

## SEPTEMBER 26

### Isaiah 48:12-50:11

Isaiah 48:12-22

Vs. 12-13 Isn't it interesting that God declares His eternal nature and power as Creator to comfort His people, not to threaten them? Who does that? Our Father does. As God calls the creation and it obeys, so will it be when He calls His people out of exile.

Vs. 14-22 This is God's promise to free His people from Babylon. Notice all of the love and comfort being spoken to Israel. And some people really insist that the God of the OT is a god of wrath?

V. 16 This sounds like it is the Messiah.

V. 18 Doesn't this sound a little like Jesus crying over Jerusalem? Anyone who says there is no love in the OT hasn't read it and doesn't understand the heart of God. Isn't it amazing to be able to say that we can understand the heart of God?

V. 22 There is no rest for the wicked; and then somebody said, "and the righteous don't need any." Not true.

Isaiah 49

The past nine chapters have been focused on giving the people hope. They would be scattered and punished in the world, in Babylon, and in the times that precede the coming of Christ in His kingdom. These next nine chapters will focus on the Messiah. Read these chapters with that understanding, and you'll see how some of these verses will pull at your heart.

Vs. 1-4 This is the Messiah introducing Himself.

V. 2 This sounds like what the apostle John witnessed, when he saw Jesus in the book of Revelation.

V. 3 The Messiah is called "Israel," because chronologically on earth, He takes over for Israel as the servant of God.

V. 4 This sounds a little "un-Messiah" like, but as a man, Jesus did cry out to His Father.

Vs. 5-6 This is the Messiah's job. He will bring Jacob back to the Father and He will be a light to the nations.

Vs. 7-12 Amazing verses. Because of the Messiah, nations come to Israel and the people will be saved. Jesus Himself will be a covenant for the people. It is clear that this will apply to a future generation of Israel.

Vs. 13-14 Because of the Messiah there should be rejoicing from all of creation, but Israel felt forgotten. They have paid a hard price for their disobedience, and now God has used them as an object lesson. The future will take away all of Israel's anguish.

Vs. 15-18 God will not forget His promise to Israel. Paul and the Spirit say this in Romans 15:8, *For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs.* The church didn't supplant Israel or take their promises. Israel's promises were confirmed by the Messiah and they will be fulfilled in the future.

Vs. 19-21 When the Messiah brings everything to fulfillment, Israel will feel like the land is too small for them because of all the blessing.

Vs. 22-26 At the Messiah's coming Israel will be exalted among the nations. This will not just be because the King is in Israel. It will be because of the role Israel plays during the Tribulation,

risking their lives to get out the word of the kingdom to the people of the earth as the storm rages. Verse 23 confirms that those who wait for the Messiah will not be put to shame.

V. 25 This sounds like what Jesus said about binding the strong man and looting his house. In this case, the loot is people. Jesus would free people from bondage to death and the power of Satan. He will also redeem Israel, allowing Israel to be the servant of God in the Tribulation and during the Millennial Kingdom.

Isaiah 50

Vs. 1-3 Although God had "divorced" Israel because of her "adultery," the Messiah has the power to bring them back.

Vs. 4-6 This introduces the price the Messiah will have to pay to redeem Israel and mankind.

V. 5 He put His hand to the plough and didn't look back. He was obedient and humbled Himself even to die on a cross.

V. 6 This is exactly what happened to Jesus before the cross.

Vs. 7-9 The Son walked by faith and sought the help of His Father. As His disciples we do the same. He is the perfect example of what abiding means.

V. 7 I was reading this morning in John 7, *When the days drew near for Him to be taken up, He set His face to go to Jerusalem.* That is the context of this verse.

Vs. 10-11 There are two lights here. One light is in trusting in the Messiah. The other light is one's own trust in himself or in whatever. One light leads to the peace that passes understanding, and the other light leads to torment in this life, and in the life to come.

I was just reading in John 17 how Jesus said He would send us into the world. Because of that assignment He would consecrate Himself, so that we would also be consecrated in the truth. Jesus was already laying everything down for us, for our forgiveness and to pay for our sin. Now, in the context of our mission in the harvest, He was saying that His commitment would redouble to guide us during this time. If Jesus is this committed to us and to the harvest, it means that we should be committed too; but more, it means that we have all of the power and authority of heaven at our back, enabling us as we follow, reach out, and make disciples, who make disciples.

### **Ephesians 4:17-32**

With all of the grace that is described in chapters 1-3 and with the inclusion of us all in the mystery of the revealed church, Paul makes his second strong appeal in this chapter. The first appeal was to live a life worthy of our calling in Christ and our inclusion in the work of the church. This appeal is even stronger. Now that we bear the name of Christ in the world, we are to live and work as one. This sounds a lot like John 17.

V. 17 This verse ought to be stunning. As Christians we can still live in the futility of our minds. This is why church often doesn't work. The love of Christ becomes replaced by routine and by our agendas. The love of Christ is supposed to drive us together in the power of the Spirit into the harvest.

Although the next verses will describe the darkness of the lost mindset in terms of ethical malfunctions, the futility of mind that Paul mentions here is living and thinking without being filled by God's Word and Spirit. There is nothing "intuitive" about the spiritual life. We can't get it from ourselves. We need the solid input of the Word every day in our hearts and minds. Then, rather than relying on our feelings, desires, and agendas, we must rely on the leading of the Spirit. That old life is lived in our imagination, in our desires, in our gut, in our resources and in our intellect. The sin within us still permeates everything. That old life never worked before and it doesn't work now. The new life is bound to the Word and our salvation in Jesus. Now, we are

to follow Him and to walk by asking the Spirit to guide us in all situations, expecting that He is doing it. It's a wilder ride than we think.

Vs. 18-20 This is the darkness of the lost mind and the reason for it. This is the world at present, and since this is written to a church, it means that we are still capable of doing it.

What do we (did we) learn in Christ?

Vs. 20-24 So, what are we being renewed in? What is it that is constantly making us over and guiding our thinking and attitudes and actions every minute and hour? That would be everything Paul said in chapters 1-3. Based on that, following the Spirit into the harvest with a loving, supernatural, humble mindset should be a given. This continual renewing will only happen if we are in the Word every day and taking up our cross every day to follow Christ in the harvest.

Vs. 25-32 Oh, yeah, how does all of that relate to this people in this "divine" organization? If the church is a team, reaching the lost, making disciples, who make disciples into the next generation, it has to function like a team. Unlike any other "team" that might work together, but not really like each other, we are supposed to love one another because of the special bond we share in the love, blood and salvation in Jesus Christ. Again, read the context of John 16-17. In John 17 Jesus says that His followers will be hated by the world but are sent into the world to proclaim His message. So Jesus appealed to the Father to protect His people from the evil one and prayed that His followers might be one with Him and the Father. Loving one another and being one in Christ is the only way we can succeed in this mission. Too many believers have lost the mission, and too many believers strive to make church what they want. The church is about what Jesus wants in this time of harvest.

V. 32 I've seen this verse abused by Christians. God does not forgive us if we do not repent and say we're sorry. To force others to forgive when a lie still exists in the room is not being like God; it's just trying to get someone off the hook or sweep the matter under the rug in the name of "forgiveness."

## **Psalm 69:1-18**

Before you begin reading you should know that this psalm is full of references to the Messiah and some of this is fulfilled in Jesus. Whatever David experienced would be mirrored in the life and suffering of our Lord, both before the cross and while on the cross.

Vs. 1-4 It must have made David wonder why so many people wanted him dead. He had done nothing to Saul to deserve that. *But the word that is written in their Law must be fulfilled: 'They hated me without a cause.'* (John 15:25)

V. 5 I can identify with this. This would have been David, but not Jesus.

Vs. 6-8 In some respect, this portion reminds me of John 17. And imagine, David had all of these people joining him, following his faith in God. I can sense the weight of that. If you lead people in faith, it is often your faith that they hang on to. This is why Jesus said in John 17:19, *And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.*

V. 9 The first half of this verse is quoted in John 2:17, when the new disciples of this new rabbi watched Him go "postal" in the temple (maybe they watched Jesus and came up with the expression, "going temple"), chasing animals, overturning tables, telling people to leave. *His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."*

Paul quotes the second part of this verse in Romans 15, telling the Romans to live for others because Jesus did not live to please Himself, *but as it is written, 'the reproaches of those who reproached you, fell upon me.'*

Vs. 10-12 I know this applied to David, and it certainly applied to Jesus. And Jesus endured this for us.

Vs. 13-18 David appeals to God's *faithfulness* and His *steadfast love*. Verse 13 is also interesting in that David apparently knew that God had a plan and a time in mind for everything that was happening.

Could this portion also have been true of our Lord? *In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.* (Heb. 5:7)

## **Proverbs 24:5-6**

Verse 6 explains the *full of strength* and the *enhances his might* of v. 5. The *wise man* knows how to go to the right people and get the counsel he needs. In the harvest, we need to learn to seek wisdom and counsel from others, but we often learn this by first having to learn who to go to, or not go to. Not all believers live by faith, and not all are disciples. Finding kindred spirits who are able to help and give good advice is priceless. Sometimes it might seem wiser to go it alone, but that should be the exception. The wisdom from God given here is to seek godly help. If God wants you isolated and alone in the wilderness, you'll know it.