

## EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #73

Isaiah 50:1-11

Last time we were together we saw that there is coming a day when God is going to do some amazing things with Israel. All of her enemies will eventually be bowed down, licking the dust from Israel's feet. Now when you presently look at Israel and see the conditions she is in, one must wonder what in the world is happening now? What has gone wrong? Why has Israel seemingly been set aside by God? Why did God ever seem to stop His relationship with Israel and take up a new relationship with the Church? We may notice that **verse 1** begins with a "Thus says the LORD." God has a special message for Israel to understand and here it is:

**GOD HAS TEMPORARILY REJECTED ISRAEL BECAUSE ISRAEL REJECTED HIS WORD AND HIS SERVANT/SON/SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.**

In **verse 1** there are two present realities that God wants Israel to understand.

**PRESENT REALITY #1** – God has presently divorced Himself from Israel because of her transgressions against Him. **50:1a**

On this point there are a few commentators who take the position that God is saying to Israel that you cannot offer any proof that God has divorced her or sold her. However, if we compare this text with Jeremiah 3:8-9 this is not what this passage means. I agree with many interpreters who believe that God is telling Israel why she has been abandoned by Him.

In Deuteronomy it was legitimate at times for a man to divorce His wife; but once he had divorced her and she became another man's wife, it was not legitimate for him to remarry her (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). Now the certificate of divorce typically contained the reasons for the divorce. In this verse God poses a question to Israel, specifically, do you know why I have divorced you? Do you have any idea why I have separated Myself from Israel?

Now God does not leave the answer to this question in doubt. The reason He divorced Israel is because of her transgressions. The word transgressions is plural and the basic meaning of the word is to sin, to transgress, to defect specifically against God (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 695).

God basically says, the reason you are not in a wonderful intimate relationship with Me is because of all of your sins against Me. In fact, Jeremiah said it was because of all of her evil, adulterous sins God has divorced her (Jeremiah 3:1-10).

Here is the amazing thing for us about this. The reason why you and I have a relationship with God today is because He has divorced Himself from Israel and has married a new bride, the Church. If it weren't for this we would not have any relationship with God. What is even more amazing is that in the end, God is going to take His bride, the Church, out of this world and then remarry Himself to Israel.

But the point God makes here is that I have done all of these things because of Israel's transgressions.

**PRESENT REALITY #2** – God has presently sold Israel into the hands of foreign powers because of her iniquities against Him. **50:1b**

Again we point out that the word “iniquities” is plural. This word actually refers to depraved, perverse things which makes one guilty because the acts are criminal in God’s sight (*Ibid.*, p. 614).

God is telling Israel, I have allowed you to be sold as captives and slaves because of your evil sin and rebellion against Me.

Ever since the days of Isaiah, 700 years before Jesus Christ was born, Israel has been in one political mess after another. Why is this? Here is your answer - because of her transgression and iniquities.

Now in **verses 2-11** God gives His own reasons why things are bad for Israel to this very day:

**REASON #1** – Because of how Israel related to Jesus Christ. **50:2-3**

When God actually came to Israel and called out to her, she would not respond to Him and turn to Him for salvation.

Now keep in mind that this text is designed to show Israel why she is not experiencing all of the marvelous blessings of God right now. It is clear from this text that she did not welcome God and, in fact, rejected Him.

Notice from **verse 2** that it is stated that God actually came in Person to this earth. When? When did God come to this earth to Israel in Person? This cannot be a reference to when God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai, because at that time He demanded that Moses and Israel keep their distance from Him (Exodus 3:5-6).

The time when God actually came in Person to Israel was in the Person of Jesus Christ. John said that “He came unto His own and His own received Him not” (John 1:11). So this passage is about God coming in the Person of Jesus Christ to Israel and what happened.

When Jesus Christ came to this world there was no one to welcome Him. There was no welcoming committee, no rolling out a red carpet, and no acceptance. When He was born in Bethlehem, and there were all of these amazing signs to show it, Israel did not welcome Him. In fact, only a few shepherds and wise men from the east cared enough to go see Him. When He took His ministry to Israel and performed amazing miracles, the nation did not rally around Him. It rejected Him and when He left there were only about 120 disciples who were really committed to Him (Acts 1:15). Truth is, Israel not only didn’t embrace Him, she nailed Him to a cross (Acts 2:22-23).

In the middle of **verse 2** to the end of **verse 3**, God wants Israel to clearly understand that the power of God could have easily delivered the Son of God. After all, this is the God who can dry up the sea with a simple rebuke. This is the God who can cause fish to die of thirst. This is the God who can do whatever He wants with the heavens. God has the power to redeem Israel whenever He wants, but at the present time He isn’t doing this for Israel.

God says, you rejected Me, but don't think for one second that I couldn't have stopped you. The fact is, God could completely destroy Israel or completely redeem Israel in a moment.

**REASON #2** – Because of how Jesus Christ related to God the Father. **50:4-9**

When God actually came into this world, He functioned as a disciple. Now we get a glimpse here as to how God revealed Himself in the Person of Jesus Christ to Israel. There is a combination of nouns for God used four times in these verses (**50:4, 5, 7, 9**). These nouns “Lord, GOD” are literally Adonai, Jehovah. These names truly raise the stakes of this section to a lofty God-honoring level. **The double noun combination means God is sovereign master and ruler of all things (Adonai) and that God is the self-existing Almighty God who can do whatever He wants to do (Jehovah).** Now Jesus Christ came to Israel to reveal this amazing God to this world. In these verses, we get an amazing glimpse as to the way God revealed Himself to His Son and the way His Son revealed Himself to Israel. There are seven revelatory facts brought out in these verses:

**(Revelatory Fact #1)** - God revealed Himself through Jesus Christ and gave to Him an expert level of Divine knowledge and speech. **50:4a**

Jesus Christ had “the tongue of disciples.” The word “disciple” (limmud) is one in Hebrew that refers to one who has been taught and learned to the point of being an expert (*Ibid.*, p. 439). We may observe that the noun “disciples” is plural, which we believed grammatically refers to a majestic Hebrew plural. What this means is that Jesus Christ's knowledge level is at the ultimate level of excellence (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, p. 398). There was no one at a greater knowledge level of God's Word.

Jesus Christ is the Divine expert. No one ever had more knowledge of the things of God than He did. By age twelve, He was so skilled in the Scriptures that He was baffling the greatest scholars on earth (Luke 2:46-47). He learned the Scriptures to the point that every time He said anything, it was an accurate presentation of the Word of Almighty God.

Jesus Christ was a serious student of God's Word and He knew it and revealed it at an expert level. He studied the Bible, and if He studied the Bible how much more should we. When Christ came into this world, He was God and He was the Word of God and yet He still poured through the Scriptures. Many have wondered what Jesus Christ did for the first 30 years of His life on earth? One answer is that He was given to careful study and understanding of God's Word. He was the ultimate expert in His knowledge of the Word of God because God the Father saw to it that He revealed it perfectly.

I want us to see what **verse 4** says; God must give us the ability to understand His Word. The ability to grasp God's Word at a level that you can accurately communicate it, is a grant from God. You cannot get this ability from a school or a course; you get it from God.

**(Revelatory Fact #2)** - God revealed Himself through Jesus Christ so that He could sustain weary ones with His words. **50:4b**

The purpose of gaining great knowledge of God's Word is to be able to present it so that it can sustain the weary ones. This is eye-opening. The word "weary" refers to those who are fatigued and worn out (*Ibid.*, p. 357).

Jesus Christ came as God with an expert level of the Word of God so that He could minister the Word of God to those who are worn down and fatigued. This is what sin will do; it will wear you down and fatigue you, but God's Word will sustain you.

God did not give His Word so a bunch of scholars could sit in some academic cloister and discuss all of the textual nuances. God gave His Word to minister to people. Think of this. God in Person on this earth ministering God's Word to worn down fatigued people so they could be sustained and encouraged.

**(Revelatory Fact #3)** - God revealed Himself through Jesus Christ every morning. **50:4c**

Every morning God spoke to His Son. God the Father would wake up God the Son every morning and speak to Him, and His ear would listen to what He had to say.

Every single morning by every single morning Jesus Christ awoke to the Word of God. It was the first thing He thought about as He got up. God the Father communicated the Word of God to God the Son every morning.

When Jesus Christ woke up, He did so with an ear to hear God's Word. He woke up and the first thing on His mind was to hear the Word of God.

Oh that this would be true of us. So many Christians wake up and the first thing on their minds is to hear the TV or radio. It ought to be to hear from God through His Word. That is how Jesus Christ was.

Don't ever forget this point - when we get up in the morning and search the Scriptures in order to hear from God, we are doing exactly what Jesus Christ did when He was here on this earth.

**(Revelatory Fact #4)** - Jesus Christ was never disobedient to God's Word. **50:5a**

What is revealed here is that there was not one time ever in Jesus Christ's life that He did anything rebellious that would have required some form of corrective discipline (*Ibid.*, pp. 507-508). In fact, the word carries with it the idea of deserving stripes because one has disobeyed. Edward Young claims this Hebrew word specifically has to do with an inner attitude or disposition of rebellion (*The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 3, p. 299). Jesus Christ never had an inclination of rebellion in Him.

All of us have gone astray time and time again and have disobeyed God's Word. We all deserve God's wrath and what we don't deserve is His grace. Think about what is revealed here; not one time did Jesus Christ ever disobey God. He was absolutely perfect. He understood every bit of God's Word and He obeyed every bit of God's Word. He never violated anything from God's Word ever.

**(Revelatory Fact #5)** - Jesus Christ would never turn away from God's will. **50:5b-6**

Now when Jesus Christ came to this world, He had to complete a very humiliating assignment. He knew full well what was going to happen to Him. He did not hesitate for one second. These things would have caused most of us to turn away in a moment. There are three specific humiliating atrocities that Jesus Christ allowed to happen to Himself. Keep in mind He is God:

**Humiliating Atrocity #1** - He allowed His back to be beaten. **50:6a** / Matthew 27:26

**Humiliating Atrocity #2** - He allowed His beard to be ripped off His face. **50:6b**

**Humiliating Atrocity #3** - He allowed His face to be spit on. **50:6c** / Matthew 26:67; 27:30

Matthew says they spit in His face and actually beat Him in His head. Then they delivered Him to be crucified.

Who of us would be willing to take on this assignment? Jesus Christ did not turn away from God's will.

**(Revelatory Fact #6)** - Jesus Christ totally depended on God the Father for help. **50:7**

He did not get any help from Israel or even His disciples. He was totally focused on God for help. He knew He would never be disgraced or ashamed. Even though He was being disgraced on earth and was treated in a demeaning and shameful way, He knew that He would never be disgraced or ashamed in His Father's sight. So He set His face like flint on doing His Father's will.

**(Revelatory Fact #7)** - Jesus Christ will be vindicated by God and any who stand against Him will be gone. **50:8-9**

The word "vindicate" is a judicial legal word. In fact, the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew text) uses the Greek word "justify" which means this whole plan of God was about justifying a sinful nation and sinful individuals. God will only declare one righteous who believes in His Son. That is why His Son put up with all of these terrible things.

Even though when Jesus Christ was here, it certainly did not appear as though He was winning; the fact is, He knew God's plan perfectly. He was completely aware of the fact of justification and of the fact that those who rejected Him would come to nothing.

No one will be able to contend with Jesus Christ or condemn Jesus Christ. God the Father will wipe them all out who demean His Son. As John says, one must honor the Son in the same way one honors the Father.

Isaiah ends this chapter by giving two invitations to two different classes of people. Numerically the class of people in **verse 10** is much fewer than the class of people in **verse 11**:

**Invitation #1** - God offers His grace . **50:10**

God gives Israel and any an invitation to fear Him and turn to His Servant, Jesus Christ. Those who fear the Lord and obey His Word by turning to Him, will at times find they seem to be walking in a dark world. There will be times when it looks like all light is gone. But one who trusts in Jesus Christ will never be ashamed. What God does is that He challenges people to trust in this One whom He sent. Notice where salvation is found - by **relying on God**. Not yourself, not your works, and not the church. Rely on Jesus Christ and trust only in Him.

**Invitation #2** - God offers His warnings . **50:11**

God gives Israel and any a serious warning. Those who rely upon themselves rather than Jesus Christ and walk in their own light will end up in eternal torment.

J. Vernon McGee said that one time a man confronted him about his message of salvation that he heard on the radio. Dr. McGee taught the only way to be saved from hell was to believe on Jesus Christ. The man said that he disagreed and wanted to tell Dr. McGee what he thought. Dr. McGee said, "I don't want to hear what you think because what you think is meaningless. All that matters is what God says" (*Isaiah*, Vol. 3, p. 306).

You may think you have the best argument in the world to present your works before God. Well, you need to know this - Jesus Christ came to this earth and put up with the terrible things He did to save you from your sins. What you need to do is fear the Lord and trust only in Him for your salvation.

God offers Israel His Son and He offers the same to you. Israel to this point has rejected Him and that is why she is in a mess. How about you?