

PARADOX:

Finding Clarity in Life's Contradictions

Our lives are filled with apparent contradictions. We often say illogical things like, "Less is more," and "The only constant is change." Literally speaking, such statements can't be true, but deep down, we know they are right. And so it is with God sometimes.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah found God in life's paradoxes. He saw God as a garden flourishing in the desert, as a slave who is more powerful than his masters, and as a healer who is mortally wounded. Through his prophecies, Isaiah revealed a deeper reality about God that cuts through our apparent contradictions and points directly to our crucified savior, Jesus Christ. At The Story, we'll explore these deeper truths beginning Sunday, March 2, through Easter Sunday.

March 30, 2025 - Part 5 - Barren Parents & Orphaned Heirs

Think about a time when you felt like God forgot about you. **What made you feel that way?**

Isaiah 49 is a key chapter that reveals a profound mystery about God's plan to save the world. In it, Isaiah speaks from the perspective of a figure known as "the Servant of the LORD."

Isaiah 49:1-2 - Listen to me, you islands; hear this, you distant nations: Before I was born, the LORD called me; from my mother's womb he has spoken my name. He made my mouth like a sharpened sword, in the shadow of his hand *he hid me*.

What does the Bible say about "the Word of God"? (see Heb. 4:12, John 1:1-3, 14)

What might Isaiah's vision of a sword have to do with Jesus? (Matt. 10:34, Rev. 19:11-15)

What is the significance of Isaiah's prophecy that the Servant of the Lord would be "hidden" by God until the right time? (Gal. 4:4-5)

What do all of these clues in Isaiah 49:1-2 reveal about the identity of the "Servant"?

Isaiah 49:3 - He said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor." But I said, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing at all."

If Jesus is the "Servant of the Lord" foretold in Isaiah 49, why would he say that his efforts were in vain? (John 1:10-11, Matt. 17:17, Matt. 27:46)

What does it mean to you that Jesus felt forgotten and experienced pain just like us?

Isaiah 49:5-7 - And now the LORD says - he who formed me in the womb to be his servant... "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." This is what the LORD says... to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation... "Kings will see you and stand up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful..."

What historical evidence do we have of these prophecies - that the Servant would be a "light for the Gentiles", that his salvation would "reach to the ends of the earth," and that kings and princes would "see and bow down" before him - coming to pass?

Isaiah 49:13-15, 18, 19-21 - Shout for joy, you heavens; rejoice, you earth; burst into song, you mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. But Zion said, "The LORD has

forsaken me, the LORD has forgotten me.” “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!”

“Lift up your eyes and look around; all your children gather and come to you... Though you were ruined and made desolate and your land laid waste, now you will be too small for your people... 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.’ Then you will say in your heart, ‘Who bore me these [children]? I was bereaved and barren; I was exiled and rejected. Who brought these [children] up? I was left all alone, but these [children] - where have they come from?’”

Why might Zion (aka *Israel*) have felt forgotten by God?

What was God’s promise to His chosen people Israel? How did He fulfill it? (Gal.3:28-29)

Isaiah 49:23, 26 - “Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground... Then you will know that I am the LORD... Then all mankind will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”

What is God’s promise to everyone who feels forgotten, barren, orphaned, and alone?

What does this promise of God mean to you?

Your Notes:



Save the Dates: Easter at The Story

We're a month away from celebrating Easter at The Story and we'd love for you to join us! Visit thestory.church/easter to save the dates, complete registrations where necessary, and share important information with your friends.



Lenten Midweek Prayer

Join us on Wednesdays at 7pm (through April 16) in the Sanctuary to spend some time dwelling on Scripture and in prayer both individually and as a group. Come as you are and as you are able!



Serve on Sunday Teams

Serving on Sundays is one of the best ways to meet new people and get connected to The Story! Stop by our **Teams Table** today to learn more about ways you can sign up to serve on Sunday mornings!