Isaiah – Chapter 50

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Chapter 50

Theme: Israel deserved their captivity, but Messiah would be gifted, faithful, meek, and mighty to save.

Outline:

1-3 God Vindicated and Israel Condemned for Captivity

4-5 Messiah Used Divine Gifts Faithfully in His Work

6-9 Messiah Meekly Endured Enemies by God's Help

10-11 Messiah Is the Determinant of Salvation and Truth

Preparatory Reading: Isaiah 11-12; Malachi 4.

Related Links:

A. Exposition of Isaiah 11 *(Root of Jesse)*.
B. Exposition of Isaiah 40 *(Comfort Ye)*.
C. Exposition of Isaiah 42 *(My Servant)*.
D. Son that Became King *(Is 9:6)*.
E. Well of Salvation *(Is 12:3)*.

Introduction:

A. We have reached the third section of the book of Isaiah that directs increasing attention to Messiah.
B. The main object of the chapter is to present the glory, meekness, truth, and authority of the Lord Jesus.
    1. Therefore, any attempt to assign verses 4-9 in particular to anyone but the Messiah is lying heresy.
    2. Of course, the Jews in their constant attempt to eliminate a meek Messiah corrupt it and Isaiah 53.
    3. Expositors have chosen Isaiah as the subject, someone else living in exile, or the best of the Jews.
    4. The prevailing interpretation among Jews during Jerome's time was the second alternative above.
    5. Most Christian commentators, especially those of more recent time, clearly see the Messiah here.
    6. The prophetic details cannot apply to Isaiah, any other unknown man, or any Jews with propriety.
    7. The prophetic details clearly fit the historical record of Jesus the Christ as recorded in the N.T.
    8. The division and threat of the final two verses cannot apply to any like Isaiah but rather to Christ.
    9. Jesus endured the specific torment/torture of verse 6 as a fulfillment (Luke 18:31-34; Matt 26:67).
    10. Once applied to Messiah, it accords well with related prophecies of Him in chapters 11, 53, etc.
    11. The Jewish scriptures, the Old Testament, including Isaiah, testify of Jesus the Christ (John 5:39).
C. We view this chapter and its prophecies from the perspective of exiles sold into Babylonian captivity.

1. However, the prophecy extends far beyond Isaiah's time and captivity in Babylon 160 years later.
2. It extends to the times of Messiah and the gospel era of the New Testament and Jews of that time.
3. Therefore, like other sections and lessons of Isaiah, the prophet's view is short and near together.
4. Isaiah saw the future captivity in Babylon (many chapters) and later the Messiah (some chapters).
5. When looking forward, the largest events would rise from the horizon to minimize minor events.
6. Keep in mind Isaiah moves all over the timeline in both directions e.g. Rome (Is 6:9-13), Assyria (Is 7:2), Messiah (Is 9:1-2,6-7), Assyria (Is 10:1-34), Messiah (Is 11:1-10), Babylon (Is 13-14).
7. There is no need for us to press Isaiah into any of this or to press Messiah into the first three verses.

D. Remember Isaiah's frequent change in verb tenses, for it his perspective (Is 43:12,16-17; 45:13-14).

God Vindicated and Israel Condemned for Captivity – Verses 1-3

1 Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

A. This prophetic chapter of Isaiah begins as all sermons should, "Thus saith the LORD."

B. God had indeed divorced them (Jer 3:8-11) and sold them away (Ps 44:12; Hos 2:1-5).
1. His relationship to them was like marriage, thus adultery (Eze 16:1-14,15-59,60-63).
2. Their relationship was like a purchase, thus selling (Ex 15:16; Deut 32:6; Is 43:3-4).
3. He had sold them many times before to enemies (Judges 2:14; 3:8; 10:7; I Sam 12:9).

C. God by Isaiah appealed to national practices bad and good of Israel to get their attention.
1. They could and would write bills of divorcement to get rid of wives (Deut 24:1-4).
2. They could and would sell children to pay off family debts (Ex 21:7; II Kings 4:1).
3. It was bad to dump wives (Matt 19:3-12); it was not so bad for debts (Rom 13:8).

D. The two questions forced self-examination by the nation as to the cause of the captivity.
1. God confronted them for reasons of their rejection by a divorce decree or bill of sale.
2. Captivity in Babylon indicated God was alienated from them and had rejected them.
3. God asked them to prove He was at fault (divorce) or obligated to others (creditors).
4. They were the cause. It was their sins and iniquities that had brought the calamities.

E. They tried to excuse and exonerate themselves and blame God instead (Ezek 18:1-3,29).
1. God had divorced them (Jer 3:8-11) and sold them as well (Ps 44:12; Hosea 2:1-5).
2. he great reversal of fortune in the nation was judgment for their sins (Deut 32:30).

F. If you want to think about the terribleness of divorce and slavery of children, hate sin!

2 Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there *none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.*

A. God continued to debate with Israel about the origin, source, and reason for their pain.
   1. They were in foreign captivity then and oppressed later for ignoring His warnings.
   2. When I warned and exhorted you by my prophets, why did you not answer and obey?
   3. God sent Israel many warnings over many years (Jer 11:7; 25:3-4; 35:14; 44:4-6).
   4. He then sent servants and Son; they ignored again (Mat 21:33-46; Jn 1:11; Lu 11:52).

B. Was their indifference and rejection of His warnings due to lack of power on His part?
   1. They must have discounted His power to punish first, but that is not the point here.
   2. God asked if His mighty hand was shortened? Had His power to save been reduced?
   3. God modified the shortening of His hand by *all* and His power to deliver by *none.*

C. He exalted His power against their indifference by giving illustrations of His strength.
   1. He reminded them of His ability to dry up the sea, like the Red Sea (Ex 14:21-31).
   2. He reminded them of His ability to dry up rivers (Joshua 3:7-17; II Kgs 2:8,13-14).
   3. He had told them how Cyrus would dry up the Euphrates to save them (Is 44:25-28).
   4. He was able to dry up water and/or change it to another liquid to kill (Ex 7:14-25).

D. It is the duty of fathers (parents) to teach the wonderful works of God to their children, so they will set their hope in God, obey Him, and not be a stubborn people (Ps 78:1-8).

3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

A. God continued to reprove Israel about their apparent lack of faith in His power (Is 50:2).

B. He indeed was able to deliver them by events of their national history of His strength.
   1. He can change the weather, sky, and sunlight. He brings dark storms and ends light.
   2. As in Egypt, a great deliverance of Israel, He sent darkness to be felt (Ex 10:21-23).
   3. He can and did bring national and spiritual darkness (Is 5:30; 8:22; 29:9-16; 45:7).
   4. He brought darkness on Israel at His death, but they still denied Him (Matt 27:45).

C. Reader, examine thyself lest thou be like these rebels (II Cor 13:5; 5:9-11; Eph 5:14).

Messiah Used Divine Gifts Faithfully in His Work – Verses 4-5

4 The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should

know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth ***morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.***

A. Jehovah had spoken (Is 50:1-3); now the Messiah, the One gifted by Jehovah, took up.
   1. Lord GOD is Lord (Adonai) and GOD (Jehovah) for Sovereign I AM THAT I AM.
   2. By His human nature as Mediator, Jesus was subject to sovereign God (I Cor 15:28).

B. God gave Jesus speech all admired (Mat 7:28-29; 22:46; Lu 2:46-47; 4:22; John 7:46).
   1. This gift was by the Spirit to comfort mourners (Is 11:1-5; 61:1-3; Matt 11:28-30).
   2. Isaiah had written about the fuller verbal gift of Jesus to comfort or slay (Is 11:1-5).
   3. Jesus comforted many very well (Mark 16:7; Luke 7:11-15,36-50; 10:38-42; 22:24-30; John 1:45-49; 4:7-26; 5:1-9; 8:3-11; 9:35-38; 11:20-38; 19:26-27; 20:16; etc.)
   4. Isaiah had also written of Messiah that he would not quench smoking flax (Is 42:3).
   5. If you are weary and heavy laden, there is a Savior that knows how to comfort well.

C. Jehovah figuratively wakened the Lord Jesus every morning for His daily instruction.
   1. The pronoun *me* is elliptical – *he wakeneth me* – as seen by the verse's last clause.
   2. Neither Jehovah nor him that was weary wakened every morning, but rather Jesus.
   3. Jehovah here wakened Messiah to hear, and Messiah heard attentively as the learned.
   4. Jehovah did teach Jesus (John 7:14-19; 8:28; 12:49-50; 14:10,24; 17:8,14; Rev 1:1).
   5. Jehovah gave Jesus ears to hear (Luke 2:52; John 4:34; 6:38; 8:29; 14:31; 15:10).

5 The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

A. The LORD opened our Lord's ear metaphorically by presenting Him glorious content.
   1. God did not hear for Jesus, and neither did God force Jesus to hear what He said.
   2. The words are for matter presented for hearing (Is 48:6-8; Ps 40:6-8; Job 33:14-17).
   3. Isaiah had just used this phrase for timing of revealed prophecies, not for ability.
   4. Paul used David's words for Jesus hearing God's will about sacrifices (Heb 10:5-9).
   5. Until there is light, the best eyes can see nothing, for all is darkness (Matt 6:22-23).
   6. Until there is sound, the best ears can hear nothing, for all is silence (I Cor 14:8).
   7. Of course we know God must open all senses for spiritual truth (Acts 16:14; 26:18).
   8. Of course we know rebellious men may stop up their ears (Zech 7:11; Acts 7:57).
   9. But Jesus was not depraved in spiritual death with His faculties like us (Eph 2:1-3).
   10. God opened Jesus' ears in this sense by supplying the content and matter to be heard.

B. Jesus was actively willing to do His Father's will, even when dreadful (Mark 14:36).
   1. He *learned,* as the context uses this word, for attention and obedience (Heb 5:7-10).
   2. He did not hesitate or resist as Moses, Jeremiah, and Paul, nor did He flee like Jonah.

3. He did not turn back, even when warned, but set His face (Luke 9:51; John 11:7-10).

Messiah Meekly Endured Enemies By God's Help – Verses 6-9

6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

A. Neither His sufferings nor death were without His will – He gave Himself (John 10:18).
   1. This section was prefaced with God revealing His will, which Messiah then did.
   2. Even in the grief of Gethsemane, He fully submitted to God's will (Luke 22:41-44).

B. Jesus gave His back to the smiters – they scourged Him (Matt 27:26; Mark 15:15; 19:1; Isaiah 53:5; Matt 20:19; Mark 10:34; Luke 18:33; I Peter 2:24; Psalm 129:3).

C. Jesus gave His cheeks to have His beard plucked; though this is not directly recorded in the gospel accounts, does any believer wish to doubt it (Neh 13:25; II Sam 10:4-5)?

D. Jesus gave His face to shame of scorn, hitting, nakedness (Matt 26:67; 27:29,35; Mark 14:65; 15:24; Lu 18:32; 22:63; 23:11,34,36; Jn 19:23-24; Heb 12:2; Ps 22:6-8,17-18).

E. Jesus gave His face to spitting, which is a prophecy that appears nowhere else in the O.T. (Matt 26:67; Mark 14:65; 15:19; Num 12:14; Deut 25:9; Job 30:10), and Luke recorded that Jesus knew this prophecy and referred to it (Luke 18:31-34).

7 For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

A. The divine plan of all ages – God sent His Son to die – included God's help of His Son.
   1. Jesus trusted God to the end, when He committed His spirit to His hands (Lu 23:46).
   2. They accused Him of trusting God, and He did (Ps 22:9-21; Matt 27:43; Heb 2:13).

B. He never feared being confounded, for He knew He would be successful (John 17:1-5).

C. Being confident in God, He set His face to go to Jerusalem (Lu 9:51-53; Mat 16:21-23).

D. His Abba Father sent an angel from heaven to comfort Him in Gethsemane (Lu 22:43).

E. For the joy set before Him, Jesus never varied but boldly went to Calvary (Heb 12:1-3).

8 He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.

A. Jesus trusted God to justify Him – show Him the glorious Son of God to the universe.
   1. Jesus did not need to be justified from sin; He rather needed vindication (Luke 7:29).
   2. After false accusations, mocking, and scorn, Jesus knew God would vindicate Him.
   3. The previous verse has Messiah's confidence of not being confounded or ashamed.

4. For joy set before Him, Jesus never varied but boldly went to Calvary (Heb 12:1-3).

B. God justified Jesus many times, but it culminated with promotion to heaven's throne.
   1. Justification of Jesus as God's Son is part of the great gospel mystery (I Tim 3:16).
   2. God justified the Lord Jesus Christ at His baptism in a glorious display of approval.
   3. God justified Him with mighty signs and wonders before and after His resurrection.
   4. God was near to justify Him, as He did by sending darkness, a great earthquake, and a partial resurrection, which caused the centurion to testify (Matt 27:50-54). Glory!
   5. God was near to justify Him, by raising Him from the dead (Rom 1:4; I Tim 3:16).

C. Jesus the Lord, exalted to God's right hand after His ascension, challenged His enemies.
   1. Let the false witnesses and enemies now come before my glorified state to face me.
   2. Where is Caiaphas now? Let him come and accuse me! Let him treat me rudely now!
   3. The Lord GOD, the great Judge of all, did justify and exonerate the Lord Jesus Christ as a holy and faithful Servant; who could care what envious Jews thought of Him?

D. Mystery of Godliness.

E. Mystery of Godliness.

9 Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

A. The Lord GOD helped Him greatly, and He was prospered and very exalted (Is 52:13).
   1. The divine transaction was by divine plan and involved the Godhead helping Jesus.
   2. For His humility in this world as the Son of Man, Jesus was glorified (Phil 2:9-11).

B. His enemies were despised, destroyed, and desolated by great wrath (I Thess 2:14-16).
   1. God brought upon that generation all the righteous blood from Abel to Zacharias.
   2. They suffered tribulation to a degree the world had not and never will see in a city.
   3. They decayed away into the dust of oblivion, so they can hardly be found anywhere
   4. Those in Israel today are questionably Semites and certainly not Abraham's children.

C. Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Messiah Is the Determinant of Salvation and Truth – Verses 10-11

10 Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.

A. This verse is to God-fearing elect, who obey God's Messiah and need His truth for light.
   1. The real children of GOD Jehovah fear and love Him and obey His Servant Son.
   2. The gift of eternal life included benefits of knowing Father and Son (John 17:2-3).

B. The servant is Jesus the servant and son of God (Isaiah 42:1; 52:13; 53:11; Phil 2:5-8).
    1. His spirit and action of servitude were without rebellion or turning back (Is 50:5-6).
    2. He is called servant of God repeatedly in popular passages ahead (Is 52:13; 53:11).

C. Walking in darkness and having no light is the condition of those needing to trust Him.
    1. They are cast down in soul, struggling with sin guilt, lacking fellowship with God.
    2. David wrote of such soul sickness before (Ps 27:13-14; 42:1-11; 43:1-5; 51:1-13).
    3. Where do you go, what do you do, when you are troubled and need soul comfort?

D. The light is truth, glory, and hope in the gospel comfort and rules of Jesus the Christ.
    1. He brought light (Is 42:6-8; 49:6-8; 60:1-3; Mat 4:7-12; Jn 8:12; 12:46; II Tim 1:10).
    2. He offered comfort to laboring saints, as we have seen (Isaiah 50:4; Matt 11:28-30).
    3. Paul said, Awake from sleep, arise from death, Christ shall give thee light (Ep 5:14).

E. When we trust in the name of the LORD in the New Testament, we trust in Jesus' name.
    1. What great combination of salvation and comfort in Jesus – God with us. Immanuel!
    2. Our greatest peace is trusting the name of Jehovah, I AM THAT I AM (Is 26:3-4).
    3. Yet the name of Jesus, Jehovah is salvation, is a great name (Phil 2:9-11; Act 4:12).

11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

A. This verse is addressed to unbelievers, mocking them and warning them of judgment.

B. The fire and light here is in contrast to the light of the previous verse given by Messiah.
    1. The Jews assumed light and truth as Abraham's children with religious confidence in the Scriptures, temple, and other rituals of Moses' law, as they practiced it.
    2. John the Baptist ridiculed their confidence as children of Abraham (Matt 3:7-12).
    3. Jesus told them they were not Abraham's children, but the devil's (John 8:31-59).
    4. Jesus taught them that the only way to the Father was by and through Him (Jn 14:6).
    5. The apostles taught that salvation was only by the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).
    6. Paul taught plainly that not all children of Abraham were Jews (Ro 2:28-29; 9:6-8).
    7. He prayed for elect Jews to be saved from their confidence in the law (Ro 10:1-11).
    8. He taught well that Jesus is the Seed of Abraham, and we are Christ's (Gal 3:16-29).
    9. He taught an allegory from Sarah and Hagar that condemned Jews (Gal 4:21-31).
    10. He wrote a whole book pointing out the insufficiency of Moses' law (Hebrews).

C. Think about how II Tim 4:3-4 fits here … heaping up sparks/speakers … for itching ears.

D. Isaiah rebuked them ironically – intending opposite – by exhorting them in their folly.

E. There are eternal consequences for ignoring or rejecting God's glorious gift of His Son.
    1. Jesus told Jews they could not escape damnation of hell for their sins (Matt 23:33).

2. here is not and never shall be an escape from hell but by salvation in Christ Jesus
3. God kindly sent a Prophet like Moses, but woe to any rejecting Him (De 18:15-19).
4. If any love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha (I Cor 16:22).
5. Arminians create their own confidence in manmade ideas of salvation to no avail.
6. There is only one way to lie down in peace and safety, believe on Jesus (John 3:36).
7. There are two ways to approach God; only one lies down in peace (Luke 18:9-14).

F. There are practical consequences in life for ignoring and rejecting the Son of God.
   1. Before the Jews got to die, they suffered the greatest tribulation ever (Matt 24:21).
   2. Kiss the Son, as David warned the kings of the earth, lest you perish (Psalm 2:12).
   3. The churches of Jesus had two die in Jerusalem, many in Corinth (many more were sick and weak), and some in Thyatira (Acts 5:1-11; I Cor 11:30-32; Rev 2:20-23).

G. There are practical benefits in life for loving and obeying the Servant of the living God.
   1. If you love this Servant and desire to live for Him, then you should be baptized as was the eunuch after hearing about Him from Philip and Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:26-39).
   2. If you are already baptized, then you should remember His death for you with a church of saints showing your communion around His body and blood (I Cor 11:26).
   3. If you are already part of a church of saints, then you should seek the full dimensions of Him by the revelation of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:15-18; 3:14-19; 5:8-9,14-20; etc.).

H. Believe and love the Son, and obey Him for fear of God, Who He is, and this warning.