

## All Things Put Right

General Topic: God Delivers and Restores

Sunday, June 19th, 2022

Author: Rev. Spencer L. Braddix

### Lesson Text: Isaiah 49:18-23

*Background Scripture: Isaiah 49:18-26*

*Isaiah 49:1 Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.*

*19 For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.*

*20 The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.*

*21 Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?*

*22 Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.*

*23 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.*

### Lesson Objective(s):

This lesson will further reveal the comfort we can take in knowing the restorative plans God has for all of His children.

### Teaching Tools:

Word puzzles may be developed from the following site: [www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com). Also, [www.dtlk.com](http://www.dtlk.com) has several visual aids that may be beneficial, as well as [www.kidssundayschool.com](http://www.kidssundayschool.com) which provide other helps for teaching.

Bible Journaling may be an interesting way to involve older teens in self-expression of the lessons they are taught. Visit [www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps](http://www.lifeway.com/Articles/how-to-start-bible-journaling-in-six-easy-steps) to find ways to use this valuable tool to learn and reinforce Scripture.

### The Lesson:

For many years, the Southern Kingdom of Judah, led by their religious leaders, continued in sin, and became more unfaithful to the Lord. They followed the evil example of heathen nations and ruined the Temple that the Lord had made holy in Jerusalem. But because God loved them and had a plan for them, he sent prophets to correct them more than once, but the people made fun of them and refused to listen (Chronicles 36:14-16). Through Moses, God declared that if His people were disobedient, He would remove them from the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 28:15, 49-52).

That time would arrive, but God in His compassion for His people sent Isaiah with the prophecy in this week's lesson to let them know that they would be taken captive but after some time they would return to Jerusalem. The interesting thing about our lesson is that Isaiah prophesied about Israel's return even before Babylon, who would take the nation captive, became a world power. That being said, Isaiah prophesied that the nation of Israel would return and be prosperous.

## **Background**

Reading the prior lesson is necessary to fully grasp the beauty of what the Lord is expressing in this week's verses. The overall picture and context is ultimately about God's deliverance and grace as He liberates His people. These people were once the ancient kingdom of Judah, and they were both held in captivity and exiled from Jerusalem by the Babylonians. This was made possible after Nebuchadnezzar prevailed against the King Zedekiah and the Judeans. After King Zedekiah, the last wicked king was defeated, the Babylonians destroyed Solomon's Temple.

In our lesson, the Lord not only vows to liberate them, but He promises to restore what they have lost in terms of the Temple and community. Not only will God restore what they have lost, but He will give them more than they ever asked for. This restoration will also include enlisting new people into the family of God. Even Gentiles will come to know God and worship Him unashamedly.

## **A Promised Restoration (Isaiah 49:18-19)**

Zion (also known as Jerusalem) is personified as a woman, as the restored bride of God who is coping with her feelings of loss, desertion, and abandonment. Zion

recognizes that her position of captivity was the result of her own choices but still bemoans the pain of not being in the presence of the Lord any longer. We imagine that she is filled with regret, coping with the guilt of knowing that she broke God's heart with her unfaithfulness. Picture her crying every day while reflecting about her previous life with God. Her tears are dried, however, when she learns that the Lord has not left her permanently.

Through the Lord's grace and forgiveness, He promises to restore all that was taken from her and destroyed. Zion, in shock and glee, is comforted by not only the Lord's presence but the Lord's explicit declaration of commitment to His covenant in spite of what she has done historically by breaking her vows to Him.

In verse 18, the Lord says to Zion, to the broken-hearted exiles, look around, look up, open your eyes, and behold the process of your own restoration. When the text says, "As I live, saith the Lord," the Lord is in many ways renewing the vows, breathing fresh air into the ancient Abrahamic covenant and declares once again that Zion is His bride, in spite of what she has done, and she will be adorned with the children who are returning to her. John alludes to this text when he describes the New Jerusalem "as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:2).

In the New Testament, the church of Jesus Christ is the extension of the Lord's covenant with the kingdom of Judah. It is the finished picture of redemption promised many centuries ago. The separation rifted between God and man will be eliminated. The veil that estranged us from our Maker has been shredded to an unrenovable state. Thus, we can find joy in this Old Testament readings, knowing it is an example of the freedom when now enjoy through Christ.

## **A Populated Restoration (Isaiah 49:20-21)**

The next portion of the text describes the great increase of the true people of God. The image given is of a mother who had been robbed of her children and made a widow. She had seen the devastation of ruin that was spread all around her. She felt alone. Then all of sudden the mother sees herself completely surrounded with more children than she lost. She is home and blessed by the happy family that surrounds her. God's restoration would be beyond what she could hope for.

There will be so many people in Zion that the bereaved mother and bride will wonder where these people came from. How could they be her children if so many of her sons were lost in captivity? Zion will be astonished at the restoration happening in front of her eyes. This astonishment is also connected to imagery of the mothers of the Jewish people who were once incapable of conceiving children (Genesis 16:1, 30:1) and found themselves astonished at what the Lord did for them. Zion, like Sarah and Rachel, were at one point despondent about their condition until the Lord surprised them with a blessing, they considered unfathomable.

Isaiah invokes the mothers in Genesis to highlight what the Lord has done in the past in order to show what God is capable of doing in the present and future. The blessings of restoration and redemption will also overwhelm Zion. Jerusalem will return and be plentiful. This blessing will overwhelm Judea to the point where she will ask questions in her heart that reveal the embarrassing abundance of God's blessings. As already stated, she has lost children in captivity, but the growth in new children arriving during bereavement will compel her to ask how this restoration is possible.

As we read this passage as New Testament believers, we also see that even as much as God fulfilled the promise to the Israelites when they returned to the Promised Land from exile, He also brought another kind of fulfillment after Christ's resurrection. He again brought in a flood of believers to join the faithful by welcoming Gentiles into the family. Then again, we look forward to seeing the ultimate fulfillment of this promise in a fully populated heaven as every nation, tribe, and tongue

glorify God. The Church can also understand it has a part to play in bringing about this influx of people. God commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. In a way, Jesus' Great Commission is a similar command that when we go out into the world, we are to grow the number of faithful.

### **A Powerful Restoration (Isaiah 49:22-23)**

What Isaiah is saying here in the remaining verses is that God will do two things. First, God will enlist other peoples to help free the captives. Secondly, God will also invite and accept them into His care and concern. In other words, in the process of delivering the captives from their oppressors, that deliverance will function as a type of witnessing.

Non-Jewish people will see the glory of the Lord in the event of Zion's redemption. Historically, this shows that God has the power to not only use Cyrus and the Persians to free the people from captivity in Babylon, but also that God has the power to convince the world that He can do the same for them. The Gentiles across the world will be able to recognize God's grace and compassion and will ultimately want to serve Him, too.

### **Final Thoughts**

This lesson sheds light on God's ability to restore what was lost. He renews His vows with the chosen people, exhibits unfathomable grace and forgiveness and then promises to restore them to the point that will run out of room. This oncoming event will be so glorious that Gentiles will eventually make Yahweh their God and worship Him in spirit and in truth. This lesson highlights the notion that God will never abandon you, and even when it seems like it, take heart and know that God is faithful and committed. God will never leave you nor forsake you.

Today, there are many people who need to be restored to God because of sin. Some may even feel downtrodden and overused. Many cry out who can restore us? The

Good News is that Jesus will lift us up when we feel neglected, abandoned, and bereaved. God restored Israel; He will also restore us. He will give us freedom when we're enslaved by our own choices and disobedience. Jesus is waiting to restore us so that we can have a relationship with God. We must repent, pray, and wait on the restoration of the Lord! We must depend on God's promises to bring the Gentiles and His people together into one people of God through Jesus Christ, knowing that one day he will put all things right.

***Be Salt! Be Light! Be Blessed!***