



Sunday School Lesson for December 11, 2005  
Released: December 7, 2005

**"Strength for the Weary from God"**

Printed Text: **Isaiah 49:5-6; 50:4-11**  
Read: **Isaiah 49:1-50:11**  
Devotional Reading: **Isaiah 49:7-13**  
Background Scripture: **Isaiah 49, 50**

Time: about 700-695 B.C.  
Place: Jerusalem

Golden Text: "The Lord GOD will help Me; Therefore I will not be disgraced; Therefore I have set My face like a flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed" (Isaiah 50:7 NKJV).

**Lesson Aims:**

After participating in this lesson, the student will be able to:

Recite at least two purposes that Isaiah prophesied for the Messiah to fulfill.

Tell how Jesus fulfilled those prophecies.

Prepare an explanation of how the shame Christ underwent saves us.

**Lesson Outline:**

The Restorer of Israel and Light of the Nations; Isaiah 49:5-6

The Wise and Rejected Servant; Isaiah 50:4-9

**Lesson Text: Isaiah 49:5-6 (New King James Version)**

5 " And now the LORD says,  
Who formed Me from the womb *to be* His Servant,  
To bring Jacob back to Him,  
So that Israel is gathered to Him[a]  
(For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD,  
And My God shall be My strength),

6 Indeed He says,  
' It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant

To raise up the tribes of Jacob,  
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;  
I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles,  
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth."

**Isaiah 50:4-11 (New King James Version)**

- 4 " The Lord GOD has given Me  
The tongue of the learned,  
That I should know how to speak  
A word in season to *him who is weary*.  
He awakens Me morning by morning,  
He awakens My ear  
To hear as the learned.
- 5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear;  
And I was not rebellious,  
Nor did I turn away.
- 6 I gave My back to those who struck *Me*,  
And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard;  
I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.
- 7 " For the Lord GOD will help Me;  
Therefore I will not be disgraced;  
Therefore I have set My face like a flint,  
And I know that I will not be ashamed.
- 8 *He is* near who justifies Me;  
Who will contend with Me?  
Let us stand together.  
Who *is* My adversary?  
Let him come near Me.
- 9 Surely the Lord GOD will help Me;  
Who *is* he *who* will condemn Me?  
Indeed they will all grow old like a garment;  
The moth will eat them up.
- 10 " Who among you 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 upon his God.
- 11 Look, all you who kindle a fire,  
Who encircle *yourselves* with sparks:  
Walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks you have kindled-  
This you shall have from My hand:  
You shall lie down in torment.

## **Lesson Background:**

Today's lesson continues in the prophetic book of Isaiah-with the prophet's second and third "servant songs" that identify the coming Messiah. Although some have identified Isaiah's songs with being Moses, Isaiah himself, the nation Israel, it is very obvious by the end of today's study and from our New Testament perspective that the One Isaiah prophesizes about is Jesus Christ. Think of Isaiah as an Old Testament John The Baptist-in that, Isaiah foretold of Jesus' arrival. Isaiah wasn't speaking about himself, but about Jesus as Messiah.

Another important fact to point out is that Isaiah wasn't speaking his own words, but was relaying a divine *oracle* or message from God. Nonetheless, the oracle wasn't very popular with Isaiah cohorts.

Although the Servant is portrayed in Isaiah as being wise yet rejected, He is certainly not diminished in His glory. There are surprises for Jewish readers and Christian readers in these words from Isaiah. Many Jewish readers find it difficult to imagine a rejected Messiah. And many Christian readers find it hard to imagine a Messiah who came first and foremost for Israel that rejected Him. But, remember that hindsight is truly clearer than foresight. So, while we may study today's lesson and say, "Duh! *Of course* Isaiah's talking about Jesus the coming Messiah." It was not as easy for those who heard Isaiah's prophetic message to embrace what he was saying or who he was speaking of.

Isaiah teaches us a great deal about Jesus, showing us God's purposes in Jesus' life. This remarkable prophecy mentions the discouragement Jesus felt over the lack of response from His listeners to His message. There is also joy over the fact that Jesus' act of salvation will bring the whole world to God. Besides this, Jesus was able to endure the rejection He would ultimately receive and instead rely upon the strength that came from His Father's backing. *We, too, hallelujah*, can rely upon the strength of God to uphold us during hard times-especially when those hard times come as a result of our doing His kingdom work. Be encouraged today and know that we have "Strength from God!"

## **Questions:**

### **1. What other biblical figure was specifically called by God from the womb? (Isaiah 49:5)**

Besides God having chosen the Servant (Jesus Christ) before He was in Mary's womb, God also specifically called Jeremiah: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5 NKJV). One thing to keep in mind, though, is that God doesn't do anything by chance. If this were the case, God would cease being God. But, because He is the Creator of all things, His call in the life of His servants begins before they are old enough to do anything to earn their place. God's call is based on His divine choice. He knows who His servants will be, for He chooses them beforehand. What a mighty God we serve!

### **2. What were the two parts of the mission of the Servant? (Isaiah 49:5-6)**

The Servant's mission was to "bring Jacob back to (God),"-Jacob, again, being used as a figure to describe the nation of Israel; and to be given "as a light to the Gentiles," to "be (God's) salvation to the ends of the earth." What a wonderful two-fold mission this is for all of mankind. God's plan for the Servant was inclusive of the nation of Israel and gentiles. God's plan of salvation *then* is the same as it is *now*-

even in light of the fact that Jesus Christ was born, lived a life full of examples for our benefit, died on the cross for our sins, was buried and then resurrected, and stands to come again; a way of salvation was provided before time itself existed. This is something so awesome to consider!

### **3. Which part has Jesus already fulfilled, and which part will be dramatically fulfilled later? (Isaiah 49:6)**

Jesus is already the light of the world. During His life, while He taught in Judea, the nations almost universally believed in false gods. Within a few centuries of His coming, the world changed drastically. Increasingly a sizable portion of the world began to believe in the one God of Israel. And, one day Jesus will fulfill the rest of the mission by restoring Israel to her rightful position as God's chosen people. God will be fully glorified through Jesus' obedient work.

### **4. In what ways did Jesus evidence having wisdom? (Isaiah 5:4)**

One characteristic of God's Servant is wisdom of speech. God described His way of speaking as "the tongue of the learned" (v. 4). There are numerous examples of wise words in Jesus' life. Perhaps the aspect of wisdom that mattered most in the Jewish context of Jesus' life was His ability to refute the scribes and teachers of the law. Jesus possessed authoritative knowledge of the Torah and the traditional interpretations of His day.

Not only did Jesus exhibit authoritative wisdom, to the confounding of His critics, but His speech was also a "word in season to him who is weary" (v. 4b). He found many needy persons such as Matthew—a tax collector, and the Samaritan woman and spoke words that brought them to God. Jesus' words had a tendency to refresh and draw people to God rather than put burdens on them.

### **5. Why is it important to know that Jesus willingly offered Himself to torture and abuse? (Isaiah 50:7)**

It is important to know that Jesus willingly offered Himself to torture and abuse because we must realize that He was acting in obedience to His Father. All the while Jesus was enduring the many beatings and much humiliation, it was His choice to obey His Father's will. At any given moment, Jesus could have struck down those who were abusing Him, but His trust was in the help of the Lord God—as ours should be as well. In our most difficult times, amidst physical pain and suffering, and emotional distress and abuse, the Lord God is our strength, and through Him we can endure *anything*! Jesus knew what we need to know during challenges... He knew that the One who would vindicate Him was near. If God is our ally, no one can truly harm us. No adversary is worthy of Him.

### **6. In what way is it true that Jesus was determined to fulfill His task? (Isaiah 50:9)**

Jesus set His face like flint to the task of the cross. Once He had wrestled in the garden with the enormity of His task, His mind was made up. Ignorant men mocked Him. Wicked men condemned Him. Corrupt authorities forced Him to endure beatings and the shame of carrying His own cross. In the face of it all, Jesus did not shrink back or try to extricate Himself from the nightmare. He spoke with a calm dignity to His oppressors. Even in His final torment, He spoke forgiveness to them.

## **7. Why did it seem that God was not helping Jesus? (Isaiah 49:14, 21; 50:7-8)**

It might seem as though God was not helping Jesus because God allowed Him to be abused in such a horrible way. But, Jesus-the Servant-was convinced of the Lord's protection even while He faced the greatest trial ever.

## **8. How did God help Him in the end? (Isaiah 50:8-9)**

God helped Jesus in the end by strengthening Him to endure. Many would contend with Christ, but the Servant had supreme confidence in His vindication because of His empowered relationship with God. Many may contend with us and try to condemn us also, but it will be to no avail if we are on God's side. Our opposition will eventually disintegrate like a moth-eaten garment.

## **9. How did the enemies of Jesus fail to prevail over Him? (Isaiah 50:9)**

Jesus was tormented primarily by two groups: the Sadducees and the Romans. The Sadducees were mostly wealthy priests and held immense power in Israel even over and above the more popular Pharisees. The Romans were an outside occupying army who ruled with an iron fist. Together they killed Jesus. Yet as Isaiah prophesied, "they will all grow old like a garment" (v. 9b). Look at what happened over time. The Roman Empire is no more. The Sadducees and all they represented in Judaism are done away with. And, yet Jesus remains.

## **10. What are some contrasts between the Servant and Israel?**

Israel was rebellious throughout history, grumbling during the escape from Egypt and making a golden calf while Moses was still on the mountain (Exodus 32:1-6). The Servant was not rebellious but submitted to a most arduous task and sacrificed Himself.

Again, Israel was unconvinced of the true love and protection of the Lord (Isaiah 49:14, 21). Yet, the Servant was unmistakably convinced of His Father's protection during His greatest trial ever (v. 50:1). The Servant had no transgressions but suffered due to His obedience to God's mission (vss. 6-8). Israel suffered for her own sins. The Servant suffered for the sins of others.

## **Conclusion:**

The verdict is clear: there is strength for the weary! We tap in to the ultimate source of that strength by referentially fearing the Lord and obeying His voice (Isaiah 50:10). The factor of obedience must not be overlooked. Many people desire physical blessings in abundance from God, but there are few attempts to live faithfully in obedience to God's commands. Should God be expected to strengthen the weary who live in flagrant disobedience to Him?

The Sermon on the Mount ends with the familiar account of the two builders (see Matthew 7:24-7). One built on the rock, and the other built on sand. Jesus said that building on the rock means hearing His words and obeying them. To obey God brings with it a certain assurance and joy that give strength to live for God every day.

### **Practical Points:**

\*We should give unending praise to God that He extended the light of salvation all the way to us (Isaiah 49:5-6).

\*The Lord Jesus lived a perfect life in dependence on God; we can learn from Him (50:4-5).

\*Jesus did not shrink from any pain for our sake; we should be willing to endure suffering for His sake (vs. 6).

\*As was true with Jesus, no one can bring us ultimate shame (Isaiah 50:7-8; cross reference Romans 8:31-34).

\*If our enemies are Christ's enemies, their time is running out; one day we will perceive no sign of them (Isaiah 50:9).

### **Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus, give us strength for today, just for this day. As we seek our physical and spiritual strength daily, remind us that our task is to live for You one day at a time. In Jesus' name, amen!

### **Thought to Remember:**

"God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8 NKJV)

### **Anticipating Next Week's Lesson:**

We examine another of Isaiah's prophetic references to the Messiah and Mary's response to the revelation of the Savior's birth.

Date: December 18, 2005

Title: "Hope for Those Who Suffer"

Printed Lesson: **Isaiah 53:1-3; Luke 1:47-55**

Read: **Isaiah 53:1-12; Luke 1:1-80**

Devotional Reading: **Romans 12:9-16**

Background Scripture: **Isaiah 53; Luke 1.**

Golden Text: Luke 1:50

### **Lesson Summarized by:**

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