

the nations and set my standard to the peoples, and they will bring your sons in their arms and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders. (23) And kings will be your guardians, and their queens your nursing mothers. 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.

Even though the center of attention moved back, in verses 14-16, to the time of the Exile, much of the picture in verses 17-23 looks far beyond anything that took place at that time.

An era is described in which the children of Zion will be far more numerous than ever before. They are not necessarily natural children, for verse 21 asks the question, "Who has begotten these for me, seeing I have lost my children?... Who has reared these?... Where did these come from?" It is not at all unnatural to take this as a picture of the new branches grafted into the olive tree described in Romans 11:24, though physically derived from a different source. Such an interpretation of verse 21 would suggest that verses 22-23 look to the extension of the knowledge of the true God throughout the world.

In the first part of verse 17, the King James Version reads, "Thy children shall make haste." By a slight change of vowels, the Hebrew word here translated "children" could be translated "builders," ³⁰ and the word is so rendered in many modern versions. Although there can be little question that in most cases knowledge of the original vowels has been correctly preserved, there are undoubtedly some instances where a vowel was not correctly remembered during the centuries prior to the time when vowels began to be indicated by signs in the text, perhaps as late as the tenth century after Christ. The Septuagint took this word to mean "builders," and this rendering was followed by the Vulgate. Actually it makes little difference which reading is adopted here, since both are true. The passage clearly predicts that Zion will be rebuilt; it also predicts a great increase in the number of its children. In the nearer context, *builders* might seem to fit better; in view of the following