

Sunday School Lesson
Isaiah 50:4-9
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God's Servant (3)



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This third study of a Servant Song takes us to an advancement of idea. Again the text is focusing on the servant and his calling. But now the dominant theme shifts to the hostility expected against the servant as he delivers his message to God's people. This emphasis will anticipate in certain ways the final servant song in chapter fifty three where the stress on suffering reaches its climax.

Some debate exists concerning the termini of this third servant song. The older tendency is to see verses four through eleven as comprising the song. But recent scholarship tends toward verses four through nine. A common view of verses ten and eleven is reflected in the comment of Gregory Mobley (*New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 3rd ed, p. 1049): **"A comment on vv. 4-9, apparently by a follower or disciple, addressed to the unreceptive audience of the prophet, now identified as the servant of the Lord."** Thus, whether a part of the original song or not, these verses are closely connected to the song. This uncertainty of terminus -- v. 9 or v. 11 -- is in part due to the shift of person in verses ten and eleven. Verses seven through nine focus on God's support of the servant, while ten and eleven shift to the second person "you" in a stinging indictment of the audience for their lack of support. Our study will concentrate on verses four through nine, and give some attention to the two additional verses at the end.



I Context

The basic contextual issues, except for the literary setting, remain virtually the same as for the previous two studies on Isa. [42:1-4](#) and [49:1-6](#). Consequently, that material will be briefly summarized here, and new material added only as relevant to the study of [50:4-9](#).

a. Historical

External History. The compositional history of Deutero-Isaiah focuses on chapters 40 - 55 of the book of Isaiah. This unknown prophet in the tradition of Isaiah of Jerusalem (742 - 701 BCE) sought to give the Jewish exiles in Babylonia God's message of hope and challenge during his ministry there from

546 to 538. His objective was to speak the words of the original prophet Isaiah, had the prophet been alive and able to speak to these people. Thus his calling from God (chap. 40) was to let the people know that their captivity was the consequence of their rebellion against God. Also, they needed to know that this

did not mean that God had abandoned them. With obedience to God they would have a bright future in God's plan for His covenant people. But realization of this would take serious turning away from sin and deep commitment to God's ways. His calling was to challenge these captives to accept such a message.

b. Literary

Genre. Again, we are dealing with prophetic oracle in these verses. The pattern of Hebrew poetic parallelism characterizes the way the ideas are presented to the readers.

One point of differing viewpoint among OT scholars about these verses centers over the dominant theme. For some, the sense of suffering anticipated for the servant echoes the tone of Jeremiah's Lamentations. Indeed, some scholars feel that the suffering of the prophet Jeremiah during this same period of ministry may have served as the inspirational model for the picture painted here. Christopher Seitz (*New Interpreter's Bible*, iPreach) seems to be on target in agreeing with Claus Westermann's view:

The poem is not in the form of an individual lament, but rather is an individual psalm of confidence. Missing completely is any complaint to God, on any score, either as giver of the painful situation (so, e.g., Jer 15:18; 20:7) or as one slow to respond to it (Lam 5:20). There is even no declaration that the affliction the servant bears is the cause of any serious anguish or doubt whatsoever; in fact, the opposite is true (vv. 7-9). "Individual psalm of confidence" is precisely a correct interpretation of the poem before us.

What we are looking at is a poetic expression of a servant of God reflecting confidence in God's help, even though the people around him are hostile and reject the message from God that the servant is to deliver.

Literary Setting. Several legitimate assessments of literary context are possible. One of the more intriguing and possibly accurate ones is that by John Watts (*Word Biblical Commentary*, Logos Systems), who sees this as a part of a chiasmus:

- A 50:4-9
- B 50:10-11
- C 51:1-2a
- D 51:2b-3a (Keystone concept)
- C' 51:3b-c
- B' 51:4-6

A' 51:7-8

If correct, the 50:4-9 is mirrored by [51:7-8](#), which declares:

7 Listen to me, you who know righteousness, you people who have my teaching in your hearts; do not fear the

Internal History. The internal time and place references in 50:4-9 are minimal. Their designation depends upon the applicational bridge constructed through interpretative analysis. Consequently, these matters will be handled in the exegesis of the verses.

reproach of others, and do not be dismayed when they revile you. 8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my deliverance will be forever, and my salvation to all generations.

The central point of 50:4-51:8 is then expressed in [51:2b-3a](#) (NRSV): "for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many. For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord."

How accurate this understanding may be can be debated, but it does call attention to the interconnectedness of the Isaiah text.

More helpful is to read 50:1-3 as the springboard into 50:4-9 and 50:10-11 as an added comment reflecting the past experience of the servant:

50:1-3 (NRSV). Thus says the Lord: Where is your mother's bill of divorce with which I put her away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? No, because of your sins you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was put away. 2 Why was no one there when I came? Why did no one answer when I called? Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? By my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a desert; their fish stink for lack of water, and die of thirst. 3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and make sackcloth their covering.

50:4-9 (NRSV). 4 The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he awakens — awakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. 5 The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. 6 I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. 7 The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; 8 he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. 9 It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

50:10-11 (NRSV). 10 Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his servant, who walks in

darkness and has no light, yet trusts in the name of the Lord and relies upon his God? 11 But all of you are kindlers of fire, lighters of firebrands. Walk in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled! This is what you shall have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.

Isa. 50:1-3 is God speaking to the people affirming

His sovereignty over them to judge and punish. 50:4-9 is the Servant affirming his confidence in God to support him in delivering this stinging message to the people. 50:10-11 is the voice of a later commentator condemning the people for not paying attention to the servant's message.

II. Message

Literary structure. The thought structure inside verses four through nine are relatively easy to detect. The first segment, vv. 4-6, affirms the openness of the servant to listen to God in contrast to the people's unwillingness (vv. 1-3). The second segment, vv. 7-9, declares the servant's deep confidence in God's support of his ministry in the face of opposition. Our study will be organized around these two key emphases.

a. Willingness to Obey, vv. 4-6

LXX

ἡ κύριος δίδωσίν μοι
γλώσσαν παιδείας τοῦ
γνώσει ἐν καιρῷ ἡνίκα
δεῖ εἰπεῖν λόγον ἔθηκέν
μοι πρῶτῃ προσέθηκέν μοι
ὥτιον ἀκούειν ἡ καὶ ἡ
παιδεία κυρίου ἀνοίγει
μου τὰ ὦτα ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ
ἀπειθῶ οὐδὲ ἀντιλέγω
ἔτον νῶτόν μου δέδωκα
εἰς μάστιγας τὰς δὲ
σιαγόνας μου εἰς
ῥαπίσματα τὸ δὲ
πρόσωπόν μου οὐκ
ἀπέστρεψα ἀπὸ αἰσχύνης
ἐμπυσμάτων

NASB

4 The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, 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. 5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not disobedient Nor did I turn back. 6 I gave My back to those who strike *Me*, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

NRSV

4 The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he awakens — awakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. 5 The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. 6 I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

NLT

4 The Sovereign LORD has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know what to say to all these weary ones. Morning by morning he awakens me and opens my understanding to his will. 5 The Sovereign LORD has spoken to me, and I have listened. I do not rebel or turn away. 6 I give my back to those who beat me and my cheeks to those who pull out my beard. I do not hide from shame, for they mock me and spit in my face.

Notes:

First of all, these verses come together more clearly visually with a representation in English translation of their poetic structure:

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain the weary
with a word.

Morning by morning he awakens —
awakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.

I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

Various body parts form an organizing structure:

his tongue, his ear, his back, his cheeks, and his face. These reflect certain angles of expression. The tongue communicates with the people. The ear listens to God speaking. His back, cheeks, and face reflect his willingness to take abuse from the people. Thus a particular interplay takes place between the servant, God and the people. The servant stands between God and the people as the divinely called spokesman who communicates God's message, and then catches the flack of the people's rejection of that message.

The tongue and the ear. The combination of these symbols highlight the role of the Servant to both speak God's message and to hear it from God. In truth, these symbols affirm the foundational idea

of prophecy in Israel, as Claus Westermann (*Old Testament Library*, iPreach) describes:

They are, every single word of them, an exact description of prophecy in Israel—not, of course, of prophecy's subject matter, but of prophecy as event between God and his chosen people. The prophetic office can be described in just the way in which it is summed up here, as hearing and speaking 'like a disciple', *limmud* being understood 'in the sense of a person at school' (Volz). The special characteristic of the prophetic office is the very fact that the prophet awakens his ear 'morning by morning', and must continually allow it to be opened by God, in order to have 'an answer to give to the weary'. The entire inability to exercise any control over the reception and transmission of a word that has no establishment in which it is at home, is here the expression of the chief characteristic of the prophetic office of the word. The verses also mention a second distinctive and entirely appropriate feature. Elsewhere in the Old Testament *limmud* only designates the disciple of a human master or teacher (e.g. Is. 8:16). Its use here to describe the reception of God's word directly from himself points to the unique way in which precisely the prophets of the eighth century speak of the word which they receive and have to transmit. We can therefore only conclude that when the speaker in the opening verses of the present song—the Servant—appeals to the office to which he has been commissioned, this is absolutely the same prophetic office as we find in the case of the writing prophets before Deutero-Isaiah. In this connection, it should be noticed that the designation 'ebed' does not appear in 50:4–9. Instead, here the 'ebed is the *limmud*. God's servant is here described as God's 'disciple'. The implication is this. The term *limmud* does not say all that might be said about the Servant. 'God's servant is God's disciple.' This expresses the most important feature in the picture of the Servant. But it is not the complete picture. The Servant is more than a *limmud*.



The tongue metaphor projects the responsibility of the servant to speak God's words to His people. Some variation in ancient texts surfaces over whether the tongue is that of a teacher (NRSV) or that of a student (NASB).

More likely the latter was the original wording. The significance is to underscore the submissiveness of the Servant to God as the Teacher who awakens the student's ears daily in order to communicate His words to the Servant.

The heart of what the Servant is to say to the people is "to sustain the weary." The Servant's words

are to be pointed toward this. But he must first be taught those words by his Teacher, God Himself.

God as Teacher calls class roll call every morning: "morning by morning he awakens--awakens my ear..." There's no "sleeping in" or "cutting class" in this school!

Helpful background on this comes from some awareness of how the words for "ear" show up in the Bible. R.C. Dentan (*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, iPreach) provides an important background summary:



[אָר; אוֹר]. The ear is frequently mentioned in the Bible in its literal, physical sense, but its figurative use as a symbol of the complete process of hearing and, by extension, of understanding and obedience is far more significant. The concrete term "ear" is often employed where our own modes of thought would lead us to use a more abstract word such as "hearing" or "attention." "To speak in the ears" (Deut. 5:1 KJV) means "to speak in the hearing" (so RSV); "to incline the ear" (Ps. 88:2) means "to give attention." The "ear" can also designate the whole faculty of understanding, as in Job 13:1; and because "hearing" in the full sense must include understanding, it is possible to say of people that they "have ears, but hear not" (Jer. 5:21). In many passages the word "ear" might well be translated "mind," as in Job 33:16; cf. LXX.

For the apprehension of the divine word, the possession of physical ears is not enough; God must "open" the ears so that the word is received with comprehension and a spirit of willing obedience (Job 36:10; Ps. 40:6; Isa. 50:4-5). "Uncircumcised" ears are ears which have not been thus opened (Jer. 6:10; Acts 7:51). Ears may also be "heavy" (Isa. 6:10), and men who have physical ears may in fact be "deaf" (Isa. 43:8).

In the Bible, the key word for man's response to God is "hearing" rather than "seeing" (see EYE; SEEING). For the mystery religions the highest religious experience was that of "seeing" the god; but for the Bible, where the basic religious attitude is obedience to the divine word, the emphasis is on "hearing" his voice. The most important formula of Israel's religion begins characteristically: "Hear, O Israel." "He who is of God" is not the mystic who has seen a vision, but one who "hears the words of God" (John 8:47).

Thus the Servant's schooling is a process of God opening up his ears so that he can receive the divine instruction. Once those ears have "woken up," they are ready to receive the instruction.

Through such vivid imagery the Bible conveys the mysterious way in which God spoke to His prophets so that they could in turn communicate that mes-

sage to God's people.

The response of the Servant to this instruction is set forth in verse five: "The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward." (NRSV). The disobedience of Israel to God's message in 50:1-3 stands in direct contrast to the Servant's willingness to hear and obey what God had to say. There was no rebelliousness of the Servant. The following parallel line stands synonymous with the declaration, "I did not turn backward." To express rebellion would be to turn one's back on God, that is, to show Him your back side.

This preparation of the Servant by the Lord enables him to withstand the hostility of the people who will reject his message. That rejection is described with the motif of body parts -- **back, cheeks, face** -- in dramatic imagery that emphasizes the intensity of the rejection.

The back is put forth for the flogging. The cheeks are put forth for the degrading action of pulling out the hairs of the beard. The face is put forth as a target for spitting and verbal insult. The rejection of both the Servant and his message are severe.

This has echoes of the abuse that Jeremiah experienced after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE. At the end of the prophet's life while under arrest in Jerusalem, he had spoken out to the exiles in Babylon with words of encouragement (chap. 39ff.). He ended up being taken against his will into Egypt with those fleeing the wrath of the Babylonians. Much of his ministry at the end of the southern kingdom and the early stages of the Babylonian exile were spent suffering abuse from his fellow countrymen who rejected his words from God to them. Deutero-Isaiah, preaching during the Babylonian captivity, perhaps saw in Jeremiah a pattern that would be true for the Servant in his ministry.

Who was this Servant? In the previous two Servant Songs we have seen multiple levels of application and identification. These range from the collective representation of the Servant as the remnant of covenant people remaining after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple to an individual who in various ways would minister to this faithful remainder of Israelites with words of encouragement and hope for better days to come. In Christianity, Jesus ultimately becomes the realization of this Servant, and yet, as the study in 49:1-6 reflected with the use of 49:6 in [Acts 13:47](#), the Servant can become the followers of Jesus as well.

The identity, historically, of the Servant remains vague, and that intentionally -- I am convinced. In

large part, these texts seek to underscore timeless truths that remain significant to those who would seek to follow faithfully the God of Abraham.

What are some of those in vv. 4-6? **For one thing**, these verses affirm that God calls people to speak in His behalf to others. The calling of the Servant here is squarely in the prophetic calling tradition of the Israelite religious tradition. God chooses individuals through whom He intends to speak His message. People don't just arbitrarily decide they want to be God's mouthpiece. To be sure, many over the centuries have so chosen, but in the biblical perspective these stand as false prophets or false teachers in the NT label. To be an authentic spokesperson for God one must have been chosen, called, and instructed by God for this task.

Second, these verses underscore the training that is absolutely essential for that calling. God must open the ears of his spokesman before the spokesman can open his mouth. Intensive divine instruction of the spokesperson is essential. This requires openness and persistence by the individual. The "morning by morning" waking of the ears doesn't happen all at once, nor without commitment of the individual to open himself/herself to what God is trying to teach. In our post-biblical era, the heart of this is exposure to the teachings of scripture. Every means possible must be marshalled to pry open our ears to God's Word.

Third, this authentic exposure to God's instruction is the only grounds upon which we can minister to others. This especially because delivering that message is going to generate hostility of some sort. It can and will come in a variety of forms, but it will come. If it doesn't, then Luke's advice from Jesus needs to be heeded ([Lk 6:26](#)): "Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets" (NRSV). Hopefully, the hostility won't be as severe as projected here for the Servant. But, in whatever situation, the Servant sets the challenge to us. We must be willing to offer our backs, our cheeks and our face. Jesus echoed this same principle both in his non-retaliatory action ([1 Pet. 2:20-25](#)):

20 If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. 21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. 23 When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to

the one who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

and in his teaching ([Mt. 5:38-42](#)):

39 But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; 40 and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; 41 and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. 42 Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

Fourth, the Servant was to learn from God “[how to sustain the weary with a word](#).” One must gain from this in its larger context of chaps. 40 - 55 that offer-



ing words of encouragement did not mean toning down the sinfulness of the people. Genuine encouragement and hope could come only inside a commitment to God that honestly faced its sin and rebellion. Their weariness was the product of their rebellion against God and His judgment upon them. Additionally, that message of encouragement focused on God’s actions of deliverance, not some self-help program. The people were to entrust themselves and their future into God’s hands. They had to come to realize that, even though God harshly punished them for their rebellion, this punishment did not mean abandonment. God was still reaching out to them and beckoning them to reach out to Him. Helping the people accept this was the central task given to the Servant.

Thus the Servant’s word could only bring authentic hope if it came from God and was based upon God’s will. Anything else was sham and false.

This was the huge task given to Jesus as God’s Servant. His message was that God loves His people and wants to deliver all. Yet, because the shaping of that message by Jesus did not fit the biases of the people of his day, they rejected Jesus and his message. Those who serve the Lord must offer a true word, no matter how the audience wants it framed. Otherwise, no real hope exists in the message.

b. Confidence in God’s Help, vv. 7-9

LXX	NASB	NRSV	NLT
<p>καὶ κύριος βοηθός μου ἐγενήθη διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐνετρέπην ἀλλὰ ἔθηκα τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ὡς στερεὰν πέτραν καὶ ἔγνων ὅτι οὐ μὴ αἰσχυνθῶ ⁸ ὅτι ἐγγίζει ὁ δικαίωσας με τίς ὁ κρινόμενός μοι ἀντιστήτω μοι ἅμα καὶ τίς ὁ κρινόμενός μοι ἐγγισάτω μοι ⁹ ἰδοὺ κύριος βοηθεῖ μοι τίς κακώσει με ἰδοὺ πάντες ὑμεῖς ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσεσθε καὶ ὡς σὴς καταφάγεται ὑμᾶς</p>	<p>7 For the Lord GOD helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed. 8 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 draw near to Me. 9 Behold, the Lord GOD helps Me; Who is he who condemns Me? Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; The moth will eat them.</p>	<p>7 The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; 8 he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. 9 It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.</p>	<p>7 Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be dismayed. Therefore, I have set my face like a stone, determined to do his will. And I know that I will triumph. 8 He who gives me justice is near. Who will dare to oppose me now? Where are my enemies? Let them appear! 9 See, the Sovereign LORD is on my side! Who will declare me guilty? All my enemies will be destroyed like old clothes that have been eaten by moths!</p>

Notes:

Again, visually seeing the poetic structure of these verses in English translation helps facilitate understanding of their meaning.

- The Lord God helps me; (1)
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint, (2)
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me? (3)
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries? (4)
Let them confront me.
It is the Lord God who helps me; (5)
who will declare me guilty?
All of them will wear out like a garment; (6)
the moth will eat them up.

A mixture of synonymous and step parallelism come together to craft a bold expression of confidence that God's help will be present and will vindicate the work of the Servant in the face of stinging criticism that he doesn't represent God.

The conceptual link of these verses with the previous verses, vv. 4-6, is important. The confidence expressed here builds off the foundation of his sense of calling set forth in vv. 4-6. The Servant knows that he did open his ears to the instruction from the Lord and is faithfully following it. Therefore, his confidence in the face of opposition is unshaken.

The first two sets of strophes (#s 1 & 2) first affirms that God is helping the Servant and this enables him to avoid being disgraced by rejection. With his realization of God's help, the Servant has become a hard as flint in his commitment to serve God. His confidence is that God will not shame him.

The efforts of people around him to do so have no weight and will not deter him from his commitment. The focus on human criticism is picked up at the end in strophes 5 and 6 in the form of a challenge to his enemies to prove that he doesn't speak for God. Trying such a case will take so long that their clothes will be worn out and moth eaten before they can hope to make a case against the servant. Even his enemies will be worn down like their clothes by such a hopeless effort to successfully prove that the Servant doesn't represent God. In fact, he begins this second section with a challenge to them to challenge his credentials (strophe 4). He dares them to try to make a case against him, he is so confident of the genuineness of his calling from God and God's leading him.

The apostle Paul echoes these ideas in his letter to the believers at Rom ([Rom. 8:33-39](#)):

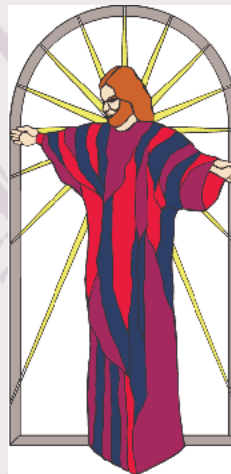
33 Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship,

or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Peter also reflects this same principle in his first letter ([1 Pet. 3:12-17](#)):

12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. 13 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? 14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; 16 yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil.

Strophe 3 at the end of the first section issues a



call for others to follow God's leadership along with him. Who will stand up for God and for God's messenger? The Servant calls on them to stand with him in defending God's message to His people.

How basic these principles are to both OT and NT truths! Faithfully serving God will bring confrontation and claims that you don't represent God. Doubting one's own calling is deadly. But basing that calling on the genuineness of God's calling and on-

going support provides the strength to stand firm and consistent. Jeremiah exemplified this during this era. Jesus set the standards for us who follow him as Lord and Savior. The examples of countless believers down through the centuries encourages. See [Heb. 12:1-3](#):

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.

LXX

⁴κύριος δίδωσίν μοι γλῶσσαν παιδείας τοῦ γνῶναι ἐν καιρῷ ἥνικα δεῖ εἰπεῖν λόγον ἔθηκέν μοι πρωί προσέθηκέν μοι ὠτίον ἀκούειν ⁵καὶ ἡ παιδεία κυρίου ἀνοίγει μου τὰ ὦτα ἐγὼ δὲ οὐκ ἀπειθῶ οὐδὲ ἀντιλέγω ⁶τὸν νῶτόν μου δέδωκα εἰς μάστιγας τὰς δὲ σιαγόνας μου εἰς ραπίσματα τὸ δὲ πρόσωπόν μου οὐκ ἀπέστρεψα ἀπὸ αἰσχύνης ἐμπτυσμάτων ⁷καὶ κύριος βοηθός μου ἐγενήθη διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐνετράπην ἀλλὰ ἔθηκα τὸ πρόσωπόν μου ὡς στερεὰν πέτραν καὶ ἔγνω ὅτι οὐ μὴ αἰσχυθῶ ⁸ ὅτι ἐγγίξει ὁ δικαίωσας με τίς ὁ κρινόμενός μοι ἀντιστήτω μοι ἅμα καὶ τίς ὁ κρινόμενός μοι ἐγγισάτω μοι ⁹ἰδοὺ κύριος βοηθεῖ μοι τίς κακώσει με ἰδοὺ πάντες ὑμεῖς ὡς ἱμάτιον παλαιωθήσεσθε καὶ ὡς σῆς καταφάγεται ὑμᾶς

NASB

4 The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, 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. 5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not disobedient Nor did I turn back. 6 I gave My back to those who strike *Me*, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting. 7 For the Lord GOD helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed. 8 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 draw near to Me. 9 Behold, the Lord GOD helps Me; Who is he who condemns Me? Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; The moth will eat them.

NRSV

4 The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens — wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. 5 The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. 6 I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. 7 The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; 8 he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. 9 It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

NLT

4 The Sovereign LORD has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know what to say to all these weary ones. Morning by morning he awakens me and opens my understanding to his will. 5 The Sovereign LORD has spoken to me, and I have listened. I do not rebel or turn away. 6 I give my back to those who beat me and my cheeks to those who pull out my beard. I do not hide from shame, for they mock me and spit in my face. 7 Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be dismayed. Therefore, I have set my face like a stone, determined to do his will. And I know that I will triumph. 8 He who gives me justice is near. Who will dare to oppose me now? Where are my enemies? Let them appear! 9 See, the Sovereign LORD is on my side! Who will declare me guilty? All my enemies will be destroyed like old clothes that have been eaten by moths!

Hebrew Text:

Isaiah 50:4-9

4 אֲדַנְיָ יְהוָה נָתַן לִי לְשׁוֹן לַמּוֹדִים לְדַעַת לַעֲוֹת אֶת־יַעֲרֹךְ
דְּבַר יַעֲרֹךְ בַּבֶּקֶר בַּבֶּקֶר יַעֲרֹךְ לִי אֲזִין לְשִׁמְעַת כָּל־מוֹדִים⁵
אֲדַנְיָ יְהוָה פְּתַח־לִי אֲזִין וְאִנְכִי לֹא מֵרִיתִי אֲחֹזֵר לֹא
נִסְתַּחֲתִי
6 גּוֹי נִתְתִּי לְמַכִּים וּלְחַנִּי לְמוֹרְטִים פָּנִי לֹא הִסְתַּרְתִּי
מִכְּלָמוֹת וְרֹקַע
7 וְאֲדַנְיָ יְהוָה יַעֲזֹר־לִי עַל־כֵּן לֹא נִכְלַמְתִּי עַל־כֵּן שָׁמַחֲתִי
פָּנִי כַחֲלָמִישׁ וְאֲדַע כִּי־לֹא אִבּוֹשׁ
8 קְרוֹב מִצְדִּיקִי מִי־רִיב אֶתִּי נַעֲמֹדָה יִחָד מִי־בַעַל מִשְׁפָּטִי
יִגֵּשׁ אֵלַי
9 הֵן אֲדַנְיָ יְהוָה יַעֲזֹר־לִי מִי־הוּא יִרְשִׁיעֵנִי הֵן כָּל־ם כִּבְנֹד
יִבְלוּ עֵשׂ יֵאכְלֻם

Isaiah 50:4-9 4 ʾādōnāy yhw(ʾēlōhīm) nātan lī ləšōn limmūdīm lādā at lā ūt ʿet-
yā ēp dābār yā ʾr babbōqer babbōqer yā ʾr lī ʾōzen lišmō^a kallimmūdīm 5
ʾādōnāy yhw(ʾēlōhīm) pāṭaḥ-lī ʾōzen wəʾānōkī lō māritī ʾāḥōr lō ʾnəsūgōtī 6
gēwī nātattī ləmakīm ūləḥāyay ləmōrtīm pānay lō histartī mikkəlimmōt
wārōq 7 waʾdōnāy yhw(ʾēlōhīm) ya ʾzor-lī al-kēn lō niqlāmtī al-kēn
śamtī pānay kaḥallāmīš wāʿēda kī-lō ʿēbōš 8 qārōb mašdīqī mī-yārīb ʾittī
nā amdā^h yyāḥad mī-bā al mišpātī yiggaš ʿēlāy 9 hēn ʾādōnāy yhw(ʾēlōhīm)
ya ʾzor-lī mī-hū ʾyarsī ʿēnī hēn kullām kabbēged yiblū āš yōʾkələm

NRSV

- 4 The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.
Morning by morning he wakens —
wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.
- 5 The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.
- 6 I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.
- 7 The Lord God helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
8 he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.
- 9 It is the Lord God who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?
All of them will wear out like a garment;
the moth will eat them up.

