

## **Allan MacRae: Isaiah 1-6: Lecture 9**

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Last time we discussed Isaiah 11:4 and pointed out that this is looking forward to one not yet revealed who will destroy by the spirit of his mouth and the brightness of his coming. To me it is perfectly clear that this refers to Revelation 19; that is, Jesus' victory over the Antichrist is described here in verse 4 of Isaiah 11.

And then number 6 of the outline: "His millennial reign" in Revelation, right after chapter 19, we have the description of a period which is six times referred to as 1000 years. A period in which "Satan is bound so that he will deceive the nations no more." Some say that when it says, "Satan is bound so that he cannot deceive the nations," it means that Satan is unable to injure the saved after they go to heaven. Well, that is an extremely figurative interpretation. And I don't think it is really worthy of much consideration. But what it clearly says here: Satan is unable to deceive the nations in this period of a 1000 years in which Christ reigns on the earth. And that is described in Isaiah 11 in the account of the conditions on earth during the 1000 years. In verses 6 to 9, Isaiah describes the conditions, at the time when there will be a complete end of external violence. The wolf will dwell with the lamb. Not that the lamb will be inside of the wolf but that lamb doesn't need to fear the wolf. That neither one will injure the other. And it is stated in figurative language in verses 6 to 8, and then verse 9 makes it literally "they shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as waters cover the sea" So number 6 in the outline is, then, "His millennial reign"

Number seven of the outline: "The obedience of the nation" This is contained here in verse 10, which says that, "In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the people; it shall the Gentiles seek and his rest shall be glorious." This word "rest" is not such a good translation. The

word can mean rest like when you go to bed and be refreshed, but it can mean just like this glass case rests on the table. The Hebrew word is used in both ways. But there are those who take it in the sense of a place of rest, and they say it refers to the place of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, but most interpreters do not take it that way. But the main thing in the verse is that Christ will be an ensign or a sign, to the people, and him shall the Gentiles seek, and that is exactly what we have in Isaiah 2. Where it says “All nations will come and they will say, 'let us go to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob. And he will teach us his ways and we will walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Now there is a book written recently by a man who takes this 11<sup>th</sup> chapter and insists that it must be exactly in chronological order. And therefore since verse 11 speaks of regathering of the Israelites and verse 4 of the millennium, he says that the regathering cannot come until after the millennium.

And therefore the present state of Israel is not the regathering from the Scripture. Now, we cannot be dogmatic that the present state of Israel is the regathering of Israel spoken of in Isaiah 11, but it certainly looks that way. It looks very much that way to me. It is possible that the state of Israel might be destroyed, the Jews dispersed, and that another regathering will take place before the coming of Christ, which is yet to come. It is possible. We cannot be dogmatic. But there is to be a regathering of Israel, which most interpreters think comes before the millennium, and to say that because of verse 11 it comes after the millennium is, I think, reading into Scripture. But the obedience of the nations is here in verse 10 which we have in Isaiah 2:3 and in Micah 4:2.

And number 8 of the outline: “The time perspective.” We have the account in verses 1-9 and then verse 10 refers to what happens in the beginning of the millennium or what is all through the millennium. Does verse 11 refer to what happens in the millennium or does it refer to what is afterwards? The prophetic perspective is not always made clear in Scripture. If he said, “After that this will

happen," that would make it clear. If he said, "before this will happen, that will happen," then that would be clear. But if I were to tell you that I have business in Rome and in Jerusalem, that statement would not tell you which I went to first. You might assume I went to Rome first, but perhaps I'm speaking of a logical rather than a chronological order. You don't know unless I tell you. And in reading the Scripture, we can make guesses from the order of passages so to their chronology but if we are to be dogmatic, we have to have consistent statement either in the passage or in some parallel passage that gives us chronological information. Well, we won't spend more time on that now because, after all, that is not the section of Isaiah that we are specifically dealing with in this course. But it is related very definitely to what we have already covered. And we go on now to a passage which also is not in part we are dealing with, but which is vital background to the part of that we will deal with in most of the rest of the course.

And so, Roman numeral 9 will be: "The Servant of the Lord" Thus far we have had no reference to what you might call the, "Servant of the Lord." But capital A: "Isaiah's use of the word 'Servant'". We have had the word "servant" occasionally in this early part of Isaiah. There are a few general uses in the early part of the book. It speaks of "a servant of the King" it speaks of the king of Assyria sending his servant to do something. It's used in the plural occasionally in the early part of Isaiah. But the singular word "servant" is once used in Isaiah 20, verse 3, where the King James Version reads: "The Lord said 'Like as my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot 3 years for a sign of wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoner.'" In this passage it refers to Isaiah as God's servant. That's the only passage in the first part of Isaiah that refers to Isaiah as God's servant. There is one place in the latter part of the book that may refer to Isaiah, but may not. You will notice it as you go through this assignment for next time. Now, all uses of the singular of the word "servant" after Isaiah 37, are of a special type, all uses with one possible exception. There is at most one exception where this word "servant," which is

used occasionally in the general sense in the early part of Isaiah, is used a great deal in the latter part as you see from the sheets I gave you for the assignment for next time. The word is used a great deal in expressions like “my servant,” “the Lord’s servant,” and “the servant of the Lord.” And these expressions are of a special type. They do not refer to an ordinary person or an ordinary situation. There is one possible exception that might refer to Isaiah, but not necessarily.

So what we have is a special usage of this term “the Servant of the Lord.” And we will look at the first 3 occurrences of this type of expression. They are in Isaiah 41. And there in Isaiah 41, we have in verse 8 the statement: “But thou Israel art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. And verse 9 says: “Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth and called thee from the chief men thereof and said ‘thou art my servant I have chosen and not cast thee away.’” Is this servant here called Israel? I don’t think that any of you would have question about verse 8. “Thou Israel, art my servant.” God is calling Israel his servant. And he is speaking here of the nation of Israel. And then in verse 9, he also refers to Israel. Now, verse 8 specifically calls the servant, Israel. Verse 9, in the light of context, must be take in light of the context. So here we have in these first two cases the use of the word “Servant” and it is clearly Israel who is designated by name in the first instance, and who is clearly indicated by the context in the second.

But when you turn to the next chapter, we find in chapter 42 begins with the words, “Behold my servant whom I uphold, my elect in whom my soul delights.” Well, thus far could that be Israel in view of all the rebuke of Israel before for their sin and their terrible punishment described? It seems a bit strong to speak of Israel “the servant in whom his soul delights.” But the verse goes on, “I have put my spirit upon him. He shall bring forth justice to the Gentiles.” Well, Israel was a small nation. The word “Gentile” can equality well be translated “nation.” The same is true in the New Testament where the word “Gentile” and “nation” are identical. And you have to get which meaning is implied from

context and often it is very difficult to know which. Getting back to Isaiah, although there are a few cases where the word "gentile" is even used to include Israel, usually it refers to nations outside of Israel. But God says His servant is going, "to bring justice to the Gentiles." How is he going to do it? Israel is a small nation. Assyria had ten times the power that Israel had. Persia, a century later, had perhaps fifteen times the power that Israel ever had. How is Israel going to bring justice to the nations? Is Israel going to be able to build a large enough army and strong enough force to establish justice throughout the world?

Well, how it is going to be done? The servant "will not cry or lift up nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." It is not going to be done through a great, tremendous military power. There is some other method involved. "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoking flax he will not quench, but he will bring forth judgment into truth." Does that sound like the nation of Israel? It is a gentle progress here described. God will use those that are giving a little light, and making a rather poor job and yet sincerely trying. He is not going to cast them out of the way as unfit for his purposes. He is not going to quench them. There is a gentleness there is a confidence. "He shall not fail or be discouraged until he has spread judgment on the earth and the isles of distant lands shall wait for his law." These first seven verses describe "my servant," the Lord's servant, in a way that will be very, very difficult to apply to Israel.

And we have cases later on that are similar and that are very, very difficult to apply to Israel. And so we have here a very interesting problem. The servant of the Lord is specifically called Israel. Not only in this one case we referred to, but in a number of others, which you will see. The servant of the Lord is these contexts clearly refer to Israel, not only in chapter 41 verse 9, but in a number of other cases at which we will look. But the servant of the Lord cannot be the nation in chapter 42. It just does not fit Israel. It is entirely different than what Israel could possibly do.

And when you get to chapter 49 you find that the servant of the Lord is distinguished from Israel. You find the statement made there in verse 6: He says, "It is a light thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the tribes of Israel? I will also give you as a light to the Gentiles." Clearly, the servant is distinguished from Israel in chapter 49. And when you get to chapter 53, which should start 3 verses earlier at 52:13, where we read, "behold my servant shall be exalted and extolled and be very high." And then follows the great description of the suffering of Christ in chapter 53. And the word "servant" used in verse 53:11. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." And the word is never used again in the singular in the whole book of Isaiah. So we have all of these uses of the term "servant," some of which clearly refer to Israel, and some of which could not possibly refer to Israel. Yet are spoken of as "my servant" or the "servant of the Lord."

As I said, the word is never again used in the singular. But we have here the tremendous work to be done by the servant of the Lord. And after this we have the "servants" of the Lord spoken of. Never again a singular "servant." In chapter 54 verse 17 we read at the very end of the chapter, "'This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord. And their righteousness is from me,' says the Lord." The servants of the Lord are the followers of the servant of the Lord. It is always used in the plural after this never again in the singular in the book of Isaiah.

And so the examination of these passages will make clear to you the nature of the problem. How can the servant be Israel and also be Christ? Is the word used in two entirely different ways? Or is there one way in which it is used which covers all of the usages? Well think I won't get into that today. I'll let you look at it first to get an idea of, and to think about the problem. So we will close now for the day and continue this discussion next time.

Read and edited by Dr. Perry Phillips