



# ISAIAH 50

## THE LORD, THE FAITHFUL HUSBAND ~ THE SERVANT, OUR TEACHER ~ THE SERVANT’S SURRENDER TO THE CROSS ~ THE FEAR OF GOD

If you’ve ever wondered what it was like to have a conversation with a Jewish person, here’s a pretty good example. Questions, followed by more questions and even more questions! Rabbi Lawrence Hajoiff has this to say regarding questions, “Why are questions so important? The Maharal of Prague explains that people feel satisfied with their view of life. Thus they are complacent when it comes to assimilating new ideas. But when a person has a question, it is an admission of some lack. This creates an ‘empty space’ to be filled.”

Isaiah is having a conversation with the Lord...kind of. More accurately, the Lord is having a conversation with his people *through* Isaiah. Make no mistake, Yahweh has a lot on his mind and he’s not holding back. He presents his case as a husband, a teacher, a martyr and a leader.

You can approach this chapter of Isaiah a couple different ways. The first time through, before you get into the flow of what the Lord is saying, try inserting yourself into the conversation. The Lord is talking to you. Not really to you, but with you. He’s not just being rhetorical. He is truly interested in your answers to his very pointed questions. How will you respond! What will you say?

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 50:1 Thus says the LORD: “Where is your mother’s certificate of divorce, with which I sent her away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away. <sup>2</sup> Why, when I came, was there no man; why, when I called, was there no one to answer? Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, 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. <sup>3</sup> I clothe the heavens with blackness and make sackcloth their covering.</p>	<p><b>a</b> 50:1 Or “divorced your mother (Israel).”  <b>b</b> 50:2 Or “Is my arm too short?”</p>	<p><b>The Lord, the Faithful Husband</b></p> <p>Isaiah 50:1 Yahweh asks, “Have I abandoned you? Can you show me your mother’s divorce papers that prove I sent her away? Do you think I sold you into slavery to pay off a debt? No, you sold yourselves into slavery because of your sins, and because of your rebellion I sent your mother away! <b>a</b> <sup>2</sup> When I came to you, why was no one there? When I called, why did no one answer? Am I powerless <b>b</b> to rescue you or too weak to deliver you? With only a threat I can evaporate the sea and dry up the rivers as a desert, leaving the fish to rot and die of thirst. <sup>3</sup> I dress the sky with darkness and shroud it with sackcloth.</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p><sup>4</sup> The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.</p> <p><sup>5</sup> The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. <sup>6</sup> I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.</p> <p><sup>7</sup> But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. <sup>8</sup> He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. <sup>9</sup> Behold, the Lord GOD helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.</p> <p><sup>10</sup> Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God. <sup>11</sup> Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches! Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled! This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.</p>	<p><b>c</b> 50:4 See Ps. 45:1.</p> <p><b>d</b> 50:4 Or “He arouses for me an ear.”</p> <p><b>e</b> 50:4 Seven times Jesus stated that he spoke only what the Father gave (taught) him to say. See John 7:16; 8:28, 47; 12:49; 14:10, 24; 17:8.</p> <p><b>f</b> 50:5 A pierced ear was the mark of a willing slave. See Deut. 15:12–17; Ps. 40:6.</p> <p><b>g</b> 50:7 Or “I have set my face like flint.”</p> <p><b>h</b> 50:9 See Rom. 8:30–39.</p> <p><b>i</b> 50:9 These old clothes represent the old concepts of an old covenant. See Matt. 6:19–21; Heb. 1:11–12.</p>	<p><b>The Servant, Our Teacher</b></p> <p><sup>4</sup> The Lord Yahweh has equipped me with the anointed, skillful tongue <b>c</b> of a teacher—to know how to speak a timely word to the weary. Morning by morning, he awakens my heart. He opens my ears <b>d</b> to hear his voice, to be trained to teach. <b>e</b></p> <p><b>The Servant’s Surrender to the Cross</b></p> <p><sup>5</sup> The Lord Yahweh has opened my ear, <b>f</b> and I did not resist; I did not rebel. <sup>6</sup> I offered my back to those who flogged me and my cheek to those who tore out my beard. I never hid my face from demeaning insults or from those who spit on me.</p> <p><sup>7</sup> The Lord Yahweh empowers me, so I am not humiliated. For that reason, with holy determination, <b>g</b> I will do his will and not be ashamed. <sup>8</sup> The One who makes me righteous is close to me. Who would dare challenge me now? Who would be my opponent? Let him stand before me! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! <sup>9</sup> It is the Lord Yahweh who empowers me; who would condemn me? <b>h</b> My accusers will all fade away like worn-out, moth-eaten clothes. <b>i</b></p> <p><b>The Fear of God</b></p> <p><sup>10</sup> Who among you has “true fear and reverence of Yahweh? Who of you listens to the voice of his servant? Are any of you groping in the dark without light? Let him trust in the faithful name of Yahweh “and rely on his God. <sup>11</sup> But if you presume to light your own torch, you are playing with fire. So go ahead, walk in the light of your own fires; and the sparks you have kindled. But I can promise you this: it will take you down into torment!</p>

## Bible Knowledge Commentary

JOHN A. MARTIN

- Israel exhorted to walk by faith (chap. 50) The statements about Israel’s future were to evoke an ethical response. Israel was rebellious but the prophet pleaded for her to trust in the Lord, not in her own devices.
  - **The Lord’s “Divorce” of Zion.**
    - **50:1-3.** The LORD declared that He was temporarily “divorcing” Zion because she had rejected Him without cause. He explained to Zion’s children that He temporarily sent away their mother because she sinned. In the Mosaic Law a husband could give his wife a divorce certificate detailing her fault(s) and she would be required to leave the home (Deut. 24:1). Israel’s captivity was like a wife having to leave her husband because of ... sins. Isaiah also pictured Israel’s exile as being like sons sold into indentured servitude because of a great debt. Yet Israel’s rejection of Him was unreasonable (Isa. 50:2). Did they think God could not ransom or rescue them? Of course He could. He is the One who can withhold rain and dry up ... rivers (cf. Deut. 28:23-24).

- **The Servant's Growth by Experience** (50:4-9).
  - **50:4-6.** In verses 4-9 the Servant is speaking, for He addresses God as the Sovereign LORD (vv. 4-5, 7, 9). As the Lord taught the Servant daily how to comfort the weary (v. 4), the Servant did not rebel against that instruction (v. 5). In fact He even gave His body to those who persecuted Him (v. 6). Jesus, before He was crucified, was beaten, mocked, and spit on (Mark 14:65; 15:16-20). In extremely difficult circumstances, more difficult than what Isaiah's original readers were facing, the Servant was obedient and submissive (cf. 1 Peter 2:22-23).
  - **50:7-9.** The Servant was convinced that He will be vindicated by the Sovereign Lord who helps Him (vv. 7, 9). Even if it did not seem as if He were winning a battle, He was convinced that He was doing God's will. The Servant was aware that those who falsely accused Him will eventually face Him as their Judge and will come to nothing. Like moth-eaten garments, they will perish (cf. 51:8).
- **The Prophet's Exhortation.**
  - 50:10-11. Isaiah exhorted the Servant's followers—those who fear the LORD and obey His Word, but who are in the dark (i.e., living in difficult times when the Servant was rejected, v. 6)—to walk by faith, trusting in the ... LORD. If they insist on walking by their own light they will suffer the fate of those who reject Him. They will lie down in torment (cf. Luke 16:23, 28; also note Rev. 20:13-15; 21:8). This admonition was directed to those living in Isaiah's day. But all who refuse to trust the Lord will suffer eternal damnation.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. First question in Chapter 50, no warm-up, no intro..."Have I abandoned you?" Have you ever felt abandoned by someone? Have you ever been the one doing the abandoning? Knowing God's character, is it even possible for him to abandon his people? Why?
2. Have you ever heard a teacher described as someone who knows "how to speak a timely word to the weary," or someone who "awakens my heart?" You get the feeling this teacher doesn't just communicate information. Go into a bit of detail and describe what this teacher Yahweh is like. What motivates him? What is his goal or what is he after?
3. In verse 7, the Servant says he has not been humiliated or ashamed because of God's power. What is the enemy of our soul after through humiliation and shame? How does the Lord use those two powerful emotions to soften our hearts and conform us to the image of his Son, Jesus?
4. What is the "true fear of the Lord?" how does it work? What price will we pay if we lose it? Once lost, how can we get it back? Do *you* "fear the Lord?"
5. What question might you ask to discern whether someone's heart is tender toward the Lord, without asking them that specific question?