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ISAIAH 49: 1 Listen, islands, to me; and listen, you peoples, from far: the LORD has called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother has he made mention of my name:

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In this chapter the Messiah is introduced, declaring the full extent of his commission, which is not only to be Savior to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles. The power and efficacy of his word is reprehended by apt images; the ill success of his ministry among the Jews is intimated, and the great success of the Gospel among the Gentiles, Isa 49:1-12. But the prophet, then casting his eye on the happy, though distant, period of Israel's restoration, makes a beautiful apostrophe to the whole creation to shout forth the praises of God on the prospect of this remarkable favor, Isa 49:13. The tender mercies of God to his people, with the prosperity of the Church in general, and the final overthrow of all its enemies, make the subject of the remaining verses, Isa 49:14-26.

#### Verse 1

Listen, O isles, unto me "Hearken unto me, O ye distant lands" - Hitherto the subject of the prophecy has been chiefly confined to the redemption from the captivity of Babylon; with strong intimations of a more important deliverance sometimes thrown in, to the refutation of idolatry, and the demonstration of the infinite power, wisdom, and foreknowledge of God. The character and office of the Messiah was exhibited in general terms at the beginning of chap. 42.; but here he is introduced in person, declaring the full extent of his commission, which is not only to restore the Israelites, and reconcile them to their Lord and Father, from whom they had so often revolted, but to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, to call them to the knowledge and obedience of the true God, and to bring them to be one Church together with the Israelites, and to partake with them of the same common salvation procured for all by the great Redeemer and Reconciler of man to God.

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ISAIAH 49: 2 and he has made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand, he has hidden me: and he has made me a polished shaft; in his quiver has he kept me close:

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#### Verse 2

And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword "And he hath made my mouth a sharp sword" - The servant of God, who speaks in the former part of this chapter, must be the Messiah. If any part of this character can in any sense belong to the prophet, yet in some parts it must belong exclusively to Christ; and in all parts to him in a much fuller and more proper sense. Isaiah's mission was to the Jews, not to the distant nations, to whom the speaker in this place addresses himself. "He hath made my mouth a sharp sword;" "to reprove the wicked, and to denounce unto them punishment," says Jarchi, understanding it of Isaiah. But how much better does it suit him who is represented as having "a sharp two-edged sword going out of his mouth," Rev 1:16; who is himself the Word of God; which word is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart;" Heb 4:12. This mighty Agent and Instrument of God, "long laid up in store with him, and sealed up among his treasures," is at last revealed and produced by his power, and under his protection, to execute his great and holy purposes. He is compared to a polished shaft stored in his quiver for use in his due time. The polished shaft denotes the same efficacious word

which is before represented by the sharp sword. The doctrine of the Gospel pierced the hearts of its hearers, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." The metaphor of the sword and the arrow, applied to powerful speech, is bold, yet just. It has been employed by the most ingenious heathen writers, if with equal elegance, not with equal force. It is said of Pericles by Aristophanes, (see Cicero, Epist. ad Atticum, 12:6): - Οὕτως εκηλει, και μονος των ρητορων Το κεντρον εγκατελειπε τοις ακρωμενοις.

Apud. Diod. lib. xii.

His powerful speech

Pierced the hearer's soul, and left behind

Deep in his bosom its keen point infixed.

Pindar is particularly fond of this metaphor, and frequently applies it to his own poetry: - Επεχε νυν σκοπω τοξον, Αγε, θυμε. τινα βαλλομεν Εκ μαλθακας αυτε φρε- νος ευκλεας οϊστους Ίεντες - ;

Olymp. 2:160. "Come on! thy brightest shafts prepare,

And bend, O Muse, thy sounding bow;

Say, through what paths of liquid air

Our arrows shall we throw?'

West.

See also ver. 149 of the same ode, and Olymp. Heb 9:17, on the former of which places the Scholiast says, τροπικος ο λογος· βελη δε τους λογους εορηκε, δια το οξυ και καιριον των εγκωμιων. "He calls his verses shafts, by a metaphor, signifying the acuteness and the apposite application of his panegyric."

This person, who is (Isa 49:3) called Israel, cannot in any sense be Isaiah. That name, in its original design and full import, can only belong to him who contended powerfully with God in behalf of mankind, and prevailed, Gen 32:28. After all that Vitringa, Bp. Lowth, and others have said in proof of this chapter speaking of the Messiah, and of him alone, I have my doubts whether sometimes Isaiah, sometimes Cyrus, and sometimes the Messiah, be not intended; the former shadowing out the latter, of whom, in certain respects, they may be considered the types. The literal sense should be sought out first; this is of the utmost importance both in reading and interpreting the oracles of God.

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ISAIAH 49: 3 and he said to me, "You are my servant; Israel, in whom I will be glorified."

ISAIAH 49: 4 But I said, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely the justice due to me is with the LORD, and my reward with my God."

ISAIAH 49: 5 Now says the LORD who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered to him (for I am honourable in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength);

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Verse 5

And now, saith the Lord "And now, thus saith Jehovah" - The word כה koh, before אמר amar, is dropped out of the text: it is supplied by eight MSS. (two ancient) of Dr. Kennicott's, two of De Rossi's, and the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate.

Though Israel be not gathered "And that Israel unto him might be gathered" - Five MSS. (two ancient) confirm the Keri, or marginal correction of the Masoretes, לו lo, unto him, instead of לא lo, not, in the text; and so read Aquila; and the Chaldee, Septuagint, and Arabic omit the negative. But the Septuagint, MSS. Pachom, and 1. D. 2 express also the Keri לו lo by προς αυτον, to him.

ISAIAH 49: 6 yes, he says, "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give you for a light to the nations, that you may be my salvation to the end of the earth."

#### Verse 6

And to restore the preserved of Irsrae "And to restore the branches of Israel" - נצירי netsirey, or נצורי netsurey, as the Masoretes correct it in the marginal reading. This word has been matter of great doubt with interpreters: the Syriac renders it the branch, taking it for the same with נצר netser, Isa 11:1. See Michaelis Epim. in Praelect. xix.

ISAIAH 49: 7 Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despises, to him whom the nation abhors, to a servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall worship; because of the LORD who is faithful, even the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

#### Verse 7

The Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One "The Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One" - "Perhaps we should read לקדושו likdosho," Secker: that is, to his Holy One. The preceding word ends with a ל lamed, which might occasion that letter's being lost here. The Talmud of Babylon has וקדושו ukedosho, and his Holy One.

To him whom man despiseth "To him whose person is despised" - "Perhaps we should read נבזה nibzeh," Secker; or בזוי bazui, Le Clerc; that is, instead of the active, the passive form, which seems here to be required.

ISAIAH 49: 8 Thus says the LORD, "In an acceptable time have I answered you, and in a day of salvation have I helped you; and I will preserve you, and give you for a covenant of the people, to raise up the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritage:

ISAIAH 49: 9 saying to those who are bound, 'Come out!'; to those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves!'

"They shall feed in the ways, and on all bare heights shall be their pasture.

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 Verse 9

To them that are in darkness "And to those that are in darkness" - Fifteen MSS. (five ancient) of Dr. Kennicott's, eleven of De Rossi's, and one ancient of my own, and the two old editions of 1486 and 1488, and three others, add the conjunction I vau at the beginning of this member. Another MS. had it so at first, and two others have a rasure at the place: and it is expressed by the Septuagint, Syriac, Chaldee, and Vulgate.

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ISAIAH 49: 10 They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun strike them: for he who has mercy on them will lead them, even by springs of water he will guide them.

ISAIAH 49: 11 I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.

ISAIAH 49: 12 Behold, these shall come from far; and behold, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim."

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## Verse 12

Behold, these shall come from far - "Babylon was far and east, מִמְּזֶרַח mimmizrach, (non sic Vett.), Sinim, Pelusians, to the south." - Secker.

The land of Sinim - Prof. Doederlein thought of Syene, the southern limit of Egypt, but does not abide by it. Michaelis thinks it is right, and promises to give his reasons for so thinking in the second part of his Spicilegium Geographiae Hebraeorum Exterae. See Biblioth. Oriental. Part 11 p. 176. סין sin signifies a bush, and סִיִּים sinim, bushes, woods, etc. Probably this means that the land where several of the lost Jews dwell is a woodland. The ten tribes are gone, no one knows whither. On the slave coast in Africa, some Jewish rites appear among the people, and all the males are circumcised. The whole of this land, as it appears from the coast, may be emphatically called אֶרֶץ שִׁינִים erets sinim, the land of bushes, as it is all covered with woods as far as the eye can reach. Many of the Indians in North America, which is also a woodland, have a great profusion of rites, apparently in their basis Jewish. Is it not possible that the descendants of the ten lost tribes are among those in America, or among those in Africa, whom European nations think they have a right to enslave? It is of those lost tribes that the twenty-first verse speaks: "And these, where had they been?"

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ISAIAH 49: 13 Sing, heavens; and be joyful, earth; and break out into singing, mountains: for the LORD has comforted his people, and will have compassion on his afflicted.

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## Verse 13

Break forth into singing, O mountains "Ye mountains, burst forth into song" - Three ancient MSS. are without the ' yod or the conjunction I vau before the verb: and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate.

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ISAIAH 49: 14 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me."

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#### Verse 14

The Lord (יהוה Yehovah) hath forsaken me, and my Lord (אדני Adonai) hath forgotten me - But a multitude of MSS. and several ancient editions read יהוה Yehovah in both places.

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ISAIAH 49: 15 "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, these may forget, yet I will not forget you!

ISAIAH 49: 16 Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

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#### Verse 16

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands "Behold, on the palms of my hands have I delineated thee" - This is certainly an allusion to some practice, common among the Jews at that time, of making marks on their hands or arms by punctures on the skin, with some sort of sign or representation of the city or temple, to show their affection and zeal for it. They had a method of making such punctures indelible by fire, or by staining. See note on Isa 44:6 (note). It is well known, that the pilgrims at the holy sepulcher get themselves marked in this manner with what are called the ensigns of Jerusalem. See Maundrell, p. 75, where he tells us how it is performed: and this art is practiced by travelling Jews all over the world at this day.

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ISAIAH 49: 17 Your children make haste; your destroyers and those who made you waste shall go out from you.

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#### Verse 17

Thy children shall make haste "They that destroyed thee shall soon become thy builders" - Auctor Vulgatae pro בניך banayich, videtur legisse בוניך bonayich, unde vertit, structores tui; cui et Septuaginta fere consentiunt, qui verterunt  $\omega\kappa\omicron\delta\omicron\mu\eta\theta\eta\varsigma$ , aedificata es, prout in Plantiniana editione habetur; in Vaticana sive Romana legitur,  $\omicron\kappa\omicron\delta\omicron\mu\eta\theta\eta\sigma\eta$ , aedificaberis. Hisce etiam Targum Jonathanis aliquatenus consentit, ubi, et aedificabunt. Confer infra Esai. Isa 54:13, ad quem locum rabbini quoque notarunt en tractatu Talmudico Berachot, c. ix., quod non legendum sit בניך banayich, id est. filii tui; sed בוניך bonayich, aedificatores tui. Confer not. ad librum Prec. Jud. part ii., p. 226, ut et D Wagenseil Sot. p. 253, n. 9. "The author of the Vulgate appears to have read בוניך bonayich for בניך banayich, as he translates it by structures tui, 'thy builders.' The Septuagint is almost the same with the Vulgate, having  $\omega\kappa\omicron\delta\omicron\mu\eta\theta\eta\varsigma$ , art built, as in the Plantin edition: but the Vatican or Roman copy reads  $\omicron\kappa\omicron\delta\omicron\mu\eta\theta\eta\sigma\eta$ , those shalt be built. To these readings the Targum of Jonathan has some sort of correspondence, translating et aedificabunt, 'and they shall build.' See Isa 54:13; on which place the rabbins also remark, in the Talmudic tract Berachoth, c. 9, that we should not read בניך banayich, thy sons, but בוניך bonayich, thy builders. See the note in Prae. Jud. part ii., p. 226, and also D. Wagenseil, Sot. p. 253, n. 9. "See also Breithaupt. not. ad Jarchi in loc.; and the note

on this place in De Sac. Poes. Hebr. Praelect. 31. Instead of בניך or בוניך bonayich, thy builders, several MSS. read בניך baneycha, thy sons. So also the Syriac: see the above note.

Shall go forth of thee "Shall become thine offspring" - יצאו ממך יצאו mimmech yetseu, shall proceed, spring, issue, from thee, as thy children. The phrase is frequently used in this sense: see Isa 11:1; Mic 5:2; Nah 1:11. The accession of the Gentiles to the Church of God is considered as an addition made to the number of the family and children of Zion: see Isa 49:21, Isa 49:22, and Isa 60:4. The common rendering, "shall go forth of thee, or depart from thee," is very flat, after their zeal had been expressed by "shall become thy builders:" and as the opposition is kept up in one part of the sentence, one has reason to expect it in the other, which should be parallel to it.

ISAIAH 49: 18 Lift up your eyes all around, and see: all these gather themselves together, and come to you. As I live," says the LORD, "you shall surely clothe yourself with them all as with an ornament, and dress yourself with them, like a bride.

#### Verse 18

Bind them on thee, as a bride doeth "Bind them about thee, as a bride her jewels" - The end of the sentence is manifestly imperfect. Does a bride bind her children, or her new subjects, about her? Zion clothes herself with her children, as a bride clothes herself, - with what? some other thing certainly. The Septuagint help us out in this difficulty, and supply the lost word: ὡς κοσμον συμφη· as a bride her ornaments. כליה כליה kichleyha callah, or כלה כלה kecallah keleyha. The great similitude of the two words has occasioned the omission of one of them. See Isa 61:10.

ISAIAH 49: 19 "For, as for your waste and your desolate places, and your land that has been destroyed, surely now you shall be too small for the inhabitants, and those who swallowed you up shall be far away.

ISAIAH 49: 20 The children of your bereavement shall yet say in your ears, The place is too small for me; give place to me that I may dwell.

ISAIAH 49: 21 Then you will say in your heart, 'Who has conceived these for me, since I have been bereaved of my children, and am solitary, an exile, and wandering back and forth? Who has brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where were they?'"

#### Verse 21

These, where had they been "These then, where were they?" - The conjunction is added before אלה elleh, that is, ואלה veelleh. in thirty-two MSS. (nine ancient) of Kennicott's, and fifty-four of De Rossi's, and so the Septuagint, Chaldee, and Vulgate. See the note on Isa 49:12 (note).

ISAIAH 49: 22 Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and set up my banner to the peoples; and they shall bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders.

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 Verse 22

Thus saith the Lord God - יהוה אדני Adonai Yehovah. Adonai is wanting in one MS., in the Alexandrine copy of the Septuagint, and in the Arabic.

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ISAIAH 49: 23 Kings shall be your nursing fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers: they shall bow down to you with their faces to the earth, and lick the dust of your feet; and you shall know that I am the LORD; and those who wait for me shall not be disappointed."

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## Verse 23

With their face toward the earth "With their faces to the earth" - It is well known that expressions of submission, homage, and reverence always have been and are still carried to a great degree of extravagance in the eastern countries. When Joseph's brethren were introduced to him, "they bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth," Gen 42:6. The kings of Persia never admitted any one to their presence without exacting this act of adoration; for that was the proper term for it. *Necesse est, says the Persian courtier to Conon, si in conspectum veneris, venerari te regem; quod προσκυνειν illi vocant.* "It is necessary, if thou shouldst come in sight, to venerate thee as king; which they call worshipping." - *Nepos in Conone.* Alexander, intoxicated with success, affected this piece of oriental pride: *Itaque more Persarum Macedonas venerabundos ipsum salutare, prosternentes humi corpora.* "The Macedonians after the manner of the Persians, saluted their monarch with the ceremony of prostration." - *Curtius, lib. 8.* The insolence of eastern monarchs to conquered princes, and the submission of the latter, is astonishing. Mr. Warmer, *Observ. 2:43,* gives the following instance of it from *D'Herbelot:* "This prince threw himself one day on the ground, and kissed the prints that his victorious enemy's horse had made there; reciting some verses in Persian, which he had composed, to this effect: - "The mark that the foot of your horse has left upon the dust, serves me now for a crown." "The ring which I wear as the badge of my slavery, is become my richest ornament." "While I shall have the happiness to kiss the dust of your feet, I shall think that fortune favors me with its tenderest caresses, and its sweetest kisses."

These expressions therefore of the prophet are only general poetical images, taken from the manners of the country, to denote great respect and reverence: and such splendid poetical images, which frequently occur in the prophetic writings, were intended only as general amplifications of the subject, not as predictions to be understood and fulfilled precisely according to the letter. For the different kinds of adoration in the east, see the note on *Isa 44:17.*

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ISAIAH 49: 24 Shall the plunder be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captives be delivered?

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## Verse 24

Shall the prey be taken from the mighty "Shall the prey seized by the terrible be rescued" - For צדיק *tsaddik*, read עריץ *arits*. A palpable mistake, like that in *Isa 42:19.* The correction is self-evident from the very terms of the sentence; from the necessity of the strict correspondence in the expressions between the question and the answer made to it, - and it is apparent to the blindest and most

prejudiced eye. However, if authority is also necessary, there is that of the Syriac and Vulgate for it; who plainly read עָרִיצָה arits, in Isa 49:24 as well as in Isa 49:25, rendering it in the former place by the same word as in the latter. - L.

These two last verses contain a glorious promise of deliverance to the persecuted Church of Christ from the terrible one - Satan, and all his representatives and vicegerents, persecuting antichristian rulers. They shall at last cease from destroying the Church of God, and destroy one another.

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ISAIAH 49: 25 But thus says the LORD, "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the plunder of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him who contends with you, and I will save your children.

ISAIAH 49: 26 I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I, the LORD, am your Saviour, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

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