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**God Answers Israel's Cry of Despair:  
Isaiah 49:14-50:3**

DESPITE THE WONDERFUL PROMISES in 49:1-12, followed by the beautiful doxology in verse 13, Israel may be imagined as thinking, *These are wonderful pictures of marvelous acts that God may perform in the distant future, but what good will this do me, enduring suffering and humiliation with no hope of deliverance?* In verse 14 she utters a cry of despair:

But Zion said, The LORD has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.

It is characteristic of humanity to have periods of doubt about God's great goodness. Here the Lord speaks to Isaiah's godly followers. These believing Israelites, knowing that the sin of their nation was so great that exile must inevitably come, might tend to give way to despair and even decide that there was no future for their nation or for their religion.

God answers Zion's despondent words with three arguments, each expressed in the form of a question.

1. "Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?" (49:15).
2. "Can prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?" (49:24).
3. "Thus says the LORD, where is the certificate of divorce by which I have sent your mother away?" (50:1).

Each of these questions is followed by an explanation.