

ISAIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 48 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In Isaiah chapters 46 and 47 we saw God rebuke Babylon for their idolatry and because of that He was going to judge them. And that is exactly what happened to this world power, Cyrus King of Persia and his army came in and wiped them out just as God said. Even naming Cyrus as the leader who would do this long before he was even born.

As we move into Isaiah chapter 48 tonight we are going to see God chasten the Southern Kingdom of Judah because they knew the truth and yet did not walk in the truth. They had this façade of being religious but their hearts were far from God. With that as our background, let's begin reading in Isaiah chapter 48 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

ISAIAH 48**VERSES 1-2**

1. First of all we see the word "**Hear**" and that is important. Remember what Paul said in Romans 10:17, "**So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**" We need to listen to God; we need to hear what He is telling us and God speaks to us through His Word. The problem here is that what they were listening to was not from God. How can I say that? Because we are told it was "**... not in truth or in righteousness.**"

We see that even today, many people speaking for God and yet, God has already spoken to us through His Word and we need to listen and obey what He is telling us. That was the problem for Judah, they looked good outwardly, they had the appearance that they were very spiritual people, and yet God sees the heart and exposes it!

Notice that the Lord calls them “**Jacob**” which means deceiver, cheater, conniver, schemer and-so-on. That is how God sees them. Then why does He call them “**Israel**”? Because it is in name only, this is not what flowed from their lives. What flowed from their lives was Jacob; they were not governed by God!

Even in verse 2 we see what they believed. They felt that since they knew of God they had access to Him no matter their actions, no matter if what they were doing was based in truth and righteousness, and God is correcting that here.

2. Now let’s apply this to our own lives. Why are you saved? What brings you into that relationship with God? Is it your family, they were all Christians so you must be a Christian? Maybe it is because you are a Baptist or a Lutheran or you go to Calvary Chapel? No, none of those are right!

You see, it doesn’t matter what church you belong to, it does not matter your family affiliation, the issue is do you have a relationship with Jesus Christ? Who is Christ to you? And, that relationship must be based in truth, not in the doctrine of man. It is as Jesus said in John 8:31-32, “**... ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’**”

It is so simple and yet we make it so complicated. The truth of God that is found in His Word will set you free from the deception, the lies of the Devil that will keep you in bondage! Don't fall prey to the deception that is growing in the churches of America and really the world today. Be in His Word and you will not be deceived and you will know who God is because God reveals Himself to us through His Word! Jesus said in John 17:17, "**Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.**" How do you walk in righteousness, by knowing the truth because the truth sets us apart and shows us how to live out our faith! The wisdom of the world is foolishness and yet so many run to it for their answers and they reject what God's Word says.

VERSES 3-5

1. God is saying to Israel that He has shown them what was going to happen before it came to pass. Why would He do that? We don't have to guess, He tells us. It was because His people were "**obstinate**" they were stubborn and instead of giving glory to God they looked at other reasons why these things came to pass. God did not want them to look to their idols or their ideas of who did this, He wanted them to look to Him, but they didn't!
2. We do the same today. Things happen and we feel it was because of what we have done, or just pure luck, some random chance happening instead of giving glory and honor to the Lord who has done these things in our lives.

Imagine a high school football coach who was invited to play against the Green Bay Packers. A professional football team against a high school football team and not just the starters, he puts his second string on the field to play against the Packers. And guess what, he scores a touchdown. What kind of explanation of what took place can we give? All we could say is that this guy is a great coach!

That is what God does with us. We are kind of like that high school football team and not even the starters, second string. And yet God uses us and does great things and all we can say is, “Our God is great!” All we can do is praise and honor Him for using people like us! And yet how easy it is to forget that God is the One who enables us to do these things, we truly have no strength in ourselves. May we keep our hearts soft and open to the Lord and thank Him for all He is doing in our lives!

VERSES 6-8

1. What is the Lord speaking of regarding these new things that He is showing them? I believe He is speaking of Cyrus being raised up and he will be the one who not only defeats the Babylonians but will release the Jews from their captivity, allowing them to come home.

And as you read this the Lord is amazed that His people have seen all that He has done, how He has brought them this far and yet they are still obstinate towards Him. Now I know God is not surprised by anything we do, but the picture is like this, “How can you turn from Me when I have done all these things for you?”

2. I think we too need to look and remember all that God has done in our life, is doing in our life and will be doing in our life and stand in awe of Him. We know ourselves. We were born sinners, descendants of Adam and it is only through Christ that we have been set free! Because of His grace and mercy that He has extended to His people, Israel, and extends to us, we are set free from sin.

VERSES 9-13

1. Look at how bad they are! Look at how sinful they are! Why in the world would God ever show mercy to a group of people like this? He tells us, “**For My name’s sake.**” God does not do it because they deserve it but as He extends mercy to them, it brings glory to Him. He does it because of what He promised to them and God will not go back on His Word! And when you think about it, mercy is not something that is given because we deserve it, we need it and thus, God extends it to us as He did with Israel.

2. We see the Lord speak of putting them in the “**furnace of affliction**” and I think that is referring to their captivity in Babylon. He did that not to destroy them but to refine them, to remove those impurities in their heart.

The problem was that as these fires burned there was no silver found in them, nothing of value came out of this process. Here in Isaiah 48:10 we see this in The Living Bible more clearly and I think that is the intent here. We are told, “**I refined you in the furnace of affliction, but found no silver there. You are worthless, with nothing good in you at all.**” That is a sad indictment against His people.

And yet our God is so gracious, He is so merciful that we are told in verse 11, and again this is from The Living Bible, **“Yet for my own sake - yes, for my own sake - I will save you from my anger and not destroy you lest the heathen say their gods have conquered me. I will not let them have my glory.”**

3. Now, when trials, when these refining fires come upon you do they bother you? I can only speak for myself here and I have to admit, I don't like it! You see, as we go through the furnace of affliction we can learn what is deep down in our own hearts and we don't always like what we see. And as those things come to the surface we can let them go, we can give them to God or we can hold on to them and stay in that furnace longer! It is our choice. David put it like this in Psalm 119:71, **“It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.”**

It may be good but I don't always like it!

4. God does not destroy His people because His name is on the line like I have said. God birthed them and thus, He will chasten them when they move in a direction that will ultimately harm them, but He will not destroy them. I don't know about you but I am thankful for that. God disciplines His children but He does not disown them!

Think about this for a minute. When your children act up, misbehave, it reflects upon you as parents and people develop a picture of who you are based upon your children's actions many times. The same is true of God. How we as His children live our lives reflects upon Him!

Remember when the prophet Nathan came and rebuked David for his sin with Bathsheba. One of the things that Nathan told David was by his actions he gave the enemies of God an occasion to blasphemy God. David's actions, like ours, reflect upon how people perceive our God. Be a good witness of Him and understand that because He loves you He chastens you, He does not disown you!

5. One more point here before we move on and it deals with our perspective of God. How big is the God you worship? My God has laid the foundation of the earth with His hand and spread out the universe. It has been estimated that the universe is some 12 billion light years and He has done this with His right hand. He is sovereign, He is in control, He is Almighty God, don't look to anyone or anything else but Him!

VERSES 14-19

1. Why does God want us to obey and praise Him? Because He loves us and we were created to bring Him good pleasure. Thus, there is great joy in our lives when we do what we were created for, to obey and worship the Lord!

And what we see here is that God is calling for the Jews to understand that the Babylonian astrologers have not spoken of things to come, they can't tell the future. And what the Lord has in mind specifically here is that of Cyrus the Persian King. God was going to use him to defeat the Babylonians and let the Jews return home and all the soothsayers, the fortune tellers, the astrologers from Babylon did not see this coming but God did.

It kind of reminds me of the Psychic Hotline from years ago, I don't think they saw themselves going bankrupt but they did and yet they were there to tell your future and yet they could not even tell their own! Go figure. My life is in the hands of God!

2. Now the big question that comes up here in verse 16 is "Who is speaking?" Some say it speaks of Cyrus, I don't see that. I think the One who is speaking is Jesus and I think verse 17 makes that very clear as it says "**Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer . . .**"

And notice that Jesus is speaking and it is the Father and the Holy Spirit that send Jesus into the world to be that sacrificial Lamb and take away the sins of the world, and He freely submitted Himself to that mission. In other words, this verse is saying "***Yahweh your Redeemer***" because Jesus is God, the second person of the Holy Trinity and we see the Trinity spoken of here in these two verses, Isaiah 48:16-17!

3. Not only that but our Redeemer is the One who is leading us and Paul picks up on that in Hebrews 1:1-2 where he tells us, **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”** God spoke by the prophets but now His final revelation is found in Jesus Christ, called the Word. We don't need new revelations from God, new doctrine, the Word is complete. Yes God does guide us and speak to us by His Spirit, but not with new revelations of doctrine! He is leading us as the Good Shepard, the Great Shepard!

4. God warned them and they did not listen and because they did not listen to the Lord they went into captivity! You see, God said these things not to be some kind of cosmic kill joy and ruin all their fun, but to bless them and give them peace. But they refused and they suffered the consequences.

The same is true today, God warns us but we have a free will, a choice, to either listen to Him and be blessed, as difficult as that may be, or to do our own thing and suffer the consequences of our actions.

I wonder what our lives would be like if we lived in total obedience to the Lord? Disobedience, unbelief keeps us from so much that God has for us. Redpath put it like this, “Yes, I am deeply impressed with the simplicity of the road to revival. Just twenty-four hours' obedience in our lives, and we would be living in such a flood tide of Holy Spirit blessing that there would not be room enough to contain it!” May we learn to surrender to His will in our lives and not our own!

VERSES 20-22

1. Again we are jumping into the future as God is calling for His people to return home from their captivity. To leave Babylon and share with those around them what God has done for them! Tragically, out of the 2 to 3 million Jews that went into captivity, only some 50,000 returned. Many had become comfortable and stayed in the world rather than return home.

Psalm 126 is a song they sang as those that did returned home. They were free at last! In this Psalm beginning in verse 1 we read, **“When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion, We were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, And our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, ‘The LORD has done great things for them.’ The LORD has done great things for us, And we are glad. Bring back our captivity, O LORD, As the streams in the South. Those who sow in tears Shall reap in joy. He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him.”** Psalm 126.

Now as you read verse 21 it seems to be speaking of their exodus from Egypt and not Babylon. We are told that God provided water for them in the desert and He caused water to flow from the rock as well as splitting the rock and waters flowing forth.

Besides their exodus from Egypt and from Babylon we don't have any other recorded events of them traveling through the desert and God providing water like this. And there is no indication that this is looking back on what God had done in their departure from Egypt, so I believe it has to be speaking of their return from Babylon, God provided water to sustain them on their journey home!

In either case, we know that God did provide for them as they traveled from Babylon to Jerusalem! God will take care of His people; nothing is too hard for Him!

2. What is one of the things that the world is looking for and they just can't seem to find it?

They are looking for peace and that is not found outside of Christ. He is the Prince of Peace in our lives now and one day as He rules and reigns from Jerusalem! And God is very clear on this, there is *no* peace, not *some* peace, not a *little* peace or even *slight* peace apart from Jesus, there is **NO PEACE!** Like the bumper sticker says, "No Peace, No God. Know Peace, Know God!" That is what is being said here.

Let me share this article about Michael Jordan because it says a lot about a person who lives their life apart from God. They might have everything we would desire, but it is like Mick Jagger said, "I can't get no, satisfaction!" and that is truly what we see in this man's life. There truly is no peace that he can find. The article is called, "Do You Still Want to Be Like Mike?" and it is written by Matt Smethurst. We are told,

Thompson's piece pulsates with the sense that Jordan isn't happy. "I would give up everything now to go back and play the game of basketball," the Hall of Famer confesses. When asked how he replaces it, Jordan simply states, "You don't. You learn to live with it."

Such an abnormal existence brings certain abnormal hopes, promises, expectations. As Thompson observes:

Most people live anonymous lives, and when they grow old and die, any record of their existence is blown away. They're forgotten, some more slowly than others, but eventually it happens to virtually everyone. Yet for the few people in each generation who reach the very pinnacle of fame and achievement, a mirage flickers: immortality. They come to believe in it. Even after Jordan is gone, he knows people will remember him. Here lies the greatest basketball player of all time. That's his epitaph.

There's a fable about returning Roman generals who rode in victory parades through the streets of the capital; a slave stood behind them, whispering in their ears, "All glory is fleeting." Nobody does that for professional athletes. Jordan couldn't have known that the closest he'd get to immortality was during that final walk off the court. . . . All that can happen in the days and years that follow is for the shining monument he built to be chipped away, eroded. His self-esteem has always been, as he says, "tied directly to the game." Without it, he feels adrift. Who am I? What am I doing? For the past 10 years, since retiring for the third time, he has been running, moving as fast as he could, creating distractions, distance.

In his supercilious 2009 Hall of Fame speech, Jordan called the game of basketball his "refuge," the "place where I've gone when I needed to find comfort and peace." Three years later, the restlessness remains.

It turns out the voracious drive that turned a shy North Carolina youngster into a household name comes with a price tag. And as the flicker of immortality fades, Jordan stares in the mirror, wondering where to turn. "How can I enjoy the next 20 years without so much of this consuming me?" he ponders. "How can I find peace away from the game of basketball?"

As a Christian, it's easy to read a piece like Thompson's and feel discouraged, even disgusted, by Jordan's egotism. Yet as psychologists clamor to diagnose Jordan's condition, we feel no surprise. The distance between him and us is, after all, uncomfortably slim. We want to be the most important person in every room; he is. As the apostle might say, who is sufficient for these things?

In the world, status is tethered to performance. It's the same in the gospel. The difference, however, is that our status as believers is not tethered to our performance, but Christ's. Only the gospel can offer the resources to combat our pride, expose our emptiness, and flood our hearts with peace.

"How can I find peace away from the game of basketball?" the aging legend asks.

Michael, you never had peace. Triumph and fame, yes, but not peace. James Naismith invented a game that brought you a sense of purpose, of value, of calm. But it was only that - a sense, a counterfeit of the real thing. You will never find life outside the game for the same reason you never found life in it. It's not there.

The peace you seek isn't available on a basketball court or a golf course but on a little hill outside Jerusalem. There, Yahweh incarnate hung in the place of sinners - wannabe Yahweh's like you and like me.

You've gained the world and found it lacking, Mike. Don't lose your soul.

- <http://thegospelcoalition.org/mobile/article/tgc/when-greatness-meets-emptiness-michael-jordan-at-50>

You see, unless you have made peace with God through His Son Jesus Christ you will never know the peace of God in your life, you will have no peace! But we can rest in Him and we do rest in Him because His peace surpasses all understanding!

3. Now remember what we just read here in Isaiah 48:22, **“There is no peace,’ says the LORD, ‘for the wicked.’**” But now, as we move into chapter 49, we are going to be introduced to the Messiah, the only one that can give us peace with God and thus, allow the peace of God to fill our hearts.

And as we look at the next several chapters, 49-53 it is going to be like traveling from the foothills in chapter 49 and ascending upward, climaxing on the mountain top in chapter 53. We are going to move from His birth and culminate with His crucifixion, seeing a more detailed description than we get in the New Testament. So let's jump into Isaiah chapter 49 this evening and see where true peace is found, not in this world but in the Messiah, in Jesus!

ISAIAH 49**VERSES 1-2**

1. This is Jesus speaking here and I want you to notice that He has not come just for the Jewish people but for all people, the coastlands and those that are far away, the Gentiles, you and me! And Yahweh has called Him from the womb. What is interesting is that even before this we are told in Micah 5:2, **“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”**

In other words, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Word, has always existed but here we are told in Isaiah that there would come a day when Almighty God would indwell a body of flesh.

And as we get to the New Testament we see this played out for us. In Matthew chapter 1, during the engagement period of Joseph and Mary, she was found to be with child, and not by Joseph, the one she was betrothed to. Mary was still a virgin and yet she was pregnant and of course Joseph did not believe it, how could he? But Joseph, still loving Mary, did not want her to be put to death for her sin, and thus he was going to tell her to go away, to leave town.

As Joseph thought about what he was going to do an angel of the Lord appeared and said to him and said, **“... ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.’”** Matthew 1:20-21. While He was in the womb of Mary God spoke to Joseph through this angel naming his son and identifying His mission.

2. Not only that but when He spoke His words were sharp. They said of Jesus, “**No man ever spoke like this man!**” (John 7:46). Why? Because He did not speak according to what the religious leaders of the past had said and taught. Other teachers would say, “**You have heard that it was said . . .**” but Jesus spoke with authority. He taught the truths of God that pierced their hearts like a sword.

It is as Hebrews 4:12-13 says, “**For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**”

3. Now what does it mean when it says that “**In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, And made Me a polished shaft; In His quiver He has hidden Me.**” It could be speaking of His early life, before He began His ministry at the age of 30. God protected Him, hide Him in a sense until it was time for Him to step forward and complete the work He was sent to do. Jesus grew during that time, “**a polished shaft**” you might say! I think that is what is being spoken of here.

VERSES 3-4

1. As you read this you may come to the conclusion that this is speaking of the nation of Israel, but look at the context, look who has been talking and you will see that it doesn't fit. I believe that it is a reference to the Messiah, to Jesus. Then why is He called "**Israel**"? Because He was Jewish, he came from Israel. Not only that but He completely fulfilled what that name means, "governed by God." So I believe we are still speaking of the Messiah, of Jesus!

And here is one more point as Lindsey tells us, "On the surface, the statement 'You are my servant, Israel,' explicitly identifies Yahweh's Servant as the nation Israel. But if that were the case, an apparent contradiction would arise in verses 5-6, in which the Servant's task is to bring Israel back to Yahweh and to the land . . . the view that 'Israel' is a title of the individual messianic Servant harmonizes most satisfactorily with the passage and context."

2. Now is there other proof that Israel is speaking of the Messiah and not specifically the Jewish people? I believe there is. We read in Hosea 11:1, "**When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son.**"

Now that is obviously speaking of Israel when they were freed from their bondage in Egypt and we just might leave it at that if it wasn't for what Matthew said in Matthew 2:13-15, where we are told, "**Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, 'Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.'** **When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt I called My Son.'**"

Matthew is telling us that what Hosea was also speaking of was Jesus. And thus, this section here, as it speaks of Israel, must be speaking of the Messiah; it must be speaking of Jesus and not the nation of Israel. And as we read on we will see that as He will deliver the Jewish people, something the Jews could not do themselves.

3. Now as you look at verse 4 it seems like the Messiah was discouraged, down, thought His work was in vain. How can that be? The reason is simple. When we think of Jesus we tend to focus on His deity, which of course is very important.

But He was also human, and we tend to forget that Jesus hungered, He was thirsty, He got tired, He felt pain, and it seems from what is said here in Isaiah that He was discouraged by the reaction of the people. They were not interested in a relationship with God but of seeing the miracles, getting fed, and-so-on. Yes Jesus was fully God, but He was also fully human, and we are going to see that His perspective of things was correct, even though He may have been discouraged at times.

4. Then how did Jesus do it? How did He go forward when He was discouraged? Simply, **“Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD, And my work with my God.”** Now you may have noticed that the King James does not capitalize the **“my”** in these verses and the reason for that is they did not believe it could be Jesus who was speaking. But as we have seen, it is and thus, it should be capitalized!

And the reason Jesus could do the work that the Father sent Him to do is that Jesus committed it all to the Father, not focusing on the outward circumstances. His desire was to do the Fathers will and give the rest into the Fathers Hands. He ministered in difficult and discouraging circumstances; He never gave into discouragement, but always put His trust in the LORD.

What a lesson for us. That we don't let things move us from the course that God has for us. It is as Paul said to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:24, **“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”**

May we have that same attitude as we serve the Lord and as we do we will not be moved from the work that God has for us, no matter how difficult, how discouraging it may be. Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 15:58, **“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”** May we not forget that!

VERSES 5-7

1. What was the Messiah to do? He was **“To bring Jacob back to Him, So that Israel is gathered to Him.”** In other words, the Jewish people had developed a relationship with God that was superficial and based upon the Law. Jesus came to bring them back into a relationship with God and that was going to be done through His shed blood.

And yes, the Jews have rejected the Messiah as a nation at this time but one day they will come to that saving faith or as Paul said, “**And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.’**” Romans 11:26-27.

2. I want you to also notice that the Messiah is not just for the Jews but He has come for Gentiles. Both Jews and Gentiles needed both light and salvation and that is what Jesus has brought to them and to us. And I love what we are told here, “**That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.**” That means every person in every part of this world has the opportunity to come to the Savior, to come to Jesus! He did not come for just a select few!

VERSES 8-12

1. As you read this it seems to be pointing to the Kingdom Age. You see, Jesus is the New Covenant and that Covenant was established in the shedding of His blood. Man’s sins were paid in full and one day these bodies will be changed, they will be transformed and that sin nature that dwells in our flesh will be gone. Thus, not only will He restore man from the effects of sin but this world also will be restored as He sets up His kingdom.

2. Now this “**desolate heritages**” speak of our spiritual heritages that we were born into. We were born in sin, in fact conceived in sin and there was no way out on our own. But as the Gospel message shined upon our hearts we were reborn into the family of God and our heritage that came from Adam was atoned for, we have a new heritage in Christ.

And once you have come out of that darkness you are a light to those that are in darkness and you are calling for them to come out of the darkness into the light of Christ. People should see a difference in our life as Christians and thus, don't hide the light! The Good News, the Gospel message will go forth to the ends of the earth!

3. In verse 12 we are told of this place called Sinim. Where in the world is this place called Sinim? Some say it refers to China, others to Egypt but we can't be sure. Maybe it is none of those places. You see, in the Hebrew the "im" ending speaks of plurality. So let's look at it like this. People from around the world will step forth from the land of *SINS* into the glorious light of God! It does seem to fit and it does make sense!

Grogan sees it like this as he wrote, "It is most likely that Isaiah was being consciously obscure. Even unmapped places are known to God, and even from them he will gather his pilgrims." Either way the Gospel message reaches out to all and it is up to them to receive it or reject it but there are consequences to both!

VERSES 13-14

1. God is calling for His people to shout with joy, to sing to the Lord because He has comforted His people. And how do they respond? "**... The LORD has forsaken me, And my LORD has forgotten me.**"

How could they say that? Because they were still in captivity and as they looked at the situation it was overwhelming to them. God was trying to comfort them and they had the words of the prophets that the captivity would be 70 years, but God's Word did not comfort them because they did not believe it!

That is a powerful lesson for us. You see, what God has spoken to us, the promises that He has made to us we need to hold onto and believe or we will feel like the Lord has forsaken and forgotten us!

Many Jews also felt this way during the Holocaust, that God has forsaken them and forgotten them, but He didn't and He won't. In fact, as we read on in Isaiah chapter 49 and on into Isaiah chapter 50 we will see that God really does care about His people the Jews. Thus, they should be filled with joy and so should we! God wants His people, the Jews, to understand that He will **NEVER** forget them or forsake them and He wants us to also understand that!

VERSES 15-18

1. For the most part, the love of a mother for her child is deep, it is rich, she would never forget about this joy in her life. But there is always the exception and God wanted His people to understand that even as good as a mothers love for her child is, she may forget him or forsake him, but God will **NEVER** do that with His people. That is an important lesson for us to learn no matter what we are going through in life. God never forgets or forsakes His children.

How can we be so sure? First of all we have His Word that we must trust in. Secondly, He has inscribed us on the palms of His hands! What does that mean? It means that if you want to see how much God loves you look at the nail prints in His hands that held Him to the cross of Calvary to pay in full the penalty for our sins. We did not deserve it, never have and never will and yet that is how much He loves us and loves the Jewish people!

2. When the Lord speaks of the “**walls are continually before Me**” I believe He is speaking about the walls of protection, like the city of Jerusalem and the walls that surrounded her! Not only that, but the Lord will deliver His people from those who would try to destroy them.

This promise was partially fulfilled in the return of the exiles from Babylon as well as the regathering of Israel in these last days but it will be ultimately fulfilled in the Kingdom Age when the Lord gathers the Jews from all over the earth and brings them into the land of Israel!

VERSES 19-26

1. Even though only a small handful of Jews returned from their captivity in Babylon, just under 50,000 out of the 2-3 million that went into captivity, they will multiply and prosper so much that the land will not be able to hold them. And we are seeing that even today in Israel. A nation only in the land for 65 years, has grown and grown, establishing new settlements in Israel, and the land is not able to hold them. And ultimately this is speaking of those who are descendants of Abraham by faith, including us, that we will fill the earth and we see that ultimately fulfilled in the Kingdom Age.

And when they look and see all that God has done for them it is going to be hard for them to believe how much they have been blessed. The same is true with all of us. Think of all the blessings God has bestowed upon us in our life. It is as Paul said in Ephesians 3:20, “**Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.**” Don’t limit what God wants to do for He desires to bless us abundantly, even more than we could ask or think! And don’t forget to praise Him for all He is doing in your life!

2. Now as you get to verse 23 of this chapter it seems that what is being spoken of is not right, not at all, even for the enemies of the Jews. **“They shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, And lick up the dust of your feet.”** What is that about?

Bultema wrote, “*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.”

And Clarke wrote, “These expressions therefore of the prophet are only general poetical images, taken from the manners of the country, to denote great respect and reverence: and such splendid poetical images, which frequently occur in the prophetic writings, were intended only as general amplifications of the subject, not as predictions to be understood and fulfilled precisely according to the letter.”

That seems to make more sense to me, more of a recognition of who the Jews are, the people of God!

3. Now we do know that as the day of the Lord’s return gets closer there is going to be a rise of anti-Semitism and we are seeing that today around the world. We are told from a New York Times report from November 8 of 2013,

BRUSSELS - Fear of rising anti-Semitism in Europe has prompted nearly a third of European Jews to consider emigration because they do not feel safe in their home country, according to a detailed survey of Jewish perceptions released Friday by a European Union agency that monitors discrimination and other violations of basic rights.

Sixty-six percent of respondents said they considered anti-Semitism to be a major problem in their countries, while 76 percent said the situation had become more acute over the past five years.

- http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/09/world/europe/jews-in-europe-report-a-surge-in-anti-semitism.html?_r=0

And that is only going to get worse around the world to the point that during the Tribulation Period the world will come against the Jewish people. But God is saying one day, in the Kingdom Age; the Jews will be loved and honored as God's people. But before that comes to pass the world's hatred for the Jews will increase and sadly enough, we even see that hatred within many so-called Christian churches today.

4. Now verse 26 also seems troublesome in that it says, **"I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh, And they shall be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine."**

What is that about?

"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." (Motyer)

How true that is, sin destroys lives, it consumes them but for those who wait upon the Lord, looking to Him, you will not be disappointed, you will not be ashamed, He is coming again! And when He does the wicked will be punished and the righteous, only righteous through His shed blood, will enter into the Kingdom Age!