

A Trek Through Isaiah 67 - 51:1-16

Bruce Pike

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For this week:

- To the Faithful Remnant (part 1) 51:1-11

Context

The Greater Deliverance: the Work of the Servant (49:1 - 55:13)
The Servant's mission 49:1-13
Nation and Servant contrasted 49:14 - 50:11
To the faithful remnant 51:1 – 52:12
The Servant's triumph 52:13 - 55:13

- In the book of the Servant (38 - 55): How will God's people be redeemed from captivity?
- This section (49 - 55) describes the greater deliverance (redemption from sin) accomplished through the Servant.
 - The Servant's mission: to redeem Israel and to redeem the world. 49:1-13
 - Nation and Servant Contrasted 49:14 – 50:11
 - To the faithful remnant 51:1 – 52:12
 - The Servant's triumph 52:13 - 55:13

To the Faithful Remnant 51:1 – 52:12

- Theme
 - 50:10-11 differentiates those who trust in God from those who don't
 - Obeying the voice of the Servant is the distinguishing factor.
 - 51:1 - 52:12 addresses the believing remnant.
- Structure
 - Three calls to listen 51:1-8
 - Appeal to the LORD to act 51:9-11
 - Interlude 51:12-16
 - Three calls to alertness and action 51:17 - 52:11

- Three calls to listen 51:1-8

- First Call to Listen: **Eden** restored 51:1-3

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.

■ V1a Call to listen

- Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD
 - The faithful remnant
 - Called to listen to God
 - Pursue: Vigorous pursuit.
 - Righteousness.

■ Conformity to God's law

■ Righteousness of faith

■ V2b The example of Abraham and Sarah

- 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;
 - Metaphor of a rock quarry: Look to where you came from..
- for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him.
 - Abraham was only one man.
 - God promised that nations and kings would come from him.
 - Gen 17:3, 6 Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, 4 "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations... 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you.
 - From such a beginning this was not humanly possible, but God accomplished it.
 - As with Gideon and his 300 in Jdgs 7:1-8 God purposely started with an impossible situation so that it would be apparent that He had accomplished the work
 - The believing remnant is called to exhibit the same faith as Abraham.

■ V3 Comfort for Zion

- 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;
 - In the end times.
 - Comforts.
 - Restores. As Is 40:1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God...
 - 2x to indicate certainty.
 - makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord
 - Barren wilderness made like a garden
 - Curse lifted.
- joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song
 - Response to what the Lord has done
 - Not found in the first Eden, since there had been no fall and no salvation.

- Second Call to Listen: Universal and eternal salvation 51:4-6

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.

- V4a Call to hear

- Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation.
 - The faithful remnant.
 - Again called to focus on God

- V4b-5 Light and salvation

- a law will go out from me,
 - God’s righteous requirements
- and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.
 - God’s justice is demonstrated in the cross.
 - He does not forget any sin.
 - Jesus paid the penalty for all sins.
 - Thus the cross is a light to all peoples.
- My righteousness draws near.
 - The righteousness that comes through faith in Christ.
- my salvation has gone out, and my arms will judge the peoples;
 - Salvation is available to all who trust in Christ.
 - Each person faces the same question, as the disciples in Mt 16:15 He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”
 - Each person will be judged according to their answer, as Rev 20:11-12, 15 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done... 15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
 - Arms. Plural for certainty.

■ V6 Eternal life

- 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,
 - All created things are transient; they will pass away.
 - As Jesus says in Lk 21:33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.
- they who dwell in it will die in like manner;
 - All people will pass away.
- but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.
 - God's salvation is eternal; it stands forever.
 - Be dismayed. Overcome by external forces.

- Third Call to Listen: No **fear** 51:7-8

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.”

■ V7a Third call to listen

- Listen to me,
 - Again, call to focus on God
- you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law
 - In all three calls, the faithful remnant described
 - V4: my people... my nation
 - The true remnant that belongs to the LORD.
 - V7: you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law
 - They are renewed
 - A new mind that can understand spiritual things
 - A new heart that accepts God’s law
 - V1: you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD
 - They seek God continually

■ V7b Coming trials

- fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings.
 - Reproach..revilings. Strong word. Used 6 of 7 times for blasphemy against God.
 - Men. From a root indicating weakness and frailty.
 - Fear not.
 - We all tend to fear
 - The Rx
 - Truly be God’s person
 - Understand spiritual things
 - Welcome His law in our heart
 - Continually pursue and seek Him
 - As 1 Jn 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

■ V8 Contrasting ends

- For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool,
 - The end of those who reproach and revile.
 - Two pictures of things being destroyed by forces beyond their control.
- but my righteousness will be forever, and my salvation to all generations.
 - My righteousness....my salvation.
 - All of God
 - Obtained through faith.
 - forever...to all generations.
 - Eternal.
 - Over all human experience.

- **Appeal** to God 51:9-11

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.

- Structure
 - Following the three calls, now an appeal to God.
- V9a Appeal
 - Awake, awake.
 - 2x for intensity.
 - Anthropomorphism. Seemed like God had gone to sleep.
 - Arm of the Lord. His power in action.
 - Put on strength. Clothe for battle.
- V9b-10 Past deliverance
 - Pictures from the Exodus when God had previously delivered His people out of bondage.
 - Rahab
 - Egypt
 - Sea monster of Canaanite mythology = chaos.
 - Dried up the sea.
 - Red Sea crossing which opened the way for the exodus of God's people out of bondage in Egypt.
 - who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over
 - Turned an impassible obstacle into a highway.
- V11 Coming deliverance
 - Repeated from 35:10; binds the prophecy together.
 - Ransomed.
 - The redeemed ones, for whom the LORD has paid a price.
 - Return and come to Zion.
 - Returning to the presence of God.
 - everlasting joy shall be upon their heads.
 - As a crown.
 - they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
 - Picture of companions on the journey
 - Their present companions (sorrow and sighing) will be gone.
 - New companions (gladness and joy) will be with them.
 - Pictures from the end times. Passage moves from present appeal to future hope.

- **Assurance** To All 51:12-16

- Structure

- Tenses of “you” reveal the structure

- V12a masculine plural: spoken to all
- V12b feminine singular: spoken to the city Zion
- V13 masculine singular: spoken to a captive
- V15-16 masculine singular: spoken to the Servant

- V12a To all

12 “I, I am he who comforts you;

- I, I. Doubled for emphasis.

- to all (city, captives, Servant)

- V12b To the city

12 ...who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass,

- who are you that you are afraid.

- Presuming to know better than God.
- Saying that His assurances have no meaning.
- Calvin says, “The consequence is, that when dangers arise, they are terrified and confounded, and attribute far more to the power of mortal man in attacking than to the power of God in defending.”

- of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass

- The true nature of man
 - Mortal.
 - Merely human, not divine.
 - Created not eternal
 - Transient.

- V13-15 To the captives

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.

- V13 Their condition

- What they have done
 - forgotten the LORD
 - Not having the LORD in mind.
 - Not remembering His word.
 - Not seeking His glory
 - Your Maker
 - Forgotten Him as Creator
 - Forgotten Him as their Creator
- The result
 - You fear continually all the day
 - Because they have forgotten the LORD.
 - because of the wrath of the oppressor
 - Mere men. As v12.
- The truth
 - And where is the wrath of the oppressor?
 - What they feared was an illusion.

- V14 The coming deliverance

- He who is bowed down shall speedily be released.
 - Deliverance from bondage.
 - Speedily. Suddenly
- He shall not die and go down to the pit. Life rather than death.
- Neither shall his bread be lacking.
 - Provision for his needs.

- V15 The Deliverer

- I am the Lord your God
 - Better: “For I am”. The basis of the promises just made.
 - Your God. The covenant God of Israel.
- who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar
 - The sea. A symbol of chaos.
 - A picture of omnipotence over chaos.
 - The God who can stir up the sea can also calm it.
- the LORD of hosts is his name
 - Military connotation: commander of armies
 - A picture of omnipotence over all powers.

- V16 To the Servant

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.' ”

- Equipped

- As all prophets: with God's word

- Protected

- As 49:2: Sheltered by God's hand.

- Given His work

- Three infinitives: what the LORD will do through the Servant.
- establishing the heavens
 - Creating anew
- and laying the foundations of the earth
 - Setting a secure foundation.
- and saying to Zion, 'You are my people.' ”
 - Fulfilling God's purpose for His people

Discussion

We will break into three groups for discussion. The questions are

- 1. Faithful discipleship 51:1, 4, 7**
 - a. Children of the Father**
 - b. Understanding and accepting His word**
 - c. Pursuing righteousness and seeking Him**
- 2. Eternal things 51:6**
 - a. Heavens and earth are passing away.**
 - b. God's salvation and righteousness are forever.**
- 3. Fear not men 51:7-8, 12-13**
 - a. The problem: fear of man**
 - b. The remedy: true discipleship**

Remember to worship the Lord: (1) See (2) Know (3) Respond

For next week: To the Faithful Remnant (part 2) 51:17 - 52:12

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