

DALLAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

BIBLE STUDY LAB

ISAIAH 49:1 - 6

BIBLE STUDY LAB SUBMITTED TO

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURSE

APPLIED HERMENEUTICS

BY

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### Main Idea of the Passage:

Isaiah presents the Servant of the Lord, whose message of hope and salvation is to be declared for all people, but who struggles with the strange ways in which his vocation seems to be fulfilled.

### Outline of the Passage:

In verses 1 – 6 we see a conversation between the Servant and the Father

Verse 1 – 2 The Servant speaks, proclaiming a message for all people as one called by the Father speaking words of truth

Verse 3 The Father speaks, telling the Servant that he is the Father's and has been given the vocation of displaying God's splendor

Verse 4 The Servant speaks, downtrodden over lack of results from effort, yet with a hope in God and knowledge that the reward is in Him.

Verse 5 – 6 The Lord responds again, this time stating that the Servant is to be a light unto the Gentiles that salvation may be brought to the ends of the earth.

### Exegetical notes for Context:

#### Historical-Cultural Context

- This book was written between 740 – 680 B.C.
- The location of this book was Israel and Judah
- It is thought that this chapter was written during the reign of Manasseh before Isaiah's martyrdom in 680 B.C. under the reign of Manasseh (Hebrews 11:37)
  - o Manasseh was the evil 14<sup>th</sup> king of Judah, known for leading Judah and the people of Jerusalem astray (2 Chronicles 33:9).

#### Literary Context

- Isaiah is the first of the major prophetic books in the Old Testament
- Isaiah 49 comes near the end of the Book of Isaiah (40:1 – 66:24) and is a prophecy of comfort
  - o This section of Isaiah is sometimes referred to as Second or Third Isaiah because of the shift in the subject and writing style from the earlier part of Isaiah
  - o The end of Isaiah speaks about the way of forgiveness and how this has been opened for all sinners by the Sinless Servant
  - o In these chapters the proclamation of universal salvation is confirmed
  - o These chapters contain a post-exilic viewpoint
- Isaiah 49 also begins a new section in this part of Isaiah and is a prophecy of Israel's Deliverer, with Isaiah 49 speaking specifically about the Messiah's Mission
- Isaiah 49 is the second Servant Song, with the others being in 42:1 – 4, 50:4-9 and 52:13 – 53:12.
  - o In this passage the Servant (Israel) speaks and dialogues with God.

- There is a theme of restoration and comfort – echoes Isaiah 40
- It contains an interpretation of Israel’s experience and mission to the nations
- Throughout this section of Scripture we see a dialogue occurring between the Servant and the Lord.
- In this passage the Servant’s ministry is divided into two parts: his ministry of truth (verses 1 – 3) and his ministry of failure (verses 4 – 6).

### Exegetical Notes for Content

- In this passage the Servant of the Lord takes center stage
- There are several definitions to words in verse one that can be helpful in understanding the passage:
  - Listen: Strong’s #8085, sama. To hear, listen, obey, to summon, to call together, to proclaim, from the base meaning of hearing come to the extensions of understanding and obedience, cause to hear, diligently harken.
  - Islands: Strong’s #339, Island, coastland, distant shores.
  - Hearken: Strong’s #7181, qasab. To pay attention, give heed, listen.
  - Called: Strong’s #7121, qara. To call, summon, announce, proclaim, to be invited or appointed.
  - Womb: Strong’s # 990, beten. Inmost part, the inner person, the heart, the seat of emotion, thought and desire.
  - Mention: Strong’s #2142, zakar. To remember, commemorate, consider.
  - Name: Strong’s #8034, sem. A proper designation of a person, place or thing. By extension: renown, fame.
  - In verse one we heard the Servant speaking, calling all people to listen and hear his words of truth. He is asking these distant places to pay attention, because from the beginning he has been called by God with a special anointing from the Lord.
  - The language used here is similar to that used at the calling of Jeremiah and also Paul into ministry.
- In verse two the Servant continues to speak
  - Shadow: Strong’s #6738 – sel. Shade, protection.
  - Hid: Strong’s #2244 – haba. Keep oneself in hiding.
    - 5641 – satar. To be hidden, concealed, have a refuge.
  - Polished: Strong’s #1305, barar. To purge, to be chosen, be choice, be sharpened, to keep clean, be pure.
  - The Servant here states the power and accuracy of his words. Through intimacy with God words of power have been given and he has been made pure as well as honest and straightforward. Truth has been revealed, and the Servant is called to speak it forth boldly.
  - There is also protection in the Lord (shadow of His hand...)
  - There is an additional reference to Jesus in this verse. It states, “he...concealed me in his quiver.” In the same way the Son of Man was

not revealed until the Father's appointed time. His identity was hidden until it was the Father's time for Him to be made known.

- In verse three God responds to the Servant's words.
  - o Servant - Strong's #5650 – ebed. Bondservant, attendant, slave.
  - o God here recognizes him as a servant and refers to him as Israel.
  - o Israel is both the called people of God and also herself called to be the agent of creating the people of God
  - o Since God called Abraham Israel had been God's chosen people, whom He revealed Himself to in a unique way. In this passage we see that God's plan is to use Israel, His chosen people, as a light to the world that all may come to know Him. However, throughout the Old Testament we see the failure of Israel to live up to this expectation. As they follow other gods and lose sight of God's purpose for them, He reveals that it is now another Servant (Jesus) who will ultimately come and preach this message of salvation for all to the Gentiles.
  - o The Messiah became the true Israel
  - o We too make up Israel as servants of the Lord
- In verse four the Servant here speaks of frustration – feeling that He has labored in vain, yet realizing that earthly success isn't the Lord's concern.
  - o Reward – Strong's # 6468 – Labor, work, wages.
  - o The Servant realizes that God sees the labor and work, and that his (the Servant's) reward is in God.
  - o The Servant doesn't need to concern Himself with the outcomes of his actions but with his obedience to the Father.
  - o In serving God, Israel will be glorified. Though his ministry appears futile, his reward is in God.
- In verse five we see the Servant's description of the Lord.
  - o The Servant recognizes God as Creator and One who has been actively involved throughout time. The Servant recognizes God's favor and the strength found in Him.
  - o In this verse and the following the life and mission of old and new Israel are contrasted.
  - o This is also a prophecy of Israel's release from captivity in Babylon and from the even greater captivity of sin.
  - o There is a level of intimacy and knowledge of God evident in the Servant's description.
  - o There is a prayer that Israel be gathered to Him
  - o The second object of the Servant's calling is to equip Him for His work by the strength of the Lord
- In verse six there is a commission to go out and preach the good news of salvation to all peoples all over the earth.
  - o Although the children of Israel were the firstborn there is no difference between Israel and the Gentile for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him
  - o The very humiliation of God's people will work the greater glory

- Together with Genesis 12:1 and Exodus 19:5 – 6 this has been called the “great commission of the Old Testament”. This is also quoted by Paul and Barnabus in Acts 13:47.

### Application

As those who are children of God often times we can become disheartened in ministry. Perhaps we planned an event that wasn't well attended, or led a Bible study where people appeared to be disengaged. Whatever the case may be, there are times that we look at what we've done and wonder if our efforts have been in vain. The results that we would like to see aren't there, and we begin to wonder if we really are making a difference. Our ministry isn't as “successful” as we think it should be. This passage though is a reminder that God and man do not measure success in the same way. God asks for obedience, and the results of that obedience are not our business. When we are truly following after Christ and going where He leads there is nothing to fear for it has not been in vain. If we have come to know the Father more and have surrendered to Him, we need not fear if we are in the right place or doing the right things. That is the Father's business. It isn't our business wondering if we would be more “effective” in a different ministry context. God has called us to obedience and to surrender to Him.

There must have been times during Jesus ministry on this earth when he felt he had failed. He knew Peter was going to deny him three times. One of his very own disciples betrayed him. His disciples fought over who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Yet Jesus walked forth in faith, knowing that this was the Father's business. He was called to be obedient and respond to the Father in reverent submission (Hebrews 5), and because of this the Father heard Him. As we go forth may we measure success not by the world's standards, but by our obedience to God. May we be servants of God, following after Him and by His grace being lights to a darkened world.

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In the Hebrew Bible the book of Isaiah initiates a division called the Latter Prophets (for the Former Prophets see introduction to Joshua: The and Theological Theme), including also Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve Minor Prophets (so called because of their small size by comparison with the major prophetic books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and not at all suggesting that.Â Isaiah is a book that unveils the full dimensions of God's judgment and salvation. God is "the Holy One of Israel" (1:4;6:1) who must punish his rebellious people (1:2) but will afterward redeem them (41:14,16). Israel is a nation blind and deaf (6:9-10; 42:7), a vineyard that will be trampled (5:1-7), a people devoid of justice or righteousness (5:7; 10:1-2). Isaiah 49 - Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.Â Blue Letter Bible study tools make reading, searching and studying the Bible easy and rewarding. Blue Letter Bible is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Â©2020 Blue Letter Bible | Privacy Policy. Isaiah 49:1-6 New International Version (NIV). The Servant of the Lord. 49 Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born the Lord called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name.Â Upgrade, and get the most out of your new account. An integrated digital Bible study library - including complete notes from the Believer's Bible Commentary and the Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible (NIV and NRSV) - is just a step away! Try it free for 30 days. Learn more today!