

**Discouraged But Determined
Encouragement for the Remnant of Israel
Isaiah 51:1 – 13**

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Shortly after I became a believer, I reached the point in my walk where I could not get enough of the word. Sunday morning was not enough. If the doors were open, I was there and I invited friends to come with me. They did not want to come to church...not even for one service.

Even those who said they were followers and were friends, were not that interested. When all was said and done, there were only three of us who were there, and we were usually being discouraged by our parents about going so often as well. Was I discouraged about those who would not come with me? Absolutely. I did not understand it.

The Lord had done so much for me in flipping me from being the best pagan I could be to following Him, that I just could not understand why no one else wanted to have the same.

For those who are faithful and following YAHWEH in Judah, the same temptation to be discouraged was there. They were faithfully following Torah. They were at Temple, they observed the Feasts, but when they would invite others, even family, they found themselves being ignored. There were other things vying for attention in the culture in Jerusalem and it did not involve being a faithful follower of YAHWEH.

Yeah, He is there but we have our fire insurance, we're Jews.

The end of Isaiah 50 has a word for the remnant as well as a word for the unbelieving members of Judah, the ones who have been at odds with how the Lord has announced how He will achieve His goals for the nation, to include exile and rescue using a gentile of all people. These are those who thought being Jewish was enough.

At the end of Isaiah 50 they had even reached the point that they were happy with false light, not the true light.

But there was a short word of encouragement for the remnant. They are the ones who will see the salvation of the Servant. Now the Lord speaks directly to the remnant with encouragement.

Isaiah 51:1–3

“Listen to Me, you who pursue righteousness, Who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut, And to the quarry from which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father And to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain; When he was only one I called him, Then I blessed him and multiplied him. Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her ruins. And He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, Thanksgiving and the sound of a melody.” (NASB 2020)

The Lord is directly addressing the remnant, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. There has always been a remnant among the Jews of those who truly believe the word of the Lord and are following Him, even when the culture says not to.

In the Northern Kingdom, idolatry was the name of the game, yet even Elijah, who thought he was alone, had pointed out to him by the Lord that even in the Northern Kingdom, there was a remnant of believers. Paul picked up on this theme in his discussion of the simple fact that God is not through with the Jews.

Romans 11:1–6

“I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? “Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life.” But what is God’s reply to him? “I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.” (ESV)

Within the diaspora and in the nation of Israel today, there are those who have recognized who their Messiah is and are loyally following Him. They are the remnant, they are also part of the Church and when the rapture takes place, they will go along with the rest of the Church.

It is then that God once again deals with His people, the Jews, as evidenced by what we see in the book of Revelation after the end of Revelation 3. The focus turns to Israel as evidenced by the 144,000 male evangelists who come solely from 12 tribes of Israel, excluding anyone from the tribe of Dan (Revelation 7:4 – 8).

But for the remnant living in Judah, it was becoming increasingly lonely to be a faithful follower of YAHWEH. In the first group to be taken into exile in Babylon, there was a large group of young men who were earmarked to become servants of the state. We do not know how many were taken, but we know of only four who were faithful to YAHWEH (Daniel 1:6 – 21). Ezekiel shows us just how bad it wound up being in Jerusalem just prior to the final assault from Nebuchadnezzar when he relates the instructions given to mark and protect the remnant. Ezekiel’s reaction reflects heavily on just how many faithful there were. Not many.

Ezekiel 9:4–11

“The LORD said to him, “Go through the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of the people who moan and groan over all the abominations practiced in it.” While I listened, he said to the others, “Go through the city after him and strike people down; do not let your eye pity nor spare anyone! Old men, young men, young women, little children, and women—wipe them out! But do not touch anyone who has the mark. Begin at my sanctuary!” So they began with the elders who were at the front of the temple. He said to them, “Defile the temple and fill the courtyards with corpses. Go!” So they went out and struck people down throughout the city. While they were striking them down, I was left alone, and I threw myself face down and cried out, “Ah, sovereign LORD! Will you destroy the entire remnant of Israel when you pour out your fury on Jerusalem?” He said to me, “The sin of the house of Israel and Judah is extremely

great; the land is full of murder, and the city is full of corruption, for they say, 'The LORD has abandoned the land, and the LORD does not see!' But as for me, my eye will not pity them nor will I spare them; I hereby repay them for what they have done." Next I noticed the man dressed in linen with the writing kit at his side bringing back word: "I have done just as you commanded me." (NET)

The remnant, just like those of us who are being faithful believers in the 21st century, need encouragement. It is and always has been tough to remain faithful in a culture running 100mph the opposite direction. What we see today really is not all that new.

Just being a Jew was not enough, being faithful to the Lord was what made the difference. Just being born in the United States or going to church or having been baptized as a child is not enough. What is needed, just as then, is a relationship. "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6, ESV)

Jesus anticipated there would be a continuation of the attitude held by most of the Jews. That their heritage was all that counted.

The lies of Satan have not changed, he still wants to discourage us that we need to be individually faithful and loyal to Jesus Christ. He lies to us and to the culture about what is truly needed to be "in."

Matthew 7:21–23

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" (ESV)

2 Corinthians 13:5

"Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!" (ESV)

Are we trusting on the achievement of Christ on the cross for our salvation or on our work? Do we know that we know or are we not all that sure? Is our relationship with Jesus Christ the central focus of our life or are we box checkers?

Romans 10:8–11

"But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." (ESV)

2 Peter 1:10–11

"So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away. Then God will give you a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (NLT)

The message to the remnant shows us that the Lord knows. He is aware of what we are going through in the culture today and we are not alone. Those who were faithful in Judah were not alone. The remnant is encouraged to do as Paul encouraged the Corinthians to do, take a self evaluation and see where you are regarding salvation.

You feel lonely, remember, when Abraham was called it was just him and Sarah who were following.

Isaiah 51:2

“Look to Abraham your father And to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain; When he was only one I called him, Then I blessed him and multiplied him.” (NASB 2020)

In the Hebrew, there is a hint, in the form of the word translated “called.” קָרָאתִי (qra ti) is in the perfect tense. It was a single call from YAHWEH to Abraham immediately after the nations were split up into 70 groups in Genesis 11. This “relates the single call of divine grace, which removed Abraham from the midst of idolaters into the fellowship of Jehovah.” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 485)

Because of God’s grace, Abraham was blessed, and he was multiplied, and multiplication had to be a miracle of God for it to take place. Part of the promise was also that through a descendant of Abraham, the world would be blessed. This is a promise of Messiah, the Servant we have been talking about the past few weeks.

Genesis 12:2–3 “And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you will be blessed. And I will bless those who bless you, and those who curse you I will curse, and **in you all the tribes of the earth will be blessed.**” (Lexham Press 2020, Genesis 12:2-3)

They can clearly see God’s grace taking them from one elderly childless couple, to the nation they are today. They see God’s grace in action.

The Lord then reassures the remnant about the surety of what He has been saying.

Isaiah 51:3

“Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her ruins. And He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, Thanksgiving and the sound of a melody.” (NASB 2020)

He is not fooling about the talk regarding exile. It is coming. Jerusalem will become rubble, a pile of ruins. It will be rebuilt.

He goes further talking about the changes that will come at the end of the age. “This picture of transformation—the unproductive becoming fertile, the wild ordered, the waste rich and abundant—is crowned by the reference to Eden restored, an image going beyond order, beauty and richness to the removal of the curse (Gen. 3:18) and the restoration of creation to the divine intention: the new earth.” (Motyer 1999, 362)



(Bolen 2012, Used with Permission)

The remnant will be the ones who will enjoy the restoration of all things. They will see the salvation of the Servant. They will see the changes that will take place as a result of Messiah being on the throne of the world.

The intent of YAHWEH has always been to restore the planet to Eden, which He will do at the end of the Tribulation. We have already received a glimpse of the future earlier in Isaiah 35. We covered that more in depth in our study of Isaiah 35.

Isaiah 35:1–4

“The wilderness and the desert will rejoice, And the desert will shout for joy and blossom; Like the crocus It will blossom profusely And rejoice with joy and jubilation. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, The majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the LORD, The majesty of our God. Strengthen the exhausted, and make the feeble strong. Say to those with anxious heart, “Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The retribution of God will come, But He will save you.”” (NASB 2020)

Ezekiel also spent time discussing Jerusalem and the impact of Messiah taking over.

In God’s eschatological recreation of the earth (Ezek 36:24–36) Ezekiel describes how God will gather his people back to their land (36:24, 31), cleanse the people of their sins (36:25, 33), give them a new heart and his Spirit (36:26–27), and restore the fertility of their land like the garden of Eden (36:29–30, 34–35). The joy and singing that will accompany this eschatological restoration of the land expresses a radical change in the attitude of the Hebrew people. These new conditions in Zion do not refer to the situation in Zion after the people return from Babylonian exile but something much greater and grander at the end of the ages. (Smith 2009, 393)

As the earth is restored to Eden, there is something we need to remember about Eden. “Eden was also God’s home. Ezekiel refers to Eden as “the garden of God” (Ezek. 28:13; 31:8–9). No surprise, really. What might be surprising is that, right after calling Eden “the garden of God,” Ezekiel calls it “the holy mountain of God” (v. 28:14). In many ancient religions, luxurious gardens and inaccessible mountains were considered the home of the gods. The Bible uses both descriptions for Eden. Eden was God’s home and, therefore, where he conducted business. It was his headquarters, or home office.” (Heiser 2015, 28)

In Isaiah 50 we learned some of the reasons which make Eden possible. Isaiah will cover more reasons ahead, but for Eden to be possible, the issue of sin must have been dealt with. “Eden is now a possibility again. Christ as the last Adam has opened the doors to Eden through his death and resurrection. The curse of Eden is overturned at the cross. The cross is both the means and the moment in which entry to Eden is made possible again.” (Isaac 2015, 333)

Isaiah 51:4–6

“Pay attention to Me, My people, And listen to Me, My nation; For a law will go out from Me, And I will bring My justice as a light of the peoples. My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, And My arms will judge the peoples; The coastlands will wait for Me, And they will wait expectantly for My arm. Raise your eyes to the sky, Then look to the earth beneath; For the sky will vanish like smoke, And the earth will wear out like a garment And its inhabitants will die in the same way. But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not fail.” (NASB 2020)

The idea the Lord is saying is simple. His salvation and righteousness are forever.

Here is the thing, He is encouraging His faithful followers, the remnant. In verse one He commanded them to listen to Him, something they were more than willing to do, in contrast to the rest of Judah. Here He commands again, another imperative to those who are faithful followers, to pay attention to Him. Amid persecution, it is easy to have our attention drawn elsewhere. The culture works hard to convince of their opinion. The remnant, who is in the minority, feels like they are all alone, but they are not. God

commands them to listen to the encouragement He has for them and to stop listening to the culture. The word He has is that judgement is coming, it is certain. It really is all gonna burn.

When Christ returns as King, the justice of God will shine from Israel, specifically Jerusalem, to the entire planet. With that justice there are those who cannot withstand the scrutiny it will bring, and the natural outcome is the judgement of God as reflected in Zechariah 14 and Revelation 19.

Isaiah 51:5 "My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, And My arms will judge the peoples; The coastlands will wait for Me, And they will wait expectantly for My arm." (NASB 2020)

We see the anticipation in the remnant and in nature for the justice of the Lord to reverse the curse. Paul talked of this day.

Romans 8:18–23

"I consider that what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. All of creation waits with eager longing for God to reveal his children. For creation was condemned to lose its purpose, not of its own will, but because God willed it to be so. Yet there was the hope that creation itself would one day be set free from its slavery to decay and would share the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we know that up to the present time all of creation groans with pain, like the pain of childbirth. But it is not just creation alone which groans; we who have the Spirit as the first of God's gifts also groan within ourselves, as we wait for God to make us his children and set our whole being free." (GNB)

Here in verse 5, we see that the righteousness of God and His salvation are connected. "His salvation will fulfill all the standards required by His righteousness. God's "arm" means His power, by which He will judge all nations, bring His justice, and carry out His decisions." (Horton 2000, 380)

After putting up with the rule of the Beast and the terror that went along with it, those remaining and entering the kingdom are more than ready for the King. The coastlands refers to all of world, every continent.

They "look to" (Heb. *yeqawwu*, "wait expectantly for") God; that is, they wait for Him to send the Messiah, hoping and trusting in His power to make His salvation available to all the world. (Horton 2000, 380)

Isaiah 42:1 "Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations." (NASB 2020)

Looking back at the first Servant song we exactly who it is that will bring divine justice.

The first Servant Song shows that the Servant is the mediator of this divine justice (42:1). Here we see that the law, justice, righteousness, and salvation are all to be widely disseminated throughout the nations. This particular combination of terms certainly suggests that there is going to be a thorough reordering of human life among the nations on the basis of God's own character, revealed in his law, expressed in his righteousness, and taking the form of salvation. (Grogan 1986, 294)

At the end of the age, the remnant is waiting. "...they will wait expectantly for My arm." We find ourselves even today waiting expectantly His arm, His judgement to begin; for the Lord to return and correct the mess we are in. We know that day is now closer than ever before and the convergence of all the prophetic signs is breathtaking.

The farthest reaches of humanity wait expectantly for God's delivering power in the sense that everyone wants someone to correct the mess we are in, not that they know how salvation will come. This salvation was imminent, the Lord promised, as imminent as Messiah's appearing. (Constable 2003, Is 51:5)

The culture adheres to uniformitarianism. This is part and parcel of the worship of evolution that there was no creator at all. No miracles. We wait for something the world considers absurd as they have a totally different worldview.

Evolutionary uniformitarianism is the theory that originated about a century and a half ago with Charles Darwin. The theory postulates that the processes presently operating in nature are sufficient to account for all geological changes throughout the history of the Earth. (Lindsay 1992)

The worldview of our culture rejects that there is a Creator God. This worldview also rejects accountability to any god other than the one of their own making...themselves. Why the loneliness? This is not the worldview of the Believer.

On the other hand. Creation Science adheres to the theory of catastrophism, which states that changes in the Earth's crust have, on occasion, been effected suddenly by physical forces. Creationists believe that as is described in scripture, throughout time God has directly intervened in the normal physical processes of the universe, causing significant global changes—some temporary, some permanent. These catastrophes were associated with judgment on mankind. Sometimes these judgments were worldwide in scope and at other times they were local. (Lindsay 1992)

Because we choose to believe that a Creator God made it all, we believe in creation and as such find ourselves waiting expectantly for His arm of judgement to begin. We know we all come from the same set of parents showing just how foolish racism is. But what we see in the culture is increasing in insanity, (Deuteronomy 28:1 – 37) all predicted by Jesus as a sign of the last days (Matthew 24:9).

For example, Scientific American recently published an opinion piece entitled “Denial of Evolution Is a Form of White Supremacy”. (Hopper 2021) It is no longer about the Science, but about the destruction of faith.

The fact that this was even published reflects where we are on the timeline.

Again, we feel rather “out there” at times in our faith. We know the truth, just as the remnant does, and are unwilling to compromise the truth of God's word for the lies of Satan and the culture. Paranoia is not the answer, the Lord provides the answer.

Isaiah 51:6

“Raise your eyes to the sky, Then look to the earth beneath; For the sky will vanish like smoke, And the earth will wear out like a garment And its inhabitants will die in the same way. But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not fail.” (NASB 2020)

The Servant, Jesus Christ, answered three questions shortly before going to the cross. The answers are called the Olivet Discourse. The questions? “Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and said, “Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will signal your return and the end of the world?”” (Matthew 24:3, NLT)

Jesus answers those questions. We have a record in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21. In Luke, we see a repeat of the language used here in Isaiah 51.

Luke 21:28–33

“So when all these things begin to happen, stand and look up, for your salvation is near!” Then he gave them this illustration: “Notice the fig tree, or any other tree. When the leaves come out, you know without being told that summer is near. In the same way, when you see all these things taking place, you can know that the Kingdom of God is near. I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear.” (NLT)

Here in Isaiah is a promise. Those who are of the remnant, those who are looking for His salvation and His righteousness will see it all.

Those who come through the Tribulation will indeed look up as they see His salvation come (Zechariah 14: 1 – 5, Revelation 19:11 – 16).

They will see Him rescue His people. Because of His salvation and His righteousness, they will also transcend the temporal and see the sky vanish, the earth go away and those who do not follow Him disappear from the scene. We are seeing a description here of what John describes for us in Revelation 20:7 – 10 capped with the promise fulfilled.

Revelation 21:1–4

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, because the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and the sea was gone. I also saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne say, “See, the tent of God is among humans! He will make his home with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There won’t be death anymore. There won’t be any grief, crying, or pain, because the first things have disappeared.”” (ISV)

Isaiah 51:7–8

“Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, A people in whose heart is My Law; Do not fear the taunting of people, Nor be terrified of their abuses. “For the moth will eat them like a garment; Yes, the moth will eat them like wool. But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation to all generations.” (NASB 2020)

After that magnificent promise of the final triumph of God comes another word to the remnant. As like before, it begins with a similar command to listen. But there is an interesting progression seen here. In verse 1, the word was for those who pursued righteousness, in verse 4 it was for “My people.”

Here in verse 7, there is more to it than pursuit and simply being His people, we find out that by pursuing righteousness and being His people, we will know righteousness. “God’s instruction is in their heart. Truly, these are God’s people (v. 4).” (Oswalt 1998, 338)

The secret is that the presence of the Holy Spirit in them makes them know, truly know righteousness. This is not about genetics. The remnant is not that because they are descended from Abraham.

For us, we are not part of the body of Christ simply because we went to church. When we believed, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit as the down payment that what Christ has begun in us, He will complete (2 Corinthians 1:20 – 22). Here God is saying that same thing to the remnant of Israel. They have had a heart change.

Romans 2:28–29

“For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision something that is outward in the flesh, but someone is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart by the Spirit and not by the written code. This person’s praise is not from people but from God.” (NET)

When faced with the evil of the world, the seeming delay in the fulfillment of God’s promises, and the mockery and hatred of a sinful world, believers should remember the evidence of God’s faithfulness in history (vv. 1–3). They should recognize that God is not some local deity who is but a projection from creation; rather, he is the Creator, whose promises of salvation will outlast the cosmos (vv. 4–6), and they should know that those who reproach and revile them, like all that has not partaken of the permanence of God, are doomed to the slow destruction from which none who have made this world their God can ever escape. (Oswalt 1998, 338)

For the remnant, hang in there, “you who know righteousness.” Keep looking up rather than down. Remember who it is that you serve and that He is the Creator God. His law, at the end of the age, will truly be in their heart as He completely fulfills the promises of Joel 2:28 – 29, promises which began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost.

For us as NT believers, we are there as well. “...Do not fear the taunting of people, Nor be terrified of their abuses.” (Isaiah 51:7b, NASB 2020)

Remember, we will be treated no differently than our Lord when He was here.

2 Timothy 3:12–15

“Now in fact all who want to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil people and charlatans will go from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived themselves. You, however, must continue in the things you have learned and are confident about. You know who taught you and how from infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (NET)

God is telling the remnant not to freak out because of taunting or abuse. Ignore the insanity. For us, ignore the incredibly misinformed articles making it into print. Ignore the insanity. See 2 Timothy 3:13 again.

The remnant has a glorious future and so do we. But for those who are busy taunting and abusing, persecuting us.

Isaiah 51:8

“For the moth will eat them like a garment; Yes, the moth will eat them like wool. But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation to all generations.” (NASB 2020)

This is not the first time that YAHWEH is telling His people to not let the world get them down. Back when the Egyptian army, the most powerful military in the world at the time, was busy chasing His people; they were freaking out. Kinda like what Isaiah is talking about with the remnant and us.

Exodus 14:13–14

“And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.” (ESV)

The Lord will fight for you. He has a future and a plan. He has promised that the remnant will see as eyewitnesses what it is God has prepared for the future.

We have the same promise. We are here today for such a time as this, we have no idea of what it is He has planned for the interim, but we know the future.

1 Corinthians 2:9–13

“That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.” But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God’s deep secrets. No one can know a person’s thoughts except that person’s own spirit, and no one can know God’s thoughts except God’s own Spirit. And we have received God’s Spirit (not the world’s spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit’s words to explain spiritual truths.” (NLT)

The Lord finishes His encouragement with a reminder to the remnant and a reminder to us, His righteousness is forever, and His salvation is for all.

Therefore it is necessary to fear nothing and to be confident in their salvation. And, as he already taught them, this salvation is immortal and ageless and eternal and powerful. (Eusebius of Caesarea 2013, 253)

Isaiah 51:9–11

“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; Awake as in the days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not You who cut Rahab in pieces, Who pierced the dragon? Was it not You who dried up the sea, The waters of the great deep; Who made the depths of the sea a pathway For the redeemed to cross over? And the redeemed of the LORD will return And come to Zion with joyful shouting, And everlasting joy will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, And sorrow and sighing will flee away.” (NASB 2020)

Suddenly, we have a new speaker. This is not YAHWEH, and it is not the Servant, this is the remnant and possibly Isaiah.

Verse 9 starts off with a double imperative followed by one more, but it is directed to the Lord. They are not asking Him to wake up, they are asking Him to act. This is a rather urgent request as well since they repeat it three times.

The plea is that God in His power (arm; cf. v. 5) would rise again (Awake; cf. v. 17) and save His people as He did in the Exodus (as in the days gone by). (Martin 1985, 1105)

This is prayer, intercession with the Lord calling for Him to act and save His people just as He has done before. As they pray, they begin reminding the Lord of what He has done in the past.

Isaiah 51:9b–10

“...Was it not You who cut Rahab in pieces, Who pierced the dragon? Was it not You who dried up the sea, The waters of the great deep; Who made the depths of the sea a pathway For the redeemed to cross over?” (NASB 2020)

As questions often serve their role in prayer, so here. Praying people ask if it was not the Lord who defeated Egypt’s army, cleared a path in the sea, and let His people cross safely. They do not answer their own question, for the reply is obvious. (Rosscup 2008, 1119)

Yes, God is indeed the one who did all of that. He has been letting the faithful know that exile is coming, hard times are coming, but there is a future. They are praying about that future.

The use of way is significant, because this and related terms, such as “highway,” are used throughout the book to speak of God’s ability to bring his own back to him. Thus if that is what God did in the past for the descendants of Abraham, is it not possible that God could, if he would, do the same thing again? (Oswalt 1998, 342-343)

This is the remnant who is praying, they know they are being heard. They know He can do as in the past and they react with an affirmation of this.

Isaiah 51:11

“And the redeemed of the LORD will return And come to Zion with joyful shouting, And everlasting joy will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, And sorrow and sighing will flee away.” (NASB 2020)

There is confidence in this prayer. The redeemed will return, this is not a request to return, this is an affirmation of what they have been told. They know they will return. They know that there will be joy in Jerusalem again, joy that will never end.

This is an affirmation of the prophetic plans God has for the nation. They know He will do this, and God answers them.

Isaiah 51:12–13

“I, I Myself, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you are afraid of mortal man, And of a son of man who is made like grass, That you have forgotten the LORD your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens And laid the foundations of the earth, That you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, As he makes ready to destroy? And where is the rage of the oppressor?” (NASB 2020)

God responds to His people, and He does so with comfort immediately attacking the one thing that becomes enemy number for all of us as we wait on the Lord, fear.

His first comment should be sufficient to chase away all fears and doubts. The question had been posed by the remnant as to whether God is the one who did the great works in the past and the first thing that is affirmed to them is no, I am your comforter, but something even more profound. I am.

Why is God able to be their comforter, because “I am.” He is the self-existent one. He is the Creator God of everything.

Jesus also talked about this, reflecting that it is a known temptation for us and a reminder we need.

Luke 12:4–5

“But I tell you, my friends, never be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can’t do anything more. I’ll show you the one you should be afraid of. Be afraid of the one who has the authority to throw you into hell after killing you. Yes, I tell you, be afraid of him!” (ISV)

The fear is misplaced. Ultimately, man has no authority or control on the future for those who belong to the Lord. In verse 7 the call was not to fear those who taunt and abuse. Man is temporal and fleeting, not even worthy of fear in the face of the pre-existent one.

He is the source of life, breath, hope, salvation, encouragement, righteousness. He is and always has been. That should be sufficient.

Isaiah 51:13

“That you have forgotten the LORD your Maker, Who stretched out the heavens And laid the foundations of the earth, That you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, As he makes ready to destroy? And where is the rage of the oppressor?” (NASB 2020)

God asks a question, is the reason you experiencing fear is because of a poor memory?

The problem is not with God’s memory; the problem must be the poor memory of the people of Israel. If they would continually remember that their God was the Creator who “stretched out the heaven and laid the foundation of the earth,” they would not live in constant fear of their oppressors who were trying to destroy them. (Smith 2009, 406-407)

Have they forgotten who it is He is? He is their creator, their maker. He is the one who stretched out the heavens. He is the one who made the earth.

Remember, this is the remnant praying that God is responding to. Is the response at the end of the age to those who are in hiding from the Beast and his oppression? Are they so concerned with this oppression that they have forgotten that there is a future, and it is the Lord who is taking care of them? They are in fear of destruction but those they fear are only men. They are soon to be returned to Jerusalem in an exodus much like the first one.

Ezekiel 36:22–32

“Therefore tell the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: “I’m not about to act for your sake, you house of Israel, but for the sake of my holy reputation, which you have been defiling throughout all of

the nations where you've gone. I'm going to affirm my great reputation that has been defiled among the nations (that is, that you have defiled in their midst), and those people will learn that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, 'when I affirm my holiness in front of their very eyes. I'm going to remove you from the nations, gather you from all of the territories, and bring you all back to your own land. I'll sprinkle pure water on you all, and you'll be cleansed from your impurity and from all of your idols. I'm going to give you a new heart, and I'm going to give you a new spirit within all of your deepest parts. I'll remove that rock-hard heart of yours and replace it with one that's sensitive to me. I'll place my spirit within you, empowering you to live according to my regulations and to keep my just decrees. You'll live in the land that I gave to your ancestors, you'll be my people, and I will be your God. In addition, I'll deliver you from everything that makes you unclean. I'll call out to the grain you plant, ordering it to produce abundant yields, and I will never bring famine in your direction. I'll increase the yields of your fruit trees and crops so that you'll never again experience the disgrace of famine that occurs in other nations. Then you'll remember your lifestyles and practices that were not good. You'll hate yourselves as you look at your own iniquities and loathsome practices. I won't be doing any of this for your sake," declares the Lord GOD, "so keep that in mind. Be ashamed and frustrated because of your behavior, you house of Israel!" (ISV)

The remnant has the attention of God. He answers their prayers, and He comforts them. They are not alone, and we are not either. He is coming very soon. The events we have been discussing are soon to take place in real time, and you can be ready for that, but it will involve a decision made with the full disclosure that not many will be joining you on the path.

We already seen the response that His invitation to enjoy His salvation requires.

Salvation is a Gift

- Admit you are a sinner.
- Believe in your heart that Jesus died for your sins, was buried and He rose from the dead three days later.
- Call on the name of the Lord.

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