

# Jesus' Scourging and Humiliation Prophesied

## Isaiah 50:1-11

### Introduction:

- **Isaiah 50** has been called “The Gethsemane of the Servant.” In this Servant Song, the Servant of Jehovah, Jesus Christ, speaks of the suffering that He would endure on the morning of His trial and sentence under Pontius Pilate.
- The other themes of this Servant Song are the obedience of Jehovah’s Servant, and His faith in the LORD in the midst of His suffering.

### Isaiah 50:1-11

#### I. The unfaithful servant of Jehovah: Israel (vv. 1-3)

- In **verse 1**, Jehovah asks a couple rhetorical questions in order to get the attention of the rebellious nation of Judah.

##### 1. *“Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement, whom I have put away?”*

In this verse, the LORD likens the nation of Judah to his wife. (The phrase “your mother” refers to the nation.) The question that Jehovah asks of the nation is a rhetorical one. The fact that Judah was still in her land was evidence that God had not broken His marriage “covenant” with them. By asking this rhetorical question, the Lord is pointing out that He had *not* divorced Judah.

Incidentally, God permitted divorce only in one circumstance: during the period of “betrothal.”

#### Deuteronomy 24:1-4

Jewish “betrothal” is *not* the same as our modern concept of “engagement.” In betrothal, the man and woman were considered to be *legally* married, but were not living together in physical intimacy. Engagement, on the other hand, is not legally considered to be “marriage.” Only during this period of betrothal (*before* the man and wife were living together in intimacy) was a man able to divorce his wife, or *vice versa*—and *only* for the reason of unfaithfulness. Even then, God stated over and over again that He hates divorce (**Malachi 2:14-16**). God would rather that the betrothed man and wife seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

Such was God’s attitude toward Judah. The nation of Judah had been unfaithful to the LORD: and the LORD had every right to break His covenant with them. Yet, God had not put them away.

##### 2. *“Which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?”*

Under the Old Testament system, a Jewish man who had debts that he could not pay could sell himself, or one of his family members, as a “bondman” to the creditor in order to pay the debt. He served his creditor a maximum of six years in order to pay the debt. At the beginning of the seventh year (the *shemittah* year), his master was obligated to clear the debt, and let his servant go free—unless the servant voluntarily decided to serve his master forever.

**Exodus 21:1-7**

**Leviticus 25:35-43**

**Deuteronomy 15:12-17**

**2 Kings 4:1**

Once again, the LORD is asking a rhetorical question of the nation of Judah in order to make a point about their relationship with Him. The answer to this question is obvious: God had *not* sold Israel to any “creditor.” (In no sense does God have a “creditor,” because God owes no man anything!)

- At the end of **verse 1**, the LORD proceeds to answer His own question: He has *not* divorced Israel, nor has He sold them to any creditor. Rather, *they* had put themselves away from the LORD by way of their sins, and had voluntarily *sold themselves* into spiritual harlotry.

This idea was illustrated by the prophet Hosea’s wife, Gomer, who literally sold herself into prostitution. God commanded Hosea to marry Gomer, and informed him from the start that she would be unfaithful to him. God willed for Hosea to go through this agony in order to illustrate the way that Israel had treated their God.

In **Hosea 3:1**, God commanded Hosea to go and “*love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress.*” In other words, he was to continue to love his wayward wife, Gomer. She was still his “friend,” even though she was living in adultery. Hosea literally bought her back from the slave market in order to illustrate “*the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel.*”

**Hosea 1:2-9 / 2:14 – 3:5**

- In **verse 2**, the LORD asks why “*no man*” would respond to His call. There was, of course, always a remnant of faithful people in Israel and Judah, such as the 7,000 in Elijah’s day who would not bow the knee to Baal; but compared to the overwhelming majority of the nation, their number was so small as to be virtually nil. Amazed that virtually no one would respond to His gracious call, the LORD rhetorically asks them whether His hand is short to redeem or deliver. He then reminds them of the times in the past when He had delivered Israel in a powerful way.

1. “*At my rebuke I dry up the sea.*”

This is a reference to God's parting of the Red Sea.

**Exodus 14:21-22**

2. *"I make the rivers a wilderness"* (literally, "parched ground")

This is a reference to God's parting of the Jordan River on several occasions.

**Joshua 3:15-16**

**2 Kings 2:8, 14**

3. *"Their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst."*

This is a reference to the massive die-off of fish in the land of Egypt when God turned the water into blood.

**Exodus 7:21**

4. *"I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering"* (v. 3).

This is a reference to the plague of darkness that God brought upon the Egyptians.

**Exodus 10:22-23**

Incidentally, God will perform this plague again during the future Tribulation.

**Revelation 16:10-11**

**Verses 1-3** are a sad portrayal of the spiritual condition of Judah (and of the nation of Israel as a whole). God had called the nation of Israel *"my servant"*: yet, they were constantly unfaithful to Him.

**II. The faithful Servant of Jehovah: Jesus Christ (vv. 4-11)**

- In **verses 1-3**, the *unfaithfulness* of Jehovah's servant, Israel, was described. Now, in **verses 4-10**, the *faithfulness* of Jehovah's Servant, Jesus Christ, is described. The contrast between the two "servants" is stark and obvious. The "Servant" of **verses 4-10** cannot possibly be the nation of Israel, because this Servant is *faithful* to Jehovah. The "Servant" of **verses 4-10** is none other Israel's Messiah, Jesus Christ.
- Throughout the rest of the chapter, Jehovah's Servant speaks directly to the nation of Judah, and describes His future earthly ministry.
  - A. Jehovah's Servant states that the Lord GOD has given Him the *"tongue of the learned"* (v. 4).

The word *limmudim*, which is translated here as “the learned,” could also be translated as “the instructed ones.” In other words, *limmudim* means “disciples.” Christ was, Himself, the “Disciple” of Jehovah!

Christ’s words were filled with extraordinary power and wisdom. This is because Christ did not receive His wisdom from men: He received it directly from His Heavenly Father, with whom He had continual communion.

### **John 7:14-18**

In **verse 15**, the word “letters” refers to “higher theological education.” To put it in modern parlance, the Jews were asking, “How does this man have doctorate level theological training, when He never went to a seminary, and never received a Ph.D. or Th.D.?” In short, they were asking, “Where did Jesus get His deep, powerful doctrine?”

That truly is an amazing question to ponder. We know that Jesus is God; and as God, He is all-knowing. He knows His own Law perfectly. However, that doesn’t change the fact that Jesus has two natures, which are united in one Person. He is both God...*and Man*. Though Christ never ceased to be God, He humbled Himself by taking on human flesh.

### **Philippians 2:5-8**

As God, Jesus is all-knowing; but as Man, His knowledge was limited. Usually, the disciples saw Jesus’ *divine* nature on display, as He did miracles that only God can do, and revealed truths that only God would know. Many times the disciples worshipped Him and acknowledged, “*Lord, thou knowest all things*”; and Jesus accepted that statement as truth (**John 21:17**). Yet, there were times when Jesus chose to limit Himself to His *human* knowledge.

### **Mark 13:32**

Amazing though it is, Jesus, as a boy, actually had to *learn* to do things—which included learning the Scriptures. This point is highlighted in the last half of **Isaiah 50:4**, where Jehovah’s Servant says, “*he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.*”

### **Luke 2:41-52**

As Jesus grew into manhood, He was instructed by His Heavenly Father every single day; and even as a Man, He received instruction from His Father continuously. The Father guided Him moment by moment, and He followed His Father’s instruction implicitly.

The people were constantly amazed at Jesus’ knowledge of Scripture, and the authority with which He spoke; yet, despite their amazement, they still challenged Him. They asked Him how He dared presume to teach such great things, when He had never been

to a higher school of learning. Jesus' answer to them was short and simple: "***My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me***" (John 7:16).

Jesus, being God Himself, could truthfully have said, "My doctrine is mine, *and* His that sent me." After all, Jesus and His Father are equal in power and authority. They work together to uphold the universe; they judge together; they receive honour together; they impart spiritual life together; and they raise dead bodies back to life together. As God, Jesus is absolutely equal with His Father (John 5:17-32). From the perspective of His *divine* nature, Jesus truly could have said, "My doctrine belongs to both me **and** my Father."

However, that is *not* what Jesus said. Jesus said, "***My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.***" We must not forget that Jesus, as a Man, was in a state of humiliation. He had willingly limited Himself. As a Man, He had received instruction from His Father; and He humbly acknowledged that it had been *given* to Him.

When Jesus said, "***My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me,***" He was simply saying that His doctrine was not *uniquely* His. Jesus didn't have any unique teachings of His own which differed from His Father's teaching. His teaching was precisely that of His Father, in every last detail.

In one sense, the doctrine *was* both Christ's and His Father's, because Jesus is God. But as a Man, Jesus could not say that the doctrine was His: rather, He had received it from the Father. He had received "***the tongue of the learned***" from Jehovah.

- B.** Jehovah's Servant says that the Lord GOD gave Him the tongue of the learned in order that He might "***speak a word in season to him that is weary***" (v. 4).

The Scriptures have much to say about speaking wise words at just the right time in order to minister to others.

**Proverbs 15:1-2, 4, 7**

**Proverbs 25:11**

In attempting to communicate the truth of God's Word to others, we often fail to meet the standard of the Scriptures above. We either do not use knowledge aright; or we use poor words to express the truth; or we speak at the wrong time, or with a wrong spirit (due to prideful passions in our hearts). Jehovah's Servant, on the other hand, always said things with perfect wisdom, and without a speck of pride or selfishness. He also knew exactly what individual sinners needed to hear, because He (unlike us) knows the true thoughts and intents of people's hearts.

**Isaiah 42:3**

**Matthew 11:28-30**

**John 4:9-26 / 46-54**

### **Mark 5:21-43**

C. Jehovah's Servant declares His obedience to the Lord GOD (v. 5).

*“The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.”*

Even some of the greatest men of God inwardly balked and rebelled when God called them to service, or gave them an instruction.

Moses did not want to obey.

### **Exodus 3:11 / 4:1, 10-15**

Ezekiel did not want to obey.

### **Ezekiel 3:4-14**

Jeremiah did not want to obey.

### **Jeremiah 1:4-10,17 / 20:7-9**

Elijah did not want to obey.

### **1 Kings 19:1-4**

In contrast, Jesus *never* rebelled against His Father's will. The statement *“The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear”* indicates the Messiah's willingness to listen to Jehovah's words, and to obey Him. He was never rebellious.

### **Psalm 40:6-8**

### **Hebrews 10:1-5**

In **Hebrews 10:5**, Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, replaced the phrase *“mine ears hast thou opened”* with *“a body hast thou prepared me.”* The idea is that because Christ's ears were open to every command that His Father gave Him, He was willing to give up His whole body as a sacrifice on the cross. He was obedient unto death.

D. Jehovah's Servant prophesies of His future suffering at the hand of the Roman soldiers (v. 6).

- This is a striking prophecy of the beating and torture that Christ suffered on the morning of His trial.

1. He gave His back to the “smiters.”

### **Matthew 27:26**

### **Mark 15:15**

### **John 19:1**

2. He gave His cheeks to those who plucked out His hair.

The New Testament does not specifically record Jesus' beard being plucked out; but we know for certain that it happened, because it was prophesied here in **Isaiah 50:6**.

3. He did not hide His face from shame and spitting.

It should come as no surprise that the soldiers plucked out the hair of Jesus' beard, because they also punched and slapped Him in the face repeatedly, beat Him on the head with a rod, and spat in His face. What could be more shameful than to be punched, slapped, beaten, and spat in the face?

### **Matthew 26:67-68 / 27:27-30**

The word "buffet" comes from the Greek word *kolaphizo*, which means "to punch with the fist." The word "smote" in **Matthew 26:67** comes from the word *rhapizo*, which means "to slap with the palm of the hand." The word "smote" in **Matthew 27:30** comes from the word *tupto*, which means "to beat with repeated blows with a fist or rod." We know that this word "smote" in **Matthew 27:30** refers specifically to beating with a rod, because Micah prophesied that the "**Judge of Israel**" would be beaten on the cheek with a rod.

### **Micah 5:1**

In light of the brutal beating and tearing of flesh that Christ endured on His face (including the ripping of His scalp with the crown of thorns), it is no wonder that it was prophesied that the Messiah's "visage" (appearance of His face) would be "**marred more than any man.**" The very fact that Christ did not die from the beating to His face alone shows that He could not die until it was the right time!

### **Isaiah 52:13-14**

- E. Jehovah's Servant says that He will not be "**confounded**"; that He will set His face "**like a flint**"; and that He will "**not be ashamed**" (verse 7).

1. He would not be "**confounded**," because the Lord GOD would help Him.

The word "confounded" means "humiliated." Though Jesus did suffer public humiliation, He was able, in the midst of it all, to look beyond His present humiliation and see the glory and honour that He would soon share with His Father.

## **John 17:4-5**

## **Philippians 2:5-11**

Christ also was able to foresee the joy that would be His on account of sinners who would be justified because of His sacrifice. Through it all, the Lord GOD was with Him to “*help*” Him, so that He could accomplish His purpose of providing salvation for mankind. Therefore, He “despised” (thought nothing of) His humiliation.

## **Hebrews 12:2**

## **Isaiah 53:10-11**

2. He would set His face “*like a flint.*”

To set one’s “face like a flint” is a Hebrew expression meaning “to be resolute and undaunted in one’s purpose.”

## **Ezekiel 3:6-9**

Jesus knew His purpose for coming into the world; and though He recoiled in horror at the prospect of having our abominable sins laid upon Him, He did not shrink from His task.

## **John 12:27-28**

3. He knew that He would “*not be ashamed.*”

On the surface, it might seem that this statement does not agree with **verse 6**, where Jehovah’s Servant says that He would not hide His face “*from shame.*” However, there are two different Hebrew words for “shame” that are being used in these two verses. In **verse 6**, the word for “shame” is *k’limma*, which means “public humiliation.” In **verse 7**, the word “ashamed” is *bos*, which refers to “shame that comes as the result of failure.”<sup>1</sup> Obviously, Christ endured public shame and humiliation; yet, He was not ashamed, because He had *not* failed, and He knew that God was with him.

On a side note, the same is true for believers. We, too, often experience *outward* shame at the hands of God’s enemies, for Christ’s sake (**Acts 5:40-41**). In our hearts, however, we are not ashamed of Christ or His Gospel.

## **Romans 1:16**

## **Romans 10:9-11**

---

<sup>1</sup> Peter Stevenson, *Isaiah* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2003), p. 433



## 2 Timothy 1:12

### F. Jehovah's Servant asserts His innocence before God (vv. 8-9)

When God uses the word “justified” in reference to the *believer*, it means “declared to be righteous”—even though, in practice, we are *not* righteous (**Romans 4:1-5**). God, the righteous Judge, applies Christ's righteousness to the believer's account as though it were his own. It is on this basis that God is able to accept sinners. This is why God says that no adversary can go to God's courtroom and charge the believer with sin (**Romans 8:31-34**). Satan *tries* to accuse Christians before God day and night (**Revelation 12:10**); but His condemnations cannot avail, because *in position*, God's people have the imputed righteousness of Christ. Also, Christians are destined, on the future resurrection day, to be completely conformed to Christ's image. On that day, Christians will be not only *positionally* righteous, but *actually* righteous in spirit and body (**Romans 8:29; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2**).

However, when the word “justified” is used in reference to *God*, it means “declared to be righteous because He *is* actually righteous”!

### Psalm 51:4

Obviously, God is always “justified” (declared to be righteous) in His sayings and judgments, because He *is* righteous. The same is true of Jehovah's Servant, Jesus Christ. Christ, being God, *is* righteous: therefore, God the Father “*justifieth*” Him (v. 8).

Those who try to accuse Jesus Christ of sin will not only wear themselves out in their attempt to do so, but they will waste away bodily, and eventually pass away and decay (like a moth-eaten garment) (v. 9). All who have tried to accuse Jesus of unrighteousness in the last 2,000 years have come to the grave (or else are presently heading there): but Christ's righteousness is still recorded in God's Word, for all the world to see. Christ's sinless words and actions could not have been made up or crafted by any charlatan. If any sinful man had tried to “invent” Jesus, he would have created a “Jesus” like ourselves—full of sinful passions.

People's accusations against Jesus cannot stick. For this reason, Jehovah's Servant challenges His accusers to come forward and “*stand together*” with Him before the LORD's judgment bench, to make their accusations (v. 8). This is reminiscent of the challenge that Jesus made to His accusers while He was on earth.

### John 8:46

### John 18:19-23

### G. Jehovah's Servant invites men who fear the LORD, and who obey His (the Servant's) voice, to trust in the name of the LORD continually, so that they may have light for their pathway (vv. 10-11).

The concluding verses of **chapter 50** teach two vital truths:

1. Jehovah's Servant is equal to Jehovah Himself.

In **verse 10**, Jehovah's Servant makes a very important claim: namely, He equates fearing the LORD to obeying the voice of "his Servant" (in other words, Himself). Those who truly know and fear God also know and obey the Lord Jesus Christ—because Jesus *is* God.

### **Matthew 17:5**

### **John 8:19, 42**

This teaching is not exclusive to the New Testament. Throughout the Old Testament, men are commanded to obey Jehovah's Servant. **Isaiah 50:10-11** is merely one of the many Old Testament passages that teach this truth. Consider these other passages, as well:

### **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**

### **Exodus 23:20-23**

In the passage above, the word "angel" does *not* refer to a created spirit being, such as Michael or Gabriel. The word "angel" (Hebrew *malak*) simply means "messenger," "deputy," or "ambassador." Obviously, Jehovah's "Messenger" is *equal to* Jehovah, because Jehovah's name is "in" this Messenger (**v. 21**)!

The "Messenger of Jehovah" is none other than Jesus Christ; and, as this passage says, His voice is to be obeyed.

2. Men should trust in the LORD, and in His Servant.

For those who need light for their pathway, the solution is to trust in the LORD. The LORD directs the path of those who trust in Him (**Proverbs 3:5-6**). He provides light for our pathway through His Word (**Psalms 119:105**), and through His Son, who is the Light of the World (**John 8:12**).

What is the alternative to trusting in the LORD, and in His Servant, Jesus Christ? The only alternative is to light your *own* "fire" in order to try to see through the darkness that is caused by your sin. That is what **verse 11** is all about. With a touch of sarcasm, the LORD invites those who refuse to receive light from His Servant to "**kindle**" their *own* "fire" (in other words, to trust in their own wisdom, their own will, and their own efforts).

How does it go for those who light their own fire in order to lighten their path through life? Jehovah's Servant answers this question very descriptively. The phrase "**compass yourselves about with sparks**" literally means "surround yourselves with firebrands." The idea seems to be that of someone trying to light firebrands, only to end up trapping himself within a circle of fire. To put it simply....it doesn't end well! Basically, the LORD is saying, "Go ahead. Light

your ‘fire’ and try to make your way through life in the light of that fire. But know this: in the end, you will lie down in sorrow.”

This is an ominous message indeed! Whether the phrase “*lie down in sorrow*” refers to the sorrow in *this* life that is caused by one’s sin, or to the *eternal* sorrow that sinners will experience after they have “lain down” in the grave, the message is clear: rejecting the LORD and His Servant brings sorrow.

**Conclusion:** The servant of Jehovah, the nation of Israel, had been unfaithful to the LORD. She had “sold” herself by way of her own iniquities, and had “divorced” herself from the LORD by way of her own transgressions. Furthermore, she would not respond to the LORD, even when He earnestly pleaded with them.

The Servant of Jehovah, Jesus Christ, on the other hand, was faithful to Jehovah in all things. As a Man, He allowed Jehovah to give Him the “tongue of the learned,” so that He could speak timely words to the weary. His ear was attentive to His Father, and He was not rebellious. He willingly suffered the merciless beating and cruelty of the Roman soldiers. Through it all, He was not confounded or ashamed; and He set His face like a flint. Though He has many would-be accusers, none can condemn Him, because He is justified by Jehovah.

In light of all this, men ought to fear the LORD and obey the voice of His Servant, Jesus Christ. Those who refuse to let Him light their pathway will bring about their own ruin, and will lie down in sorrow.