

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes: Isaiah Chapter 50 - 52

5/28/14

Chapter 50 Study Notes

Israel's Sin and the Servant's Obedience - Verses 1-11

1 This is what the LORD says: "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce with which I sent her away? Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? Because of your sins you were sold; because of your transgressions your mother was sent away. **2** When I came, why was there no one? When I called, why was there no one to answer? Was my arm too short to ransom you? Do I lack the strength to rescue you? By a mere rebuke I dry up the sea, I turn rivers into a desert; their fish rot for lack of water and die of thirst. **3** I clothe the sky with darkness and make sackcloth its covering." **4** The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. **5** The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. **6** I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting. **7** Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame. **8** He who vindicates me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who is my accuser? Let him confront me! **9** It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who is he that will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up. **10** Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God. **11** But now, all you who light fires and provide yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze. This is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment.

50:1-2 God promised to fight for Israel, but Israel sold itself into sin. Israel had caused its own problems. God didn't lack the power he needed in order to help his people. The people of Israel forgot God and turned to other nations for help. God had not rejected Israel, but Israel had rejected God.

50:10-11 If we walk by our own light and reject God's, we become self-sufficient, and the result of self-sufficiency is sorrow and torment. When we place confidence in our own intelligence, appearance, or accomplishments instead of in God, we risk torment later when these strengths fade.

Chapter 51 Study Notes

Everlasting Salvation for Zion - Verses 1-16

1 "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; **2** look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed

him and made him many. **3** The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing. **4** "Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: The law will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. **5** My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm. **6** Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail. **7** "Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have my law in your hearts: Do not fear the reproach of men or be terrified by their insults. **8** For the moth will eat them up like a garment; the worm will devour them like wool. But my righteousness will last forever, my salvation through all generations." **9** Awake, awake! Clothe yourself with strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in days gone by, as in generations of old. Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces, who pierced that monster through? **10** Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep, who made a road in the depths of the sea so that the redeemed might cross over? **11** The ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. **12** "I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mortal men, the sons of men, who are but grass, **13** that you forget the LORD your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, that you live in constant terror every day because of the wrath of the oppressor, who is bent on destruction? For where is the wrath of the oppressor? **14** The cowering prisoners will soon be set free; they will not die in their dungeon, nor will they lack bread. **15** For I am the LORD your God, who churns up the sea so that its waves roar-- the LORD Almighty is his name. **16** I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of my hand-- I who set the heavens in place, who laid the foundations of the earth, and who say to Zion, 'You are my people.' "

51:1-2 The faithful remnant may have felt alone because they were few. But God reminded them of their ancestors, the source of their spiritual heritage—Abraham and Sarah. Abraham was only one person, but much came from his faithfulness. If the faithful few would remain faithful, even more could come from them. If we Christians, even a faithful few, remain faithful, think what God can do through us!

51:7 Isaiah encouraged those who follow God's laws. He gave them hope when they faced the reproach of other people or suffered insults because of their faith. We need not fear when people insult us for our faith because God is with us and truth will prevail. If people make fun of you or dislike you because you believe in God, remember that they are not against you personally but against God. God will deal with them; you should concentrate on loving and obeying him.

51:9-10 God had performed many powerful miracles in founding Israel, perhaps none more exciting than making a dry path through the middle of the Red Sea (see Exodus 14). Our God is the same God who made that path through the sea. His methods may change, but his love and care do not.

51:12-16 God's people feared Babylon, but not God. They had reason to fear Babylon for the harm it wanted to do, but they should also have realized that God's power is much greater than Babylon's. Babylon was interested in making the people captives; God was interested in setting them free. The people had misplaced their fear and their love. Jerusalem should have feared God's power and loved his mercy.

The Cup of the LORD's Wrath - Verses 17-23

17 Awake, awake! Rise up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath, you who have drained to its dregs the goblet that makes men stagger. **18** Of all the sons she bore there was none to guide her; of all the sons she reared there was none to take her by the hand. **19** These double calamities have come upon you-- who can comfort you?-- ruin and destruction, famine and sword-- who can console you? **20** Your sons have fainted; they lie at the head of every street, like antelope caught in a net. They are filled with the wrath of the LORD and the rebuke of your God. **21** Therefore hear this, you afflicted one, made drunk, but not with wine. **22** This is what your Sovereign LORD says, your God, who defends his people: "See, I have taken out of your hand the cup that made you stagger; from that cup, the goblet of my wrath, you will never drink again. **23** I will put it into the hands of your tormentors, who said to you, 'Fall prostrate that we may walk over you.' And you made your back like the ground, like a street to be walked over."

51:17-52:10 Jerusalem was God's holy city, the city with God's temple. But the people of Judah experienced ruin instead of prosperity, destruction instead of liberty. Because of their sins, the people suffered. But God promised to restore Jerusalem as a holy city where sinners cannot enter. God reigns. Put your entire faith and confidence in his ability to control the course of history—and your life.

Chapter 52 Study Notes

Verses 1-12

1 Awake, awake, O Zion, clothe yourself with strength. Put on your garments of splendor, O Jerusalem, the holy city. The uncircumcised and defiled will not enter you again. **2** Shake off your dust; rise up, sit enthroned, O Jerusalem. Free yourself from the chains on your neck, O captive Daughter of Zion. **3** For this is what the LORD says: "You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed." **4** For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "At first my people went down to Egypt to live; lately, Assyria has oppressed them. **5** "And now what do I have here?" declares the LORD. "For my people have been taken away for nothing, and those who rule them mock," declares the LORD. "And all day long my name is constantly blasphemed. **6** Therefore my people will know my name; therefore in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I." **7** How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" **8** Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. **9** Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has

comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. **10** The LORD will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God. **11** Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the LORD. **12** But you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for the LORD will go before you, the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

52:7 God says that the feet of those who bring good news are "beautiful." It is a wonderful privilege to be able to share God's Good News with others—his news of redemption, salvation, and peace. To whom do you need to give the Good News?

52:12 The people did not have to leave in fearful haste because Cyrus, God's anointed (45:1), decreed that the Jewish exiles could return safely to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1-4). They had the king's approval and his guaranteed protection. More important, the Lord would go ahead to point the way and be behind to protect them.

The Suffering and Glory of the Servant - Verses 13-15

13 See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. **14** Just as there were many who were appalled at him-- his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness-- **15** so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

52:13 The "servant", as the term is used here, points to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He would be highly exalted because of his sacrifice, described in chapter 53.

52:14-15 This servant, Jesus Christ, would be "marred beyond human likeness" by his suffering; but through his suffering, he would cleanse the nations (Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:2).