

Isaiah 50-52 - CFM Week 40-2022 - He Hath Borne Our Grievs - Day 1

My hope here is that when you read these three chapters from Isaiah you will see that their message is plain and beautiful to read. But in the off chance Isaiah's message isn't plain to you, my next hope is that by reading my commentary on the right, the words of Isaiah on the left will become plainer and easier to understand. I would be thrilled if, after reading what follows below, you can say, "well that seemed rather obvious." It is in such "obviousness" that we find our joy in the words of Isaiah.

Isaiah 50 - Compare to 2 Nephi 7

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.

2 Wherefore, when I came, was there no man?

In this chapter the Lord is defining his relationship with his covenant people. He is specifically telling them how they got themselves into the conditions into which they found themselves languishing for thousands of years. It started with the Assyrians carrying away Northern Israel - the 10 tribes - and ended with Southern Israel - the Jews - in the great dispersion when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and scatter the remaining Jews throughout their empire.

For almost 2,000 years after their dispersion the Jews lived among other nations, hated and driven, which was all foretold by the prophets for thousands of years before it happened. The Lord here is once again establishing the facts as to how this dispersion came about, and re-establishing his own credentials as their God and their Savior.

Jehovah is saying to his people, 'Can you show me any legal documents that prove that it is I who has sold you into slavery? If you have them, show me!' He is making the point that it was never him who caused their problems, but themselves. They sold themselves to other masters, because they refused to have him for their master. Israel is in an eternal covenant relationship with God, like a husband and wife who are sealed to each other. They were "put away" because of their own transgressions. Throughout the Old Testament Israel is compared to an unfaithful wife who plays the harlot to her ever faithful husband, the Lord.

Even in the days of Moses Israel was told that when the day came that they turned their backs on their God they would be scattered to the four winds, but that the day would come when God would gather them back into His covenant. In verse 2 the Lord is asking us to consider his ability to do as was promised and gather his people from all the nations of the earth.

In verses 2-5 the Lord puts forth some demonstrations of his power.

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.

3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

4 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.

5 ¶ The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

6 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.

7 ¶ 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.

8 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.

9 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

Verses 4-5 sound like they could be talking about Isaiah, for he was highly educated, but it is still talking about Christ here. In verse 4 I find it comforting that our Father gave Christ the tongue of the learned so he could speak timely words of comfort to those who are weary.

If we are to follow Christ in all things, verse 5 is instructive. At no time did Christ ever rebel against that which he was told. He never turned his back on the Lord to follow his own path. This one thing (turning our back on the Lord) is one of our greatest sources of sorrow in life.

This is a demonstration of Christ's commitment to his covenant to follow God in all things. He allowed himself to be smitten, driven, mocked, persecuted, cut, and spit upon. He even compares his own resolve to be obedient, no matter what, by comparing his own attitude as a flint, a hard rock. When we set ourselves at defiance, it can be expressed as setting our face like a flint. The Savior defied all who would turn him away from the will of God by setting his face like a flint. And why? Because he knew that he would not be ashamed if he followed the will of God.

I find it interesting that we are just the opposite. When God tells us that we have become hard hearted, it means that we have set our faces as flint against Him. Christ was just the opposite. He defied the world to cause him to oppose God in any way. We too often defy God to make us forsake our love for the world.

Verses 8-9 show Christ standing in defiance of anyone who would condemn his actions. He says that such people will "wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up." This shows his confidence in the Lord and His promises.

up.

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.

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.

Isaiah 51 - Compare to 2 Nephi 8

1 Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.

2 Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

3 For the Lord shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

4 ¶ Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people.

5 My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.

10-11 is a continuation of Christ's defiance against those who condemn his faithfulness to his Father. This is mixed with a promise. If you fear God and obey the voice of His servant, though you cannot see where it is taking you ("hath no light"), you should still "stay upon" or rely upon God's support. Those who pretend to "know the way" are compared to those who kindle their own fires and surround themselves with the sparks of their own knowledge. Christ says they will "lie down in sorrow." And that sorrow will come from the hand of Christ himself. He has never had much tolerance for those who think they know better than His Father.

This chapter describes the joys and the hopes of the redemption of Israel in the last days. Here Christ describes what they have to look forward to when the days of their captivity come to an end.

Verses 1-2 describe in reverse Israel's problem all along. They looked to other sources for their identity. They wanted to worship idols, which are just fictitious or man-made gods. Christ is saying that if you want to be a follower of righteousness you need to look to the source of righteousness. It is like returning to hole from which you were originally digged, or to returning to the rock from which you were originally cut out of. We need to go back to our source, and that source is Abraham and Sarah, and the covenant God made with them.

In the last days the Lord will work miracles in the lives of his covenant people. Her barren state will become like Eden, and she (Israel, his covenant people) will have joy and gladness.

Israel did not listen to Christ. They forsook his judgments and his laws. To find the joy Christ is describing Israel, his covenant people must now give ear, or listen to his laws, and use them as the light for their path. We call this today the "covenant path."

6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

7 ¶ Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

8 For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

9 ¶ Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?

10 Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?

11 Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

12 I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;

13 And forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of

All things physical shall become old and pass away, but God's "salvation shall be for ever." This is why we should put our faith in Christ, for all else of this world will come to naught, but his teachings and promises are sure.

One of our most difficult lessons to learn in this life is to fear God, and not men. Christ, who set his face as flint against all those who opposed God, is telling us to do the same. Don't be afraid of the revilings of men. They shall be eaten up like a moth eats holes in clothing. (Remember that back then they didn't have synthetic material. Almost everything was made from wool which moths eat.)

The arm or power of the Lord is as strong today as it was in ancient days. It is the same arm that cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon. We don't even need to know the specifics here as the point is still made - God is just as powerful now as He was anciently.

Christ reminds us here that it was he who dried the waters of the Red Sea so the children of Israel could pass over on dry ground.

The redeemed of Israel are all those who accept the covenants God made with Abraham. These are they who will "come with singing unto Zion." God promises that those who make and keep covenants with Him will find "gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."

Isaiah is particularly fond of describing man as grass, which withers so easily in the heat of the sun or from the first hint of drought. Why are we afraid of something so weak and tender when we can rely on the Lord who lives from eternity to eternity and is all powerful?

The Lord makes a fair argument here when he says, 'I created all that is in the heavens above you. I created the earth on which you stand. So why are you still afraid of those who oppress you and threaten to destroy you?' He is trying to get us to see that what man can do is

the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy?
and where is the fury of the oppressor?

14 The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, and that he should not die in the pit, nor that his bread should fail.

15 But I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The Lord of hosts is his name.

16 And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

17 ¶ Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.

18 There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons that she hath brought up.

19 These two things are come unto thee; who shall be sorry for thee? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?

20 Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God.

literally on the opposite end of the scale from what He can do. We are putting our faith, trust, and our fear in the wrong people. We should be fearing He who can create worlds and destroy them by His words, rather than fussing about what one of our fellow travelers in mortality has to say about what we should be doing.

“The captive exile” is Israel, actually, each of us. We are so concerned about the comforts of mortality that what we eat next or where we lay our head tonight is more important to us than where we end up for the rest of eternity.

God is telling us that he has given us His own words of wisdom, comfort, and insight. Like ancient Israel whom He covered by day with a cloud to protect them from the sun, and with a pillar of fire by night to give them light by which to see, so too has He protected us, and still does each day, for we are His people.

Here Christ acknowledges that Israel has had a tough time of it for many generations. Yes, it was of their own choosing, but the punishment was a harsh one, one that was fitting to the betrayal of the covenants they had made and broken over and over again. But the day has come when the cup of God’s wrath is being taken from the hands of Israel. They will no longer have to drink the bitter dregs of their cup of punishment.

Because Israel has been scattered, there is no one to guide her from among all her posterity. In verses 18-20 the Lord is telling them that because of their lack of someone to lead them, fear and frustration afflict them at every turn. The people are befuddled, like someone who is drunk, but they have not had any wine. They lack the word of God, so they are confused and unsteady. This is the unspoken way of saying that clarity of thought can only come through obedience to God’s laws, and through His Spirit.

21 ¶ Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine:

22 Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:

23 But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.

Isaiah 52

1 Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.

2 Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

3 For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

4 For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

5 Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for nought?

God, Himself pleads the case of His people in the last days. He is taking out of his people's hands the cup of His wrath, "the cup of trembling." In stead He will give the cup of his fury to those who have told his people to bow down so they can walk over them. In the last days the tables will be turned and all those who fight against Israel, His covenant people, will be the ones to experience God's fury. This refers to our day.

Here Christ tells the people what they need to do to receive his blessings once again. This is the day of rejoicing. No longer do they need to worry about being punished by God, for he is now going to fight their battles. Why? Because they are going to be obedient, like they were of old. Never again will he have to put them away, for their obedience will cause him to bless them and redeem them from their conditions of bondage. I address this point further in the CFM lesson for Day 1.

Instead of telling us to put on sackcloth and ashes, Christ tells us to put on our beautiful clothes. No more will we need to worry about those who are evil and are violators of the covenant who are unclean.

We need to arise from our positions of bondage and from our spiritually degraded conditions. He wants us to sit as one of His children and loose the bands from off our collective neck. In other words, free ourselves from the captivity of sin in which our ancestors sold themselves into. Christ has redeemed our souls without money, for he has redeemed us with himself. He gave his all so we might be saved through faith on his name.

For centuries different people have oppressed God's covenant people, starting with the Egyptians. Those who have taken them away and made them howl have blasphemed His name every day. Now Christ's people will know his name, and know that it is He, the Son of God who speaks to them.

they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the Lord; and my name continually every day is blasphemed.

6 Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I.

7 ¶ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.

9 ¶ Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

10 The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

11 ¶ Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.

12 For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rearward.

13 ¶ Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14 As many were astonished at thee; his visage

How does the convert react when they see the missionaries who taught them the gospel come to their door. There is rejoicing and gladness of heart. This is what it means when it talks about “how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.” The missionaries, and those who are covenant keepers (the members of the Church) are those who declare to all those around them, “Thy God reigneth!”

We often refer to the leaders of the Church as the watchmen on the wall. They “see eye to eye” in that they are united and understand the messages of salvation as a united body.

We have cause to rejoice, for God is redeeming Israel, and someday will redeem Jerusalem itself, as one of His holy cities. (There will be two holy cities, Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem in Jackson County, Missouri.)

In the last days the power of God will be manifest to all the nations of the earth. They will see Him work His miracles and will be speechless.

God’s instructions to Israel, to all who make covenants with Him, is to cease to touch anything that is unclean. That includes unclean visuals, reading, language, situations, thoughts, etc. Those who bear the vessels of the Lord are those who hold the priesthood, for the vessels of the Lord are found within the temple.

Today is a day unlike any other generation of mankind. Today we all have the blessings of the priesthood in our life. All worthy males can enter into the priesthood and officiate in its ordinances.

Verses 13-15 refer to Christ. The JST says that verse 15 should read, “So shall he *gather* many nations;”

was so marred more than any man, and his
form more than the sons of men:

15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings
shall shut their mouths at him: for that which
had not been told them shall they see; and that
which they had not heard shall they consider.