

The Servant of the Lord—Isaiah 49:1–26

Open It

1. *What do people do to remember loved ones who are far away?
2. When have your efforts to be kind to another person been misunderstood?

Isaiah 49:1–26 (ESV)

¹Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.

²He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.

³And he said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”

⁴But I said, “I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God.”

⁵And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him— for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength—

⁶he says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

⁷Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

⁸Thus says the LORD: “In a time of favor I have answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages,

⁹saying to the prisoners, ‘Come out,’ to those who are in darkness, ‘Appear.’ They shall feed along the ways; on all bare heights shall be their pasture;

¹⁰they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them, for he who has pity on them will lead them, and by springs of water will guide them.

¹¹And I will make all my mountains a road, and my highways shall be raised up.

¹²Behold, these shall come from afar, and behold, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene.”

¹³Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

¹⁴But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.”

¹⁵“Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.

¹⁶Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

¹⁷Your builders make haste; your destroyers and those who laid you waste go out from you.

¹⁸Lift up your eyes around and see; they all gather, they come to you. As I live, declares the LORD, you shall put them all on as an ornament; you shall bind them on as a bride does.

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.

²⁰The children of your bereavement will yet say in your ears: ‘The place is too narrow for me; make room for me to dwell in.’

²¹Then 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?’ ”

²²Thus 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.

²³Kings 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.”

²⁴Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?

²⁵For 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.

²⁶I 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.”

Explore It

3. When did God place His call on His Servant, the Messiah? (49:1)
4. To what implement of hunting or war was Messiah compared? (49:2)
5. What did God promise to show through His Servant? (49:3)
6. Although His work might have seemed to be in vain, what would vindicate Messiah? (49:4)
7. What was God’s greater purpose in sending Messiah, besides bringing Israel back to Himself? (49:5–6)
8. How would Messiah be regarded initially by the people of Israel? (49:7)
9. How did God intend to use the Messiah, in His own time? (49:8–9)
10. How does Isaiah’s prophecy describe the calling out of the people of God? (49:9–12)
11. Compared to the response God expected, how did the people of God express their situation? (49:13–14)
12. With what images did God illustrate the depth of His love? (49:15–16)
13. What was God’s promise to the land with regard to the people exiled from it? (49:17–18)
14. What happy circumstance would surprise the people who saw the desolation of God’s judgment? (49:19–21)

15. How did God promise that the Gentiles, who once oppressed Israel, would treat them in the future? (49:22)
16. What would the people of God know when the powerful of other nations served them? (49:23)
17. What seemed impossible to Israel and Judah when Isaiah was prophesying? (49:24)
18. What would be understood as a result of God's dealings with Israel's oppressors? (49:25–26)

Get It

19. What are some evidences from this prophetic passage that God understands how we feel in the middle of our troubles?
20. In what way is this passage a message of restoration?

Apply It

21. In what particular area of insecurity can you remind yourself of God's great love for you?