

## Handout: Isaiah Lesson 18

One of the key words in the Book of Consolation is the Hebrew word *shema*/listen (hear/harken). It is used at least thirty times in the first two parts of Isaiah and is found another thirty times in this third part of the book. Throughout the Book of Isaiah, God has continually called the people to “listen” but, as you will recall when Isaiah was called to his ministry by Yahweh, he was told to command the people to listen but he was also warned that the people would not listen and because they would not listen they would not understand (Is 6:9-10).

In Chapter 48:1-22 Isaiah makes the contrast between Israel’s stubbornness versus God’s even more stubborn determination to bless His people with His grace. Isaiah 48:1-5 addresses three aspects of the covenant people’s relationship with God:

1. Isaiah reminds them of their divine election.
2. He gives an account of their sins.
3. He proclaims their accountability to the one true God.

In the promise of God’s future acts on behalf of His people, in 48:6b-22 Isaiah stressed three aspects of God’s grace:

1. God’s continued patience with a rebellious people (verses 6b-11).
2. God’s continued revelation of His divine plan (verses 12-16).
3. God’s continued promise of redemption (verses 17-22).

Chapter 49 begins the second part of the “Book of Consolation” (chapters 40-66) that is the third part division of the Book of Isaiah (see the book summary outline in handout 1 of Isaiah Lesson 1). The three parts of the Book of Consolation:

- The first part in chapters 40-48 dealt for the most part with the promises of liberation from the future Babylonian exile.
- The second part in chapters 49-55 will deal with the restoration of Zion—the faithful covenant people of God.
- The third part in chapters 56-66 will deal with prophecies concerning the covenant people after the return from exile and a promise of salvation for the other nations of the earth.

Isaiah 49:1-6 is the second “Song of the Servant”:

1. The first “Song of the Servant” is in Isaiah 42:1-4 (5-9).
2. The second “Song of the Servant” is in Isaiah 49:1-6.
3. The third “Song of the Servant” is in Isaiah 50:4-9 (10-11).
4. The fourth “Song of the Servant” is in Isaiah 52:13-53:12.

All the “Servant Songs” are messianic prophecies that are fulfilled in the mission of Jesus the Messiah. See handout 4 from Isaiah Lesson 1.

In the Second Song of the Servant in Isaiah 49:1-6, unlike the first Servant’s Song in 42:1-4, it is not God who is announcing His Servant but the Servant is speaking about himself and his divine mission. He demands that all peoples listen to him, and then the servant describes himself and his future mission in 49:1-2, 5: → turn page over

1. He will be chosen and named before he is born (49:1).
2. He will be given authority to speak the truth “like a sharp sword” (49:2a).
3. He will be hidden from those who might want to harm him (49:2b).
4. He will have a special purpose like a “polished arrow” that is free of imperfections and can fly straight and true toward its objective (49:2c).
5. He will be concealed in God’s “quiver” that holds other men and woman of the human family until it is time for him to fulfill his destiny (49:2c).
6. It is his mission to restore Israel to her covenant relationship with Yahweh (49:5a).
7. He will be honored by Yahweh (49:5b).

In verse 6 God adds additional information about the Servant’s mission:

1. He will become discouraged with the failure of some to listen to His words.
2. His mission is not just for Israel but to redeem all peoples of all nations.

The description of the Servant in 49:1-2 and in 4-6 is perfectly fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah:

1. Jesus was chosen and named before he was born (Lk 1:26-36).
2. He was given authority to speak the truth of the Word of God (Jn 14:10).
3. He was hidden from His birth until He began His ministry at age thirty (Lk 1:39-40; 2:52; 3:23).
4. He had a special mission, and He was free of the imperfection of sin (Lk 1:32-35; 1 Jn 3:5).
5. He was concealed among the human family until it was time for His baptism by the Holy Spirit when God’s voice from Heaven identified Him (Mt 2:13-15, 19-23; 3:13-17).
6. He was frustrated at times in His mission by the Pharisees, scribes, and chief religious leaders as well as the covenant people who refused to accept His signs of authority that He was the promised Messiah (Mk 6:6; Mt 27:46; Lk 22:39-46; Heb 5:7-10).
7. His mission was to redeem the faithful remnant of “the lost sheep” of Israel (Mt 10:6; 15:24), and also to send the redeemed of the “new Israel” out to carry the Gospel message of salvation “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).
8. The description of the servant being “the one who is despised, detested by the nations, the slave of despots” (also see parallel in Is 53:3) is fulfilled in Jesus’ rejection by His own people, His condemnation by the Romans, and His Passion which resulted (after His Resurrection) in the conversion of Gentiles, including kings and nations across the face of the earth (Mt 26:3-4; 27:20-31, 39-44, 54; 28:1-8, 16-20; Acts 1:3-11).

Isaiah 49:8-26 is the continued description of Israel’s joyful return to the Promised Land. In this passage Isaiah focuses on three aspects of the return:

1. God’s guidance of His servant (Is 49:8-13)
2. Zion’s doubt and God’s response (Is 49:14-21)
3. God’s vindication (Is 49:22-26)