

-Save This Page as a PDF-

Look to the Rock from which You Were Cut, and to the Quarry from which You Were Hewn

51: 1-8

Look to the Rock from which you were cut, and to the quarry from which you were hewn DIG: Chapters 51:1 to 52:12 are an extended poem, summing up ADONAI's intent for the believing remnant. How is their current situation like that of Abraham and Sarah? Since Abraham was so old and his wife, Sarah, was barren, why would God use this example for the righteous of the TaNaKh? If the previous verses were meant to give hope to the faithful remnant, what would these verses do for them? What does this indicate about the LORD's purpose in restoring Zion? Compare 51:6 with Genesis 15:5. How does the heavenly vision of the faithful remnant compare with that of Abraham? What does this stress about God?

REFLECT: When have ADONAI's promises seemed to you like mere words? At those times, what forces seem to be stronger to you than the LORD? When you feel like that, how might the faith of Abraham, who waited 25 years to see one child born, encourage you? If you were being persecuted to the point of death, what would it mean to you to realize that God's promises are more enduring than the stars or the earth around you? How might meditating upon the lesson of the stars give you a new perspective on the problems that face you today? Do you believe that the salvation granted by the Servant will last forever and never fail? What is the basis for your belief? How do you hide ADONAI in your heart? How are you at odds with this fallen world? Has it cost you anything? Do you have a light touch on the things of this world? How so? Is there anything you need to let go of? Does the Lord mean what He says?

Chapter 51 is a **far eschatological prophecy** and a message of **comfort** to a generation that had not even been born yet. It was a message of **comfort (40:1-11)** to the last **Jewish** generation before **the Messiah** returns at the end of the Great Tribulation (**to see link click Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah**). They were being persecuted, hunted down and killed like animals by the antichrist and the armies of the world; therefore, **the LORD** gives **His** chosen people three messages of comfort because

her sin had been pardoned. First, **He** asks **them** to look at **their** glorious past in order to learn lessons for the future (**51:1-3**). Secondly, there is the **comfort** of **God's salvation** (**51:4-6**), and thirdly, there is **comfort** from knowing that **their** enemies will perish (**51:7-8**).

The first message of comfort comes from Israel's origin (51:1-3). Just as **God** had blessed **one man, Abraham**, by making **him** the ancestor of **numberless descendants** (**Genesis 13:16**), **He** would also bless **Abraham's offspring** who were being persecuted and slaughtered by the antichrist.¹⁹⁹ Those whose hearts are hardened toward **God** will not particularly be disturbed by **His** apparent failure to keep **His** promises, if they were even aware of them at all. But **the believing remnant** will be discouraged. **They** will be decimated, scattered, and desperately trying to avoid death at the hands of the antichrist and his henchmen. However, those who would listen to the voice of **the Servant** would learn and receive encouragement from what had happened in the past.

Listen to Me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD (51:1a). This call, **listen to Me**, is clearly to **the faithful remnant**. Only those **who pursue righteousness and seek the LORD** are **faithful**. During the Great Tribulation, in the midst of **their** turmoil and pain, **God** asks the **holy ones** (**Job 5:1; Deuteronomy 33:2-3; Psalms 16:3 and 34:9; Zechariah 14:5**) to think about the background of **their** nation.



Figuratively speaking, **Isaiah** asks the believing remnant to **look to the rock from which they were cut and to the quarry from which they were hewn (51:1b)**. The **rock** was **Abraham** and the **quarry** was **Sarah**, “founders” of the nation. What is the point **He** is making? How big was **the Jewish nation** in the days of **Abraham**? The entire **Jewish race** was literally in **Abraham**. There was only one **Jew** and **his wife**. Yet, out of that one **Jewish** couple came a nation. And certainly **the faithful remnant** was greater than one **Jew**. And if **God** can make a great nation out of one **Jew**, **He** could certainly make even greater things out of a small **faithful remnant**.

Look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth (51:2a). When **God** told them to **look**, **He** used the same verb that **He** used in **Genesis 15:5** to command

Abraham to look up at the heavens and count the stars. So just as **Abraham** was called on there to **look** and believe for a numberless offspring to come from the barren womb of **Sarah**, **Isra'el** is here called to **look** at the faithfulness of **ADONAI** in the past and to believe in, to trust in, to have faith in **God**, that **He** would yet again keep **His** promises to a barren **Zion** with children from around the world. Here again, the path to **righteousness** with **God** is through belief, truth, and faith in the promises of **the LORD (Genesis 15:6)**.²⁰⁰ Would they believe that? Do *you* believe that?

When I called him, he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many (51:2b). Here **God** used three Hebrew words (phrases in English) concerning **Abraham**. **God** says **I called him, I blessed him and** then the main point, **I made him many**. *This was the comfort.* **God** says, when **I** do the calling, then **I** do **the blessing**. And when **I** do **the blessing**, then it multiplies. When **Abraham** was but one, **I called him, I blessed him, and I made him many**. That is, **He** gave the patriarch many **descendants** as **He** had promised (**Genesis 12:2, 15:5, 17:6, 22:17**). For many years **Abraham** and **Sarah** had no children, but they believed **God's** promise (**Genesis 15:6**). The same will be true of the **faithful remnant, the Hebrew** believers of every age. Although small in numbers, **God** does the calling, **God** does the blessing and eventually, **God** will multiply **them**. Though **they** had not yet seen the fulfillment of **God's** promises about **Isra'el** living at peace in **the Land (Genesis 15:18-21)**, they have **His** sure word that the Messianic Kingdom would be established upon the earth.

The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins. **Comfort** for the past should provide **comfort** for the future. Just as **God** had prospered **Abraham** even though **his** nephew Lot had selfishly chosen the well-watered plain of the Jordan, which was **like Eden, the garden of the LORD (Genesis 13:10-11)**, so also **God** would now bring the believing remnant back to **the Land** and **make her deserts like Eden, and her wastelands like the garden of the LORD**. The result will be **joy and gladness, thanksgiving and the sound of singing (51:3)**.²⁰¹ Therefore, the first message of **comfort** comes from **Isra'el's** origin.

Comfort from God's Salvation (51:4-6). A second call comes to **the believing remnant**. Here the address is made even more personal than in **51:1**. Who are these **people** who are desperately seeking **ADONAI**? They are **His people, His nation**. **The Servant** says: **Listen to Me, My people; hear Me, My nation (51:4a)**. No matter what happened in the distant past, no matter how far **they** had missed the mark, no matter how much **they** had sinned, if **they** were truly seeking **the LORD**, **He** calls them **His** own. All **His** promises are **theirs**. Therefore, we know **God** is not talking to the whole nation but only **the faithful**

remnant.

My [just rulings] will go out from Me; My justice will become a light to the nations (51:4b). What **rulings** is **He** dealing with here? **They** are not the Torah, **these** are **the just rulings** that **Isaiah** mentioned at the beginning of **his** book. There, **Isaiah** first announced that the Messianic Kingdom would draw all the Gentile nations to it. But notice what is drawing **them**, “**In the last days, the mountain of the LORD’s Temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. Many peoples will come and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in His paths. His just rulings will go out from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:2-3).** These **rulings** **Isaiah** is dealing with are not the Torah because it was never given to the Gentiles to begin with. **He** is dealing with **the just rulings** of the Messianic Age that will be applied to **the** Gentile **nations** of the Kingdom, and from these **just rulings** **He** will establish **His justice**, which **will become a light to the** Gentile **nations**.

As a result, the context here will not allow this to be a message to the exiles returning to Jerusalem from the Babylonian Captivity. **God’s justice** did not **become a light to the** Gentile **nations** around the world at that time. That will not happen until **His** millennial reign. In fact, later in 70 AD the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, killing over a million **Jews** and sending the rest into the Diaspora for twenty centuries (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Mt - The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple on Tisha B’Av in 70 AD**).

The Suffering Servant says: **My righteousness draws near speedily, My salvation is on the way, or gone forth (51:5a).** All this is said to be imminent. **On the way** is a prophetic perfect, meaning that **the prophet** sees the reality of what **ADONAI** is going to do so clearly that in **his** mind it is already done. As **the Jews** were being tracked down and hunted by the antichrist and the armies of the world, without realizing it, **their salvation** was **speedily near**. As the noose was tightened around **their** collective necks in Jerusalem and Bozrah, the spiritual scales would fall from **their** eyes and **they** would recognize **Yeshua** was **the Messiah** and cry out for **Him** to return (see the commentary on **Revelation Ev - The Basis for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ**), and **the LORD** would battle with the antichrist and the armies of the world (see **Kh - The Eight Stage Campaign of Armageddon**).

Righteousness is the result of **salvation**. When we receive **Messiah** as our **Lord** and

Savior, we are transferred from the family of the Adversary to the family of **God** by virtue of having **salvation**. The result of having **salvation** is being declared righteous. That's what justification means, to be declared **righteous** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Bw - What God Does For Us at the Moment of Faith**). All the **righteousness** of **Jesus Christ** is imputed, or credited to our account, and then we are declared **righteous** (**Romans 1:17; Second Corinthians 5:21**). In other words, we do not get to heaven by our own **righteousness**, but by the **righteousness** of **Messiah**. **Righteousness** is a result of **salvation**, and that **salvation** will go out to all the Gentile nations during the Millennial Kingdom (**Revelation 20:1-6**).

He says: **My arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands** (the ends of the earth) **will look to Me and wait in hope for My arm (51:5b)**. Here we have the fourth of nine references to the **arm of the LORD** (**30:30 and 32, 40:10, 50:2, 51:5 and 9, 52:10, 53:1, 59:1 and 16, 62:8 and 63:5**). How could someone **hope** or trust in an **arm**? At this point **Isaiah** is introducing a theme that will be developed beautifully in **Chapter 53**. There will be interplay between **the arm of God** and the giving of **salvation**. In **53:2**, **Isaiah** says: **He grew up**. The pronoun **He** refers to **the Messiah** who is about to die for **Isra'el's** sins. Therefore, the **arm** in **51:5b** refers to **Messiah, the Servant of the LORD**.

My righteousness (which is a result of **salvation**) **draws near speedily, My salvation is on the way** (the Hebrew word for **salvation** is *Yeshua*), or **My Yeshua is on the way; and My arm** (**God's** judgment) **will bring justice to the Gentiles nations. The islands** (the ends of the earth) **will look to Me and wait in hope for My arm. But My salvation will last forever, My righteousness will never fail (51:6b)**. Having spelled out that **salvation** will come by means of **the arm of the Servant of God** in **51:5**, in **51:6** **Isaiah** points out that the **salvation** granted by **the Servant** will last **eternally**. Once we are saved, does **eternal** mean **eternal**? **Yeshua** says to us today: **My sheep listen to My voice: I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are one** (**John 10:27-30**).

Some questions need to be asked about **eternal** **salvation**. Would **Yeshua** use the word **eternal** if our **salvation** were temporary? We are a gift from **the Father** to **God the Son** (also see **John 6:37-40, 17:2, 6, 9 and 24**). Would **Jesus** ever refuse a gift from **the Father**? Would **Messiah** ever allow that precious gift to be lost? If believers could lose their **salvation**, **the Father** would have to take back those whom **He** gave to **the Son** as a gift. Why would **ADONAI** ever present someone as a gift to **the Son** if **He** knew they were

going to lose their **salvation**? If we could lose our **salvation**, could we be re-saved? Why doesn't the Bible ever mention being re-saved? Is **salvation** that will **last forever** to be considered cheap grace? Read **Chapter 53** and decide for yourself (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer**).

Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies (51:6a). But, in stark contrast to the transitory nature of the heavens and the earth, His salvation will last forever. Therefore, the doctrine of the security of the believer is not merely a New Covenant doctrine: it is already found here in the TaNaKh. **Divine instruction, justice, and salvation will be a light to the world. The nations will seek guidance from God and the righteous will be assured of His everlasting salvation and favor.**

The first **comfort** was for **the faithful remnant** to look back on **Isra'el's** history because **God** can do great things through small numbers of people. Secondly, **they** should rejoice and be happy over **their salvation**, which will be extended to the Gentiles and will be eternal. Thirdly, we see in the next two verses, **comfort** against **Isra'el's** enemies.

Comfort Against Enemies (51:7-8). Hear Me, you who know what is right, you people who have My Torah in your hearts (51:7a). **The eternal salvation and favor promised should provide the faithful with moral courage and strength to withstand the momentary taunts and abuse of the ungodly.** Once again there is a message of **comfort** to **the faithful remnant**. We know it was addressed to **the faithful remnant** because of two phrases: **you who know what is right**, and **you people who have My Torah in your hearts (Psalm 119:11)**. Notice that both of these statements point to inward conviction and not external practice. The **Torah** does not save us, nor does external religiosity. Some people put on a good show, but are far from **the LORD**. Will spending time sitting in your messianic congregation or church make you a believer? Will spending time sitting in your garage make you a car? No! One can keep the **Torah** externally and be lost. But what we *believe* saves us. **The heart** is a symbol in many societies for the seat of our emotions. **Jesus** says: **Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30)**. Thus, knowing from **51:6b**, that **God's salvation will last forever**, and that **His righteousness will never fail**, we should take courage and not be **terrified**. Anyone who fears **God** and listens to **His Servant** will certainly find themselves at odds with the fallen world.

The point here is this, **do not fear** the criticism **of men, or be terrified of their insults**

(51:7b). Why? For the moth will eat them up like a garment; the worm will devour them like wool. But My righteousness will last forever, My salvation through all generations (51:8). In the same way, **God** says your enemies will perish **like a moth-eaten garment**. But the **salvation** and **righteousness** that they now possess, through the **arm of the LORD, will last forever**. Is that Good News or what?

The cries of the oppressed for justice and deliverance have hardly ever been heard so loudly as in the twentieth century. The brutality of oppressors was not new, but science and industry gave them an ability to extend and multiply their oppressive force in previously unheard-of ways. As a result, we have the terrors of Auschwitz and the “killing fields” of Cambodia. In situations such as these, the cry comes again: **Awake, awake! Clothe yourself with strength, O arm of the LORD (51:9)**. And again: **How long, O Lord? Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood (Revelation 6:10)?** Why does **God** not act on behalf of **His people**, or if **they** are not **His people** in particular, at least on behalf of the helpless and downtrodden, whom the Bible declares have a special place in **His heart**?

If there were an easy answer to this question, it would have been given long ago, and there would be no more books on the problem of evil. But, as in the book of **Job**, the Bible does not answer the question. But it does offer an alternative. We can serve the **God** of the universe who loves justice and will ultimately balance the books. The only other option is to have a world in which we and our abilities are supposedly supreme. A wise person will certainly choose to serve **the LORD**, as **Job** did, for to choose that path is not to answer the problem of evil in the world, but to render it sheer nonsense. If **ADONAI** is good and just, then we have hope that oppression can be, and will be, overcome.²⁰² In short, we must have **faith (Hebrews 11:1)**. Then along with **Job** we can say: **I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my body has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God (Job 19:25)!**