



"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME"
ISAIAH 61:1

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

CHAPTER 50: 4-11

AND HIS NAME
WILL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER,
PRINCE OF
PEACE.
ISAIAH 9:6

Isaiah is called "The Book of Salvation." The name *Isaiah* means "the salvation of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation." Isaiah is the first book containing the writings of the prophets of the Bible. And the author, Isaiah, who is called the Prince of Prophets, shines above all the other writers and prophets of Scripture. His mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill have earned him the title, "Shakespeare of the Bible." He was educated, distinguished, and privileged, yet remained a deeply spiritual man. He was committed to obedience over the long haul of his 55-60 year ministry as a prophet of God. He was a true patriot who loved his country and his people. Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two.

Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem, urging the people to repent from their sins and return to God. He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord. Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).

In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not man. God alone is Savior, Ruler and King.

Commentary on the book of Isaiah is by noted theologian Rev. William G. Most (1914-1999). His contributions to theology have been recognized all over the world. He published 12 books and a host of articles on topics ranging from biblical studies to Mariology and Latin grammar.

Book of Isaiah

Summary of Chapter 50: 4-11

3rd Servant Song. 50:4-11. Summary and Comments

The Servant speaks: The Lord has given me a tongue trained to help the weary. Every morning He wakens me to listen to His message. I have not been rebellious to His plans, even though I have suffered. Instead, I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled my beard. I did not hide from those who mocked and spat upon me.

Even though the Targum does not mark this song as messianic, we cannot help seeing the connection to the fourth song, which is surely messianic. The prophet had to suffer personally, and the same sort of sufferings as in the fourth song, and as in the Passion of Jesus. So there is really no obstacle to understanding all three songs thus far - and the fourth to come - as having a double sense: they refer to the servant individually, who at times seems like the Prophet, but with full fulfillment in Jesus -- and at times the servant is Israel, following the Hebrew pattern of using an individual to stand for and even embody a collectivity.

Did God really appear to Isaiah every day? Not necessarily. Perhaps at times, at other times it could be merely interior locution, or just part of the general commission: please recall the introduction to this text.

So the prophet does not lose confidence, he makes his own face like flint to stand up to those who torment him. The Lord defends me, he says, no one can accuse me. Does Isaiah ask for punishment of the offenders? If he did, it would not be in a tone of revenge, but of rebalancing the objective order, cf. our comments at chapter 1 on <naqam>. Is this different from Jesus praying: Father forgive them? Not entirely. Jesus did ask for forgiveness, and of course His prayer was granted. Yet as with any offer of forgiveness by God, it is not effective if the intended recipient rejects it. And so many did reject Jesus. He knew all too well both sides of the picture. Hence in Mt 23:27 He wept over Jerusalem, and He foretold what was going to happen in 70 A. D. He willed to offer forgiveness, yet He knew it would be in vain for most of them.

In v. 10 the prophet is the one who speaks, asking: Who obeys the message he gives? Even though the one who obeys is still walking in the dark, he must trust in the Lord.

In v. 11 God Himself speaks: They light fires, hoping to destroy the Servant. But God will turn even the fire against them, it will burn, not help them. Instead of walking, they will "lie down" in suffering.

End of Chapter 50: 4-11