

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 49:14-23, ZION IS NOT FORGOTTEN

Despite all the warnings that God gave Israel concerning His plans to impose divine temporal discipline on the nation for disobedience and rebellion, the Israelites always seem to be shocked that it happens. They seemingly never consider the fact that they could turn to God at any time and begin to receive the promised blessings for obedience. At times, Israel's national attitude reminds me of the kids who murdered their parents and then, at the sentencing hearing, begged the judge for leniency because they are orphans! As I've said in the past, we wouldn't do any better, but Israel's "poor me" attitude is born of the fact that God said He would punish them for disobedience, and He has done and is doing what He said He would do. Their failure to uphold their responsibilities under the covenant, and including their failure to accept the King and His offer of the Kingdom, are the only reasons they have suffered so much throughout history, but, rightly or wrongly, that suffering has produced in them sadness, sullenness, and an attitude of ungratefulness and grumbling towards God. It makes us wonder why they don't actually read their Scriptures and comprehend what is happening to them. On the other hand, due to their stubborn rebellion and resistance to the Word, God has judicially blinded them to the truth for a period of time (Is. 6:10). Yet, if they sincerely sought the truth, they would find it.

Of course, Israel's rebellion is not a surprise to God, and He has a plan for national redemption encompassing both physical and spiritual restoration for the people and for their nation. Through Isaiah, God has promised restoration to Israel several times (cf. Is 40:27) including in the immediately preceding verses, but the people, rather than being encouraged, are skeptical. This is particularly striking following immediately after the hymn of praise that was revealed in Isaiah 49:13.

Isaiah 49:14 ¹⁴But Zion said, "The LORD [יְהוָה] has forsaken [פָּצַב] me, And the Lord [אֱלֹהֵי] has forgotten [שָׁכַח] me."

This is a mournful thought. The Israelites believe Yahweh has forsaken and forgotten them, which is a condition that could not be further from the truth. We already know from the immediately preceding verses, that the Israelites will be restored spiritually and physically and returned to their homeland. In the next verses, Yahweh makes it clear that He will never forget Zion. The Word of God plainly reveals that God has been intimately involved with Israel; He has protected and preserved the nation since He founded it in Egypt and on into Canaan. The stubborn rebellion of the Israelites simply keeps them from recognizing that truth, and, conversely, keeps them in a perpetual state of grumbling and, at times, in extraordinary levels of fear.

Psalms 121:3-4 ³He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber. ⁴Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep.

Forsaken, עָזַב, means to leave, abandon, or desert, to forsake, or to loose. The Israelites are complaining that Yahweh has forsaken or abandoned them. This word represents what the Israelites believe to be the actions of God.

Forgotten, נָשָׁח, means to forget, ignore, overlook, or to be unmindful of. The implication is that something has been lost to memory. In this context, there is an element of suppression, that is, they fear that He has dismissed them from remembrance which would be a deliberate act on His part rather than simple time induced forgetfulness. That is, of course, not true. This word represents what the Israelites believe to be the inner thoughts or feelings of God concerning them.

Two names are used for God in this verse. The first is Yahweh [יְהוָה] and the second is Adonai [אֲדֹנָי]. In the Hebrew text, they are together, Yahweh Adonai, "Yahweh and Lord." Adonai is a word used of God meaning "my Lord." The NET Bible translates this word "sovereign master." The Jews substituted the use of this word for Yahweh which they deem too holy to be spoken by mere men. It refers to the supreme authority and power of God. It is often combined with Yahweh, as it is here, to emphasize the unique nature of Yahweh.

It is not unusual for people to get impatient and even angry with God for being, in their mind, slow to act on their behalf and fulfill His covenant promises. Israel seems to suffer under this self-imposed burden to an inordinate degree. "... [I]t is not that surprising to find more impatient statements that express some questions about God's lack of action on Israel's behalf. It is not necessarily a bad thing to want God's kingdom to be established on earth right away or for his servant to want God to restore Israel now, but unchecked impatience with the timing of God's plan can sometimes lead to doubt or even disillusionment. This proclamation of salvation addresses the concerns of the city of Zion by repeating some of God's past promises and assuring the people of Zion that God has not forgotten her" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 364].

We know from earlier Scriptures in Isaiah, that God has promised to save Israel and completely restore the nation. These promises are meant to provide hope, but the nation is doubtful. They think He has forgotten them, but He is going to reassure them with promises of His devotion to Israel and the Israelites.

God compares Himself to a mother who may forsake her children and forget them, but He will never forsake and forget Israel. Some theologians consider this verse to be one of the premier expressions of God's love for Israel in the Bible setting it alongside Jeremiah 31:20.

Isaiah 49:15 ¹⁵"Can a woman forget her nursing child And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you.

We all know and have observed, many of us on a personal basis with our own mothers, the bond that mothers have with the children they have birthed, nursed, and raised. The compassion and the love they have for their children is obvious. The answer to this question is also obvious, it is "no," but there are exceptions to the obvious. While unusual, even

unthinkable, some mothers fail to bond with their children, have no emotional bonds with them, and do not properly care for them. The sin nature can lead even mothers to do unspeakable things to their children, or put their own interest over the love and care of their babies. Even those who love their children may do horrible things to them under intense stress such as that experienced in siege warfare (cf. 2 Kings 6:26-29; Ps. 27:10; Lam. 4:10). God is not like that; He will never abandon nor forget Israel. He makes a personal promise to Israel that He will not forget the nation. This promise is unconditional; God will not forget Israel for any reason.

Israel is constantly in God's thoughts, and He keeps their existence ever before Him by means of an inscription cut into His hands, presumably the name "Israel" or "Zion," but the text does not say. The walls of what is presumably Jerusalem, or Zion, which the text also does not identify, are always in His mind. Some theologians believe the inscription is an image of the walls. If it is a reference to the name, which I think is the most likely, then it is something that is not ordinarily done. Masters do not write a slave's name on their hands; slaves write their master's name on their hands.

Isaiah 49:16 ¹⁶"Behold, I have inscribed [תִּקַּק] you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me.

Behold may be translated "look" [LEB, CSB, NET Bible, ISV] or "see" [NKJV]. He is showing the Israelites that He has the people and the nation uppermost in His mind.

Inscribed, תִּקַּק, means to cut in, to inscribe, to engrave, or to mark out. It refers to making meaningful marks on an object. It has the sense of writing or engraving as a lasting record. "See suggests a gesture, the hands held out for inspection, incised with self-inflicted wounds of love" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 313]. This is a metaphor, of course, but inscribing on the hand signified something important (cf. Is. 44:5).

The walls are not specified, but whatever they are, the Lord is continually seeing them before Him, meaning they are always on His mind. The city's well-being is of paramount importance to Him.

The sense of the next verse is that the effects of the destruction visited on the city will not last long. Nevertheless, the destruction and the devastation the city will experience is going to be immense, and that is not just for one time. The city will be destroyed by the Babylonians, the Romans, and the armies of antichrist before it is finally and permanently rebuilt and securely lived in. The overall context here is eschatological.

Isaiah 49:17 ¹⁷"Your builders hurry; Your destroyers and devastators Will depart from you.

This verse has a textual issue. Builders, בְּנֵיָהּ [CSB, ESV, ISV], and sons or children, בְּנֵיהָ [KJV, NKJV, ASV, LEB, NET Bible]. Even with the vowel points, they look the same, but the initial vowel may be either a long "a" or a long "o" vowel.

The text may be interpreted either "sons" or "builders." The root consonants are the same for both words and the original text did not have vowel pointing. One vowel is the only difference between the words. "The builders were the sons that Zion thought had been

denied her. The Hebrew word translated 'builders,' *bonayik*, is almost identical to the word translated 'sons,' *banayik*, and may have been deliberately ambiguous to communicate both ideas. Originally only the consonants, which are identical, appeared in the text" [Thomas L. Constable, *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, Volume IV: Isaiah-Daniel, 4:142*].

Since walls were mentioned in the preceding verse, it seems natural that "builders" might be the intended meaning in this verse. "Builders" also seems to comport with the concept of destruction that necessitates rebuilding. However, the rest of the passage has a lot to say about children, so that is a viable interpretation. It may also be that the sons and the builders are one and the same.

"... [W]hichever word was originally used was probably used with double entendre. The consonants of the words are identical (*bynk*), with on one vowel being different (*banayik* and *bonayik*, respectively). 'Builders' goes well with the previous verse and with 'your overthrowers,' while 'sons' seems to be presupposed by the otherwise unidentified 'them' of v. 18. Thus, the prophet says, the builders of your ruined walls are the sons of which you thought you were deprived forever" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 307].

Once again, replacement theologians simply cannot understand the Old Testament. "As the name of Zion is engraved on both His hands, so the walls of Zion stand ever before Him as a memorial. Even though the forces of infidelity and unbelief, of indifference and ignorance, may attempt to overthrow the Church, yet God is with her, for she is ever before His eyes" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:286]. The damage men like this have done to people's understanding of the Word of God from beginning to end is incalculable. This is truly wolves in sheep's clothing theology.

Keil and Delitzsch also referred to the church in these verses. "What follows, therefore, applies to the church of the present, i.e., of the captivity.... In reply to the complaining church ..." [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 7, 7:475]. The church is not in the Old Testament, of course. Furthermore, note that they are placing the Israelites in the Babylonian captivity at the time Isaiah penned the words to these verses. That is incorrect; the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and the subsequent captivity were still nearly 200 years in the future.

The builder sons are going to return to Zion; all of them will return. This too is eschatological in nature. This situation has never occurred to this point in history, and it will not occur until the Tribulation is ended and the Messianic Kingdom is inaugurated.

Isaiah 49:18 ¹⁸"Lift up your eyes and look around; All [לָל] of them gather [קָבְצוּ] together, they come to you. As I live," declares the LORD, "You will surely put on all of them as jewels and bind them on as a bride.

This is a dazzling picture of what restored Zion is going to be like for the Israelites. It will be a time that surpasses even the greatness of King Solomon's splendid kingdom. Zion is commanded to lift up her eyes and look around. She will see a nation full of people who are like jewels are to a bride who has adorned herself for her wedding. "These people

will come and will be viewed like precious jewels, like ornaments of gold or silver that might be fastened to the hand, neck, ears, ankles, or clothes of a beautiful woman (the city of Zion), like a bride who is dressed up for a wedding celebration" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 367].

Every Israelite is going to be there which also reveals this truth to be Kingdom truth. That did not happen after the Babylonian destruction of the nation.

All, כָּל, means the whole, totality, all, everyone and everything. It has the sense of the whole thing, i.e., all of something including all its component elements or parts. It is inclusive of all or every one of something.

Gather, קָבַץ, means to collect, to assemble, to gather together referring to gathering into one place by linear motion, implying a relationship of kind or unity of purpose of the objects which have been gathered.

Together, these words indicate that all the Israelites will one day be back in the land. This truth is in sharp contrast with the relative few who returned from the Babylonian captivity. Even today, nowhere near all the Jews of the world are living in the land of Israel when there are no barriers to doing so.

God binds Himself to this prophecy with an oath; "as I live" and "surely" are confirmation that when He says something that He affirms with an oath, He has proclaimed something that must come to pass. Everything He says He will do must come to pass, but the oath adds emphasis to His proclamation, which was probably meant to comfort the people and give them something to look forward to. When He says that all the Israelites will be gathered together in one place, then He will see to it that all the Israelites will be gathered together in one place!

The topic of Israelite residence back in the land continues. This verse is a continuation of the oath revealed in verse 18. The first word of verse 19, "for," could have been translated "surely" which would make that connection clearer (LEB, ESV). "Surely" also introduces the fact that the land is going to be repopulated. These things are also guaranteed on oath by the Creator God to come to pass. The grammar in verse 19a is a bit difficult, but the meaning is evident.

Isaiah 49:19–20 ¹⁹"For [surely] your waste [הָרְבָה] and desolate [שָׁמֵמ] places and your destroyed [הִרְסוּת] land— Surely now you will be too cramped [צָרָר] for the inhabitants, And those who swallowed [בָּלְעוּ] you will be far away. ²⁰"The children of whom you were bereaved will yet say in your ears, 'The place is too cramped for me; Make room for me that I may live here.'

The description of the land before the return of the people to it for the inauguration of the Kingdom is bleak: waste, desolate, and destroyed. These words are not describing anything good. Whatever happens to the land during the Tribulation is going to be devastating.

Waste, *הֶרְבָּה*, means a desolation, a place laid waste, and ruins referring to a place destroyed and in rubble implying a depopulation of the place rendering it desolate. The sense is that of a ruined building, structure, or city which is often referred to collectively as ruins. "The word almost always refers to an area ruined by the judgment of God" [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. "*הֶרְבָּה*," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 375].

Isaiah uses this word a number of times to describe Jerusalem, the land, and the restoration that is going to take place at the end of the Tribulation. The Servant will raise up the ruins of Jerusalem and Judah (Is. 44:26). The verse here confirms the fact that the nation will be repopulated to be not only full of Israelites, but overflowing with them. The Lord will turn the waste places of Zion into a place resembling Eden (Is. 51:3). The ruins of Jerusalem will sound forth in singing in joyful gratitude for restoration (Is. 52:9) and rebuilding (Is. 61:4).

Desolate, *שָׁמָּה*, means to be laid waste, to be desolated or destroyed, ravaged, ruined, and deserted referring to being in a destroyed and ruined state which implies that the object or area destroyed is now abandoned from all help, deserted, or in personal poverty. The sense is to be in a state of ruin or destruction. "Basic to the idea of the root is the desolation caused by some great disaster, usually as a result of divine judgment [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. "*שָׁמָּה*," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 936].

Destroy, *הָרַסוּת*, means destruction or a waste referring to an area that is in ruin and destruction implying a lack of usability and productivity. It has the sense of an event, or the result of an event, that completely destroys something.

These words, used together and based on God's oath, imply a level of destruction that the land has never seen before, even when it was conquered by other nations. Generally speaking, when nations conquer nations, they don't want to completely destroy the place; they want to plunder it and use it as a source of tribute or income. These words reveal that Jerusalem and the land are going to be utterly devastated as a result of God's judgment. That's the bad news. The good news is that the Israelites will return, repopulating and rebuilding, which will eventually result in a land that resembles the Garden of Eden (Is. 51:3).

God's oath also ensures that the land will be repopulated. In fact, there will be so many people in the land that it will be too small to contain them all. We also need to remember that the Israel of the Kingdom will be living in the land according to the original boundaries set forth by God in the Abrahamic Covenant, which result in a much larger nation, in terms of land area, than exists today (cf. Gen. 15:17-21; Ezek. 47:13-48:29). In addition to that, much of this larger area is unproductive desert today, but as a land like Eden, that land will become productive and support a far larger number of people than it is currently able to support.

The land will someday be described as cramped, *צָרָר*, which means to be narrow, to be straight, to wrap, tie, or bind up, to envelop, to be restricted referring to being or becoming constricted in size. The context here refers to a place that has become too small for people to comfortably inhabit because they have increased in such large numbers. Other English translations use "too small" (NKJV, CSB), "too narrow" (ESV, KJV), or too straight (YLT). "The city that was once abandoned will now be bursting at the seams to

the point that Zion will be confused about where all the people have come from. This is referring to the restoration of Zion in the millennial kingdom, not to the return from Babylon" [Michael Rydelnik and James Spencer, "Isaiah" in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, 1083]. I do not think this should be restricted to the city; the land is the issue.

Not only will the Israelites be back in the land, but those who have swallowed them in the past will no longer be a threat to them. They will be banished from the area.

Swallowed, בָּלַע, means to swallow up or down, to devour, or to destroy referring to having something pass through the mouth into the stomach with the focus that what has been swallowed is consumed, i.e., no longer visible or destroyed. It is used here as a figure of speech as a reference to those who have wasted, devastated, and destroyed Israel.

These enemies of Israel, those who have devoured them, will be sent far-away where they will never again be a threat to the nation. Actually, because only believers will enter the Messianic Kingdom these hostile people are sent to their eternal destiny which is indeed "far-away."

Is verse 20 a reiteration of verse 19, or is it the proclamation of a promise that the children of whom Israel was bereaved are going to return to the land? Most theologians believe it to be a reference to a future return. This is difficult to interpret, and there are lots of ideas concerning the meaning. It may refer to the Israelites of the *Diaspora* returning to the land which comports with the eschatological nature of this pericope. That seems suspect because when they return to the land there will be plenty of room for all of them as they realize the complete fulfillment of the Land Covenant component of the Abrahamic Covenant within the parameters of the original land promise to Abraham. Even when we consider that the Old Testament believing Jews will be resurrected to live in the land, there will still be plenty of room in the land for all of them. However, over time, as the redeemed Israelites repopulate the land during the Millennium, they will run out of room and cry for space in which to live.

"The children of Zion's bereavement, the children whom thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, refer to the prolific increase of the population of redeemed and restored Israel during the Kingdom age, compensating for the wiping out of the bulk of the nation (the rebels) during the Tribulation. That newly reborn and growing nation will say with great urgency, This place is too narrow for us; give us room to live" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1281].

Israel is going to wonder how in the world all this happened? Where did all these people come from? The primary answer to the question will come in Isaiah 54.

Isaiah 49:21 ²¹"Then you will say in your heart, 'Who has begotten these for me, Since I have been bereaved of my children And am barren, an exile and a wanderer? And who has reared these? Behold, I was left alone; From where did these come?'"

Israel has suffered much throughout the nation's history, and will continue to do so until the Messianic Kingdom is inaugurated, and when that happens, they are going to find it difficult to understand this amazing, wonderful turn of events. To go from being barren, in

exile, and a wanderer to inheriting the land and prospering with no enemies and a safe, prosperous place to live is a lot to take in a relatively short period of time. It is hard to suddenly change your mindset when you have gone from the sheer terror of the Tribulation judgments to the God guaranteed safety and security of the Kingdom in a short period of time.

Some theologians believe the large population increase is also due to Gentiles living in Israel during the Kingdom, but I do not believe that to be the case, at least not on a large-scale basis. The land belongs to the Israelites, the Israelites are the heirs to the land, the Israelites will inherit the land, the Israelites will be placed in the land by the God Himself (Mt. 24:31), and the Israelites will be the people living in the land. Some of the verses they rely on to make the case for Gentiles in the land are clearly relating to the Israelites. For example, Isaiah 2:1-5 reveals that Gentiles will be going to the mountain of the Lord to learn His ways, but it does not say they will live there. Isaiah 1:11-12 refers to regathering the believing remnant of Israelites, not believing Gentiles. There will be Gentiles working on behalf of the Israelites as servants during that time (Is. 14:1-2).

Part of the reason for the amazement is due to the fact that they know they could not have possibly done these things themselves. God has been working among the Jewish people all along, but the majority have continued to reject Him. Therefore, they do not know just how large the remnant is at any one time in history. During the Tribulation, the number of saved Jews will be unknown to most other saved Jews. They will apparently be astonished at the number of them once they enter the land.

The population will greatly and quickly increase once the Kingdom begins. Death will be rare. Lots of children will be born without loss of life and fertility rates will almost certainly be high given the good health and longevity that will be part of Kingdom life. Populations will explode not just in Israel, but around the world. It will be an amazing time in the history of the world. Everything about the Messianic Kingdom that the Israelites will find so amazing is the result of God's grace to the nation when He saves them and restores them.

When the Tribulation ends and the Messianic Kingdom is about to begin, the Gentile world will have a change of heart concerning the Israelites to the extent that they will help them make the journey to their land from the various places around the world where they have been scattered.

Isaiah 49:22–23 ²²Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations And set up My standard to the peoples; And they will bring your sons in *their* bosom, And your daughters will be carried on *their* shoulders. ²³“Kings will be your guardians, And their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth And lick the dust of your feet; And you will know that I am the LORD; Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame.

If the revelation of Gentile assistance to the Jews is before the sheep and goat judgment takes place (Mt. 25:31-46), then there are still Gentile unbelievers who proved by their actions during the Tribulation that they hated the Israelites. Presumably, these people would not participate in helping the Israelites journey to their covenanted homeland. If that judgment has occurred, then all the Gentiles remaining alive to enter the Kingdom

are believers who supported Israel during the Tribulation judgment and they, presumably, would assist in the effort to get the Israelites delivered to their Kingdom homeland.

There will be Gentiles, their rulers, and their nations who are going to respond to God's call to assist the Israelites. The raising of God's hand could be part of swearing the oath He made in verse 18, or it could be, in connection with setting a standard to the peoples, a signal to the world to assist the Israelites in their sojourn back to the land.

Many theologians try to make this about the return from the Babylonian captivity of old, but these things did not happen at that time. In fact, even a cursory reading of Ezra and Nehemiah reveal that the Gentiles in the area resisted Israel's efforts to reestablish themselves back in the land at that time. They certainly did not, in any way, help them return. "Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 192, thinks this paragraph refers to the restoration of the Jewish people from Persia. This historicizes a future eschatological event and almost falsifies it, for [Isaiah] 49:22-26 was not fulfilled in the postexilic era" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 370, n. 102]. "The restoration from Babylon was a historical prefigurement [sic] of the far greater restoration from Israel's present worldwide Diaspora to Kingdom status" [Merrill F. Unger, "Isaiah" in *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1282]. Unger's view is much more biblically accurate.

The only excuse—which is no excuse—for one's failure to understand the eschatological nature of this pericope is theology. When the Bible is interpreted according to the presuppositions of one's theological and eschatological positions—instead of the other way around where theology and eschatology flow from the text and are used to develop one's theology and eschatology—literal hermeneutics are abandoned and the interpretive result is erroneous. This issue emphasizes the difference between Dispensational Theology, based on literal hermeneutics, and other systems of theology that use their theology to determine their interpretation of the Word of God.

At this point in time, the nations and the peoples are references to saved Gentiles who, like the Israelites, have been saved during the Tribulation. This is not a reference to unsaved people who suddenly found it in their hearts to be nice to the Israelites as some theologians suppose it is. "No essential difference need be made between *nations* and *peoples*; both words refer to the heathen nations; the two actions are intended to embrace all who are without the covenant nation.... God's actions causes the heathen nations to bring the sons of Zion to her" [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:290]. God causes unbelieving Gentiles to take the Israelites back to the land? That is not what is happening here.

Once again, we must note that replacement theologians cannot understand these verses. This is a vitally important issue. Replacement theology simply destroys any possibility of understanding God's program for history as it involves both Israel and the Church. "Such affectionate treatment does the church receive, which is assembling once more upon its native soil, whilst kings and their consorts hasten to serve the re-assembled community.... All that is true in the regal headship of the church will be realized, and all that is false in regal territorialism will condemn itself. They do homage to the church, and kiss the ground upon which she stands and walks. According to ch. 45:14, this adoration

belongs to the God who is present in the church, and points the church itself away from all thought of her own merits to Jehovah, the God of salvation ..." [C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Isaiah*, vol. 7, 7:477-478].

Verses such as these raise questions about the relationship between the Israelites and the Gentiles during the Millennial Kingdom. Some people read them and presume that Gentiles will be slaves of Israel. What we do know is that Israel will be the lead nation in the world (Dt. 28:13, 44), the nations will flock to Israel because God is there and the Israelites know Him (Is. 2:3), and the nations will stream to the light in Israel (Is. 60:3). They will serve the Israelites by guarding them (Is. 49:23), nursing them (Is. 49:23), and bringing their wealth into the nation (Is. 60:5-7, 11). The fact that Kingdom Gentiles will bow down before the Israelites to pay homage to them (Is. 49:23, 60:14) or build their walls for them (Is. 60:10) does not mean they will be slaves. "The imagery is political subservience, the reality is spiritual indebtedness" [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 314]. It is simply unimaginable that in a righteous and just Kingdom under the rule of a righteous and just King, that slavery would be allowed.

The point being made is that the nations of the Messianic Kingdom are going to contribute in a very big way to the relocation of the Israelites back into the land, and also to the restoration of the physical plant of the nation. Gentile rulers and nations will honor Israel and submit to them as the head nation in the world. They will show their respect by bowing down before them which is something that is generally reserved for royalty in our day and age, but in those days, it was more common (cf. Ruth 2:10). Licking the dust from the Israelites' feet is a metaphorical way of portraying the depth of respect and homage that the Gentile nations will give the nation. The world is going to recognize and know both Israel and the Lord in ways and to an extent the world has never done before.

Those who wait on the Lord will not be put to shame. The emphasis here is not the waiting; it is the certainty that God will do what He has said He will do—save and restore Israel. The Israelites were told that they would be saved and never suffer shame or humiliation once the nation is saved (Ps 25:3; Is. 45:17; Joel 2:27), and that message is reiterated here. The reference to those Israelites who wait on the Lord must be a reference to the believing remnant. The unbelieving Israelites certainly are not waiting on the Lord; He has been waiting on them!

Concerning the relationship between waiting for Him and not being disgraced, "... it is important to recognize the grammatical relation between these two ideas. The second is a relative clause modifying the first. It is a quality of God's identity that those who wait for him in absolute dependence will not be disgraced. To know him as Lord is to know that he has both the power to be able to keep his promises and the faithfulness to want to keep them" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 311].

Since the times of the Gentiles began in 586 BC, the Israelites have been afraid of and bowing before the Gentiles. Once Israel is the head nation of the world and the King is on His throne in Jerusalem, those roles will be reversed. The difference is that the Israelites will not be arrogantly lording their leadership position over the rest of the world. The

Israelites will not hate the world as the world hates Israel. The Israelites will not be subjecting the world to persecution as the world did to the Israelites.