

How can Israel do this? Of course this can't be all of Israel. There are some very wicked sinners in Israel. There are some who completely deny God. It can't be everyone in Israel. The OT has terrible denunciations of the wicked in Israel. It has terrible denunciations. To me it is one of the great evidences of the fact that God wrote this Book, the fact that God preserved and kept it for our use today is these terrible denunciations of Israel in general and of individual Israelites in the OT.

Did any other nations in the world history ever keep wonderful books for posterity?? Books in which terrible things are said about them! That are said about Israel in this Book? It is absolutely unique in this way. That they should keep and treasure as holy documents books that say terrible things about their nation. Just take the denunciations of wicked Israelites that this book has and put them together, and you say Why did they ever keep such stuff? Why did they every treasure and preserve it and revere it? Because God showed them it was His Word. These prophets and these individuals who came from many different backgrounds and different situations, some of them standing alone against the whole nation yet God preserved what they wrote and led the people to preserve it and to consider it as God's holy Word!

So we have certainly the servant cannot be the whole of Israel. Is Israel going to be able to fulfill this wonderful picture, this ideal picture which is given in ch. 42? Will a part of the nation do it? Will a large part of the nation do it? Or will there perhaps be just one individual who will come out of Israel, who will be truly an Israelite, who can represent Israel but who can carry out the great work that is here laid out for the servant of the Lord.

Then you turn over to ch. 49. In this ch. you find another of the Servant Songs. Here we have the peculiar picture. In some parts you may think this is Israel speaking; yet as you read you don't see how this can quite fit the whole nation. You read, "Listen to me you isles. Hear this you distant nations. Before I was born the Lord called me. From my birth he made mention of my name." Well, that certainly can be said as true of Israel. God had planned in advance. He had predicted the coming of Israel. "He made my mouth like a shapened sword, in the shadow of His hand He hid me. He made me into a polish arrow, and concealed me in his quiver. He said to me, You are my servant, Israel in whom I will display my wonders."

How wonderful is Israel. So happy that he is God's servant and able to fulfill God's wonderful purpose. But here he sees the note changes. "But I said, I have labored to no purpose. I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is with my God. Here is the servant. You think of Israel in the . You think of the godly portion of Israel. They struggled, they strived, but they are not able to accomplish it, his work. They can't fulfill it. A wonderful picture of God's servant. Israel had the responsibility to fulfill this, Israel was called into existence in order that it might be fulfilled but Israel is unable to do it! Can someone represent Israel, be of Israel and yet be able to fulfill this tremendous task that God has put before His servant??