

Isaiah Chapters 49-50 Summary - John Karmelich

Title: Why is God bothering with His "Redeem our world" plan?

I admit, I have way too much time on my hand, if I can sit here to contemplate why God is bothering in His plans for mankind? The short version of these chapters is Isaiah explains why God will do what we accept as Christians, about His redemption plans for Israel as an entity, and believers around the world! What I pondered is why did God bother in the first place? Since He's perfect, what's in it for Him? Yes, the Bible explains His plans for mankind here in these chapters, including details of how Jesus suffered on the cross. I get that God wants us to understand why He wants to do this. These chapters give us a few insights into His plans for humanity. Before I get into all that, I pondered why He bothers? Yes, I get God decided to make the redeemed part of His eternal plan. I get that He wants to reveal to us what those plans are in advance to verify that He's God and we must accept that! Bottom line, God chose all those who accept His free gift of salvation to be eternally blessed! We must accept that and deal with it the best we can!

I admit there are a few things in Chapter 49 that can be confusing. It reads like God is calling Israel to redeem Israel which is a contradiction! What makes more sense, is to grasp that Jesus is Jewish and it's part of His plan to redeem Israel as an entity, as part of that eternal plan! As I state way to often, Jesus will rule the world from Israel, so that nation must exist whenever that happens. The chapter uses what most of us can relate to as illustration: A mom can't unlove her children, despite how much we hurt our moms (disappoint them with our decisions). In effect, God's saying the same thing: Who He chooses to love He can never unlove, because we are who God chose to love. We can disappoint Him by sinning, which simply means at that moment we're choosing to not live as He desires but at the same time, He'll never unlove what He chose to love. Again, our behavior matters because we were saved to use our life as a witness for Him, but we can't be unloved by He who loved us (evidence of that's a commitment on our behalf to live as He desires!) Bottom line, these chapters explain God's "game plan" for Israel as an entity as well as Christian believers around the world and we must accept that this is the "plan"!

OK then, time for details: The last chapter focused on the question of what does it require to be saved? Chapter 49 changes topics to ask the question "Why is God bothering in the first place?" It discusses a fairly detailed description of why the cross is necessary not only for Israel's sake but for the world! The chapter opens with Isaiah saying, listen up everyone, here's the game plan for salvation! From Verses 2 through 7 is a literal description of Jesus in His "First Coming" role. Verse 3 refers to Jesus as Isreal. I should point out Verse 5 says this "Israel's" (reference to Jesus) job is to call the Israelites back to God. Realize "Israel" has several meanings. One's "struggle with God" and it can also mean "Prince of God" as in He who is chosen by God. Bottom line, "Israel as a nation can't lead itself to salvation, so it must be referring to THE Messiah who will do that!"

The other thing to grasp from this text is that Isaiah reminds the Israelites, what God says will come to pass, did. In other words, we can count on the word of God coming true! Remember this was written a good 700 years before Jesus. I have always argued that every aspect of Jesus First and Second Coming is discussed in the Old Testament with the New to support what actually happened! That leads to Verse 6 which is God lecturing Isaiah and us to declare this as truth so people can deal with it! Then we get a big reminder that God isn't doing this because the Israelites are "good people". They (and us) are saved only because it is His plan to trust in His complete payment for our sins, not our own goodness!

By Verse 8 Isaiah is in effect shouting for joy. The key point is there will be a happy ending for Israel as a nation again due to God's unconditional promises to them. That leads back to my lesson title, why is God bothering with all this? Part of it is to show the people He chose to love (believers) that He can be counted on to keep His Word! As far as the nation of Israel, despite the fact the Babylonian Empire destroyed that nation and took them captive, and despite the fact they got scattered around the world, it (the text) reminds us God can never forget who He has decided to love! In Verse 15, Isaiah talks about if a mother can ever forget her newborn child? God created women with an instinct to love and to care for their newborns. Along the same line, no matter how much we or Israel mess up, God will keep His unconditional promise to protect Israel as a nation. So why did God allow the Holocaust? My answer is to show that despite man doing his worst, Israel will still exist as an entity. That's the good that came out of all that horror! In effect, Isaiah is reminding us despite our sins and faults God still chooses Israel and us to be part of His eternal plan. As I like saying if God's going to rule the world from Israel, there must be an Israel to rule from! The last part of Chapter 49 is the reminder that Israel will return to their land despite the Babylonian captivity (future to Isaiah writing) and despite the many times in history of Israel suffering as a people, they're part of His eternal plans. As I like to put it, He made our world, and it is His decision what to do with it and who spends eternity with Him!

That leads to Chapter 50. Isaiah is still "pounding the pulpit" that God hasn't abandoned them just like He will never abandon us when we fail to live as He desires! In Verse 2 we get visual reminders God's God and He wants to empty a sea, or some other great visual act He can if it was His will! By Verse 4, we're back to where we started in Chapter 49 describing Jesus as He was sent to Israel (first time). It is a strong reminder Jesus was able to live the sinless life despite being fully human by fully trusting God to guide His life! By Verse 6 the text switches from the positive aspects of trusting God to the negative of why Jesus had to endure the cross. (Short version, the Israelite religious leaders did not want to give up their current system to fully trust God to guide their lives!) Anyway, Verse 6 mentions the fact that the Messiah's beard was pulled out (just as it happened just prior to the crucifixion). The point is Jesus endured intense suffering and disgrace and trusted God through all that physical pain!

By the way, the text is building up to in effect "Chapter 53" which is often called the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament as it describes Jesus' suffering for our sins. The last part of Chapter 50 is a "prelude" as again the text is building up to that climax! The key point of the last part of Chapter 50 is about the fact Jesus endured all this out of His love for humanity as it was the only way to have God Himself pay for our sins!

On a related note, one of the questions I love to ask my religious Jewish friends is do you think another descendant of King David will have more popularity than Jesus to rule as the Messiah? Because Jesus will rule the world from Israel and is of the Davidic line, can there be another Jewish person who's able to prove they are from that line who again will have greater popularity than Jesus? One reason He had to come the first time and be rejected, was so the world could accept Him as God. Now it's about 2,000 years later and multi-millions accept the fact Jesus is God. His First Coming was necessary, to pay the price for sins for everyone who accepts that gift! God decided He wants to be with people for eternity. The only decision we must make for eternal salvation is to accept that free gift.

I realize this is old news for most of us. The great question is what are we doing with that news? The end of my life on earth whenever that is, my desire is to hear Jesus state, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" It DOES NOT mean I'm perfect. It just means I have committed my life to serving Him as I let Him guide me to live as He desires!

With that said, hope you like this study. Again, I wrote a more detailed study some years back. If you want to read that, click on one of the links below. It's still a joy to study the bible and again grateful to all of you reading this. The rest of this email are links to questions you may have. If you are new here, you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again for reading this!