

A BETTER KING, SERVANT, CONQUEROR

The Book of Isaiah

Isaiah 49—50

Verse to Remember

He says:

*"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring my salvation to the
ends of the earth."*

Isaiah 49:6

The Four Servant Songs in Isaiah

Is. 42:1–9; Is. 49:1–13; Is. 50:4–11 and Is. 52:13–53:12

We were introduced to the servant in the first song. This week, through the next two songs, we will learn more about the servant's mission and call. In the final song, we will learn about the suffering this servant will endure for his mission.

As you read this week's passage about the servant, be mindful that Isaiah is speaking to God's people who will be in exile in Babylon and will have heard about God's deliverance through Cyrus, the Persian ruler (Is. 45:1–6, 13). In this passage, God is revealing "a savior greater than Cyrus"¹ - the perfect servant of God, the true Messiah for the people of Israel and ultimately all nations.


Day 1 — Read Isaiah 49:1–12. Calling


1. Why are the "islands" and "distant nations" (Is. 49:1a) being called along with the "house of Jacob" (Is. 48:1) to hear the conversation between the LORD and his servant? (Is. 49:6)

2. What is the servant's mission?

Is. 49:5

Is. 49:6

 * Is. 42:1b–4, 6–7

3. Why should the nations listen to the servant? (Is. 49:1–7;  Is. 42:1)

4. How does the servant evaluate his mission? (Is. 49:4a)

How does the servant gain perspective? (Is. 49:4b, 5b)

What reassurance does God give the servant? (Is. 49:6–12)

The Perfect Israel (Is. 49:3)

God called the nation of Israel to be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6). We see through their history in the Old Testament that they were unable to fulfill their call in "truth or righteousness" (Is. 48:1b). So God calls the servant "Israel" as he is the holy "Israel in whom God will be glorified."² The servant completes Israel's mission by being the perfect "light for the gentiles" (Is. 49:6b).

Day 2 — Read Isaiah 49:13–26. Compassion

1. Review the prophecy of deliverance in Isaiah 49:1–12. How should all of creation respond to the servant’s mission? (Is. 49:13)
2. How does Zion (God’s people still in exile) respond? (Is. 49:14)
3. In what ways can you relate to Zion’s feeling of being forsaken?

What comforts you in those moments?

4. What images does the LORD use in response to his people’s despair? (Is. 49:15–16)

What do these images convey?

Children of Zion

(Is. 49:17–23)

During her time of exile, Zion was “ruined and made desolate,” “bereaved and barren” (Is. 49:19, 21). Isaiah 49:17–23 is a prophecy that declares that Zion will be restored in the distant future. At that time, Zion will lift up her eyes and behold children that she did not bear coming to her as to their mother. They will adorn Zion as jewels adorn a bride. When the LORD lifts up his banner, the children of promise out of every nation will be brought to Zion by kings and rulers. The land will be too small for the multitudes that will gather.³

5. God poses a question in verse 24 and then answers it in verse 25. What point is he making? (Is. 49:25–26)

Day 3 — Read Isaiah 50:1–9. Commitment

1. “Isaiah now takes up the thought introduced in 49:14, of God’s having forsaken his people, and points out that Israel’s separation from God is the result of their own sin and not because God has forsaken them.”⁴
How does God assure them of his ability to rescue them? (Is. 50:2–3)
2. How has the Sovereign LORD equipped the servant to accomplish his purpose? (Is. 50:4–5a)

3. What aspects of the servant’s character are on display in Isaiah 50:5–9?

v. 5

v. 6

v. 7

v. 8

v. 9

What strikes you most about the servant in these verses?

Day 4 — Read Isaiah 50:10–11. Counsel

1. In Isaiah 50:10–11 God uses the analogy of light and darkness.
 - a. What choices exist for those in darkness?
v. 10

v. 11a
 - b. Why do you think torment is the consequence for those who provide their own light?

Day 4 continues on page 4




2. You may be tempted to look to something other than the Lord to illuminate a period of darkness in your own life, just like God's people in exile. How does this week's lesson encourage you to place your trust wholeheartedly in the Lord?

Day 5 — Completion

1. Luke 4:17–21, Jesus declares to the Israel of his day that he is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies. In Acts 3:13, Peter says, "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his Servant Jesus." Fill in the chart below to see *some* of the ways Jesus fulfills the Servant's calling.

Prophecy	Fulfillment ⁵	What do these passages say about Jesus, the Servant?
Is. 49:3	Jn. 17:1–5	
Is. 49:4	Mt. 23:37	
Is. 49:5–6a	Acts 5:30–31	
Is. 49:6b	Lk. 2:25–32	
Is. 50:4	Jn. 12:49–50	
Is. 50:6	Mt. 27:26–31	
Is. 50:7	Lk. 9:51	
Is. 50:8	Acts 2:22–33	

2. Look back over the chart. What is your response to the Servant provided by God to bring about salvation?

*The  symbol indicates verses for further study.

¹ Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., *Isaiah: God Saves Sinners*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005), 323.

² *Ibid.*, 324.

³ Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, Volume 3 Chapters 40–66 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 286–291.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 295.

⁵ [http://www.messiahrevealed.org/isaiah49.html#isaiah 49:1a](http://www.messiahrevealed.org/isaiah49.html#isaiah%2049:1a); <http://www.messiahrevealed.org/isaiah50-51.html>