

Isaiah 50

The key verses that link with the Torah reading of **Numbers 12** :

Isaiah 50:2 - "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?"

Moses was designated to be the man to answer when God called, a type of Christ.

Isaiah 50:9 - "Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?" This relates to Miriam and Aaron's slander against Moses.

Isaiah 50:1 - "Thus saith the LORD, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away."

The analogy is that God is the husband and Israel is his wife:

'For thy Maker is thy husband' - **Isaiah 54:5**;

'Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you' - **Jeremiah 3:14**.

The Targum interprets "your mother" by "your congregation" i.e. Israel.

God had good reason to adopt this extreme measure (**Jeremiah 3:8**), He has not done it, but has left the way open for a reconciliation. But a bill of divorce would be final, giving the reasons for putting her away. (**Deuteronomy 24:1-4**)

The Law moderated divorce customs of the time - from the caprice of emotion or anger of the moment to something that required a formal document with reasons stated, releasing the wife from the marriage tie, and leaving her at liberty to pursue her own inclinations in regard to future marriages.

The Jewish custom was pronounced by Jesus to be inconsistent with the true idea of marriage and a concession to the weakness of human nature (**Matthew 19:3 ff.**; **Mark 10:2 ff.**).

In this case, Israel separated of her own accord, even though God had offered forgiveness (**Isaiah 40:2**).

There was also a custom of selling one's children to pay debts (**Exodus 21:7**). But God has no debtors.

Isaiah 50:2 - "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst."

Israel doesn't believe God is able to deliver them, so they turned to idols

The Red Sea (**Exodus 14:20**) and the Jordan (**Joshua 3:17**) were dried up. The Nile stank (**Exodus 7:21**)

Isaiah 50:2-3 - "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering."

"Wherefore, when I came, was there no man?".... The Targum has: "why have I sent my prophets, and they are not converted?"

"when I called" - He has called us to the marriage feast (**Matthew 22**).

"I clothe the heavens with blackness" - At the plague of darkness (**Exodus 10:12**) and at the crucifixion (**Matthew 27:45**). And in the end times (**Revelation 6:12**).

Rashi - The host of the heavens, the princes of the heathens (nations [Mss. and K'li Paz]), when I come to mete out retribution upon the nations.

Christ as Obedient Son

Isaiah 50:4-6 - "The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

What Christ "learns" from the Father He imparts to us:

- **John 15:15** - "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."

"I was not rebellious" - Compare to the complaining of Israel in the wilderness, and to the slander of Miriam and Aaron against Moses in **Numbers 12**.

"I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting" - these were fulfilled at Christ's crucifixion. (**Matthew 27:26, Mark 14:65, Matthew 26:67**)

Confidence in God

Isaiah 7-9 - "For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up."

"I set my face like a flint" - Hardened against all opposition; resolute and undaunted; constant and unmoved by the words and blows of men. - *Gill's Exposition*

"I know that I shall not be ashamed" - i.e. in defeat. God will be victorious.

Paul references this verse in **Romans 8:33** - "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

"they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up" - something irrecoverable. A garment eaten by a moth can't be fixed or re-used.

Isaiah 50:10 - "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God."

Many of the rabbis explain that the "servant" is Isaiah. But Christ is meant. The Zohar says (Zohar in Exod. fol. 54. 3.) this is "Metatron," a name of the Messiah-like figure, the "Son of Man" in the books of Enoch; the angel that led the people of Israel through the wilderness, who is also a heavenly priest.

The Alternative is Grim

Isaiah 50:11 - 'Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.'

sparks = *ziyqoth* - chains, sparks, firebrand, flaming arrow (Apparently sort of an all-purpose word)

"lie down" = *shakab* - lie down, sometimes used in a sexual connotation. (So we're back to the imagery of Israel as an adulterous wife)

"sorrow" = *ma`atsebah* - a place of anguish, sorrow, grief, affliction, terror or pain. (The only time this word is used).

Self-generated "light" cannot save. Sparks are quickly extinguished and provide no lasting light or heat.

This is one of the passages the Jews say is repeated by the company of angels who meet a wicked man at his death (Babylonian Talmud, Cetubot, fol. 104. 1.).

It is a stark contrast

- **John 3:18** - "Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."

"condemned" = *kekriti* - distinguished, by implication tried, condemned and punished