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Zion Not Rejected

49: 14-21

Zion not rejected DIG: What are Isra'el's doubts in 7:14 and 24? How does this passage answer them? Having children was important, both as a sign of ADONAI's blessing and for provision for the future. What then does it mean that the people feel like a barren and widowed woman? What images does God use to respond to that feeling?

REFLECT: How do you react when you feel like the LORD has forgotten about you? Do you believe your feelings? Can they mislead you? Or do you rely on God's word? Who could gain from having you feel this way? What can you do about it? When in your life have you felt barren and bereaved, and unexpectedly received a gift from God, and said in your heart, "Where did that come from?"

These verses contain **Zion's** complaint, or **her** assertion, that **ADONAI** had forgotten and rejected **her**, saying: **But Zion, or the people of Jerusalem, said . . .** the opening word, **but**, argues that this thought is a continuation of the previous section (**to see link click [In - He Has Made My Mouth like a Sharpened Sword](#)**). In response to the promises of the restoration of **Isra'el** from **Messiah's** perspective in **49 1-13**, it is as though **Zion** was saying, "All that is really nice, but that has nothing to do with **me** because **God** has given up on **me**." **ADONAI has abandoned me; Adonai has forgotten me** (49:14 CJB).

Zion, pictured as a rejected and abandoned **wife**, is emphasized going forward (**51:11, 16, 18-20, 52:1, 54:1-8 and 66:7-14**). This foreshadows the expanded focus of **Chapters 49-55**. Although the metaphors of exile and captivity are still used, **God** no longer addresses the exiles in Babylon; however, the relationship of the nation to **ADONAI**, and the implications of that relationship, is emphasized.

Then **God** responds in a very beautiful and moving way, saying, "No, no! You have not been forgotten. **Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has born? Though she may forget, I will not forget you (49:15)! You** are included in **My** plan of redemption. In fact, it is through **you** that it will be realized." It is very seldom that **mothers** can forget or abandon **their children**. Yet as rare as this

happens, from **ADONAI's** perspective **He will never forget Jerusalem** no matter how bad it seems to look. **His love** is even greater than a **mother's** love. Much the same point is made in **Psalm 27:10**, where we read: **Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.** Why can't **God** forget **Jerusalem**? **He** tells us in the next verse.

*Sometimes we face struggles in life, and we are tempted to think that **God** has forgotten us. We may even believe that He no longer loves us. But the **LORD's** love for us is as wide as the open arms of **Messiah** on the cross. And the tender compassion of **ADONAI** is more dependable and more lasting than the **love** of a nursing mother for her child. Be comforted: **For the LORD is good and His love endures forever; His faithfulness continues through all generations (Psalm 100:5).***

Then **God** uses a second image to assure **Zion** that **He** has not forgotten **her**: **See, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands (49:16a).** This is opposite of the normal practice. Instead of the master's name being written on the servant's hands, the servant's name is written on **the Master's hands**. This is a figurative way of expressing that **the LORD** will never forget **Zion**. **The City** is represented as graven on **His hands**, so that its walls are perpetually in **His** sight, and thus **the people of God**, who are figured by **the City**, are kept in everlasting remembrance. A similar form of speech is frequently used in India to express one's destiny. It is common to say, in reference to men or things, "They are written on the palms of his hands." Remembrance of an absent one is expressed by a figure of speech used in this verse: "Ah, my friend, you have long since forgotten **Me!**" But have **I** forgotten you? Never!¹⁹²

*Quite a thought isn't it? Your name written on **God's hands**. Your name on **the LORD's** lips. Maybe you've seen your name in some special places. On an award or diploma . . . But to think that your name is on **the LORD's hands** and on **His lips** . . . could it be? Or perhaps you have never seen your name honored. And you can't remember when you heard it spoken with kindness. If so, it may be more difficult for you to believe that **ADONAI** even knows your name. But **He** does. Written on **His hand**. Spoken by **His mouth**. Whispered by **His lips**. Your name (from *When God Whispers Your Name*, Nashville: W Publishing Group, 1994).*



He cannot forget **Jerusalem** because every time **ADONAI** lifts up **His hands** **He** sees the name **Zion**. In addition, **He** says **your walls are ever before Me (49:16b)**. **He** explains this phrase later in **Isaiah** when **He** says the **walls of Jerusalem** are continually before **Him**. How are the **walls of Jerusalem** continually before **God**? **He** says: **I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they will never be silent day or night. You who call on the LORD, give Him no rest until He establishes Jerusalem and makes her the praise of the earth (62:6)**. There are **angels** standing around the **walls of Jerusalem** to this day. **They** have only one ministry; **they** are **God's** reminder that **He** has made a promise that **Jerusalem** will be **the praise of the earth**, so that **God** will fulfill that promise. As a result, when **God** says **your walls are ever before Me** this is what **He** means. **God** has not forgotten **Zion**, and the proof that **God** has not forgotten **her** is three-fold. First, **Zion** is written **on the palms of God's hands**.

Secondly, **Your sons hasten back, and those who laid you waste depart from you (49:17)**. In this **far eschatological prophecy** the enemies of **Zion**, the antichrist and his armies, will disappear when the **Sons of Zion** ultimately return.

Thirdly, **Zion** was encouraged to **lift up her downcast eyes and look around**; all her **sons** will **gather and come to her (49:18a)**. One of the reasons we know this is **a far eschatological prophecy** rather than a near historical one, is that not **all of the Jews** came back to **Zion** after the **Babylonian** captivity. In fact, most did not. Consequently, for **all her** sons and daughters to be gathered to **her**, it has to be during the Millennial

Kingdom (the context is important, so see [Iq - The Gentiles and the Return of Isra'el](#)). Surrounded by **her** children, **she** asks, "How can this be?" **God** has sworn it on **His** own life, "**As surely as I live, declares the LORD, you will wear them all as ornaments; you will put them on, like a bride**" (48:18b). During the Great Tribulation, the wretched old **woman** who had seemingly lost everything will suddenly have children all around **her**, wearing **them** like many **ornaments**. **Zion** will be clothed with **Jews** returning from all over the world. When they get there, what will happen? That's what **Isaiah** describes next.

Zion will be restored. Here, then, is further evidence of **her** final restoration and that **her sin had been pardoned**. **Though you were ruined and made desolate and your Land laid waste, Isra'el will be too small for your people, and those who devoured you will be far away (49:19)**. The **Land laid waste** refers to the places that will be devastated within the **Land** of **Isra'el** during the Great Tribulation. It is as if **ADONAI** were saying, "The antichrist and those who tried to destroy you will all be gone, and in their place will be so many Jews that **the Land** seems to be overflowing." Although **Zion** will be threatened with total destruction by the antichrist and his worldwide army (see [Kh - The Eight Stage Campaign of Armageddon](#)), **she** will survive.

The children born during your bereavement will yet say in your hearing, "This place is too small for us; give us more space to live in" (49:20). So many **Jews** will return to **Zion** from all over the world, that **Isra'el** will be teeming with **them**. **Babylon** was not **her** final destiny. When reading **Isaiah's** prophecy and looking into **the far eschatological future** the **Babylonian** captives would be encouraged by the abundance of **their** future.

Here we hear **Zion** thinking out loud, like an old **woman's** astonishment over having **children** around **her** again when those she **had** borne were dead. As though **she** was too old to have any more **children**. And it is as if **she** is saying, "Where did **these** come from? **Then you will say in your heart, "Who bore me these?" I was bereaved and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who brought these up? I was left all alone, but these - where have they come from**" (49:21). I thought I was left alone. I thought I would have no more **Jewish children** to live within **me**. But look, **they** have started to come back." One can imagine Naomi holding the grandson she thought she would never see saying something similar (**Ruth 4:13-17**). Are **these children** a result of something **she** has done? No, **they** are the gift of **God**. **She** did not bear **them**, nor did **she** rear **them**, so where did **they** come from? It could only come from the fruitfulness and the grace of **God**. This theme runs straight through the Bible, from Sarah onward.

In ourselves we are barren and bereaved, no more able to bring abundant life or eternal life

onto this planet than we are able to give ourselves physical life. If abundant, eternal life is to be ours, it will be the gift of **God**, and we will look on in amazement, saying, "Where did that come from." **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:8-10).**¹⁹³