

“LISTEN TO ME, MY PEOPLE”

Isaiah 49-51

Introduction

- 1) The nation of Israel/Judah was a witness to the fact that there is one true God
- 2) But, due to idolatry and other sins, the nation was punished and sent into foreign captivity
- 3) From captivity, a remnant was brought back to be established in the land again
- 4) From this remnant would come the Messiah, the Redeemer and Savior of men
- 5) The servant nation failed, but from the servant remnant God would bring forth the Servant Messiah to save Israel and bring all nations to Zion, God’s redeemed people

I) God’s Servant Will Bring Salvation to All People (49:1-13)

- A) Second of the four “Servant Songs” (vv. 1-6)
- B) The Servant Messiah speaks – all the Gentile peoples are to listen (v. 1a)
 - 1) Called by Lord from the womb – commissioned from the start (v. 1b)
 - 2) Made mouth to be a sharp sword (cf. Rev. 1:16; 19:15), and a polished arrow hidden in God’s quiver (v. 2)
 - 3) “Israel” (v. 3) refers to Messiah who came from Israel and glorified God (cf. Jn. 13:31)
 - 4) Labor appeared to be in vain (v. 4) – rejected by His own (cf. Jn. 1:10-11); but God rewards
 - 5) Commissioned by Lord to bring Jacob [Jews] back and to be a light to the Gentiles to be God’s salvation to the ends of the earth (vv. 3-6; cf. Acts 13:47)
- C) The Servant/Redeemer of Israel, who is chosen by God and despised and abhorred, will be worshiped by kings and princes (v. 7)
 - 1) There will be an acceptable time, a day of salvation, when God’s Servant/Messiah will be given as a covenant to the people and will provide freedom for those in prison and darkness (vv. 8-9)
 - 2) Joy and blessings will be abundant for those set free (vv. 10-13)
 - 3) This is fulfilled in the new covenant of the Messiah – the day of salvation (cf. 2 Cor. 6:1-2)

II) God will Not Forget His People (49:14-26)

- A) God’s people [Zion] felt forgotten in Babylonian captivity (v. 14)
 - 1) God cannot forget them, no more than a mother can forget her nursing child (v. 15)
 - 2) They are inscribed on the palm of His hand (v. 16)
 - 3) Those who had destroyed them shall go away (v. 17)
- B) God would clothe them as a bride, and their numbers shall fill the land again (vv. 18-19)
 - 1) Zion will wonder where all the others came from – Gentiles will come and join in the joy and salvation of Zion (vv. 20-23)
 - 2) The restoration of the physical remnant of Israel set stage for the establishment of spiritual Zion filled with Jews and Gentiles (cf. Heb. 12:22-24 church/messianic kingdom)
- C) Captives wonder who the prey (Israel) can be taken from the mighty (Babylon) (v. 24)
 - 1) God will do it, and all will know that the Lord is their Savior and Redeemer (vv. 25-26)

III) God’s Servant is the Hope for Restoration (50:1-11)

- A) Israel’s iniquities and transgressions are to blame for their condition of captivity (v. 1)
 - 1) God had not arbitrarily divorced them or sold them into slavery
 - 2) No one answered when God called them to come back [repent]; they rejected God (v. 2a)
 - a) God has the power to save just as He has the power to punish (vv. 2b-3)

- 3) Compare Jeremiah 3:6-25 – the consequence of the sins of Israel and Judah and God’s call for them to return to Him for forgiveness and restoration
- B) Third of the four “Servant Songs” (vv. 4-9)
 - 1) Servant Messiah readily speaks and hears
 - 2) He willingly endures suffering – struck, beard plucked, spit upon (cf. Matt.26:67)
 - 3) He trusts in God’s help to be victorious (cf. Heb. 5:7-9)
- C) Need to fear the Lord and obey the voice of His Servant/Messiah – those in darkness need to trust in the name of the Lord (v. 10)
 - 1) Rebellion and sin kindles the fires of torment and sorrow (v. 11)

IV) The Lord’s Comfort for Zion (51:1-23)

- A) God to Zion [righteous remnant]: *“Listen to Me!”*
 - 1) Those who follow after righteousness and seek the Lord should look to Abraham and Sarah from which they came – called and blessed (vv. 1-2)
 - a) God will comfort Zion and they will have joy and gladness (v. 3)
 - 2) God’s law and justice will be a “light of the peoples” [Gentiles] (v. 4)
 - a) His righteousness and salvation will endure forever for all people (vv. 5-6)
 - 3) God’s faithful people should not fear the reproach and reviling of men (v. 7)
 - a) Evil men are only temporary while God’s righteousness is forever (v. 8)
- B) The faithful people of God appeal to the Lord to awaken in strength to defeat His enemies and save His people (vv. 9-11)
 - 1) Rahab/serpent – symbolism of God’s former defeat of Egypt (v. 9; cf. 30:7; 27:1)
 - 2) Reference to Red Sea crossing (v. 10)
- C) God answers to comfort His people (vv. 12-16)
 - 1) Do not fear man – God is strong to bless and save His people! (cf. Matt. 10:28)
 - 2) “Words in your mouth” [knowledge]; “covered with shadow of My hand” [safety] (v. 16)
 - a) Compare to God’s provisions for His Servant Messiah (49:2), and now for His people!
- D) God tells His people that His fury toward them is over (vv. 17-23)
 - 1) Jerusalem had drunk of God’s cup of fury and was thoroughly devastated (vv. 17-20)
 - 2) God will remove the cup of fury from them (“You shall no longer drink it”) and put it in the hand of their afflictors [Babylon] (vv. 21-23)

Conclusion

The comforting words of God about the end of His fury (captivity) and the return of His people to the land is the preparation for the time and work of the Servant/Messiah to bring God’s salvation. But, as will be seen next, only through willing suffering and death of the Servant will this grand mission for mankind be accomplished.