

v10 For other (important) uses of “light” in Isaiah, see 2:5; 9:1-2; 60:1-3.

vv10-11 “What impact is [verses 4-9] intended to have on those still on the knife-edge of belief or unbelief that was reached at the end of the previous section?...The Servant is not simply to be admired or wondered at; he is to be obeyed (10). In short, in describing his own discipleship the Servant has shown them what God requires of all his people: not empty profession, but wholehearted, costly obedience” (Webb 1996: 199).

### NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

Mark 10:33-34 (NIV) “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles,<sup>34</sup> who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

Hebrews 5:7-9 (NIV) “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.<sup>8</sup> Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered<sup>9</sup> and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.”

Matthew 17:5 (NIV) “While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!’”

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

In what ways should you imitate the example of the servant (vv4-9)?

In what ways do you see this passage (vv4-9) fulfilled in the life of Jesus?

How does verse 10 apply to your life?

### SOURCES CITED

J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC, 1999.  
John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, NICOT, 1998.  
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## ISAIAH 50: THE SERVANT’S VINDICATION

### STRUCTURE OF ISAIAH 49-55

Servant poem (#2)	49:1-13
Salvation for Zion	49:14-50:3
<b>Servant poem (#3)</b>	<b>50:4-11</b>
Salvation for Zion	51:1-52:12
Servant poem (#4)	52:13-53:12
Salvation for Zion	54:1-17
Conclusion	55:1-13 (adapted from Smith 2009: 337)

### OUTLINE OF ISAIAH 50

- I. The nation’s failure (not God’s fault) (50:1-3)
  
- II. The servant’s vindication (he is innocent) (50:4-9)
  
- III. The people’s decision (which light will you choose?) (50:10-11)

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SERVANT IN CHAPTER 50

- He has a close relationship with the Sovereign Lord (v4).
- He can speak words to the weary because God has taught him (v4).
- He listens to the Sovereign Lord daily (vv4-5).
- He obeys the Lord (v5).
- He is physically abused (v6).
- He does not resist in the face of suffering (v6).
- He is helped by God because he is innocent (v7).
- He decides to persevere in spite of opposition (v7).
- He knows that he will be vindicated by God (v8).
- He knows that those who persecute him will not last (v9).

## NOTES

vv1-3 “It readdresses the charges made in 49:14, that God has somehow arbitrarily abandoned his people” (Oswalt 1998: 317).

v1 “Has the Lord divorced their mother? No, he has not, for no bill of divorce has been issued. Has he sold her to clear a debt? No; the very suggestion that he has creditors is preposterous. The explanation for Zion’s destruction is the *sins* and *transgressions* of its people, not any cooling of affection or straitened circumstances on God’s part. Since there has been no *divorce*, the Lord can take Zion back, and since he has not *sold* her she is still his to claim as by right” (Webb 1996: 197-98).

vv4-9 “As in 42:1-9 and 49:1-7, this person is obedient and faithful, and though deeply troubled, is supremely confident in his divine calling and ultimate vindication. His mission is centered on the proclamation of the Word” (Oswalt 1998: 322).

vv4-9 “This particular expression of the Servant’s ministry has a new emphasis on his suffering. There was no mention of it in the first passage [ch 42], and only the sense of frustration over apparently fruitless labor in the second (49:4). But here the Servant’s obedience to God leads directly to both physical and emotional suffering (vv. 5-6). When one considers the sequence of all four Servant passages, a progression is apparent, leading to a climax in the fourth passage, 52:13-53:12, where the nature and meaning of the Servant’s suffering is explained and related to his ministry” (Oswalt 1998: 322).

v4 “There the openness of the ear has to do with complete obedience. This becomes especially clear when it is remembered that “to hear” in the OT is virtually synonymous with “to obey.” To say “I have heard” is to say “I have obeyed,” and to say “You did not hear me” is to say “You disobeyed me.” Thus the point of God “awakening” the Servant’s *ear* may well be that the Servant is able to speak God’s word to the broken and outcast of the world because he has learned from the outset of the day to do what his Master

tells him to do. A disciple speaks what he has learned through a life of obedience” (Oswalt 1998: 324).

v7 “Persecution will not lead to fear that intimidates or weakens the will to act; instead, abuse will result in an unbreakable commitment (as strong as flint) to continue trusting God” (Smith 2009: 383).

v7 “This stubborn commitment to God’s way must be the perspective of all who truly trust and serve God, for in the end God never fails, even though persecution and tribulations may require a person to suffer severely for a while when they are innocent of any wrong” (Smith 2009: 383).

vv8-9 “Why this heavy emphasis on the undeserved nature of his suffering? Again, 52:13-53:12 provides the clue. If the Servant’s suffering was deserved, it certainly could not be on behalf of someone else (cf. 1 Pet. 2:21-24). But if it was undeserved, as is strenuously maintained here, then the kind of substitution that that passage attributes to him is possible” (Oswalt 1998: 327).

vv10-11 “There are two sorts of people: the one sort (10) *has no light* but *obeys the word of* the Lord’s Servant by facing the darkness with *trust* and reliance. The others (11) seek to conquer the darkness by fires of their own making” (Motyer 1999: 360).

v10 “Even more surprising than the equation of the Servant and the Lord is the coupling of the two groupings. To fear God and to obey the voice of the Servant would seem to imply having an abundance of light. But on reflection, that is not necessarily the case. Those who follow this Servant may indeed walk with him into the darkness of frustration, injustice, humiliation, and abuse. But this does not mean they should forgo their reliance on God....Thus the prophet is saying to his people, people who are wondering whether their dark situations are evidence that God has forgotten them (cf. 49:14), that they must trust God in the darkness if they are to become the servants of God they are called to be, in the image of the Servant who declares God’s way to them” (Oswalt 1998: 329).