

ISAIAH

Chapter 50

Israel's Sin and the Servant's Obedience

Thus says the LORD: “Where is your mother’s certificate of divorce, with which I sent her away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away. 2 Why, when I came, was there no man; why, when I called, was there no one to answer? Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, by my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a desert; their fish stink for lack of water and die of thirst. 3 I clothe the heavens with blackness and make sackcloth their covering.” 4 The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. 5 The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. 6 I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. 7 But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. 8 He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. 9 Behold, the Lord GOD helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up. 10 Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God. 11 Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches! Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled! This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.

Ch 50 As in ch 49, the Lord exhorts His doubting and despairing people to believe His promises of deliverance. Though the Servant is not expressly named, He again appears in His role as Redeemer of Israel and of the nations (cf ch 49), speaking of His mission in the timeless expressions of prophecy. Israel’s liberation from the Babylonian exile and repatriation in its homeland continue to be in the forefront of Isaiah’s vision, but they become tokens of all people’s salvation from the curse of sin, and pledge the restoration of all nations. Ch 50 makes unique contributions to this theme. The exiles, though punished and sent away for their iniquities and transgressions, are not like a woman irrevocably divorced from her husband. Nor are they like children whom a father sold into slavery to pay his creditors. The gracious and omnipotent God agrees to renew the bonds broken by infidelity and disobedience. The chapter can be summarized as follows: behold, sinners need not despair; behold, their sins are atoned for; behold, it is dangerous to refuse forgiveness. (TLSB)

50:1 *certificate of divorce.*† A husband was required to give this to a wife he wished to divorce (see Dt 24:1, 3; Mt 19:7; Mk 10:4). According to Jer 3:8 God gave the northern kingdom of Israel her certificate of divorce, and Isa 54:6–7 indicates that God had left Judah (see 62:4). Isaiah’s point is that God did not initiate the divorce; Judah broke her relationship with him. The exile was a temporary period of separation (see 54:7) rather than a permanent divorce. (CSB)

Cf Mt 5:31; 19:7. Prophets often compare sin to marital unfaithfulness (Is 54:4–8; Ezk 16. (TLSB)

my creditors. If a man's debts were not paid, his children could be sold into slavery (see 2Ki 4:1). But God has no creditors. (CSB)

God asks Israel if they seriously believe the impossible, namely, that He would need to sell Israel to pay what he owed to some overbearing creditor. (TLSB)

I have sold. Cf. 45:13; 52:3. (CSB)

Cf Ne 5:1–5. (TLSB)

The reason for their exile in Babylon was not because God owed something to Babylon. (PBC)

50:2–3 The Lord can empty the seas and rivers, though their flow and limits seem constant. Israel is to have no doubt over His power to turn the course of nations. (TLSB)

50:2 *I came ... called.* Through his servants the prophets (see Jer 25:4). (CSB)

no one to answer. Israel was deaf toward God. (CSB)

By means of Cyrus's decree in 538 BC (cf Ezr 1), the Lord began to recall His people, but many did not return home (cf Ezr 2). Many in Babylon preferred to remain there, despite the prophecy in Is 48:20. (TLSB)

my hand shortened. Those who made Babylon their home feared that the Lord would not be able to do what He had promised, that is, give them hope and future (cf Jer 29:11) and rebuild Jerusalem. (TLSB)

dry up the sea. A reference to crossing the Red Sea. (CSB)

the sea ... a desert. The Lord reminds Israel of the exodus events: drying up the Red Sea, turning the Nile to blood and killing its fish, bringing darkness upon Egypt (Ex 10:21), and giving Israel light (Ex 10:23). If He did it once, He can do it again (cf Is 43:18–19). (TLSB)

fish stink. Perhaps a reference to one of the plagues in Egypt (see 19:5–6, 8; Ex 7:18). (CSB)

50:3 *heavens with darkness.* Perhaps an allusion to the plague of darkness (Ex 10:21). (CSB)

50:4–9 (or 4-11) The third of the four servant songs (CSB)

The first verse of this chapter identified the speaker as “the Lord.” But now someone else speaks, because he announces His relationship to “the Sovereign Lord.” The Hebrew mind assumed that everyone reading the passage would understand that the speaker had changed. We consider the speaker to be the Servant of the Lord, whom we have met before. (PBC)

50:4–5, 7, 9 *Lord God.* The only uses of this title in the servant songs. (CSB)

50:4 *Me.* The Servant, identified by title in 42:1; 49:6. (TLSB)

The Servant is given a learned “tongue” and a listening “ear” characteristic of “those being taught/disciples.” The Servant is the disciple par excellence because he always listens to God (Deut. 6:4), and this gives him the ability to speak a Word that sustains the weary. (CC)

John 5:19, “Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.”

John 8:28 “Jesus therefore said, ‘When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.’”

In 40:28-31, Yahweh had promised to renew the strength of the weary. The tired Israelites are a bundle of contradictions. On the one hand, the majority lament that their way is hidden from Yahweh and that he has neglected their “justice/cause” (40:27). These people share a commonality with pagan idolaters (44:12) and are therefore exhorted to awaken from their lengthy lethargy (51:17; 52:1). They have fainted and lie at the head of every street (51:20). On the other hand, some are “pursuing righteousness” and “seeking Yahweh” (51:1), who claims them all as “my people” and “my nation” (51:4; cf. 40:1). Yet these believers are sinful, desperate, and exhausted. (CC)

Jesus invites all who are weary to come to him for rest (Mt.11:28). Every lackluster believer may listen confidently for his encouraging Word. Ears are on the outside of our heads and not on the inside. This physical makeup encourages us to listen to God and not to ourselves. And our God speaks! The OT refers to the Word of God coming to his peoples at least 394 times. (CC)

His voice becomes even more pronounced in Jesus. “No one ever spoke like this man” (Jn. 7:46). “He was teaching as one who has authority and not as their scribes” (Mt. 7:29). Jesus is able, like no other, to bolster and brace the weary. One of the most galvanizing promises Christ made is that the enemy, whose accusations continually exhaust us, will go down in defeat. Our chief adversary, Satan, will be consumed in the same way that a moth eats a garment (51:9; 51:8). “We are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Rom. 8:37). Christ’s word does not condemn weary exiles; it save them (cf. 3:17). The Servant’s surrender to God’s plan, leading to death, becomes the source of our needed justification (Is. 53:11; 54:17). (CC)

Like a teacher awakening his student, Yahweh opens the ear of the Servant (cf. 22:14). This contrasts with Israel’s inability to open its ears and listen (48:8) The root problem is idolatry. Fascination with counterfeit gods cuts off all communication between Yahweh and his people (6:9-10). In the Servant, though, Israel can be reconciled to Yahweh (53:11; cf. Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:22). Those who listen to the Servant’s voice are led out of darkness and begin to walk in the light (Is. 50:10; Jn. 8:12). (CC)

instructed tongue – limood – A tongue that has been taught. The KJV says “the tongue of the learned.” Sometimes it is also called a disciples tongue. That would imply ongoing learning and following of Christ. It is one that is well educated and therefore can speak with authority. This was especially true when it came to God’s Word.

The Servant is the most excellent disciple because He listens before He speaks. “To listen” is to epitomize Israel’s response to the Lord (cf Dt 6:4). (TLSB)

The Servant is the most excellent disciple because He listens before He speaks. (TLSB)

The Hebrew describes it as the “tongue of learners,” i.e. a tongue adapted to deliver effectively the message that is given Him to communicate. (Leupold)

Trained tongue, a well-taught tongue. Christ did nothing of Himself; only as the Father had taught Him, so He spoke (John 8:28). (PC)

The power of the Word parted the Red Sea because the Lord said, “Strike it!” (cf. Ex. 14:16). By this Word the sea was divided, and He commanded them to cross over. Here dullness and weakness depart from them. So weakness departs from the Word; then the water of Baptism and the bread and wine become exceedingly powerful, for beyond the water and the bread and wine there is the Word of Christ, who accomplishes more than does the weakness of the appearance, the minister, and the element. This is so because the Lord God has added a tongue that is taught, because it is a tongue instructed by the Lord. The Lord is the teacher; He teaches the tongue in such a way that it speaks nothing but what is divinely inspired. He says elsewhere, The Lord “made My mouth like a sharp sword ... He made Me a polished arrow” (Is. 49:2). This is a Hebraism. Christ has the power of administration, He has the scepter, so that those who have accepted the Word would not immediately be offended. This Word is not humanly transmitted but divinely, and therefore its divine power comes to the aid of the fettered, those enduring trials, and all the weary and exhausted, since these lack resources and wisdom and are the off scouring before the world. The Lord truly says, “In due time I know that I will speak with those people so that they might have strength in weakness.” However, He does not want to set us free at once, as we have prescribed time, place, and manner for Him. What He wills to do will be enough, if only we trust in Him. (Luther)

Exodus 4:12 “Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

John 7:46 “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards declared.”

are taught – The prophets received communication from God, often in their sleep. This afforded them great insight as what God wanted them to do.

Psalms 71:17 “Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.

Jeremiah 32:33 “They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline.”

John 6:45 “It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’

Ephesians 4:21 “Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.”

word of him who weary.† In 42:3 the servant assisted the weak. Cf. Jer 31:25. (CSB)

yawafe – Those who are exhausted, faint or fatigued.(QV)

Jesus’ words have the power to convert “weary” souls. His very words are sheer “spirit and life.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

The Servant's mission has to do both with Israel and the Gentiles. Israelites were laboring under the burden of the law and finding no peace, and the Gentiles laboring under the oppressive burden of idol-religions that afforded no peace to the burdened conscience of the sinner. (Leupold)

Isaiah 42:3 "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;

Jeremiah 31:25 "I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint."

Matthew 11:28-29 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ 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."

morning by morning he awakens – oor – To help rise up or to stir. It is like being awakened so one can be instructed or learn the next lesson. (CSB)

awakens my ear. Unlike Israel (see v. 2), the servant was responsive to God. (CSB)

While rebellious Israel turned a deaf ear to God, the Servant would "speak just as the Father taught" Him (Jn 8:27–29). Therefore, a word from Him sufficed to sustain the weary. (TLSB)

To make it ready for instruction. A little bit like toning a piano so that great music make come from it.

Unlike Israel, which often was deaf to God's Word, the Messiah would eagerly listen. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

God is described as supplying every day, as a necessary gift, an alert ear, keeping it sensitive to the divine teaching. As true man He remained a "learner" all His days. (Leupold)

Not enlightening Him occasionally, as He did the prophets, by dreams and visions, but continually whispering in his ear. At n time did the Father "leave Him alone" (John 8:29) or cease to speak to Him. "morning by morning" is not to be narrowed to the bare literal meaning, but to be taken in the sense of "uninterruptedly" (PC)

those who are taught – The student is paying attention. (CSB)

Like a pupil who is ready to learn. But when they hear us for the purpose of passing judgment on the Word, they are bringing the ears of a teacher. One who is eager for the truth submits his ears to learning, and he does not fight to show off his skill. To one who makes this kind of accusation you must answer: "I am not here to teach the teacher but the pupil who is eager and wearied, who reduces his wisdom to nothing." Here is a most harmonious relationship between the learned tongue, the ready ear, and the heart prepared for learning. (Luther)

To have the proper spiritual understanding of the Lord's will and to yield a glad obedience to it. Cp. Ps. 40, 6-8; Heb. 10, 5-7. (Kretzmann)

50:5 Because the Servant is listening, it follows that He cannot be rebellious. This description sets Him apart from all other servants, prophets, or leaders of Israel, as everyone else had times in

which they turned their back on the Lord (e.g., Ex 4:13; Jer 20:9, 14; Jnh 1:3). Only one Servant could truly claim such obedience to the Lord (cf Jn 8:29). (TLSB)

opened my ear. A sign of obedience. (CSB)

Unlike the rebellious nation of Israel (e.g., 48:4; 8), whose ears are closed (e.g., 42:20), the Servant's ear are wide open. As Israel's substitute Servant, he reverses the nation's deafness (6:10; 42:19). The Servant will never turn back (50:5). He is treated shamefully (50:6), but in the end, he will not be put to shame (50:7). Idolatrous Israel, on the other hand, is turned back in utter shame (42:17). There is a sharp contrast between Israel and the submissive Servant. His life testifies against those who doubt Yahweh's Word and turn to other gods. (CC)

pawthakh – To loosen, unstop or open wide. This was a sign of obedience which was different than what Israel had been. (QV)

To listen with cheerful willingness. (Kretzmann)

His ear was opened to receive God's Word perpetually. (PC)

Because the Servant is listening, it follows that He cannot be rebellious. The description sets Him apart from all other servants, prophets, or leaders of Israel, as everyone else had times in which they turned their back on the Lord (e.g. Ex.4:1-13; Jer. 20:9, 14; Jonah 1:3). Only one Servant could truly claim such obedience to the Lord (cf. John 8:29). (TLSB)

This willing, cooperative attitude on the part of the Servant is a restatement of what was also said in 4b. The Servant eagerly desires to be directed by the Lord in all His ways. Jesus obediently fulfilled this predicted attitude of the Servant as told by Paul. (Phil. 2:5-8) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

Psalms 40:6-8 "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.⁷ Then I said, "Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll."⁸ I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

Matthew 13:23 "But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

John 14:31 "but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me."

Acts 2:41 "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."

Acts 17:11 "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."

Philippians 2:5-8 “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!”

was *not rebellious*. Unlike Israel. (CSB)

The Servant is not only different from “servant” Israel, but he is also unlike all other OT servants, prophets, or leaders. Moses wanted someone else to rescue Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 4:13). Gideon complains, “My clan is the weakest in Manasseh and I am the least in my father’s house (Judges 6:15). Jonah tried to run away (Jonah 1:3) and would rather die than to submit to his God (Jonah 4:3, 8). Jeremiah admits to being rebellious (Jer. 20:9, 14). Only one Servant can truly claim complete obedience to Yahweh (Jn. 8:29). He does not need forgiveness, since he has no sin (Is. 53:9; Heb. 4:15). Instead, he forgives sinners by offering himself as the “guilt offering” (Is. 53:10). By his agony and disgrace, he makes intercession for transgressors (53:12). (CC)

Not even when His soul was sorrowful even unto death and His human nature was trembling with the severity of the afflictions which He suffered. Cp. Ps. 22, 12-21; 1 Pet. 2, 22. (Kretzmann)

“It is the Lord who opens My ears.” So it is for Christ and so it is for all Christians, even if because of weakness and denseness they feel that all things are contradictions and hindrances and faults in sins, anxiety, poverty, blasphemy, etc. Nevertheless, to hear the Word in earnest and to bear all things for the sake of the Word, this is ultimately very difficult. (Luther)

Matthew 26:39 “Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

Romans 5:19 “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”

Hebrews 5:8 “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered”

I turned not backward – The Servant knows that there will be problems but keeps going just the same. (CSB)

“I do not turn back to Egypt and become unbelieving, but I confess the Word with the mouth as well as in deed. I sing the praises of the power and might of that seemingly powerless and foolish Word.” (Luther)

Deuteronomy 5:32 “So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left.”

Joshua 1:7-8 “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. ⁸ Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so

that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.”

Proverbs 4:27 “Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

Luke 9:62 “Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

50:6 Listening (50:4) and obedience (50:5) play a part in learning, but the most important teacher for a theologian of the cross is suffering. Knowledge is not merely antiseptic acquaintance with ideas, but rich development of thought in the crucible of life. Luther writes:

For as soon as God’s Word takes root and grows in you, the devil will harry you, and will make a real doctor of you, and by his insults will teach you to seek and love God’s Word. I myself (if you will permit me, mere mouse-dirt, to be mingled with pepper) am deeply indebted to my papists that through the devil’s raging they have beaten, oppressed, and distressed me so much. That is to say, they have made a fairly good theologian of me, which I would not have become otherwise. And I heartily grant them what they have won in return for making this of me, honor, victory, and triumph, for that’s the way they wanted it. AE 34:287 (CC)

There is an escalation of humiliation in this verse. First the Servant’s back is beaten. Then his beard is pulled out. This was to show contempt and disrespect to the person (2 Sam. 10:4-5; Neh. 13:25). (Young writes: “The Oriental regarded the beard as a sign of freedom and respect, and to pluck out the hair of the beard is to show utter contempt.) Finally, he does not hide his face from mocking and spit. This suggests a quasi-legal setting in which the Servant is publicly shamed. (CC)

Unlike the predominance of passive verbs in the Fourth Servant Song (52:13-53:12), in this verse, the Servant is in control of the situation. He gives his back and his cheeks. He does not hide from scorn or spit. (CC)

In his passion, Jesus takes both an active and a passive role in suffering (often called his active and his passive obedience, respectively. Actively, he says, “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father” (Jn. 10:17-18 ESV). Passively, the Savior accepts violent abuse and ridicule. “Then they spit in his face and beat him. And some slapped him” (Mt. 26:67; see also 1 Peter 2:23). (CC)

my back to those who strike. Beatings were for criminals or fools (see Pr 10:13; 19:29; 26:3; Mt 27:26; Jn 19:1). (CSB)

The Servant is abused by others as Jesus was in His Passion. (TLSB)

This offers a first look at the suffering the Servant must undergo. The eternal Word of life that the Servant brings to His people will come at a great cost to Him. It will cause Him great suffering and anguish. Describing Christ in this role, Luther said” “Christ is the first to undergo a host of afflictions because of the Word” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

This implied that a whipping would take place. Beatings happened to criminals. This and what follows is the “way of the cross.” Jesus freely takes that path. (Luther)

Isaiah 53:5 “but he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”

Matthew 27:26 “Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.”

pull out my beard. A sign of disrespect and contempt (see 2Sa 10:4–5; Ne 13:25). (CSB)

This detail of Jesus’ appearance, commonly depicted by artists, occurs only here. Pulling out of a beard showed contempt and disrespect for the person (cf 2Sm 10:4–5; Ne 13:25). (TLSB)

Beards symbolized dignity, maturity and manhood.

2 Samuel 10:4-5 “So Hanun seized David’s men, shaved off half of each man’s beard, cut off their garments in the middle at the buttocks, and sent them away. ⁵When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, “Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back.”

Nehemiah 13:25 “I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God’s name and said: “You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves.”

Isaiah 7:20 “Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.”

disgrace and spitting. To show hatred (Job 30:10) or to insult or disgrace (Dt 25:9; Job 17:6; Mt 27:30). This treatment of the servant anticipates his ultimate suffering in 52:13–53:12. (CSB)

This was to show hatred, insult or disgrace. Moses had a severe punishment for this.

What does that spitting accomplish except extolling the wisdom of the world? Thus our face toward the world, if anyone will look at it with spiritual eyes, is so spit upon, so polluted by endless disgraces, that no profession is less imposing in the world than that of those who profess the Gospel. But for one disgrace a hundred glorious rays will one day appear, because the Lord Himself is present as our Helper. He strengthens, preserves, and liberates the hearers. (Luther)

Deuteronomy 25:9 “his brother’s widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, “This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother’s family line.”

Job 17:6 “God has made me a byword to everyone, a man in whose face people spit.

Job 30:10 “They detest me and keep their distance; they do not hesitate to spit in my face.

Matthew 27:30 “They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.”

50:7 *Lord God* – adonoy - Lord and master, someone who controls. (QV)

For the third time (50:4-5), the Servant states that the Lord Yahweh assists him in his mission. (CC)

All-powerful Jehovah, the God of the covenant, to whom He has appealed time and again. (Kretzmann)

helps me. In the past He has not been disappointed when He fell back upon the Lord. (Leupold)

not been disgraced ... put to shame. Ultimately the servant will be honored (see 49:7; 52:13; 53:10–12). (CSB)

Disgraced is awlawn – and means to wound or insult. Shame is boosh and means to be disappointed or confounded. Knowing that the all-powerful God will never leave him, he can totally focus his activities and energy on his calling.

The power of God will uphold Him while under the horrible treatment that is to come. If He were a mere man, and on His own, He could not undergo all that is in store. But with the Sovereign Lord's help, the Servant will not be disgraced or defeated in His stated goal. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

Even death is not a disgrace for the Servant, who places His life in the Lord's hands. (TLSB)

The assistance given to His soul by the strength of Jehovah keeping Him from being submerged in misery and shame. (Kretzmann)

Psalm 119:6 “then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands.

Romans 9:33 “As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

Philippians 1:20 “I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”

1 Peter 4:16 “However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.”

1 John 2:28 “And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.”

my face like flint. Like the prophets, the servant will endure with great determination. Cf. Lk 9:51, where Jesus “resolutely set out for Jerusalem” (lit. “resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem”). (CSB)

Jesus “set His face” when he resolutely set out for Jerusalem (Lk 9:51). See Jesus' determination to fulfill everything written by the prophets (Lk 18:31; 24:44). (TLSB)

Confident that he will receive help and vindication, in the face of opposition, he sets his face like flint. In the call narratives of other prophets, Yahweh made Jeremiah to be like an iron pillar

(among other metaphors in Jer. 1:18), and he made Ezekiel's face hard with a forehead like emery (Ezekiel 3:8-9) so that they could withstand the attacks on their ministries from the very people to whom they were called to serve. (CC)

Being sure of not being disgraced or put to shame one can move ahead confidently. Jesus did so and with great determination. By this Jesus is saying "Thy will be done."

A Christian might be thus influenced that he has a very hard face, since he will have to hear insults and even see openly that everything, however good, right, and true it may be, is given the worst possible interpretation. Let not then Christians despair when they hear such great blasphemies from the fanatics as even human nature cannot bear, unless the Word and the Spirit of God harden our face against the despisers of the Word. (Luther)

Ezekiel 3:9 "I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious house."

Luke 9:51 "As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."

50:8 Courtroom settings in Isaiah end with the verdict that Yahweh is in control of history, not idols or Babylonian leaders (e.g., 41:1-7, 21-29; 45:20-25). Here Yahweh is not a protagonist in the court scene (as in chapter 41) but the key witness who is near in a spatial sense, metaphorically standing nearby in court, and/or in a chronological sense, about to intervene. The Servant is confident that Yahweh will preside over his case and acquit him in such a way that his opponents will be unable to condemn him. Paul asks the same question as the Servant: "Who is it who condemns me?" (Rom. 8:33-34). The adversary does not stand a chance. The Vindicator" publicly justifies the Servant on Easter, and he, in turn justifies many (53:11). (CC)

vindicates me. The Lord will find him righteous (see 45:25; for its ultimate fulfillment see 1Ti 3:16). (CSB)

tsawdak – To make right, clear or clean. The nearness is a great confidence builder. He is always near to us too. There is a phrase that says he is "only a prayer away."

This steadfastness is based on nothing other than the nearness of His Vindicator, not on any capacity of His own to absorb punishment. (Leupold)

Isaiah 45:25 "but in the LORD all the descendants of Israel will be found righteous and will exult."

1 Timothy 3:16 "Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory."

contend with me. Because Christ was sinless, he also nullifies the charges brought against any who believe in him (see Ro 8:31-34). (CSB)

After He had finally accomplished the Father's plan, there were no accusers left. As often happened, the false accusations fell apart when tested against the truth of the eternal Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

The Hebrew is “Lord of judgment.” The expression means not merely one who has a lawsuit or a cause, but one who is “lord of the judgment,” i.e., possessor of the cause, or one who has a claim and can demand that the judgment should be in his favor. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

The guilt of all mankind was indeed imputed to Him, but in His own person He was ever the Holy One of God, whom no man could convict of sin. (Kretzmann)

“No one will dare to go into judgment with Me,” says Christ, for “God is for us, who is against us?” (Rom. 8:31). He brings it about that we consider it of no consequence, even though the whole world contends against us. The rule of the church is not located in pomp and appearance but in the Word, even in the spoken Word, on which we may stand firm against all insults. For “if God is for us, who is against us?” (Luther)

Come, let us be judged. There is nothing evil in the whole world which they themselves commit and do not shove off on us, so as to have a cause against us because of the Gospel. Nevertheless, we can innocently say with Samuel (1 Sam. 12:3): “Whose ox have I taken? Or whose ass have I taken?” Yet they persecute us for the sake of their own tyrants. But we shall persevere. (Luther)

my adversary. Cf. 54:17. (CSB)

This implies the question, “Who is a master over me? It is hard to imagine that anyone would even think of doing something like that.

Let him who believes that he has a case against the Messiah step forward. (Kretzmann)

Isaiah 54:17 “no weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me,” declares the LORD

Romans 8:31-34 “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”

50:9 *who will declare me guilty* – Charged with the sins of the world, yet vindicated and acquitted when He was raised from the dead, He is at the right hand of God, defending the innocence credited to all who appeal to Him for justification (Romans 8:31-34). (TLSB)

Using the same words as in 50:7, the Servant reiterates his confidence that “the Lord Yahweh will help me.” This time, though, he adds the emphatic “behold.” Because he is vindicated (50:8), no one will be able to condemn him. (CC)

Charged with the sins of the world, yet vindicated and acquitted when He was raised from the dead, He “is at the right hand of God,” defending the innocence credited to all who appeal to Him for justification (Rm 8:31–34) (TLSB)

wear out like a garment; the moths. Those who falsely accuse the righteous succumb to moths in 51:8 (i.e., they will be destroyed). (CSB)

The Servant's enemies will be as fragile and vulnerable as cloth, which even a tiny moth can destroy. (TLSB)

Those who disregard Yahweh's acquittal of his Servant will decay, just as clothing wears out and is devoured by a moth (cf. Hos. 5:12; Job 4:19; Heb. 1:11-12). Employing a different metaphor to state the same truth, Jesus asks, "have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?" (Mt. 21:42 ESV, quoting Ps. 118:22-23). He then warns, "And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him" (Mt. 21:44 ESV; cf. Is. 8:14; 28:16; Dan. 2:34). Building a life while ignoring the Cornerstone invites ruin. (CC)

That is, they will perish little by little through constant use rather than all of a sudden, but room will be given them for repentance. In another place we read: "My face is indeed weakened like a garment chewed up by worms." Thus also our enemies will perish but "the word of our God will stand forever" (Is. 40:8). (Luther)

Job 4:19 "how much more those who live in houses of clay, whose foundations are in the dust, who are crushed more readily than a moth!

Job 13:28 "So man wastes away like something rotten, like a garment eaten by moths.

Job 27:18 "The house he builds is like a moth's cocoon, like a hut made by a watchman.

Isaiah 51:8 "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."

Hosea 5:12 "I am like a moth to Ephraim, like rot to the people of Judah."

Matthew 6:19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal."

Charges may be hurled at Him. They fall to the ground, repelled by the shield of divine protection. (Eph 6:16 – shield of faith). In fact, in the end not He but they will wear out and come to ruin, as the expressive figure indicates. A rare measure of confidence and steadfastness are displayed here, a steadfastness not based on inflated opinions of self but upon a divinely wrought certainty necessary for the fulfillment of the task assigned by the Servant's Lord. It must be admitted that the Servant depicted is a very striking figure whose potential is met fully only in Jesus Christ. (Leupold)

50:10 *fears the LORD.* yawray - In this case it means to be in awe and reverence of God for his faithfulness.(QV)

Pieper indicates that "the fear of God is basically always fear in the presence of God, awe before the majesty of God." To the unrepentant sinner, this is a horrible experience. But to the child of God, who "obeys the word of his Servant" there is only joy at being in His presence. Here the Servant is addressing those who are His own children. The enemies of the Servant are gone. They have been put to shame and are no longer in His presence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 4)

If anyone delights in hearing the Word, if it is not a light for him, let him trust in the name of the Lord, even if he is polluted by spitting and every form of disgrace is inflicted on him, let him not be afraid, because Christ has been set forth before us in a twofold manner, as Gift and as Example. Let us then follow His example, for under a thorn crowned head the members cannot be spoiled with indulgence. Darkness, clouds, trials, irritations on the part of demons and of men will come our way, but in spite of everything Christ is the Light; He will not leave us in darkness. (Luther)

Proverbs 1:7 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Isaiah 59:19 “From the west, men will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along.”

His servant? Note how the Servant and the Lord are set parallel to each other. Fear and obedience are due to both. (TLSB)

in darkness. Perhaps trouble or distress, similar to the experience of the servant (cf. 8:22). (CSB)

trust ... rely. The Lord encouraged such trust in 12:2; 31:1. (CSB)

bawtakh – To put full confidence and hope in and be certain of that trust.

We cannot defend ourselves with human resources, since there is so much malice and impudence on the part of ungodly men. But let us flee for refuge to the strongest tower, the name of the Lord (cf. Prov. 18:10), and there every righteous man will be made to rejoice, and even the dead will be made alive. (Luther)

Psalms 37:5 “Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this.”

Proverbs 3:5 “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

Isaiah 12:2 “Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation.”

Isaiah 26:4 “Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal.

Isaiah 31:1 “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD.”

50:11 *burning torches...light of your fires.* Perhaps a reference to wicked practices that will ultimately destroy those who engage in them. Fire is a frequent figure of punishment. (CSB)

Those who try the do-it-yourself way of spirituality, will eventually have their lights extinguished. Only those who depend on the Lord will have the true light. (TLSB)

torment. Cf. 66:24. (CSB)

For in the destiny that God controls for all such, they shall find the sparks falling on themselves, kindling a fire that they cannot extinguish. They shall lie down to torment and perish miserably. (Leupold)

Ch 50 The Lord contrasts His Servant's humility and obedience with Israel's rebelliousness. The Servant's obedience and suffering atoned for your sins and the sins of all the world. Walk in the light of His Word. In Him there is no disgrace. • Awaken my ear, O Jesus. Rouse me each day to fear, love, and trust my Lord. Amen. (TLSB)