

accomplishments or to individuals who have received great spiritual blessings. From either viewpoint, Israel would be considered as having already borne many children.

As Paul points out in Romans 9, God brought many blessings into the world through Israel. It was through Israel that the knowledge of the true God was kept alive during many centuries when the rest of the world seemed to have forgotten Him. It was through Israel that the books of the Old Testament were brought into being. It was through Israel that preparation was made for the coming of Christ into the world. From the viewpoint of having been the source from which great blessing had proceeded, Israel surely had borne many children, and had even continued to do so during the Exile, through the great revelations given through Ezekiel and Daniel.

From the other viewpoint, that of having brought into existence a spiritual progeny, Israel could also record a great accomplishment. In the centuries before the Exile there had been thousands of true believers in Israel, who had found in the sacrifices a prefiguration of the way God would provide deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. Even during the Exile there were great numbers of pious Israelites who studied the Scripture and put their faith in its promises. There was no time in Israel's history when she could properly be described as one who had borne no child. It seems quite clear, therefore, that the barren one who had borne no child is not a figure for Israel but for the Gentile nations, where darkness reigned so long.

It must be remembered that the work of the Servant is foundational to all of Part 3. This portion of Isaiah contains no specific mention of deliverance from exile but is all directly related to the work of the Servant of the LORD.

In the first long passage about the Servant of the LORD (Isa 42), His work was described as entirely related to the nations, with hardly a reference to any specific relation to Israel. In chapter 49 this emphasis was continued to a large extent, though it was specifically stated that He must also do a work for Israel (v. 6). it cannot be considered at all unlikely that