

16 Isaiah Sees the Saviour

picturing Him as "calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executes my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."

One wonders how to relate such a prediction as this to the coming of Christ. Yet Isaiah 49:1-2 brings us directly into His presence:

(1) 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. (2) And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me.

The picture of Christ continues vividly for a number of verses leading up to the beautiful picture in verse 10. What a contrast is found in Isaiah 51:20!

Thy sons have failed, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net; they are full of the fury of the LORD, the rebuke of thy God.

Yet only two chapters later we reach the very familiar picture of the sacrifice of Christ in Isaiah 53.

Isaiah's wonderful predictions of Christ bring joy to every Christian heart. They are not, as they might seem at first sight, glorious passages intermixed with material that is quite unrelated. In the whole section, all the way from chapter 40 to chapter 56, there is a steady progress of thought, though it sometimes takes a bit of study to see how it develops. The section might be compared to a human body, in which many different portions are joined together by a skeleton that lies below the surface. In order to see this progress, certain important principles must be noted. Before we begin to examine the chapters in order, it will be helpful to look at some of these principles, noting relevant passages. So, in the next five chapters we shall give particular attention to the following:

1. The relation of Isaiah to his own times