



Isaiah: Messiah's First & Second Coming

10. Isaiah Chapters 46-48: The Suffering Servant



The Servant Israel and the Suffering Servant are two distinct but clearly linked "Servants" in the book of Isaiah. Though Israel is called the "Servant" of the Lord, Israel is a servant in need of redemption, Israel is called the "stubborn-hearted" and "far from righteousness". Again and again we see the "fallen" servant Israel, who is in need of redemption and salvation. The distinction of these two servants is important, because the redemption of one "Servant" depends on the work of the "Second Servant".

This second Servant is the Redeemer, who suffers for the sins of the nation, who calls the disobedient nation to salvation. Through this disobedient nation, salvation is then offered to the whole world, the nations, or also called the Gentiles.

Isaiah 46: Idols of Babylon versus the Lord

Isaiah looks forward to the day when Babylon will fall and contrasts the God of Israel with the idols of Babylon. Bel and Nebo are the idols (gods) of Babylon, they are taken away in captivity by Cyrus and the Persians. God in Isaiah 46 tells Jacob (Israel) to "Listen" (vs.3), and know their idolatry is meaningless. Nothing compares to their relationship with the one true God (vs.5).

The God of Jacob is like none other

Isaiah 46

1 Bel bows down, Nebo stoops; Their idols were on the beasts and on the cattle. Your carriages were heavily loaded, A burden to the weary beast.

2 They stoop, they bow down together; They could not deliver the burden, But have themselves gone into captivity.

3 "Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, And all the remnant of the house of Israel, Who have been upheld by Me from birth, Who have been carried from the womb:

4 Even to your old age, I am He, And even to gray hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear; Even I will carry, and will deliver you.

5 "To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal And compare Me, that we should be alike?

6 They lavish gold out of the bag, And weigh silver on the scales; They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god; They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.

7 They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it And set it in its place, and it stands; From its place it shall not move. Though one cries out to it, yet it cannot answer Nor save him out of his trouble.

8 "Remember this, and show yourselves men; Recall to mind, O you transgressors. **Isaiah 46:1-8**

The Prophetic Council of God

God demonstrates His unique person, "there is no other", "none like Me" (vs.9). In verse 10, God declares His mastery over time, by "declaring the end from the beginning". What is the evidence of the Bible and that the God of the Bible is God? Bible Prophecy is God's answer, he declares the "End" from the



"Beginning". When Isaiah refers to a day when "all the nations" (United Nations) would gather against Israel, Isaiah was not just guessing, but God through Isaiah was demonstrating His unique character.

9 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me.

10 Declaring the end from the beginning. And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.'

11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.

12 "Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, Who are far from righteousness:

13 I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, For Israel My glory. **Isaiah 46:9-13**

Bel bow down: This is another name for Marduk the chief Babylonian god. The world is referred to Babylon. So this does not only apply to the period of 700 B.C., but looks forward over the ages as the people of God would be opposed to the ways of Babylon (Revelation 17-18).

Nebo: Was the god of learning and literature. This also is looking forward through the centuries and learning and writings of humanity would in many ways become a idol to

fallen humanity.

Listen to Me: God emphatically tells us (Israel) to listen.

To whom will you liken Me: How can you compare the one true God to worthless and lifeless idols?

Declaring the end: God gives the evidence of who He is by His ability to declare the "End" at the "Beginning".

far from righteousness: Jacob (Israel) is not the righteous servant, they are "far from" it. Therefore they need salvation.

My salvation: Salvation comes through the servant, who would redeem Israel and the world of their sin.

Chapter 47 The coming destruction of Babylon

Isaiah looks forward 150 years in the future, when the nation who would conquer Judah would themselves be conquered. Babylon pride and glory has warped her. Babylon was an instrument of judgment against Judah, they used their position to abuse Judah. Now God will abuse them in judgment.

Though this refers to the Babylon in the days of Isaiah (Isaiah 39), there is a much wider application then the first meaning. Babylon represents man's fallen nature and opposition to God. The tower of Babel, Genesis 11, was built in Babylon when humanity was united as "one" people. In the last days, as in the first days following the flood, the earth will be "one" people united against "God's people" Israel. The glory and pride of human achievement vaunts itself against the God of the Bible.

Revelation chapters 17 and 18 mirror the comments of Isaiah 47, looking forward to the fall of Babylonian arrogance in a moment. Just as Cyrus would conquer the city of Babylon as the "anointed" of God (Isaiah 45:1-2), so would the Messiah finish Babylon in a moment at the "Second Coming".

1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication." 3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. 5 And on her



forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

14 "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful." 17 "For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. 18 "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." **Revelation 17:1-5, 14, 17, 18**

Isaiah 47

1 "Come down and sit in the dust, O

virgin daughter of Babylon; Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called Tender and delicate.

2 Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, Take off the skirt, Uncover the thigh, Pass through the rivers.

3 Your nakedness shall be uncovered, Yes, your shame will be seen; I will take vengeance, And I will not arbitrate with a man."

4 As for our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is His name, The Holy One of Israel.

5 "Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; For you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms.

6 I was angry with My people; I have profaned My inheritance, And given them into your hand. You showed them no mercy; On the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily.

7 And you said, 'I shall be a lady forever,' So that you did not take these things to heart, Nor remember the latter end of them.

8 "Therefore hear this now, you who are given to pleasures, Who dwell securely, Who say in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, Nor shall I know the loss of children';

9 But these two things shall come to you In a moment, in one day: The loss of children, and widowhood. They shall come upon you in their fullness Because of the multitude of your sorceries, For the great abundance of your enchantments.

10 "For you have trusted in your wickedness; You have said, 'No one sees me'; Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you; And you have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one else besides me.'

11 Therefore evil shall come upon you; You shall not know from where it arises. And trouble shall fall upon you; You will not be able to put it off. And desolation shall come upon you suddenly, Which you shall not know.

12 "Stand now with your enchantments And the multitude of your sorceries, In which you have labored from your youth-Perhaps you will be able to profit, Perhaps you will prevail.

13 You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels; Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, And the monthly prognosticators Stand up and save you From what shall come upon you.

14 Behold, they shall be as stubble, The fire shall burn them; They shall not deliver themselves From the power of the flame; It shall not be a coal to be warmed by, Nor a fire to sit before!

15 Thus shall they be to you With whom you have labored, Your merchants from your youth; They shall wander each one to his quarter. No one shall save you. **Isaiah 47:1-13**

Virgin daughter: Babylon portrayed itself as an innocent virgin. God will expose her to judgment, she will be judged. Verses 1 to 3 picture the transformation of the dainty virgin into a slave girl, crossing the river and working with the millstone. Revelation 18, pictures the final judgment of the capital city of Beast, Babylon judged by a millstone being thrown into the river. Babylon is pictured at the start (Genesis 18) and at the end (Revelation 17-19).

21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. Revelation 18:21

Our Redeemer: Isaiah contrasts the Israel's redeemer with the Babylon. Through the centuries Isaiah calls out to Israel to turn to their redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the rejected suffering servant

of Isaiah 50, 53.

My People: Israel was subjected to Babylon for their sins, this was prior to the “first coming” and would be the case in the “second coming”. Israel before they were established as a nation in 1948, were in the nations because they rejected the Messiah at His first coming (Daniel 9:26).

Isaiah Chapter 48: Hear this Jacob

Israel is urged to turn to the God of Israel, because they are out of the way. Even though Israel makes mention of the God of Israel, they do it, “not in truth or in righteousness”. Israel is in unrighteousness, they are turned from the way, and they need redemption.

Isaiah 48

1 "Hear this, O house of Jacob, Who are called by the name of Israel, And have come forth from the wellsprings of Judah; Who swear by the name of the Lord, And make mention of the God of Israel, But not in truth or in righteousness;

2 For they call themselves after the holy city, And lean on the God of Israel; The Lord of hosts is His name:

Isaiah 48:1-2

Before it came to pass

Through the words of Bible prophecy, God provides the evidence to a disobedient nation. The context of the events is Israel's redemption from the Chaldeans (Babylon). The Redeemer is the Lord Himself, who will fight against Babylon. Again, the events in Isaiah's day era (700-539 B.C.), when Cyrus defeats Babylon are merely a foreshadowing of the coming defeat of the “World”, the united nations who are opposed to God's redemption.

3 "I have declared the former things from the beginning; They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it. Suddenly I did them, and they came to pass.

4 Because I knew that you were obstinate, And your neck was an iron sinew, And your brow bronze,

5 Even from the beginning I have declared it to you; Before it came to pass I proclaimed it to you, Lest you should say, 'My idol has done them, And my carved image and my molded image Have commanded them.'

6 "You have heard; See all this. And will you not declare it? I have made you hear new things from this time, Even hidden things, and you did not know them.

7 They are created now and not from the beginning; And before this day you have not heard them, Lest you should say, 'Of course I knew them.' **Isaiah 48:3-7**

Israel's sin

Far from being a righteous “Servant” Israel was a disobedient and transgressor from the womb, who needed redemption. This is an important point, since some commentators try to turn Jacob into the “Righteous” servant of Isaiah 50:10, 52:13 and 53:11. Israel is the servant who needs instruction, Israel is the servant who needs redemption. The “Suffering Servant” comes to redeem and instruct Israel and the world.

8 Surely you did not hear, Surely you did not know; Surely from long ago your ear was not opened. For I knew that you would deal very treacherously, And were called a transgressor from the womb.

9 "For My name's sake I will defer My anger, And for My praise I will restrain it from you, So that I do not cut you off.

10 Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

11 For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do it; For how should My name be profaned? And I will not give My glory to another.

12 "Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last.

13 Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, And My right hand has stretched out the heavens; When I call to them, They stand up together.

14 "All of you, assemble yourselves, and hear! Who among them has declared these things? The Lord loves him; He shall do His pleasure on Babylon, And His arm shall be against the Chaldeans.

15 I, even I, have spoken; Yes, I have called him, I have brought him, and his way will prosper.

16 "Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord God and His Spirit Have sent Me."

The Redeemer

The "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah is the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel. He has provided Israel the way they "should go" (vs.17). Israel has always been in a state of rebellion and never achieved the peace God intended for them. God longs to provide them the peace of obedience (vs. 18). Jesus echos this longing before He is killed by the Romans at His "first coming".

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! Matthew 23:37

17 Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go.

18 Oh, that you had heeded My commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

19 Your descendants also would have been like the sand, And the offspring of your body like the grains of sand; His name would not have been cut off Nor destroyed from before Me."

20 Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! With a voice of singing, Declare, proclaim this, Utter it to the end of the earth; Say, "The Lord has redeemed His servant Jacob!"

21 And they did not thirst When He led them through the deserts; He caused the waters to flow from the rock for them; He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out.

22 "There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked." **Isaiah 48:8-22**

