

Isaiah 50

The Lord's Ideal Servant Perseveres (50:4–11). The servant declared his confidence in God. He had not drawn back from the Lord's commission, despite severe opposition and humiliation. He persevered, confident that the Lord would one day vindicate him before his enemies. The chapter concludes with an appeal for the servant's faithful followers to continue to trust the Lord and with a warning of judgment to those who reject the Lord's salvation and guidance.

Contents: The humiliation of the Holy One of Israel. The Lord Jesus, our Redeemer, was to be wise above all men, able to speak the word of comfort to every heart; He was to have the ear of the learned to receive instruction in all things from His Father. In spite of this, He was to be smitten and insulted by men, yet unshaken in constancy and resolution, suffering all patiently and voluntarily for the salvation of His people. Let all who fear God, build their hopes upon Christ who has proven Himself the Savior.

Our Savior's Commission:

I. As a revitalizing preacher and a perfect disciple.

V. 4. -- Messiah, as "the servant of Jehovah" (Is 42:1), declares that the office has been assigned to Him of encouraging the "weary" by "words in season" suited to their case; and that, whatever suffering it costs Him, He does not shrink from it (Is 50:5-6), for that He knows His cause will triumph at last (Is 50:7-8). **Learned ("disciple")**—not in mere human learning, but in divinely taught modes of instruction (Is 49:2; Ex 4:11; Mt 7:28, 29; 13:54). **Speak a word in season**—(Prov 15:23; 25:11). Literally, "to comfort by words," sustain, in their season of need, the "weary" dispersed ones of Israel (De 28:65–67). Also, the spiritual "weary" (Is 42:3; Mt 11:28).

Awakens Me morning by morning—Compare "daily rising up early" (Je 7:25; Mk 1:35). The image is drawn from a master *waking* his pupils early for instruction. **Awakens My ear**—prepares Me for receiving His divine instructions. **As the learned disciple**—as one taught by Him. He "learned obedience," experimentally, "by the things which He suffered;" thus gaining that practical learning which *adapted* Him for "speaking a word in season" to suffering men (Heb 5:8). **Christ himself received that he might give.** Christ's apostles were first disciples, Mt. 13:52. It is not enough to hear, we must hear and understand, hear and remember; true learners/disciples are doers of what they learn. **We need to be awakened morning by morning.** Our case calls for continual fresh supplies of grace, to free us from the dullness we contract daily. The morning, when our spirits are most lively, is a proper time for communion with God;

then we are in the best frame both to speak to him (*my voice shalt thou hear in the morning—Ps 5:3*) and to hear from him.

II. As a patient and obedient sufferer in our work of redemption vv. 5-6.

Vv. 5-6. -- Opened My ear (See on Is 42:20; Is 48:8); that is, hath made me *obediently attentive*, as a *servant* to his master (compare Ps 40:6–8, with Php 2:7; Is 42:1; 52:13; 53:11; Mt 20:28; Lu 22:27). **Not rebellious** but, He was most willing to do the Father’s will in proclaiming and procuring salvation, at the cost of His own sufferings (Heb 10:5–10). One would think that He who was commissioned and qualified to speak comfort to the weary should meet with no difficulty in his work, but universal acceptance. It is quite otherwise; he has both hard work to do and extreme resistance to undergo; and here he tells us with what constancy he went through with it. “The Lord God has not only **awakened** my ear to hear, but has **opened** my ear to receive it, and comply with it” (Ps. 40:6, 7, *My ear hast thou opened; then said I, Lo, I come*); for when he adds, *I was not rebellious, neither turned away back*, He was willing, though He foresaw a great deal of difficulty and discouragement, for as a servant, He was to empty himself and humble Himself. His obedient patience in his suffering work was patience with an eye to his Father’s will, thus speaking in His own heart, *This commandment have I received of my Father*, and thus submitting to God, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*.

In this

submission to the Father, He resigned himself, (1.) To be **scourged**: *I gave my back to the smiters*; permitting it along with the other instances of pain and shame which he would voluntarily undergo for us. (2.) To be **buffeted/slapped**: *I gave my cheeks to those that not only smote them, but plucked off the hair of the beard*, which was a greater degree both of pain and of ignominy. (3.) To be **spit upon**: *I hid not my face from shame and spitting*. He could have hidden his face from it and avoided it, but He would not, because He was made a reproach of men, submitting to abhorrence and indignation. Plucking of the beard and being spit upon are the highest possible insults in the Near East and Orient. All this Christ underwent for us, and voluntarily, convincing us of His willingness to save us.

III. As a courageous champion in the face of mockery, suffering, and death v. 7–9.

V. 7. -- Of His not being dismayed, “discouraged” (Is 42:4; 49:5): He **set His face like flint**—set Myself resolutely for My work of love by shame or suffering (Ez 3:8-9). The Redeemer is as famous for his boldness as for his humility and patience, and, though He yields to rejection and suffering, He is more than a Conqueror. **For the Lord God will help me**. As he promised he would, and did, (Ps 89:21)(Is 49:8), which is no

contradiction to the deity of Christ; for He is the true God, and has all divine perfections; is equal to his Father in power, as well as in glory. So this reference to help is to be understood of him as man, and expresses his strong faith and confidence in God, and in his promises. In his human nature He was weak, and was crucified through weakness (2 Cor 13:4), and in it he was made strong by the Lord, and was upheld by him. This shows the greatness of the work of man's redemption, that no mere creature could affect; even Christ as man needed help, assistance in it.

Therefore shall I not be confounded; or "ashamed" though shamefully used, yet not confounded; so as to have nothing to say so as to be ashamed of his work; which is perfect in itself, and well pleasing to God. He was not dismayed at his enemies who came to arrest him as they would a thief, with swords and spears; nor in the high priest's palace, nor in Pilate's hall, in both which places he was roughly treated; nor dismayed at Satan, and his minions; nor at death itself, with all its terrors. **And I know that I shall not be ashamed,** of His ministry in power and authority; of His miracles, which were proofs of his deity and Messiahship; of His obedience, which was perfect and pleasing to God; of His sufferings, which were for the sake of his people; nor of the work of redemption, in which He was not frustrated nor disappointed.

Vv. 8-9. -- (Is 49:4). **V. 8 -- He is near that justifieth me.** His Father was "near" Him in His whole state of humiliation; He was at his right hand, and therefore He was not moved; and the Father "justified" Him from all the accusatory plots of his enemies, and from all the sins of his people that were upon him; these He bore up to the cross, and made satisfaction for them, upon which he was acquitted; and which is evident by his resurrection from the dead, by his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God; and by the gifts of the Spirit, extraordinary and ordinary, he received for men, and gave unto them (1 Tim 3:16).

The believer (is 'justified'), by virtue of his oneness with Christ—there is use of the same language; 'who will bring a charge against God's elect?' (Ps 138:8; Ro 8:32–34). But "justify" in Christ's case, is God's judicial acceptance and vindication of Christ on the ground of *His own* righteousness/obedience (Lu 23:44–47; Ro 1:4; 1 Ti 3:16, with which compare 1 Pe 3:18); in the believer's case, on the ground of Christ's righteousness and meritorious death *imputed* to them (Ro 5:19).

V. 9 -- Behold, the Lord God will help me. This is repeated from Isa 50:7, (See Gill on Isaiah 50:7); and to discourage his enemies: **who is he that shall condemn Me? Who will contend with (has a case against) Me?** Being thus acquitted; will the law and justice of God find fault with him? No, they are both satisfied; will Satan dispute the matter with him? He is conquered, and destroyed; or will the wicked Jews enter the argument with him? Wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

Let us stand together; face Me if they dare: **who is mine adversary?** Let him appear, that he may be known: **let him come near to Me:** and engage with Me, if he has courage or skill. This addresses the defiance of all His enemies, and His triumphing

over them. **Lo, they all shall waste old as doth a garment**; His enemies, those that accused him, the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests; and those that condemned him, the Jewish Sanhedrim, and the Roman governor: **the moth shall eat them up, as a garment**, they shall be like a worn out, moth-eaten garment, that can never be used anymore.—(Is 51:6, 8; Ps 102:26). A leading constituent of wealth in the East is change of raiment, always liable to the moth; hence the frequency of the image in Scripture. The phrases denote how irrecoverable their ruin should be.

IV. As the hope and light of the believer, but as the Judge of the self-righteous vv. 10-11.

V. 10. -- Messiah exhorts the godly after His example (Is 49:4-5; 42:4) when in circumstances of trial (“darkness,” Is 47:5), to trust in God alone. Whosoever (Jdg 7:3). **obeyeth ... servant**—namely, Messiah. The godly “honor the Son, even as they honor the Father” (Jn 5:23). **darkness**—(Mic 7:8-9). God never had a son who was not sometimes in the dark. For even Christ, His only Son, cried out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” A godly man’s way may be dark, but his end shall be peace and light. A wicked man’s way may be bright, but his end shall be utter darkness (Ps 112:4; 97:11; 37:24). **Let him trust in the name of the Lord**—as Messiah did (Is 50:8-9). I. **Comfort is here spoken to disconsolate saints**, and they are encouraged to trust in God’s grace, v. 10.

What is sometimes the case of a child of God. He has in his heart the fear of God, and faith in Christ, yet for a time he walks in darkness and has no light, he has seasons of little or no comfort. It is no new thing for the heirs of light sometimes to walk in darkness, and for a time not to have any glimpse of light. This means especially an absence of their spiritual comforts, which relate to their souls. They walk in darkness when their evidences for heaven are clouded, their joy in God is interrupted, the testimony of the Spirit is suspended, and the light of God’s countenance is eclipsed. (1.)

Let him trust in the name of the Lord, in the goodness of his nature, and that which he has made known of himself, his wisdom, power, and goodness. *The name of the Lord is a strong tower*, let him run into that. Let him depend upon it that if he walk before God, he shall find God all-sufficient to him. (2.) Let him *stay himself upon his God*; let him hold his covenant-relation to God, and call God *his God, My God, My God*. When a child of God is ready to sink, he will find enough in God to rest upon. Let him trust in Christ, for God’s *name is in him* (Ex. 23:21), trust in that name of his, *The Lord our righteousness*, our Mediator.

V. 11. -- In contrast to the godly (Is 50:10), **the wicked, in times of darkness, instead of trusting in God, trust in themselves** (*kindle a light* for themselves to walk by) (Ec 11:9). The image is continued from Is 50:10, “darkness”; human devices for

salvation (Pr 19:21) are like the spark that goes out in an instant in darkness (compare Job 18:6; 21:17, with Ps 18:28). **sparks**—not a steady light, but sparks extinguished in a moment.

Behold, all ye that kindle a fire. To enlighten and warm yourselves; who, rejecting Christ the Light of the world, and despising the glorious light of his Gospel, and loving darkness rather than light, set up the light of nature and reason as the rule of faith and practice; or the traditions and doctrines of men to be guided by; or their own righteousness for their justification before God: **that compass yourselves about with sparks**, which have little light and no heat, and are soon out; which may denote the short-lived pleasures from the creature: **who walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled**; an ironic expression, bidding them take all the comfort and satisfaction in their own works, and get all the light and heat they could from them: **this shall ye have of mine hand**; for rejecting Me and my righteousness, and trusting in your own: **ye shall lie down in sorrow**; instead of being justified, and having peace with God, and entering into heaven, ye shall be pressed down with sore distress, die in your sins, and enter into an everlasting state of condemnation and death; see (Mark 16:16) . This was the case and state of the Jews, (Romans 9:31 Romans 9:32) (10:3) (John 8:24) (John 3:19 John 3:20) . This is one of the passages the Jews say is repeated by the company of angels, which meet a wicked man at death.

Our Savior's Commission:

I. **As a revitalizing preacher and a perfect disciple.** That I should know how to **speak a word in season to him that is weary**; not only saints, weary with sin, their own and others, and with troubles from the world, from Satan, and by afflictive providences; but sinners under first awakenings, distressed and uneasy in their minds at a sight of sin, in its exceeding sinfulness; pressed with the guilt of it, filled with a sense of divine wrath on account of it, and terrified with the thoughts of death, and a future judgment; being in want of spiritual rest, peace, and comfort; and who are hungry and thirsting after righteousness, after pardoning grace and mercy, after Christ and salvation by him, after his word and ordinances, after communion with him, and conformity to him; who are weak and without strength, and ready to faint for want of refreshment. **The Gospel, is "the word in season"**, to be spoken to weary souls; which proclaims pardon, preaches peace, is the word of righteousness and salvation; which directs hungry and thirsty souls to Christ. That word of his, (Matthew 11:28 Matthew 11:29) is such a word Christ spoke when he was here on earth, and now speaks by his ministers in the preaching of the Gospel, and by his Spirit applying it to his people. **He wakeneth morning by morning**; one after another continually; the allusion is to masters calling

their scholars early to their studies; the morning being the fittest season for instruction and learning. **He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned**; who hear attentively, and with great pleasure and profit. Denotes both the earliness in which Christ entered on his prophetic office, and his attentiveness to all that was said in the eternal council and covenant by his divine Father; which he, as the Prophet of his church, makes known unto his people, (John 15:15) .

Christ was anointed with the Spirit above his fellows. To make the man of God perfect, he has, 1. ***The tongue of the learned, to know how to give instruction, how to speak a word in season to him that is weary***, v. 4. **God, who made man's mouth, gave Moses the tongue of the learned, to speak for the terror and conviction of Pharaoh, Ex. 4:11, 12. He gave to Christ the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season for the comfort of those that are weary and heavily laden under the burden of sin, Mt. 11:28. Grace was poured into his lips.** See what is the best learning of a minister, to know how to comfort troubled consciences, and to speak pertinently, properly, and plainly, to the various cases of poor souls. An ability to do this is God's gift, and it is one of the best gifts, which we should covet earnestly. Let us feed upon the many comfortable words which Christ has spoken to the weary. 2. **The ear of the learned**, to receive instruction. Ministers have as much need of this as of the tongue of the learned; for they must deliver what they are taught and no other, must hear the word from God's mouth diligently and attentively, that they may speak it exactly, Ezra 3:17. **Christ himself received that he might give.** Christ's apostles were first disciples, Mt. 13:52. Nor is it enough to hear, but we must *hear as the learned*, hear and understand, hear and remember, hear as those that would learn by what we hear. Our ears need to be awakened; we need to have something said to rouse us, to awaken us out of our spiritual slumbers, that we may hear as for our lives. **We need to be awakened morning by morning, as duly as the day returns, to be awakened to do the work of the day in its day.** Our case calls for continual fresh supplies of divine grace, to free us from the dullness we contract daily. The morning, when our spirits are most lively, is a proper time for communion with God; then we are in the best frame both to speak to him (*my voice shalt thou hear in the morning*) and to hear from him.

II. **As a patient and obedient sufferer in our work of redemption v. 5-6.** One would think that he who was commissioned and qualified to speak comfort to the weary should meet with no difficulty in his work, but universal acceptance. It is quite otherwise; he has both hard work to do and hard usage to undergo; and here he tells us with what undaunted constancy he went through with it. We are sure that the prediction was abundantly verified in Jesus Christ: 1. His patient obedience in his doing work. "The Lord God has not only wakened my ear to hear what he says, but has opened my ear to receive it, and comply with it" (Ps. 40:6, 7, *My ear hast thou opened; then said I, Lo, I come*); for when he adds, *I was not rebellious, neither turned away back*, more is implied than expressed—that he

was willing, that though he foresaw a great deal of difficulty and discouragement, though he was to take pains and give constant attendance as a servant, though he was to empty himself of that which was very great and humble himself to that which was very mean, yet he did not fly off, did not fail, nor was discouraged. Note, As a good understanding in the truths of God, so a good will to the work and service of God, is from the grace of God. 2. His obedient patience in his suffering work was patience with an eye to his Father's will, thus pleading with himself, *This commandment have I received of my Father*, and thus submitting to God, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*. In this submission he resigned himself, (1.) To be scourged: *I gave my back to the smiters*; and that not only by submitting to the indignity when he was smitten, but by permitting it (or admitting it rather) among the other instances of pain and shame which he would voluntarily undergo for us. (2.) To be buffeted: *I gave my cheeks to those that not only smote them, but plucked off the hair of the beard*, which was a greater degree both of pain and of ignominy. (3.) To be spit upon: *I hid not my face from shame and spitting*. He could have hidden his face from it, could have avoided it, but he would not, because he was made a reproach of men, and thus he would answer to the type of Job, that man of sorrows, of whom it is said that they *smote him on the cheek reproachfully* (Job 16:10), which was an expression not only of contempt, but of abhorrence and indignation. All this Christ underwent for us, and voluntarily, to convince us of his willingness to save us.

III. As a courageous champion in the face of mockery, suffering, and death v. 7–

9. The Redeemer is as famous for his boldness as for his humility and patience, and, though he yields, yet he is more than a conqueror. Observe, 1. The dependence he has upon God (v. 7): *The Lord God will help me*; and again, v. 9. Those whom God employs He will assist, and will take care they want not any help that they or their work call for. God, having laid help upon his Son for us, gave help to him, and his hand was all along *with the man of his right hand*. Nor will he only assist him in his work, but accept of him (v. 8): ***He is near that justifieth***. He was falsely accused and loaded with reproach, as other prophets were; but he despised the reproach, knowing that God would roll it away and bring forth his righteousness as the light (Ps. 37:6). And so it was verified in Christ; by his resurrection he was proved to be not the man that he was represented, not a blasphemer, not a deceiver, not an enemy to Caesar. The judge that condemned him owned he found no fault in him; the centurion, or sheriff, that had charge of his execution, declared him a righteous man: so near was he that justified him. It was true of him in a further and more peculiar sense: the Father justified him when he accepted the satisfaction he made for the sin of man, and constituted him *the Lord our righteousness*, who was made sin for us. He was *justified in the Spirit*, 1 Tim. 3:16. He was near who did it; for his resurrection, by which he was justified, soon followed his condemnation and crucifixion. He was straightway glorified, Jn. 13:32.

2. He was straightway glorified, Jn. 13:32. 2. The confidence he thereupon has of success in his undertaking: “If God will help me, if he will justify me, will stand by me and bear me out, *I shall not be confounded*, as those are that come short of the end they aimed at and the satisfaction they promised themselves: *I know that I shall not be ashamed.*” 3. The defiance which in this confidence he bids to all opposers and opposition: “God will help me, and *therefore have I set my face like a flint.*” The prophet was bold in reproving sin, in warning sinners (Eze. 3:8-9), and in asserting the truth of his predictions. Christ did so; he went on in his work, as Mediator, with unshaken constancy and undaunted resolution; he did not fail nor was discouraged; and here he challenges all his opposers, (1.) To enter the lists with him: *Who will contend with me*, either in law or by the sword? *Let us stand together* as combatants, or as the plaintiff and defendant. *Who is my adversary?* Who is *the master of my cause?* so the word is, “Who will pretend to enter an action against me? Let him appear, and *come near to me*, for I will not abscond.” Many offered to dispute with Christ, but he put them to silence. The prophet speaks this in the name of all faithful ministers; those who keep close to the pure word of God, in delivering their message, need not fear contradiction; the scriptures will bear them out, whoever contends with them. *Great is the truth and will prevail.* **Christ speaks this in the name of all believers, speaks it as their champion. Who dares be an enemy to those whom he is a friend to, or contend with those for whom he is an advocate?** Thus St. Paul applies it (Rom. 8:33): *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?* (2.) He challenges them to prove any crime upon him (v. 9): *Who is he that shall condemn me?* The prophet perhaps was condemned to die; Christ we are sure was; and yet both could say, *Who is he that shall condemn?* For there is no condemnation to those whom God justifies. There were those that did condemn them, but what became of them? *They all shall wax old as a garment.* The righteous cause of Christ and his prophets shall outlive all opposition. *The moth shall eat them up* silently and insensibly. All believers are enabled to make this challenge, *Who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ that died.*

IV. As the hope and light of the believer, but as the Judge of the self-righteous. The prophet, having the tongue of the learned given him, that he might give to everyone his portion, here makes use of it, rightly dividing the word of truth. It is the summary of the gospel. *He that believes shall be saved* (he that trusts in the name of the Lord shall be comforted, though for a while he walk in darkness and have no light), but *he that believes not shall be damned*; though for a while he walk in the light of his own fire, yet he shall lie down in sorrow.

I. **Comfort is here spoken to disconsolate saints**, and they are encouraged to trust in God’s grace, v. 10. Here observe, 1. What is always the character of a child of God. He is one that fears the Lord with a filial fear, that stands in awe of his majesty and is afraid of incurring his displeasure. This is a grace that usually appears most in good people when

they walk in darkness, when other graces appear not. They then *tremble at his word* (ch. 66:2) and are *afraid of his judgments*, Ps. 119:120. He is one that obeys the voice of God's servant, is willing to be ruled by the Lord Jesus, as God's servant in the great work of man's redemption. Those that truly fear God will obey the voice of Christ. 2. What is sometimes the case of a child of God. It is supposed that though he has in his heart the fear of God, and faith in Christ, yet for a time he walks in darkness and has no light, is disquieted and has little or no comfort. Who is there that does so? This intimates that it is a case which sometimes happens among the professors of religion, yet not very often; but, whenever it happens, God takes notice of it. It is no new thing for the children and heirs of light sometimes to walk in darkness, and for a time not to have any glimpse or gleam of light. This means especially an absence of their spiritual comforts, which relate to their souls. They walk in darkness when their evidences for heaven are clouded, their joy in God is interrupted, the testimony of the Spirit is suspended, and the light of God's countenance is eclipsed. Pensive Christians are apt to be melancholy, and those who fear always are apt to fear too much. 3. What is likely to be an effectual cure in this sad case. He that is thus in the dark, (1.) *Let him trust in the name of the Lord*, in the goodness of his nature, and that which he has made known of himself, his wisdom, power, and goodness. *The name of the Lord is a strong tower*, let him run into that. Let him depend upon it that if he walk before God, which a man may do though he walk in the dark, he shall find God all-sufficient to him. (2.) Let him *stay himself upon his God*; let him keep hold of his covenant-relation to God, and call God *his God, My God, My God*. When a child of God is ready to sink he will find enough in God to stay himself upon. Let him trust in Christ, for God's *name is in him* (Ex. 23:21), trust in that name of his, *The Lord our righteousness*, and stay himself upon God as his God, in and through a Mediator.

Behold, all ye that kindle a fire. To enlighten and warm yourselves; who, rejecting Christ the Light of the world, and despising the glorious light of his Gospel, and loving darkness rather than light, set up the light of nature and reason as the rule of faith and practice; or the traditions and doctrines of men to be guided by; or their own righteousness for their justification before God: **that compass yourselves about with sparks**, which have little light and no heat, and are soon out; which may denote the short-lived pleasures and comforts which are had from the creature, or from anything of a man's own: **walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled**; an ironic expression, bidding them take all the comfort and satisfaction in their own works, and get all the light and heat they could from them: **this shall ye have of mine hand**; which you may depend upon receiving from me, for rejecting me and my righteousness, and trusting in your own: **ye shall lie down in sorrow**; instead of being justified, and having peace with God, and entering into heaven, ye shall be pressed down with sore distress, die in your sins, and enter into an everlasting state of condemnation and death; see (Mark 16:16) . This was the case and state of the Jews, (Romans 9:31 Romans 9:32) (10:3) (John 8:24) (John 3:19 John 3:20) .

This is one of the passages the Jews say is repeated by the company of angels, which meet a wicked man at death.

Conviction is here spoken to presuming sinners, and they are warned not to trust in themselves, v. 11. Observe, 1. The description given of them. They *kindle a fire*, and *walk in the light of that fire*. They depend upon their own righteousness. In their hope of acceptance with God they have no regard to the righteousness of Christ. They refresh and please themselves with a conceit of their own merit and sufficiency, and warm themselves with that. It is both light and heat to them. They *compass themselves about with sparks of their own kindling*. As they trust in their own righteousness, and not in the righteousness of Christ, so they place their happiness in their worldly possessions and enjoyments, and not in the favor of God. Creature-comforts are as sparks, short-lived and soon gone; yet the children of this world, while they last, warm themselves by them, and walk with pride and pleasure in the light of them. 2. The doom passed upon them. They are ironically told to *walk in the light of their own fire*. “Make your best of it, while it lasts. But what will be in the end thereof, what will it come to at last? This shall you have of my hand (says Christ, for to him the judgment is committed), *you shall lie down in sorrow*, shall go to bed in the dark.” See Job 18:5-6. *His candle shall be put out with him*. Those that make the world their comfort, and their own righteousness their confidence, will certainly meet with a fatal disappointment, which will be bitterness in the end. A godly man’s way may be melancholy, but his end shall be peace and everlasting light. A wicked man’s way may be pleasant, but his end and endless abode will be utter darkness.¹

John Gill

V. 4 -- The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned. Those who have learned of the Father, and been taught by the Spirit of God, and are well-versed in the Scriptures, and can speak in the taught words of the Holy Ghost, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Christ, whose gifts and graces he received without measure, he was abundantly qualified for his office; and was capable of speaking as never man did, and with such power and authority. **That I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary**; not only saints, weary with sin, their own and others, and with troubles from the world, from Satan, and by afflictive providences; but sinners under first awakenings, distressed and uneasy in their minds at a sight of sin, in its exceeding sinfulness; pressed with the guilt of it, filled with a sense of divine wrath on account of it, and terrified with the thoughts of death, and a future judgment; being in want of spiritual rest, peace, and comfort; and who are hungry and thirsting after righteousness, after pardoning grace and mercy, after Christ and salvation by him, after his word and ordinances, after communion with him, and conformity to him; who are weak and without strength, and ready to faint for want of refreshment. **The Gospel, is**

¹ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (pp. 1175–1177). Peabody: Hendrickson.

"the word in season", to be spoken to weary souls; which proclaims pardon, preaches peace, is the word of righteousness and salvation; which directs hungry and thirsty souls to Christ. That word of his, (Matthew 11:28 Matthew 11:29) is such a word Christ spoke when he was here on earth, and now speaks by his ministers in the preaching of the Gospel, and by his Spirit applying it to his people. **He wakeneth morning by morning**; one after another continually; the allusion is to masters calling their scholars early to their studies; the morning being the fittest season for instruction and learning. **He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned**; who hear attentively, and with great pleasure and profit. Denotes both the earliness in which Christ entered on his prophetic office, and his attentiveness to all that was said in the eternal council and covenant by his divine Father; which he, as the Prophet of his church, makes known unto his people, (John 15:15) .

V. 5 -- The Lord God hath opened mine ear. To hear and receive most fully, what is said by him, and to observe and do it (see Exodus 21:5 Exodus 21:6)(Psalms 40:6) Expressive of his voluntary obedience, as Mediator, to his divine Father performing with the greatest readiness and cheerfulness, the great work of man's redemption. **And I was not rebellious**; not to his earthly parents, to whom he was subject; nor to civil magistrates, to whom he paid tribute; nor to God, he always did the things that pleased him: he was obedient to the precepts of the moral law, and to the penalty of it, death itself, and readily submitted to the will of God in suffering for his people; which obedience of his was entirely free and voluntary, full and perfect, done in the room and stead of his people; is the measure of their righteousness, and by which they become righteous; is well pleasing to God: **neither turned away back**; he did not decline the work proposed to him, but readily engaged in it; he never stopped in it, until he had finished it; he did not hesitate about it, as Moses and Jeremiah; or flee from it, as Jonah.

v. 6 -- I gave my back to the smiters. To Pontius Pilate, and those he ordered to scourge him, (Matthew 27:26) **and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair**; of the beard; which, is painful, so a great indignity. The Septuagint renders it, "and my cheeks to blows"--speaks of Christ being smitten and stricken with the palms of men's hands, (Mark 14:65) (John 18:22) (Micah 5:1) : **I hid not my face from shame and spitting**; they spit in his face, and exposed him to shame, and yet he took it patiently, (Matthew 26:67) , what is more reproachful than to be stripped of clothes, receive lashes on his bare back, in public? in which ignominious manner Christ was used: scandalous for a man to have his beard plucked by a mob? Nothing is more affronting than to spit in a man's face. (see Job 30:10) .

V. 7 -- For the Lord God will help me. As he promised he would, and did, (Psalms 89:21)(Isaiah 49:8), which is no contradiction to the deity of Christ, nor suggestion of weakness in him; for he is the true God, and has all divine perfections in him; is equal to his Father in power, as well as in glory, and therefore equal to the work of redemption, as his other works show him to be; but this is to be understood of him as man, and expresses his strong faith and confidence in God, and in his promises as such; and in his human nature he was weak, and was crucified through weakness, and in it he was made strong by the Lord, and was

held and upheld by him: and this shows the greatness of the work of man's redemption, that it was such that no mere creature could affect; even Christ as man needed help, assistance in it; and also the concern that all the divine Persons had in it: **therefore shall I not be confounded**; or "made ashamed" though shamefully used, yet not confounded; so as to have nothing to say so as to be ashamed of his work; which is perfect in itself, and well pleasing to God: **therefore have I set my face like a flint**: or like "steel"; hardened against all opposition; resolute and undaunted by the words and blows of men; by anything they can say or do. He was not dismayed at his enemies who came to apprehend him, though they came to him as a thief, with swords and staves; nor in the high priest's palace, nor in Pilate's hall, in both which places he was roughly used; nor at Satan, and his principalities and powers; nor at death itself, with all its terrors. **And I know that I shall not be ashamed**, neither of his ministry, which was with power and authority; nor of his miracles, which were proofs of his deity and Messiahship; nor of his obedience, which was pure, and perfect, and pleasing to God; nor of his sufferings, which were for the sake of his people; nor of the work of redemption and salvation, in which he was not frustrated nor disappointed of his end.

V. 8 -- He is near that justifieth me. His Father was "near" him in his whole state of humiliation; he left him not alone; he was at his right hand, and therefore he was not moved; and "justified" him from all the accusatory plots of his enemies brought against him, and from all the sins of his people that were upon him; these he took upon him, and bore them, and made satisfaction for them, upon which he was acquitted; and which is evident by his resurrection from the dead, by his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God; and by the gifts of the Spirit, extraordinary and ordinary, he received for men, and gave unto them; see (1 Timothy 3:16) . **Who will contend with me?** Being thus acquitted; will the law and justice of God litigate the point with him? They are both satisfied; will Satan dispute the matter with him? He is conquered, and destroyed; or will the wicked Jews enter the argument with him? Wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. **Let us stand together**; face to face, if they dare; let them face me, if they can: **who is mine adversary?** Let him appear, that he may be known: **let him come near to me**: and engage with me, if he has courage or skill. This is bidding defiance to all his enemies, and triumphing over them.

V. 9 -- Behold, the Lord God will help me. This is repeated from Isa 50:7, (See Gill on Isaiah 50:7); and to discourage his enemies: **who is he that shall condemn me?** Make me out a wicked person, prove me guilty, and pass sentence upon me, when thus acquitted and justified by the Lord God? The Apostle Paul seems to have some reference to this passage in (Romans 8:33 Romans 8:34), **lo, they all shall waste old as doth a garment**; his enemies, those that accused him, the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests; and those that condemned him, the Jewish Sanhedrim, and the Roman governor: **the moth shall eat them up**; they shall be like a worn out or motheaten garment, that can never be used more. The phrases denote how irrecoverable their ruin should be.

V. 10 -- Who is among you that feareth the Lord? [&c.] Not with a slavish fear of the awful majesty of God, or of his tremendous judgments, or of wrath to come, but with a

filial fear, a fear of the Lord, and his goodness, which is an internal principle in the heart, a reverential affection for God is attended with faith in him, and joy of him; which makes holy, and keeps humble, and takes in the whole worship of God. Of men of this character there are but few, and especially there were but few among the Jews at this time which the prophecy refers to; the greatest part were rejecters of Christ, before spoken of, and to; and from whom the Lord turns himself, and addresses these few. There are none that naturally fear the Lord, only such who have the grace bestowed on them; their number is but small, but there are always some in the worst of times, and these are taken notice of by the Lord, (Malachi 3:16 Malachi 3:17) (4:2), **that obeyeth the voice of his servant**: indeed he is meant, before spoken of as the Lord's servant, and represented as an obedient one, and afterwards as righteous; see (Isaiah 49:3) (Isaiah 50:5 Isaiah 50:6) (53:11) and by his "voice" is meant either his Gospel, which is a soul quickening and comforting voice which is obeyed, heard, and hearkened to, by his people, externally and internally, when they receive it by faith, and in the love of it; or else his commands, precepts, and ordinances, which love constrains his people to an obedience unto; and where there is the fear of God, there will be hearing of his word, and submission to his ordinances: **that walketh in darkness**: not the Lord's servant, but the man that fears the Lord, and obeys his servant's voice, such an one may be in darkness, and walk in it; or in periods of darkness; not only in affliction and misery, often expressed by darkness in Scripture, but in desertion, under the hidings of God's face; and which may continue for a while: **and hath no light**? Or "shining" without the light of God's countenance shining upon him; without the light of spiritual joy and comfort shining in his heart; and this must be a very distressing case indeed. **Let him trust in the name of the Lord**; not in himself, nor in any creature, but in the Lord himself; in the perfections of his nature, his mercy, grace, and goodness; in the name of the Lord, in whom is salvation; in Christ, and whose name is the Lord our Righteousness; and to trust in him, when in the dark, is a glorious act of faith; this is believing in hope against hope. **And stay upon his God**; covenant faithfulness continues in the darkest dispensation; God is the believer's God still; and faith is a staying or leaning upon him, as such; a dependence upon his power to protect, on his wisdom to guide, and on his grace, goodness, and all sufficiency, to supply.

V. 11 -- Behold, all ye that kindle a fire. To enlighten and warm yourselves; who, rejecting Christ the Light of the world, and despising the glorious light of his Gospel, and loving darkness rather than light, set up the light of nature and reason as the rule of faith and practice; or the traditions and doctrines of men to be guided by; or their own righteousness for their justification before God: **that compass yourselves about with sparks**, which have little light and no heat, and are soon out; which may denote the short-lived pleasures and comforts which are had from the creature, or from anything of a man's own: **walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled**; an ironic expression, bidding them take all the comfort and satisfaction in their own works, and get all the light and heat they could from them: **this shall ye have of mine hand**; which you may depend upon receiving from me, for rejecting me and my righteousness, and trusting in your own: **ye shall lie down in sorrow**; instead of being justified, and having peace with God, and

entering into heaven, ye shall be pressed down with sore distress, die in your sins, and enter into an everlasting state of condemnation and death; see (Mark 16:16) . This was the case and state of the Jews, (Romans 9:31 Romans 9:32) (10:3) (John 8:24) (John 3:19 John 3:20) . This is one of the passages the Jews say is repeated by the company of angels, which meet a wicked man at death.

Matthew Henry Outline:

I. Those to whom God sends, justly charged with bringing all the troubles they were in upon themselves, by their own willfulness and obstinacy, God was able and ready to help them if they had been fit for deliverance (**v. 1–3**). **II.**

He by whom God sends embraces his commission (**v. 4**), alleges his own readiness to submit to all the services and sufferings he was called to in the execution of it (**v. 5-6**), and assures himself that God, who sent him, would stand by him and bear him out against all opposition (**v. 7–9**).

III. The message that is sent is life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse, comfort to desponding saints and terror to presuming sinners (**v. 10-11**). Now all this seems to have a double reference, 1. To the unbelieving Jews in Babylon, who quarreled with God for his dealings with them. 2. To the unbelieving Jews in our Savior's time, whose own fault it was that they were rejected, Christ having preached much to them, and suffered much from them, and being herein borne up by a divine power.