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Because the Sovereign LORD Helps Me, I Will Set My Face Like a Flint

50: 1-11

Because the sovereign LORD helps me, I will set My face like a flint DIG: What is the LORD emphasizing with the rhetorical questions here? This is the third of four Servant Songs. How would you describe the Servant's mission? His relationship to God? How does this differ from the nation of Isra'el (see 48:8)? What new element about the Servant, not found in the previous two songs, is added in 50:6-9? Consider the response of the people to Isaiah in 28:9-10 and 30:9-11. What might cause the Servant to be mistreated like this? What gives the Servant confidence and hope in spite of such ill-treatment? What might the prophet mean by those in the dark? What are they to do? How might God's example encourage them?

REFLECT: How would you describe your current relationship with God: (a) Not Looking? (b) Casual date? (c) Going steady? (d) Engaged? (e) Married? (f) Happily-Married? (g) Separated? (h) Divorced? (i) Restraining Order? Why? What would it mean for you to start your day by listening to ADONAI? How might you do so? Recently, has the voice of Jesus been one that sustains you when weary? Or one that cuts like a sharpened sword (49:2)? Why? When was the last time you were walking in the darkness? Did that experience strengthen your relationship with God or cause you to doubt? Who would benefit from your doubting? Who would benefit from your trust, faith, and belief in the LORD?



The context of these verses is the crucifixion of **Yeshua Messiah, the Servant of the LORD**, on the cross. **Adonai ELOHIM has opened My ear, and I neither rebelled nor turned away. I offered My back to those who struck Me, My cheeks to those who plucked out My beard; I did not hide My face from insult and spitting. For Adonai ELOHIM will help. That is why no insult can wound Me. That is why I have set My face like a flint, knowing I will not be put to shame (50:5-7 CJB).** The means by which **Isra'el's sin** will be pardoned is by the death of **the Suffering Servant**. As a result, **Isaiah** is pointing to the final salvation and restoration of **Isra'el** at the very end of the Great Tribulation.

ADONAI was ready to help **His people**, but **they** refused to repent. **They** have always had trouble trusting **the LORD**. When Pharaoh's army had **them** pinned in after leaving **Egypt**, **they** complained. **They** didn't believe that **God** had led **them** out of **Egypt**. **They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians?' It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert (Exodus 14:11-12)!"** **They** also complained during the Babylonian captivity, where **they** looked upon themselves as a displaced people.¹⁹⁴ And **they** will also grumble at the end of the Great Tribulation when the armies of the world close in on them. **They** will use the same old tired line and say: **ADONAI has abandoned us; Adonai has forgotten us (49:14 CJB).**

Isra'el's sin and the Servant's obedience: So here, **God** asks **them** some rhetorical questions that provide evidence of **His** faithfulness. It is as if **ADONAI** is asking **the Jews** in the last days as **He** had in the days of **Jeremiah**, **"Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away?"** The answer is there wasn't any. Why? Because **the LORD** was faithful to that generation just as **He** will be faithful to the last generation before

He returns. In addition, **He** will ask: **Or to which of My creditors did I sell you (50:1a)?** **The Jews** are seen as complaining that **God** had arbitrarily **divorced them** and sold **them** into slavery because under the Torah if a man got himself into debt and could not pay it, he could sell his own children into slavery and buy them back in the Year of Jubilee.¹⁹⁵ **God** did not sell **His children** into slavery and in addition, **God** has no creditors. The problem is not **divorce** or being in debt, the problem is **sin**. It was **because of your sins you were sold; because of your transgressions your mother was sent away** into the Babylonian captivity **(50:1b)**.

But more importantly, for this last generation before **He** returns, it will be as if **the LORD** is saying, "It is **because of your sins** that this is happening to you. Will you never believe in **Me**? **I** was not too weak to save you from Pharaoh and from Babylon and **I** am not too weak to save you now! **My** power is overwhelming." **When I came, why was there no one** else to help **you**? No, instead of trying to fix the blame on **God**, **the people** should be committing themselves to the power and grace of **their Creator** and **Redeemer** in **50:2-3**.

When **the LORD** issued a call for salvation, no one responded. Humans are incapable of gaining salvation by themselves, that was why **ADONAI** sent **His Son the Suffering Servant (John 3:16)**. **When I called, why was there no one to answer?** Was there a problem with **God's** ability to save? **He** asks rhetorically: **Was My arm too short to ransom you? Do I lack the strength to rescue you (50:2a)?** As the **arm** is an emblem of power, the shortness of the arm signifies diminished power, and length of the **arm** an increase. This is the third of nine occurrences of the **arm of the LORD (30:30 and 32, 40:10, 51:5 and 9, 52:10, 53:1, 59:1 and 16, 62:8, 63:5)**. **ADONAI's** power to deliver **His people** from **their** bondage of **sin** is expressed through the common ancient idiom of **the arm**. **The LORD** will rain blows on **their** ancient enemy and force them to give **His people** up. **God's arm** is not **too short**, or weak, for the task. But what will **His arm** look like? Its appearance, just as in **9:6-7**, will be surprising **(52:14 to 53:3)**. Instead of power to smash the enemy, it will have the power to absorb the worst the enemy has to offer, and yet give back love.¹⁹⁶ No, **God** lacks neither the desire nor the ability to deliver **His people** from **sin**. The only issue is whether **they** will repent and answer **Him** in faith when **He** calls.

The evidence that **ADONAI's arm** is not too short is seen in **His** control over nature. The allusions to the exodus cannot be missed **(50:2b-3): By a mere rebuke I dry up the Sea of Reeds** (see the commentary on **Exodus, to see link click [Ci](#) - The Waters Were Divided and the Israelites Went Through the Sea on Dry Land**), **and I turn rivers into a desert; their fish rot for lack of water and die of thirst** (see the commentary on **Exodus [Bk](#) - Strike the Water of the Nile and It Will Be Turned into Blood**). **I clothe**

the sky with darkness and make sackcloth its covering (see the commentary on Exodus [Bs](#) - **Moses Stretched Out His Hand Toward the Sky and Total Darkness Covered All Egypt For Three Days**). All these seem to be drawn from that experience. When all was said and done neither the strength of **the sea**, nor the power of **the sky** could resist **Him**. It does not matter how much **water** is in the ocean, or how bright the sun is in the heavens; **the LORD** can **dry up** the one and darken the other. No one should doubt **His** ability to save **the apple of His eye (Deut 32:10b)**!

Despite **God's** promises of redemption (**49:1-13**), **Isra'el** believed **she** was rejected (**49:14** and **24**). But **ADONAI** insists that is not the case because **He** can and will deliver her (**49:15-50:3**). In these verses **the Servant** speaks. **He** doesn't tell us *why* **He** is suffering here, but later we learn that it was to ensure **that her sin had been pardoned**. This would ultimately point to the fact that **the Suffering Servant** of **Isaiah** would be **Jesus Christ** and **His** atoning death on the cross would forgive the **sin** of the people. This is the third of **Isaiah's** four **Servant** Songs (**42:1-17**, **49:1-6**, and **52:13** to **53:12**).

When **Messiah, the Son of God**, was born, there is ample biblical evidence that **the man Yeshua** was a fully human person, not lacking any of the essential elements of humanity that are found in each of us. **He** was truly human in both the physical and psychological sense. Intellectually, **He** had remarkable knowledge, yet this knowledge was not without limits. **Yeshua** frequently asked questions, and the impression given by the gospels is that **He** asked because **He** did not know. It is difficult to account for the fact that **Jesus'** knowledge was extraordinary in some things, but definitely limited in others. But the point in these verses is that **He** had to undergo a learning process like everyone else. In **His** humanity **Yeshua** had to learn certain things. When **He** is twelve years old **He** was found by **His** parents **in the Temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions**. The Bible tells us that they were **amazed at His understanding and His answers** (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Ba](#) - **The Boy Jesus at the Temple**). But how did **He** gain **His** knowledge? We are not told anywhere in the New Covenant how **Messiah** learned what **He** knew in **His** humanity. **Luke** simply summarizes that **Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52)**. But how did **He** learn it? **Isaiah** tells us.

The Servant of ADONAI: Adonai ELOHIM has given Me the ability to speak as a man well taught, so that I, with My words, know how to sustain the weary (50:4a CJB). **God the Son** was discipled by **God the Father**. Early in the **morning, morning by morning, He wakens My ear to listen like one being taught (50:4b)**. The phrase **like one being taught** in Hebrew is not a verb, it is a noun, meaning *a disciple*. So what it is

really saying is: **He wakens My ear to listen like a disciple.** Just like we need to be *discipled*, **God the Father** would arouse **God the Son** in **His** humanity, take **Him** out somewhere and *disciple Him*. And one of the things **He** learned was **to know the word that sustains the weary**; or to minister with meaningful words. This is the same mission that was spelled out in **Chapter 49** of **Isaiah**. Later **Jesus** would say: **Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).**

But that is not all **He** was trained for. Next we learn that **Yeshua** was trained for the rebuke, but that **He** would endure. We are told **the Servant** did not react against mistreatment: **God opened His ears** so that when **He** was abused and mistreated at **His** trial and crucifixion **He** never **rebelled**. **And I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back (50:5).** There was no animosity or anger on **His** part. Neither did **He** **draw back** because **morning by morning God the Father** trained **Messiah** for **the suffering** task to which **He** was called.

Then **His suffering** is described: First, **I offered My back to those who beat Me**. At no point did **Jesus** try to retreat, or cower away from the blows. **He offered His back** to the forty lashes that was given to **Him** before **His** crucifixion.

Secondly, **He offered His cheeks to those who pulled out His beard**. This is the equivalent to what we term “pulling the hair out by the roots.” It was sometimes a self-inflicted suffering as a token of mourning (**Ezra 9:3**), sometimes an act of wanton persecution as shown here, and sometimes punishment, as represented in the text. It is said the ancient Athenians punished adulterers by tearing the hair from the scalp and then covering the head with hot ashes.¹⁹⁷ To understand what is happening here we need to look at the TaNaKh and its concept regarding **beards**. **They** were a meaningful symbol throughout. Therefore, pulling out someone’s **beard** was a sign of utter contempt (**Ezra 9:3; Nehemiah 13:25**). That is why **the LORD** forbid **Jews** from shaving **their** beards.

Thirdly, **Yeshua** says: **I did not hide My face from mocking and spitting (50:6).** As Roman guards began to spit on **Christ**, **He** never lifted up **His** hands, or ducked **His face** to protect **Himself** from this **mocking**. The fulfillment of this is found in four passages, **Matthew 26:67, 27:26 and 30; Mark 14:65 and John 18:22**. But while on the one hand men despised **the Servant, God the Father** aided **Him**. **Messiah** willingly subjected **Himself** to these things because **He** knew that **ADONAI** would come to **His** aide. And because of this, **Christ set His face like a flint** to the task to which **He** was called,

specifically, the task to **suffer** and die for **the sins** of the world. And **He** was so sure of this, **He set His face like a flint** (also see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Gk - As the Time Approached, Jesus Resolutely Set Out for Jerusalem](#)) to the cross to **suffer** because **Jesus** knew **He** would **not be put to shame** (50:7).

As a result, **the Servant** was **vindicated**. **He who vindicates Me is near. Who then will bring charges against Me? Let us face each other! Who is My accuser? Let him confront Me (50:8)!** But there is only silence because there is no one who can take this **Servant** to trial. It is only **the Father** who will vindicate **Him**. This vindication comes by means of the resurrection. **Regarding His Son, who as to His human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 1:3 and 4).** Now **Messiah** always *was* **the Son of God**, but the justification or the proof of **His Sonship** with **God the Father** came by means of the resurrection. **He** did not *become* **the Son of God** by the resurrection; **He** was proved who **He** claimed to be by the resurrection. Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: **He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Ruach ha-Kodesh, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, and was taken up in glory (First Timothy 3:16).** Notice **He** was **vindicated by the Ruach ha-Kodesh, being taken up in glory**, after the resurrection. In fact, the resurrection proves the deity **of the Son**.

The Servant was not condemned. Once again there is recognition **of God the Father's aid**. **Look, if Adonai ELOHIM helps Me, who will dare condemn Me?** And for those who would dare to contend with **the Son, here, they are all falling apart like old, moth-eaten clothes (50:9).** **They** will die away like an **old piece of cloth**. **The Servant** is eternal and will live forever because of the resurrection that justified **His** claim. But, for **those** who dispute **His** claims, **they** will fade away with age because **they** do not have **the Spirit** to teach and guide **them**. It is interesting to note that some of **the sages teach that the Suffering Servant is Isaiah himself. But others regard him as the personification of the saintly minority or Isra'el, the faithful remnant.**

The Message to Believers and Unbelievers Alike: Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on His God (50:10b). Throughout **Chapters 49 and 50**, primarily **the Servant**, but to some extent, **God the Father** has been speaking. But now **Isaiah** speaks and asks: **Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of His Servant (50:10a)? The prophet encourages his people** who were wondering whether **their dark** situation was evidence that **God** had forgotten **them**. **Isaiah's** answer is to have faith in **the word of His Servant**. No matter

how gloomy things get, if we trust and obey, **the LORD** will be with us. Therefore, to trust and obey **ADONAI** would seem to imply being in the light. On reflection, however, that is not necessarily the case. Those who follow **the Servant** may indeed walk with **Him** into the darkness of trouble or distress. But this does not imply that we should forego our reliance on **Him**. Through the ages, believers have equated **ADONAI's** blessing with comfort and a sense of well being. But that is not the way of **the Servant**. Therefore, the challenge is again and again, do not lose your confidence in **the LORD**. Put your hope, your **trust**, and your belief in **Him**.¹⁹⁸

However, for those who insist on walking by their own **light**, they will suffer the fate of those who reject **Yeshua Messiah**. **But now, all you who light fires and provide yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze.** The final verse is an ominous warning: **This is what you shall receive from My hand: You will lie down in torment (50:11).** This is a Jewish expression meaning: **You will lie down in sh'ol.** In the parable of **the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment . . . he begged father Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's house for he had five brothers. He** wanted **Lazarus to warn them, so that they will not come to that place of torment (Luke 16:23 and 27-28).** Therefore, unbelievers who self-righteously **light** their **torches** to illumine their **own paths** (that will supposedly lead them to safety), will only receive judgment (see the commentary on **Revelation Fp - The Lake of Fire is the Second Death**).

For believers, no matter how **dark** it gets, we are to rely upon **ADONAI**. **Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).**