

God. Isaiah 49:21, like Isaiah 29:22-23, presents another wonderful promise of what Paul predicted when he spoke of the grafting of wild branches into the olive tree of God's grace, so that the Gentiles would have a part in the inheritance of Abraham (Rom. 11).

In verses 22-23 the Lord vividly points out how the kingdom is to be extended. Many of the leaders of the Gentiles are to be "nursing fathers" and "nursing mothers" to the new children of Zion; they will bow down before the Lord and will perform their part in upbuilding the family of God.

This, of course, does not mean that in all periods of the future the people of God will seem to be successful. Plainly enough there will be ups and downs, times of progress and times of seeming defeat, but over the centuries this promise has been abundantly fulfilled. God has used many kings of the earth -- some of them voluntarily through love of God, others against their will -- as His instruments in building up His people.

Verse 23 ends with a wonderful promise: "for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me." God does not promise that there may not be temporary embarrassment or even seeming failure, but in the end His will is bound to be accomplished. Those who truly and sincerely seek to serve Him will often find their efforts rewarded in ways far beyond what they had ever dreamed. God makes even the wrath of man to praise Him and brings things to pass in most unexpected and wonderful ways. Surely the people of God, reading these words of the prophet Isaiah, would have their faith strengthened and be encouraged to wait for the Lord, well assured that His wonderful promises would be fulfilled.

The Second and Third Answers

The second answer to Zion's complaint is found in verses 24-26. God says in effect, "It may seem difficult to you that the mighty should be forced to disgorge their prey or to surrender the captives they have taken. However, My power is far greater than that of any of the mighty of the earth and I shall exert this power to save the children of Zion." He will save them not merely from physical oppression and from the Babylonian captivity, as He has promised to do through