

“Choices” Isaiah 50:1-11

Context: Isaiah emphasizes the broad topic of salvation, as mentioned in our previous discussions that address the broad context of his book. Our immediate context is a continuation of the Lord’s repudiation of Israel’s claim that He has permanently cast her off. This section is in the language of a court proceeding. The breadth of God’s mercy revealed here fits in the larger context that seems to go beyond a broken Israel, extending hope of salvation even to Gentiles who, like the Jews, feel most unworthy because of their sin. Those who accept God’s act of merciful salvation are rescued out of the world’s structure of sin and redeemed for His future established Kingdom, a kingdom of life in a newly created heavens and earth.

Life Principle: When life is darkened by confusion, lean on the guiding light of God and not on the light of self-reliance which delivers burns for comfort and anguish for ease (cp. Isaiah 50:10-11).

1. Sinful choices, predictable ends – Isaiah 50:1-3

The prophet uses Mosaic Law associated with divorce and debtors’ slavery as an analogy to show that Israel is separated from God and in slavery as a consequence of her own sin. Her plight came because she did not heed the prophets’ warnings and not because God was unwilling or unable to redeem her.

2. Servant’s choice, just ends – Isaiah 50:4-9

Jesus of the passion is revealed as the Lord Yahweh’s Servant and exemplifies a steadfast trust in the Father to help, vindicate, and bring retribution on His oppressors. The Servant delivers Jews weary of the law’s burden and Gentiles weary of idolatry through revelation and vicarious atonement.

3. Illuminating choices, ultimate end – Isaiah 50:10-11

Times of confusion descend upon God-fearers and self-absorbed alike. Those who critically understand the divine guidance of Jesus Christ are exhorted to secure their feelings and thoughts to His revelation. The self-sufficient suffer when they eventually exhaust the extent of their resources.

Study questions:

- Analogy is often used in prophetic literature to reveal a truth. The key to interpretation is to uncover the idea of the first text, which correlates with the situation of the text in question. As a **Bible study method**, correlate the situation of Isaiah 50:1 with the principles found in Deuteronomy 24:1-5. Who are the husband and wife in the analogy? What counts as the indecency? From what house is Israel sent in the Isaiah context? What covenant would the divorce paper signify in Isaiah? What claim would Israel have on God if the Mosaic Covenant were broken?

- Isaiah 50:4 reveals that God meets His servants in the morning, awakens them to His teaching, and uses them to bring that teaching to the weary. Study Jesus Christ’s habit of prayer (cf. Mark 1:35ff). When did he pray? What did He do afterward? When do you pray? What do you do afterward (cf. James 1:23-25)?

- Isaiah 50:6 and Matthew 26:67 reveal that Jesus willfully gave Himself up to humiliation as part of the price of bearing our sins, trusting God the Father to vindicate Him (see footnotes 6 ‘**Salvation**’ in our **doctrinal statement** under **what we believe** at www.gracepointfellowship.org). Do you see the sins of your tongue as spitting in His face, the sins of your rebellion against the Law as whipping His back, or your neglect of witness as sins of pulling out His beard? Ask God to show you some of the gravity of your sin before our next communion.

Transformation exercise:

In Isaiah 50:4, God awakens His servants to His guidance when they habitually come before Him in morning quiet times. Set aside at least 5 minutes each morning this week in reading Scripture and ask God to make you sensitive to teach what you learn to someone who is fainthearted.