

## Text: Isaiah 50.4-9

Isaiah 50 is a short chapter, containing the third Servant Song. There is some discussion in the commentaries about the length of the Servant Song, some will add the last two verses of the chapter to it, others will not.

We are going to focus on the part that is clearly the Song, but I'll touch on the last two verses as we come to the end.

Now what have we seen so far in the Servant Songs?

In Isa 42, we had **The Call of the Servant**. There we see the servant called to bless the nations, with just a hint of his suffering:

Isa 42.4 "He will not be disheartened or crushed Until He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands will wait expectantly for His law."

In Isa 49, we had The Commission of the Servant. There we see the authority given him to restore Israel, but more than that, to become a light to the nations. In that Song we had a more explicit reference to his troubles:

Isa 49.4 "But I said, 'I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity; Yet surely the justice *due* to Me is with the LORD, And My reward with My God.'"

There is also this:

Isa 49.7 "Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel *and* its Holy One, To the despised One, To the One abhorred by the nation, To the Servant of rulers, 'Kings will see and arise, Princes will also bow down, Because of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You.'"

What we are seeing is the development of his mission with a hint of the opposition that the Servant will face.

Let's listen to Isa 50.4-9, and we will see a much more explicit statement of the servant's suffering, along with:

### The Commitment of the Servant

**Proposition:** The Servant of the Lord is committed to the mission until the very end.

Before we get into the message, I want to call your attention to some features of our text.

First, the repetition of the phrase: “the Lord God” — v. 4, 5, 7, 9

Second, one could arrange this material using that phrase as the marker. I am going to do that, but we’ll put the last two references together as the last point.

## I. The Servant Prepared (4)

### A. The purpose of preparation

1. In the last song, the servant’s tongue is a sharp sword

Isa 49.2 He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver.

2. Here, the Servant sustains the weary one with a word
  - a. “Weary one” = exhausted, worn out
  - b. No reference distinguishing the weary one of Israel or of the nations: just “the weary one”

This is a “building block” word: keep it in mind.

3. The preparation gives the Servant the tongue of disciples
  - a. The tongue of the disciple knows how to “bind up the brokenhearted” (sustain the weary one)
  - b. The tongue of the disciple is the tongue of counsel

### B. The pattern of preparation

1. Daily, direct interaction (morning by morning, “*babbōqer babbōqer*”<sup>1</sup>)
2. Daily opening the ear: readiness to hear as a *disciple*

He learns, he speaks:

<sup>1</sup> Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), 277.

Mk 1.35 ¶ In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left *the house*, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

Heb 5.8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

Jn 17.7-8 “Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; <sup>8</sup> for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.

### C. The person of the one prepared: he is a man

1. He learns
2. He is a disciple

“If Jesus was a true human being physically, he also was fully and genuinely human psychologically. Scripture attributes to him the same sort of emotional and intellectual qualities that are found in other men. He thought, reasoned, and felt.”<sup>2</sup>

“It is difficult to account for the fact that Jesus’ knowledge was extraordinary in some matters, but definitely limited in others. ... Part of the wonder of the incarnation is that although Jesus’ humanity involved his not knowing certain things, he was aware of this limitation and did not venture assertions on those matters. We must be careful to avoid the assumption that his humanity involved all of our shortcomings.”<sup>3</sup>

This point is the wonder of the Incarnation: God became a man!

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<sup>2</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1998), 725.

<sup>3</sup> Erickson, 726, 727.

## II. The Servant Committed (5-6)

“The servant of Jehovah affords us a deep insight here into His hidden life.”<sup>4</sup>

### A. The ear is opened

1. What did the Lord God say to the Servant? Text doesn't say
2. The following words imply the lesson is a hard one: but he is a disciple
3. But compare Israel

Isa 48.8 “You have not heard, you have not known. Even from long ago your ear has not been open, Because I knew that you would deal very treacherously; And you have been called a rebel from birth.

Ps 58.4 They have venom like the venom of a serpent; Like a deaf cobra that stops up its ear,

Isa 33.15 He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity,  
He who rejects unjust gain And shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe;  
He who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed And shuts his eyes from looking upon evil;

### B. The Servant did not turn back

1. He obeyed: his inner disposition
2. He stayed the course: his faithful outward conduct

Jn 8.29 “And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

### C. The Servant gave himself to the mission: here is the commitment

1. I gave my back
2. I gave my cheeks
3. I gave my face

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<sup>4</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, 2:277.

“It would be impossible for any sinful human being, no matter how fine a person he was, to undergo the sufferings herein described without a spirit of rebellion welling up within him. And if a spirit of revenge took hold of him, we might well understand. Even Jeremiah complained at the way he was being used (cf. Jer. 20:9, 14ff., and note Job 3). Only one who was entirely without sin could undergo such suffering without a rebellious spirit [cf. 1 Pet. 2:22–23].”<sup>5</sup>

Jesus literally endured these things: Matt. 26:67; 27:30; Mark 14:65; 15:16–20; Luke 22:63

“If we did not have the fulfillment of this prophecy in the life of the Lord Jesus, it would be easy to interpret this verse as only a figurative, poetic description of suffering.”<sup>6</sup>

### III. The Servant Vindicated (7-9)

#### A. The Lord God helps me (7, 9)

1. The identical phrasing leads me to put all three verses together
2. “Helps” has various nuances
  - a. Military assistance (an ally)
  - b. Help, meet for him KJV (Gen 2)
  - c. Personal assistance
  - d. And... a legal connotation: a help in court
3. In the following verses, we have the language of the courtroom
  - a. The one who contends (8)
  - b. The one who stands up against another (8)
  - c. The one who condemns (9)

All of these are legal adversaries, the Lord God helps his Servant

<sup>5</sup> Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1977), 301.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Isa 50.6.

## B. Commitment restated

1. I am not disgraced
2. I have set my face like a flint
3. I will not be ashamed

Lk 9.51 ¶ When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem;

Lk 9.51 ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, (KJV)

## C. Confidence in vindication

1. Vindication is like “justification” = declared righteous
2. Men condemn him, God vindicates him

## D. Results in a challenge to his accusers

1. Who will contend with Me?  
Let us stand up to each other;
2. Who has a case against Me?  
Let him draw near to Me.
3. Who is he who condemns Me?

“The verb *condemn* is the antithesis of *justify*, and refers to the pronouncement of condemnation.”<sup>7</sup>

## E. When will this come to pass?

1. The judgement of the Servant’s enemies is slow and long (wear out like a garment)

“They fall to pieces like a worn-out garment, and fall a prey to the moth which they already carry within them: — a figure which ... although apparently insignificant, is yet really a terrible one, inasmuch as it points to a power of destruction working imperceptibly and slowly, but yet effecting the destruction of the object selected with all the greater certainty.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 3:302–3.

<sup>8</sup> Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, 2:279–80.

## 2. The vindication of the Servant happens in stages

Ac 2.23-24 this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death.<sup>24</sup> “But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

Heb 1.1-4 ¶ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,<sup>2</sup> in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.<sup>3</sup> And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,<sup>4</sup> having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

### Conclusion:

**Proposition:** The Servant of the Lord is committed to the mission until the very end.

Isaiah speaks in the prophecy and gives the hearers a choice:

Isa 50.10 Who is among you that fears the LORD, That obeys the voice of His servant, That walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.

Isa 50.11 Behold, all you who kindle a fire, Who encircle yourselves with firebrands, Walk in the light of your fire And among the brands you have set ablaze. This you will have from My hand: You will lie down in torment.

Option 1: trust God

Option 2: trust idols (you will lie down in torment)