

make it quite clear that he is an individual who comes out of Israel and who represents Israel, but who can yet be distinguished from the rest of Israel. So this individual who represents Israel is to gather Israel, to restore the tribes of Jacob, to restore the preserved of Israel, and yet is also to carry out the great work for which Israel was brought into being -- to bring light to the Gentiles and the salvation of God to the very ends of the earth. The individuality of the servant, suggested in previous chapters, is thus made absolutely clear in this chapter.

The note of universality is prominent in this chapter. It is stated in verse 6 that the servant is not merely to restore Israel, which is suffering, but is also to accomplish the work of the Lord to the ends of the earth. This was already indicated in the very first verse, which begins with a summons to the distant isles to listen to the Word of God as given by His servant.

In verse 1 the reference to the mother in connection with the servant is interesting. Ordinarily in Scripture one is spoken of as the seed of his father; only rarely is special reference made to the mother. We find, however, a thread beginning in Genesis 3:15, where mention is made of the seed of the woman, recurring in Isaiah 7:14, where it is predicted that a virgin will bring forth the coming King, Immanuel, and even touched upon in Micah 5:3 in connection with the promise of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem of Judah. This reference to the mother in 49:1 may be an allusion to these other passages.

The second verse contains two ideas. The first is that the servant's mouth is made like a sharp sword and that he is a polished shaft. This reminds us of the beautiful picture in Isaiah 42 of the quiet, successful progress of the servant. He is ideally fitted to perform his work and will never be discouraged until it has been completed. From the mouth of Christ, in His earthly ministry, there came such teaching that it has been the marvel of the world ever since. In the future His mouth will perform tasks of quite a different sort. In Isaiah 11:4 we read "and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked!" 2 Thessalonians 2:8 and Revelation 19:15, 21