

July 16

Isaiah 48, 49, 50

Welcome back everyone & thanks for joining me for the July 16th Accelerator. My name is Terry Ebers & I'm excited to jump into Isaiah 48, 49, & 50 with you today!

Now there are a few things I want to point out from the text we read today. Let's first look at the very end of chapter 48... "The Lord says: There is no peace for the wicked." One thing's for sure...this was a sharp arrow aimed at Babylon, but it's a message for many others as well.

Individual people, larger groups, & entire nations seek out peace in a thousand different places. They may look for it in personal wealth or in national strength and security. They may hunt for it in alliances with Assyria or Egypt, Babylon or Rome. They may run after it in the context of fame, or look for it in the storehouses of accumulated human wisdom. But for the wicked, peace is truly the impossible dream. There is no peace for the wicked. But the invitation of Jesus is, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" – "and you will find rest for your soul."

Now an important thing here in these three chapters is the presence of the second and third of the Servant Songs. The second song is found right at the beginning of chapter 49 & it's strikingly different than others because it is written in the first person. Let's look at some important observations in this text.

One observation is that the mouth of the servant is like a sharpened sword. And it's a sharpened sword because from it precedes the Word of God. The New Testament tells us God's word is "quick and sharp like a powerful double-edged sword." But then comes an interesting thing - the servant is made, by the Lord, into a polished arrow that is then concealed in God's quiver. Perhaps this is pointing to the fact that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, went largely unrecognized before the very people to whom He had been sent? Maybe it also alludes to the fact that for such a long time (the first 30 years of Jesus' life) he was hidden away, first in Egypt and then in Galilee. Only in Isaiah 9 was Galilee connected to the prophecies of the coming Messiah.

Another observation has to do with a portion of the servant's mission that relates to bringing Israel back to God, but the servant will also have a wider mission -- to the Gentiles -- to whom He will be a light, so that He can bring the salvation of God to the ends of the earth. Make no mistake; from the day God first spoke to Abraham onward, there should have been no doubt or confusion about the fact that the salvation of God has always had the entirety of the human race as its ultimate object.

The third Servant Song is found in chapter 50 and It's in this song that we begin to learn that Jesus is not only a servant, but a suffering servant of the Lord. Jesus will be rejected and suffer at the hands of men. But the Lord who disciplined him will also vindicate him.

Starting in verse 4 it says..."The sovereign Lord has given me an instructed (or disciplined) tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like a disciple. The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and know I will not be put to shame..."

So, what do you think it was that gave Jesus the inner strength needed to carry out the most burdensome task in the history of the universe? Well, some might say that Jesus had these inner resources simply and automatically because He was the God-man. It was His deity, and because of that it was easy for Him. Well that's not what this passage teaches us. Jesus was fully God, but He was also fully man. And Jesus' inner strength came from the fact that He was taught - fully disciplined - as the result of regular, disciplined, daily time with God.

"He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught." every day Jesus spent time with the Father. We saw the same thing in some of David's Psalms, and over and over again throughout scripture and the history of the church. we are brought face to face with the simple fact that obedience is the result of regular, consistent, disciplined time spent with God - preparation time.

The inner strength needed to stand silent while they plucked out his beard, to endure the scourging in silent trust, to hear the taunts and not come off the cross to defend and enforce His own justice (which He could have easily done). His strength was born a long time before in the everyday routine of spending disciplined time with God in prayer and study.

Well, we too are servants. And where will our strength come from, if not from the same daily practice of time spent with God in prayer and study of the Word? God calls us to walk by faith, even in Darkness, just as Jesus did. And the strength to proceed and trust the Lord comes out of that daily, disciplined time with God.

Well thanks for joining in today. May you stay consistent & faithful to your time with God everyday. And may He give you the strength to walk by faith, even in the darkest of times.