) are with Jehovah, and laid up with Him until the time when He will vindicate His servant's right, and crown his labor with success.

The writer of Hebrews alludes to **My reward with My God** which He received at the end of His race...

fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of faith, **Who for the joy set before Him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and **has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** (Hebrews 12:2+)

**Ortlund** - Jesus saw the joy set before Him, He clung to it by faith, and that faith preserved Him in His arduous mission. (Preaching the Word - Isaiah)

**Isaiah 49:5 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 honored in the sight of the LORD, And My God is My strength),**

- **formed:** Isa 49:1
- **To bring Jacob back to Him**- Isa 56:8 Mt 15:24 Ac 10:36 Ro 15:8
- **So that Israel might be gathered to Him**- Mt 21:37-41 23:37 Lu 19:42 1Th 2:15,16
- **For I am honored in the sight of the LORD**- Ps 110:1-3 Mt 3:17 11:27 17:5 28:18 John 3:35 John 5:20-27 Eph 1:20-22 1Pe 3:22

**NET** Isaiah 49:5 So now the LORD says, the one who formed me from birth to be his servant— he did this to restore Jacob to himself, so that Israel might be gathered to him; and I will be honored in the LORD's sight, for my God is my source of strength— (Isa 49:5 NET)

### **THE SERVANT'S MISSION: ISRAEL RE-GATHERED**

**And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant**- This is still the Messiah speaking. In Isa 49:1+ He says He was **called** but here He says He was **formed from the womb** ([JESUS' INCARNATION](#)). The Servant (Messiah) acknowledges His mission which existed even **from the womb**, first to Israel and then to the world in Isaiah 49:6.

**To bring Jacob back to Him so that Israel might be gathered to Him**- Jesus was sent by God to earth as Israel's long expected Messiah, and yet for the most part (except for a small believing **remnant**), the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah for they were looking for a conquering king, not a Suffering Servant (they "inverted" His two comings - because He was the Suffering Servant, He will return as the Conquering King of kings! The Cross before the Crown). John summarizes Jacob's response to the Messiah...

**He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him** 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:11-13+, cf Acts 13:46+)

Israel should never think that God has forgotten His covenant people, an idea expressed in Isa 40:27

Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel,  
"My way is hidden from the LORD,  
And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God"?

This mission of the Messiah to the nation of Israel to **bring** them **back to** God is seen in both testaments...

Isaiah 56:8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, "Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered."

Matthew 15:24 But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Romans 15:8-9 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision (JACOB = ISRAEL = THE JEWS) on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME."

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem **those who were under the Law** (JACOB - ISRAEL - THE JEWS), that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Messiah's mission was clearly not completed at His first coming but will be fully accomplished at His Second Coming as described by Paul and Zechariah...

(Zech 12:10-11+) **I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him**, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. "In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

(Zech 13:1+) "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, **for sin and for impurity.**

(Ro 11:25-29+) For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; 26 and so **all Israel will be saved**; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER (MESSIAH) WILL COME FROM ZION (HIS SECOND COMING), HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB (JACOB = ISRAEL = THE JEWS)." 27 "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." 28 From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

**For I am honored in the sight of the LORD** - Exactly why the Servant states He is **honored** in this context is somewhat difficult to discern. The **NET note** suggests that "one might interpret it as indicating purpose, *'and so I might be honored.'*"

**Honored** (glorified) ([03513](#))(**kabad**) is a verb which means to weigh heavily, to be heavy, then to be honored or receive honor. As a result of the fact that the Servant (Messiah) will accomplish His mission of bring Israel back to God, He will be honored in the sight of Jehovah. As we see later (Isa 49:7), He will be despised and abhorred by Israel, the very ones His mission is to bring back to God!

The **Septuagint** translates **honored** with [doxazo](#) which means to influence one's opinion about another so as to enhance the latter's reputation. **Doxazo** most often speaks of glorifying God, the Father or the Son. Certainly when Messiah completes His mission at the end of this age, at His Second Coming, when He returns as Israel's Deliverer (Ro 11:26-27+), He will be **honored** as in Revelation...

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. (Rev 5:9+)

saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and **might** (ishcus - same word [ischus](#) used for Lxx of Strength below) and honor and glory and blessing." (Rev 5:12+)

**And My God is My strength** - The Servant's strength to accomplish His Mission is from God. During His earthly ministry the Son emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives and submitted to the Spirit of God as His Source of strength as Peter described in Acts 10:38+ declaring ""You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how **God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power**, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."

Play **Robin Mark's** worshipful song [Highly Exalted](#)

**You were despised**

**You were rejected Lord**

Those who passed by  
Even averted their gaze from Your sight  
Such was the suffering You bore for us

Led like a lamb, lamb to the slaughter  
You spoke not a word  
Chose to be silent Lord  
You did no wrong  
Nor was deceitfulness found in You  
Yet by Your wounds our salvation has come  
Yet by Your suffering our freedom is won

**Chorus**

For God has highly exalted Your name  
He has enthroned You on high

Jesus, the name above all names – 2times

Led like a lamb, lamb to the slaughter  
You spoke not a word  
Chose to be silent, Lord  
You did no wrong  
Nor was deceitfulness found in You  
Yet by Your wounds our salvation has come  
Yet by Your suffering our freedom is won

**Isaiah 49:6 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."**

- **It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant** 2Ki 3:18 20:10
- **I will also make You a light of the nations**- Isa 42:6 60:3 Lu 2:32 Joh 1:4-9 Ac 13:47 26:18
- **So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth**- Isa 11:10 24:14-16 46:13 52:10 Ps 98:2,3 Lu 24:46,47

NET Isaiah 49:6 he says, "Is it too insignificant a task for you to be my servant, to reestablish the tribes of Jacob, and restore the **remnant** of Israel? I will make you a light to the nations, so you can bring my deliverance to the remote regions of the earth." (Isa 49:6 NET)

### **THE SERVANT'S MISSION: SALVATION TO THE GENTILES**

**He says** - Now God the Father is speaking to His Servant, the Messiah.

**It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant**- NET = "Is it too insignificant a task for you to be my servant." "The question is purely rhetorical; it does not imply that the servant was dissatisfied with his commission or that he minimized the restoration of Israel." (NET Note)

The NLT is a good paraphrase for it shows the Servant's role not just to the nation of Israel but to the Gentile world...

He says, "You will do more than restore the people of Israel to me. I will make you a light to the Gentiles, and you will bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." (Isa 49:6NLT)

**To raise up the tribes of Jacob** - NET = "to reestablish the tribes of Jacob" This is a picture of the Servant bringing about salvation of the **tribes of Jacob** ( [See Scriptures above](#)).

**Wiersbe** - Our Lord could not minister to the Gentiles until first He ministered to the Jews (vv. 5-6). Read carefully Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 3:25-26; 13:46-47; and Romans 1:16. When our Lord returned to heaven, He left behind a believing **remnant** of Jews that carried on His work. We must never forget that "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). The Bible is a Jewish book, the first believers and missionaries were Jews, and the Gentiles would not have heard the Gospel had it not been brought to them by Jews. (Be Comforted).

**And to restore the preserved ones of Israel** - NET = "restore the **remnant** of Israel" **Restore** is [shub/sub](#) and translated in Greek with [epistrepho](#). The restoration involves conversion and salvation (How? [See Scriptures above](#)). The Septuagint has "to turn (a return to God) the dispersed of Israel."

**Oswalt** astutely observes that "Here the Lord makes the astounding statement that the task of restoring Israel to himself is not a large enough task for the Servant. He is of such a nature, calling, and preparation that he should be given a larger task: saving the world!" (NICOT-Isaiah)

**I will also make You a light of the nations**(Gentiles) - According to tradition, **Light** was one of the names of the Messiah. [Isa 9:1-2; Isa 49:6; Isa 60:1-3; Mal 4:2; Lu 2:32].

Earlier Isaiah records Jehovah's similar declaration...

"I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I

will appoint You as a covenant to the people, **As a light to the nations** (Isa 42:6)

**Paul** quoted this verse in Acts 13:47+

"For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.'"

**Toussaint** writes that "This Old Testament passage (Isaiah 49:6) has at least three applications—to **Israel** (Isa. 49:3), to **Christ** (Luke 2:29-32), and to **Paul**, the apostle to the Gentiles." (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

Paul's quote shows that he clearly understood God's intention for the Jewish nation to be **alight to the Gentiles**, which was ultimately fulfilled by THE MESSIAH, the Light of the world (Jn 1:9, Jn 8:12) Instead of quoting his own commission to the Gentiles given to him on the road to Damascus, he chose to quote God's commission of all Jews as found in the Old Testament. In rejecting that commission, the Jewish leaders who listened to Paul not only rejected the Gentiles and Paul, but they rejected God Himself. As a result, Paul turned to the Gentiles, who immediately **"began rejoicing and glorifying the work of the Lord."** (Acts 13:48) The result? **"The Word of the Lord spread through the whole region"** Yes, the nations are responsive to the Gospel, if we will only bring it to them!

Below is a thought of how you can be a co-laborer with Paul and all the missionaries of all the ages in bringing God's Gospel of salvation to the lost souls, especially in the spiritually dark 10-40 window. Give it some thought, and in eternity future, I can guarantee you will not regret it!

**THOUGHT - YOUR PRAYERS ARE SAFELY STORED IN A BOWL** - Revelation 5:8+ which describes "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." Now observe carefully that the next verse (Rev 5:9+) describes "men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Can you not see the relationship between **supplications** in verse 8 and **saved souls** in verse 9? Clearly and mysteriously, our prayers for hidden people groups (see [Ralph Winter in 1980](#) when there were 16000 hidden people groups) today will be effective in bringing souls to eternal salvation. Would you not consider storing up for yourself treasure in heaven daily for the rest of your life (Mt 6:20+)? Can I encourage you to take a step of faith and believe that God will hear your prayers for hidden people groups and that one day in eternity you will meet those for whom you have been praying day after day, year after year? And here is an easy way to pray for the hidden people groups daily - bookmark [Joshua Project](#) or download the APP from Joshua Project and select **daily notifications** and you will receive a daily text reminder with the name of the hidden people group for that day. (see also [Global Prayer Digest](#)) Now even if I forget to read the full entry for the people group of the day, the APP allows me to never miss a day praying for lost souls who have never heard the Name of Jesus (Acts 4:12+) and His saving Gospel (Ro 1:16+). This is your **"once in a lifetime opportunity!"** Praying for souls is something we can only do now on earth and is an exciting, rewarding way to redeem the time on earth for heaven! Indeed, if you (energized by the Spirit) pray now, your time in time eternal will be marvelously impacted by the presence of those you took time to pray for in time temporal! Don't procrastinate! Don't delay! [Bookmark the site](#) and/or download the Joshua Project APP today. If Paul were speaking to us today he might say something like this "So then, **while we have opportunity**, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith." (Gal 6:10+) Today is your "opportunity of a lifetime!" May our Father in Heaven grant you amazing grace by His Spirit to be energized and motivated to intercede for peoples you have never seen but will one day see in the presence of the Lamb Who Alone is Worthy (1 Th 2:19-20+). Amen.

Faith asks no signal from the skies,  
To show that prayers accepted rise,  
Our Priest is in his holy place,  
And answers from the throne of grace.

"Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. (Daniel 12:3+)

**Henry Morris** - The Father is here speaking to the Messiah, His Son. He is to be "the light of the world" (John 8:12), not only to Israel.

**Believer's Study Bible** - In another deeper sense the Servant of God and Israel are one, for Jesus came of Israel and is the glory of Israel.

**MacArthur** - The Servant's goal is the salvation and restoration of Israel for the fulfillment of the covenant promise. But not limited to

Israel, He is to function as a **light** bringing salvation to the Gentiles. Israel's mission had always been to bring the nations to God (Isa 19:24; 42:6). This she will finally do very effectively in the tribulation after the conversion of the 144,000 witnesses (Rev. 7:1-10<sup>+</sup>; Rev 14:1-5<sup>+</sup>) and when she is restored to her Land at the Servant's return to earth. Cf. Isa 9:2; 11:10; 42:6; 45:22; Luke 2:32. Paul applied this verse to his ministry to the Gentiles on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:47). (The MacArthur Study Bible)

**MacDonald** - The servant of Jehovah in chapter 49 may seem to be the nation of Israel in Isa 49:1-3, but only the Lord Jesus fully answers to the text. In verse 3 Israel is mentioned by name, but it is Christ, the true Prince of God, and not the nation. In verses 5- 6 the Servant is distinguished from Israel. The restorations of Israel merge in these verses, first the return under Cyrus, then the future restoration when the Messiah sets up His Kingdom. The Servant calls on the people of the world to heed Him as He recounts His birth, the name that was given to Him before His birth (Matt. 1:21), His incisive, authoritative message, and His appointment by God as Servant, a Prince of God (Israel) in whom Jehovah would be glorified. He further intimates the trouble of soul He experienced over His rejection by Israel (see Matt. 11:16?24), but then His satisfaction that God would reward (cf. v. 4 with Matt. 11:25, 26). God called Him not only to bring about the spiritual rebirth of Israel, but also to bring salvation to the Gentiles. Verse 6b is quoted in Acts 13:47 as referring to Christ. ( Believer's Bible Commentary)

**KJV Commentary** - In this section of Isaiah's prophecy, the Servant is personalized and identified as the One whom the Lord has called from the womb and the One whom He has called by name. The parallel to Isaiah 7:14 is all too obvious. This is none other than the virgin-born Immanuel Himself! His mouth is described like a sharp sword, a description often used of Christ, but never of Israel. Though He is called my servant, O Israel, it is clear that the national title is used as a designation for the Messiah who shall come forth from that nation. The Servant has a twofold mission from the Lord who formed (yotseriy, meaning to fashion or ordain) Him from the womb to be his servant. That mission is to bring Jacob again to him and to restore the preserved of Israel. This first aspect of His assignment is to the House of Israel and to the believing **remnant** of Israel in particular. In addition, He is also commissioned to be a light to the Gentiles. This statement is quoted in Acts 13:47 as being fulfilled by Jesus Christ. There it forms a part of Paul's sermon in the Jewish synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia. Other references to this statement may be found in Luke 2:32 and John 11:52. For the liberal scholar to deny this interpretation is to contradict the inspiration of the Apostle Paul! (KJV Bible commentary. Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

**So that** - Purpose clause. The purpose of the Light of Jesus and the Gospel of Jesus.

**Oswalt** - It is not restoration to the land of Judah that is in view here. Rather, it is the restoration of an estranged world, along with an estranged Israel, to God. (NICOT-Isaiah)

**My salvation may reach to the end of the earth** - The Gospel of Jesus will lead to salvation for Jews and Gentiles in the remote regions of the earth. We see the fulfillment of this in Revelation 5:9<sup>+</sup> where John records souls "purchased for God with (JESUS') blood men from **EVERY** tribe and tongue and people and nation."

**Isaiah 49:7 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."**

- **the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One** - Isa 48:7 Rev 3:7
- **To the despised One** Isa 53:3 Ps 22:6-8 69:7-9,19 Zec 11:8 Mt 26:67 27:38-44 Lu 23:18,23 Joh 18:40 19:6,15
- **To the Servant of rulers** - Mt 20:28 Lu 22:27
- **Kings will see and arise** - Isa 49:23 52:15 60:3,10,16 Ps 2:10-12 68:31 72:10,11 Rev 11:15
- **the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You** - Isa 42:1 Lu 23:35 1Pe 2:4

**NET** Isaiah 49:7 This is what the LORD, the protector of Israel, their Holy One, says to the one who is despised and rejected by nations, a servant of rulers: "Kings will see and rise in respect, princes will bow down, because of the faithful LORD, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen you."

**NLT** Isaiah 49:7 The LORD, the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel, says to the one who is despised and rejected by the nations, to the one who is the servant of rulers: "Kings will stand at attention when you pass by. Princes will also bow low because of the LORD, the faithful one, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

## **MESSIAH'S REJECTION BY MEN AND REIGN OVER MEN**

**Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One** - Isaiah "piles up" the **appellatives** for God! Here the Father is

referred to as the Redeemer. And notice that He is still the Redeemer of **Israel**., nor has He replaced Israel with the Church (see [the false teaching of replacement theology](#)). God has not forgotten His Chosen People, despite their many wanderings and continued unfaithfulness!

**John Oswalt** comments that God "is not merely the LORD, he is the Redeemer of Israel. But he is the Redeemer because he is Israel's Holy One. That is, he is able to redeem because of his transcendent power, and he wills to redeem because of his unearthly faithfulness and love. This is the one who addresses the Servant. This is clearly no offhanded chat, but an address of supreme importance."

**LORD** (03068)(**Jehovah**) is "the personal name of the living God found 6,823 times in the Old Testament. It is his redemptive, covenant-keeping name, called the Name (Lev. 24:11,16+) and "this glorious and awesome name" (Dt. 28:58). To Moses, God revealed the meaning of his personal name "Yahweh" by connecting it with the Hebrew phrase ehyeh, usually translated "I am," though it is better translated "I will be." In Exodus 3:12 God said, "I will be (ehyeh) with you." Then in verse 14 God went on to say, *Ehyeh asher ehyeh*, which can be translated "I am who I am," or, "I will be what I will be." However, ehyeh is a Hebrew imperfect which indicates action going on. Thus, it has the meaning: "I will show you who and what I am by who and what I will be to you, for I will be with you." (Gilbrant - [Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#))

The prophet Isaiah records this declaration by God Himself...

I am **Jehovah**, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images." (Isa 42:8)  
([See note](#))

**Hemphill** concludes: Most Bible scholars would agree that the name Yahweh, or Jehovah, as it is sometimes translated, would be the proper name of God. The other names, including the compound names, provide further revelation of His character and His activity. (Names of God)

- **Psalm 68:4** Sing to God, sing praises to His name; Lift up a song for Him who rides through the deserts, **Whose name is Jehovah**, and exult before Him. ([See note](#))
- Play the song [He Is Jehovah](#) - performed with a beautiful Jewish flavor - May God grant you desire to take a moment to worship Him in Spirit and in Truth in Christ. Amen.

**New American Commentary** notes "that in spite of some of the difficult words he will announce in the coming sentences, the one who is speaking to them is God, Israel's "Redeemer" (gō'ēl)."

**Redeemer** (01350)([see notes below for more detailed discussion of goel/ga'al](#)) is a verb which usually means to perform the role of a kinsman and thus to redeem one's kin from difficulty or danger. Theologically ([as discussed below](#)), this word is used to convey God's redemption of individuals from spiritual death.

**Holy One** - 56v in OT and NT - NET Note - "**Holy One** of Israel is one of Isaiah's favorite divine titles for God. It pictures the Lord as the sovereign king who rules over his covenant people and exercises moral authority over them."

2 Ki. 19:22; Job 6:10; Ps. 16:10; Ps. 71:22; Ps. 78:41; Ps. 89:18; Ps. 106:16; Prov. 9:10; Prov. 30:3; Isa. 1:4; Isa. 5:19; Isa. 5:24; Isa. 10:17; Isa. 10:20; Isa. 12:6; Isa. 17:7; Isa. 29:19; Isa. 29:23; Isa. 30:11; Isa. 30:12; Isa. 30:15; Isa. 31:1; Isa. 37:23; Isa. 40:25; Isa. 41:14; Isa. 41:16; Isa. 41:20; Isa. 43:3; Isa. 43:14; Isa. 43:15; Isa. 45:11; Isa. 47:4; Isa. 48:17; Isa. 49:7; Isa. 54:5; Isa. 55:5; Isa. 60:9; Isa. 60:14; Jer. 50:29; Jer. 51:5; Ezek. 39:7; Dan. 4:13; Dan. 4:23; Dan. 8:13; Hos. 11:9; Hos. 11:12; Hab. 1:12; Hab. 3:3; Mk. 1:24; Lk. 4:34; Jn. 6:69; Acts 2:27; Acts 13:35; 1 Pet. 1:15; 1 Jn. 2:20; Rev. 16:5

**To the despised One** - Literally this reads "To the despised in soul." NAS renders "**soul**" ([nephesh](#)) as "One." What a striking contrast from "LORD...Redeemer...Holy One" to "One abhorred"

**To the One abhorred by the nation** - Note that **nation** is singular (goy) and when used in the singular usually refers to the **nation** of Israel (cf Ge 12:2; Ex 19:6; Dt 4:6; Mic 4:7; Zeph 2:9). Certainly Israel had the first opportunity to abhor and despise Him. This is the Messiah "was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him." (Isa 53:1+, cf Isa 50:6,7).

The verb **abhorred** is a word that presents an atrocious picture of the depraved depth to which their esteem of the Messiah had fallen! And do not miss that Isaiah does not say he was abhorred by a few but **by the nation**! The King of the Jews abhorred by His Jewish brethren! This would seem to be an almost gross exaggeration were it not tragically true!

As **Oswalt** says "He is seen not only as unworthy of attention but as positively distasteful. (For a contemporary analogue, one may think of the homeless on the streets of any large city.)" (NICOT-Isaiah)

**Abhorred** (Other versions have scorned, detested, despised and rejected) (08581)(**taab** related to **toebah** = abomination) means to despise, detest, to loathe, to degrade, to have a hatred or very strong dislike for something or someone, in this case the Son of God! In essence He was rejected as "unclean!" Amazing depth of depravity and deception that would hold the sinless Lamb of God in such abysmally low esteem! (But in one sense, was this not all of us prior to our miraculous conversion! cf Ro 1:30, Ro 5:8, 10+, Col 1:21+) It describes "persons, things or practices that offend one's ritual or moral order." (NIDOTTE)**Taab** implies not only contempt for someone, but also a low opinion of his value. **Taab** is translated here in the Septuagint with an "ugly," strong verb **bdelusso** [word study] (derived from **bdeo** = to stink or reek) which means literally to emit a foul odor or to render foul and figuratively means to strongly detest something on the basis that it **reeks** and is **abominable** (as used in Rev 21:8-note) (abominable = quite disagreeable, worthy of disgust, whatever is odious to the mind or offensive to the senses). In Greek usage **bdelusso** means to feel loathing for food and then to signify disgust in general. The upshot is that the verb **bdelusso** pictures one turning away from a stench as in disgust. This is a horrible picture of how the Chosen People viewed the Holy One of Israel Who was sent to be their Savior and Redeemer!!!

**Barnes** is correct when he comments that "To this day, His name (JESUS) excites the utmost contempt among Jews, and they turn from him and his claims with the deepest abhorrence. The common name by which he is designated in the Jewish writings is Tolvi —'the crucified;' and nothing excites more deep abhorrence and contempt than the doctrine that they, and all others, can be saved only by the merits of 'the crucified.'"

The **nation** of course is Israel, referred to in Isa 1:4 as a '**sinful nation**,' and Isa 10:6 as a '**godless nation**.'

In this verse God the Father will give a promise to His Son the Messiah that even though He would be despised, He would one day be greatly honored by kings and princes.

**MacArthur** - This speaks to the humiliating treatment of the Servant at His first advent, a theme emphasized by Isaiah (50:6-9; 52:14, 15; 53:3). (The MacArthur Study Bible)

**To the Servant of rulers** - Jesus is the Servant of rulers who receive Him. Kings and presidents have genuinely believed in Him throughout history.

(Mt 20:28) just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but **to serve**, and to give His life a ransom for many."

(Lu 22:27+) "For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But **I am among you as the One Who serves**

**M. C. Unger** writes similarly "The Servant is said to be 'a servant of rulers', reduced to the state of a slave under pagan tyrants such as Pontius Pilate and Herod, and under the unscrupulous leaders of the Sanhedrin, under such men as Annas and Caiaphas".

**W E Vine** - Christ, in the days of his flesh, made Himself subject to Roman rulers, handing Himself over to their will that He might fulfil the great purposes for which He had come...How great the change of attitude from that of the present time! How startling will be the revelation of the Lord of glory in a world that has lain in darkness, superstition and alienation from God!

**Oswalt** comments that "this worthless, stinking slave becomes the astonishment of kings, who stand up from their thrones in awed respect, and princes, who prostrate themselves before the true King." (Ibid)

**Kings...Princes** - This indicates that Gentile nations will worship the King of kings.

**Kings will see and arise** - NET = "Kings will see and rise in respect." The day of Messiah's despising will give way to the day of His glory and it will continue forever and ever. Amen. The Servant of rulers will one day receive respect from rulers! In Isaiah 52:15 God predicts that "Kings will shut their mouth on account of Him (MESSIAH)!"

**Barnes** - Of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus alone, was all this true; and the assurance is thus given, that though he was rejected by his own nation, yet the time will come when the kings and princes of all the world shall do him homage.

**Princes will also bow down** - One day all will see Messiah, the great and the small and all will bow before His majesty, glory and power!

**Barnes** on **bow down** - This was the customary mode of showing respect or reverence in the East. It consisted generally in falling upon the knees, and then touching the forehead to the ground, and is often alluded to in the Bible (see Genesis 42:6; 18:2; 19:1; Nehemiah 8:6).

It is interesting to note that when a ruling dignitary approaches his subjects, they all rise in respect. One day as a British king entered a room and everyone stood, he said, "Please take your seats, gentlemen. I'm not the Lord, you know." "No, Your Highness," replied

one of the group. "If you were, we would have dropped to our knees."

**Bow down** (07812)([shachah](#)) means to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to crouch, to fall down, to humbly beseech, to do reverence, to worship. The idea is to assume a prostrate position as would in paying homage to royalty (Ge 43:28) or to God (Ge 24:26, Ps 95:6). **Bow down** is translated in the [Septuagint \(LXX\)](#) in this passage (and most of the OT uses) with the picturesque Greek verb [proskuneo](#) (from **pros** = toward or facing + **kuneo** = kiss, adore) which pictures the practice among the Orientals (especially the Persians) of falling upon their knees and touching the ground with their forehead as an expression of profound reverence.

In **Psalm 2** we read

Now therefore, O **kings**, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth. Worship the LORD with reverence And rejoice with trembling. 12 Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Ps 2:10-12)

**Paul** writes

So that at the name of Jesus **EVERY KNEE WILL BOW**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:10-11+)

**Because of** - Term of explanation. What is Isaiah explaining? He is explaining why the Servant could be assured that because of the faithfulness of His Father, **the Holy One of Israel**, kings would rise from their golden thrones and princes would prostrate themselves before the true King, indeed, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Amen (cf Rev 19:16+)

**The LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You**- Jehovah will fulfill every promise to His Servant and ultimately will fulfill every promise in Christ, for as Paul wrote " For as many as are the promises of God, in Him (**MESSIAH**) they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us." (2 Cor 1:20)

Peter writes " And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, (1Pe 2:4)

**Oswalt** on the phrase **who has chosen You** - As in Isa 49:4, to be the chosen of God does not mean glory along the way, but it does mean glory at the end of the way. (Ibid)

**Isaiah 49:8 Thus says the LORD, "In a favorable time I have answered You, And in a day of salvation I have helped You; And I will keep You and give You for a covenant of the people, To restore the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages;**

- **In a favorable time** - Ps 69:13 Joh 11:41,42 2Co 6:2 Eph 1:6 Heb 5:7
- **in a day of salvation I have helped You** - Isa 42:1 Isa 50:7-9 Acts 2:24-32
- **And I will keep You and give You for a covenant of the people**- Isa 42:6 Mt 26:28 Heb 8:6 12:24
- **To restore the land** - Isa 51:16 Ps 75:3
- **to make them inherit the desolate heritages** - Isa 49:19 Isa 51:3 Isa 54:3 Isa 58:12 Isa 61:4 Ps 2:8 Eph 2:12-19

NET Isaiah 49:8 This is what the LORD says: "At the time I decide to show my favor, I will respond to you; in the day of deliverance I will help you; I will protect you and make you a covenant mediator for people, to rebuild the land and to reassign the desolate property.

**Vine** writes "Isaiah 49:8 tells how Jehovah heard the prayer of His Servant when, in the lowly condition which He shared with His people, He "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death" (Hebrews 5:7).

**Thus says the LORD** - This is still God the Father addressing God the Son, the Messiah and giving Him assurance that His mission and ministry to Israel would succeed.

**The Moody Bible Commentary** notes that "this final part of the Servant's call looks to the more remote future when Israel will ultimately believe in Him and experience redemption. At the appointed time, God will make the Servant a covenant of the people. This is the same expression used in the first Servant Song, meaning that the Servant would be a covenant-mediator for the people of Israel. The phrase is a figure of speech ([metonymy](#) of effect [covenant] for cause [mediator]) for "covenant-mediator" (see Isa

42:5–7). This refers to the “new covenant” which includes both spiritual and material elements (Jer 31:31–34).

**In a favorable time** - Literally "In a time of good pleasure," or "In a time of delight."**NET** - "At the time I decide to show my favor, I will respond to You." NLT "At just the right time, I will respond to you" This is a **time** when Jehovah will respond favorably to the Messiah. He was well-pleased to have His Son when He called on Him, something Jesus in fact did all through His 3+ year ministry (cf Mt 14:23, Mk 6:46, 14:23, Lk 6:12+). The Hebrew for **time** ([eth](#)) can speak more of a season (e.g., Ps 1:3 - "like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its **season**") and it is translated by the Greek [kairos](#) which describes a season. As **Barnes** says "In a time of favor; in a time that shall be adjudged to be the best fitted to the purposes of salvation, Yahweh will be pleased to exalt the Messiah to glory, and to make him the means of salvation to all mankind." It is interesting that this same word kairos is used in Eph 1:10 which speaks of "the fullness of the times," paraphrased as "And this is the plan: At the right time He (THE FATHER) will bring everything together under the authority of Christ (THE MESSIAH)-- everything in heaven and on earth." (Eph 1:10NLT)

**Geoffrey W Grogan** on **a favorable time** - The background to the expression "the time of my favor" is probably the Day of Jubilee in Leviticus 25:8-55+ (cf. Isa 61:1-2) (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**Constable** adds a note on [Year of Jubilee](#) - The Servant would restore the land, make the Israelites inherit desolate areas, and (v. 9) free captives. The terms used in this verse recall the relief that came to the Israelites in their **Jubilee Year** (cf. Lev. 25:8-22+). The salvation in view will appear in the Millennium, which the Jubilee Year anticipated. Then too the Servant will represent Israel. The Apostle Paul quoted this verse in 2 Corinthians 6:2. To him the present day was the day of salvation that Isaiah predicted. I take it that Paul meant that the day of salvation had begun because Christ had died on the cross, not that everything that will mark that day had arrived. Clearly God has not yet restored the land to Israel. The day of salvation will come to its glorious climax in the future Millennium.

**I have answered You** - This implies Messiah asked the Father. If we go back to Isa 49:4-5 Messiah said He "I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity," but then He changed the tenor and declared "surely the justice due to Me is with the LORD, and My reward with My God." And He describes His mission in v5 "To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel might be gathered to Him." It would seem that here the Father is responding to His Son.

**MacArthur** writes "Messiah is represented as asking for the grace of God to be given to sinners. God gives His **favorable** answer in a **time** of grace (cf. Isa 61:1) when salvation's day comes to the world (cf. Gal 4:4, 5; Heb 4:7). At His appointed time in the future, the Lord will, by His Servant, accomplish the final deliverance of Israel." (Ibid)

**Barnes** adds that "The giving of the world to the Messiah is represented as in answer to his prayer in Psalm 2:8 "**Ask** of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your (MESSIAH'S) inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession."

This verse (quoting the Septuagint, not the Hebrew - LXE = "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I succored [helped] thee") is cited in 2 Corinthians 6:2, where Paul applies this promise to all who hear the Gospel of salvation stressing the urgency of accepting God's grace and salvation in Christ (2 Cor 5:20,21) without delay (Pr 27:1; Jas 4:13,14)...

"AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU."  
Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," **behold** (USED TO GRAB OUR ATTENTION), **now** (NOT TOMORROW) is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"

**And in a day of salvation I have helped You** - What is this day of salvation? It is doubtless not just a single day because when paralleled with "favorable time" it speaks of a period of time that is opportune for the Messiah to complete His work that will provide salvation, not only for Israel (which is the primary focus in this context), but for the entire world. Personally I think this would culminate with the Cross, when the Messiah sacrificed Himself and made a full and final atonement for sin for all who will ever place their faith in Him. For example Peter describes how God helped Jesus in Acts 2:24 "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power."

**Barnes** explains **I have helped You** - "Have I imparted the assistance which is needful to accomplish the great purpose of salvation to the world. This passage is quoted by Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:2, and is by him applied to the times of the Messiah. It means that the time would come, fixed by the purpose of God, which would be a period in which he would be disposed, that is, well pleased, to extend salvation to the world through the Messiah: and that in that time he would afford all the requisite aid and help by his grace, for the extension of the true religion among the nations.

**Young** writes on **time** and **day** - The words *time* and *day* are significant, for they make clear that God does not act capriciously or haphazardly. At the time determined He performs His work. Our Lord expressed the same thought when at the wedding feast at Cana He remarked, "My hour is not yet come."

**Guzik** - The Lord God extended His help and preservation to the Messiah all through His earthly ministry. Yet if there is any specific

time that this promise was fulfilled, it was as Jesus died on the cross and trusted in the promise of resurrection. It is beautiful to imagine Jesus comforting and strengthening His soul with these promises as He anticipated and endured the ordeal of the cross. He could know, based on this promise, that the Lord would hear, help, and preserve Him.

**Salvation** (03444)(**yeshua**) is from a root in Arabic = "make wide" or "make sufficient" sarar = "narrow," = "be restricted" or "cause distress." The idea of wide connotes freedom from distress and ability to pursue one's objectives. It means to move from distress (enemies, natural catastrophies, plague or famine, sickness) to safety which requires deliverance. Generally deliverance comes from some an outside source. The one who brings deliverance is known as the "savior." **Yeshua** may be used in everyday life free of theological overtones at a well Moses saved daughters of Reuel (Ex 2:17) but generally has strong religious meaning. And so we read Yahweh wrought deliverance - God of our salvation Ps 68:19-20. Yeshua can also describe salvation through human agents empowered by God. While the NT idea of salvation is primarily forgiveness of sin, deliverance from sin's power and defeat of Satan, the OT only begins to point in this direction. And so in the OT the majority of references to **salvation** speak of Yahweh granting deliverance from real enemies and out of real catastrophies.

**Yeshuah** - 77v - note frequency in Isaiah 40-66.

Gen. 49:18; Exod. 14:13; Exod. 15:2; Deut. 32:15; 1 Sam. 2:1; 1 Sam. 14:45; 2 Sam. 10:11; 2 Sam. 22:51; 1 Chr. 16:23; 2 Chr. 20:17; Job 13:16; Job 30:15; Ps. 3:2; Ps. 3:8; Ps. 9:14; Ps. 13:5; Ps. 14:7; Ps. 18:50; Ps. 20:5; Ps. 21:1; Ps. 21:5; Ps. 22:1; Ps. 28:8; Ps. 35:3; Ps. 35:9; Ps. 42:5; Ps. 42:11; Ps. 43:5; Ps. 44:4; Ps. 53:6; Ps. 62:1; Ps. 62:2; Ps. 62:6; Ps. 67:2; Ps. 68:19; Ps. 69:29; Ps. 70:4; Ps. 74:12; Ps. 78:22; Ps. 80:2; Ps. 88:1; Ps. 89:26; Ps. 91:16; Ps. 96:2; Ps. 98:2; Ps. 98:3; Ps. 106:4; Ps. 116:13; Ps. 118:14; Ps. 118:15; Ps. 118:21; Ps. 119:123; Ps. 119:155; Ps. 119:166; Ps. 119:174; Ps. 140:7; Ps. 149:4; Isa. 12:2; Isa. 12:3; Isa. 25:9; Isa. 26:1; Isa. 26:18; Isa. 33:2; Isa. 33:6; Isa. 49:6; Isa. 49:8; Isa. 51:6; Isa. 51:8; Isa. 52:7; Isa. 52:10; Isa. 56:1; Isa. 59:11; Isa. 59:17; Isa. 60:18; Isa. 62:1; Jon. 2:9; Hab. 3:8

**And I will keep You - Keep** means to protect, guard, watch over.

**Gary Smith** proposes that "God will guard (PROTECT) the Servant through the dark days and then in the time of salvation God will make him to be a "covenant of the people" (bĕrît 'am), as in Isa 42:6." (New American Commentary – Isaiah) Smith does not explain what he things the dark days represent, but one might suggest they were the days leading up and including His crucifixion, for it was their that He in fact "cut covenant" and inaugurated the New Covenant in His blood.

**And give You for a covenant of the people-** (cf God's promise to Messiah - "I will appoint You as a covenant to the people." Isa 42:6) NLT paraphrases it "give you to the people as my covenant with them." Messiah, the Servant, is a **covenant of the people** in the sense that He personifies and provides the blessings of salvation to the believing **remnant** of Israel.

**Covenant** (01285)(**berit/berith/beriyth**) is it he most solemn and binding agreement known in the ancient world and was usually sealed by walking between pieces of a slain animal to symbolize that the same thing (death) would happen to the two parties that entered the covenant. A few commentators think this refers to the Abrahamic Covenant because of the mention of the restoration of the land as was promised to Abrahamic, Isaac and Jacob in that covenant. However, it may also allude to the New Covenant which like the Abrahamic Covenant also had to be entered into by grace through faith. And as noted below the New Covenant (like the Abrahamic) was initially given to the nation of Israel (but of course would be applicable to the Gentiles, to all who would enter it by grace through faith).

Jesus is the Mediator of a better covenant than the Old Covenant. This New Covenant is promised to Israel **Note:** both houses of the Chosen People) in Jeremiah

"Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the **house of Israel** and with the **house of Judah**, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer 31:31–34+).

**Comment** - This New Covenant to houses of Israel and Judah will not be fulfilled until the One Who was appointed a covenant to the people returns, Paul explaining that "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." 27"THIS IS **MY COVENANT** WITH THEM (NATION OF ISRAEL), WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." (Ro 11:26-27+).

**Wiersbe** has an interesting comment for those of us who are Gentiles asking - **How does this apply to the Gentiles?** If God had not restored the people from the Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem, He could not have fulfilled His promises concerning the Messiah. You see God had already prophesied, that is predicted, through some of His prophets that Jesus would be born in Israel, accomplish His ministry there, and be crucified there. Had there been no Bethlehem, where would Jesus have been born? Had there been no Nazareth, where would He have grown up? Had there been no Jerusalem and no temple, where would He have taught, suffered, and died? And He did this for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews.

**Guzik** - Jesus, the Messiah, doesn't merely bring a covenant; He is a covenant to the people.

**Oswalt** on the **Servant** (Messiah) made a **covenant to the people** - Somehow the Servant in himself will be the embodiment of God's covenant with his people. If the author does not here spell out the details of that embodiment, it is nonetheless clear that this is the Servant's role....As the embodiment of the covenant, the Servant will do several things: restore the land, apportion desolate heritages, and call forth the prisoners (v. 9). As mentioned above, this is the language of Jubilee. (NICOT-Isaiah)

**Barnes** on the **people** - The '**people**' (['am](#)) refers doubtless primarily to the Jews—the better portion of the Israelite people—the true Israel (Romans 2:28,29). (ED: cf other uses of PEOPLE in Isaiah which refer to Israel - Isa 11:10–16; 22:4; 25:8; 44:7; 51:4; 52:9, etc

**Constable** writes "He would make the Servant a covenant of the people, namely, He would make a new covenant with His people that the Servant would embody (cf. Isa 42:6; Jer. 31:31; 32:40; Ezek. 37:26; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8–12). The Servant would fulfill God's covenants with Israel."

**To restore the land** - NLT says "Through you (MESSIAH) I will reestablish **the land** of Israel and assign it to its own people again." So this refers to **the land** of Israel. When will this prophecy be fulfilled? While the Jews are back in the land of Palestine at the present time, this is not the fulfillment to which God refers in this prophecy. That fulfillment awaits the coming Millennium.

**Moody Bible Commentary** - This restoration is linked to the Servant's work and therefore does not refer to the return from Babylon (539 BC) but looks forward to the end-of-days restoration of Israel in the messianic kingdom.

In Acts we see that restoration of the Kingdom was ever in the minds and on the hearts of the Jewish people, even the disciples of Jesus, who (in what appear to be their final words and last question to the Resurrected Jesus) "were asking Him, saying, **"Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"**" (Acts 1:6-see in depth discussion; see discussion of a parallel passage - Acts 3:19, cf Joel 3:16-21+) There it is! The Jews of Jesus' day expected the Messiah would now **restore** the Kingdom now that He had defeated the greatest enemy "death." It is vital to note that Jesus did not correct them saying for example "I was not sent to restore the Kingdom to Israel." He did not say that. And the reason He did not refute the gist of their question, is because that is part of the Mission that He will accomplish at His Second Coming, at which time He will **restore the land** to Israel and establish His Messianic Kingdom. These Scriptural facts refute the [false teaching of replacement theology](#), which say (among other things) that Jesus will not **restore the land** as prophesied here in Isaiah!

**Barnes** on the idea of **restore** - The language is derived from restoring the ruins of a land that has been overrun by an enemy, when the cities have been demolished, and the country laid waste. (Sadly, then Barnes all of a sudden says this is to be spiritualized [\[interpreted allegorically - see explanation\]](#) and is not taken literally, and as a result he ends up applying it to church! Once again we need to be reminded of the basic [hermeneutical](#) principle that context is king in interpretation [\[Keep Context King\]](#) and when we run afiel from the context, we invariably run into the field of misinterpretation. We must zealously, continually seek to **Be Bereans**, no matter whose commentary we are reading, including that by yours truly! - see Acts 17:11+).

Note that the KJV translates **restore the land** as "to establish the earth" (Isa 49:8 KJV) which is possible but is confusing because the [context](#) is describing the nation of Israel, and so the land would refer to the Middle East, the land of Palestine (cf God's promise of land to Israel, a promise He has not yet fully fulfilled! - Ge 15:18+)

**MacArthur** - When the Lord saves and regathers Israel, they will return to the Land, to which Joshua brought their ancestors after their exit from Egypt, now restored and glorious (Isa 44:26; Jos 13:1-8). (MSB)

**To make them inherit the desolate** (Hebrew = [shamen/samen](#)) **heritages** - **Them** in context is Israel. There is a play on words here which describe Israel as "possessing their possessions." The Septuagint has "inherit the inheritance." Based on this prophecy from the Non-lying God (cf Titus 1:2), after 1000's of years, Israel would finally and fully **possess the possession promised** to their father Abraham (Ge 15:18+) and then to Isaac and then to Jacob. Israel had never fully possessed this land at any time in the past. It is only when Messiah returns and "all Israel is saved," (all those that believe in Messiah) that redeemed Israel will possess all that God had promised.

Isaiah 54:3 is a prophetic promise to Israel (where **desolate** is the same word [shamen/samen](#)) which will be fulfilled at the Second Coming of Messiah and establishment of His Millennial Kingdom

"For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left. And your descendants will possess nations and will resettle the **desolate** (Hebrew = [shamen/samen](#)) cities.

In Isaiah 61:4 there is another prophetic promise to Israel which also will be fulfilled at the Second Coming of Messiah and establishment of His Millennial Kingdom.

Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former **devastations** (Hebrew = [shamen/samen](#)); And they will repair the ruined cities, The **desolations** (Hebrew = [shamen/samen](#)) of many generations.

**Isaiah 49:9 Saying to those who are bound, 'Go forth,' To those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' Along the roads they will feed, And their pasture will be on all bare heights.**

- **to those who are bound** - Isa 42:7 Isa 61:1 Ps 69:33 102:20 107:10-16 146:7 Zec 9:11,12 Lu 4:18 Col 1:13 1Pe 2:9
- **To those who are in darkness** - Isa 9:2 42:16 60:1,2 Lu 1:79 Joh 8:12 Ac 26:18 2Co 4:4-6 Eph 5:8,14 1Th 5:5,6
- **Along the roads they will feed** - Isa 5:17 55:1,2 65:13 Ps 22:26 23:1,2 Eze 34:13-15,23,29 Joe 3:18 Joh 6:53-58 10:9
- **And their pasture will be on all bare heights** - Dt 32:13

### THE CAPTIVES WILL BE SET FREE

**W E Vine** writes that Isaiah 49:9-13 "give one of the most glorious descriptions of the effects of Christ's Second Advent. The promises exceed anything that took place in the return from captivity under Cyrus. The people are depicted as a flock returning home"

**Keil and Delitzsch** comment that "The person of the servant of Jehovah (MESSIAH) now falls into the background again, and the prophecy proceeds with a description of the return of the redeemed. The people returning home are represented as a flock. By the roads that they take to their homes, they are able to obtain sufficient pasture, without being obliged to go a long way round in order to find a sufficient supply; and even upon bare sandy hills (Isaiah 41:18) there is pasture found for them."

**Oswalt** comments that "The first half of this verse identifies the work of the Servant in proclaiming release to imprisoned ones. That this work is to be done through the Servant is clear from Isaiah 61:1-4, where it is the agent of the Lord, not the Lord himself, who does the work. That passage also reminds the reader that while physical imagery is being used in both places, it is imagery, imagery of that spiritual blindness, desolation, disinheritance, and imprisonment that goes far beyond any merely physical release." (NICOT-Isaiah)

**Saying** - This continues the theme of Isa 49:9 of Messiah **the covenant of the people**, Who will restore the land of Israel and allow Israel to possess their possessions promised by God.

**John MacArthur** - At the Messiah's **second advent**, Israel's condition will change from captivity and oppression to contentment and prosperity such as that enjoyed by a well-fed, protected, and watered flock of sheep. These ideal conditions will be enjoyed by the faithful **remnant** returning for their kingdom in Israel. John reveals that this condition is a foretaste of heaven (Rev 7:16, 17). (MacArthur Study Bible)

**Cornerstone Biblical Commentary** - Through the servant, prisoners were beckoned to come out and enjoy freedom (Isa 49:9).

**Constable** comments that "Part of the salvation to appear in that favorable time will involve the liberation of captives, physical and spiritual (cf. Isa 61:1-4)."

**To those who are bound** (tied, imprisoned) **Go forth** (**imperative**) - **NET** "You will say to the prisoners." The Septuagint translates **bound** ([asar](#)) with **desmos** which literally is a bond or fetter. Are these people who are literally bound by ropes or figuratively bound by sin? This same word **bound** is used in Isaiah 61:1+ in the phrase "to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners ([asar](#))." Of course, this latter phrase was quoted by Jesus in his first synagogue "sermon" in Luke 4:18+ marking the beginning of His ministry as well as speaking of the mission of His ministry.

**Believer's Study Bible** comments that "The 'prisoners' are those in the bondage of sin and not merely the captives in Babylon."

To those who are in darkness, **Show yourselves** ([imperative](#)) - NET has "to those who are in dark dungeons, 'Emerge.'" Both commands (go forth, show yourselves) speak of liberation. When Messiah returns to save the believing **remnant** of Israel, they will be set free from bondage to sin and spiritual darkness.

**Barnes** on **show yourselves** - Hebrew, 'Reveal,' or manifest yourselves; that is, as those who come out of a dark cell come into light, so do you, who have been confined in the darkness of sin, come forth into the light of the Sun of righteousness, and be manifest as the redeemed.

**Show** ([01540](#))(**galah**) means to reveal, to be revealed, to uncover, to remove. The Septuagint translates **galah** with the Greek verb **anakalupto** meaning to be uncovered or be without a veil. This last meaning (without a veil) is interesting because in their unredeemed condition the Jews are described as having their minds "hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same **veil remains unlifted** (*me anakalupto*), because it is removed in Christ." (2 Cor 3:14). In other words when the Jews hear the OT read, they cannot understand that it points to the Messiah, but when a Jew comes to know Jesus by grace through faith, the veil is lifted and one can see the Messiah foreshadowed throughout the Old Testament!

Paul writes of the extraction of a sinner from the domain of darkness and transferred as a saint into the kingdom of Christ...

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col 1:13-14+).

**Oswalt** comments that "The second half of the verse (Isa 49:9b) begins to speak of the return to God's land that the Servant will have made possible. That discussion extends through v. 12. The language is very familiar to readers of the book. Three or four common images are used: flocks safely grazing (Isa 17:2; 40:10-11; 41:18; 43:19; 63:11); the provisions of the exodus (Isa 43:19-20; 51:10; 63:11-14); an easy, well-graded highway (Isa 11:16; 19:23; 36:8; 40:3-4; 42:16; 62:10). All this is in answer to the implicit question: It is easy to talk about restoration, but how do we get from where we are to where we need to be? The Servant's ministry is not merely to set them free from the bondage of sin but also to lead them the full way home to God's presence. (NICOT-Isaiah)

**Constable** comments that "God's sheep will enjoy feeding even on the roads and formerly barren heights of their land (cf. Isaiah 17:2; 40:10-11; 41:18; 43:19; 63:11). This is a picture of abundant pasturage, and it represents millennial blessings."

**Cornerstone Biblical Commentary** - Through the servant, prisoners were beckoned to come out and enjoy freedom (Isa 49:9). They will be like "sheep, grazing in green pastures" (Isa 49:9), as echoed in John 10:11-16; 21:15-17.

## ISRAEL'S RETURN LED BY THE SERVANT (ISAIAH 49:9b-12)

**Gary Smith** on Isaiah 49:9b-12 - The final portion of this section refers to what "they" will do, the ones the Servant will set free. Using the imagery of sheep being cared for by a shepherd (cf. Isa 40:9-11), the Servant promises these people that they will have plenty to eat. (New American Commentary)

**Barnes** - In the remainder of this verse, and in the following verses, the **Messiah** is represented under the image of a **Shepherd**, Who leads forth His flock to green fields, and who takes care that they shall be guarded from the heat of the sun, and shall not hunger nor thirst. The phrase 'they shall feed in the ways,' means, probably, that in the way in which they were going they should find abundant food. They should not be compelled to turn aside for pasturage, or to go and seek for it in distant places. It is equivalent to the language which so often occurs, that God would provide for the needs of his people, even when passing through a desert, and that he would open before them unexpected sources of supply.

**Along the roads they will feed** - What is the meaning of this statement? NET has "they will graze beside the roads" indicating had rich and abundant the provisions will be at this time (Millennium). As **Vine** explains "they will be able to have sufficient supplies of food on their journeys without going long distances to get food."

**And their pasture will be on all bare heights** - This describes the land as fertile, and so the liberated people experience abundant provision. Given that these descriptions occur in the context of the Second Coming, they would describe the blessed conditions the saved Jews will experience as they enter into the earthly Kingdom of God (Millennium).

**Barnes** on **all bare heights** - means, that on the hills and mountains, that are naturally barren and unproductive, they should find an abundance of food. To see the force of this, we are to remember that in many parts of the East the hills and mountains are utterly destitute of vegetation. This is the case with the mountainous regions of Horeb and Sinai, and even with the mountains about Jerusalem, and with the hills and mountains in Arabia Deserta. The idea here is, that in the ways, or paths that were commonly

traveled, and where all verdure would be consumed or trodden down by the caravans, and on the hills that were usually barren and desolate, they would find abundance. God would supply them as if he should make the green grass spring up in the hard-trodden way, and on the barren and rocky hills vegetation should start up suddenly in abundance, and all their needs should be supplied. This is an image which we have frequently had in Isaiah, and perhaps the meaning may be, that to his people the Redeemer would open unexpected sources of comfort and joy; that in places and times in which they would scarcely look for a supply of their spiritual needs, he would suddenly meet and satisfy them as if green grass for flocks and herds should suddenly start up in the down-trodden way, or luxuriant vegetation burst forth on the sides and the tops of barren, rocky, and desolate hills.

**Isaiah 49:10 "They will not hunger or thirst, Nor will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; For He who has compassion on them will lead them And will guide them to springs of water."**

- **They will not hunger or thirst** - Mt 5:6 Joh 6:35 Rev 7:16,17
- **Nor will the scorching heat or sun strike them down** - Isa 4:6 Isa 25:4 Isa 32:2 Ps 121:5,6
- **He who has compassion on them will lead them** - Isa 54:10 Ps 23:2-4 Jer 31:9 Eze 34:23 Joh 10:3,4

## **GOD THROUGH MESSIAH SUPPLIES EVERY NEED**

Remember that this prophetic promise is addressed primarily to Israel, specifically the believing Jewish remnant who survive the Great Tribulation and who repent and return by grace through faith to Him, acknowledging Jesus as their Messiah and Redeemer (Zech 12:10-14+).

**Wiersbe** adds that Isaiah 49:10-12 "look beyond the deliverance from Babylon in 536 B.C. toward the future glorious kingdom. The Lord will call the Jewish people from the ends of the earth and gather them again in their land (Isa. 14:1-3; 35:6; 40:11; 43:19)." (Be Comforted)

**They will not hunger or thirst** - God provides for all their needs. Is this not what our God does for all of us today in Christ? As Paul discovered after experiencing times of plenty and times of hunger, God's provision was sufficient

Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things through Him Who (CONTINUALLY) strengthens me. (Php 4:11-13+)

**Barnes** - All their needs shall be abundantly provided for, as a Shepherd will provide for His flock. In the book of Revelation, this entire passage is applied (Rev 7:16,17) to the happiness of the redeemed in heaven, and the use which is made of it there is not foreign to the sense in Isaiah. It means that the Messiah as a Shepherd shall abundantly satisfy all the needs of His people; and it may with as much propriety be applied to the joys of heaven, as to the happiness which they will experience on earth. Their longing desires for holiness and salvation; their hungering and thirsting after righteousness (Matthew 5:6), shall be abundantly satisfied.

**Nor will the scorching heat or sun strike them down** - God protects them from the elements. The Septuagint translates **heat** with the noun *kauson* which describes a burning heat (Mt 20:12, a scorching east wind (Jas 1:11).

**Barnes** - the burning heat of the sun shall not oppress them—an image of refreshment, protection, and joy, as when the traveler in burning sands finds the grateful shade of a rock or of a grove (see the notes at Isaiah 4:6; 14:3; 25:4; 32:2). The word rendered here '**heat**' ([sharab](#)), denotes properly heat, burning; and then the heated vapor which in burning deserts produces the phenomenon of the mirage (Isa 35:7). It is equivalent here to intense heat; and means that they shall not be exposed to any suffering like that of the intense heat of the burning sun reflected from sandy wastes.

Isaiah 4 gives a prophetic description which parallels his description of protection in Isaiah 49:10...

When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, (THIS WILL TAKE PLACE PRIOR TO THE Millennium - SEE Zech 13:1+) 5 then (WHEN? AFTER THE PURGING OF ISRAEL - SEE COMMENT BELOW FOR NAMES OF THIS TIME OF PURGING) the LORD will create over the whole area of **Mount Zion** and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a canopy (THIS CORRESPONDS TO MESSIAH ESTABLISHING HIS MESSIANIC KINGDOM IN THE Millennium). 6 There will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain. (Isa. 4:4-6+)

**Comment** - The time of (spiritual) cleansing and purging described in Isaiah 4:4 corresponds to the [Great Tribulation](#) (aka Time of Jacob's Distress of Jer 30:7 = "A Time of Distress" of Da 12:1) which culminates (and is terminated) by the [Second Coming of Christ](#). Zech 13:8+ predicts that "two parts in it (LAND OF ISRAEL) will be cut off and perish; but the third will be left in it (THE BELIEVING JEWISH REMNANT WILL BE LEFT AND WILL ENTER INTO THE MESSIAH'S KINGDOM)."

**MacArthur** - The future inhabitants of Jerusalem will enjoy the Lord's protective covering over the glory on **Mount Zion**. This recalls Ezekiel's prophecy of the return of the Shekinah to the temple (Ezek 43:2-5). (The MacArthur Study Bible)

This picture in Isaiah 49:10 also reminds me of the beautiful description in Psalm 121

Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD is your keeper; The LORD is your shade on your right hand. 6 The sun will not smite you by day, Nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul. 8 The LORD will guard your going out and your coming in From this time forth and forever. (see commentary)

**For** - Term of explanation. Explains why God does what He does to a people who do not deserve such beneficent treatment (His mercy) and secondly (His guidance).

**He Who has compassion on them will lead them** - Messiah will lead believing Israel, not because they are worthy, but because He has compassion on them. He is a covenant keeping God and His treatment of the believing **remnant** reflects His faithfulness to the New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Jer 31:31+).

**Compassion** (mercy) ([07355](#)) ([racham](#) from **rechem** = womb ~ suggesting a connection between the place of the developing child and the strong feelings of love a mother has toward her child) speaks a deep love of God for His people Israel. God is touched by the pain and grief of his people. Baker adds that racham "pictures a deep, kindly sympathy and sorrow felt for another who has been struck with affliction or misfortune, accompanied with a desire to relieve the suffering." (WSNT) The **Septuagint** translates **racham** with the verb [eleeo](#) meaning to be greatly concerned about someone and to help someone because of pity.

**Constable** - The picture continues along the lines of the Good Shepherd providing for and protecting His flock, compassionately leading them and supplying all their needs (cf. Ex 12:21; 17:6; Ps. 23; Rev. 7:16-17).

**And will guide them to springs of water** - In Palestine water is highly valued because of its scarcity, but here the Messiah will lead the believing remnant to abundant supply.

This description recalls Ex 17:6 when Israel was in the desert and in need of water and Moses declared...

Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

**Comment** - In the NT we read that the physical rock from which came living water was a spiritual picture of Jesus for as Paul taught "the rock was Christ." (1 Cor 10:4). And here we read of that very Messiah, guiding Israel once again to springs of water!

**Barnes** - The whole figure in this verse is taken from the character of a **faithful Shepherd** who conducts His flock to places where they may feed in plenty; who guards them from the intense heat of a burning sun on sandy plains; and who leads them beside cooling and refreshing streams. It is a most beautiful image of the tender care of the Great Shepherd of his people in a world like this—a world in its main features, in regard to real comforts, not unaptly compared to barren hills, and pathless burning sands.

See the related study on [Christ The Breaker](#) which is taken from Messiah's role for Israel described in Micah

"I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold; Like a flock in the midst of its pasture They will be noisy with men. The Breaker goes up before them; They break out, pass through the gate and go out by it. So their King goes on before them, And the LORD at their head." (Micah 2:12-13-[note](#))

As one reads Isaiah's description, it reminds one of the description of heaven recorded by John in the Revelation...

They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their Shepherd, **and will guide them to springs of the water of life**; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes." (Rev 7:16-17+)

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## Isaiah 49:11 "I will make all My mountains a road, And My highways will be raised up.

- Isa 11:16 Isa 35:8-10 40:3,4 43:19 57:14 62:10 Ps 107:4,7 Lu 3:4,5 Joh 14:6

**I will make all My mountains a road and My highways will be raised up-** The One Who made the mountains can level! **Raised up highways** would be elevated from the surrounding desert terrain (cf Isa 43:19, 57:14). The picture is of all obstructions obliterated that His people might return to the land! This is a continuation of the blessed conditions in Isa 49:10 which describe the days of the Millennium which is in essence a fulfillment of the Messianic promises God had given to Israel. Messiah now reigning as King of kings will usher in a reign of safety and security to which the weary exiles may come streaming in return.

As **W E Vine** says "Comfortingly He speaks of **'My mountains'** and **'My ways.'**" They are His by creation and therefore He can order for their alteration so as to make everything favorable for the return of His people. All this is applicable to our present experiences. The mountains of difficulty which face us in our pilgrim path can become highways of communion with God and of joyous fellowship with His people, if we trust in the Lord with all our heart and present to Him our whole being for the fulfillment of His will." (Collected Writings of W. E. Vine)

**Redpath** applies this truth to our lives - Notice it says each...mountain (or, as in the King James Version, **all** ... mountains). "There is no exception in that great, but little word, **all**. There is nothing in life – no obstacle, no loneliness, no trial, no sorrow – which may not be a way into God's richest blessing. There is no situation of entanglement, nothing that you can possibly conceive, but this can be part of God's way to make His mountain a way of deliverance...."[When you make] the commitment of your life to Jesus Christ without reservation, then you can go to meet your mountains and meet obstacles in Jesus – not to meet them outside Him, but in Christ. If you do that, then the mountain between you and God's land of blessing becomes the way into it." (Quoted by Guzik)

**Isaiah** had spoken about roads and highways during this glorious reign of the Messiah, both of these passages below also describing conditions in the Millennium....

Isaiah 11:16+ And there will be a highway from Assyria For the remnant of His people who will be left, Just as there was for Israel In the day that they came up out of the land of Egypt.

Isaiah 35:8-10 A highway will be there, a roadway, And it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, But it will be for him who walks that way, And fools will not wander on it. 9No lion will be there, Nor will any vicious beast go up on it; These will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk there, 10And the ransomed of the LORD will return And come with joyful shouting to Zion, With everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, And sorrow and sighing will flee away.

## Isaiah 49:12 "Behold, these will come from afar; And lo, these will come from the north and from the west, And these from the land of Sinim."

- these shall - Isa 2:2,3 11:10,11 43:5,6 60:9-14 66:19,20 Ps 22:27 72:10,11,17 Mic 4:2 Zec 2:11 8:20-23 Mt 8:11 Lu 13:29 Rev 7:9 11:15

## WORLDWIDE RESTORATION

**Behold, these will come from afar and lo, these will come from the north and from the west-** The **land** is restored and the highways are prepared to receive the regathering of **His people** (cf Isa 49:13, Isa 49:6). Clearly this prophecy describes more than Judah's return (when only some of the Jews actually returned others choosing to remain in Babylon) from exile in Babylon.

He is speaking of the regathering of Israel, echoing His earlier prophetic promise'

Do not fear, for I am with you (GOD'S PROMISE TO ISRAEL); I will bring your offspring from the east, And gather you from the west. 6 "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar And My daughters from the ends of the earth, (Isaiah 43:5-6).

**And these from the land of Sinim** - Some say **Sinim** (found nowhere else in the Bible) is China which is possible but we cannot be dogmatic. The Septuagint suggests a different interpretation as the English translation reads **"from the land of the Persians."** The NLT paraphrase (which is also an interpretation) has "and from as far south as Egypt," but we simply cannot know with certainty. The point is that this restoration is worldwide.

**NET Note** - The precise location of the land of Sinim is uncertain, but since the north and west are mentioned in the previous line, it was a probably located in the distant east or south.

**Isaiah 49:13 Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people And will have compassion on His afflicted.**

- **O heavens** - Isa 42:10,11 44:23 52:9 55:12 Ps 96:11-13 98:4-9 Lu 2:13,14 15:10 Rev 5:8-13 7:9-12
- **the Lord** - Isa 12:1 40:1,2 51:3 61:2,3 66:13,14 Jer 31:13 2Co 7:6 2Th 2:16,17

## **ALL CREATION GIVES PRAISE TO GOD**

**J Vernon McGee** explains that "God's purposes in the earth center in the nation Israel. When they are back in the land, then both the heavens and the earth can rejoice. Today, however, everything is more or less out of place as far as the world is concerned. Israel should be in their land, in the place of blessing, serving God. They are not. The church should be in heaven with Christ, but the church is still in the world. The Devil should be in hell, but he is walking around the earth seeking whom he may devour. The Lord Jesus Christ should be sitting upon the throne of the earth, ruling the earth, but He is at the right hand of God. There are many things that have to be shifted around and put in the right socket. Then the lines of Robert Browning as written in "Pippa Passes" will be true: "God's in His heaven: All's right with the world," which at the moment just do not fit the world in which you and I live." (Thru the Bible Commentary)

**Constable** comments that "Isaiah concluded by calling on the whole created universe to rejoice because the Lord had comforted His people (cf. Isa 40:1; 47:6) and had shown compassion on His formerly afflicted nation (cf. Isa 42:10–13; 44:23; 45:8; 52:8–9; 55:12–13). **This is rejoicing over deliverance from sin, not just exile**. When the Servant completes His work of salvation, the whole creation, not just humankind, will experience liberation from the effects of the Fall (cf. Ro 8:19–22+). (Bold added)

**Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains!**- This personifies all of Creation singing a song of praise at the fulfillment of Messiah's Mission as described in the previous passages. And certainly God's faithfulness to keep His promises should always [emote](#) praise from His people!

**Oswalt** explains that "The language is that of ecstatic praise. The verbs for shout and exult occur most frequently in the Psalms, but the book in which both occur next in frequency is Isaiah. This element of exultation is clearly at the heart of what the book is about. The book rings with the certainty of God's ultimate triumph for the sake of his people, no matter who the enemy is: Assyria, Babylon, or the great enemy, sin. Isaiah knows that God will be the victor, and that not only his own people but all people will be the beneficiaries." (NICOT-Isaiah)

**For** - Term of explanation. The reason for the universal praise service is that Yahweh had shown **comfort** and **compassion** to His people Israel (the believing remnant). Recall that this last section of Isaiah 40-66 began with the words "**Comfort, O comfort My people (ISRAEL),**" says your God." (Isa 40:1). The previous passages in Isaiah 49 described some of the elements of Yahweh's **comfort**.

**The LORD has comforted** - The Hebrew verb [naham/nacham](#) is used in Isaiah 40:1 (Comfort...comfort) and in the several passages that speak of Jehovah's future comfort to His Chosen People...

Isaiah 51:3 Indeed, the LORD will **comfort** ([naham/nacham](#)) Zion; He will **comfort** ([naham/nacham](#)) all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in her, Thanksgiving and sound of a melody.

Isaiah 51:12 "I, even I, am He who **comforts** ([naham/nacham](#)) you. Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies And of the son of man who is made like grass,

Isaiah 52:9 Break forth, shout joyfully together, You waste places of Jerusalem; For the LORD has **comforted** ([naham/nacham](#)) His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.

Isaiah 61:2 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD And the day of vengeance of our God; To **comfort** ([naham/nacham](#)) all who mourn,

Isaiah 66:13 "As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; And you will be **comforted** ([naham/nacham](#)) in Jerusalem."

**His people - His people** in this context is primarily the **saved remnant of Israel**. Will there be saved Gentiles also? Of course and so very likely this group will include Gentiles given the fact that the Servant's mission was to be "a Light of the nations (Gentiles), so that (God's) salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (Isa 49:6).

**Comforted** (05162)([naham/nacham](#)) is a verb which means to be sorry, to console, to comfort. According to the TWOT **nacham** reflects the idea of "breathing deeply" and hence refers to the physical display of one's feelings, such as sorrow, or in this case compassion or comfort. The Lord had compassion on His people (i.e., He became sorry for them because of the oppression their enemies placed on them [Jdg. 2:18]) **Nacham** means to comfort or console oneself "thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." (Ge 24:67). Jacob "refused to be comforted" when he believed that Joseph had been killed (Ge 37:35). To console is synonymous with showing kindness to someone, as when David consoled Hanun, king of the Ammonites, over the death of his father (2 Sa 10:2).

The **Septuagint** renders **nacham** here with the Greek verb [parakaleo](#) (**para** = beside + **kaleo** = call) which has the basic picture of calling someone to oneself, to call to one's side, to encourage, to instill someone with courage or cheer and so to comfort (used this way in Mt 5:4+, cf Lk 16:25+).

**And will have compassion on His afflicted**- The Hebrew word for **afflicted** ([ani](#)) is translated in the Septuagint with the word [tapeinos](#) which literally speaks of a low position and figuratively of people who have little power of significance. Tapeinos can also describe one's emotional state as downhearted, or depressed. In a good sense tapeinos refers to those who are humble.

**Compassion** (mercy)([07355](#)) is the same word used in verse 10. See there for [racham](#)

Isaiah prophesied in chapter 12

Then you will say on that day, "I will give thanks to You, O LORD; For although You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, And You comfort me. (Isa 12:1+)

**Isaiah 49:14 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, And the Lord has forgotten me."**

- **The Lord** - Isa 40:27 Ps 22:1 31:22 77:6-9 89:38-46 Ro 11:1-5
- **my Lord** - Ps 13:1 Jer 23:39 La 5:20

## **ZION'S FEAR THAT GOD HAS FORSAKEN THEM**

**Oswalt** gives an excellent summary of Isaiah 49:14-26 - The **unit is divided in two** with the **longer segment** (Isaiah 49:14-23) first. It deals with the insistence by God that far from forgetting Zion's concerns (Isa 49:14), God keeps her future constantly before him (Isa 49:15). She may feel that with all her children dead and her husband having forsaken her, her life is over; but God says that he will bring her children from all over the world. She will not be put to shame if she puts her trust in God (Isa 49:23). The **second segment** (Isa 49:24-26) addresses a question that the assertion in Isa 49:23 raises. Is God's love strong enough to defeat the tyrants who hold the people of the world in thrall? The answer is a resounding yes, capped by a typical Isaianic threefold appellative asserting God's loving power (Isa 49:26).

**Charles Ryrie** summarizes Isaiah 49:14-26 writing that "Here the Lord encourages His people who will be in captivity. He has not forgotten them (Isa 49:14-18); He will restore them to their land (Isa 49:19-23) and punish their enemies (Isa 49:24-26). The return of such a large group described in Isa 49:19-21 must look beyond the relatively small group that returned from Babylon to the second coming of Christ (Mt 24:31).

**But** - Term of contrast. The previous section (Isa 49:8-13) described the work of the Servant in hopeful terms which led to an exultation of praise in Isa 49:13. In response **Zion** (the people of Israel) issue what amounts to a complaint saying "That sounds great, but You have forgotten us."

**Rejoicing** (based on truth) in the previous section now turns to **complaining** (which is based on not trusting in truth).

**Wiersbe** writes "So sing the people of God as they contemplate their future deliverance (Isa 49:13), but the people of the Captivity and those left in "the desolate inheritances" are not so happy. Instead of singing, they are complaining. The Lord assures them of His love by comparing Himself to a compassionate mother (Isa 49:14-23), a courageous warrior (Isa 49:24-26), and a constant lover (Isa 50:1-3)." (Be Comforted)

**Constable** writes that "This pericope focuses on God's salvation of the Israelites through the future ministry of the Servant. Isaiah used the figure of **Zion** being the **wife of Yahweh** to present the Lord's relationship with His chosen people....Isaiah often used **Zion** when he spoke of Jerusalem or the Israelites in the future, as here."

**Zion** (06726) ([Tsiyyon](#)) is a proper noun the which may mean fortress (but this is debated). The name Zion **does** not occur at all from Genesis to 1 Samuel. In the present context Zion is personified and stands for the people of Israel who feel God has forgotten them.

**The LORD has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me** - As shown in the Scriptures below that use the Hebrew verb 'azab, over and over Yahweh says in essence that He has not forgotten Israel.

**Forsaken** (left) (05800) (['azab](#)) basically means to depart from something -- to leave, to forsake (48x), to leave (26x); "left" (22x), to loose, to depart, to abandon. This is quite an accusation by the people of Israel, for the fact is that this same verb is first used in Isaiah 1:4 where Isaiah says "They (Israel) have **abandoned** (['azab](#)) the LORD!" (Used again in Isa 1:28). In spite of Israel's forsaking their "Husband" Jehovah, God says "I, the LORD, will answer them Myself, as the God of Israel I will not **forsake** (['azab](#)) them." (Isa 41:17). Again in Isa 42:16ESV God says "I do not **forsake** (['azab](#)) them."

We read of Yahweh's lament and then His promise of **compassion** to Israel...

For the LORD has called you, Like a wife **forsaken** (['azab](#)) and grieved in spirit, Even like a wife of one's youth when she is rejected," Says your God. 7 "For a brief moment I **forsook** (['azab](#)) you, But with great compassion I will gather you. (Isa 54:6-7)

In Isaiah 60:15 God promises...

Whereas you have been **forsaken** (['azab](#)) and hated With no one passing through, **I will make you an everlasting pride, A joy from generation to generation.**

In Isaiah 62:4 Jehovah gives Israel another promise...

It will no longer be said to you, "**Forsaken** (['azab](#))," Nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; But you will be called, "My delight is in her," And your land, "Married"; For the LORD delights in you, And to Him your land will be married.

In another rebuttal to their claim that Jehovah had forgotten Israel, God says

And they will call them, "The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD"; And you will be called, "Sought out, a city not **forsaken** (['azab](#))," (Isa 62:12)

**Forgotten** (07911) ([shakach/shakah](#)) means to **forget**, ignore, to cease to care, (*Niphal*) to be forgotten, (*Piel*) to cause to forget, (*Hiphil*) to make or cause to forget, (*Hithpael*) to be forgotten. The Lxx translates with the Greek verb *epilanthanomai*, where the **epi-** preposition intensifies the meaning and thus conveys the idea of not just forgetting but **"completely forgetting."** They Jews are saying Jehovah has completely forgotten them!

**Isaiah 49:15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you.**

- **Can a woman forget her nursing child** - 1Ki 3:26,27 Ps 103:13 Mal 3:17 Mt 7:11
- **Even these may forget** - Lev 26:29 Dt 28:56,57 2Ki 6:28,29 11:1,2 La 4:3,10 Ro 1:31
- **but I will not forget you** - Isa 44:21 Jer 31:20 Hos 11:1 Ro 11:28,29

## **THE LORD WILL NEVER FORGET ISRAEL**

This is the first of two striking replies which present God's argument in the strongest way possible that His people are safe and secure and He has not and will not ever forget them. One wonders how commentators can read this and still espouse the [fallacious](#) idea that God is finished with Israel? For example, read this interpretation by Ortlund of this section...

God is addressing Zion. In Isaiah's culture, a city was thought of in the feminine gender. That's why this final section of the passage (49:15–50:3) is filled with images of Lady Zion and her children—in our terms today, **the church and her members.** (Bold added)

**Comment** - When is **Zion** ever equated with the **Church**? Never! Isaiah is NOT addressing the Church but Zion (Ortlund even admits that much). But then out of the blue draws a patently absurd conclusion that **Zion is the Church**. This genre of interpretation is the reason one must be very careful reading commentaries on Isaiah, for many (possibly most) fail to interpret the text literally. I greatly respect the series "[Preaching the Word](#)" where Ortlund's work on Isaiah is found, but clearly not all of the volumes of this generally excellent series are of equal accuracy in regard to interpretation of Bible books with eschatological passages (e.g., in the volume on Daniel by Stortz in this series there are 176 references to the "church" and 72 references to Israel! E.g., Stortz writes "*We are the offspring of the woman, the Church*" referring to the Woman in Rev 12, and thus he totally jettisons Israel from Revelation 12! See [Garland for excellent literal exposition of Revelation 12](#) And this is just one of many examples.). Again, the reader is strongly exhorted to **Be a Berean** (even in reading the notes you are reading!)(Acts 17:11+)!

**Can a woman forget her nursing child And have no compassion on the son of her womb?**- The logical answer to this rhetorical question is that it would be highly unlikely for a mother to either forget or fail to show compassion to her offspring.

**Wiersbe** - The Bible emphasizes the fatherhood of God, but there is also a "motherhood" side to God's nature that we must not forget. God is compassionate and comforts us as a mother comforts her children (66:13). Isaiah pictures Israel as a nursing child, totally dependent on the Lord who will never forget them or forsake them.

**Even these may forget, but I will not forget you** - Now he proposes a very unlikely possibility, that a mother might forget her offspring. But such an event is very unlikely. Even more unlikely is that God would ever forget Israel. In fact God flatly states that it will not happen.

**NET Note** -The argument of v. 15 seems to develop as follows: The Lord has an innate attachment to Zion, just like a mother does for her infant child. But even if mothers were to suddenly abandon their children, the Lord would never forsake Zion. In other words, the Lord's attachment to Zion is like a mother's attachment to her infant child, but even stronger.

**Moody Bible Commentary** - even these may forget, for the love of a woman for her child is not as sure or consistent as the love that the Lord exhibits toward His people. God will never forget Zion.

Other Scriptures repeatedly affirm God's faithfulness to not forget or reject **His people Israel**...

Isaiah 44:21-22 "Remember these things, O Jacob, And Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant, O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me. "I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."

**Moody Bible Commentary** - The call to remembrance is reinforced by God's assurance that He will not forget His special servant, His chosen nation. The Lord summons Israel to return.

**MacArthur** - Further reassurances of God's sovereign grace at work on behalf of Israel were given (43:25). God had blotted out their sins written in His book against them (cf. Rev 20:12). (MacArthur Study Bible)

**Warren Wiersbe** - God formed **Israel** (Isa. 44:21, 24), forgave **His people** their sins (Isa 49:22; see Isa 43:25), and is **glorified in them** (Isa 44:23). He speaks to His people and is **faithful to keep His Word** (Isa 49:26).

Jeremiah 31:20+ "Is Ephraim (USED HERE FOR ISRAEL) My dear son? Is he a delightful child? Indeed, as often as I have spoken against him, **I certainly still remember him**; Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him," declares the LORD.

**NET Note comment** - "Is Ephraim a dear son to me or a child of delight?" For the substitution of Israel for Ephraim and the plural pronouns for the singular see the note on v. 18. According to BDB 210 s.v. h] 1.c the question is rhetorical having the force of an impassioned affirmation. See 1 Sam 2:27; Job 41:9 (41:1 HT) for parallel usage.

**Moody Bible Comment** on Jeremiah 31:18-20 - Jeremiah ended this section by recording the grief, shame, and contrition Ephraim (Israel) will express when she is restored to the Lord. Though she had behaved like an untrained calf she will return to the Lord, repent, and be instructed. God in turn will remember Israel, because the Lord's heart yearns for His people (has great compassion) and will have mercy on them when Israel returns to their Father (cf. Jer 31:9; Hos 2:16-23; Ro 11:28-29).

Romans 11:28; 29+ From the standpoint of the gospel they (ISRAEL) are enemies for your sake, but from the

standpoint of God's choice they (ISRAEL) are beloved for the sake of the fathers; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are [irrevocable](#) ([ameteleptos](#)).

**Comment** - In English [irrevocable](#) means incapable of being retracted or revoked. Laying aside all you have been previously taught, consider this question this passage inspires - Is God finished with His Chosen People Israel as is being taught more and more even in evangelical circles? What does God's Holy Word say?

**Oswalt** - One might assume, then, that the next point would be to say that God is like those mothers. In fact, that is not the case. The truth is that while most mothers cannot forget the children of their wombs and breasts, some do. We have only to think of the recurring stories of mothers standing passively by while their boyfriends abuse the mothers' children. But whatever the failures of mothers, God does not forget! God's attachment is more than a mother's. The prophet asks us to think of a mother's attachment and then go one step farther. That is what God's attachment to us is. Much the same point is made in Ps. 27:10: "If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up." We must never allow our sense of God's offended justice to obscure the truth from our eyes that he is love. Earthly love, as wonderful as it is, may cease, but his love has no limits whatsoever. (NICOT-Isaiah)

#### **Spurgeon on maternal love -**

"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 not I forget thee." The affection of a right-minded mother for her tender and helpless offspring is one of the strongest that is experienced by human beings. But, though strong, very strong, it may, alas! give way. It is, at best, only a creature's love, and therefore changeable; while that love which is exercised by God towards His believing children is, like Himself, unchangeable. These words prove, and were designed to prove, most conclusively, that the love of the Divine Father towards His adopted sons and daughters is not a fluctuating or changing thing. What other, or what lower interpretation can we put upon the words, "YET WILL NOT I FORGET THEE?"

**Comment** - Normally in ancient times a slave would bear the brand mark of the master, but here we see an act of ineffable divine condescension in which **the Master inscribes the servant's name on His palm**. Charles Wesley applied this Scripture to Christ, writing, "[Arise, My Soul, Arise](#), shake off thy guilty fears, The bleeding sacrifice in my behalf appears. Before the throne my Surety stands; **My name is written on his hands**." What are these marks but the marks of indelible grace, a tangible manifestation of God's covenant with us, the covenant mark testifying throughout eternity "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you, so that we may confidently say, The Lord is my Helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" (Heb 13:5-6). For God to forget us and/or abandon us, the scars inscribed in the palm of His hands would must needs disappear! Beloved, see the Savior spread out His hands before us with our very name inscribed in His scarred palms. We are loved profoundly and eternally by God! Try it now, believing and expecting that the Lord will hear you. You see, he has set you apart for himself, you belong to him, you are his treasure, his jewel, the signet on his finger, the delight of his heart, your name is graven on the palms of his hands; do you think he wishes you to be in this miserable state? Oh, no; he has sent the Comforter to deal with just such as you are! One Person of the Divine Trinity has undertaken the office of comforting the people of God; therefore he must want you to be happy and comfortable. Cry to him to bring you up out of your low estate.

**Isaiah 49:16 "Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.**

- **I have:** Ex 13:9 Song 8:6 Jer 22:24 Hag 2:23
- **Your walls:** Isa 26:1 54:12 60:18 Rev 21:10-21

### **INSCRIBED ON THE PALMS OF DIVINE HANDS**

God now gives a second strong symbol to assure Israel that He has not forgotten her or rejected her! It is as if Israel were "tattooed" on His hand. And to make sure they did not miss this great assurance, He begins with a call to **Behold!**

**Behold** ([02009](#))([hinneh](#)) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used

as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! **Hinneh** is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17).

**Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

Normally in ancient times a slave would bear the brand mark of his master, but in Isaiah 49:16 we see an act of ineffable divine condescension in which the Master inscribes the servant's name on His palm! (cf Isa 11:1–4; 30:18; 57:15–16; 66:2)

It is interesting that Israel used a similar description Isaiah recording

"This one will say, 'I am the LORD'S'; And that one will call on the name of Jacob; **And another will write on his hand, 'Belonging to the LORD,'** And will name Israel's name with honor. (Isa 44:5).

**Constable** - This was a practice of some people in the ancient world who wanted to make their commitment to some individual prominent (cf. Deut. 6:8). A soldier sometimes wrote the name of his commander on his hand, a slave bore the name of his master, and a devotee did the same with the name of his god

**I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands** - This is figurative language. **You** of course is the nation of Israel (called "Zion" in this context - Isa 49:14). **The palms of My hands** is of course is a divine [anthropomorphism](#) but nevertheless serves to help us visualize God's strong emphasis that He will remain faithful to His chosen people Israel ("Zion") who have been continually unfaithful to Him.

- [Click here for more supplementary notes](#) related to Isaiah 49:16 (devotionals, quotes, hymns, etc).

**Inscribed** (02710)(**chaqqaq**) means to cut, to inscribe which means to write or engrave as a lasting record. Literally it means to cut as in Isa 22:16 which has "have **hewn** (**chaqqaq** - in English hewing means to strike or blow with a tool such as an ax or sword) a tomb." In Isa 10:1 **chaqqaq** means a decree - "Woe to those who **enact** (**chaqqaq**) evil statutes." (cf similar sense in Pr 8:15, Pr 31:5). In Pr 8:27 we see a figurative use where God "**inscribed** a circle on the face of the deep" and in Pr 8:28 where God "**marked** out the foundations of the earth." In a Messianic passage **chaqqaq** refers to "the ruler's staff." (Ge 49:10, cf "**Scepter**" in Nu 21:18, Ps 60:7, Ps 108:8). **Chaqaq** is translated **commanders** in Jdg 5:9, 14. Job declares "Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were **inscribed** in a book!" (Job 19:23) In Isa 30:8 the prophet is told to "**Inscribe** it on a scroll," which would serve as future evidence that God warned His people Israel of impending judgment in light of their guilt. The prophet Ezekiel is told to take a brick and "inscribe a city on it, Jerusalem." (Ezek 4:1+) In Ezek 23:14 **chaqqaq** describes "images of the Chaldeans **portrayed**" with [vermillion](#) (thus more likely painted than carved)" on the wall.

The Septuagint translates **chaqqaq** here with the verb *zographo* which is not found in the NT and which generally means to paint (cf the two uses in Ezek 23:14 which translate **chaqqaq** meaning to cut in and **chaqqaq** to engrave).

**Chaqaq** - 19 uses - carve(1), commanders(2), decree(1), decreed(1), enact(1), inscribe(2), inscribed(3), lawgiver(1), marked(1), portrayed(1), ruler's(1), ruler's staff(1), scepter(3).

Gen. 49:10; Num. 21:18; Deut. 33:21; Jdg. 5:9; Jdg. 5:14; Job 19:23; Ps. 60:7; Ps. 108:8; Prov. 8:15; Prov. 8:27; Prov. 8:29; Prov. 31:5; Isa. 10:1; Isa. 22:16; Isa. 30:8; Isa. 33:22; Isa. 49:16; Ezek. 4:1; Ezek. 23:14

Something that is engraved (inscribed) is considered to be **indelible**. [Indelible](#) means that which cannot be removed, washed away, blotted out, canceled, effaced or erased and thus speaks of that which is unforgettable, lasting and cannot be lost or annulled. Such is the grace of God in Isaiah 49:16, one of the most beautiful expressions of God's everlasting love in all of Scripture.

**W E Vine** - Jews had a custom of marking on their hands, or elsewhere, a delineation of the city and the temple, as a sign of their devotion to, and perpetual remembrance of, them. The Lord graciously adopts the figure to confirm His assurance. However great the devastation wrought by Gentile powers might be, the walls are ever before Him in their restored and perfected condition in the future. To be graven on the palms of His hands is suggestive of the closest identification with Himself, of His unchanging love, and of His constant mindfulness of us in all His emotions and activities. Often, in our unbelief, remissness and forgetfulness, we lose sight of our preciousness in His sight in Christ. What is here conveyed in figure finds its fullness of expression in the outflowing of the Lord's heart to the disciples in the upper room, "Even as the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you: abide ye in My love" (John 15:9). (The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine)

**C H Spurgeon**, who preached three sermons on Isaiah 49:16 reminds us that **"These words apply, first of all, to God's ancient people, the Jews (ED: the accurate interpretation), but they are equally true of all believers (Ed: a valid application)."**

**Spurgeon** adds that the phrase **I have inscribed you** "does not say, thy name. Our name is there, but that is not all: I have graven THEE! See the fullness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when he has graven thee upon His own palms?"

**APPLICATION** - Have you ever wondered if God has forgotten or abandoned you? Even now perhaps you feel like David who cried out to God his Rock, "Why have you forgotten me?" (Ps 42:9-[note](#)) Perhaps like Israel of old you are saying "My way is hidden from the LORD. My cause is disregarded by my God." (Isa 40:27) You find yourself in your own personal Pilgrim's Progress ["slough of despond,"](#) bogged down in the "spiritual quicksand" of seemingly endless adversities and afflictions which keep dragging you deeper into despair. I understand for that is where I am as I write. But even better Jesus understands for on the Cross, He cried "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mt 27:46, Ps 22:1-[note](#)) Jehovah Rapha, the Great Physician, understands for "He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered and is able to come" to our aid as we are tempted (Heb 2:18-note) having given us spiritual truth in Isaiah 49:16 that like the [balm of Gilead](#) can heal our souls of what **Spurgeon** calls that "unbelief which often makes us talk about God forgetting us when He does nothing of the kind. We know not which most to wonder at, the faithfulness of God or the unbelief of His people. He keeps His promise a thousand times, and yet the next trial makes us doubt Him. He never fails; He is never a dry well; He is never as a setting sun, a passing meteor, or a melting vapor; and yet we are as continually vexed with anxieties, molested with suspicions, and disturbed with fears, as if our God were the mirage of the desert." Father, by Thy Spirit grant us grace to sing in faith "The Welcome to the King"

Midst the darkness, storm, and sorrow  
One bright gleam I see,  
Well I know the blessed morrow  
Christ will come for me

Midst the light and peace and glory  
Of the Fathers home,  
Christ for me is watching, waiting--  
Waiting till I come

Long the blessed Guide has led me  
By the desert road;  
Now I see the golden towers--  
City of my God.

**There amidst the love and glory,  
He is waiting yet;  
On His hands a name is graven,  
He can ne'er forget.**  
(Francis Havergal)

**Your walls are continually before Me** - God is addressing **"Zion"** (a [metonymy](#) for Israel) and in ancient days the cities were walled for protection of the inhabitants. So hear God gives a third assurance of His faithfulness to never display forgetfulness to His Chosen People Israel. First, He is like a mother with her infant, then like one who inscribes a picture on his hand and finally like one who continually has His eyes on His beloved city and people.

Our name is engraven upon His own hands,  
Our witness in heaven eternally stands;  
The nearest and dearest and choicest to Him,  
Without spot or wrinkle without or within.

The tables and tablets of brass and of stone  
With their deeply cut letters are soon overthrown;  
But none can erase the indelible names  
Of those He redeems and eternally claims.

**Barnes on walls** - The meaning is, that he constantly looked upon them; that he never forgot them. He had a constant and sacred regard for his people, and amidst all their disasters and trials, still remembered them.

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Below is further devotional application of the fact that God has inscribed His people on the palm of His hands. As noted the accurate interpretation is that God is speaking of Israel, but these truths are applicable to all believers in Christ.

Scripture records "Neither shall any man snatch them out of My hand (or) out of My Father's hand." (Jn 10:28-29) "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." (Isa 49:16) "My times are in Thy hand." (Ps 31:15-[note](#)) Vance Havner refers to these passages as "having the situation well in hand. Here is security for time and eternity. The palm of the hand is a well-protected place and that hand can fold into a fist if threatened! Not only ourselves but our times, all our circumstances, the day in which we live, the happenings of our lives—all these are under His control. Sometimes they are beyond our control, but "He's got the whole world in His hands." He not only leads us by His hand, He keeps us in His hand." J I Packer calls us to affirm the truth that "I am graven on the palms of His hands. I am never out of His mind. All my knowledge of Him depends on His sustained initiative in knowing me. I know Him, because He first knew me, and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend, One Who loves me; and there is no moment when His eye is off me, or His attention distracted from me, and no moment, therefore, when His care falters (cf Mt 10:30-31)." Do you believe the beautiful words of the hymn "Before the throne of God above/ I have a strong and perfect plea/ A great high Priest Whose Name is Love/ Who ever lives and pleads for me/ My name is graven on His hands/ My name is written on His heart/ I know that while in Heaven He stands/ No tongue can bid me thence depart." Hallelujah! (Bancroft)

As **Kay Arthur** says "If you are God's child by covenant, a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, this is the truth you must cling to when you feel abandoned: You are inscribed on the palms of His hands! For the feelings are just that—feelings. Feelings that are very real, feelings that you must deal with. But remember reality. Reality is the fact that a covenant has been cut on your behalf. Your feelings will betray you—overwhelm you cripple you—if you do not decide, by the gut-level determination of faith, that "feel it or not" you will trust your Covenant God. Put on the music ... the hymns of the faith ... the choruses of trust. Sing whether you feel like it or not. Sing whether you can sing or not. Sing until your feelings conform to reality."

In fact sing **Toplady's [A Debtor to Mercy Alone](#)** -

["My name from the palms of His hands"](#)

Eternity will not erase  
Impressed on His heart it remains  
In marks of indelible grace

Yes, I to the end shall endure  
As sure as the earnest is given  
More happy, but not more secure  
The glorified spirits in heaven."

As **Spurgeon** says "If you will think of those hands of which the Lord says, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands," you may rest assured that nothing can come from those hands but what infinite Wisdom directs, and infinite Love has ordained. Rejoice then, O Christian that God's love does not fail in the furnace, but is as hot as the furnace, and hotter still."

Normally in ancient times a slave would bear the brand mark of his master, but in Isaiah 49:16 we see an act of ineffable divine condescension in which the Master inscribes the servant's name on His palm! Charles Wesley applied this Scripture to Christ, writing, "[Arise, My Soul, Arise](#), shake off thy guilty fears/ The bleeding Sacrifice in my behalf appears/ Before the Throne my Surety stands/ My name is written on His hands." Amen!

**What are these marks but the marks of indelible grace**, tangible manifestations of God's covenant cut with us on Calvary's Cross, covenant marks testifying today and throughout eternity "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you, so that we may confidently say, the Lord is my Helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" (Heb 13:5-6). For God to forget us or abandon us, the scars inscribed in the palm of His hands must disappear! Perish all thy doubting thoughts! Beloved of the Father (1Jn 3:1), see the Savior spread out His hands before us with our own name inscribed in His scarred palms. Surely we are not for even a moment forgotten, but are loved faithfully and forever by our great God!

**Come with me to that moment in eternity where John is weeping and lamenting that there is no one to open the scroll** (Rev 5:4-5-[note](#)), writing expectantly "I saw between the throne with the four living creatures and the elders a Lamb standing, AS IF SLAIN, (same verb in Greek of Ex 12:6 describing the perfect lamb Israel was to "slay at twilight"! cf Jn 1:29, 1Co 5:7) (Rev 5:6, 5:9, 12-[note](#); Rev 13:8-[note](#)). Transported into the future, John saw those scars indelibly inscribed by the nails that once impaled Him to the old rugged Cross, scars that will forever be the brand marks of God's everlasting covenant, yes, even the scars that bear our names beloved. Inscribed forever. Eternally secure. Precious pictures of passion perfected for His treasured possessions to marvel at throughout eternity. And so the Lamb Who was slain has not forgotten our name, for He cannot forget what is immutably inscribed in the palm of His hands throughout eternity! Spurgeon encourages us to "Look at the nail-print, that is His memorial, His forget-me-not, and by it He says to thee "Forget thee I will not, I cannot, thy name/ Engraved on my heart doth forever remain/ The palms of My hands whilst I look on I see/ The wounds I received when suffering for thee."

Now come with me and gaze expectantly with eyes of faith at future grace (1Pe 1:13-[note](#)), that glorious day in eternity future, when we are seated around the Table of the Lord, celebrating the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. John testifies "Blessed (fully satisfied independent of circumstances) are those who are invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb." (Rev 19:9-[note](#), cf Lk 14:15, 13:29, 22:28-30, Mt 8:11) Now turn to the parable in Luke 12 which records a glorious passage (Lk 12:37-[note](#)) that many commentators such as John MacArthur [[note](#)] describe as a "remarkable statement (that) pictures Christ, at His return, ministering as a Servant to believers!" Alexander Maclaren has an sermon on this one verse entitled "[Servant-Lord](#)." The esteemed 19th century commentator Johann Bengel called Luke 12:37 the greatest promise in God's Word, for in it we see a prophetic picture of the Gentle, Humble Jesus, the Servant Lord, condescending to "gird Himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and (He) will come up and wait on them." (Lk 12:37, cf Jesus girding Himself at His First Coming - Jn 13:4-5) As He gives you the bread, you recall His words to the disciples at the Last Supper: "I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God" (Lk 22:16) and "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." (Mt 26:29, Lk 22:18) And as His glorified hands reach out (cf Rev 1:16-17-[note](#)) to give you the bread, you see on them the nail-pierced scars, those marks of indelible grace, marks of His eternal covenant (Heb 13:20-[note](#)). And then with even greater awe and amazement, you see your name there and you recall His precious promise now made perfect: "I have inscribed you on the palm of My hands." And you bow humbly in worship and adoration and wonder at the Messiah's Meekness and Majesty.

"May our God bring home to you a sense of your safety in Christ Jesus! May He assure you that your name is graven on His hand and whisper in your ear the promise, "Fear not, I am with thee." Look upon Him, the great Surety of the covenant, as Faithful and True (Rev 19:11-[note](#)), and, therefore, bound and engaged to present you, the weakest of the family, with all the chosen race, before the Throne of God (Col 1:22-[note](#), 2Cor 4:14-[note](#), Ep 5:27-[note](#), cf Jude 24); and in such a sweet contemplation you will drink the juice of the spiced wine of the Lord's pomegranate, and taste the dainty fruits of Paradise. You will have an antepast of the enjoyments which ravish the souls of the perfect saints above, if you can believe with unstaggering faith that "faithful is He Who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass." Amen (1Th 5:24-[note](#)) (Spurgeon)

Play "[Before the Throne of God Above](#)" by Selah ([same song](#) by Shane and Shane). Note especially the lines

My name is graven on His hands,  
My name is written on His heart.

Play Charles Wesley's great hymn [Arise, My Soul, Arise](#) - up tempo version by Indelible Grace

Arise, my soul, arise, shake off your guilty fears;  
The bleeding sacrifice, in my behalf appears;  
Before the throne my [Surety](#) stands,  
Before the throne my [Surety](#) stands,  
**My name is written on His hands**

**Isaiah 49:17 "Your builders hurry; Your destroyers and devastators Will depart from you.**

- **Your builders:** Isa 51:18-20 62:5 Ezr 1:5 Ne 2:4-9,17 Eze 28:24
- **You destroyers:** Isa 49:19 51:13,22,23

NET Isaiah 49:17 Your **children** hurry back, while those who destroyed and devastated you depart. (Isa 49:17 NET)

ESV Isaiah 49:17 Your **builders** make haste; your destroyers and those who laid you waste go out from you.

CSB Isaiah 49:17 Your **builders** hurry; those who destroy and devastate you will leave you.

NIV Isaiah 49:17 Your **sons** hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you.

## A DIVINE EXCHANGE EXILES ENTER, DESTROYERS DEPART

This is a difficult passage as the text is uncertain. Given the context of walls in Isa 49:16, builders would seem to be a more reasonable rendition than children or sons. This passage alludes to the regathering of the people to Israel, which will be built up.

Moody Bible Commentary - God will not only remember, but He will also fully restore Israel. Zion will experience an influx of people as the sons of Jerusalem return and those who destroyed the city will leave it.

**Young** - That God has not forsaken His Zion is shown in that Zion's sons are hastening to her. The verb implies that the action has begun and is continuing. By a slight change of the pointing some would read thy builders instead of thy sons. This seems to fit in better with the parallel, thy destroyers and thy wasters. At the same time the Masoretic text, thy sons, fits in better with what follows, particularly in verse 22. (Ibid)

**Your builders hurry** - Constable combines the two words "Her builder-sons" - The builders were the sons that Zion thought had been denied her. The Hebrew word translated "builders," *bonayik*, is almost identical to the word translated "sons," *banayik*, and may have been deliberately ambiguous to communicate both ideas. Originally only the consonants, which are identical, appeared in the text."

One meaning could be that those appointed to build the city and walls of Zion, shall speedily begin and accomplish the work.

**Your destroyers and devastators Will depart from you** - The rest of this section Isa 49:17-20 alternates between your children will return, and your adversaries will leave. Those who destroyed the city (and the nation of Israel) will go out (Heb = *yatsa* = Lxx = *exerchomai* = go away).

**Guzik** - The Lord's love and faithfulness for Zion is also shown by His promise for their future. It isn't just demonstrated by the past and the present, but also by His future plans for them. This promise was partially fulfilled in the return of the exiles from Babylon, but will be ultimately fulfilled in the regathering of Israel in the last days.

Why can we be certain that this is not a reference to Judah's return from Babylonian exile? As Constable points out "Only a few Israelites responded to Cyrus' edict and returned to rebuild Jerusalem. The majority decided to stay in Babylon. Thus this prediction must be looking into the future."

**Isaiah 49:18 "Lift up your eyes and look around; All of them gather together, they come to you. As I live," declares the LORD, "You will surely put on all of them as jewels and bind them on as a bride.**

- **Lift up** - Isa 60:4 Ge 13:14 Mt 13:41,42 Rev 22:15
- **All of them gather together** - Isa 49:12,22 43:5,6 54:1-3 60:5-11 66:12,13,20 Jer 31:8 Ga 3:28,29
- **As I live** - Isa 54:9 Ge 22:16 Heb 6:13-18
- **you will surely put on all of them jewels** - Isa 61:10 Pr 17:6
- **bind them on as a bride** - Jer 2:32 Rev 21:2

## RETURNING JEWS WILL BE LIKE BRIDAL ORNAMENTS

**Lift up** (imperative or command) **your eyes and look around** - To be sure, Jerusalem and Israel have been conquered, subjugated and even decimated time and again over the centuries, so the reader might be inclined to see Isaiah's preceding promises as if they were merely a mirage. So here God calls for them to have 20/20 vision so to speak. What has been described is not a mirage but a miracle! And in this passage we see the greatest seal of all, God's giving of an oath on His life! This will surely come to pass as it has been written.

Recall that God is still addressing Zion whose eyes have surely been downcast and whose countenance dejected. But He does not just say look up but even better, **look all around** "for on all sides those whom she thought she had lost are coming in dense crowds to her." (Keil and Delitzsch) The Chosen People are coming from all around, from all over the world.

**Barnes** on **Lift up your eyes and look around** - That is, see the multitudes (OF ISRAEL) that shall be converted to thee; see thy ruined city rise again in its former beauty; see the Gentiles come and yield themselves to the worship of the true God (**SEE** Zechariah 14:9, 16+); see kings and princes approach and do thee homage (**CF** Ps 2:10-12).

**Young** - Zion the mother is commanded to behold her sons returning to her

Isaiah records a similar exhortation in chapter 60

**"Lift up your eyes round about and see;** They all gather together, they come to you. Your sons will come from afar, And your daughters will be carried in the arms. (Isa 60:4)

**All of them gather together, they come to you** - **Gather** the sons together, for "these will come from afar...." (Isa 49:12+) Both verbs (**gather...come**) are [prophetic perfect tense](#) ([see diagram depicting prophetic perfect](#)) describing the gathering and the coming to Israel as already accomplished in God's mind. This is what Zion sees when she lifts up her eyes.

**As I live," declares the LORD** - A divine oath. Jehovah gives His pledge base on His own life. It is immutable and eternal just as He is (**As I live**)

**Young** on **as I live** - The oath formula is a common one, and means, "So true as it is that I live, saith the Lord, etc."

**Barnes** on **as I live** (Note on similar phrase **"I have sworn by Myself,"** from Isa 45:23) - The expression, 'I have sworn by myself,' denotes a purpose formed in the most solemn manner, and ratified in the most sacred form. God could swear by no greater (Heb. 6:13, 16); and this, therefore, is the most solemn assurance that could be possibly given that the purpose which he had formed should be executed. To swear by himself is the same as to swear by his life, or to affirm solemnly that the event shall as certainly occur as that he exists. The same idea is often expressed by the phrase, 'as I live.' See a parallel declaration in Nu 14:21: 'But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD' (comp. Num. 14:28; Isa. 49:18; Jer. 22:24; Ezek. 5:11; 14:16, 18, 20; Zeph. 2:9; Ro 14:11). This passage is quoted by Paul in Rom. 14:11, where the phrase, 'I have sworn by myself' is rendered, 'as I live, saith the Lord,' showing that they are equivalent expressions.

**Paul Apple** titles this passage "Spectacular Spectacle of the Bejeweled Bride."

**Beall:** The imagery in v. 18b is that of the city as a bride bedecked with the jewels of her sons coming back—her children are her glory.

**You will surely put on all of them as jewels and bind them on as a bride** - Zion is represented as a female. Two figures of speech both of which point to a marked (yea, even miraculous) reversal of fortune for Zion and the Chosen People! Zion shall "wear" **all of them** (the acquisition and increase of Jewish converts primarily in context, but there will be Gentile converts) as **jewels**, like a **bride** does on her wedding day. Zion will bind or tie the believing remnant like bridal ornaments.

**Oswalt** - God has sworn it on his own life. As surely as God lives, the wretched old woman, having lost everything, will have children around her as bright as morning. Isaiah says that just as a bride clothes herself in finery, so will Zion deck herself with children. This has already happened again and again and will continue to happen until the end of time. Zion's children will be her glory. God has sworn it. (NICOT-Isaiah)

**Wiersbe** - They will be like beautiful bridal ornaments, not decrepit refugees from Captivity.

Sadly commentators like **Young**, whose work is usually considered a classic, continue to veer away from the literal interpretation of the text. And so **Young** writes (and quotes Calvin) - "The true beauty of the **Church** is found in the work of grace in the hearts of believers. "But the true dignity of the **Church** is internal, so far as it consists of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and of progressive faith and piety" (Calvin)."

**THOUGHT** Let us repeat it until it is ringing loudly and clearly in our ears! Isaiah 49 is **NOT** speaking of the **Church People** but of the **Chosen People**, those Jews who are true Jews, not just circumcised in flesh but in heart (Ro 2:28-29+), those who have had the eyes of their hearts opened and the veil removed that had caused their spiritual blindness, so that they might recognize Yeshuah as their Messiah, Savior, Redeemer and Lord, and repent and return and receive Him by grace through faith (cf Zech 12:10-14+, Zech 13:1+). Jehovah HAS NOT FORGOTTEN THEM NOR REJECTED THEM!

**Keil and Delitzsch** - "Jehovah pledges His life (chai 'ānī, Lxx - zoe ego) that a time of glory is coming for **Zion** and her children....The population which Zion recovers once more, will be to her like the ornaments which a woman puts on, like the ornamental girdle (Isaiah 3:20) which a bride fastens round her wedding dress."

**Isaiah 49:19 "For your waste and desolate places and your destroyed land-- Surely now you will be too cramped for the inhabitants, And those who swallowed you will be far away.**

- **For your waste and desolate places** - Isa 49:8 51:3 54:1,2 Jer 30:18,19 33:10,11 Eze 36:9-15 Ho 1:10,11 Zec 2:4,11 10:10
- **And those who swallowed you will be far away** - Isa 49:17,25,26 Ps 56:1,2 124:3 Pr 1:12 Jer 30:16 Jer 51:33,44 Eze 36:3

NET Isaiah 49:19 Yes, your land lies in ruins; it is desolate and devastated. But now you will be too small to hold your residents, and those who devoured you will be far away.

ESV Isaiah 49:19 "Surely your waste and your desolate places and your devastated land-- surely now you will be too narrow for your inhabitants, and those who swallowed you up will be far away.

### NUMBER OF RETURNING JEWS WILL CROWD THE LAND

**For** - Probably this opening "ki" is best not seen as causal, but as marking a continuation of Jehovah's oath in the previous verse.

**Oswalt** proposes "It is as though he says, "Think of those vast, empty wastelands, peopled by nothing except thorns and briars—now there will not be room enough for everybody." (Ibid)

**Your waste and desolate places and your destroyed land** - THIS IS THE BAD NEWS! This describes Israel's appearance as a result of her enemies trampling over her for centuries.

**Young** - The desolation now present will pass, and the time will come when Zion will be too narrow to contain all her inhabitants.

**Surely now you will be too cramped for the inhabitants**- THIS IS THE GOOD NEWS! NET - "But now you will be too small to hold your residents." The city and the nation will be crowded in this glorious future day. This reminds me of how God does things when He does them as expressed by Paul in Eph 3:20+ "Now to **Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think**, according to the power that works within us." He is the same in our lives as NT believers as He will be to Israel when He restores her "far more abundantly" then they could ask or think!

**Moody Bible Commentary** - The city that was once abandoned will now be bursting at the seams to the point that Zion will be confused about where all the people have come from (Isa 49:19–21). This is referring to the restoration of Zion in the millennial kingdom, not to the return from Babylon.

**Ellicott** - The *over population of the future* is contrasted with the *depopulation of the past* (Isaiah 3:6; Isaiah 4:1).

**Barnes** - The enemies that laid waste thy land, and that absorbed, as it were, thy inhabitants, and removed them to a distant land. They shall be all gone, and the land shall smile again in prosperity and in loveliness.

**And those who swallowed you will be far away** - Isa 49:17 is similar "**Your destroyers and devastators Will depart from you.**"

As an aside the same Hebrew verb **swallow** is used in Isaiah 25:8 in another encouraging passage that describes Israel's future...

He will **swallow up** death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people (ISRAEL) from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.

**Jeremiah** gives four pictures of how complete will be the removal of Israel's enemies

'Therefore (1) **all who devour you will be devoured**; (2) And **all your adversaries, every one of them, will go into captivity**; (3) And those who **plunder you will be for plunder**, (4) And all who **prey upon you I will give for prey**. (Jer 30:16+, cf the fate of Babylon - Jer 51:33, 44)

**Isaiah 49:20 "The children of whom you were bereaved will yet say in your ears, 'The place is too cramped for me; Make room for me that I may live here.'**

- **children** - Isa 60:4 Ho 1:10 Mt 3:9 Ga 4:26-28
- **The place** - Isa 51:3 54:1,2 Jos 17:14-16 2Ki 6:1

NET Isaiah 49:20 Yet the children born during your time of bereavement will say within your hearing, 'This place is too cramped for us, make room for us so we can live here.' (Isa 49:20 NET)

## THE RETURNING JEWS NEED MORE SPACE

**The children of whom you were bereaved will yet say in your ears** - This refers to those Israelites (believing remnant) who will be regathered as described in Isaiah 60:4 "Your sons will come from afar, And your daughters will be carried in the arms." Clearly he is not saying that previously dead Jewish children will be resurrected. This is a figure of speech and **Oswalt** explains that "The point is simply that although Zion has lost everything (see Isa 3:24–4:1), nevertheless, against all the odds, in the midst of her bereavement there will be a new generation through which her life can continue."

**The place is too cramped for me; Make room for me that I may live here**- This repeats the picture of Isa 49:19 of the land of promise with God's people so plentiful now that it is cramped! Ask yourself this question - has such a thing ever occurred in the history of Israel? Of course not, so once again we are reminded that the literal fulfillment of this prophecy is yet future!

## CAVEAT EMPTOR!

Now keeping in mind that Isaiah is a Jewish prophet speaking to Jewish people about prophecies that will impact the nation of Israel in the future, notice what happens when one veers from a straight-forward literal interpretation.

Here is **Edward Young's** comment on Isaiah 49:20...

Even during the exile the tide was turning. God was raising up Cyrus, who would make it possible for the exiles to return to their home. In this return there is seen the first fulfillment of this promise, but **in the deeper sense the fulfillment takes place in the distant future (ED: A STATEMENT WITH WHICH I HEARTILY AGREE!)** when the Gentiles are brought into the Church of Christ. Zion is bereaved, but she has children, so many that there is no room for them. (The Book of Isaiah – Volume 3: Chapters 40 to 66)

Beloved, do you see how Young is forced to switch from Jews coming back under Cyrus to Gentiles coming into the Church of Christ? He "**morphs**" so to speak from Jews to Gentiles which is absolutely amazing! He accepts the historical truth about Israel in captivity but rejects the fact that there will be a future Israel set free from Gentile oppression. The reason I am going into some detail on Young's interpretations is because his scholarly (and it is truly scholarly with many excellent explanations) three volume work is hailed by modern evangelicals as **one of the top commentaries** on the Prophecy of Isaiah. For example, **Tim Challies**, a respected evangelical writer, has said the following about Edward Young's commentary (which he ranks as the number 3 best commentary) -

"It is still regarded as one of the finest commentaries on Isaiah. While the commentators on the commentaries note that Young's writing can be tedious at times, the volumes are commended for their sound exegesis and their firmly evangelical theology." ([Best Commentaries on Isaiah](#))

I would suggest **Caveat Emptor** be one's motto regarding any Isaiah commentary (including the one you are currently reading -- I am human and make no claim to have a monopoly on truth) for many, if not most commentaries on Isaiah have to one degree or another replaced the literal nation of Israel with the Church, especially in the prophetic promises that are clearly future. So while Young may have "sound exegesis and...firmly evangelical theology," his comments on eschatological passages related to Israel are almost all reflective of his spiritualizing or allegorizing the literal text (see [Rise of Allegorical Interpretation](#)). Remember - when the Bible speaks, God speaks. So the best approach is to let the God say what He says, taking it as one would normal speech from one to another and laying aside any preconceived notions of what you have been told the text says. In this way you can come to the text as if you had never read it before. Then you can profitably and prayerfully spend some time reading the text (including use of different translations which may help on difficult passages). Then after you have arrived at your own interpretation, you are prepared to go to the commentaries and see how they interpret the passage. Remember you have as much of the Holy Spirit as do those who write commentaries and you can trust Him to lead you into all truth. That does not mean you will understand every passage, but, for example, in Isaiah 49 you would get a good sense of the general idea of what Isaiah is saying and to whom he is speaking. And I think if you read it in this manner, you will conclude that Isaiah a Jewish prophet is speaking to a Jewish audience and making declarations and promises to the Jews.

Here is another example of spiritualizing Isaiah 49:20 by Albert Barnes, whose notes contain some excellent comments on some of

Isaiah's passages, but tend to become a bit "imaginative" and non-literal when he deals with prophetic promises given to Israel. Commenting on **the place is too cramped** Barnes writes...

There is not room for us all. The entire language here denotes a vast [accession](#) to the church of God. It is indicative of such an increase as took place when the gospel was proclaimed by the apostles to the Gentiles, and of such an increase as shall yet more abundantly take place **when the whole world shall become converted to God.** (ED: WHAT? THE WHOLE WORLD CONVERTED? THIS COMMENT NOT ONLY REPLACES ISRAEL WITH THE CHURCH, WHICH IS THE FALSE TEACHING OF [REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY](#), BUT ALSO SEEMS TO SUGGEST THE FALSE TEACHING OF [UNIVERSALISM](#)! Be a Berean - Acts 17:11+)

Below is another example of an incredible interpretation from the Pulpit Commentary on Isaiah 49:19-20. Notice that the writer has the hubris and audacity to tell you not to interpret the text literally. Why? Because to interpret it literally would be to acknowledge that this Jewish prophet is addressing God's future promises to the nation of Israel! And notice that in the comment on Isa 49:19 he interprets the first part (the "bad news") **literally** but then the "good news" **allegorically**! Talk about "*schizophrenic hermeneutics*!"

Ver. 19.—**The land of thy destruction**; or, of thy overthrow—i.e. where thou wert overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar (ED: INTERPRETS THE "BAD NEWS" LITERALLY)—shall **even now be too narrow**, etc. This must not be understood literally. (ED: WHY: BECAUSE IT DOES NOT FIT HIS ESCHATOLOGY! BECAUSE HE DOES NOT SEE IT AS A FUTURE PROMISE TO ISRAEL!) Palestine, after the return from the Captivity, was at no time over-populated (ED: THIS IS ACCURATE); and when the conversion of the Gentiles took place it caused no influx of fresh settlers into the Holy Land. **The object of the prophet is simply to mark the vast growth of the Church**, which would necessarily spread itself far beyond the limits of Palestine, and would ultimately require the whole earth for its habitation. (ED: CAN YOU NOT SEE HOW HE IS FORCED TO CONTRIVE AN ABSURD INTERPRETATION BECAUSE HE HAS "JETTISONED" LITERAL INTERPRETATION!)

Ver. 20.—**The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other**; literally, the children of thy bereavement; i.e. the Gentiles who shall replace those many faithless Israelites who refused to return when Cyrus issued his edict, and became lost to the Church of God. (ED: BELOVED THIS IS NOT GOOD SENSE BUT NONSENSE!)

**John Calvin** similarly takes the text non-literally as referring not to Israel but Church writing " "bereavement" and "barrenness" refer rather to the person of the **Church**." (CALVIN ROUTINELY ESPOUSES [REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY](#) IN HIS COMMENTS ON ESCHATOLOGICAL PASSAGES RELATED TO ISRAEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT).

**John Trapp** is non-literal - The children of thine orbity; such as are not yet received into **the Church**. Give place to me that I may.] People shall offer violence to heaven, and the "violent shall take it by force": Ezekiel describeth **the Church of the New Testament** to be very large and spacious, and yet she shall be so crowded as is a bee hive, out of the mouth whereof the bees oft hang in heaps for want of room within.

**Matthew Henry** is non-literal - Two things are here promised, which were to be in part accomplished in the reviving of **the Jewish church** after its return out of captivity, but **more fully in the planting of the Christian church by the preaching of the gospel of Christ** and we may take the comfort of these promises. (ED: SO EVEN SUCH A HIGHLY RESPECTED COMMENTATOR AS HENRY INTERPRETS THESE PROMISES PRIMARILY TO THE CHURCH! AMAZING!)

**Matthew Poole** is non-literal - Those Gentiles which shall be begotten by thee, to wit, by the ministry of thy children, Christ and his apostles, when thou shalt be deprived of thine own natural children, when thou shalt become barren and unfruitful as to conversion of natural Jews, when the generality of the Jews shall cut themselves off from God, and from his **true church**, by their apostacy from God, and by their unbelief and obstinate refusal of their Messiah. (ED: POOLE IMPLIES GOD IS FINISHED WITH THE JEWS! AMAZING!)

Here is a striking example of non-literal interpretation from the pen of a modern writer **Raymond C Ortlund, Jr** writing in the popular series **Preaching the Word**. Notice how he [unabashedly](#) does not even mention the POSSIBILITY that Isaiah might be speaking about the nation of Israel (Amazing!)...

Far from neglecting us, God swears by his very life to surprise us with the expansion and growth of his **church**. Isaiah imagines it (ED: THE CHURCH) like a childless woman delightedly astonished at the multitude of happy children gathering around her as their mother, replacing her (ED: THE CHURCH'S) devastation with fullness (49:17–21). **This is the future of the church, by God's decree** (ED: NOT THE FUTURE OF ISRAEL THE ONE TO WHOM ISAIAH IS SPEAKING!) His people will someday look around and blink with

amazement: "Can it be? **All these multitudes gathered into the bosom of the church even in our barrenness and futility?** What on earth has happened?" **The growth of the church** will be too vast to be explainable by any human plan, too massive to be accommodated by any human program. (**ED**: Notice what happens when one totally extirpates Israel from the prophecy of Isaiah -- the result is comments that make no sense. One has to wonder what Isaiah might think if he were to read comments such as the preceding!)

Unfortunately, I could continue with sad examples of comments that in effect replace Israel with the Church and so give these great promises to the latter rather than to the former, the nation of Israel to whom God clearly gave the promises in Isaiah 49. [Replacement Theology](#) has a long history which sadly includes many well-known commentators and has given rise to a reemergence of this false teaching in the twenty-first century! This false teaching is very popular among many in the reformed movement.

Praise God that there are wonderful writers like **Dr Warren Wiersbe** who still read and interpret the Holy Word of God literally. Wiersbe's comments are in marked contrast to the preceding writers...

Zion seems like a forsaken and barren mother, but she will be so blessed of God that there will be no room for her children! They will be like beautiful bridal ornaments, not decrepit refugees from Captivity. **Once again, the prophet looked ahead to the end of the age when the Gentiles will honor Jehovah and Israel, and kings and queens will be baby-sitters for Israel's children!** ([Be Comforted](#) - highly recommended commentary series).

**Isaiah 49:21 "Then you will say in your heart, 'Who has begotten these for me, Since I have been bereaved of my children And am barren, an exile and a wanderer? And who has reared these? Behold, I was left alone; From where did these come?'"**

- **Since** - Jer 31:15-17 Ro 11:11-17,24 Ga 3:29 4:26-29
- **I have been bereaved of my children** - Isa 3:26 51:17-20 52:2 54:3-8 60:15 62:4 64:10 La 1:1-3 Mt 24:29,30 Lu 21:24 Ro 11:26-31

ESV Isaiah 49:21 Then you will say in your heart: 'Who has borne me these? I was bereaved and barren, exiled and put away, but who has brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; from where have these come?'"

NET Isaiah 49:21 Then you will think to yourself, 'Who bore these children for me? I was bereaved and barren, dismissed and divorced. Who raised these children? Look, I was left all alone; where did these children come from?'"

NLT Isaiah 49:21 Then you will think to yourself, 'Who has given me all these descendants? For most of my children were killed, and the rest were carried away into exile. I was left here all alone. Where did all these people come from? Who bore these children? Who raised them for me?'"

## **THE NUMBER OF RETURNEES WILL BE SURPRISING**

**Then you (ZION) will say in your heart, 'Who has begotten these for me, Since I have been bereaved of my children And am barren, an exile and a wanderer? And who has reared these? - THIS IS A TOTAL REVERSAL OF EVENTS.** Zion is amazed at the children that have come to Israel. Once she was **bereaved** and **barren** but now is "bountiful!"

**WHEN DOES THIS OCCUR?** These passages describing a large number of returning Jews is an important clue as to when the passages in this section (Isa 49:17-23) will be fulfilled. Why so? This description cannot refer to the relatively small number of Jews who returned to Jerusalem and Judah after the 70 year exile, not to mention the fact that few if any of the Jews (10 Tribes) that were taken off into exile in Assyria returned to Palestine. Only a small number of exiles returned to Judah from Babylon when they were released by King Cyrus of Persia. Therefore, this prophecy was not fulfilled in those days. It follows that this must refer to a future time and the most logical time is the coming Messianic Kingdom, the day when Christ will return to establish His kingdom on earth. One might entertain a "partial fulfillment" with the rebirth of the Nation of Israel in 1948 and the return of many Jews to Palestine from around the world. But remember that for accurate interpretation of the Bible we need to avoid interpreting isolated passages out of their surrounding "environment" (Context), which in this case includes Isaiah 49:22-23. Isaiah 49:23 would effectively exclude 1948 as a partial fulfillment because although Israel was "reborn" in the United Nations and with the approval of President Harry Truman, the subsequent decades demonstrates that the Gentile nations have expressed continued animosity, overt

hatred and caustic criticism of the nation of Israel. No, the time when the Gentiles "**will bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders**" and "**Kings will be your guardians, and their princesses your nurses**" awaits a future fulfillment. The most reasonable "candidate" for the time of fulfillment is at the return of the Messiah, when He in effect finally and fully abolishes all Gentile opposition to Israel and instead exalts them to a position of honor in the world in His Messianic Kingdom, even as Isaiah had prophesied in chapter 2

Now it will come about that In [the Last Days](#) The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains (MT ZION, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL), And will be raised above the hills; And all the **nations** (GENTILES) will stream to it. 3 And many **peoples** (GENTILES) will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob (ISRAEL); That He may teach us (GENTILES) concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." (cf Zech 14:9,17+) For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 And He (MESSIAH) will judge between the **nations** (GENTILES), and will render decisions for many **peoples** (GENTILES); and **they** (GENTILES) will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. **Nation** (GENTILES) will not lift up sword against **nation**, And never again will they learn war. (Isaiah 2:2-4+)

**Martin** - When the people returned from the Babylonian Captivity they were a comparatively small, struggling band. The return mentioned in Isa 49:19–21 seems to be much larger and therefore probably refers to Israel's return at the beginning of the Millennium. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Vine** - Her people had been exiles and wanderers and she had been left "solitary" (**barren**). Now she finds herself surrounded by a multitude of her children. How, she wonders, had they been "**borne**" to her? Who had brought them up? **From where did these come?** The answer is about to be given. (The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine) **Comment** - Let me give the answer in a word - God! God's grace will bring this surprising event to pass as described in the next verses).

**Guzik on I was left alone** - The great blessing of the returning sons of Zion—in both near and far fulfillment—will come as an astounding surprise. God's blessing will seem to come from nowhere. Though the promise seems too good to be true, God confirms it with an oath to the nations. God will rescue Israel from both their immediate and ultimate captivity.

**Behold, I was left alone; From where did these come?**- Zion is recounting how she was once alone, but now there are multitudes of Jewish returnees. How did this happen. And so Zion is personified as asking from where in the world did they they all come? As stated earlier (see Isa 49:12+), they came from all over the world!

**Oswalt** answers Zion's question **from where did these come?** - They are the gift of God. She did not bear them, nor did she rear them, so where did they come from? The fruitfulness and the grace of God. This theme runs straight through the Bible, from Sarah onward. In ourselves we are barren and bereaved, no more able to bring abundant life or eternal life onto this planet than we are able to give ourselves physical life. If abundant, eternal life is to be ours, it will be the gift of God, and we will look on in amazement, saying, "Where did that come from?" (See Eph. 2:8–10.)

**Vine** - Her people had been exiles and wanderers and she had been left "solitary" (or "barren"). Now she finds herself surrounded by a multitude of her children. How, she wonders, had they been "borne" to her (R.V., margin—not "begotten")? Who had brought them up? **"Where were they?"** (R.V.). The answer is about to be given. Sometimes the Lord refrains from manifesting His dealings and, in testing our faith, keeps us waiting till the appointed time for the disclosure of His actings and significance. Far greater the joy when the unfolding comes than if there had been no mystery, no darksome circumstances, and far greater the glory of His grace.

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform

Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face

Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain."  
(The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine)

**Isaiah 49:22 Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations And set up My standard to the peoples; And they will bring your sons in their bosom, And your daughters will be carried on their shoulders.**

- **Behold** - Isa 49:12 2:2,3 11:10,11 42:1-4 60:3-11 66:20 Ps 22:27 67:4-7 Ps 72:8,17 86:9 Mal 1:11 Lu 13:29

NET Isaiah 49:22 This is what the sovereign LORD says: "Look I will raise my hand to the nations; I will raise my signal flag to the peoples. They will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders.

NLT Isaiah 49:22 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will give a signal to the godless nations. They will carry your little sons back to you in their arms; they will bring your daughters on their shoulders.

ESV Isaiah 49:22 Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.

CSB Isaiah 49:22 This is what the Lord GOD says: Look, I will lift up My hand to the nations, and raise My banner to the peoples. They will bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders.

NIV Isaiah 49:22 This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders.

## GOD WILL REVERSE GENTILE SUPREMACY!

**Jesus** alluded to the "[times of the Gentiles](#)" prophesying that "Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Lk 21:24+). Those **TIMES** are coming to an end according to Isaiah 49:22-23!

**Criswell on Times of the Gentiles** - "Times of the Gentiles" indicates that Jerusalem will be in the hands of the Gentiles until the time which God has fixed for the cessation of such rule. This phrase is a reference to the Gentile domination of Jerusalem and Palestine up to and including the Great Tribulation, particularly the latter three and one-half years of that period. The revived Roman Empire and its leader, the Antichrist, will annul a covenant made with Israel at the outset of the Tribulation. Jerusalem and the temple will be trodden underfoot by these Gentiles until Christ intervenes at His return to establish the earthly kingdom (cf. Rev. 11:1-2+).

**Constable** - The "**times of the Gentiles**," the times of Gentile supremacy in the world, will have ended (cf. Zech. 12:2+; Zech 14:2-3+; Luke 21:24; Rev. 11:2+; Rev 19:17-19). This will prove that Yahweh is the true God since He predicted this reversal of Israel's fortunes and will bring it to pass. Those who believe His promises will not be embarrassed because He will fulfill them.

When the [times of the Gentiles](#) are fulfilled, then the Gentiles will be commissioned to help Israel.

**Thus says the Lord GOD** (Isa 49:22NET) - The [sovereign](#) LORD says it. That settles it whether we believe it or not! Believe it! "The Lord reassured Israel not only with the promise that He would remember and restore Israel, but also that He would ultimately exalt Israel." (Moody Bible Commentary)

**Lord** is **Adonai** ([0136](#)) (['adonay](#)) is a word denoting ownership, and thus One in absolute control. **Adonay** is often translated in the Septuagint with [kurios](#), which means master or owner. **'Adonay** is applied to God as the owner and governor of the whole earth (Ps. 114:7). Several translations like NET and NIV translate **adonay** as **sovereign**. The **NET Note** (on Ge 15:2NET) in fact says that "the presence of "Master" before the holy name is rather compelling evidence that the original would have been "*Master, LORD*," which is rendered here "*sovereign LORD*." (Ge 15:2NET) The Jews, out of a superstitious reverence for the name Jehovah, always pronounce **Adonai** where **Jehovah** is written. This title indicates the truth that God is the owner of each member of the human family, and that He consequently claims the unrestricted obedience of all.

**THOUGHT** Is Jesus your Adonai? What are you holding back from Him - you time, your money, yea, even your heart? Bow down to Him and surrender your heart to Him today while it is still called today! (2 Cor 6:2, carefully read Hebrews 4:1-2+)

**Wiersbe** rightly reminds us that "Once again, the prophet looked ahead to the end of the age when the Gentiles will honor Jehovah and Israel, and kings and queens will be baby-sitters for Israel's children!" (Be Comforted)

**Behold** - Pay attention! See! Look! God is going to do a "new thing" which will get the attention of the entire world (cf **all flesh** in Isa 49:26+).

**Oswalt** - God says to Zion that he is the one who has brought these descendants to her, and that the nations before whom she had

once fawned in an effort to gain their support, and who had mockingly turned against her, shaming her for her false trust, will come fawning to her feet, bringing with them her children from around the world (see also Isa 11:11–12; 66:20).

**I will lift up My hand to the nations**- This is an [anthropomorphism](#). God is beckoning to the nations, giving the Gentiles a signal that He is about to act. Exactly what this "signal" will look like in the future is difficult to state with certainty. The point is that God is in control and He is reestablishing His people Israel in the land of promise just as He had promised in cutting covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He will keep His Word! This is a fascinating picture, for it is a prophecy that the Gentiles will participate in the rebuilding and Jewish re-population of the nation of Israel.

**Vine** explains that "The close of the forth-ninth chapter, from Isaiah 49:22, gives the Lord's answer to the surprised questions arising from Zion in Isaiah 49:21. He shows how the multitude of scattered Israelites will be delivered from their exile and those who oppressed them (GENTILES), and be gathered to their own land. (**ED**: IN DIVINE IRONY) He will employ the Gentile nations to take their part in accomplishing this gathering (OF JEWS). (The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine)

**J Vernon McGee** writes that "God assures Israel that the Gentiles will assist Him in the final restoration of the nation to the land. Heretofore, the Gentiles have scattered them, which makes this a rather remarkable prophecy even for today. Great Britain did open the land for the Jews; yet Great Britain was the country that issued the mandate which forbade them to enter the land—so they came by ship without permission, and they have been hindered in one way or another since that time. It has taken persecution to push them out of other countries, and at the time I am writing this they are being blocked from leaving Russia, which probably has the third largest Jewish population in the world. Russia doesn't want to get rid of them; yet it subjects them to a great deal of anti-Semitic oppression. However, in that day, that is, in the end times, God will bring them back into their land, and He will use Gentiles to move them back! (Thru the Bible)

**And set up My standard to the peoples** (the Gentiles) - God raises this banner or signal pole to get the attention of the Gentiles. He is calling them to assist the literal nation of Israel. Setting up of a **standard** is a frequent figure in Isaiah -- Isaiah 5:26+; Isa 11:10, 12+; Isa 13:2+, Isa 18:3; 62:10.

**Constable** has an interesting comment that "God would raise His hand and **an ensign (banner, signal), Messiah**, to summon the nations to do this (ED: DO WHAT? SEE GENTILE ACTIONS IN Isa 49:23) (**COMMENT** - In other words Constable sees the "ensign" as the Messiah which is very reasonable considering in Isa 11:10, 12, he has already said the Messiah ("root of Jesse") will be this [Ensign](#) Who will call nations to himself.)

**Standard** (signal) ([05251](#))([nec/nes](#)) means a banner, an ensign, a standard, a signal pole (wood pole which was visible when raised - Nu 21:8), a signal (non-verbal communication - Nu 26:10, Jer 4:6), a sail (for a boat - Isa 33:23). **Nec/nes** served as a rallying point or standard which drew people together for some common action for or for the communication of important information. The **banner** could be an ornamental piece of cloth on the end of a staff or pole as a leader's signal. Usually the signal was placed on a high place in the camp.

Isaiah 5:26+ He will also lift up a **standard** to the distant nation, And will whistle for it from the ends of the earth; And behold, it will come with speed swiftly.

**Comment** - God says that he will call all the nations to come and plunder Israel and Judah, and he will do so by raising an ensign.

Isaiah 11:10+ Then in that day The nations will resort to **the root of Jesse** (MESSIAH), Who will stand as a **signal** ([nec/nes](#))(STANDARD, ENSIGN) for the **peoples** (GENTILES); And His resting place will be glorious.

Isaiah 11:12+ And He will lift up a **standard** ([nec/nes](#)) for the **nations** (GENTILES) And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth.

Isaiah 13:2 Lift up a **standard** on the bare hill, Raise your voice to them, Wave the hand that they may enter the doors of the nobles.

**Oswalt** comments that "this passage because it is the only other place in the Bible where "hand" and "ensign" parallel each other. There, as elsewhere, it is a signal flag used to communicate God's directions. In that instance, it signals the destruction of proud Babylon.

Isaiah 18:3 All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth, As soon as a **standard** is raised on the mountains, you will see it, And as soon as the trumpet is blown, you will hear it.

Isaiah 30:17 One thousand will flee at the threat of one man; You will flee at the threat of five, Until you are left as a flag on a mountain top And as a **signal** on a hill.

Isaiah 31:9 "His rock will pass away because of panic, And his princes will be terrified at the **standard**,"

Declares the LORD, whose fire is in Zion and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 33:23 Your tackle hangs slack; It cannot hold the base of its mast firmly, Nor spread out the **sail**. Then the prey of an abundant spoil will be divided; The lame will take the plunder.

Isaiah 49:22 Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations And set up My **standard** to the peoples; And they will bring your sons in their bosom, And your daughters will be carried on their shoulders.

Isaiah 62:10 Go through, go through the gates, Clear the way for the people; Build up, build up the highway, Remove the stones, lift up a **standard** over the peoples (GENTILES).

**Comment** - This passage states that an ensign is raised over the peoples to signal the coming of the MESSIAH Who will be salvation for Zion.

**And they (GENTILES) will bring your sons in their bosom and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders-** NLT "They will carry your little sons back to you in their arms; they will bring your daughters on their shoulders." The repopulation of Zion will be assisted by the Gentiles. Exactly how this will occur and what this will look like is not clear.

**Beall** says that Isa 49:22-23 state that Gentiles will help bring Jews to the promised land, and Gentile leaders will serve the Israelites (v 23).

**Oswalt** - Clearly, much more than merely the return of the Babylonian exiles is in view here. This is a foretaste of the picture of chs. 60–66, which is itself a fulfillment of Isaiah 2:1–5+. All the nations are flowing to Jerusalem to bow at her feet, yes, to beg mercy for the wrongs done, and yes, to bring back with apology those who had been dragged away, but also to try to learn something of this amazing God who has been able to lift his people from barren widowhood to being the laughing grandmother of nations...the final consummation of this picture is yet to come (**ED: IN THE MILLENNIUM**), (Ibid)

**Isaiah 49:23 "Kings will be your guardians, And their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth And lick the dust of your feet; And you will know that I am the LORD; Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame.**

- **kings** - Isa 49:7 52:15 60:3,10,11,16 62:2 Ezr 1:2-4 6:7-12 7:11-28 Ne 2:6-10 Es 8:1-10:3 Ps 2:10-12 68:31 72:10,11 138:4 Rev 21:24-26
- **nurses** - Heb. nourishers, Nu 11:12
- **bow down** - Isa 45:14 60:14 Ge 43:26 Ps 72:9 Rev 3:9
- **lick the dust** - Mic 7:17
- **And you will know that I am the LORD** - Isa 25:9 Isa 64:4 Ps 25:3 34:22 69:6 Ro 5:5 9:33 10:11 1Pe 2:6

NET Isaiah 49:23 Kings will be your children's guardians; their princesses will nurse your children. With their faces to the ground they will bow down to you and they will lick the dirt on your feet. Then you will recognize that I am the LORD; those who wait patiently for me are not put to shame.

NLT Isaiah 49:23 Kings and queens will serve you and care for all your needs. They will bow to the earth before you and lick the dust from your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD. Those who trust in me will never be put to shame."

ESV Isaiah 49:23 Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you, and lick the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame."

NIV Isaiah 49:23 Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed."

## **A REVERSAL OF ROLES**

**Kings will be your guardians, and their princesses your nurses** - The NLT paraphrases it "Kings and queens will serve you and care for all your needs" These descriptions speak of protection (**guardians**) and nurturing (**nurses**) of Israel.

Now think about this prophecy for a moment -- has this ever occurred in the history of the nation of Israel? While there have been a few Gentile rulers who have shown the Jews favor, this has never occurred on the scale as suggested by this passage, and certainly not accompanied by subjecting themselves to Israel (cf following phrase **they will bow down**)! This has not been fulfilled, but it will be fulfilled when Messiah returns, and delivers a remnant of believing Jews. The point is clear that instead of the predominant Gentile attitude toward Israel of ANTI-SEMITISM, this passage predicts a time when the attitude of Gentiles will be PRO-ISRAEL! If you think this has occurred, just look at the nations of the world attack Israel in the United Nations or look at the worldwide increase in anti-Semitism (I am writing in October, 2018 - e.g., see [NY Times May, 2018 article](#), [Aug. 2018 article on rise in Germany](#)). This favor to Israel by Gentile rulers has NOT occurred.

**Young** offers a totally non-literal and rather absurd comment that "Even the highest and most powerful rulers of the heathen nations will reverence the **Church** and devote to her all their wealth and power." **Young** has some excellent comments on the Hebrew and interpretation of difficult passages, but interspersed are other comments which necessitate one staying very alert and discerning when using his voluminous material on Isaiah (3 volumes).

**Bultema** notes that "**Calvin** and most expositors believe that the text teaches that one day the greatest in the nation will love and care for the children of the **Church**. This text has usually been made to serve as proof of the legitimacy of the church state (or state church); however, the prophet does not have the Church in mind here, but **future Israel**."

Clearly, passages such as Isaiah 49:23 are so incredible that it forces those who do not accept the fact that God has neither forgotten nor rejected a literal Israel to [concoct](#) very imaginative interpretations. Beloved, if the plain **sense** of a text makes good sense in context, then it is prudent to avoid attempting to make some other **sense** out of it, lest it end up being non-**sense**!

I apologize but cannot not avoid commenting on another [nonsensical](#) interpretation by **Young** - "We are not to look for a literal fulfillment of this promise (ED: BEGS THE QUESTION - "WHY NOT?" WHAT IS IN THE TEXT OR CONTEXT THAT SAYS THIS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN LITERALLY?). It rather refers to a conversion of the Gentiles, who as converted bring to Zion the converted sons of Israel." WHAT? Be a Berean! (Acts 17:11+) See [Constable's thoughts](#) on interpretations like those by Young.

**They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth and lick the dust of your feet**- This figure speaks of Gentiles submitting to Israel, something that clearly did not transpire in Israel's past. This is a future event at the end of this age and beginning of the next age (Millennium).

Clearly the **Times of the Gentiles** (See [note above](#)) will have ended for them to bow down to those who previously were forced to bow down to them.

**Vine** - The statement that they shall "lick the dust of Thy feet" points to the submission of those who before had taken part in oppressing them (see Psalm 72:9; Micah 7:17+).

**Bow down** (07812)([shachah](#)) means to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to crouch, to fall down, to humbly beseech, to do reverence, to worship. The idea is to assume a prostrate position as would in paying homage to royalty (Ge 43:28) or to God (Ge 24:26, Ps 95:6). **Bow down** is translated in the [Septuagint \(LXX\)](#) in this passage (and most of the OT uses) with the picturesque Greek verb [proskuneo](#) (from **pros** = toward or facing + **kuneo** = kiss, adore) which pictures the practice among the Orientals (especially the Persians) of falling upon their knees and touching the ground with their forehead as an expression of profound reverence.

**Paul** explained that all people will **bow** down to Jesus Christ

For this reason also (WHAT REASON? Php 2:8), God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the Name which is above every name, 10 so that at the Name of Jesus **EVERY KNEE WILL BOW**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (Php 2:9-10+)

**Bultema** - "Lick up the dust of thy feet refers to the great honor which the great ones of the world will give Israel. It is mainly on the basis of this phrase that there is the practice of kissing the pope's feet."

**Gilbrant** - They will subject themselves to Zion, recognizing their spiritual indebtedness to Israel. Then the people of Zion will know in their experience that God is Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God. Because He is faithful, those who hope and trust in Him will not be ashamed of that hope or be disappointed.

**And you will know that I am the LORD** - **You** refers to Zion/Israel. When all of these miraculous events transpire, it will be obvious that they are not natural, but supernatural and could only be from Jehovah. As they experience these events described above (regathering, rebuilding, etc), they **will know** from this experience it is of Yahweh. Clearly this prophecy HAS NOT been fulfilled.

We see this same pattern of God's acts giving clear evidence of God's presence and power in Ezekiel. And keep in mind that the context of these passages is yet future, in the last days, preceding Messiah's second coming. That is when the Jews (a believing remnant) will come to truly know the LORD.

(Ezek 36:11) 'I will multiply on you man and beast; and they will increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as you were formerly and will treat you better than at the first. **Thus you will know that I am the LORD.** (Commentary on Ezekiel 36)

(Ezek 36:23) "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. **Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight.**

(Ezek 36:38) "Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. **Then they will know that I am the LORD."**

(Ezek 37:14) "I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. **Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it," declares the LORD.**" (Commentary on Ezekiel 37)

(Ezek 39:22-23) "And **the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God from that day onward** 23 "The nations will know that the house of Israel went into exile for their iniquity because they acted treacherously against Me, and I hid My face from them; so I gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and all of them fell by the sword. (Commentary on Ezekiel 39)

(Ezek 39:28) "**Then they will know that I am the LORD their God** because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer.

And even the **nations** (the Gentiles) will know it is Jehovah who has done these things for Israel. Again, the setting of the following passages is the last days before the Messiah returns. This is great news for Gentiles for in the last days, many Gentiles will come to know the LORD.

(Ezek 36:36) "**Then the nations that are left round about you will know that I, the LORD** have rebuilt the ruined places and planted that which was desolate; I, the LORD, have spoken and will do it."

(Ezek 37:28) "**And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel** when My sanctuary is in their midst forever."

(Ezek 38:23) "I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and **they will know that I am the LORD.**" (Commentary on Ezekiel 38)

(Ezek 39:7) "My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. **And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.**

**Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame** - NET = "those who wait patiently for me are not put to shame." paraphrase " This description explains how the Jewish remnant will come to know that God is **the LORD**. They will come to know Him by grace through faith. NLT has "Those who trust in me will never be put to shame," for to **hopefully wait** is to express faith, confidence, trust that God will do what He said He would do.

**Isaiah 25** combines the ideas of **waiting** on (trusting in) the LORD and **salvation** by the LORD...

And it will be said in that day, "Behold, this is our God **for Whom we have waited that He might save** ([yasha'](#)) **us**. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His **salvation** (Hebrew = [yeshua](#); Lxx = [soteria](#)) ." (Isa 25:9)

**MacArthur** explains that "To **wait** for God entails an ultimate **trust** in Him, not becoming impatient when His timetable for final salvation differs from ours (cf. 26:8; 33:2; 40:31)." (MSB)

**Cornerstone Bible Commentary** - God's people continued to praise Him, proclaiming, "This is our God. We trusted in Him, and He saved us" (Isa 25:9)—**an excellent summary of the experience of faith and salvation.**

**Moody Bible Commentary** - When these things take place, the people of Israel will recognize that their hope in the Lord has not disappointed.

**Oswalt** on **hopefully wait** for God - For one to wait on the Lord is to know that he will probably not act on one's own timetable, but that he will act. It is to know that what I accomplish for myself without a clear indication that this accomplishment is in his plan is dust

and ashes. It is to know that what he will do for me is so far beyond my own dreams and plans as to be all but unimaginable. It is to know that with him I may dare the impossible, and if I fail, I will still have done more for the world than if I had conquered the possible in my own strength. (Ibid)

**Vine** - In Isaiah 40:31+ the promise is that **"they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength"** In the present passage the promise is negative: they will not be put to shame. Here too the exercise of patience is in view, in the endurance of all that is difficult and adverse until the Lord's time for deliverance comes. We wait upon Him in prayer. We wait for Him in the confident assurance that present conditions of trial and sorrow will have a future of joy and peace such as can come only by the direct and manifest intervention of the Lord Himself. (Ibid)

#### Isaiah 49:24 "Can the prey be taken from the mighty man, Or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?"

- **Can** - Eze 37:3,11
- **prey** - Isa 42:22 53:12 Ps 124:6,7 126:1-3 Mt 12:29 Lu 11:21,22
- **captives of a tyrant be rescued**, Ezr 9:9,13 Ne 9:33,37 Jer 25:6-9,11-14

### A SKEPTICAL QUESTION: IS GOD ABLE?

Why does Isaiah introduce these questions (really one question as they are related) at this juncture? What Isaiah has just written is so incredible that it is simply hard to believe it could ever come to pass. So Isaiah introduces the question that a skeptical reader might ask at this point. In short, how could this possibly come to pass? Who can defeat our enemies?

**Keil and Delitzsch** notes that this "skeptical question prompted by weakness of faith...The question is logically one, and only divided rhetorically into two."

**Constable** adds that in this passage "Isaiah addressed an objection that some in his audience evidently entertained. Is it possible that Yahweh could really overturn the power of the mighty nations that scattered the Israelites and kept them from their land? Of course, God had already rescued Israel from one mighty man at the Exodus. Typically mighty men and tyrants cling to their prey and captives tenaciously."

**Can the prey be taken from the mighty man**- Rhetorical. Answer - No.

**Mighty** (01368)(**gibbor**) means mighty and is used by Isaiah in Isaiah 9:6 in his description of the Messiah as "Mighty God". Isaiah again uses **gibbor** to refer to God in Isaiah 10:21+ "A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God." While Isaiah 10 may have had a partial fulfillment, it too, like the present description of Israel's return to the Land, awaits a future time when Messiah the Deliverer returns to rescue captive Israel (Ro 11:26+).

The Septuagint translates **mighty** (**gibbor**) in Isaiah 49:25 with the noun **gigas** which can mean giant or mighty. The question arises is who is the "giant," the **mighty man**? The text does not say.

**Or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?** - Rhetorical. Answer - No.

Go to the next verse for Yahweh's reply to these two questions about His ability to conquer the **mighty man** and the **tyrant**.

#### Isaiah 49:25 Surely, thus says the LORD, "Even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away, And the prey of the tyrant will be rescued; For I will contend with the one who contends with you, And I will save your sons.

- **Even** - Isa 10:27 Isa 52:2-5 Jer 29:10 50:17-19,33,34 Zec 9:11 Heb 2:14,15 1Jn 3:8
- **I will contend** - Isa 41:11,12 54:15-17 Ge 12:3 Nu 23:8,9 Jer 51:35,36 Zec 9:13-16 Zec 12:3-6 14:3,12 Ro 8:31-39 Rev 18:20
- **I will save** - Isa 54:13 Ga 4:26

NET Isaiah 49:25 Indeed," says the LORD, "captives will be taken from a warrior; spoils will be rescued from a conqueror. I will oppose your adversary and I will rescue your children.

NLT Isaiah 49:25 But the LORD says, "The captives of warriors will be released, and the plunder of tyrants will be retrieved. For I will fight those who fight you, and I will save your children.

ESV Isaiah 49:25 For thus says the LORD: "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children.

CSB Isaiah 49:25 For this is what the LORD says: "Even the captives of a mighty man will be taken, and the prey of a tyrant will be delivered; I will contend with the one who contends with you, and I will save your children.

NIV Isaiah 49:25 But this is what the LORD says: "Yes, captives will be taken from warriors, and plunder retrieved from the fierce; I will contend with those who contend with you, and your children I will save.

## **A SURE ANSWER: GOD IS ABLE!**

**Gilbrant** - The Lord has a different answer (THAN THE "NO" in Isa 49:24). The captive of the mighty warrior will be taken away and the war-booty of violent tyrants will get to safety. God will enter the battle on the side of His people. "I" is in the emphatic position in the sentence. Because his power is greater, He will be victor and He will save. ([Complete Biblical Library – Isaiah](#))

**Surely, thus says the LORD** - He is **Jehovah** (Isa 49:26) , the God Who keeps His covenant promises to Israel.

**Constable** - Yahweh replied that He would indeed save the Israelites' descendants from their tyrannical captors even though that would be humanly impossible. He is stronger than they.

**Even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away** - NET = "Captives will be taken from a warrior." Captives refer to Israel and this is not just referring to those who were taken to Babylon, but to the Jews in the end time. As W E Vine says "the time in view is far beyond the return from captivity under Cyrus, and is yet future." Note the context, which describes a time when "all flesh will know that I, the LORD am your (Israel's) Savior." (Isa 49:26). This surely did not occur when the exiles returned from Babylon, so has to refer to a future time.

**Vine** suggests the **mighty man** is the Beast of Revelation 13 (the Antichrist) and certainly we know that he has a strong desire to annihilate the nation of Israel.

In any event, Israel's enemies will not succeed for God is their **Redeemer** (Isa 49:26) who is able to liberate the captives.

**Guzik** - Babylon, the mighty empire, had taken Zion captive. But even they shall be taken away. God will shows His strength and love for Zion by giving unto Babylon what Babylon gave unto Zion, even though they thought it unlikely, as shown by the question of Isaiah 49:24.

**And the prey of the tyrant will be rescued** - He is the **Savior** (Isa 49:26) Who rescues His people.

Who is the tyrant? The text does not say. While it could be a general reference to Israel's enemy, another consideration

**For I will contend (riyb) with the one who contends with you** - He is the **Mighty One of Jacob** (Isa 49:26) and no one can defeat Him, for as He asks (rhetorically) "Who will **contend (riyb)** with Me?" (Isa 50:8) I agree with **Vine** who says "The passage again points to the time of Armageddon (Har-Magedon) and the Second Advent."

In a parallel prophetic promise which uses the same verb "contend" (**riyb**) Isaiah records...

Thus says your Lord, the LORD, even your God Who **CONTENDS** for His people, "Behold, I have taken out of your hand the cup of reeling, The chalice of My anger; You will never drink it again. (Isa. 51:22)

**Comment** - This prophecy will not be fulfilled until Messiah returns and saves a believing remnant of Israel. Those are the Jews who will never drink of the chalice of God's anger again because they are safe in Christ by grace through faith.

This description of God contending with Israel's enemies is in marked contrast to Isaiah's earlier description of God contending not **FOR** but **WITH** the leaders of Israel...

"The LORD arises to **contend (riyb)**, And stands to judge the people." (Isa 3:13)

**Contend** (07378)(**riyb**) means to strive, contend against, dispute, conduct a lawsuit or legal case, make a charge. In the first use Ge 26:20 Moses records "the herdsmen of Gerar **quarreled** with the herdsmen of Isaac." In Isa 50:8 God asks "Who will contend with Me?" Of course no one can successfully contend against God.

**Contend** in Isaiah - Isa. 1:17 ("plead for the widow"); Isa. 3:13; Isa. 27:8; Isa. 45:9; Isa. 49:25; Isa. 50:8; Isa. 51:22; Isa. 57:16.

**And I will save your sons** - He is the **Savior** (see Isa 49:26), which is the same Hebrew word **yasha'**. Could there be any greater promise from God? While one might say he is referring primarily to physical deliverance, the context surely speaks of spiritual deliverance (see below).

**Save** (deliver, help) ([03467](#))(**yasha'**) (See also **yeshua** from which we get our word "Jesus") is an important Hebrew verb which means to help, to save, to deliver. The root in Arabic is "make wide" which underscores the main thought of yasha' as to bring to a place of safety or broad pasture in contrast to a narrow strait which symbolizes distress or danger. My favorite use of yasha is Isaiah 45:22 where God says "**Turn** to Me and **be saved**, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other." The Spirit of God used this very passage to save the soul of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the prince of preachers.

**Save** (Yasha') is translated in Isa 49:25 with the Greek verb **rhumi** which means to rescue by bringing someone out of severe and acute danger. In the NT God is always the **Deliverer** and people are the objects of His deliverance (cf Mt 6:13). **Rhumi** is used in the Paul's declaration regarding the salvation of Israel writing that "all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE **DELIVERER** (**rhumi**) WILL COME FROM ZION (THE MESSIAH - HIS SECOND COMING WHICH WILL TERMINATE THE GREAT TRIBULATION, THE TIME OF JACOB'S DISTRESS), HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." (Ro 11:26).

**Isaiah's uses of yasha -**

Isa. 19:20; Isa. 25:9; Isa. 30:15; Isa. 33:22; Isa. 35:4; Isa. 37:20; Isa. 37:35; Isa. 38:20; Isa. 43:3; Isa. 43:11; Isa. 43:12; Isa. 45:15; Isa. 45:17; Isa. 45:20; Isa. 45:21; Isa. 45:22; Isa. 46:7; Isa. 47:13; Isa. 47:15; Isa. 49:25; Isa. 49:26; Isa. 59:1; Isa. 59:16; Isa. 60:16; Isa. 63:1; Isa. 63:5; Isa. 63:8; Isa. 63:9; Isa. 64:5

**Isaiah 49:26 "I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh, And they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine; And all flesh will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."**

- **I will feed** - Isa 9:20 Jdg 7:22
- **they will become drunk** - Rev 14:20 Rev 16:6 Rev 17:6
- **and all** - Isa 41:14-20 45:6 60:16 Ps 9:16 58:10,11 83:18 Eze 39:7 Rev 15:3,4

NET Isaiah 49:26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh; they will get drunk on their own blood, as if it were wine. Then all humankind will recognize that I am the LORD, your deliverer, your protector, the powerful ruler of Jacob."

NLT Isaiah 49:26 I will feed your enemies with their own flesh. They will be drunk with rivers of their own blood. All the world will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel. "

ESV Isaiah 49:26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine. Then all flesh shall know that I am the LORD your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

CSB Isaiah 49:26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they will be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine. Then all flesh will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

NIV Isaiah 49:26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh; they will be drunk on their own blood, as with wine. Then all mankind will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

## **ISRAEL AVENGED GOD EXALTED**

**Oswalt** - In no sense is God commanding cannibalism. He is simply saying in the most graphic way that those who violated his people will get their own back.

**I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh** - This is a difficult expression to explain. **Your oppressors** clearly refers to the Gentiles who have persistently been anti-Semitic. To be fed with one's own flesh could depict a siege or simply depict their death. This would have to precede the institution of the Messianic Kingdom (of peace, etc), and one candidate possibility is the description of John in Revelation 19 when Jesus returns to defeat all Gentile opposition (NOTE REPETITION OF "FLESH" IN JOHN'S DESCRIPTION)...

From His (JESUS') mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will

rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." 17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in mid-heaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the **flesh** of kings and the **flesh** of commanders and the **flesh** of mighty men and the **flesh** of horses and of those who sit on them and the **flesh** of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." 19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their **flesh**. (Revelation 19:15-21<sup>±</sup>).

**The prophet Zechariah** describes a time of incredible bloodshed at the end of this age which will precede the return of the King of kings and includes a description of the Gentile armies fighting one another....

Now this will be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the **peoples** (GENTILES) who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. 13 It will come about in that day that a great panic from the LORD will fall on them (GENTILE ARMIES GATHERED AGAINST ISRAEL); and **they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another**. 14 Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance. 15 So also like this plague will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey and all the cattle that will be in those camps. 16 Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations (GENTILES) that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths (THESE ARE GENTILES WHO ARE SAVED BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH AND WHO WILL ENTER THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM). (Zechariah 14:12-17<sup>+</sup>)

**Constable** - The Lord would cause these Gentile oppressors to consume one another (**ED**: SEE ZECH 14:13 ABOVE). This will happen when the nations fight one another at Armageddon. Jesus Christ will return from heaven, the assembled armies will turn on Him, and He will defeat them with a word from His mouth. This will open the way for Israel to return to her land as the honored of the earth in the Millennium (cf. Da 11:40–45<sup>+</sup>; Rev. 17:14<sup>±</sup>; Rev 19:14–21<sup>±</sup>). These events will demonstrate to everyone that **Yahweh** is Israel's **Savior, Redeemer**, and the **Mighty God of Jacob**.

**Motyer** - The pictures of eating their own flesh and drinking their own blood draw on the horrors of siege conditions. The reality is that those who oppose the Lord and his people experience the self destructiveness of sin—a recurring feature of the wars of the Lord."

**NET Note** - Verse 26a depicts siege warfare and bloody defeat. The besieged enemy will be so starved they will eat their own flesh. The bloodstained bodies lying on the blood-soaked battle site will look as if they collapsed in drunkenness.

**And they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine** - This is the law of reaping what they have sown.

We see similar descriptions in the Revelation, which describes the events that will occur in the last days, in the time of the Great Tribulation, the time which will be terminated when the Deliverer comes from Zion to remove ungodliness from Jacob (Ro 11:26-27<sup>+</sup>)

Revelation 14:20<sup>±</sup> And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and **blood came out from the wine press**, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.

Revelation 16:6<sup>±</sup> for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and **You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it.**"

Revelation 17:6<sup>±</sup> And I saw the woman (BABYLON) drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly. (Rev 18:6<sup>±</sup>) "Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her.

**And all flesh** - All the people of the world. This has to be in some way associated with Jesus' return and His victory over all His enemies as described above. Certainly at that time they will know that Jesus is without a doubt **LORD...**(Israel's) **Savior...**(Israel's) **Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob** (Israel). See also Romans 11:26<sup>+</sup> which says ""THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."

In Revelation 1:7<sup>±</sup> the apostle John describes a time when the entire world will recognize Jesus...

BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and **every eye will see Him**, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen."

**Will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior** (see [yasha'](#)) **And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob**- NET = "Then all humankind will recognize that I am the LORD, your deliverer, your protector, the powerful ruler of Jacob." The entire world, Gentiles and Jews, will know that Jehovah (Yahweh) is the One Who is Savior and Redeemer and will recognize that He has the might and power to accomplish redemption of the little nation of Israel, which is why they come to know Him as **the Mighty One of Jacob** (ISRAEL). Here He is not called **the Mighty One** of the Church (although of course He is that), because Isaiah's prophecy is poignantly making the point that Jehovah is NOT FINISHED WITH THE NATION OF ISRAEL! While many deny this fact, including sadly many in the evangelical community, one day they will see and come to know that He is indeed **the Mighty One of Israel!** Every mouth will be stopped. As Charles Pfeiffer says "the fulfillment of prophecy demonstrates to the world the sovereign power of Jehovah God." (The Wycliffe Bible Commentary)

Isaiah "piles up" names of God, each of which speaks of some aspect of His divine character and/or His attributes. Notice how the Names parallel His actions in Isaiah 49:25. **LORD** (Jehovah) is the covenant keeper. **Savior** is the One who rescues or delivers. **Redeemer** is the one who pays the price to set captives and slaves free. **Mighty One** is He who has the power to accomplish all these things. O come let us adore Him!

Note also the possessive pronoun **YOUR**. To whom does this **YOUR** refer? In context this is Israel. Jehovah says He is "their" Savior, "their" Redeemer and this in fact is the very "function" He will fulfill when He returns (cf Ro 11:26-27+). Therefore ultimately the **YOUR** is the **remnant of Jews** who will by grace place their faith in Messiah (cf Zech 12:10-14+, Zech 13:1+ - Zechariah gives us a description of the size of the saved remnant in Zech 13:9+)

**Your Savior** (Deliverer, Helper) ([03467](#)) (see preceding note on [yasha'](#)) (See also [yeshua](#) from which we get our word "Jesus").

**Redeemer** ([01350](#)) ([goel/ga'al](#)) is a Hebrew verb and the participial form of the Qal stem of the verb is used like a noun. The primary meaning of **goel** is to do the part of a kinsman and thus to redeem one's kin from difficulty or danger often by paying a price (cf ransom). The redemption of one's kin by the nearest relative or kinsman is both a privilege and a duty which gives rise to the designation of the term "**kinsman-redeemer**." **Goel** is used of men such as Boaz who functioned as the Kinsman-Redeemer of Ruth the Moabitess, Boaz giving us a beautiful "type" of Christ our Kinsman-Redeemer. See the related in depth study on our [Goel Jesus Christ](#) Who is our [Kinsman Redeemer](#).

The idea of [redeem](#) of course implies first that someone needs redemption and second that a nearest kinsman has the ability (and willingness) to pay the price of redemption to set their kin free (to redeem them). In Isaiah 49:26 God has paid the price to set the believing remnant of Israel free from slavery to sin (and to oppressors), the redemption price being the Kinsman-Redeemer's Own blood. Peter writes that all believers (including the Jewish remnant) "were not **redeemed** with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." (1 Pe 1:18-19+).

**Goel** is used 23 times in Isaiah (out of a total of 83x in OT) -

Isa. 35:9; Isa. 41:14; Isa. 43:1; Isa. 43:14; Isa. 44:6; Isa. 44:22; Isa. 44:23; Isa. 44:24; Isa. 47:4; Isa. 48:17; Isa. 48:20; Isa. 49:7; Isa. 49:26; Isa. 51:10; Isa. 52:3; Isa. 52:9; Isa. 54:5; Isa. 54:8; Isa. 59:20; Isa. 60:16; Isa. 62:12; Isa. 63:9; Isa. 63:16

The Name of God as **Redeemer** is used only 18 times in the OT, with most of the uses in Isaiah.

Job 19:25; Ps. 19:14; Ps. 78:35; Prov. 23:11; Isa. 41:14; Isa. 43:14; Isa. 44:6; Isa. 44:24; Isa. 47:4; Isa. 48:17; Isa. 49:7; Isa. 49:26; Isa. 54:5; Isa. 54:8; Isa. 59:20; Isa. 60:16; Isa. 63:16; Jer. 50:34

Isaiah 44:6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his **Redeemer**, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.

**Comment** - Notice how foolish it is to "do away with Israel" and to say that God is finished with the nation of Israel. Here Jehovah is unequivocally linked with the nation of Israel as his Redeemer! Could the Scriptures be any clearer? I think not. The only way to change the true meaning of this passage is to spiritualize "Israel" and say "Israel" is really not "Israel" but is the "Church!" Does Isaiah 59:20 below sound like it refers to the Church?

Isaiah 59:20 "A **Redeemer** will come to Zion, And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," declares the LORD.

**Comment** - Again notice that this is not the Church, but is the nation of Israel, here describing Messiah's return to deliver a remnant of Jewish believers. This is the passage the Jewish writer Paul cites in Romans 11:26,27+. In that day, "all Israel shall be saved."

**Martin** - When the Lord executes judgment on His enemies (at Christ's second coming), the Messiah will go to Zion. He will be the Redeemer (see Isa 41:14) of those Israelites who turn to Him in repentance (Isa 59:20). Showing their future hope, the nation was being encouraged to repent.

**McGee** - Many people ask, Will the whole nation be saved? No, For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel (Ro 9:6). Those saved will only be a remnant. And there appears to be only a remnant in the church who are actually saved. But the Redeemer is coming some day to Zion, and at that time there will be a great confession of sin. Zech 12:10+ tells us about it

Isaiah 60:16 "You will also suck the milk of nations and suck the breast of kings (GENTILE DOMINATION AND OPPRESSION FINALLY WILL BE BROKEN AND REPLACED WITH GENTILES FAVORING ISRAEL!); Then you will know that I, **the LORD, am your Savior And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob**

**Comment** - Note that the last part of this passage is similar to Isaiah 49:26. In Isaiah 49:26 Isaiah says that these incredible events that end this present age as Messiah returns will cause all the people (Jew and Gentile) of the world to know that Jehovah is the true and living god. Here in Isaiah 60:16 those who know He is their Savior, etc are the Jews (who are saved).

**Mighty One of Jacob** - This is the Holy One of Israel, Yahweh, the God Who has made (and will keep) an unbreakable covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He has the might to make His covenant right! Compare [Abrahamic Covenant versus Mosaic Covenant](#).

**Mighty One** (046)(ayir/abiy/abir) is an adjective which means strong or mighty and in all 6 the OT uses functions as a noun, specifically as a Name for God. In Isaiah 49:26 (and Isa 1:24) **Mighty One** is translated in the Septuagint with the noun **ischus** which means strength, power or might and is used of men but also of God as in Rev 5:12 ("might"). **BDAG** says **ischus** describes "capability to function effectively," and here in Isaiah 49:26 is an apt description of the omnipotent God Who has sufficient might to deliver Israel.

**Gilbrant** - This noun is distinguished by the Masoretes from the adjective 'abbir by lack of doubling in the second consonant. Regardless of the antiquity of this distinction, the epithets form a separate group. This epithet is an ancient one. The tie of a deity to the patriarch is a basic element in patriarchal religion, the assumed substructure of later Hebrew religion. The personal name Yahweh is used in parallel to this epithet (Ps. 132:2, 5; Isa. 1:24), and in other contexts Yahweh introduces a list of appellations (Isa. 49:26; 60:16). Jacob's blessing, in Genesis 49, predates the revelation of the name Yahweh to Moses. This bond to the patriarch establishes the identity of the God worshiped by the early tribes. The Blessing of Jacob predates the monarchy. Thus, both anthropology and textual evidence confirm the chronological antiquity of this title for Yahweh. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Avir** is used 6x and all refer to God each name linking Him **inextricably** to the **literal** nation of Israel (for "Jacob" is synonymous with Israel).

Genesis 49:24 (JACOB'S BLESSING OF HIS SON JOSEPH) But his bow remained firm, And his arms were agile, From the hands of the **Mighty One** of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),

Psalms 132:2 (How he swore to the LORD And vowed to the **Mighty One** of Jacob,

Psalms 132:5 Until I find a place for the LORD, A dwelling place for the **Mighty One** of Jacob."

Isaiah 1:24 Therefore the Lord GOD of hosts, The **Mighty One** of Israel (Israel and Jacob are interchangeable), declares, "Ah, I will be relieved of My adversaries And avenge Myself on My foes.

Isaiah 49:26 "I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh, And they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine; And all flesh will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior And your Redeemer, the **Mighty One** of Jacob."

Isaiah 60:16 "You will also suck the milk of nations And suck the breast of kings; Then you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior And your Redeemer, the **Mighty One** of Jacob.

**Constable** sums up this chapter - Are these descriptions just impressionistic pictures of Gentiles coming to Christ for salvation, or should we look for a more realistic fulfillment of these promises? Amillennialists say they are figurative descriptions of Gentiles coming to salvation through Christ. Premillennialists say they describe a literal return of Israelites to their land with an accompanying

exaltation of the physical descendants of Abraham in the earth. One of the cardinal rules of hermeneutics is that if the interpreter can understand something literally it should be taken that way unless other indications in the text or context point to a nonliteral interpretation. Amillennialists concede that it is possible to take these prophecies literally and that if one does he or she will come out a premillennialist. But they say that a literal fulfillment was not intended and that these predictions are being fulfilled spiritually through the church. Premillennialists view this chapter, and most of chapters 50–57, as revealing Messiah's restoration of Israel to her land at the beginning of the Millennium.

While the truths about God as "LORD, Savior, Redeemer, the Mighty One" are written to Israel, the truths reflected in these great Names are applicable to all of His children and so we can sing:

Jehovah is our strength,  
And He shall be our song;  
We shall o'ercome at length,  
Although our foes be strong:  
In vain then Satan doth oppose,  
For God is stronger than His foes.  
-- S. Barnard

Indeed God (and He Alone) is always [Mighty to Save](#). ([Play](#))

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES ON ISAIAH 49:16

**Note:** There is some duplication so use these notes "as is." These notes are a compilation of background information in preparation for the article "Indelible Grace: Inscribed on His Hands." Most of these notes are of a "devotional flavor" rather than a purely expositional flavor.

### Hymns, et al...

A Debtor to Mercy Alone  
My name from the palms of His hands  
Eternity will not erase;  
Impressed on His heart it remains,  
In marks of indelible grace.

Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given;  
More happy, but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in heaven."

by Augustus Toplady

Names and Titles of Jesus Christ - Names and Titles of Jesus Christ – The Indescribable Christ: A–G.

"If Jesus is ours we have a true friend,  
Whose goodness endures the same to the end;  
Our comforts may vary, our frames may decline;  
We cannot miscarry; our aid is divine.  
The hills may depart and mountains remove,  
But faithful thou art O fountain of love!  
The Father has graven our names on thy hands;  
Our record, in Heaven eternally stands."

-----  
Before the throne of God above  
I have a strong and perfect plea.  
A great high Priest whose Name is Love  
Who ever lives and pleads for me.  
My name is graven on His hands,  
My name is written on His heart.  
I know that while in Heaven He stands

No tongue can bid me thence depart.

When Satan tempts me to despair  
And tells me of the guilt within,  
Upward I look and see Him there  
Who made an end of all my sin.  
Because the sinless Savior died  
My sinful soul is counted free.  
For God the just is satisfied  
To look on Him and pardon me.

Behold Him there the risen Lamb,  
My perfect spotless righteousness,  
The great unchangeable I AM,  
The King of glory and of grace,  
One in Himself I cannot die.  
My soul is purchased by His blood,  
My life is hid with Christ on high,  
With Christ my Savior and my God!  
Charitie Lees Smith (1863)

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The hills may depart, and mountains remove,  
But faithful thou art, O Fountain of Love.  
The Father has graven our names on thy hands,  
Our building in heaven eternally stands.  
W. Hammond

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More than conquerors! There our Captain stands,  
While our names are graven upon His hands;  
Though the pow'rs of darkness against us frown,  
We shall win the fight, and shall wear the crown.

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Long the blessed Guide has led me  
By the desert road;  
Now I see the golden towers--  
City of my God.

There amidst the love and glory,  
He is waiting yet;  
On His hands a name is graven,  
He can ne'er forget.  
Francis Havergal

-----

Fatherlike He tends and spares us;  
Well our feeble frame He knows.  
In His hands He gently bears us,  
Rescues us from all our foes.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Widely yet His mercy flows.  
Henry Lyte

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"Thousands in the fold of Jesus,  
This attainment ne'er could boast;  
To his name eternal praises,  
None of these shall e'er be lost."  
Deeply graven

On his hands their names remain.”

Spurgeon

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Dread not the things that are ahead,  
The burdens great, the sinking sands,  
The thorns that o'er the path are spread,  
God holds the future in His hands.

God holds the future in His hands  
And every heart He understands.  
On Him depend,  
He is your Friend,  
He holds the future in His hands.  
James Rowe

-----

“Let not Satan make thee craven;  
He can threaten but not harm.  
On My hands thy name is graven,  
And thy shield is My strong arm.  
How, then, could it ever be  
I should not remember thee,  
Fail to build thy walls, My city,  
And look down on thee with pity?

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“Thousands in the fold of Jesus,  
This attainment ne'er could boast;  
To his name eternal praises,  
None of these shall e'er be lost.  
Deeply graven  
On his hands their names remain.”

-----

4 Jesus, I throw my arms around,  
And hang upon Thy breast;  
Without a gracious smile from Thee  
My spirit cannot rest.

5 Oh! tell me that my worthless name  
Is graven on Thy hands;  
Show me some promise in Thy book,  
Where my salvation stands!

Isaac Watts

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I love thy church, O God!  
Her walls before thee stand,  
Dear as the apple of thine eye,  
And graven on thy hand.  
Classical Study Bible, The.

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In light of the grandeur and glory of the truths of God's unshakable love for us in Christ, we would do well to sing the words of George Matheson's hymn to Him Who has loved us with an everlasting love...

O Love that wilt not let me go,

I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe,  
That in thine ocean depths its flow  
May richer, fuller be.

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Arise, my soul, arise; shake off thy guilty fears;  
The bleeding sacrifice in my behalf appears:  
Before the throne my surety stands,  
Before the throne my surety stands,  
My name is written on His hands.  
He ever lives above, for me to intercede;  
His all redeeming love, His precious blood, to plead:  
His blood atoned for all our race,  
His blood atoned for all our race,  
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.  
Five bleeding wounds He bears; received on Calvary;  
They pour effectual prayers; they strongly plead for me:  
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,  
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,  
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"  
The Father hears Him pray, His dear anointed One;  
He cannot turn away, the presence of His Son;  
His Spirit answers to the blood,  
His Spirit answers to the blood,  
And tells me I am born of God.  
My God is reconciled; His pardoning voice I hear;  
He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear:  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
And "Father, Abba, Father," cry.

#### CHORUS

O my soul, arise  
Behold the risen Christ  
Your Great High Priest  
Your spotless sacrifice  
O my soul, arise  
God owns you as His child  
Shake off your guilty fears  
My soul, arise

-----

1 Redeem'd offender, hail the day  
That sees thy sin forgiv'n:  
Jesus hath borne thy guilt away,  
And pleads for thee in heav'n.  
2 Imprinted on his hands thou art  
In characters of blood;  
The stream that issu'd from his heart  
Shall waft thee safe to God.  
3 For me vouchsaf'd th' unspotted Lamb,  
His Father's wrath to bear:  
I see his feet, and read my name  
Engraven deeply there.  
4 Forth from the Lord his gushing blood

In purple currents ran:  
And ev'ry wound proclaim'd aloud  
His wond'rous love to man.  
5 My faith looks back and sees him bleed;  
A thorny crown he wears,  
To set upon the sinner's head  
A shining crown of stars.  
6 Saviour, I fain would take the wreath,  
To thee, my centre, move,  
In all the lowliness of faith,  
In all the heights of love.  
7 Thy righteousness my robe shall be,  
Thy bitter death my hope:  
For my offence upon the tree  
My Lord was lifted up.  
8 For me the Saviour's blood avails,  
Almighty to atone:  
The hands he gave to piercing nails  
Shall lead me to his throne.  
Toplady

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**SPURGEON** - How appropriately Christ can say this when he looks on the nail-prints, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands"! As I said this morning, Jesus can give nothing, he can take nothing, he can do nothing, he can hold nothing, without remembering his people (WITHOUT SEEING THE MEMORIALS OF MY CHOSEN PEOPLE): "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

Our Lord Jesus has his own memorials of us, even as he has given us a memorial of himself. The prints of the nails constitute forget-me-nots of a peculiarly personal and abiding kind: "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands": Isaiah 49:16. By these marks he sees what he has already suffered, and he pledges himself to do nothing apart from those sufferings, for his hands, with which he works, are pierced. Since he thus bears in his hands the marks of his passion, let us bear them on our hearts.

SPURGEON - Yet it is a sweet thing to be able to trace the hand of God in our affliction, for nothing can come from that hand towards one of his children but that which is good and right. If you will think of those hands of which the Lord says, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands," you may rest assured that nothing can come from those hands but what infinite wisdom directs, and infinite love has ordained.

"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 never forget thee." "I have graven thee upon my hands; thy walls are continually before me." Rejoice then, O Christian, in the second thought, that God's love does not fail in the furnace, but is as hot as the furnace, and hotter still.

Yea, graven on the palms of his hands." You are not forgotten of him; is not that good news? When somebody comes to you in a foreign land, you like to hear him say, "When I was at your home, they were all talking about you, and they all sent loving messages to you. I saw your portrait in a locket, and I could tell that you were not forgotten." You are glad to hear that; and Jesus has your names graven on the palms of his hands, and he is pleading for you before the mercy-seat, you are not forgotten up there.

There is no forgetting a thing that is written on the palms of your hands. You cannot do any work but you see it there; and God cannot do any work without seeing his children's names.

Are they not blessed pledges to lay hold on—his lovingkindness and his tender mercies? With such promises you will be sure to prevail.

You may rest assured that nothing can come from those hands but what infinite wisdom directs, and infinite love has ordained.

He will never forget those whose memorials are thus perpetually with him. May the living blessing of the ever-living Savior be with you to-day and for ever! Amen.

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Luke 12:37+ "Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them."

Note the role reversal—the master now serves the servants!

**ESV Study Bible** "in view the end-time messianic banquet (Lk 13:29 "And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline [at the table] in the kingdom of God." 14:15–24; 22:27–30; Rev. 19:9).

**MacArthur** "This remarkable statement pictures Christ, at His return, ministering as a servant to believers."

**Nelson Study Bible** - In a reversal of the servant image, Jesus pointed out that the faithful servant will be served by Jesus on His return. Faithfulness will be rewarded.{Radmacher, Earl D.; Allen, Ronald Barclay; House, H. Wayne},

**NET Note** - He...will come and wait on them is a reversal of expectation, but shows that what Jesus asks for he is willing to do as well; see John 13:5 and John 15:18–27, although those instances merely foreshadow what is in view here.

**MacDonald** - This is a very touching suggestion that He who once came into this world in the form of a bondsman will graciously condescend to serve His people again in their heavenly home. The devout German Bible scholar Bengel regarded verse 37 as the greatest promise in all God's word.

**J C Ryle** comments that "This is perhaps one of the most wonderful promises made to believers in the New Testament. It must probably be interpreted figuratively (**ED**: I AM NOT AS CONVINCED!). It means that there is no limit to the honor and glory which the Lord Jesus will bestow on those who are ready to meet him at his second coming."

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In light of this great truth that God does not forget us, may the Spirit of the Living God enable each of us to "Bless the LORD O my soul and FORGET none of His benefits" in Christ Jesus. Amen (Ps 103:2) Whenever Israel forgot who they were and what God had done for them, they lapsed into sin and paid dearly for their disobedience. Gratitude is a key element in the Christian life. Instead of imitating Israel and forgetting God's blessings and ignoring his counsel (Ps. 106:13), let's praise him and celebrate his goodness to us. God doesn't forget us, and there's no reason why we should forget him.

Context of Isa 49:16 - Israel (depicted as "Zion") was in an hour of distress and discouraged by her exile to Babylon cried out "The LORD has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me." (Isa 49:14)

Most of us have had the experience of writing something on our hands so that we might not forget it later. But we only do this if it is something important. The problem with men writing on their hands is that the ink washes off and can't remember the important item! When God Who needs no help with His memory engraves us on the palm of His hands, we are on His palms as eternal "reminders." Have you ever seen somebody write something on their hand so that they would not forget something. Maybe a telephone number, or something from the store. You only write it on your hand if it is important. The only problem with this system is that when you wash your hands what you wanted to remember gets washed away.

As I was reading my Bible this week I came across a verse that reminded me of how important we are to God.

Isaiah 49:16 - See, I have written your name on my hand.

We are important enough to God that He is willing to write our name on His hand. God's hands never get dirty and He never has to wash them. That means that He writes our name on his hand it is there forever.

God never forgets us and He always loves us.

A mother may be true, her affection may be as pure and as strong as earth can furnish but she may forget. But here is somebody who always has us in everlasting remembrance. We are kept right before His eyes all the time -- graven upon the palms of His hands.

**Spurgeon** - Beloved believer, you were graven on the hands of Christ even then. Oh, that the Lord would direct you into the antiquity of his love. It shall make you greatly prize that love to think that it had no beginning, and shall never, never have an end.

Oh, blessed memory of God! "Yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee," says he, "upon the palms of my hands." There is no forgetting a thing that is written on the palms of your hands. You cannot do any work but you see it there; and God cannot do any work without seeing his children's names. He can do no work of judgment without seeing their names; and therefore he spares his people. He can do no work of bounty but what their names are on his hands; and therefore he says, "Surely, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." His hands are branded with the names of his beloved, and it is not possible that he can forget them. The Lord has a loving memory. He cannot forget his own. Think of words like these — "I remember thee, the love of

thine espousals". "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me". "The Lord thy God will not forsake thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them."

God cannot forget any of his people, sorrowful or sinful though they may be.

Spurgeon on graven thee upon the palms of my hands - O Christian, that is a firm foundation, cemented with blood, on which thou mayest build for eternity! Ah, my soul! thou needest no other hope but this. Jesus, thy mercy never dies; I will plead this truth when cast down with anguish,--Thy mercy never dies. I will plead this when Satan hurls temptations at me, and when conscience casts the remembrance of my sin in my teeth; I will plead this ever, and I will plead it now,--"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness, My beauty are, my glorious dress."

It is as if God is saying to us "I cannot work, I cannot even open the palm of my hand without seeing the memorials of my chosen people: 'I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. For God is full of kindness to his people, and cannot forget them. Oh, that they would never forget Him! (cf "Forget none of His benefits" Ps 103:2)" (Spurgeon)

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Spurgeon on eternal security - Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when he has graven thee upon His own palms?

HOW has He engraved us on His hands?

We ask for proof of His love,  
His care,  
His remembrance  
and we are ushered by Isaiah into the New Testament.  
Enter an upper room all locked against possible enemies.  
See a little group of disciples and this time Thomas is with them.  
COMES JESUS in the midst.  
Of course – the evidence is there in Jesus

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John 20:26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" JOHN 20

Luke 24 38+ He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." 40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.

And that evidence is there still for John records a heavenly picture in Revelation 5:6...

Beloved, let us with eyes of faith "Come see His hands and His feet,  
the scars that speak of sacrifice,  
hands that flung stars into space,  
to cruel nails surrendered." (Graham Kendrick)

The only man made things in heaven are the scars in the hands of Jesus, the wounds in his feet, the wound in his side. (Zech 13:6)

**Spurgeon** said, "Jesus can give nothing, he can take nothing, he can do nothing, he can hold nothing, without remembering you!"

My brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He has always had you in His mind. He has always loved you. His hands prove it.

He knows everything about you and He still loves you. your personality, your circumstances, your trials, your sins, your temptations, your wants, your works, your weaknesses, everything about you is known to Him--He has graven YOU upon His own palms.

Those hands that were pierced for us at His crucifixion fulfil the Prophet's words beyond expectation.

See! says God – I have engraved you on the palms of these hands.

By such a work of love does God write you and me on His hands

- by the wonder of His creation
- by the wonder of His sustaining work

- by the miracle of His restoring work

but most of all by the work of Christ upon His cross

My name from the palm of his hands

Eternity will not erase;

Impressed on his heart it remains,

In marks of indelible grace. Toplady

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A MOTHER'S LOVE - I have read recently where a mother followed her worthless, profligate son until he was incarcerated for life, then at the door of the prison she insisted upon having a little hut where she lived and spent her days as near to him as she was permitted, and when he was dead and buried in that prison yard she insisted upon her dead body being laid in the same place of shame, hoping that in death her bones might touch his unworthy dust. She followed him and followed him until everybody said, "Let him go," but, no, her mother heart never released itself from him until it was still in death.

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Philpot- If cast down, remember this, that to be cast down, is not to be cast away. For his own wise purposes; God often allows his people to be cast down; but he never casts them away. Has he not promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you?" Heb 13:5 Has he not said, "I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me?" Isa 49:16 It is expressly declared--"The Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance." Ps 94:14 We may doubt and fear, and even say with David in the very Psalm before us, "Why do you cast me off?" or even plead with him, "O God, why have you cast us off forever?" The Lord still answers--"I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God."

Spurgeon - "He uses the most kind and endearing terms towards us to show that his love will never die away. Glory be to his holy name for this! Is not his love better than wine?"

The wounds of our Lord are the tokens of his love.

Look at the nail-print, that is his memorial, his forget-me-not, and by it he says to thee,—

"Forget thee I will not, I cannot, thy name

Engraved on my heart doth for ever remain:

The palms of my hands whilst I look on I see

The wounds I received when suffering for thee."

Can you imagine it, that God who is greater than immensity, whose life is longer than time, that God the all-boundless One, should love you? That he should think of you, pity you, consider you, this is all very well; but that he should love you, that his heart should go out to you, that he should choose you, that he should have graven you on the palms of his hands, that he should not rest in heaven without you, that he should not think heaven complete until he brings you there, that you should be the bride, and Christ the Bridegroom, that there should be eternal love between him and you, oh, as you think of it, lift up your hands with adoring wonder, and say, "Thy love to me was wonderful."

Even as he loves his own dear Son, so he loves us. We are in his heart; we are graven upon the palms of his hands; and, therefore, when he comforts, it is in so fond a manner that we cannot but be cheered. With all the tenderness a mother feels, God feels for us, and so he comforts us as a mother comforts her child.

he thinks of us constantly. He says that he has graven our names upon the palms of his hands, as if to show how continually we are before him. David said, "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me;" and our Saviour said to his disciples, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him," proving that he had thought about them, and had looked upon them with a careful eye, and observed all their necessities. Yes, God does in very deed and of a truth think upon his people, and his thoughts concerning them are very numerous.

I have graven thee on the palms of my hands," says he. Let us engrave his name upon the tablets of our hearts.

Think, for a minute, if he had forgotten you — forgotten you in your merriest moment, ay, in your holiest moment, what would have

been your portion? If God had suspended the outflow of his grace, and left you to yourselves, what had been your fate! Oh, my God, my God, if thou hadst once forgotten me, where had I been? But he never has forgotten us. He is not forgetting us at this moment. He says to each one, however wandering "I do earnestly remember thee still." He will never forget us. The dying thief said, "Lord, remember me"; and Jesus did remember him. He cries, "I remember thee, the love of thine espousals." Lord, dost thou remember me? Then would I smite my heart to think I ever should have forgotten thee.

Oh, how can we forget when God is our diadem of glory? It is our highest privilege that he is ours and we are his. God is our beauty, the honor and excellence of all his saints. It is this that makes us illustrious in the eyes of cherubim and seraphim — that God is ours and we are his. God is our joy, our only joy, our overflowing joy. He that knoweth God hath heaven within his spirit even now. Come, let us not forget again, but let us bind the glorious name of Lord about our heart. May the sweet Spirit do it now, for Jesus Christ's sweet love's sake, for Jesus Christ's sweet love's sake. Amen.

Jesus bore the scars of Calvary in the palms of his hands, His blood inaugurating the New Covenant.

The city walls of Jerusalem, or Zion, never forgotten by God because He has an everlasting covenant with Israel.

Oh, how sweet it is to believe our names were on Jehovah's heart, and graven on Jesus' hands before the universe had a being! May not this electrify a man of joy, and make him dance for very mirth? Chosen of God ere time began.

The Lord remembers what he did when he swore that he would save his people, and when he gave Christ to make the covenant sure.

Are you discouraged? Downcast? Do you feel that God has rejected you?

The people of Israel felt that God had forgotten them in Babylon; but Isaiah pointed out that God would never forget them, as a loving mother would not forget her little child. Life Application Study Bible.

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To reassure Zion and prove the point in an even stronger way, God opens his hand and challenges Zion to "observe, see" (hēn) an image that was permanently "engraved" (ḥāqāq) on the palm of God's hand. This is not a tattoo on the back of his hand, and it is not something written with weak ink that can fade or be erased; this is permanently carved New American Commentary - New American Commentary – Isaiah 40-66: Volume 15b.

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H W Smith - God of all comfort - It is with too many, alas, just as it was with Israel of old. On one side God said to Zion: "Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted"; and on the other side Zion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." And then God's answer came in those wonderful words, full forever of comfort enough to meet the needs of all the sorrows of all humanity: "Forget thee! Can a mother forget? Yea, perhaps a mother may forget, but I cannot. I have even graven thee upon the palms of my hands, so that it is impossible for me to forget thee! Be comforted, then, and sing for you."

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Spurgeon - The next piece of good news is that Jesus is pleading for you. Remember how he said to Peter, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Jesus has thy name upon his breastplate-- yea, "graven on the palms of his hands." You are not forgotten of him; is not that good news? When somebody comes to you in a foreign land, you like to hear him say, "When I was at your home they were all talking about you, and they all sent loving messages to you. I saw your portrait in a locket, and I could tell that you were not forgotten." You are glad to hear that; and Jesus has your names graven on the palms of his hands, and he is pleading for you before the mercy-seat, you are not forgotten up there.

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The Lord's mission is to reveal His love to the discouraged (vv.15-23). His love can be compared to the love of a mother for her nursing child. Could a mother forget to feed and nourish her baby? Could she abandon and have no love for the child? Not likely! But even if she did, God will not forget His people (v.15), for they are engraved, actually carved and chiseled, on the palms of His hands. This means that God's people are permanently in His hands, under His care, protection, and provision. But this is not all: those protected inside Jerusalem's walls are ever before Him. They are always in His sight, and they will stand forever before Him as a memorial. He will always be with His people, looking after them and the Holy City.

Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Isaiah II.

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Spurgeon (Neither Forsaken nor Forgotten - Isa 49:16) - My object, in speaking upon the familiar and precious words of our text, is just this. Sometimes, you and I get into the same sad condition as Zion was then in, and we fancy that God has forgotten us, so I want to show you that, if we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord gives to us an answer similar to that which he gave to

sorrowful Zion, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." I suppose that Zion came to this conclusion because she was in banishment. She was away from the land that flowed with milk and honey, and she was suffering in exile. Is this the conclusion to be drawn from all suffering? Does the vine say, "The vine dresser hath forsaken me because he prunes me so sharply"?

Spurgeon prayer - May our God bring home to you a sense of your safety in Christ Jesus! May he assure you that your name is graven on his hand; and whisper in your ear the promise, "Fear not, I am with thee." Look upon him, the great Surety of the covenant, as faithful and true, and, therefore, bound and engaged to present you, the weakest of the family, with all the chosen race, before the throne of God; and in such a sweet contemplation you will drink the juice of the spiced wine of the Lord's pomegranate, and taste the dainty fruits of Paradise. You will have an antepast of the enjoyments which ravish the souls of the perfect saints above, if you can believe with unstaggering faith that "faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

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NOT ME REMEMBERING COVENANT BUT GOD REMEMBERING! -

"And I will remember my covenant." — Genesis 9:15

Mark the form of the promise. God does not say, "And when ye shall look upon the bow, and ye shall remember my covenant, then I will not destroy the earth," but it is gloriously put, not upon our memory, which is fickle and frail, but upon God's memory, which is infinite and immutable. "The bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant." Oh! it is not my remembering God, it is God's remembering me which is the ground of my safety; it is not my laying hold of his covenant, but his covenant's laying hold on me. Glory be to God! the whole of the bulwarks of salvation are secured by divine power, and even the minor towers, which we may imagine might have been left to man, are guarded by almighty strength. Even the remembrance of the covenant is not left to our memories, for we might forget, but our Lord cannot forget the saints whom he has graven on the palms of his hands. It is with us as with Israel in Egypt; the blood was upon the lintel and the two side-posts, but the Lord did not say, "When you see the blood I will pass over you," but "When I see the blood I will pass over you." My looking to Jesus brings me joy and peace, but it is God's looking to Jesus which secures my salvation and that of all his elect, since it is impossible for our God to look at Christ, our bleeding Surety, and then to be angry with us for sins already punished in him. No, it is not left with us even to be saved by remembering the covenant. There is no linsey-wolsey here—not a single thread of the creature mars the fabric. It is not of man, neither by man, but of the Lord alone. We should remember the covenant, and we shall do it, through divine grace; but the hinge of our safety does not hang there—it is God's remembering us, not our remembering him; and hence the covenant is an everlasting covenant.

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John MacDuff - Or, take the other emblem; every individual Christian is engraved — -where? Not on the mountains, for though called 'everlasting,' — they are to 'depart;' not on the hills — for they are 'to be removed;' not on the heavens — for they are to 'vanish as a scroll;' not on the sun — for it is to grow dim with age; on no part of outer nature — on no pillar or cornice or wall of the Almighty's palace; for years would corrode the inscription, time would obliterate it. They have a more imperishable place upon the Hand of God. From that, nothing can erase them! The Patriarch's prayer is answered; they are "engraved as with an iron pen and lead in the Rock for ever;" but that rock is the Rock of Ages!...

The vessel may be tossed by angry storms; but let her steer, not by human landmarks — earthly beacon-lights — but by these two bright constellations here given us: telling of the love of God's Heart, and the power of His Arm — and she will be brought to the desired haven!

Or, in the case of the individual believer, does a cold shadow at times fall across his sunlit path, tempting him to doubt the rectitude of God's ways, and the faithfulness of His promises? Let him trust that inviolable, unforgetting Love. Like Ezekiel's monster wheels, God's providences may be often baffling; but they are "full of eyes." They are not shifting, capricious, untended, unregulated. The eyes of love and power are there; and in their complex evolutions and revolutions they are working out some grand end for His own glory and for His people's good. All else may perish, all else may prove unfaithful. The trusted may requite with base treachery; the 'summer friend' may abandon and forsake in the winter of adversity; the golden prop on which we leaned may give way; the tree under whose shadow we sat, may have its roots sapped and undermined by the stream; brother may be estranged from the early love of brother; the fond embrace of sisters may be among the mingled memories of the past; even the mother may be a traitor to her tenderest instincts and her dearest trust — smiles may be merged into frowns, and love into cold hatred; "They may forget — yet," says Jehovah, "I WILL NOT FORGET YOU!"

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Winslow - How precious is this truth to the child of God! Human thoughts change; mind itself fails, and with it fades from memory countenances that were familiar, and names that were fond, and scenes that were sacred. Human thoughts that cluster and cling so warmly and closely around us today, before many weeks are past, attracted by new objects of interest, or absorbed by new

engagements of time, have fled and gone, and we are alone and forgotten. But there is ONE whose thoughts of us never change, whose mind never ceases for a moment to think of us. "O Israel, you shall not be forgotten of me," is His own loving declaration. Directing us to a mother—the last earthly home of human tenderness, sympathy, and love—He tells us, "She may forget, yet will not I." Beloved, whatever fluctuation you find in human thought, or change in human affection, God's thoughts of love, and care, and faithfulness, are changeless. Have they ever darted into your heart like solar beams, causing that heart to sing for joy? Then, though in darkness, loneliness, and sorrow you are led to exclaim, "Has the Lord forgotten to be gracious?" God still bears you in His thoughts and on His heart. Relatives may forget, friends may forget, the saints may forget, but your God never can. He thinks of you at this moment as lovingly, as carefully, as from all eternity. Once in the thoughts of your covenant God, you are in those thoughts forever. Be not cast down, then, if God appears to forget you. "My way is hid from the Lord," says the desponding Church. "No," says God; "I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me." Amid all your mental wanderings, your fickle, faint thoughts of Him, He still remembers you. In the multitude of your anxious and perplexed thoughts within you, awakened by a sense of your ungrateful oblivion of God, or by His trying and mysterious dealings, let this comfort delight your soul, that He never forgets you. But let us particularize some of God's thoughts of His saints.

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Thomas Brooks - He loves you with an everlasting love—Jer. 31:8, 'Where he loves, he loves to the end.' John 13:1. As people engrave the mark, name, or picture of those whom they dearly love and entirely affect, upon some stone which they wear at their bosoms, or upon some ring which they wear on their finger, so has God engraved Zion upon the palms of his hands; she was still in his eye, and always dear to his heart, though she did not think so.

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Ruth Bryan - "Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne." Revelation 5:6. Alas! those wondrous wounds. Have they left immortal scars? Will You, through all eternity, wear those marks of Your matchless love? And will You, in those blissful realms, dissolve our souls in holy rapture and adoring love, by saying, "Look at My hands and My feet—it is I Myself!" Surely, if anything could add beauty to that glorious form, it would be, in the eyes of love, those deep engravings, "I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands." And surely You, O Beloved, are engraved on the table of this longing heart. Set, oh, "set me as a seal upon Your heart, as a seal upon Your arm," too. Oh, grant another glimpse of Your surpassing charms! Let me—

"Behold the God who died for man;

And praise You more than angels can."

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Wiersbe - There are times when you wonder if God really cares about you, but He assures you that you are not forgotten. You are His beloved child (v. 15; Ps. 27:10), and He will never forget your name (v. 16).

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E Stanely Jones - Isaiah 49:16 says: "Behold, I have graven you on the palms of my hands." We are not chalked on God's hands, nor painted on; we are graven. If we were chalked or painted on His hands, He could wash His hands of us. If we are graven on His hands, however, as a sculptor engraves a name in granite, then we are literally on His hands forever.

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Wiersbe - God is compassionate and comforts us as a mother comforts her children (66:13). Isaiah pictures Israel as a nursing child, totally dependent on the Lord who will never forget them or forsake them. The high priest bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his shoulders and over his heart (Ex. 28:6–9), engraved on jewels; but God has engraved His children's names on His hands. The word "engraved" means "to cut into," signifying its permanence. God can never forget Zion or Zion's children.

Zion seems like a forsaken and barren mother, but she will be so blessed of God that there will be no room for her children! They will be like beautiful bridal ornaments, not decrepit refugees from Captivity. Once again, the prophet looked ahead to the end of the age when the Gentiles will honor Jehovah and Israel, and kings and queens will be baby-sitters for Israel's children!

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Kimberly L. Clayton- We are not forgotten. We are inscribed on the palms of God's hands. Every day in Washington, D.C., people visit the Vietnam Memorial, searching for a name etched into the wall bearing so many names. They trace their fingers over the letters, touching something deeper than name alone. Not forgotten. Remembered. Inscribed. Still, not all names are there, for even our best memorials are limited. Not so the palms of God: every name is written, everyone is included. What joy to find your own name and names of those you love on God's outstretched palm!

Might tattoos be an apt metaphor for God's inscribed hands? Indeed, people who get tattoos often want to indicate membership in a group, a way of life; or to make permanent note of an event or a person. However, an ink is being developed today that makes tattoo removal easier and less painful. Our loyalties, our loves change. Not so with God. The covenant holds. We are inscribed on the palms of God's outstretched hands, hands that guide us toward freedom and welcome us home.

Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary - Feasting on the Word – Year A, Volume 1: Advent through Transfiguration.

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Constable - 49:15 God's response to His "wife's" complaint was to assure her of His unfailing commitment to her. Human mothers may possibly neglect the children that they cared so much for that they nursed, though this is unnatural. They may even stop showing compassion to the children that they carried in their wombs for nine months, though this is inconsistent. Yet Yahweh would never, ever forget (abandon) His chosen people (cf. Ps. 27:10).

"This is one of the strongest, if not the strongest expression of God's love in the Old Testament, and is often compared with Jeremiah 31:20." (Young)

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KJV Bible Commentary - So permanent is God's relationship to His people that He promises, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. The verb shaqāq means to carve or cut into, hence, to engrave. Some have attempted to view it as a tattooing; however, it should be noted that this practice is strongly condemned in Leviticus 19:28. While it is possible that the forbiddance of the practice does not necessarily prohibit its use as a figure of speech, the implication of the passage would seem to favor engrave. However, the fact that they are engraved upon the palms would seem to favor the idea of being tattooed into the skin itself. In either case, the indication of the passage is that God's relationship with us is such that He is inseparably united to His people. That the verse teaches the security of the believer is more than obvious.

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MacDonald - In the meantime, the city of Zion is portrayed as feeling that her Lord has forgotten her. Jehovah's answer is that a mother may forget her nursing baby, but He will never forget His city. Zion is inscribed on the palms of His hands, and her walls are never out of His mind. We instinctively compare the reference to the palms of Jehovah's hands with the lovewounds borne by Christ for us. A great English Christian poet expressed it beautifully:

My name from the palms of His hands

Eternity will not erase;

Imprest on His heart it remains

In marks of indelible grace.

—Augustus Toplady

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J Vernon McGee - What beautiful assurance God gives them that they are not forsaken of Him! Israel may forsake Him—as they are doing yet today—but God will never forsake them. My friend, if you still have doubts that God will restore Israel, I submit this section to you for your careful study.

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John Oswalt - God then uses a second image to impress on the despairing Zion that he could not have possibly forgotten her. She is inscribed on his palms—more specific than "hands," perhaps denoting intimacy and immediacy. Here is the opposite of the normal practice. Instead of the master's name being written on the servant's hand, the servant's name is written on the master's hand. This is the divine condescension that we have come to expect throughout the book. The master does not expect the servant somehow to attain his height; rather, the master comes down to the servant's place (11:1–4; 30:18; 57:15–16; 66:2). This is an expression of the same kind of passionate devotion that the Israelites will express toward God (44:5); the act of a young lover whose thoughts and feelings are solely of the beloved. Forget her? The most fascinating thing in the world, written everywhere, is her name, even on one's hands. (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament)

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"Do you think I've forgotten you?" the Lord asks His people. "Look at My hands. You are engraved upon them."

Whenever I am tempted to think God has forgotten me, I need only to go to the Cross of Calvary, for there I'm reminded that He engraved me on the palm of His hands when in them He absorbed nails and paid the price for my sin.

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To reassure Zion and prove the point in an even stronger way, God opens his hand and challenges Zion to "observe, see" (hên) an image that was permanently "engraved" (hāqāq) on the palm of God's hand. This is not a tattoo on the back of his hand, and it is not something written with weak ink that can fade or be erased; this is permanently carved into his metaphorical flesh. The object engraved on the palm of God's hand is a drawing of the walls of Jerusalem, but it is useless to speculate about which walls were engraved—were these partially broken down walls or the glorious walls of the future city (63:18; 65:17-19)? When one has something engraved on his hand, it indicates an important relationship with someone who is very dear (Isa 44:5). No one engraves the name of an enemy or a casual friend on his hand. Having something like this on one's hands provides a constant reminder of the one who is loved because the engraving on the hands would be "continually before me" (Ps 16:8; 50:8). This engraving was written on the powerful hands that created the heavens and the earth (48:13), so it is very comforting for the audience to know that Jerusalem is carved on the almighty hands that can accomplish great things. New American Commentary - New American Commentary – Isaiah 40-66: Volume 15b.

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Benson - Mine eye and heart are constantly upon thee. "This is certainly an allusion," says Bishop Lowth, "to some practice, common among the Jews at that time, of making marks on their hands or arms by punctures on the skin, rendered indelible by fire or staining, with some sort of sign, or representation of the city or temple, to show their affection and zeal for it. It is well known that the pilgrims at the holy sepulchre get themselves marked in this manner with what are called the ensigns of Jerusalem. Maundrell, p. 75; where he tells us how it is performed: and this art is practised by travelling Jews all over the world at this day." See also Vitringa and Michaelis's notes. Or the allusion may be merely to the common practice of men, who use to put signs upon their hands or fingers, of such things as they especially wish to remember. Thy walls are continually before me — The ruins and desolations of my church are always in my thoughts, nor shall I forget or neglect to repair them, and grant her deliverance from her enemies, and protection at the proper time.

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Calvin "I cannot forget thee without forgetting myself."

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Guzik - a. Can a woman forget her nursing child: Though bizarre accounts of unspeakable cruelty surface from time to time, everyone knows that a woman will never forget her nursing child. Yet the LORD says, Surely they will forget, yet I will not forget you. The LORD's affection for His people is greater than the devotion a woman has for her nursing child!

b. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands: This has obvious and beautiful fulfillment in the nail-scarred hands of Jesus. As Jesus told Thomas in a post-resurrection appearance, look at My hands (John 20:27). When we see the nail-scarred hands of Jesus, we see how He has inscribed us on the palms of His hands. With such love, how could God ever forget His people?

c. Your walls are continually before Me: The walls refer to the walls of the city of Jerusalem, which figuratively speak of the health, the strength, the prosperity, and the security of God's people. God is always mindful of the condition of His people, despite the objections of a doubting Zion.

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Stedman - That is God's word that he will not forget his promises to Israel. Paul takes this up in Chapters 9, 10 and 11 of Romans, and asks the question, "Has God cast off his people whom he knew?" Romans 11:2 a KJV). His answer is, "Absolutely not." God will fulfill these promises.

Here Jehovah reminds them, "Though you may feel neglected and forgotten, I cannot cast you off. I will never forget you, 'Can a mother forget her sucking child?'" Proverbially, of course, mother love is the strongest love of all. Many mothers continue to love their children no matter what they do. But it is unfortunately true that mothers can forget their children. This week the papers were filled with an account of a mother in New York who systematically suffocated all nine of her children. Mothers can forget their children, but God cannot: "Behold, I have inscribed you, engraved you on the palms of my hands." We are reminded of that scene in the gospels when Jesus, after his resurrection, appeared to his frightened disciples, huddled together in the upper room, and said to them, "Behold, my hands and my feet and see that it is I," Luke 24:39). Those wounds in his hands were marks of love and their very

names were engraved in his hands.

Though this passage is addressed to Israel (Zion) as a nation, we Christians have a right to claim these promises for ourselves. In Hebrews 12 the writer says we believers have not come to Mt. Sinai, the mountain that cannot be touched, to the intolerable sound of the trumpet and the darkness, etc. "But," he says, "we have come to Mouny Zion and to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem," (Hebrews 12:22 RSV). Therefore these promises apply to us on a spiritual level.

This entire section is a great word for discouraged hearts. If you ever feel like God has forgotten you, that he has turned his back on you? Perhaps you have made mistakes and you think that God is going to punish you all the rest of your life. In our prayer requests this morning there is an appeal for a man who feels forsaken, discouraged, defeated. Many people feel that God has totally forgotten them.

"Can a woman forget her sucking child," &c. There cannot be a figure more tender, more comprehensive. It is the figure of a helpless babe: there is the tenderness of the tie; there is the helplessness of the child; and there is the very posture of the child; and they are all full of great and important truth; and yet according to those last words--"they may forget; yet will I not forget thee"--this is not enough. As though the Lord would say, If My love were not more than this, it would not be enough to secure thee." ... "They are borne upon the heart of the great High Priest. He forgets not the work of grace that is in them. He forgets not the trials of His saints. He forgets not the returns of His people. He forgets not the walk of His saints. He forgets them not in death." (J H Evans)

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Christ knows His disciples individually. "Jesus said unto her, Mary!" He addressed her by the old familiar name. The friend of former days was still individually dear. So Jesus knows all His disciples personally. "I have engraved you on the palms of My hands." The good Shepherd "calls His own sheep by name." The High Priest carries their memorial on the sacred breastplate. So He appeals to us. Are we in sorrow, inconsolable, forgetting Him who sends it for our good? He reminds us of His presence, saying—Mary! Are we fearing some danger as though we had no Almighty Friend to protect us? He places Himself between us and it, and says—Mary! Are we becoming worldly, restraining prayer, toying with temptation, looking at some forbidden fruit until it becomes pleasant in our eyes? Jesus, in a tone of faithful remonstrance, says—Mary!

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John Flavel - Though he be in the highest glory in heaven, he does not forget us; he has graven us upon the palms of his hands; we are continually before him. He thinks on us, when we forget him. The whole honor and glory paid him in heaven by the angels, cannot divert his thoughts one moment from us; but every trifle that meets us in the way, is enough to divert our thoughts from him. Why do we not abhor and loathe ourselves for this? What! Is it a pain, a burden, to carry Christ in our thoughts about the world? As much a burden, if your heart be spiritual, as a bird is burdened by carrying his own wings.

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By the expression, "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands," God seems to say, "I have done so much for you that I can never forget you." When a memorial is engraven on a man's hand, then it is connected with the man's life.

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Biblical Illustrator - Are you tempted to question the Lord's goodness toward you, perhaps thinking He has forgotten you? We all can fall into this slough of despond when we encounter "times of deep affliction, of dark and mysterious providences", "periods of deep spiritual temptation," Some laxity in our spiritual walk.

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God remembering His people

This figure suggests--

I. CONSTANT REMEMBRANCE. It is impossible not to observe that which is written on the hands. If writing were on the face, it would not be seen, on the breast it would not be observed. But the hands are always before us.

II. DEVOTED HELP. The hands are for work, and the Almighty wishes us to infer that His people are not only remembered, but helped.

III. PERMANENT CONSIDERATION. "I have graven thee." Writing will wear off. That which is graven will and must remain.

IV. PAINFUL EFFORT. To engrave on the hands evidently refers to the process of engraving, which causes pain. Has God made no sacrifices for His people? Is not every redeemed soul written in crimson marks in the palm of the hands and the feet of the crucified

Redeemer? (Homlist.)

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Pulpit Commentary - The idea of the passage is that the plan of Jerusalem remained in God's sight, though the Chaldeans had devastated it, and even broken down its walls. It could all be built again, after the plan in the Divine mind. Thus impressively it is suggested that nothing, no sort of outward circumstance or calamity, can remove us from God's thought and care. His supreme care is for us, and that abides through all conceivable changes of condition and circumstance.

I. ALWAYS IN SIGHT, TO BE CARED FOR. This is true of friends who truly love one another—of husband and wife, of parent and children. They may not be always in bodily sight; they are always in thought, which is soul-sight. Of God it is said, "He careth for you." We are always in his thought. Round us, wherever we may be, are the "everlasting arms."

II. ALWAYS IN SIGHT, TO BE WORKED FOR. This is quite an additional idea. Others may care for us, who have nothing to do for us or can do nothing. God's care is an active care, finding due expression in tendings, watchings, providings, and arrangements. He keeps us before him, in order that he may do for us exceeding abundantly more than we ask or think.—R.T.

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Constable - Some servants inscribed the names of their masters on their hands in Isaiah's day, but masters did not write the names of their servants on their hands. Yet Yahweh had written (lit. engraved, cf. Ezekiel 4:1) the name of Zion on His palms so that He would not forget her, but be reminded of her frequently. The profile (skyline) of the city was constantly in His thoughts.

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Gill - Not upon his thick clouds, the clouds of heaven under him, always in view... much better the Targum, "lo, as upon the hands thou art engraven before me;" signifying that his people were always in his sight, his eyes were ever upon them, and never withdrawn from them; as anything held in the hand, or tied to or wore upon it, as a signet or ring that has the name of a person on it, to which the allusion may be; which shows how near and dear they are to him, what affection he has for them, and care of them; see Song of Solomon 8:6. Some think respect is had to the wounds in the hands of Christ, which, being on their account, are looked upon and remembered by him; or, however, to their being in his hands, out of which none can pluck them, John 10:28

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Trapp - So that as oft as I look upon mine own hands I cannot but think on thee. We read of one who had written the whole history of Christ's Passion upon the nails of his hands in small letters. The "signet on his finger" a man cannot lightly look beside.

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Poole - He alludes to the common practice of men, who use to put signs and memorials upon their hands or fingers of such things as they dearly affect, and would remember. See Exodus 13:9 Deuteronomy 6:8 Proverbs 6:21 Song of Solomon 8:6 Jeremiah 22:24.

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Hands, which were nailed to the cross.

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Song 8:6 "Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The [very] flame of the LORD.

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Spurgeon - Applies the truth of Isaiah 49:16 - A RETURN SUGGESTED.

1. Does Christ remember us as I have tried to prove that He dose? Then let us remember Him. "This do ye in remembrance of Me."
  2. Let us not only remember Him at His table, but let us remember Him constantly. Let us, as it were, carry His name upon the palms of our hands.
  3. Practically. We ought so to wear Christ on our hands that whatever we touch should be thereby Christianised.
  4. Let the name of Christ, and your memory of it, become vital to you. (C. H. Spurgeon.)
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These words apply, first of all, to God's ancient people, the Jews, but they are equally true of all believers.

I. There are times when believers are apt to think themselves forsaken. - when you are experiencing waves of adversities and sore afflictions, when you have fallen into sin, when we are downcast "There is no time when the patient is an object of such tender interest to the surgeon, as when he is under his knife; so, you may be sure, if you are suffering from the hand of God, His eye is all the more bent on you (Deut. 33:27)" (R M M'Cheyne)

The prophets were more than half poets. The language here is highly figurative. It is a bold anthropomorphism.

The being of the godly is bound up with the being of God; they are specially dear to God, shall never be lost sight of by Him, have their life hid with Christ in God, and go forward to the fulness of life, to the pleasures, which, according to another use of the same figure, are said to be at God's right hand for evermore.

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I. Consider our text verbally. Every single word deserves to be emphasised.

1. "Behold." It is a word of wonder; intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation. Here, indeed, we have a theme for marveling. "Behold" is intended to attract particular attention. There is something here worthy of being studied.

Heaven and earth may well be astonished that God should grave upon His hands the names of sinners. Speak of the seven wonders of the world, why this is a wonder in the seventh heavens! No doubt a part of the wonder which is concentrated in the word "Behold," is excited by the unbelieving lamentation of the preceding sentence. How the Divine mind seems to be amazed at this wicked unbelief of man! What can be more astounding than the unfounded doubts and fears of God's favoured people? He seems to say, "How can I have forgotten thee, when I have graven," &c. Here follows the great marvel, that God should be faithful to such a faithless people, and that when He is provoked with their doubting, He nevertheless abideth true. Behold! and be ashamed and confounded for all your cruel doubts of your indulgent Lord.

2. Behold, "I have," &c. The Divine Artist, who has been pleased to engrave His people for a memorial, is none other than God Himself. Here we learn the lesson which Christ afterwards taught His disciples—"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." No one can write upon the hand of God but God Himself. Neither our merits, prayers, repentance, nor faith, can write our names there, for these in their goodness extend not unto God so as to write upon His hands. Then, again, if the Lord hath done it, there is no mistake about it. If some human hand had cut the memorial, the hieroglyphs might be at fault; but since perfect wisdom has combined with perfect love to make a memorial of the saints, then no error by any possibility can have occurred; there can be no erasures, no crossing out of what God has written, no blotting out of what the Eternal hath decreed.

3. "Behold, I have graven thee." Not, "I will," nor yet, "I am doing it;" it is a thing of the past, and how far back in the past! Oh! the antiquity of this inscription! Do not these deep things comfort you? Does not eternal love delight you?

Oh, the antiquity of this inscription! "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God"; from everlasting to everlasting Thou art the same, and Thy people's names are written on Thy hands! Yet, methinks, there may be a prophetic reference here to a later writing of the names, when Jesus Christ submitted His outstretched palms to those cruel graving-tools, the nails. Then was it surely, when the executioner with the hammer smote the tender hands of the loving Jesus, that He engraved our names upon the palms of His hands.

Eph 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love

Morris - This remarkable revelation is incomprehensible to finite minds. We who are "in Christ Jesus" were saved and called (note the past tense), not only before we consciously accepted Christ, but even before we were born and before He created the world (Ephesians 1:4). While we cannot understand this with our minds, we can apprehend it with our hearts, and thank the Lord.

Mt 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Rev 13:8 And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

4. "Graven." I have not merely printed thee, stamped thee on the surface, but I have permanently cut thee into my hand with marks which never can be removed. That word "graven" sets forth the perpetuity of the inscription.

5. "I have graven thee," &c. "My Lord, dost thou mean me? Yes, even me, if I by faith cling to Thy cross." "I have graven thee."

It does not say, "Thy name." The name is there, but this is not all; "I have graven thee."

See the fulness of this! I have graven everything about thee, all that concerns thee; it is a full picture, as though the man himself were there.

See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. It is not an outline sketch, you see; it is a full picture, as though the man himself were there. Dare we dream that God forgets us?

6. We are engraven, where? Upon His hands, not upon the works of His hands. They shall perish; yea, they shall all wax old as doth a garment, but His hands shall endure for ever. Notice, it does not say, "I have graven thee upon the palm of one hand," but "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." There are two memorials. His saints shall never be forgotten, for the inscription is put there upon the palm of this hand, the right hand of blessing, and upon the palm of that hand, the left hand of justice.

We are engraven, where? Upon His "hands." We are not graven upon a seal, for a seal might be slipped from the finger and laid aside, but the hand itself can never be separated from the living God. It is not engraven on the huge rock, for a convulsion of nature might rend the rock with earthquake, or the fretting tooth of time might eat the inscription out; but our record is on His hand, where it must last, world without end. Not upon the back of His hands where it might be supposed that in days of strife and warfare the inscription might suffer damage, but there upon the palms of His hands where it shall be well protected. The tenderest part shall be made the place of the inscription; that to which He is most likely to look, that which His fingers of wisdom enclose, that by which He works His mighty wonders, shall be the unceasing remembrance, pledging Him never to forget His chosen. It does not say, "I have graven thee upon the palm of one hand," but "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." There are two memorials. His saints shall never be forgotten, for the inscription is put there upon the palm of this hand, the right hand of blessing, and upon the palm of that hand, the left hand of justice. I see Him with His right hand beckon me—"Come, ye blessed," and He sees me in His hand; and on that side He says, "Depart, ye cursed," but not to me, for He sees me in His hand, and cannot curse me. Oh, my soul, how charming this is, to know that His left hand is under Thy head, while His right hand doth embrace thee.

Now let us proceed to the second part of the subject—

II. Consider the text as a whole. God's remembrance of His people is—1. Constant. 2. Practical. He will work and show Himself strong for His people; He brings His omnipotent hands to effect our redemption. 3. Eternal. You cannot suppose it possible that any person can erase what is written on God's hand. 4. Tender. 5. Most surprising. Child of God, let your cheerful eyes and your joyful heart testify how great a wonder it is that you, once so far estranged from God, are this day written on the palms of His hands. 6. Most consolatory. There is no sorrow to which our text is not an antidote.

#### CONSIDER THE TEXT AS A WHOLE.

1. God's remembrance of His people is constant. The hands, of course, are constantly in union with the body. In Solomon's Song we read, "Set me as a seal upon thine arm." Now this is a very close form of remembrance, for the seal is very seldom laid aside by the Eastern, who not being possessed with skill in the art of writing his name, requires his seal in order to affix his signature to a document; hence the seal is almost always worn, and in some cases is never laid aside. A seal, however, might be laid aside, but the hands never could be. It has been a custom, in the olden days especially, when men wished to remember a thing, to tie a cord about the hand, or a thread around the finger, by which memory would be assisted; but then the cord might be snapped or taken away, and so the matter forgotten, but the hand and that which is printed into it must be constant and perpetual. Oh, Christian, by night and by day God is always thinking of you.

2. This recollection on God's part is practical. We are engraven upon His heart--this is to show His love; we are put upon His shoulders--this is to show that His strength is engaged for us; and also upon His hands, to show that the activity of our Lord will not be spared from us; He will work and show Himself strong for His people; He brings His omnipotent hands to effect our redemption. What would be the use of having a friend who would think of us, and then let his love end in thought? The faithfulness we want is that of one who will act in our defence. Do you see the drift of it? If He moulds a world between His palms, and then sends it wheeling in its orbit, it is between those palms which are stamped with the likeness of His sons and daughters, and so that new work shall minister to their god. If He divides a nation, it is always with the hand that bears the remembrance of Zion. Scripture itself tells us, "When He divided the nations, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." The great wheel of providence, when God makes it revolve, works for the good of His people.

3. This is an eternal remembrance.

4. This memorial how tender! We have heard of one, an eastern queen, who so loved her husband that she thought even to build a mausoleum to his memory was not enough. She had a strange way of proving her affection, for when her husband's bones were burned she took the ashes and drank them day by day, that, as she said, her body might be her husband's living sepulchre. It was a

strange way of showing love, and there was a marvellous degree of strange, fanatical fondness in it. But what shall I say of this Divine sympathetic mode of showing remembrance, by cutting it into the palms she It appeareth to me as though the King had said, "Shall I carve My people upon precious stones? Shall I choose the ruby, the emerald, the topaz? No; for these all must melt in the last general conflagration. What then? Shall I write on tablets of gold or silver? No, for all these may canker and corrupt, and thieves may break through and steal. Shall I cut the memorial deep on brass? No, for time would fret it, and the letters would not long be legible. I will write on Myself, on My own hand, and then My people will know how tender I am, that I would sooner cut into My own flesh than forget them."

5. This memorial is most surprising. Scripture, which is full of wonders, yet allows a "Behold" to be put before this verse--"Behold!"

6. It is also most consolatory. When God would meet Zion's great doubt--"God hath forgotten me," He cheers her with this--"I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." There is no sorrow to which our text is not an antidote.

III. And now we come to EXCITE YOU TO THE DUTY WHICH SUCH A TEXT SUGGESTS.

1. Is it not your duty to leave your cares behind you to-day?

2. If you must not have cares, you should not have those deep sorrows and despairs.

3. If this text is not yours, how your mouths ought to water after it. (C. H. Spurgeon.)

III. Be heedful of the duty which such a text suggests. 1. If you be partakers of this precious text, is it not your duty to leave your cares behind you to-day? Should not the fact that God always graciously and tenderly recollects you, compel you once for all to leave your burden with Him who careth for you? 2. If this text is not yours, how your mouths ought to water after it! Is there a soul here who says, "O that I had a part and lot in this matter!" Thou mayest have His pardoning love shed abroad in thy heart even now.

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Christ Pierced Zech 12:10 Zech 13:6 John 19:37 Rev 5:6

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After John was told that someone could open the book, he saw the scene Van Eyck later attempted to portray in his marvelous Adoration of the Lamb, one of the world's great paintings. Van Eyck, working with the limitations of his medium, pictures a lamb standing upon an altar with blood shooting forth from his wounded breast.

Martin of Tours -- During the Middle Ages there was a popular story which circulated about Martin of Tours, the saint for whom Martin Luther was named. It was said that Satan once appeared to St Martin in the guise of the Savior himself. St. Martin was ready to fall to his feet and worship this resplendent being of glory and light. Then, suddenly, he looked up into the palms of his hands and asked, "Where are the nail prints?" Whereupon the apparition vanished.

John 20:20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

21 Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

23 "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

26 And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came<sup>^</sup>, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be with you."

27 Then He said<sup>^</sup> to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing."

28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

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Spurgeon - It is ill to wrench passages of the Bible out of their context, and treat them as infallible scripture when they are only sayings of men. By acting thus foolishly we could prove that there is no God (Psa 14:1), that God hath forgotten His people (Isa 49:14), that Christ was a winebibber (Mat 9:19), and that we ought to worship the devil Mat 4:19). This will never do. We must inquire who uttered the sentence before we venture to preach from it.

Isa 49:14 - When we are glad In the Lord, and are singing out our heart's joy, there is pretty sure to be someone or other who sorrowfully sighs," The Lord hath forsaken me." — People say that there never was a feast so well furnished but that somebody went away unsatisfied; but God will not have it so at his festivals; and hence, the rest of the chapter shows how the Lord comforted this poor Zion, whose lamentation and mourning he had heard. Notice how he begins: —

Isa 49:15. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? "Can a woman" — the tenderer parent of the two, — "forget her child," —her own child, her feeble little child that still depends upon her for its nutriment and life, — "her sucking child," — .

Isa 49:15. Yea, they may forget, —It is just possible; there have been such monstrosities: "they may forget," —

Isa 49:15. Yet will I not forget thee."Yet, saith the Lord, should nature change, And mothers monsters prove, Sion still dwells upon the heart Of everlasting love." How that gracious assurance should comfort the little handful, the "remnant weak and small" of God's people among the Jews! How it should also comfort any of God's servants who are under a cloud, and who have lost for a while the enjoyment of his presence!

Isa 49:16. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; —Where they must be seen, and where he can do nothing without touching his people while doing it. When a name is engraven on the hand with which a man works, that name goes into his work, and leaves its impress on the work.

Isa 49:16-17. Thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee. Jerusalem, the very Jerusalem that is in Palestine, shall be rebuilt. God will remember her walls, and the Church of God in Israel shall yet rise from that sad low estate in which it has been these many centuries; and all God's cast-down ones shall be comforted, and his churches, that seem to be left to die, shall be raised up again, for our God is no changeling. His heart does not come and go towards the sons of men.

"Whom once He loves, he never leaves, but loves them to the end."

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#### Rod Mattoon - THE MEMORY OF GOD-Ge 8:1-3

Noah has been in the ark many days, yet, God has not forgotten him. The waters assuaged as God made a wind to pass over the earth. He also closed up the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven. The rain was restrained too. The waters returned from the earth continually or rapidly. Lakes were formed; new rivers flow, and the oceans and seas cover more area of the planet. The Bible says the Lord remembered Noah. The word "remember" means to prick, pierce, or print upon the memory. God's people are engraven on the palms of His hands (Isaiah 49:16). We have four examples of God remembering something in the book of Genesis.

#### God's Memory in Genesis

- God remembers His Creation. He remembers Noah and the animals in the ark. 8:1
- God remembers His Covenant. This is His covenant with the earth. 9:15, 16
- God remembers His Champion. He remembers Abraham after the complete destruction of Sodom. 19:29
- God remembers a Crisis. He remembered Rachel and opened her empty womb. 30:22

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Over 200 instances of this verb REMEMBER can be found in the Hebrew Bible. In a majority of cases, the act denoted by this verb is more than recollection. In most instances, the act of "remembrance" is an act of covenantal or legal obligation, which leads to a present act. Remembrance is an act of recognition, not solely an act of reflection.

For ourselves, it is sufficient to know that, whether our names are blazoned abroad or unknown, easy or difficult to pronounce, short or long, full of meaning or unattractive, they are written upon God's palms and in heaven every child of His is to have a new name (Isa. 49:16; Rev. 2:17).

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D L MOODY

## GOD'S LOVE IS UNFAILING

God's love is not only unchangeable, but unfailing. In Isaiah 49:15,16 we read:

"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. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me."

Now the strongest human love that we know of is a mother's love. Many things will separate a man from his wife. A father may turn his back on his child; brothers and sisters may become inveterate enemies; husbands may desert their wives; wives, their husbands. But a mother's love endures through all. In good repute, in bad repute, in the face of the world's condemnation, a mother loves on, and hopes that her child may turn from his evil ways and repent. She remembers the infant smiles, the merry laugh of childhood, the promise of youth. Death cannot quench a mother's love; it is stronger than death.

You have seen a mother watching over her sick child. How willingly she would take the disease into her own body if she could thus relieve her child! Week after week she will keep watch; she will let no one else take care of that sick child.

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Isa 49:16

God is Cheering for You

by Max Lucado

If your God is Mighty enough to ignite the sun, could it be that He is mighty enough to light your path?

God is for you. Not "may be," not "has been," not "was," not "would be," but "God is!" He is for you. Today. At this hour. At this minute. As you read this sentence. No need to wait in line or come back tomorrow. He is with you. He could not be closer than he is at this second. His loyalty won't increase if you are better nor lessen if you are worse. He is for you.

God is for you. Turn to the sidelines; that's God cheering your run. Look past the finish line; that's God applauding your steps. Listen for him in the bleachers, shouting your name. Too tired to continue? He'll carry you. Too discouraged to fight? He's picking you up. God is for you.

God is for you. Had he a calendar, your birthday would be circled. If he drove a car, your name would be on his bumper. If there's a tree in heaven, he's carved your name in the bark. We know he has a tattoo, and we know what it says. "I have written your name on my hand," he declares (Isa. 49:16).

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The Love That Will Not Let Us Go (Isaiah 49:16.)

Christ in Isaiah.

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MAX LUCADO - When you meet your Father in heaven, he'll call your name. After all, your name is written on God's hand (Isaiah 49:16). What a remarkable thought! The King of heaven calling your name!

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May 7

"He careth for you." (1 Pet. 5:7)

The Bible is fairly full of tokens of God's marvelous care for His people. During Israel's forty-year trek through the wilderness, they ate food from heaven (Ex. 16:4), had an unfailing supply of water (1 Cor. 10:4), and were equipped with shoes that never wore out (Deut. 29:5).

It is the same in our wilderness journey. To prove this, our Lord reminds us how His care for us is so much greater than His care for birds, flowers and animals. He speaks of sparrows, for instance. He provides their food (Mt. 6:26). Not one of them is forgotten before God (Lu. 12:6). Not one falls to the ground without Him (Mt. 10:29), or, as H. A. Ironside said, "God attends the funeral of

every sparrow." The moral of the story, of course, is that we are of more value to Him than many sparrows (Mt. 10:31).

If He clothes the lilies of the field more beautifully than Solomon was ever attired, He will much more clothe us (Mt. 6:30). If He makes provision for the care of oxen, how much more will He care for our needs (1 Cor. 9:9).

As our High Priest, the Lord Jesus bears our names on His shoulders—the place of power (Ex. 28:9-12) and on His breast—the place of affection (Ex. 28:15-21). Also our names are engraved in the palms of His hands (Isa. 49:16), a fact that inevitably reminds us of the nail wounds He sustained for us at Calvary.

He knows the exact number of the hairs of our head (Mt. 10:30). He numbers our tossings at night and keeps count of our tears in His book (Psa. 56:8 RSV).

Whoever touches us, touches the apple of His eye (Zech. 2:8). No weapon formed against us can prosper (Isa. 54:17).

Whereas the heathen carry their gods on their shoulders (Isa. 46:7), our God carries His people (Isa. 46:4).

When we go through the waters, the rivers or the fire, He is with us (Isa. 43:2). In all our afflictions, He is afflicted (Isa. 63:9).

The One who guards us neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psa. 121:3, 4). Someone has called this characteristic of God "the divine insomnia".

The Good Shepherd who gave His life for us will not withhold any good from us (John 10:11; Psa. 84:11; Rom. 8:32).

He cares for us from the beginning of the year to the end (Deut. 11:12). He bears us even to old age (Isa. 46:4). In fact He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). God really cares!

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## HERBERT LOCKYER -ALL THE PROMISES OF THE BIBLE

### The Shadow of the Hand

Among the almost 1,500 Bible references to hands, there are a few relating to God which carry with them promises of provision and protection. Throughout Scripture hands are represented in very many expressive actions and customs.

The right hand was the place  
of honor and power.

"Upon thy right hand did sit the queen." Psalm 45:9; I Kings 2:19

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand." Psalm 110:1

"The right hand of power." Mark 14:62

"Thou that savest by thy right hand." Psalm 17:1; Exodus 15:6

The right hand was illustrative of  
protection and support.

"Thou hast holden me by thy right hand." Psalm 73:23; Isaiah 41:13

"He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Psalms 16:8; 109:31; 110:5

Men smote the Lord with the palms of their hands, but He in love and mercy assures us that He has graven our names upon the palms of His hands (Isaiah 49:16; Matthew 26:67). If we want to remember something, we tie a piece of string round a finger. Our names graven—never to be effaced—on His hands carries the promise of His everlasting remembrance of us.

Because in creation and redemption we are "The work of thy hand" (Isaiah 64:8), we are privileged to have the hiding shadow of that hand (Isaiah 49:2).

"My times are in thy hand." Psalm 31:15

What a rich promise this is the psalmist gives us! How blessed we are when we can sing—

All my times are in His hand:

I'll therefore trust, nor yield to fear,

But cast on Jesus all my care.

All events are under divine control. Nothing is left to chance. As Christians, we do not shape our lives by any star, as astrologists would have us do. The One who made the stars rules and overrules in the affairs of your life and mine. In infinite wisdom and love, He appoints all that should come our way. By His power, He causes all things to work together for our good—whether the "times" be good or bad.

"My purpose shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."

His purposes cannot be frustrated and His promises and purposes cannot fail.

"All his saints are in his hand." Deuteronomy 33:3

This further promise does not say that some of his saints—the most obedient and holiest—are in His hand, but all His saints. There is a sense, of course, in which every Christian is a saint—that is, separated and set apart by God for His service and sanctified by the operations of the Spirit. All believers, then, are saints, although some are more saintly than others. But all are in His hand of mercy, of power, and of providence. All in His hand are His property, to be protected and provided for by Him: and because His hand is large enough to hold all, it is strong enough to preserve all. His is the hand of a "living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

"Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand... No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." John 10:28, 29

Do we not have here the promise of a double security? Truly, the Christian is safe because of the double grip Jesus spoke about. His statement is explicit—"no man"—and this is a generic term implying that even the believer himself cannot wriggle out of the mighty hands of the Father and the Son. With our hands in these wonderful hands of deity, we are forever safe and secure.

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J J Knap in "The Loins Girded" has this devotional...

The Palms of My Hands Isaiah 49:16

Among the sailors it is still the custom to imprint upon the lower arm or the back of the hand a small ship in such a manner that it is indelible, something that is easily done because of the art of tattooing. In the same manner people in the East in ancient times had the name of someone they loved imprinted not upon the back of the hand but, more intimately, in the palm of the hand,—people only had to open the hand to read it, and as hard as it was to forget one's own hand, so little could also that name depart only for moment from the heart.

The Lord applied this in the text of today to Himself in respect of the object of His eternal love, Jerusalem, which was an image of the congregation of the living God. The ancient Israel could complain when it was in exile: "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me"; but that complaint had to die on their lips now that they heard that the Lord had not only graven the holy city in one of His palms of the hand, but in both palms of the hand; and that He did not only occasionally think of her, but that the walls of Jerusalem, that would soon be restored, were continually before Him; yes, the Lord would have to shake off His own hands if He would want to shake Jerusalem from Him!

What a comfort is contained in this image for every one who believes, and by it proves to belong to the spiritual Zion of the redeemed congregation, even if he may not occupy as conspicuous a position as the walls of Jerusalem. Not only our name, but the whole building of our outward and inward life is engraved as a permanent plan in the Lord's palms of the hands, and also of this the comforting word is said: "Thy walls are continually before Me."

All events that must add to the elevation of the house of our life; all occurrences that affect our forming; all surprises and all disappointments that shall prove to work for our good; all our cares and our sorrows, that have their intended place in the plan of our life; our joys and sadness that cannot be missed in the plan of our life; there is nothing left to chance, it is all the realization of the Lord's wise and good counsel. Yes, even our spiritual needs and cares, our lightly straying heart, our so often evil inclinations, that need continuous sanctification, our whole soul with her confusing content,—He has it all continually before His eyes: we are graven in both His palms of the hands in indelible, yes, in eternal script!

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John MacDuff -. What he said concerning Zion is true of each of his people, "Behold, I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me!" Isaiah 49:16. Yes, upon his loving heart — are our worthless names imprinted for a perpetual memorial. And should not his remembrance of us, have the effect of stirring up our minds to a more frequent, devout, and

adoring remembrance of Him? If we only felt the mighty obligations under which his boundless love has laid us — to forget him for a single hour would be impossible!

The high priest carried the names of the twelve tribes inscribed on his breastplate. But his church is engraved on the palms of the hands of her Redeemer. Isaiah 49:16.

"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:28

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"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; Engraved!

(John MacDuff, "The Immutability of Christ" 1874)

"Behold! I have engraved you on the palms of My hands!" Isaiah 49:16

"Behold," says Immutable One, "I have engraved you on the palms of My hands." Not on the mountains, colossal as they are, for they shall depart; on no page of nature's vast volume, for the last fires shall scorch them; not on blazing sun, for he shall grow dim with age; not on glorious heavens, for they shall be folded together as a scroll. But on the hand which made the worlds, the hand which was transfixed on Calvary, the hand of might and love; I have engraved you there! No corroding power can efface the writing, or obliterate your name! You are Mine now, and Mine forever!

no one can snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:28

"Behold! I have engraved you on the palms of My hands!" Isaiah 49:16

"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand!" John 10:28

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Dianne Neal Matthews (Drawing Closer to God)

"Can a woman forget her nursing child?"

Isaiah 49:14–18

Christina sat at her desk, wondering why she couldn't concentrate. She'd looked forward to coming back to work after her maternity leave; now it seemed that her heart had stayed at home. Moment by moment, her thoughts centered on her five-week-old son. Was he sleeping well today? Would the sitter remember to use that special cream on his rash? Hadn't his forehead felt a little warm this morning? And just when Christina finally got interested in her current project, the milk started flowing and she had to reach for the breast pump.

God compared a mother's love and attention to his care for Israel. During the Babylonian captivity, the people wondered if God had forgotten about them. He assured them that he had not. "Can a woman forget her nursing child?" God asked them. "Will she have no compassion on the child from her womb?" God said that although it is possible for mothers to forget their children, he could never forget his people. God had even engraved their names on his hands, so that his thoughts were continually focused on them.

What a comforting thought to know that God is thinking about us all through the day and night. How incredible to think that the Creator of the universe has us at the center of his thoughts. No matter what's happening in our life, God tenderly watches over us like a mother caring for her baby. And like a mother, he always wants what's best for us.

When we face troubles that seem to have no end, we can start to feel like God has forgotten all about us. During those times it helps to read Scriptures that remind us of his love and care. We may forget about God sometimes, but thankfully, we are never out of his thoughts.

Although mothers may forget, I will not forget you.

Isaiah 49:15

Ask yourself: What types of situations tempt me to feel like God has forgotten me?

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SCAR & COVENANT

What did participants occasionally do when they made cuts in their flesh to help them remember their blood and lives were now "co-

mingled"?

They would intentionally produce a scar? Scar = permanent reminder. These were "marks of covenant" (cp Paul Gal 6:17)

Let's see what Scripture says about "covenant cuts" and "covenant marks"

What was God's assurance to Zion (representative of the Israelite people) in Isaiah 49:15,16 when they complained that Jehovah had forsaken and forgotten them (Isaiah 49:14)?

1) Can a mother forget nursing child? Even if that occurred God would not forget Zion

2) God had inscribed (engraved) Zion on the palm of His hand (Click for more notes on scars)

Explanatory Note: The truth in Isa 49:14-16 is specifically spoken to literal Zion to assure her of God's faithfulness to preserve the city of God and the believing remnant of Israel, but these truths also clearly have application to NT believers and remind one of covenant marks in the hands of One Who would come over 500 years later.

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A Debtor to Mercy Alone

by Augustus Toplady

My name from the palms of His hands

Eternity will not erase;

Impressed on His heart it remains,

In marks of indelible grace.

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3 sermons by Spurgeon on Isaiah 49:16

1) Neither Forsaken Nor Forgotten

2) A Precious Drop of Honey

3) God's Memorial of His People

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Who does the picture of "inscribed on His palm" remind you of when compared with Ps 22:16? They pierced my hands and my feet

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What (Whom) does Ps 22:16 refer to? Messiah's Crucifixion

Piercing of hands and feet is an accurate description of crucifixion (see Acts 2:23)

Explanatory Note: "Pierced" is actually the Hebrew word 'ariy which is more accurately translated "like a lion" (see the marginal note in the NAS). On the other hand the Septuagint (LXX) translates it with the Greek verb orusso which means to dig or to dig a hole. Brenton's English of the LXX renders it "pierced my hands and my feet". Ps 22:16 is not specifically quoted in the NT, although Jesus does quote Ps 22:1 which lends support to verse 16 being a reference to Messiah's crucifixion. The most popular modern translations render this verse "pierced" but the careful student will at least be aware of the background that has led to their translation.

The incision was scarified into a permanent scar which would serve as a constant reminder of the covenant promise between the partners

Trumbull brings out this practice of scarification in his book, The Blood Covenant writing that

Commander Cameron, who, while in charge of the Livingstone Search Expedition ... gives several illustrations of the observance of this rite... "The first operation consisted of making an incision on each of their right wrists, just sufficient to draw blood; a little of which was scraped off and smeared on the other's cut; after which gunpowder was rubbed in [thereby securing a permanent token on the arm]." (The Blood Covenant - Online)

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Isaiah 49:16 Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.

The word “inscribed” means to cut into signifying permanence). Yes, the immediate context is the City of Zion, but the application to those in covenant with Him should not be lost. Indeed, Spurgeon felt fully justified to apply the metaphor to believers, not just in one sermon, but 3 sermons!

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Spurgeon comments on Isaiah 49:16 writing that...

"Behold is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." (Neither Forsaken nor Forgotten)

Spurgeon comments

"I have graven thee"... does not say, "Thy name. " The name is there, but that is not all: "I have graven thee. " See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when he has graven thee upon his own palms?...

A dear friend told me that, when traveling in the East, he frequently saw persons who had the portraits of their friends printed on the palms of their hands. I said to him, "But did not they wear out?" Yes, sometimes," he said, "but very frequently they were tattooed, marked right into the hand, and then, as long as the hand was there, there was the image of the friend, roughly drawn, of course.?" Oriental art is not very perfect, but there it was, drawn on the palms of the hands, so that it could be always seen. A person had never to say, "Run and fetch the portrait; run and bring me down the memorial?"; he always had it present with him. So the Lord Jesus always has his people present with him at all times. He is the head: they are the members. (Ed: Speaks of oneness) The members are never far off from the head. He is the Shepherd: they are the sheep; and the careful shepherd, in time of danger, is never far from, his sheep. Christ is not far from any of his people, and, therefore, his recollections of them are not difficult to be maintained. He keeps the memorial of them in his hands present with him. There is no fear, therefore, that he will forget them. (Neither Forsaken nor Forgotten)

Comment: In Spurgeon's sermon he alliteratively expounds on the significance of the Inscription on God's palm as that which is Present, Permanent (perpetual), Personal, Painful.

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F B Meyer - Yes, child of God, thou art photographed where God must ever behold thee, on his hands, on his heart. Thou art never for a moment out of his thought, nor hidden from his eye. Not on one hand only, but on both. It is the plural in each case, "On the palms of my hands."... What a contrast between Zion's wail about being forsaken and forgotten, and God's tender regard! So the believer, considering the desolations of his soul and the ruins of past joys, is apt to think himself a castaway. But it is not so. At the time of his deepest despair, God is thinking of him, as a mother of her first-born babe; and his need is ever before Him.

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Charles Roll referred to Jesus as "The Engraver of the Name (Isaiah 49:16): Reliable in fixity and faithfulness. --

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Vine comments on Isaiah 49:16... = Jews had a custom of marking on their hands, or elsewhere, a delineation of the city and the temple, as a sign of their devotion to, and perpetual remembrance of, them. The Lord graciously adopts the figure to confirm His assurance. However great the devastation wrought by Gentile powers might be, the walls are ever before Him in their restored and perfected condition in the future. To be graven on the palms of His hands is suggestive of the closest identification with Himself (Ed: Reminds us of the oneness of the New Covenant), of His unchanging love (cp God's hesed), and of His constant mindfulness of us in all His emotions and activities. Often, in our unbelief, remissness and forgetfulness, we lose sight of our preciousness in His sight in Christ. What is here conveyed in figure finds its fullness of expression in the outflowing of the Lord's heart to the disciples in the upper room, "Even as the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you: abide ye in My love" (Jn 15:9).

Ray Ortlund comments that = The imagery of Isa 49:16 suggests a vision of God spreading out his hands before us, so that we can see our very names engraved there. Have we thought through how profoundly we're loved by God? If his assurances do not move us, what more are we holding out for? Isn't the love of God enough? (Isaiah: God saves sinners. Preaching the Word)

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J Vernon McGee comments = What beautiful assurance God gives them that they are not forsaken of Him! Israel may forsake Him—as they are doing yet today—but God will never forsake them. My friend, if you still have doubts that God will restore Israel, I submit this section to you for your careful study.

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We might not want to admit it, but there are times when we feel abandoned and forgotten by the Lord too (like Zion). We wonder why the circumstances in our lives are like they are. We wonder why it seems like life is one trial after another. We wonder where God is in the world and why things appear to be out of control. Sometimes we feel like we have been forgotten! These verses are designed to teach you that you are “unforgettable”. God cannot and will not forget about you, God cannot and will not forsake you. I want to show you how these verses present our God. We are given four proofs of God's devotion to us. Let me share those proofs with you today as I preach on the subject: Unforgettable.

The Sermon Notebook - The Sermon Notebook – Isaiah.

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Jer 17:1 sins written down with an iron stylus! Sins covered by the blood of the wounds in His hands wrought by an iron nail? Wounds which leave a scar forever!

The palm is toward the face. In all the work that He does, His own people are constantly in His mind, and the objects of His care. The graving on the hands was done by the nails of Calvary. A Dictionary of Bible Types.

“The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me” (Isa 49:14).

Isaiah 6:12; 17:9; 27:10; 32:14, and 49:14; 54:6, 7; 62:4, 12.

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• When you feel alone

'So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God' Isaiah 41:10.

See also Psalms 23; 73:23-24; Isaiah 49:14-16; John 14:15-21.

The New Unger's Bible Handbook.

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God cannot forget us.

Isa. 49:14-16.

Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling.

In the verse, “Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands” (Isaiah 49:16), there is an allusion to the ancient custom of puncturing ornamental figures and mementoes upon the hand, arm, and forehead, and coloring the punctures with indigo, cypress, etc. This gives us the figure of Zion being as close to God as He is to Himself, and facing Him amid all the emotions of His divine life. The New Unger's Bible Dictionary.

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Hand of God

A figure of speech which points to God's sovereign power in creation and in his actions on his people's behalf, especially in redemption. Also used as a symbol of authority and in taking oaths.

God Creates by His Hand

Ac 7:50 See also Isa 66:2; Job 10:3, 8; Ps 8:3; 19:1; 95:5; 138:8; Isa 48:13; 64:8

God Holds the World in His Hand

Ps 95:4 See also Job 12:10; 26:13; 36:32; Ps 31:15; Isa 40:12; 41:19-20; Da 5:23

God's Creatures Are Fed From His Hand

Ps 145:16 See also Ps 104:28; Isa 34:17

God's Hand Symbolises His Power

God's hand is mighty Hab 3:4 See also 1Ch 29:12; Ps 118:15-16; Jer 18:6; Da 4:35; Am 9:2

God executes judgment by the power of his hand Am 1:6-8 Judgment on the Philistine cities. See also Dt 32:41; 1Sa 5:6-9; Isa 40:2; Jer 15:6; La 2:3; Eze 6:14; Zep 1:4; Ac 13:11

God's hand holds a cup of judgment Jer 25:15-17 See also Ps 75:8; Isa 51:17; Hab 2:16

God's hand brings trouble Job 19:21 See also Ru 1:13; 1Sa 6:3; Job 1:11; Ps 38:2; 39:10

God's hand causes fear Isa 19:16 See also Isa 23:11

Pleas for God to Use His Powerful Hand

Ps 74:11 See also Ps 10:12; 60:5 pp Ps 108:6; Ps 77:10; 144:7-8

God's Powerful Hand Used On His People's Behalf

God redeems by his powerful hand Ps 138:7 See also 1Ki 8:41-42 pp 2Ch 6:32; Ps 98:1; Isa 11:11; Eze 20:21-22, 33-34; Mic 4:10

God redeemed Israel from Egypt by his powerful hand Ex 13:3 See also Ex 3:19-20; 13:9, 14; Dt 5:15; 7:8; Ne 1:10; Jer 32:21; Pa 9:15

God's hand ensures success for his people Isa 41:10 "righteous" has the sense of "victorious". See also Ps 16:8; 18:35; 89:21; Isa 42:6; 49:4

God's powerful hand is invincible Jn 10:29 See also Ps 139:10; Isa 43:13

God's hand protects his people Ezr 8:31 See also Ex 33:22-23; 1Ch 4:10; Ps 121:5; Isa 41:13; 49:2, 16; 62:3

God's hand inspires the prophets Jer 1:9 See also Isa 8:11; Jer 15:17; Eze 1:3; 3:14, 22; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1

God's hand fulfils his purposes Ezr 7:6 See also 2Ch 30:12; Ezr 7:9, 28; 8:18; Ne 2:8, 18; Pr 21:1; Ecc 2:24; Isa 45:1; Lk 1:66; Ac 11:21

God's Uplifted Hand

Signifies his taking an oath Ne 9:15 See also Ex 6:8; Nu 14:30; Dt 32:40; Eze 47:14

Signifies his power Isa 9:12, 17, 21; 26:11

God's Right Hand Symbolises His Authority

Ac 7:55-56 See also Ps 110:1; Ac 5:31; Ro 8:34; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 1Pe 3:22

God's Hand Must Be Recognised

God requires submission under his hand 1Pe 5:6 See also Ro 10:21; Isa 65:2

The works of God's hand must be acknowledged Ps 28:5; 92:4; 143:5

Dictionary of Bible Themes: An Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies.

Matthew Poole - I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; mine eye and heart is constantly upon thee. He alludes to the common practice of men, who use to put signs and memorials upon their hands or fingers of such things as they dearly affect, and would remember. See Exo 13:9 Deu 6:8 Pro 6:21 Son 8:6 Jer 22:24.

John Gill - Not upon his thick clouds, the clouds of heaven under him, always in view, as R. Saadiah Gaon, mentioned by Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi: much better the Targum, "lo, as upon the hands thou art engraven before me;" signifying that his people were always in his sight, his eyes were ever upon them, and never withdrawn from them; as anything held in the hand, or tied to or wore upon it, as a signet or ring that has the name of a person on it, to which the allusion may be; which shows how near and dear they are to him, what affection he has for them, and care of them; see Song 8:6. ("Put me like a seal over your heart, Like a seal on

your arm. For love is as strong as death, Jealousy is as severe as Sheol; Its flashes are flashes of fire, The [ very] flame of the LORD) Some think respect is had to the wounds in the hands of Christ, which, being on their account, are looked upon and remembered by him; or, however, to their being in his hands, out of which none can pluck them, Joh 10:28: and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

John Trapp - Behold, I have graven thee. ] {a} So that as oft as I look upon mine own hands I cannot but think on thee. We read of one who had written the whole history of Christ's Passion upon the nails of his hands in small letters. The "signet on his finger" a man cannot lightly look beside. See Song 8:6 Jer 22:24. "As I live," declares the LORD, "even though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were a signet [ ring] on My right hand, yet I would pull you off;

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1. Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come,

Why should my heart be lonely, and long for heav'n and home,

When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He:

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

\* Refrain:

I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free,

For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

2. "Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear,

And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;

Though by the path He leadeth, but one step I may see;

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

3. Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise,

When songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies,

I draw the closer to Him, from care He sets me free;

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;

His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

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## CHARLES ROLL - NAMES AND TITLES OF JESUS

### The Engraver of the Name

Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. 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. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands (Isaiah 49:15-16).

When the Lord uses "behold," it is sufficient to indicate that something startling is to follow. In this instance we stand astonished at the declaration that is made. Listen to the music of the words, "Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of My hands." I, the Architect and Artist of the ages, the Designer of the everlasting habitations, "I have graven thee." A ring of reality sounds forth from this statement, reminding us of other utterances equally exciting: "I have chosen," "I have called," "I have made," "I have given" and such like, all of which we cherish dearly. No indefiniteness marks the words such as marks "I may," "I might," or "I must." Whatever else may happen to other engravings on stone or steel, in this case no erasure is feasible because He is immortal, and no error is possible because He is immutable. None can efface the engraving because He dwelleth in light which no man can approach. What antiquity is attached to the engraving of the Ancient of Days, as compared with the deep-cut hieroglyphics of the basalt rocks of

Egypt. Even before the days of earth's earliest infancy, or ever she had burst her swaddling bands of cloudy mist; prior to the shooting forth of effulgent sun rays across the bosom of the sky; preceding the peeping of stars with twinkling eyes athwart the cerulean arch; the Eternal had focused His heart's love on His ransomed society and fastened the remembrance of His loved object on the palms of His hands. Not written, stamped or printed on pages of parchment is this name, but graven forevermore.

The suggestiveness of the figure expresses eternal election; it indicates inseverable identity; it intimates an ineffable immortality; yea, the very fashion of its design foretells an unending union with an incomparable Lover. No human merit can induce Christ to engrave the name and no human monarch can insist on its being done. Philanthropists, potentates, principalities, and philosophers have no influence here, not even enough to have one single name inscribed in such a place. The sole prerogative is according to the riches of His grace, and according to the good pleasure of His will. The endorsement of His everlasting love is the only recommendation needed; the endearment of His affectionate heart of infinite mercy is the sole commendation to assure the engraving of the name on the palms of His hands.

The lines that are imprinted on our hands at birth remain unchanged until our burial at death. But God has no birth or burial, so the engraving on His hands remains forever. These are the hands wherewith He wrought the mighty wonders of creation, all the features of which creation were designed by the wealth of His wisdom. These are the same hands which have been guiding, guarding and governing through the centuries, but never before was it known that both palms were memorial tablets.

To be engraven on His hands is expressive of the favor of a faithful Guardian and likewise it exhibits a distinctive honor bestowed by a powerful Governor. We learn from these things how precious the Church is to Christ, how desirous He is to honor her, how generous He is in her favor and how vigorous His ministry in intercession whereby He assures to His Bride ineffable splendor. No fondness has ever been expressed to any loved favorite in this world that is comparable to the favor Christ has shown to His people (Psalm 106:4-5). We may esteem this act as one of the marvels of His ministry, we may count it among the miracles of His mercy and we may accept it as one of the great mysteries of His monarchy.

Our name is engraven upon His own hands,

Our witness in heaven eternally stands;

The nearest and dearest and choicest to Him,

Without spot or wrinkle without or within.

The tables and tablets of brass and of stone

With their deeply cut letters are soon overthrown;

But none can erase the indelible names

Of those He redeems and eternally claims.

Names and Titles of Jesus Christ - Names and Titles of Jesus Christ – The Indescribable Christ: A–G.

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KAY ARTHUR -

BECAUSE I'M IN COVENANT WITH GOD ... I HAVE A FAITHFUL FRIEND

Have there been times-or are there times-when you wonder if God has forgotten or abandoned you? ((remember His delays are not denials))

Does this experience come from times of difficulty, stress, loneliness, or testing?

Perhaps you've cried and cried in the depths of your need, aching, hurting, grieving, begging for relief and had that gnawing sense that rescue won't come.

Is it because the arm of flesh upon which you leaned has walked away or been taken from you in death, and you are feeling desperately alone, confused, helpless, fragmented unable to get it together?

The loving arms of protection are gone, the counsel of another has been silenced, and you feel abandoned... frighteningly on your own... forsaken!

Hush, precious one. Catch that still small voice, and listen carefully, quietly. God is speaking:

"Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb?" (Isaiah 49:15-16)

"Not usually," you answer, "though some have..."

And God says,

"Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands." (Isaiah 49:15-16)

You are not abandoned, forgotten, for you are inscribed on the palms of God's hands! It's the mark of covenant, beloved.

"SEE MY HANDS"

If you are God's child by covenant, a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, this is the truth you must cling to when you feel abandoned: You are inscribed on the palms of His hands! For the feelings are just that- feelings.

Feelings that are very real, feelings that you must deal with. But remember reality. Reality is the fact that a covenant has been cut on your behalf. Your feelings will betray you-overwhelm you cripple you-if you do not decide, by the gut-level determination of faith, that "feel it or not" you will trust your Covenant God. Put on the music ... the hymns of the faith ... the choruses of trust. Sing whether you feel like it or not. Sing whether you can sing or not. Sing until your feelings conform to reality.

For Jesus bears on His body the brand-marks of covenant. For all eternity our Lord Christ-in His resurrected body-will carry the scars of eternal love, scars made on the day they pierced His hands and His feet and thrust a spear into His side. (Revelation 5:6)

As the Guardian of your life lifts His holy hands in intercession on your behalf, the covenant marks of His love for you are ever before Him. He cannot, will not forget you or forsake you.

He is there. He cares. And He is the Son of God the God of Covenant!

He is speaking to you who doubt:

"Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." (John 20:27)

For He Himself has said, I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say,"The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6)

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Spurgeon - THE bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant." Oh, it is not my remembering God, it is God's remembering me, which is the ground of my safety; it is not my laying hold of his covenant, but his covenant's laying hold on me. Glory be to God! the whole of the bulwarks of salvation are secured by divine power, and even the minor towers, which we may imagine might have been left to man, are guarded by almighty strength. Even the remembrance of the covenant is not left to our memories, for we might forget; but our Lord cannot forget the saints whom he has graven on the palms of his hands.

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And just as he prized those people and desired to work through them, so he prizes the church today. He has purchased her at a very dear price, the blood of his Son, Jesus Christ. He tenderly regards her as a father does his children. She is the apple of his eye and her name is inscribed on the palms of his hands.

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Inscribed on the Palms of God's Hands ... God is cosmic, yet deeply personal. God's relationship to us is described in the most intimate, basic terms ... a mother breast-feeding her infant. As intensely as Israel feels forgotten, God feels intensely connected. Women who have breast-fed know the ache of this life-giving nourishment; how milk spills at the softest cry. God's intensity more than matches Israel's, as their word "forgotten" (v. 14) is overturned not once, but three times (v. 15).

We are not forgotten. We are inscribed on the palms of God's hands. Every day in Washington, D.C., people visit the Vietnam Memorial, searching for a name etched into the wall bearing so many names. They trace their fingers over the letters, touching something deeper than name alone. Not forgotten. Remembered. Inscribed. Still, not all names are there, for even our best memorials are limited. Not so the palms of God: every name is written, everyone is included. What joy to find your own name and names of those you love on God's outstretched palm!

Might tattoos be an apt metaphor for God's inscribed hands? Indeed, people who get tattoos often want to indicate membership in a group, a way of life; or to make permanent note of an event or a person. However, an ink is being developed today that makes tattoo removal easier and less painful. Our loyalties, our loves change. Not so with God. The covenant holds. We are inscribed on the palms of God's outstretched hands, hands that guide us toward freedom and welcome us home.

kimberly l. clayton

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Isaiah 49:14–16 In the meantime, the city of Zion is portrayed as feeling that her Lord has forgotten her. Jehovah's answer is that a mother may forget her nursing baby, but He will never forget His city. Zion is inscribed on the palms of His hands, and her walls are never out of His mind. We instinctively compare the reference to the palms of Jehovah's hands with the lovewounds borne by Christ for us. A great English Christian poet expressed it beautifully:

My name from the palms of His hands

Eternity will not erase;

Imprest on His heart it remains

In marks of indelible grace.

—Augustus Toplady

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Spurgeon - When I read my name inscribed on the palms of Jesus' hands, when I understood that I was united to him by a union that never could be broken, I said to myself, "What a thousand fools I have been to have lived forgetful of my highest glory, unmindful of my dearest friend!" To have lived year after year in open enmity against my Lord seemed like a grim and ghastly dream, almost too horrible to be true. Have you not felt the same? Have you not felt ashamed and confounded at the memory of your former life? Have you not felt as if you could never open your mouth any more because of all your unkindness to your heavenly friend? Such penitent reflections keep the Lord's people right, by creating a fear and trembling in the presence of his overflowing goodness.

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INDELIBLE - [Middle English indelyble, from Medieval Latin indelibilis, alteration of Latin indelebilis, from in- + delēre to delete]

(15th century)

1 a : that cannot be removed, washed away, or erased

b : making marks that cannot easily be removed an indelible pencil

2 a : lasting indelible memories

b : unforgettable , memorable an indelible performance

indelible ink - ink that cannot be erased or washed away

Indelible ink - Indelible means "un-removable". Some types of indelible ink have a very short shelf life because of the quickly evaporating solvents used. India, Mexico, Indonesia, Malaysia and other developing countries have used indelible ink in the form of electoral stain to prevent electoral fraud. The Election Commission in India has used indelible ink for many elections. Indonesia used it in their last election in Aceh. In Mali, the ink is applied to the fingernail. Indelible ink itself is not infallible as it can be used to commit electoral fraud by marking opponent party members before they have chances to cast their votes. There are also reports of 'indelible' ink washing off voters' fingers.

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INDEL'IBLE, a. [Fr. indelebile; L. indelebilis; in and delebilis, from deleo, to blot out.]

1. Not to be blotted out; that cannot be effaced or canceled; as indelible letters or characters. Indelible ink is such as cannot be taken out of paper or cloth, or not by ordinary means.

2. Not to be annulled.

They are endued with indelible power from above, to feed and govern this household. [Unusual.] Sprat.

3. That cannot be effaced or lost; as, impressions on the mind may be indelible; reproach or stain on reputation may be indelible.

INDEL'IBLY, adv. In a manner not to be blotted out or effaced; too deeply imprinted to be effaced, or to vanish.

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The Lord Carries His People

ON HIS SHOULDERS Ex. 28:12

IN HIS BOSOM Isa. 40:11

ON HIS HEART Ex. 28:29

ON HIS HAND Isa. 49:16

ON HIS FOREHEAD Ex. 28:38

ON HIS WINGS Ex. 19:4

IN HIS ARMS Deut. 33:27

Golden Nuggets - Golden Nuggets – Volume 18.

The Lord's Hands

PIERCED FOR OUR SINS Psalm 22:16

GRAVEN WITH OUR NAMES Isaiah 49:16

FILLED FOR OUR NEEDS Exodus 28:14

UPLIFTED FOR OUR BLESSING Luke 24:50

STRONG FOR OUR DEFENSE Psalm 138:7

RE-ASSURING FOR OUR FEARS Revelation 1:17

POWER-GIVING FOR SERVICE 1 Kings 18:15

Golden Nuggets - Golden Nuggets – Volume 24.

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Graven upon His Hands

By: A. B. Simpson

Isaiah 49:16

THIS BEAUTIFUL FIGURE EXPRESSES GOD'S PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF EACH ONE OF US

He addresses us in the second person, "thee," and this implies that He knows and records our individual names. God knows each of us personally. He tells us the very hairs of our head are all numbered, and we are of more value than many sparrows. "The shepherd knoweth his sheep, and calleth them by name." "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

IT SPEAKS OF HIS PERSONAL LOVE

Christ so loves us that He carries our names in His constant remembrance. He contrasts His love with the tenderest material affection; we may take the highest types of human love, and then know that He loves us yet more and better.

THE FIGURE IMPLIES CONTINUAL REMEMBRANCE

The object of engraving us upon the palms of His hand is to keep us ever in His thoughts. How wonderful is God's remembrance of us! Our circumstances may seem to deny that God has any thought about us; but He has not forgotten us; His eye is still upon us; His heart is tenderly cherishing us; His hand is working for our highest blessing.

THE FIGURE IMPLIES GOD'S PURPOSES FOR US

He has drawn the plan of our life, not on parchment, but on His own hands; and He is working it out in completeness of detail.

#### THE FIGURE ALSO SUGGESTS THE THOUGHT OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION FOR US

Those hands where our names are written are the hands He ever holds up in prayer for us to His Father. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost... seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

#### THE FIGURE SPEAKS OF ATONEMENT

Because the palms where our names are written are pierced palms, and our names are written in the blood that flowed from the prints of the nails. At least, every time the Father looks at these names, He beholds the marks of Calvary and remembers the price that was paid for our redemption.

#### ETERNAL AND UNCHANGEABLE SECURITY IS ALSO SUGGESTED BY THE FIGURE

He has not written our names, nor sketched our names, nor printed our names, but He has graven them. They are cut deep into His very flesh, or into the precious jewels which are always upon His fingers, where He says He has set us as a signet upon His hands.

Golden Nuggets - Golden Nuggets – Volume 8.

#### INDELIBLY INSCRIBED BY INDELIBLE GRACE! THE PALMS OF HIS HANDS!

A TATTOO! Isa 49:14-16 (Isa 49:14) Ever feel the Lord has forsaken or forgotten you! Does God really care about His me? Promise: The Lord cannot forget His own! This assurance was given to the chosen race on the eve of their return from Babylon. Listen to the Lord's voice take on tones of unusual persuasiveness. Ponder His assurances & compassion & comfort! (Isa 49:15) I will not forget! – a Mothers love is "tops"... but not thee top! A mothers love is awesome! Someone once asked Susanna Wesley which one of her 11 children she loved the most. She wisely replied, "I love the one who's sick until he's well, and the one who's away until he comes home." Mothers struggle w/being a buffer between their kids & the sidewalk? Them and disappointment? Them and failure? How close they are supposed to get? How far to dare fall behind? In Catholicism, going to Mary for prayer, or things, is promoted because a mother is known for being more "tender, caring, gentle, and patient, forgiving, & understanding." But God's love for us supersedes a mother's love... "They may forget, Yet I will not forget!" The difference could be likened unto the difference of the ray of the sun, verses the sun! (Isa 49:16) On which hand? – Oh, both Hands! (Pulpit) Drawn from the ancient practice of burning or puncturing figures & other mementoes upon the hand, arm etc., then often rubbing henna, indigo, gun powder, or some other color substance. Inscribed – speaks of not forgetting, permanent, indelibly marked, i.e. constantly present w/Him. Not like man w/tattoo at beach(blacked out). Inscribed you – not just your name... but you! Your person, your image, your case, your circumstances, your sins, your temptations, your weaknesses, your wants, your works, all your concerns. I have them engraved there! Whichever hand He lifts He sees His people! He treasures the remembrance of you! Now – He keeps His promise a 1000 times, & yet the next trial we doubt him again!. He never fails; He is never a dry well; He is never as a setting sun; He is never as a passing meteor; or a melting vapor;& yet we are vexed with anxieties, overwhelmed with suspicions, & disturbed with fears, as if God were a mirage of a desert. Q: Will you ever say again that God has forsaken you, when He has engraved you on his hands? Walls – of Jerusalem. Even her broken walls are before his eyes, w/a view of their rebuilding What's he eyeing in your life, w/a view rebuilding?

Faith is the Grace - . Faith is the grace that is most struck at in our tribulations (Jam 1:3); therefore if a man know the strength of it in time of tribulation, then ordinarily he has a clearer proof of the truth and strength of that grace than at other times. It is the grace that is of most use to us at such times (1Pe 5:9; Eph 6:16). Three benefits we have by it-- It keeps us so that we do not for these things question the love of God (Isa 49:14; Psa 77:9; Heb 12:5).

ISA 49:16

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands

The writing on God's hands

These words are a singularly bold metaphor, drawn from the strange and half-savage custom, which lingers still among sailors and others, of having beloved names or other tokens of affection and remembrance indelibly inscribed on parts of the body. Sometimes worshippers had the marks of the god thus set on their flesh; here God writes on His hands the name of the city of His worshippers.

I. Here we have set forth for our strength and peace A DIVINE REMEMBRANCE, MORE TENDER THAN A MOTHER'S (Isa 49:15). When Israel came out of Egypt, the Passover was instituted as a memorial unto all generations, or as the same idea is otherwise expressed, "it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand." Here God represents Himself as doing for Israel- what He had bid Israel do for Him. They were, as it were, to write the supreme act of deliverance in the Exodus upon their hands, that it might never be forgotten. He writes Zion on His hands for the same purpose. The text does not primarily refer to individuals, but to the community. But the recognition of that fact is not to be allowed to rob us of the preciousness of this text in its bearing on the individual. For God remembers the community, not as an abstraction or a generalised expression, but as the aggregate of all the individuals composing it. We think of "the Church," and do not think of the thousands of men and women who make it up. We cannot discern the separate stars in the galaxy. But God's eye resolves what to us is a nebula, and every single glittering point of light hangs rounded and separate in the heaven. There is no jostling nor confusion in the wide space of the heart of God. They that go before shall not hinder them that come after. That remembrance which each man may take for himself is infinitely tender, The echo of the music of the previous words still haunts the verse, and the remembrance promised in it is touched with more than a mother's love. "I am poor and needy," says the Psalmist, "yet the Lord thinketh upon me." But do not let us forget that it was a very sinful Zion that God thus remembered.

II. THE DIVINE REMEMBRANCE GUIDES THE DIVINE ACTION. The palm of the hand is the seat of strength, of work; and so, if Zion's name is written there, that means not only remembrance, but remembrance which is at the helm, as it were, which is moulding and directing all the work that is done by the hand that bears the name inscribed upon it. For His Church, as a whole, He does more amidst the affairs of nations. You remember the grand words of one of the psalms. "He reproveth kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not Mine anointed, and do My prophets no harm." It is no fanatical reading of the history of earthly politics and kingdoms, if we recognise that one of the most prominent reasons for the Divine activities in moulding the kingdoms, setting up and casting down, is the advancement of the Kingdom of heaven and the building of the City of God. "I have graven thee on the palms of My hands," and when the hands go to work, it is for the Zion whose likeness they bear. But the same thing applies to us individually. "All things work together"; they would not do so, unless there was one dominant will which turned the chaos into a cosmos. "All things work together for my good."

III. THE DIVINE REMEMBRANCE WORKS ALL THINGS, TO REALISE A GREAT IDEAL END, AS YET UNREACHED. "Thy walls are continually before Me." When this prophecy was uttered, the Israelites were in captivity, and the city was a wilderness; "the holy and beautiful house where the fathers praised Thee was burned with fire," the walls were broken down; rubbish and solitude were there. Yet on the palms of God's hands were inscribed the walls which were nowhere else! They were "before Him," though Jerusalem was a ruin. It means that Divine remembrance sees "things that are not, as though they were." In the midst of the imperfect reality of the present condition of the Church as a whole, and of us, its actual components, it sees the ideal, the perfect vision of the perfect future. So, the most radiant optimism is the only fitting attitude for Christian people in looking into the future, either of the Church as a whole, or of themselves as individual members of it. (A. Maclaren, D. D.)

God remembering His people

This figure suggests--

I. CONSTANT REMEMBRANCE. It is impossible not to observe that which is written on the hands. If writing were on the face, it would not be seen, on the breast it would not be observed. But the hands are always before us.

II. DEVOTED HELP. The hands are for work, and the Almighty wishes us to infer that His people are not only remembered, but helped.

III. PERMANENT CONSIDERATION. "I have graven thee." Writing will wear off. That which is graven will and must remain.

IV. PAINFUL EFFORT. To engrave on the hands evidently refers to the process of engraving, which causes pain. Has God made no sacrifices for His people? Is not every redeemed soul written in crimson marks in the palm of the hands and the feet of the crucified Redeemer? (Homlist.)

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Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!

O what a foretaste of glory divine!

Heir of salvation, purchase of God,

Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

[Refrain:]

This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long;  
This is my story, this is my song,  
Praising my Savior all the day long.  
Perfect submission, perfect delight,  
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;  
Angels descending bring from above  
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

[Refrain]

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I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Joshua 1:5

There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass. — God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

The Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him. — He will ever be mindful of his covenant.

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. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.

The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

Joshua 21:45. Numbers 23:19. Deuteronomy 7:9. Psalm 111:5. Isaiah 49:15,16. Zephaniah 3:17.

Daily Light on the Daily Path.

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Jesus saith unto her, Mary. John 20:16

Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name: Thou art mine. — The sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name. And the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. — We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.

Thou shalt take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel. And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial. And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment. And thou shalt set in it four rows of stones. And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, ... and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth in before the Lord.

Isaiah 43:1. John 10:3,4. Isaiah 49:16. 2 Timothy 2:19. Hebrews 4:14. Exodus 28:9,12,15,17,21,30.

Daily Light on the Daily Path.

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He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. John 10:3

The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity. — Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you ...

depart from me, ye that work iniquity. — The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. — Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm. — The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

2 Timothy 2:19. Matthew 7:22,23. Psalm 1:6. Isaiah 49:16. Song of Songs 8:6. Nahum 1:7. John 14:2,3.

Daily Light on the Daily Path.

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VANCE HAVNER - "WELL IN HAND!" - (cf Jn 10:28-29, our times are in His hand - Ps 31:15) - I call this "having the situation well in hand." Here is security for time and eternity. The palm of the hand is a well-protected place and that hand can fold into a fist if threatened! Not only ourselves but our times, all our circumstances, the day in which we live, the happenings of our lives—all these are under His control. Sometimes they are beyond our control, but "He's got the whole world in His hands." He not only leads us by His hand, He keeps us in His hand.

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There are times when it feels as if God has forgotten us. When life beats us down and gets the best of us, it's easy to think we've been deserted. Maybe he's busy putting out fires elsewhere, we think to ourselves. And our prayers begin to feel empty and distant. That's why it's so important to stay in God's Word, because it reminds us that God is always near. Especially when we feel the most neglected. When you feel forgotten by God, just close your eyes and envision the hands of the Almighty. And remember his words: "I could never forget you."

Embracing Eternity: Living Each Day with a Heart Toward Heaven.

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SPURGEON - Morning and Evening

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." Isaiah 49:16

No doubt a part of the wonder which is concentrated in the word "Behold," is excited by the unbelieving lamentation of the preceding sentence. Zion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." How amazed the divine mind seems to be at this wicked unbelief! What can be more astounding than the unfounded doubts and fears of God's favoured people? The Lord's loving word of rebuke should make us blush; He cries, "How can I have forgotten thee, when I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands? How dardest thou doubt my constant remembrance, when the memorial is set upon my very flesh?" O unbelief, how strange a marvel thou art! We know not which most to wonder at, the faithfulness of God or the unbelief of His people. He keeps His promise a thousand times, and yet the next trial makes us doubt Him. He never faileth; He is never a dry well; He is never as a setting sun, a passing meteor, or a melting vapour; and yet we are as continually vexed with anxieties, molested with suspicions, and disturbed with fears, as if our God were the mirage of the desert. "Behold," is a word intended to excite admiration. Here, indeed, we have a theme for marvelling. Heaven and earth may well be astonished that rebels should obtain so great a nearness to the heart of infinite love as to be written upon the palms of His hands. "I have graven thee." It does not say, "Thy name." The name is there, but that is not all: "I have graven thee." See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when He has graven thee upon His own palms?

Morning and Evening.

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There are many persons to be found who are bowed down with despondency of spirit, and cannot lift up themselves to enjoy a comfortable hope. Let such take heart from the case before us; and let them also remember that the Lord does not now forget the sorrowful and broken-hearted. We see this expressly stated in—Isaiah 49:13-16.

The Interpreter: Or, Scripture for Family Worship.

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Our Lord Jesus has his own memorials of us, even as he has given us a memorial of himself. The prints of the nails constitute forget-

me-nots of a peculiarly personal and abiding kind: "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands": Isaiah 49:16. By these marks he sees what he has already suffered, and he pledges himself to do nothing apart from those sufferings, for his hands, with which he works, are pierced. Since he thus bears in his hands the marks of his passion, let us bear them on our hearts.

My Sermon Notes: A Selection From Outlines of Discourses Delivered at The Metropolitan Tabernacle.

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We come, therefore, brethren, by the help of God's Spirit, to consider this divine memorial: "I have graven thee on the palms of my hands"; then very briefly let us trace out the result of this memorial of God, and let us close with a personal reflection upon the object of this divine remembrance: "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hand."

We have here a metaphorical speech to set forth the impossibility of God's forgetting us. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." I will give a catchword to each particular explanation of this metaphor. The first word is present... He keeps the memorial of them in his hands—present with him. There is no fear, therefore, that he will forget them.

The next thought that arises from the metaphor may be remembered by the catchword of permanent. As I have already said, the impression made upon the hands, as intended in this figure, was permanent—so long as the person lived, there it was. You grave your friend's name upon a sapphire, and you may lose it; you may write it upon a rock, and the rock may crumble; you may get to yourself the most precious and lasting form of matter, and stamp the impress of your friend upon it, and by-and-by it may moulder away; but when Christ says that he writes his people's names upon his hands, unless he himself can perish, their memorial must abide. As long as Jesus lives, he must bear with him the memories of his people. It is inconceivable that Christ should be without a hand, and what is graven deep on those palms, never to be erased, must abide near to him for ever and for ever. Oh! think, Christian, you are never forgotten of God! Never in your darkest night of sorrow, never in your most wayward moment of personal doubt and wandering, never forgotten, and you never shall be. If you live to the decrepitude of old age, he will bear and carry you. If you lie long upon a lonely pallet, where few shall observe your suffering, he will not forget you. If you are drifted to some remote part of the world, far from all you love, he will be just as near. Time shall roll on and come to its close, but Christ will not forget you then, and in the eternity that cometh amidst the burning of the world and the judging of mankind, the graving on his hand shall be as permanent as ever, and you shall still be remembered of the Lord who loved you or ever the earth was. Present and permanent, then, is the memorial which Christ cherishes of his people. We have lately seen an unusual number of rainbows, and I must confess that nothing gives me greater joy than to see the rainbow. It is the memorial of the covenant. I like to look upon it. But there is something more cherishing to me than looking on it myself: it is the thought of that text where God "saith the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant." It comforts me that I can look on the sign of God's faithfulness, but it comforts me much more that God looks at it—that his eye is on it. Had I been an Israelite, I think it would have given me much pleasure to see the blood sprinkled on the lintel and the two sideposts of my house. I should have known I was secure. But there is something better than that. You remember the text, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." It is God's sight of the blood that saved you. So here it is Christ that looks at the palms of his own hands; that sees the memorial; looks there always, and has not to look far, for his hands are not far removed from himself—they are part of himself. It is on himself he bears the memory—the permanent memory of all whom he has bought with blood; therefore, be ye comforted, and think not that ye are overlooked.

The third word shall be personal—present, perpetual, and personal. "I have graven thee not in the book of record, but I have graven thee upon myself, upon the palms of my hands." It means this—I will put it in one short, compact sentence—that Christ could as soon forget himself as he could forget his people. He has stamped them into himself; yea, more, he has taken them into such vital, indelible union with his own person, that to forget one soul that he has bought with blood would be to forget himself. The mother does not forget her child because there is an intimate connection between them. The head cannot forget the members because there is a still more intimate connection there. My finger does not need to tell my head that it suffers; and when a limb is full of pain and agony, it does not need to send express messengers up to the brain to say to the head, "Think of me, for I am full of grief." No; the head feels that the limb is a part of itself, knit to itself; and Christ has a personal interest and a personal union with all his people. Oh! precious thought! Ye are dearer to Christ than any treasure could be to him, because you are of his flesh and of his bones. This is the reason—this is one reason that is given in Scripture—for conjugal love, because the woman was taken out of the man, and she is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh; and when our blessed Second Adam fell asleep in death, God took his Church out of his side, and the Church is bone of Christ's bone and flesh of his flesh. He cannot forget her; he looks upon her with a love that never can change, and never can be indifferent.

The next word I shall give you after this one of personal is painful. "I have graven thee on the palms of my hands." I may be permitted to illustrate this by our Saviour's hands. What are these wounds in thy hands, these sacred stigmata, these ensigns of suffering? The graver's tool was the nail, backed by the hammer. He must be fastened to the cross, that his people might be truly graven on the palms of his hands. There is much consolation here. We know that what a man has won with great pain he will keep

with great tenacity. Old Jacob valued much that portion which he took out of the hand of the Amorite with the sword and with the bow, and so truly does Christ value that which he has conquered at great expense Child of God, you cost Christ too much for him to forget you. He recollects every pang he suffered in Gethsemane, and every groan that he uttered for you upon the cross. The graving upon his hands brings to his recollection the redemption price which he paid down that you might be set free. Oh! what better ground can you have for believing that Christ remembers you than this, that he loved you and gave himself for you? Treasure up that thought.

The other word is practical. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands"; as much as if God would say, "I can do nothing without remembering my people." If he creates the world, it is with the hand that has his people graven on it. If he puts forth his hand to uphold all things, that upholding hand upholds his saints. With his left hand he smites the wicked; but he cannot smite his people, for he sees them in the palm of that very hand. All that God does has an eye to his people. Note before I leave this, that it does not say, "I have graven thee on the palm of my hand," but "on the palms of my hands," as if there was a double memorial before the Lord for ever. With his right hand he blesses, and his people have a share in that; with his left hand he deals out vengeance, but he sees his people there, and gives no vengeance to them.

Oh! this is a rich text! and we trust we shall so handle it as to bring out the juice from the luscious sentences, throw it in the wine-press, and tread it again and again with active feet, and it shall always yield fresh sweetness, and give forth yet more and more luscious draughts to slake your thirst, if you know but how to use it. Dear, abiding, precious memorial of our crucified Lord, thou dost charm away our fears. He never can forget us.

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Engraved! The following is from Spurgeon's sermon, A PRECIOUS DROP OF HONEY. No. 512

God's promises are not exhausted by one fulfilment. They are manifold mercies, so that after you have opened one fold, and found out one signification, you may unfurl them still more, and find another which shall be equally true, and then another, and another, and another, almost without end... I believe, I say, that the text before us belongs primarily to the seed of Israel; next, to the whole Church as a body; and then to every individual member.

We will begin with the first word, "Behold." "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." "Behold," is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation. Here, indeed, we have a theme for marvelling.

Heaven and earth may well be astonished that God should ever grave upon his hands the names of sinners; that rebels should attain so great a nearness to his heart as to be written upon the palms of his hands. Well might the angels wonder, and those bright spirits be lost in amazement, for unto which of the angels said he at any time, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands?"

What cherub ever attained this dignity, or to what seraph was this honour awarded? But to man, who is but a worm; to the son of man who is but dust and ashes; to man who has rebelled, who has lost all claim upon God's favour and deserves his hottest wrath—to man is this consolation given, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

Speak of the seven wonders of the world, why this is a wonder in the seventh heavens! No doubt a part of the wonder which is concentrated in the word "Behold," is excited by the unbelieving lamentation of the preceding sentence. Zion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." How amazed the divine mind seems to be at this wicked unbelief of man! What can be more astounding than the unfounded doubts and fears of God's favoured people. He seems to say, "How can I have forgotten thee, when I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands? How can it be? How darest thou doubt my constant remembrance, when the memorial is set upon my very flesh?" O unbelief, how strange a marvel thou art! I know not which most to wonder at, the faithfulness of God or the unbelief of his people. He keeps his promise a thousand times, and yet the next trial makes us doubt him. He never faileth; he is never a dry well; he is never as a setting sun, a passing meteor, or a melting vapour; and yet we are as continually vexed with anxieties, molested with suspicions, and disturbed with fears, as if our God were fickle and untrue. Here follows the great marvel, that God should be faithful to such a faithless people, and that when he is provoked with their doubting, he nevertheless abideth true. Behold! Behold! I say, and be ashamed and confounded for all your cruel doubts of your indulgent Lord. I remarked that the "Behold" in our text is intended to attract particular attention. There is something here worthy of being studied. If you should spend a month over such a text as this, you should only begin to understand it. It is a gold mine; there are nuggets upon the surface, but there is richer gold for the man who can dig deep. I can only indicate the veins of gold, it is for you afterwards in your meditations to follow them out. I pray you, be very careful with the text; lose not a drop of the wine of consolation contained in its precious crystal; be prayerful and anxious to grind forth from this wheat every atom of its fine flour; leave no meal to grow stale in this barrel; drain all the oil from this cruse, for where God sets a "Behold," depend upon it, there is a something that is not to be trifled with, nor to be passed over in indifference

The Divine Artist, who has been pleased to engrave his people for a memorial, is none other than God himself.

if the Lord hath done it, there is no mistake about it. If some human hand had cut the memorial, the hieroglyphs might be at fault; but since perfect wisdom has combined with perfect love to make a memorial of the saints, then no error by any possibility can have occurred; there can be no erasures, no crossing out of what God has written, no blotting out of what the Eternal hath decreed. Fixed, and fixed for ever must be the inscription which is of divine authorship; the powers of darkness cannot rase those everlasting lines.

Take the next word. We have many wells here out of which we may draw water.

Yet, methinks, there may be a prophetic reference here to a later writing of the names, when Jesus Christ submitted his outstretched palms to those cruel graving-tools, the nails. Then was it surely, when the executioner with the hammer smote the tender hands of the loving Jesus, that he engraved our names upon the palms of his hands, and to-day when he points to those wounds, when by faith he permits us to put our fingers into the prints of the nails, he may still say to us—"Deep on the palms of both my hands I have engraved thy name."

Well, Christian, do not these deep things comfort you? Have you no consolation in the ancient things of the everlasting mountains? Does not eternal love delight you? God is no stranger to you; he has known you long before you knew yourself; ay, long ere you were curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth, in his book all your members were written, which in continuance were fashioned when as yet there was none of them. Known unto God from the foundation of the earth were you; he was always thinking of you; there was never a period when you were not in his mind and on his heart. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

I have graven thee in; I have not merely printed thee, stamped thee on the surface, but I have permanently cut thee into my hand with marks which never can be removed. That word "graven" sets forth the perpetuity of the inscription. Not on the hand of man but on the hand of God is it graven. Oh! mysterious thought! On that hand immortal and eternal is it digged, graven in. Our gravers press upon their tools; they tell us how stern the labour when they cut the hard metal to mark each line, and God has thus graven; with the whole strength of Omnipotence he has leaned upon the tool to cut our names into his flesh. Was there not such a graving at Calvary? Is it not written, "It pleased the Father to bruise him; he hath put him to grief?" It is as if eternal strength, I say, leaned upon that graving-tool to write the memorial of his chosen people in the hands of Jesus. "

"If Jesus is ours we have a true friend,

Whose goodness endures the same to the end;

Our comforts may vary, our frames may decline;

We cannot miscarry; our aid is divine.

The hills may depart and mountains remove,

But faithful thou art O fountain of love!

The Father has graven our names on thy hands;

Our record, in Heaven eternally stands."

But I want you, my beloved brethren, to notice that the word runs, "I have graven thee." It does not say, "Thy name." The name is there, but that is not all; "I have graven thee." See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven thee, everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. It is not an outline sketch, you see; it is a full picture, as though the man himself were there. What, darrest thou dream that God forgets thee? Wilt thou ever say again that thy God hath forsaken thee when he has graven thee, not thy name, I say, but everything that concerns thee upon his own palms? "Oh!" saith one, "but I am in such a plight this morning." Well, he has graven that there? "Ah!" saith another, "I am so weak and so feeble!" That, too, is engraven there. "I have graven thee." The Omniscient God knows you better than you know yourself, and whereas you are conscious of some sin and some imperfection, he knows that you have an infinitude of sin and a vastness of infirmity, he has put it all there—"I have graven thee." I say, again, this is a thing too great to be talked of, but more fit to be read, marked, learned, and digested in the silence of your closet. You have never graven yourselves so well upon the tablets of your own knowledge as God has engraven you upon those blessed tablets—the palms of his hands. Yes, I dare to say it, our indulgent God as much thinks of one saint as if there were no other saint and no other created thing in all the world. Our covenant God so recollects and cares for his child, that if the whole universe were dissolved and had departed like a shadow, and our Lord had but one man to fix all his grace upon, he would not watch him more, nor more carefully and lovingly see after his best interests, than he now cares for each one of his people. "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."

Remember we are engraven, where? Upon his hands, not upon the works of his hands. They shall perish; yea they shall all wax old as doth a garment, but his hands shall endure for ever and ever. We are not graven upon a seal, for a seal might be slipped from the finger and laid aside, but the hand itself can never be separated from the living God. It is not engraven on the huge rock, for a convulsion of nature might rend the rock with earthquake, or the fretting tooth of time might eat the inscription out; but our record is on his hand, where it must last, world without end. Not upon the back of his hands where it might be supposed that in days of strife and warfare the inscription might suffer damage, but there upon the palms of his hands where it shall be well protected, so that even

“When God’s right arm is bared for war,

And thunder clouds his stormy car,”

even then, when he smites with his fist, his people shall be well protected within the palms of his hands. The tenderest part shall be made the place of the inscription, that to which he is most likely to look, that which his fingers of wisdom enclose, that by which he works his mighty wonders, shall be the unceasing remembrance, pledging him never to forget his chosen. Do notice, it does not say, “I have graven thee upon the palm of one hand,” but “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” There are two memorials. His saints shall never be forgotten, for the inscription is put there upon the palm of this hand, the right-hand of blessing, and upon the palm of that hand, the left-hand of justice. I see him with his right hand beckon me—“Come ye blessed,” and he sees me in his hand; and on that side he says, “Depart ye cursed,” but not to me, for he sees me in his hand, and cannot curse me. Oh! my soul, how charming this is, to know that his left hand is under thy head, while his right hand doth embrace thee. Both hands are marked with the memorial; this left hand, which is the hand of cursing, cannot curse me, for it is under my head; it cannot smite, for it has become my strength and my stay, my pillow and my rest, while his right hand doth embrace me, to keep me safe from death and hell, and to preserve me, and bring me to his eternal kingdom in glory.

Now I am conscious, that I cannot work out the beauty of this passage. I am equally conscious that you cannot either, unless you have much longer time for meditation than such a short service as this can afford you. Take it home and look at it again and again, especially laying an emphasis on the word “thee,” and oh! if you can render it—“He hath graven me, me, me upon the palms of his hands,” if your soul can know that God hath you daily in remembrance, and neither can, nor will forget you, then you will dance before the ark of the Lord, and if Michal mocks, you may answer her as David did—“The God that chose me, made me to dance.” Eternal Election and Indissoluble Union, are truths which make believers rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. “Be glad in the Lord and rejoice ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart.”

God’s remembrance of his people is constant. The hands, of course, are constantly in union with the body. In Solomon’s Song we read, “Set me as a seal upon thy hand.” Now this is a very close form of remembrance, for the seal is very seldom laid aside by the Eastern, who not being possessed with skill in the art of writing his name, requires his seal in order to affix his signature to a document; hence the seal is almost always worn, and in some cases is never laid aside. A seal, however, might be laid aside, but the hands never could be. It has been a custom, in the olden days especially, when men wished to remember a thing to tie a cord about the hand, or a thread around the finger by which memory would be assisted; but then the cord might be snapped or taken away, and so the matter forgotten, but the hand and that which is printed into it must be constant and perpetual. O Christian, remember that by night and by day God is always thinking of you. From the beginning of the year even to the end of the year, the Lord’s eye is upon you, according to his precious word—“I, the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it I will keep it night and day.” Your remembrance of God is intermittent; you thought of him this morning when you rose from your beds; you are trying to think of him now, and this evening again your thoughts will go up to him; these are only times and seasons of remembrance, but God never ceases to recollect you. The finite mind of man cannot constantly be occupied, if it is to engage in other pursuits, with any one thought; but the gigantic mind of God can allow of a million trains of thought at once. He is not confined to thinking of one thing, or working out one problem at a time. He is the great many-handed, many-eyed God; he doeth all things, and meditateth upon all things, and worketh all things at the same time; therefore he never is called away by any urgent business so that he can forget you. No second person ever comes in to become a rival in his affection towards you. You are fast united to your great Husband, Christ, and no other lover can steal his heart; but Jesus, having chosen you, doth never suffer a rival to come. You are his beloved, his spouse, the darling of his heart, and he has himself said, “Mine eye and my heart are toward thee continually.” Every moment of every day, every day of every month, and every month of every year, is the Lord continually thinking upon you, if you be one of his.

Next, dear friends, and to the children of God this will be a delightful thought, this is an eternal remembrance. You cannot suppose it possible that any person can erase what is written on God’s hand. The Scriptures tell us that we are in the hand of Christ, and that none shall pluck us out.

“Once in Christ, in Christ for ever,

Nothing from his love can sever.”

Toplady made no mistake when he said—

“My name from the palms of his hands

Eternity will not erase;

Impress'd on his heart it remains

In marks of indelible grace;

Yes, I to the end shall endure,

As sure as the earnest is given;

More happy, but not more secure,

The glorified spirits in heaven.”

It appeareth to me as though the King had said, “Shall I carve my people upon precious stones? Shall I choose the ruby, the emerald, the topaz? No; for these all must melt in the last general conflagration. What then? Shall I write on tablets of gold or silver? No, for all these may canker and corrupt, and thieves may break through and steal. Shall I cut the memorial deep on brass? No, for time would fret it, and the letters would not long be legible. I will write on myself, on my own hand, and then my people will know how tender I am, that I would sooner cut into my own flesh than forget them; I will have my Son branded in the hand with the names of his people, that they may be sure he cannot forsake them; hard by the memorial of his wounds shall be the memorial of his love to them, for indeed his wounds are an everlasting remembrance.” How loving, then, how full of superlative, super-excellent affection is God toward you and toward me in so recording our names.

Weary not when I yet further remark, that this memorial is most surprising. Scripture, which is full of wonders, yet allows a “Behold” to be put before this verse—“Behold!” If the things I have been saying are enough to make you wonder, the deep sea of the text, without bottom and without shore, would much more cause you to hold up your hands in astonishment. Child of God, let your cheerful eyes and your joyful heart testify how great a wonder it is that you, once so vile, so hard of heart, so far estranged from God, are this day written on the palms of his hands.

And then I close this point by saying it is also most consolatory . When God would meet Zion’s great doubt—“God hath forgotten me,” he cheers her with this—“I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” Where are you this morning, mourner—where are you? Ah, you may well hide your head for shame. You said yesterday, when trial came after trial—

“My God hath forgotten me quite;

My Lord will be gracious no more.”

Here is God’s answer to you this morning—“It cannot be; I cannot forget you, for I have graven you upon the palms of my hands.”

“Forget thee, I will not, I cannot, thy name

Engraved on my heart doth for ever remain;

The palms of my hands whilst I look on, I see

The wounds I received when suffering for thee.”

There is no sorrow to which our text is not an antidote. If thou be a child of God, though thy troubles have been as innumerable as the waves of the sea, this text, like the channels of the ocean, can contain them all. I care not this morning though thou hast lost everything, though thou camest here a penniless bankrupt beggar; so long as thou hast this text thou art rich beyond a miser’s dream. You may have forgotten your own mercy; your own experience may seem a dream to you; the devil may tell you that you never knew the Lord; your own sins may bear evidence in the same way; but if you have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, the covenant made with David’s Lord must not and cannot be broken. “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” Come, drooping saint, lift up thy head! Thou dreary, downcast brother, be thou of good cheer! If Christ remembers thee, what more canst thou want? The dying thief’s extremity could not suggest a prayer larger than “Lord, remember me!” and thy greatest sorrow cannot ask for a more complete assuagement than this—“Lord, show me that thou hast graven me upon the palms of thy hands.”

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SPURGEON - I may illustrate this by our Savior’s hands. What are these wounds in thy hands, these sacred stigmata, these ensigns of suffering? The graver’s tool was the nail, backed by the hammer. He must be fastened to the cross, that his people might be truly

graven on the palms of his hands. There is much consolation here. We know that what a man has won with great pain he will keep with great tenacity. Child of God, you cost Christ too much for him to forget you.

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Indeed, the nail that pierced my Savior's palms had my name on it, for it should have been mine. Our names are on the Lord's heart. They're not penciled in—they're indelibly, unalterably, permanently engraved. "Do you think I've forgotten you?" the Lord asks His people. "Look at My hands. You are engraved upon them. "Whenever I am tempted to think God has forgotten me, I need only to go to the Cross of Calvary, for there I'm reminded that He engraved me on the palm of His hands when in them He absorbed nails and paid the price for my sin.

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Fly back as far as you will, until this present world and all the worlds within the universe slept in the mind of God, like unborn forests in an acorn-cup, and even then you have not reached the time, before all

time when it was first said—"I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands." Isaiah 49:16

Before the young earth had burst her swaddling bands of mist, yes, before the globe had been begotten, or yonder sun had darted his infant arrows, or yon stars had opened their eyes, the Eternal had fixed his eye of love upon his favorites!

God was always thinking of you; there was never a period when you were not in his mind and on his heart! "I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands."

Child of God, let your cheerful eyes and your joyful heart testify how great a wonder it is that you, once so vile, so hard of heart, so far estranged from God, are this day written on the palms of his hands!

There is no sorrow to which our text is not an antidote! If you are a child of God, though your troubles have been as innumerable as the waves of the sea, this text, like the depths of the ocean, can contain them all.

I care not this morning though you have lost everything, though you came here a penniless bankrupt beggar; so long as you have this text you are rich beyond a miser's dream!

"I have engraved you upon the palms of my hands."

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#### A precious assurance

God's promises are not exhausted by one fulfilment. They are manifold mercies, so that after you have opened one fold, and found out one signification, you may unfurl them still more and find another which shall be equally true, and then another, and another, and another, almost without end. I believe that the text belongs primarily to the seed of Israel; next, to the whole Church as a body; and then to every individual member.

I. I intend to CONSIDER OUR TEXT VERBALLY, pulling it to pieces word by word. Every single word deserves to be emphasised.

1. We will begin with the word, "Behold." "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." "Behold" is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation. Here, indeed, we have a theme for marvelling. "Behold" in our text is intended to attract particular attention. There is something here worthy of being studied.

2. We pass on now to the next word, "I." The Divine Artist is none other than God Himself. Here we learn the lesson which Christ afterwards taught His disciples—"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." No one can write upon the hand of God but God Himself. Neither our merits, prayers, repentance, nor faith, can write our names there. Nor did blind chance or mere necessity of fate inscribe our names; but the living hand of a living Father, unprompted by anything except the spontaneous love of His own heart. Then, again, if the Lord hath done it, there is no mistake about it. If some human hand had cut the memorial, the hieroglyphics might be at fault; but since perfect wisdom has combined with perfect love to make a memorial of the saints, then no error by any possibility can have occurred.

3. Take the next word, "have." Not "I will," nor yet "I am doing it"; it is a thing of the past, and how far back in the past! Oh, the antiquity of this inscription! "From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God"; from everlasting to everlasting Thou art the same, and Thy people's names are written on Thy hands! Yet, methinks, there may be a prophetic reference here to a later writing of the names, when Jesus Christ submitted His outstretched palms to those cruel graving-tools, the nails. Then was it surely, when the

executioner with the hammer smote the tender hands of the loving Jesus, that He engraved our names upon the palms of His hands.

4. But the next word is "graven." The Rev. John Anderson, of Helensburgh, told me that while travelling in the East he has frequently seen persons with the portraits of their friends upon their hands, so that wherever they went, as one in this country would carry the portrait of a friend in a brooch or a watch, they carry these likenesses printed on their palms. I said to him, "Surely they would wash out." They might by degrees, he said, but they frequently had them pricked in with strong indelible ink, so that there, whilst the palm lasts, there lasts the memorial of the friend. Surely this is what the text refers to. I have graven thee in; I have not merely printed thee, stamped thee on the surface, but I have permanently cut thee into My hand with marks which never can be removed. That word "graven" sets forth the perpetuity of the inscription.

5. Shall we take that next word? "Thee." It does not say, "thy name." "Thee." See the fulness of this! I have graven thy person, thine image, thy case, thy circumstances, thy sins, thy temptations, thy weaknesses, thy wants, thy works; I have graven everything about thee, all that concerns thee; I have put thee altogether there. It is not an outline sketch, you see; it is a full picture, as though the man himself were there. Darest thou dream that God forgets thee?

6. We have hitherto taken every word, but we must now take the next two or three. We are engraven, where? Upon His "hands." We are not graven upon a seal, for a seal might be slipped from the finger and laid aside, but the hand itself can never be separated from the living God. It is not engraven on the huge rock, for a convulsion of nature might rend the rock with earthquake, or the fretting tooth of time might eat the inscription out; but our record is on His hand, where it must last, world without end. Not upon the back of His hands where it might be supposed that in days of strife and warfare the inscription might suffer damage, but there upon the palms of His hands where it shall be well protected. The tenderest part shall be made the place of the inscription; that to which He is most likely to look, that which His fingers of wisdom enclose, that by which He works His mighty wonders, shall be the unceasing remembrance, pledging Him never to forget His chosen. It does not say, "I have graven thee upon the palm of one hand," but "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." There are two memorials. His saints shall never be forgotten, for the inscription is put there upon the palm of this hand, the right hand of blessing, and upon the palm of that hand, the left hand of justice. I see Him with His right hand beckon me--"Come, ye blessed," and He sees me in His hand; and on that side He says, "Depart, ye cursed," but not to me, for He sees me in His hand, and cannot curse me. Oh, my soul, how charming this is, to know that His left hand is under Thy head, while His right hand doth embrace thee.

## II. CONSIDER THE TEXT AS A WHOLE.

1. God's remembrance of His people is constant. The hands, of course, are constantly in union with the body. In Solomon's Song we read, "Set me as a seal upon thine arm." Now this is a very close form of remembrance, for the seal is very seldom laid aside by the Eastern, who not being possessed with skill in the art of writing his name, requires' his seal in order to affix his signature to a document; hence the seal is almost always worn, and in some cases is never laid aside. A seal, however, might be laid aside, but the hands never could be. It has been a custom, in the olden days especially, when men wished to remember a thing, to tie a cord about the hand, or a thread around the finger, by which memory would be assisted; but then the cord might be snapped or taken away, and so the matter forgotten, but the hand and that which is printed into it must be constant and perpetual. Oh, Christian, by night and by day God is always thinking of you.

2. This recollection on God's part is practical. We are engraven upon His heart--this is to show His love; we are put upon His shoulders--this is to show that His strength is engaged for us; and also upon His hands, to show that the activity of our Lord will not be spared from us; He will work and show Himself strong for His people; He brings His omnipotent hands to effect our redemption. What would be the use of having a friend who would think of us, and then let his love end in thought? The faithfulness we want is that of one who will act in our defence. Do you see the drift of it? If He moulds a world between His palms, and then sends it wheeling in its orbit, it is between those palms which are stamped with the likeness of His sons and daughters, and so that new work shall minister to their god. If He divides a nation, it is always with the hand that bears the remembrance of Zion. Scripture itself tells us, "When He divided the nations, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." The great wheel of providence, when God makes it revolve, works for the good of His people.

3. This is an eternal remembrance.

4. This memorial how tender! We have heard of one, an eastern queen, who so loved her husband that she thought even to build a mausoleum to his memory was not enough. She had a strange way of proving her affection, for when her husband's bones were burned she took the ashes and drank them day by day, that, as she said, her body might be her husband's living sepulchre. It was a strange way of showing love, and there was a marvellous degree of strange, fanatical fondness in it. But what shall I say of this Divine sympathetic mode of showing remembrance, by cutting it into the palms she It appeareth to me as though the King had said, "Shall I carve My people upon precious stones? Shall I choose the ruby, the emerald, the topaz? No; for these all must melt in the last general conflagration. What then? Shall I write on tablets of gold or silver? No, for all these may canker and corrupt, and thieves

may break through and steal. Shall I cut the memorial deep on brass? No, for time would fret it, and the letters would not long be legible. I will write on Myself, on My own hand, and then My people will know how tender I am, that I would sooner cut into My own flesh than forget them."

5. This memorial is most surprising. Scripture, which is full of wonders, yet allows a "Behold" to be put before this verse--"Behold!"

6. It is also most consolatory. When God would meet Zion's great doubt--"God hath forgotten me," He cheers her with this--"I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands." There is no sorrow to which our text is not an antidote.

III. And now we come to EXCITE YOU TO THE DUTY WHICH SUCH A TEXT SUGGESTS.

1. Is it not your duty to leave your cares behind you to-day?
2. If you must not have cares, you should not have those deep sorrows and despairs.
3. If this text is not yours, how your mouths ought to water after it . ( C. H. Spurgeon.)

Neither forsaken nor forgotten

I. THE FEAR EXPRESSED, which led to the utterance of our text (Isa 49:14).

1. This fear has been felt by very many.
2. It has some times been very plaintively expressed.
3. And some, too, are very obstinate while they are in that condition, for the passage contains a very unreasonable complaint. Read Isa 49:13, "Jehovah hath comforted His people," &c. Yet, in the teeth of that double declaration Zion said, "Jehovah hath forsaken me," &c.
4. I suppose Zion came to this conclusion because she was in banishment.
5. Yet I think that there is some measure of grace mingled with this fear. Let me read you this passage straight on: "Jehovah hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted. But Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." She did not say that till God had visited her. There is in your soul a longing after God. This is the work of His Holy Spirit! Besides, although the text is a word of complaint, it has also in it a word of faith: "my Lord." Did you notice that? Zion calls Jehovah hers though she dreams that He has forsaken her. I do love to see you keep the grip of your faith even when it seems to be illogical. Hold on this assurance with a death-grip. If you cannot hold on with both hands, hold on with one; and if sometimes you can hold with neither hand, hold on with your teeth.

II. THE COMFORT BESTOWED. "I have graven thee," &c. What is it that makes it so certain that God cannot forget His people?

1. God remembers His eternal love to His people, and His remembrance of them is constant because of that love. God's suffering love secures His memory of us.
2. By the expression, "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands," God seems to say, "I have done so much for you that I can never forget you."
3. When a memorial is engraven on a man's hand, then it is connected with the man's life.

III. AN INSPECTION INVITED. "Behold."

IV. A RETURN SUGGESTED.

1. Does Christ remember us as I have tried to prove that He does? Then let us remember Him. "This do ye in remembrance of Me."
2. Let us not only remember Him at His table, but let us remember Him constantly. Let us, as it were, carry His name upon the palms of our hands.
3. Practically. We ought so to wear Christ on our hands that whatever we touch should be thereby Christianised.
4. Let the name of Christ, and your memory of it, become vital to you . ( C. H. Spurgeon.)

17 "Your builders hurry; Your destroyers and devastators Will depart from you