

Family Matters
When Is a Divorce Not a Divorce?
Isaiah 50:1 – 11

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Isaiah 49:14

“But Zion said, “The LORD has abandoned me, And the Lord has forgotten me.”” (NASB 2020)

We are still in the conversation dealing with the allegation about YAHWEH that He has abandoned His own people. That is not the case as we covered the last time we were together.

The conversation continues and here in chapter 50, another aspect of Isaiah 49:14 is addressed.

Looking at Isaiah 50, we are going to have to become more familiar with Jewish family law since some of the previous arguments about being abandoned have brought in aspects of that law which will be addressed here by YAHWEH. The players, Zion is “the mother,” the Jews are the children, and God the Husband and Father.

The first topic is divorce. In Judah and Israel, if the law is being followed, a divorce was not final unless the husband presented papers to the wife. Moses laid out a specific legal structure to be followed. He also addressed remarriage as well under the Old Testament law.

Deuteronomy 24:1–4

“Suppose a man marries a woman and later decides that he doesn’t want her, because he finds something about her that he doesn’t like. So he writes out divorce papers, gives them to her, and sends her away from his home. Then suppose she marries another man, and he also decides that he doesn’t want her, so he also writes out divorce papers, gives them to her, and sends her away from his home. Or suppose her second husband dies. In either case, her first husband is not to marry her again; he is to consider her defiled. If he married her again, it would be offensive to the LORD. You are not to commit such a terrible sin in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.” (GNB)

Isaiah 50:1

“This is what the LORD says: “Where is the certificate of divorce By which I have sent your mother away? Or to whom of My creditors did I sell you? Behold, you were sold for your wrongdoings, And for your wrongful acts your mother was sent away.” (NASB 2020)

If God has forsaken and forgotten his covenant wife Israel (49:14), where is the certificate of divorce that needs to be granted to the wife? This refers to a literal “letter of cutting off” that a husband must give a wife that he “sends away, divorces” (the root šālah). (Smith 2009, 375)

Isaiah 49:14

“But Zion said, “The LORD has abandoned me, And the Lord has forgotten me.”” (NASB 2020)

This is the attitude of God’s people and implies a divorce has taken place. YAHWEH has already gone to great lengths to show them how wrong they are of that assumption. They have not been abandoned, but they are reaping what they sowed.

YAHWEH has explained to them just what it will look like at the end of the Tribulation when all are regathered back to Israel after Messiah has saved them.

There are some other things that were implied or said which gets wrapped into the discussion here in Isaiah 50.

The questioning was coming from Judah, not Israel which is already in exile. Judah is assuming something similar as what happened to Israel, that will not be the case.

The Northern Kingdom had indeed crossed the line and been divorced by the Lord. Their infidelity is the topic of Hosea. Judah was not cast off, as we learned in Isaiah 49. Their sin though is sufficient for a trial separation, with the intent to bring them back into fellowship, but not a permanent separation though a divorce.

But for the Northern Kingdom.

Jeremiah 3:6–8

“The LORD said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore.” (ESV)

Jeremiah, Isaiah, Hosea and Ezekiel all refer to the marriage relationship as a picture of the Jewish people and YAHWEH.

Has God abandoned Judah? Where is the divorce document? “Jehovah in his mercy omitted this formality; consequently, her dismissal has not the legal value of a divorce.” (Cheyne 1882, 24)

The separation was solely due to the sin of Judah. “What a sorrowful thought then is it, that by sin we should at any time estrange ourselves from our Lord, our husband; and that our iniquities should act like a bill of divorcement!” (Hawker 2013, 446-447)

As New Testament believers, do we have the capacity to estrange ourselves from God? I mean, the Holy Spirit is in us forever once we come to Christ, right? But what happens when we sin and break the relationship?

We are warned about this several places in the New Testament.

Ephesians 4:30 “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (NET)

Is it possible to drift away from the Lord into some of the things that we see taking place in Judah later under Manasseh? Yes.

1 Corinthians 5:9–13

“When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. But I wasn’t talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don’t even eat with such people. It isn’t my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, “You must remove the evil person from among you.”” (NLT)

1 John 1:6–10

“If we say we have fellowship with him and yet keep on walking in the darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth. But if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we do not bear the guilt of sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, forgiving us our sins and cleansing us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us.” (NET)

Repentance is the key. It was for Judah, and it is for us.

With repentance comes the reestablishment of the relationship. By the way, He has never left us, we left Him due to our sin. Just like Judah. It does not mean that we will not reap the results of the sin, but it does mean we are back in relationship with the Lord again. In fact, Paul says that with repentance also comes restoration within the body if the sin was such that the individual had to be cast out (2 Corinthians 2:5 – 11).

For the nation though, self-deception was strong.

The people have deceived themselves; the coming exile is solely due to their own sin. They will be reaping the results of what they did.

Something else allowable under the law is how a family deals with debt. There is always the possibility that due to outstanding debt, a parent could sell their child into slavery in order to pay off the debt. This was the case even into the time of Jesus. “Because he couldn’t pay, his master ordered him, his wife, his children, and everything that he owned to be sold so that payment could be made.” (Matthew 18:25, ISV)

Isaiah 50:1

“This is what the LORD says: “Where is the certificate of divorce By which I have sent your mother away? **Or to whom of My creditors did I sell you?** Behold, you were sold for your wrongdoings, And for your wrongful acts your mother was sent away.” (NASB 2020)

Their present condition was indeed that of being sold and put away; but this was not the effect of despotic caprice, or the result of compulsion on the part of Jehovah. It was Israel itself that had broken off the relation in which it stood to Jehovah; they had been sold through their own faults, and “for your transgressions is your mother put away.” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 480)

God did send Judah away, and He did sell them but not because of any debt, but because of sin.

He admits that he did sell the Israelites into slavery, but it was because of their sins, not because of some debt he owed. He also admits he divorced Zion, but that too was the result of the nation’s sins. So, the

first rhetorical question, rather than implying no divorce occurred, asks for the certificate to be produced so the accuser can see the reason for the divorce in black and white. The second question, rather than implying no sale occurred, simply makes the point that the Lord did not sell them into slavery to pay off a debt, but to punish them for their sins. (Chisholm Jr. 2002, 114)

Isaiah 50:2–3

“Why was there no one when I came? When I called, why was there no one to answer? Is My hand so short that it cannot redeem? Or do I have no power to rescue? Behold, I dry up the sea with My rebuke, I turn rivers into a wilderness; Their fish stink for lack of water, And die of thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, And make sackcloth their covering.” (NASB 2020)

When YAHWEH came to His people in Jerusalem, He called to them, and no one responded. They were ready to blame Him for their problems, which they created through their sin, they were so deceived and so blinded that they could no longer hear Him. Jesus says the same about the last days.

How did YAHWEH come to His people Judah and Israel? He came through the prophets, “he called to them to leave their sins, and so prevent their own ruin: but was there no man, or next to none, that had any regard to the warnings which the prophets gave them, none that answered the calls of God, or complied with the messages he sent them; and this was it for which they were sold and put away.” (Henry 1994, 1175)

2 Chronicles 36:16–17

“But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy. Therefore he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or aged. He gave them all into his hand.” (ESV)

Ultimately, YAHWEH sends His Son. Jesus knew what was in the hearts of the people and how they did not want to hear, He knew how they were going to treat Him in just a couple of days.

Matthew 21:38–40

“But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” (ESV)

As He left the Temple for the last time, before heading over to the Mount of Olives, Jesus had a final word for the leadership of Jerusalem, echoing what is seen here in Isaiah 50.

Matthew 23:37–39

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would have none of it! Look, your house is left to you desolate! For I tell you, you will not see me from now until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ” (NET)

The leadership of Judah had determined that God could not save them in the manner that they expected Him to. This was part of the conversation in Isaiah 49 and this is a continuation of that conversation. “Is My hand so short...” begins the rhetorical question.

The leadership had their own ideas of what Messiah would do and Jesus did not fit their preconceived notions.

At the end of the age, Jesus will return as the avenger of blood. This is more along the lines of what the Jewish leadership wanted to see at His first coming. God was clear though about the need for humility. At the point that His people recognize their need, they are helpless.

Zechariah 13:9 “And I will bring that surviving third through, testing them as if through fire, purifying them like silver, assaying them like gold. **They will call on my name, and I will answer them.** I will say, ‘This is my people,’ and they will say, “The LORD is my God.” (ISV)

Isaiah 63:1–6

“Who is this who comes from Edom, With garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, This One who is majestic in His apparel, Marching in the greatness of His strength? “It is I, the One who speaks in righteousness, mighty to save.” Why is Your apparel red, And Your garments like one who treads in the wine press? “I have trodden the wine trough alone, And from the peoples there was no one with Me. I also trod them in My anger And trampled them in My wrath; And their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, And I stained all My clothes. For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of redemption has come. **I looked, but there was no one to help, And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; So My own arm brought salvation to Me, And My wrath upheld Me.** I trampled down the peoples in My anger And made them drunk with My wrath, And I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.” (NASB 2020)

Isaiah 50:2 “Why was there no one when I came? When I called, why was there no one to answer? Is My hand so short that it cannot redeem? Or do I have no power to rescue? Behold, I dry up the sea with My rebuke, I turn rivers into a wilderness; Their fish stink for lack of water, And die of thirst.” (NASB 2020)

In response to the questioning of His capabilities to save and rescue, YAHWEH starts in the past then extends to the future. He reminds them who it was that rescued them from Egypt and dried up the Red Sea so they could cross (Exodus 14).

When they needed water while in the wilderness, who is it that supplied them water? YAHWEH did (Exodus 15:11 – 15, Exodus 17:1 – 7, Numbers 20:8 – 13).

Who is it that had the power to make fish die for lack of water? (Exodus 7:14 – 25, Psalm 105:29).

Isaiah 50:3

“I clothe the heavens with blackness, And make sackcloth their covering.” (NASB 2020)

Who is it that will darken the sky at the end of the age (Revelation 6:12 – 17)?

So back to the original statement “But Zion said, “The LORD has abandoned me, And the Lord has forgotten me.” (Isaiah 49:14, NASB 2020). Why is it that Jerusalem does not consider that YAHWEH can rescue or save? That His arm is too short to redeem?

The question therefore indignantly asks whether the Lord is short of the cash to buy back his wife (Hos. 3:2), to redeem his slaves or to find the due payment for their sins—in short: can the Lord satisfy the law? (Motyer 1999, 357)

That obviously was still a question when the Servant was on planet earth and doing ministry in and around Jerusalem. He brings it up.

Matthew 5:17–18 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.” (ESV)

The answer to that question...examine creation and the power that YAHWEH has, as the Creator God to be able to enter into His creation at any time and alter the circumstances in favor of His own people. Despite what it is that God said in Isaiah 49, He has again pointed that out here in Isaiah 50. “Then the voice of the Servant is heard again speaking of his mission and his obedience to God and God’s trustworthiness. Surely this Servant is not the recipient of God’s redemption for his people, but the agent of it.” (Oswalt 1998, 323)

Isaiah 50:4–5

“The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, So that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple. The Lord GOD has opened My ear, And I was not disobedient, Nor did I turn back.” (NASB 2020)

Once again, the Servant speaks up into the pity party of Judah. In the middle of their self-induced downward spiral into sin and the results of that sin, comes the voice of the one who will redeem them. God’s arm is not too short, the Servant is exhibit one; and He speaks to the nation. This also begins the third servant song (Isaiah 50:4 – 9).

What is the first word the Servant says? The Lord God (Adonai YAHWEH). The Servant speaks of Him and will be a witness for Him speaking words that are empowered through the Holy Spirit. He will use this phrase four times in the song.

What is the one thing that the Servant will have that will make Him incredibly effective? He is human, but supernaturally so and He is also God as well (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6 – 7, 11:1 – 2, 49:5 – 6). We also know from Isaiah 42:1 that He will be empowered by the Holy Spirit. But the language used in the Hebrew has something unique to say about His tongue.

This God who can clothe heavens with blackness has equipped the servant for his task, and has given a ready tongue to him (lit., a tongue of the learned ones). The phrase designates a tongue such as learned or skilled men have, and hence a ready, expert tongue. The learned are instructed by the Lord; the tongue belongs to one taught of God, and so it is the tongue of a person instructed and illumined by His Spirit. (Young 1972, 298)

What did Jesus do for the first thirty years of His life? Make furniture and nothing else? He was studying the Word of God. His viewpoints and insight were way beyond those of anyone else even at an early age.

He had the tongue of one who was a disciple, a taught or learned one, one who had become an expert in that which was being taught. This is the opposite of Israel.

We are provided a glimpse into what was taking place in those “silent” years.

Luke 2:46–52

“On the third day they found him in the Temple, sitting with the Jewish teachers, listening to them and asking questions. All who heard him were amazed at his intelligent answers. His parents were astonished when they saw him, and his mother said to him, “My son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been terribly worried trying to find you.” He answered them, “Why did you have to look for me? Didn’t you know that I had to be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand his answer. So Jesus went back with them to Nazareth, where he was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. **Jesus grew both in body and in wisdom**, gaining favour with God and people.” (GNB)

By the age of 12 Jesus was fully conversant with the Hebrew Scriptures and able to debate deep spiritual matters with the leading theologians of the day. Furthermore, when Jesus is later rebuked by His mother for remaining in the Temple, He replies, “Did you not know I would be in My Father’s house?” This one statement shows that by the age of 12 Jesus knew that Joseph was not His father, knew that God was His Father, and therefore understood that He was the Messiah of Israel. (Fruchtenbaum 1998, 51)

Isaiah has frequently pointed out the serious problem of Israel’s lack of godly leadership. If Israel’s leaders do not listen to God and guide them accordingly, little hope remains for a stable and faithful society (cf. Hos 4:5–6). The servant, on the other hand, possesses an instructed tongue with which he sustains the weary (cf. 40:29). (Briley 2000-, 196)

We pick up on the incredible faith and loyalty of the Servant, how He is totally obedient to YAHWEH. He begins by talking about the Lord God and what He has done for Him.

Given the ability to learn and speak with incredible wisdom.

Through His Word He can sustain those who are weary, Jesus even spoke about this. “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28–30, ESV)

He is reliant upon God for each day (He awakens Me.)

That is, he wakens me every morning early. The language is taken from an instructor who awakens his pupils early, in order that they may receive instruction. (Barnes 1851, 221)

The Servant does not receive revelations like ordinary prophets in ecstatic moments, in dreams and visions of the night, but in his waking hours, and not only so, but every morning—the spirit of prophecy abides constantly upon him. (Cheyne 1882, 26)

His ears are awake, open to learn as a disciples would be.

The Servant will be humble. We already know He is filled with the Holy Spirit and that He is God and also human; but He is humble and reliant upon God for each day He has, and He listens each day to what it is the Lord has for Him and what the Holy Spirit teaches Him. He models for Judah and for us how we should live.

Jesus knew His mission and what He was here to do and what was going to be the outcome of His ministry, yet He would be obedient. In direct contrast to the leadership of the nation which was anything but obedient.

The message that the Servant was charged to deliver, He would faithfully do so. He was aware of the reaction His word would elicit among the people of Jerusalem. He knew what the reaction of the rulers of Jerusalem would be.

Isaiah 50:6–7 “I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pull out My beard; I did not hide My face from insults and spitting. For the Lord GOD helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have made My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.” (NASB 2020)

Details chillingly provided, in advance by 730+ years.

It is the Servant who is giving this prophecy that Isaiah has written down for us. The one who will go to the cross, is the one telling us what He will go through.

The gradual intensification of the Servant’s mission tells of things that take place before he reaches the cross. This poem is the Servant’s own predictive statement of what he will endure over 700 years after Isaiah writes these words. (Pechawer 2008, 147)

He could have rebelled and turned aside from doing His Father’s will but He did the opposite, He set His face like a flint to do His Father’s will, Psalm 40:7, 8. (Gingrich 1993, 61)

The Servant would be subjected to persecution for the message He is tasked by God to deliver. He is faithful, Israel is not. Earlier we saw how Jerusalem did not exactly agree with how God was intending to deliver His people in the future, with a gentile. This rebellion continues.

“I gave My back to those who strike me...”

- The Servant was to be beaten or whipped by those who He delivered the message to. He offers up His back willingly to them. “Pilate asked them, “Why? What has he done wrong?” But they shouted more insistently, “Crucify him!” Because he wanted to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them. Then, after he had Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified.” (Mark 15:14–15, NET). His hand is too short? Really?

“And My cheeks to those who pull out My beard...”

- A careful reading of the New Testament nowhere reflects that Jesus had His beard pulled out. Is this an error...hardly. It took place.

Mark 14:61–65

“But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest questioned him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” “I am,” said Jesus, “and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What is your verdict?” They all condemned him as deserving death. Then some began to spit on him, and to blindfold him, and to strike him with their fists, saying, “Prophecy!” The guards also took him and beat him.” (NET)

We read of the Jews beating Him on the head. But silence on beards. What about beards.

In biblical times, the beard was regarded as a symbol of male attractiveness and virility and a natural feature distinguishing men from women. Thus a shaved face was a sign of humiliation. When Hanun, the king of Ammon, accused the envoys of King David of being spies plotting to overthrow his government, he “clipped off one side of their beards and cut away half of their garments at the buttocks, and sent them off” (2 Sam. 10:4). Understanding their deep humiliation, David ordered the men to hide in Jericho until their beards had grown again. (Eisenberg 2004, 590)

Among the Jews much attention was paid to the beard. To show any contempt toward it by plucking it or touching it, except from respect or courtesy, was esteemed a gross insult, while to kiss it respectfully and affectionately was regarded as a signal mark of friendship. (Schaff 1880, 105)

Ezra plucked out some of his beard in dismay over sin (Ezra 9:3). Nehemiah though was punishing some of his own people who were not following Torah.

Nehemiah 13:23–26

“In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but only the language of each people. **And I confronted them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair.** And I made them take an oath in the name of God, saying, “You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin on account of such women? Among the many nations there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless, foreign women made even him to sin.” (ESV)

Immediately after the resurrection, those who met Jesus had difficulty recognizing Him. Could it be because they had never seen Him with His beard missing?

Luke 24:13–16 “Now that very day two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. While they were talking and debating these things, Jesus himself approached and began to accompany them (but their eyes were kept from recognizing him).” (NET)

“I did not hide My face from insults and spitting...”

- “Then they spit in his face and hit him. Some slapped him, saying, “Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who hit you?”” (Matthew 26:67–68, ISV)

Isaiah 50:7

“For the Lord GOD helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have made My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.” (NASB 2020)

Again, the phrase, Adonai YAHWEH. The Servant is all about performing the mission of YAHWEH and He relies wholly and completely on Him. “From the first, Jesus knew that He must die. The Lord God poured the full story into His opened ear. With all other men, death is the close of their life; with Christ it was the object. We die because we were born; Christ was born that He might die.” (Exell n.d., 7)

Reversing cosmic upheaval required something greater than the law. It required a Messiah whose atoning death would ripple throughout the cosmos, healing the entire creation. The birth, death, and resurrection of the Son of God reconciles all things, whether on earth or in heaven (Colossians 1:19) and holds the entire creation together (Colossians 1:16–17). (Heiser 2017, 119)

Jesus went intentionally to Caesarea Philippi at the foot of Mount Hermon to call out the enemy. And after doing so, was determined to go to Jerusalem.

Matthew 16:21–23

“From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he would have to go to Jerusalem and suffer a great deal because of the elders, the high priests, and the scribes. Then he would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God be merciful to you, Lord! This must never happen to you!” But Jesus turned and told Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are an offense to me, because you are not thinking God’s thoughts but human thoughts!” (ISV)

Everything Jesus did after revealing Himself in glory on Mount Hermon reflects setting His “face like flint.”

Luke 9:51

“Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,” (NKJV)

Because the Servant knows that the choice which He has made to be obedient is the right decision, the decision that will provide for the redemption of mankind, He will not be ashamed. No matter what the temporary circumstances are, He knows the eternal consequences of His decisions. “The spiritual corruption of humanity would be healed by the atonement of the cross.” (Heiser 2017, 102)

Isaiah 50:8–9

“He who vindicates Me is near; Who will contend with Me? Let us stand up to each other. Who has a case against Me? Let him approach Me. Behold, the Lord GOD helps Me; Who is he who condemns Me? Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; A moth will eat them.” (NASB 2020)

The Servant is confident that even with the sufferings He is going to endure, the ones He has just told us about, victory is certain. He knows that YAHWEH will acknowledge Him. If God is your advocate, your vindicator, who can even dare to bring a case. Paul will expand on this.

Because of the Servant and His complete and total reliance upon YAHWEH, we, as a result of His work on the cross, can have the same confidence about the future. Because of Isaiah 50, Paul may be making some assumptions with Jewish believers.

Paul may presume that his readers “know” this to be true because they are familiar with these sayings. It is more likely, however, that Paul assumes they know this because they have come to know God in Christ and experienced the fullness of his grace in their lives. (Moo 1996, 527)

Romans 8:28–39

“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory. What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? **If God is for us, who can ever be against us?** Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? **Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own?** No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself. Who then will condemn us? No one—for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is sitting in the place of honor at God's right hand, pleading for us. **Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love?** Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, “For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.”) **No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.** And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (NLT)

Jesus had no reason to doubt that what He achieved would rescue His people and as believers, we are called to have the same attitude.

Isaiah 50:9

“Behold, the Lord GOD helps Me; Who is he who condemns Me? Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; A moth will eat them.” (NASB 2020)

That the enemies of the servant were not imaginary is shown by the statement about their outcome. They will grow old or worn out as garments do. Scripture uses this figure to express gradual decay (e.g. Hos. 5:12). As old clothes are devoured by the moth, so the enemies and accusers of the servant will pass away and come to naught. When they stand in court to bring accusations against the servant, they will be put to shame as easily as a moth devours the worn-out clothes. (Young 1972, 303)

Romans 8:1

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (NET)

The Servant is:

- Helped by God
- Not disgraced
- Mission driven
- Triumphant
- Unassailable
- Uncondemnable

Isaiah 50:10

“Who is among you who fears the LORD, Who obeys the voice of His servant, Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God.” (NASB 2020)

Having heard this word from YAHWEH and from His Servant, the ones who were not involved in asking the question back in Isaiah 49:14 are addressed. This is for those who are part of the remnant, those believing Jews who continue to be faithful.

This is for those who:

- Fear YAHWEH
- They obey the voice of His Servant, Messiah

- Walk in the darkness of persecution

They are to trust in the Lord, “not in himself, nor in any creature, but in the Lord himself; in the perfections of his nature, his mercy, grace, and goodness; in the name of the Lord, which is a strong tower, and in whom is salvation; in Christ, in whom the name of the Lord is, and whose name is the Lord our Righteousness; and to trust in him, when in the dark, is a glorious act of faith; this is believing in hope against hope.” (Gill 1810, 297)

Hebrews 11:1–2

“Now faith is the certainty of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen. For by it the people of old gained approval.” (NASB 2020)

Verse 10 is directed to those who will follow the Servant to trust Him and have faith in Him just as He had faith in YAHWEH.

The call is to have faith in Him, lean on Him, depend on Him and His wisdom and grace to supply our needs.

But there is that other group back in Isaiah 49:14, those who were asking the questions and expressing the unbelief and lack of faith. The ones who did not like the way God would rescue using a gentile and disagreed with His ways.

Isaiah 50:11

“Behold, all you who kindle a fire, Who encircle yourselves with flaming arrows, Walk in the light of your fire And among the flaming arrows you have set ablaze. This you will have from My hand: You will lie down in torment.” (NASB 2020)

Those who trust are in darkness, they trust not seeing what lies ahead but trusting that the one who is leading does, following the example of the Servant. But those who are self sufficient, they have light, faulty as it maybe. They have DIY light rather than true light.

In this case, the people being addressed would be those who, rejecting the fear of the Lord and the word of his Servant, attempt to create their own light and to find their own way out of their darkness. Such persons will be devoured by the light that they have tried to create. (Oswalt 1998, 329)

John 14:6

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.” (NASB 2020)

The true light is the light only available through Jesus Christ, all other ways are DIY light. Yes, He is exclusive. Yes, there is no other way.

Anything other than Jesus is DIY light, which seems to be really popular these days.

Psalms 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.” (NASB 2020)

The psalmist relied on the Word of God and we now know who that is.

John 1:1–5

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind. And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it.” (NASB 2020)

The invitation given to those in Jerusalem was to be part of that group who believe, but that was a small number. The invitation to find true light still stands today.

Romans 10:8–10

“But what does it say? “The message is near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart.” This is the message about faith that we are proclaiming: If you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with his heart and is justified, and declares with his mouth and is saved.” (ISV)

His light, His salvation is indeed near and available to all who accept it.

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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