

111 49:12

represent all China as an indication of the wide outreach of the work of the LORD's Servant.

Today strong atheistic forces hold the Chinese mainland in subjection and prohibit the preaching of the Gospel. We may well take heart from Isaiah's prophecy in verse 12 and hope that there may yet be another great period of Gospel preaching in that land, if our Lord tarries.

The present tendency among critical scholars is to insist that "Sinim" must be a reference to Syene, a small town at the extreme southern end of Egypt. They point out that in Ezekiel 29:10 and 30:6 the words "from Migdol to Syene" are probably used to designate the entire land of Egypt. Since north and west are specified in the verse, they assert that this must be a reference to the south, and must therefore point to Syene (modern Aswan). The word is actually translated "Syene" in the Revised Standard Version.

There are serious objections to the view that "Sinim" means Syene. (1) It would be very unusual to add the plural ending to the name of a small town. (2) It would be strange to put the words "land of" before the name of a small town. (3) While *Syene* is a useful term to indicate the southern end of Egypt, it was a comparatively insignificant town at the time of Isaiah and, for several centuries afterward, much less important than Yeb, on the neighboring island of Elephantine. The suggestion that "Sinim" represents Syene is highly questionable.

In addition, the fact that north and west are mentioned does not necessarily mean that Sinim must be in the south. A reference to the east would be equally possible, and in fact more probable. Mention of north and west, directions to which no exiles had been taken, shows that the phrase looks far beyond Babylonian Exile; but it would be quite natural to include a reference to an eastern point, showing that God's mercy would eventually reach even to the distant land of China, far beyond Babylon. ^29

After these twelve verses, with their breathtaking presentation of the tremendous things to be accomplished by the Servant