



ISAIAH 51

ZION'S RESTORATION ~ CRY OUT TO GOD ~ HIDDEN IN THE HOLLOW OF HIS HAND ~ WAKE UP, ZION

When you hear the phrase, “You are the people of God,” who is it that comes to mind. The people of Israel? How about Christians throughout the Earth? When you hear that phrase, do you ever first think of yourself?

In Romans 11, the Apostle Paul gives a brief history of how Gentiles were “grafted into the Root,” Jesus. From that moment on you and I are members of the group spoken of in the Bible as “God’s People.” Not better than his original “people,” the Jewish people, but members of the “family of God.” This chapter of the book of Isaiah is focused on the rescue, redemption and restoration of God’s people from Babylon. If you’ve ever needed rescuing, this is your story as well.

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 51:1 “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD: look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. ² Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him. ³ For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.</p> <p>⁴ “Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples. ⁵ My righteousness draws near, my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands hope for me, and for my arm they wait. ⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.</p>	<p>a 51:1 See Deut. 16:20; Prov. 15:9; 21:21.</p> <p>b 51:2 Part of the Abrahamic blessing is the power to procreate, even when Sarah was barren.</p> <p>c 51:3 Or “the garden of Eden.” See Joel 2:3.</p> <p>d 51:3 Or “will abide in her.”</p> <p>e 51:4 Or “I will make my justice a light for the nations.” See John 8:12.</p> <p>f 51:5 See Rom. 14:7 with Mark 1:14–15. Isa. 51:5 gives us three pictures of Jesus Christ: God’s righteousness, God’s salvation, and God’s mighty arms.</p> <p>g 51:5 Or “hope for my arm (of power).”</p>	<p>Zion’s Restoration</p> <p>Isaiah 51:1 “Listen to me, you who chase after righteousness, a you who passionately pursue the Lord. Look back to Abraham, the rock from which you were cut, to Sarah, the quarry from which you were dug, and remember what I did for them. ² Yes, look to Abraham your father and to Sarah, who bore you. For when I called Abraham, he was but one person, but I blessed him greatly b so that one became many.” ³ Indeed, Yahweh will comfort Zion, restore her, and comfort all her broken places. He will transform her wilderness into the garden of Bliss, c her desert into the garden of Yahweh. Joy and laughter will fill the air d with thanksgiving and joyous melodies.</p> <p>⁴ “Listen to me, my people; pay attention to me, my nation. For I release my teaching to the nations, and I will cause the light of justice to rest on them. e ⁵ My righteousness is coming closer, f and my salvation has gone out. My mighty arms will govern the people. The islands will trust in me and put their hope in the unveiling of my might. g ⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavenly realm and look at the earth far below. Though the heavens disappear like smoke, though the earth wears out like a garment, and though all the people die like gnats, my salvation will endure forever and my righteousness will never end!</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>⁷ “Listen to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings. ⁸ For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool, but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations.”</p> <p>⁹ Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon? ¹⁰ Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over? ¹¹ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.</p> <p>¹² “I, I am he who comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass, ¹³ and have forgotten the LORD, your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and you fear continually all the day because of the wrath of the oppressor, when he sets himself to destroy? And where is the wrath of the oppressor? ¹⁴ He who is bowed down shall speedily be released; he shall not die and go down to the pit, neither shall his bread be lacking. ¹⁵ I am the LORD your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar— the LORD of hosts is his name. ¹⁶ And I have put my words in your mouth and covered you in the shadow of my hand, establishing the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth, and saying to Zion, “You are my people.”</p> <p>¹⁷ Wake yourself, wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, who have drunk to the dregs the bowl, the cup of staggering. ¹⁸ There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne; there is none to take her by the hand among all the sons she has brought up. ¹⁹ These two things have happened to you— who will console you?— devastation and destruction, famine and sword; who will comfort you? ²⁰ Your sons have fainted; they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of the LORD, the rebuke of your God.</p>	<p>h 51:9 This is the Hebrew word rahav (Rahab), a likely metaphor for Egypt.</p> <p>i 51:9 See Ps. 74:13–14; Ezek. 29:3.</p> <p>j 51:10 Or “to cross over.”</p> <p>k 51:13 Or “trembling.”</p> <p>l 51:15 See Ps. 74:13; Jer. 31:35.</p> <p>m 51:16 Jesus Christ is the true Prophet who has the words of God in his mouth.</p> <p>n 51:16 Or “shadow.”</p> <p>o 51:17 In v. 9, the people are crying out to God to awaken and arise, but here God is telling the people they are the ones who must wake up and arise.</p> <p>p 51:18 The image here is that Zion has been intoxicated by drinking the cup of God’s anger (Jer. 49:12) and there is no one there to take her home in that condition. In the culture of that day, it was the responsibility of children to guide a drunken parent home.</p> <p>q 51:19 Although there are four listed, this double calamity is seen in two couplets (disaster and devastation, famine and war).</p>	<p>⁷ So listen to me, you who care for what is right, who treasure my teaching in your hearts: Do not fear the insults of others; do not be troubled when they revile you. ⁸ They are nothing for you to fear, for the moth will eat them up like a shirt and the worm will consume them like wool, but my righteousness will last forever and my salvation from generation to generation.</p> <p>Cry Out to God</p> <p>⁹ Awake, God, awake! Arm of Yahweh, put on your robe of strength! Awake and do the works of power as in ancient days, as in generations past! Wasn’t it you who smashed the sea monster h to pieces, who pierced the dragon i in generations long ago? ¹⁰ Wasn’t it you who dried up the Red Sea with its deep waters and made a path through the sea to rescue j your redeemed? ¹¹ Do it again! Those Yahweh has set free will return to Zion and come celebrating with songs of joy! They will be crowned with never-ending joy! Gladness and joy will overwhelm them; despair and depression will disappear!</p> <p>¹² “I, yes I, am the one who comforts you. All the sons of men will be cut down and fade like grass. Why then would you be afraid of a mere human being? ¹³ You have forgotten that Yahweh, your Maker, stretched out the skies and laid earth’s firm foundation. But you live each day constantly worrying, k living in fear of your angry oppressor who is bent on your destruction. But their fury cannot touch you! ¹⁴ Those who are suffering will soon be released. They will not die in their dark dungeon, nor will they go hungry. ¹⁵ For I am Yahweh, your faithful God, who split the sea with its roaring waves. l My name is Lord Yahweh, Commander of Angel Armies!</p> <p>Hidden in the Hollow of His Hand</p> <p>¹⁶ “I have placed my words in your mouth m and have hidden you in the hollow n of my hand to establish the heavens and make the earth rock solid. You will say to Zion, ‘You are my people!’”</p> <p>Wake Up, Zion</p> <p>¹⁷ Wake up! Wake up! o Get up, Jerusalem! You have drunk enough from the cup Yahweh handed you. It was the cup of his anger, and you’ve drained it dry—the intoxicating bowl that makes men stagger. ¹⁸ There are none of Zion’s children left, none to guide her home p and take her by the hand, none among all the children she has raised. ¹⁹ Twin calamities have come upon you, but who will feel sorry for you disaster and devastation, famine and war, q but who will comfort you ²⁰ Your children have fainted and lie fallen in the streets, like a gazelle caught in a net. Yahweh’s anger, the rebuke of your God, has overwhelmed them.</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>²¹ Therefore hear this, you who are afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine: ²² Thus says your Lord, the LORD, your God who pleads the cause of his people: “Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering; the bowl of my wrath you shall drink no more; ²³ and I will put it into the hand of your tormentors, who have said to you, ‘Bow down, that we may pass over’; and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to pass over.”</p>		<p>²¹ So listen, you who are weak and wounded, who are intoxicated not with wine but with God’s anger. ²² This is what your sovereign ruler, Lord Yahweh, your God, the Mighty Defender of his people, says: “Look! I have removed from your hand the intoxicating cup that made you stagger. You will no longer drink from the bowl of my anger. ²³ Instead, I will put that bowl in the hands of your tormentors who said to you, ‘Lie down so we can walk all over you!’ For your back became like the ground they trample on, like a street for them to walk on.”</p>

Bible Knowledge Commentary

JOHN A. MARTIN

THE REMNANT TO BE EXALTED (51:1-52:12)

- The Lord’s comfort of the remnant (51:1-16)

- **The remnant’s origin in the covenant.**

- **51:1-3.** Here the LORD is speaking to those who pursue righteousness (cf. Matt. 5:6) and seek Him. The believing remnant in Israel is to think back on their background. The rock from which they were cut, figuratively speaking, is explained in verse 2 as Abraham and Sarah, the “founders” of the nation. God made him many, that is, gave the patriarch many descendants as He had promised (Gen. 12:2; 15:5; 17:6; 22:17). For many years Abraham and Sarah had no children, but they believed God (Gen. 15:6). These people too are to believe Him. Though they have not yet seen the fruition of God’s promises about Israel being a nation in the land (Gen. 15:18-21) they do have His sure word that God’s kingdom will be established on the earth. Because of the Lord’s compassion (cf. Isa. 49:10, 15) the land will someday be fruitful like Eden ... the garden of the LORD. Because of this, joy (cf. 51:11) will abound among the remnant.

- **The Lord’s Justice to Extend over the World.**

- **51:4-8.** God’s Law will be known (cf. 2:3) and justice and righteousness (see comments on 1:21) will be established for the nations and the islands (see comments on 41:1) by His arm (i.e., His power; cf. 51:9 and see comments on 40:10). The heavens and the earth will pass away (vanish like smoke and wear out like a garment; cf. Heb. 1:11), but the Lord’s work (salvation) and standards (righteousness) will continue forever (Isa. 51:8). Therefore, knowing this fact, the remnant with God’s Law (v. 4) within them and eternal hope before them, should take courage and not be disheartened by their enemies’ insults (cf. vv. 12-13; also note the Suffering Servant’s response in 50:6). Those enemies will perish like a moth-eaten garment, a metaphor the Servant used earlier (50:9).

- **The Remnant’s Prayer for Another “Exodus.”**

- **51:9-11.** These verses could be taken as a prayer of the righteous remnant (though some scholars say they record the prophet’s words as he reflected on what would happen to that remnant). 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). The question Was it not you? (vv. 9-10) was a way of affirming that the LORD did these things for their forefathers. (On Rahab, a mythical sea monster representing Egypt, see comments on 30:7.) When Israel escaped from Egypt the Egyptian army was drowned in the sea. The Israelites crossed over the Red (Reed) Sea on dry ground (Ex. 14:21-31). In the same way the LORD by His strength will allow Israel to return in a new “Exodus” to her homeland (Zion) with joy (cf. Isa. 51:3).

- **The Lord’s Promise and Power.**

- **51:12-16.** The Lord now spoke to the remnant that was living in fear of destruction. He gave comfort reminding them that the ones they feared were only men (like grass; cf. 40:6-8) and that God is the all-powerful Creator (cf. 42:5; 44:24; 45:12, 18; 48:13; 51:16). The imprisoned remnant would soon be freed to return to the Promised Land in another “Exodus” (v. 14) because the LORD, the Creator God (vv. 15-16) is their God. He is intimate with them and protects them with His hand because they belong to Him in a unique relationship as His people (cf. Hosea 2:1, 23).

- **The Lord’s comfort of Jerusalem** (51:17-52:10)

- **Jerusalem to be freed.** (51:17-52:6).

- **51:17-23.** The remnant (or the prophet) had asked God to awaken (be alert; cf. v. 9) and do something. Now God asked Jerusalem to be awake (cf. 52:1) because He is doing something—their calamity was coming to an end. In their exile the Jerusalemites had drunk (i.e., experienced; cf. v. 21) God’s wrath fully—all the way to the bottom of the cup (cf. v. 22). In the terrible destruction of Jerusalem many young men (sons) had died (v. 18). Ruin ... destruction, famine, and sword spoke of the awful plight of the city (v. 19). The destruction was so terrible that the city experienced double calamities. Young men, objects of God’s wrath, had been killed (cf. v. 20) in Jerusalem’s streets. However, the Lord pronounced that the time of judgment was over (v. 22). Now the judgment, again pictured as a cup to be drunk, would be given to her tormentors who had walked on the dead bodies in Jerusalem (v. 23). The Babylonians, who had destroyed Jerusalem, would in turn suffer God’s wrath.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. It says in verse 3, “Joy and laughter will fill the air with thanksgiving and joyous melodies.” According to this verse, where was this “joy” coming from? Who was the the source of this joy?
2. A couple verses later, in verse 6, Yahweh says, “My salvation will endure forever and my righteousness will never end!” He is addressing this decree to his people in captivity in Babylon. What is the “salvation” that will endure forever? Is this the same salvation you and I have received? When God is speaking of “salvation,” what exactly is he promising?
3. Have you ever needed to be rescued? What was it like waiting for the rescuer(s) to come? What thoughts go through your head as you wait and what are those thoughts based upon?

4. Who is it that needs to be “rescued” in Longview? We all know that God can rescue them. Do you think he will? What do you think that rescue will look like? Are you willing to be part of the “rescue team?”

5. Right now, as you sit here tonight, is there anything you are hoping to be rescued from? Can we be part of your rescue team?