



700 years before **Jesus was born**; **Isaiah**¹ was a prophet in Judah and Jerusalem. Isaiah predicted so much about Jesus' life that his book is frequently called the "**Fifth Gospel**" --- as in (1) Matthew, (2) Mark, (3) Luke, (4) John, and (5) Isaiah! For our Advent our preparation this year, we will use the "**Fifth Gospel**" of **Isaiah** to prepare us to celebrate the birth of the Savior.

In Isaiah, there are four chapters that are referred to as the **Servant Songs**². These are 4 chapters that virtually outline the mission and ministry of Jesus, they are quoted frequently in the New Testament, and they teach us why the Son of God was born in Bethlehem. Today we are looking at the **Second Servant Song**, which begins like this:

Listen to Me, you islands;
 Hear this, you distant nations:
 Before I was **born**, Lord called Me; from My mother's **womb**, He has spoken My Name.
 Isaiah 49:1

¹ The name Isaiah means "Yahweh is salvation." He wrote from 740BC to 680BC. He was a Prophet when the Northern Kingdom of Israel was exile and destroyed by the Assyrian empire. However, his ministry was to the Southern Kingdom of Judah, particularly Jerusalem. He was a contemporary of the Prophets Hosea and Micah. He is the most quoted Prophet in the New Testament – at least 62 times! Jewish tradition says that Isaiah was martyred by being "sawn in two" and is referred in Hebrews 11:37.

² There are four "**Servant Songs**" in Isaiah that describe the obedience, suffering, and exaltation of the Servant of the Lord, the Messiah. These "songs" teach us of the Messiah and show Him to be God's righteous, Spirit-filled Servant who suffers for the sins of the world. The Servant Songs are found in Isaiah 42:1–9; Isaiah 49:1–13; Isaiah 50:4–11; and Isaiah 52:13–53:12.

The Messiah Himself is speaking these words; the Son of God is revealing to us what will happen at Christmas. These are words of *incarnation*: where the Son of God *takes on flesh and becomes a man*. The Only Begotten Son of God, **God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God** -- is **incarnate; in flesh**. He is given the Name "**Jesus**" -- which means **Savior**. *700 years earlier*, Isaiah had predicted the *incarnation* also:

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His Name Immanuel Isaiah 7:14

For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulders, and His Name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Christmas is when all of this came together; the Father sent His Son into the **world** to be the Savior. And that is the focus of the **Second Servant Song**: that Jesus is the Savior of **all people** and **all nations!**

The Lord says: "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." Isaiah 49:6

See, they will come from afar -- some from the north, some from the west, some from the region of Aswan." Isaiah 49:12

This is pure gospel for us! This is **good tidings of great joy, which shall be for all people!** The One the Father sent for us, the Faithful Servant, His only begotten Son Jesus, **SAVES US ALL!**

That's because we all need a Savior. Sin has crossed into all nations, all languages, and all bloodlines. Adam's sin is passed on to every one of us, and it totally and thoroughly corrupts us from the inside out. Every single person ever conceived, *man, woman, and child*, sins in their thoughts, words, and deeds. You know this to be

true. You have felt guilt before. You have sinned against God and against your neighbor. You know that someday you will die; and there's not a thing you can do about it. We have all sinned --- **you have sinned**. We all need help. We all need a Savior.

So God sends a Savior! Isaiah's “**Servant of the Lord**” is the Savior who was born in Bethlehem for us and for our salvation. His name is Jesus, and He will take away the sins of the world. His suffering and death on the cross reaches into all nations, all languages, and all bloodlines. He has paid for the sins of every person ever conceived: *man, woman, and child*. His work of salvation brings peace to the earth and goodwill towards men! *His work of salvation forgives your sins; gives you peace with God; and ensures that you have eternal life!*

Don't miss how immense this is.

We live 2,000 years later, on the other side of the earth, in the most prosperous and advanced country the world has ever seen. But yet we believe in one, single man --- who lived 2,000 years ago --- in a forsaken part of the Roman Empire --- who died like a common thief on a Roman cross --- like hundreds of thousands of others in that day and age. *But by the power of the Holy Spirit*, we know that this one, single Man is *God in flesh*; we know His Name is **Jesus**; we know that *He lived and died for us and for our eternal salvation*. That One Man, who Isaiah prophesied about 2,700 years ago, is the One God sent to rescue you from your sins and to give you eternal life. The Holy Spirit has given you faith so that you know who He is, and you want *and desire* His good gifts of forgiveness, peace, and eternal life!

Jesus is the Savior for **every tribe, language, people, and nation!**

No wonder then that Isaiah writes words of joy and thanksgiving at the end of this Servant Song:

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.
Isaiah 49:13

Advent is a time of joy, rejoicing, and bursting into song! God the Father loves you so very much that He sent His Son, Jesus Christ to be your Savior!

And then during your lifetime, God the Father sent the Holy Spirit to you; to lead you to Holy Baptism where you were given faith and where your sins were washed away.

That same Holy Spirit is at work through the Word and the Sacraments to nurture your faith, to strengthen it, and to keep you faithful throughout your life.

Shout for joy!
Rejoice!
Burst into song!

The **Savior of the Nations** has come;

And He **comforts** you
and has **compassion** on you!

Amen!

God the Father, You sent Your Son Jesus, the Faithful Servant that Isaiah prophesied, to rescue not just the Jews, but the Gentiles as well. We thank you for the Holy Spirit who has brought the gospel to us during our lifetime, created and nurtured our faith, so that we can trust Your Word and believe in Your Son for eternal salvation. Work in our church, and in our own lives, to let other people know about Jesus and this good news of great joy that is for all people. In Jesus' Name we pray, amen.

Isaiah 49:1-13

Listen to me, O coastlands,
and give attention, you peoples from afar.
The Lord called me from the womb,
from the body of my mother he named my name.
2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a polished arrow;
in his quiver he hid me away.
3 And he said to me, “You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”
4 But I said, “I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my right is with the Lord,
and my recompense with my God.”
5 And now the Lord says,
he who formed me from the womb to be his servant,
to bring Jacob back to him;
and that Israel might be gathered to him—
for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord,
and my God has become my strength—
6 he says:
“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will make you as a light for the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”
7 Thus says the Lord,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation,
the servant of rulers:
“Kings shall see and arise;
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves;

because of the Lord, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”
8 Thus says the Lord:
“In a time of favor I have answered you;
in a day of salvation I have helped you;
I will keep you and give you
as a covenant to the people,
to establish the land,
to apportion the desolate heritages,
9 saying to the prisoners, ‘Come out,’
to those who are in darkness, ‘Appear.’
They shall feed along the ways;
on all bare heights shall be their pasture;
10 they shall not hunger or thirst,
neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them,
for he who has pity on them will lead them,
and by springs of water will guide them.
11 And I will make all my mountains a road,
and my highways shall be raised up.
12 Behold, these shall come from afar,
and behold, these from the north and from the west,
and these from the land of Syene.”
13 Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;
break forth, O mountains, into singing!
For the Lord has comforted his people
and will have compassion on his afflicted.

Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was **Mary**. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born^[e] will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant^[f] of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband **Joseph**, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.