

9571U

SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL - 1998

YAHWEH IS MY STRENGTH AND MY SONG

BEHOLD, MY SERVANT

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study #4 He shall not be Ashamed

Reading: Isaiah 50: 4-9

Well, thank you brother chairman, and my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This afternoon then, we come to the third servant song in the 50th chapter of Isaiah, as our chairman has read it to us, and from the 4th to the 9th verses of this particular chapter. I wonder if you noticed as we read these words, how there is again now, a definite change in the **spirit** and **tone** of this third servant song. We're moving on in terms of the deepening of the trials and labours of this servant, and yet at the same time we notice that there's a change to the spirit and the attitude and the character of the servant himself. You may recall that we mentioned this in our 3rd study, but it might just be a good idea if we review that motion now, as we come into the third song and we see what is happening here.

Remember that in the first song, there was the hint of trial and labour; 'He shall not fail nor be discouraged', gave the indication or the hint in the very first song, that there may be difficulties that would lie ahead of the servant, but although ignored and doubted by some, he would exhibit a patient spirit in the accomplishment of his work. Then in the second song, we saw how that that is deepened, hadn't it? to a more specific feeling of anguish and weakness, that the servant experiences, 'I have laboured in vain', he cries. We saw how that that took us into the bedchamber of Hezekiah, at the moment of his weakness; how that it takes us in the life of Christ into the garden of Gethsemane as He struggled with those things that the Father had laid upon Him. We found that the spirit of that second song, as the idea of service deepens in the life of the servant, the spirit of that second song was that the servant although scorned and ridiculed, you see, those that are against him have become stronger in their hostility, but he is confident, he buoys himself up, 'surely my right and my reward is with my God', and he buoys himself up with the spirit that God would be with him, to guide him and to sustain him.

Now then, we come to the third song and we see that there is yet a further change. We're going to find that surprisingly on the one side, the servant is subject to yet more dreadful indignities than he has ever experienced before. Whereas there are those

who have ridiculed him in the past, where there are those who have scorned him in the past, now he is going to be subject to shame and to hostility. 'I gave my back to the smiters, my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting', this third song will say, as the work of the servant deepens inexorably to the end that will come upon him. Yet we're also going to see, in this third servant song, that deepening of the resolve of the servant himself and so we have a man who although tormented and opposed, is absolutely steadfast, verse 4. 'The Lord Yahweh will help me, for I shall not be confounded' says the 7th verse. 'I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed'. This is a different man to the second song; this is a man who has grown stronger in his resolve, is it not? and so we see this motion of the way in which the songs develop, the one upon the other as the work of the servant is unfolded before us.

So there are some changes, therefore, some changes not only with regard to the experiences of the servant, but also with regard to the deepening of his character as he strives to serve his Master. What we're going to find in this third song, therefore, is that although fervent prayer has been answered, although God has answered the cries of His servant, we're going to find that the troubles of the servant are not yet over. The servant has been assured of the divine hand to strengthen and to sustain him, but not to remove the difficulties, the difficulties remain. The trials remain and if anything, they're going, in fact, to get worse. So here we have this idea of deepening service, and yet the spirit of the servant in this song, is of a man who is able to confront those now that oppose him with a calmness, with a strength, with a steadfastness, with a resolve which is almost frightening in its strength and in its intensity. There is nothing now that the servant will not or cannot face, and you see, I think this is interesting because to me this is the spirit of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane. You see, the garden of Gethsemane is the story of the struggle of Christ, isn't it? the battle, the agony, the contest in the garden; He sweat as it were, great drops of blood. It was the anguish of the second song as he cried to his God, but you see, the battle was fought and won in Gethsemane, wasn't it? I'm not taking away from the importance of the cross, nor of the crucifixion, nor of the things that were accomplished at that moment of time in Golgotha, but we're saying that there was a battle waged and won in Gethsemane. The man who steps forth from the garden to meet His tormentors and His accusers, is a man with far more strength of character; 'whom seek ye?' is the words of Christ in John 18 as they come before Him with torches and lanterns and weapons. You see, the struggle's over, the Lord arose from the garden of Gethsemane with crimson upon His brow, but He knew exactly where He was going and what He would do. He decided to drink the cup that the Father had placed before Him, and the servant of the third servant song is Christ, as He steps forth from the garden and walks forward now with steadfastness of resolve, to whatever it is that will come upon Him. It's that change of spirit, you see, that we've captured in this third song.

Let's then see the spirit of the song in our translation. So, 'My Lord Yahweh hath given Me the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour the weary with words: He wakeneth morning by morning He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the

instructed. My Lord Yahweh hath opened my ear and I was not rebellious nor turned away backward. My back gave I to smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked out the beard: my face I hid not from insult and spitting, for my Lord Yahweh will help me; therefore I'm untouched by the insult: therefore, I have set my face like a flint, and I shall not be shamed. Near is my justifier; who will dispute with me? Let us stand up together, who can accuse me? come near to me. Lo, my Lord Yahweh will help me: who is he that condemns me? lo, they all as a garment shall rot; the moth doth devour them'. There's a certain spirit about this third song that advances our knowledge and understanding of the servant in his labours.

So you'll notice how the 4th verse begins then, 'My Lord Yahweh hath given me the tongue of the learned' or as our chairman rightly read, it's actually the word 'Adonai Yahweh', isn't it? 'Adonai Yahweh hath given me the tongue of the learned', and that's interesting because that's a special title, you see; and you'll notice that that title is not just found in verse 4, it's the key title to this whole song. It's found in verse 4 and then it's found again in verse 5, then in verse 7 and then in verse 9, so it's used 4 times through this particular song, 'My Lord Yahweh, this is the key title to this particular song. You know what the word 'Adonai' means, of course, the primary meaning of the word 'Adonai' is that of a master to a servant; my Lord, my master, Yahweh, so you see, this is now the final understanding of the particular Master that this servant serves. The Master that he serves, He's none other than the God that he worships, my Master Yahweh. This is who the servant serves, and don't you think that that title, b&s, in these verses, don't you think that that title indicates now, that the struggle in measure is over! The servant has made his decision, hasn't he? my master Yahweh, he's made the decision, he's surrendered himself, he will now go and serve the God whom he stands before!

So the 4th verse says, 'My master Yahweh, Adonai Yahweh, 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 my ear to hear as the learned'. Now this word 'learned' (3928), by the way, in the Hebrew the word can mean one of two things, it can either mean '**a learner**' one who learns or it can mean '**a learned one**' a learned person-Gesenius. Perhaps the best English word to translate the Hebrew is probably the word 'scholar' because we use the word 'scholar' in two different ways, don't we? We use the word 'scholar' in the sense of a Sunday School scholar or a pupil or a disciple, one who learns; but we also use the word of a famous man who is 'learned' in his field, he's a scholar, he is a scholarly man. Now which of those two do you think is the sense then of Isaiah 50 verse 4? 'My Lord Yahweh hath given me the tongue of the learned', is he the scholar here, the learned man, or is he the pupil? The answer I think is that he is the pupil here, he is the one who is learning; he is not only the servant of his master, but he is the disciple of his master. He sits at the feet of his God that he might learn instruction from Him, 'my Lord Yahweh hath given me the tongue of the pupil or the disciple, the one who learns from his master. That's the role that the servant plays, he sits at his master's feet that he might absorb instruction.

Now do you notice what it says, by the way, 'My Lord Yahweh hath given me the tongue, you see, this is the same as chapter 49, isn't it? the servant doesn't claim that he has this knowledge of himself; he doesn't claim that he has the tongue of the learned by inherent genius, he's been **given it** by God. Just as the servant was a sharp sword and a polished arrow hidden in the shadow of God's hand in the second song, so here in the third song he acknowledges that whatever learning he has in his tongue, has been given to him through a process of instruction through the open ear of verse 5, that's how he was given the tongue. Verse 5, 'My Lord Yahweh hath opened mine ear', how did he receive the tongue of the learned in verse 4? why, through the open ear of verse 5. It's given to him by the instruction of God.

Now come and have a look at Mark 7, because here's a marvellous cross reference, based in fact, upon the very reading that we had read this morning in our reading session in general assembly. In Mark 7, here's the very lesson of the tongue of the learned of Isaiah 50, we're told in Mark 7, and here's a parable, by the way, which is absolutely unique to the gospel of Mark which, of course is the gospel of the servant, isn't it? Mark 7 verse 31. It says, 'And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, He came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. And they bring unto Him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech;' notice the problem that the man had, he had an impediment in his speech, he cannot speak, his tongue is caught by a string, his tongue is fettered. Interestingly, the word 'impediment' is only used once in the whole of the New Testament which is right here, of course. Do you know that word is used once in the Septuagint of the Old Testament, just once, in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, and interestingly enough the place where it's used is Isaiah 35 verse 6, 'the tongue of the dumb shall sing'. This place where that Greek word is found in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, and what the Lord is going to show in Mark 7, is that He is the One of Isaiah 35 who will cause the tongue of the dumb to sing, who will bring forth water in the wilderness.

So verse 32 of Mark 7 says, that here is a man whose problem lies with his tongue, the problem is that he can't speak; his tongue is fettered and they beseech the Lord to put His hand upon him. Now look carefully at what the Lord does, verse 33, 'He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers into (not his tongue) but his ears, and He spit, and touched his tongue; And looking up to heaven, He sighed, and saith unto him, ephphatha, that is, be opened. And straightway **his ears were opened**, and the **string of his tongue was loosed**, and he spake plain.' You see, here was a man who could not speak, his tongue was caught with a string or chain; but the Lord never touched his tongue in the first instance, He went for **the ear**, He touched the ear first, and the curing of this man so that he could speak was that first, his ear had to be opened. That was the lesson of 'ephphatha'; He didn't say 'be loosed' to the tongue, He said, 'be opened' (2188) to the ear. So what's the lesson of ephphatha of Mark 7? and the answer is that it's exactly the same lesson as the lesson of the tongue of the learned in Isaiah 50 and that's this, and mark it well, **before the tongue can speak ready and appropriate things, the ear must first have been opened to divine principles**. We can never

speaking forth the principles of the truth unless we have first heard the principles of the truth. That's how the servant received the tongue of the learned in the story of Isaiah 50 and the servant song. He's only able to speak appropriate things because his ear has been open to the reception of divine principles.

So verse 4 goes on to say, 'My Lord Yahweh hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary'. (and here's how it was done) 'He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned'. So you see, the servant doesn't receive the ready tongue spontaneously of God, it's not given to him as a gift of God without personal effort on the part of the servant. The servant has to put effort into this, he has to contribute to this process of learning; 'He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear', the servant has to participate in this regular pattern of instruction. By the way, I believe that Isaiah 50 verse 4 is in fact, a verse that tells us about the unique instruction that the Lord Himself received from His Father, in other words, applying these words to the Lord Himself, I think we're given here an insight into the instruction that Christ alone uniquely received. You know, Mark 1 verse 35 says, 'That the Lord rising up a great while before day, departed into the mountains into a solitary place and there prayed;' and there, b&s, in the stillness of the mountains in the early morning, so early that the fishermen friends that He had as disciples, had not yet risen, the Lord alone in the mountains, received instruction from His Father, and I believe that what Isaiah 50 verse 4 is telling us, in the case of Christ Himself, is that He heard in His open ear, the voice of His Father speaking, instructing Him. Not the voice of an angel, but the voice of His God, wakening morning by morning His ear to hear as the learned.

There's something special, you see, in the life of the Lord Himself, but there's a principle here, isn't there? that applies to all of us, and the principle is that we need to have a steady, regular application to divine principles, morning by morning. We'll never mature properly as God's servants if our study of the Word is spasmodic, a little study here, a bible school there, then nothing for months; that's not how the servant of God grows, that's not how the character of Christ develops within us, **it must be morning by morning by morning by morning**. There's something regular here, this is what the daily readings is all about, isn't it? the daily manna, the daily provisioning of the Word. It's only in that regular intake of spiritual things that our character begins to grow, that's how the Word will empower us if we give ourselves to the Word on a regular basis, little and often is a good idea, isn't it? for bible study and for bible reading. **Little and often!**

Now, by the way, 'morning by morning', I should say this that I would translate that phrase to read, that you've got to choose whatever you believe is the best time of the day to do your studies. I think for some of us it's not the morning, I tried doing this in my early years; I used to rise in the morning and I would fall fast asleep over my study desk and I found that morning by morning was not a good time for me to have my ear opened to hear as the learned. But for me, for some peculiar reason based on the strangeness of my body, it works well at night time, in fact at midnight I would perk up, and so you see, I think the principle here is that whatever is the time when we're fresh

and alert and we're able to give diligence to spiritual things, that's the morning by morning process that we should have in our own lives. For me it happens to be evening by evening, but I think I'm observing the principle, you see. You got to find out in your own life how best this will work, but for the Lord it was early in the morning. Don't you think also that that phrase, morning by morning, I think there's another idea in this passage as well and that is this, that you see, the servant learns to draw instruction from the circumstances of daily life, morning by morning, simply the regular turn around of ordinary, plain, humdrum, daily life; the servant learns from these things morning by morning. We tend to get a little bit like this in life, don't we? you know, same job, same family, same daily circumstances, same ecclesia, same problems in life, and sometimes the very sameness of life acts as a sort of a sedative upon us so that we're not really growing, and yet the servant you see, 'morning by morning He wakeneth mine ear', even in the daily things the regular turn of daily life, the servant receives instruction and learns things; do you know what brother Roberts said, b&s? brother Roberts said, 'the ordinary things of daily life are pregnant with our destiny'. I like that, the ordinary things of daily life are pregnant with our destiny, you see, the servants of the Lord don't just grow in the great and mighty things; most of us aren't going to accomplish great and enormous things in life, it's in the little things of everyday life that the servant's character is quietly, slowly, deliberately developed morning by morning. The wisdom of the servant of God is that he is able to draw instruction from the ordinary things of daily life.

I often think, you know, of the parables of Christ. A multitude assembled and the Lord's going to instruct them in divine principles; and He tells them a story, and do you know what the story's about? It's about the fact that His doctrine and His teaching cannot be simply added to the Law of Moses, that His doctrine is new and it's different and it's changed! The whole multitude stands there, or sit there, rivetted by the teaching power of Christ; and do you know how He built that story? He told them the story of a patched garment, when did He see that? but perhaps in His mother's house! Joseph dead early, a mother, Mary, struggling with a whole brood of children, handing down garments from boy to boy, patching a cloth. The Lord probably saw that in His own house! and out of the story of a patched garment, He drew a wonderful spiritual lesson that enthralled His audience; morning by morning He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned! to see spiritual things in daily life, b&s, is a great strength, one of the secrets of the servants of God. What does all that bring Him to? what does that enable Him to do? Well, verse 4 says, right in the middle of the verse, as the result of all that instruction, the servant knows 'how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; the servant is one that is able to speak about the practical realities of life; the servant is able to comfort and to sustain others in their time of need.

You see, this is the spirit of Hezekiah. Have a look at this, this is an excellent reference concerning the very spirit of the king himself. A word in season to him that is weary, do you see what 2 Chronicles says? we're told in 2 Chronicles 32 verse 6, that 'He set captains of war over the people and gathered them together to him, did you notice that? he gathered the people together to him, he gathered them to himself, they rallied

around the king. 'He spake comfortably (3824) to them' (in the margin you'll find it says, 'he spake to their **heart**) you see, here were a people who were desperate; worried about the advance of the Assyrian. As the whole of Jerusalem shivered in their boots, it was the king who rallied all the people to his side and spoke to their heart, and this is what he said. Verse 7, 'Be **strong** and **courageous**', oh, where did he get those words from? Now aren't they the words of Moses encouraging Joshua to take up the work? 'be strong and of good courage', and Hezekiah borrowed those words, he drew them from the spirit of Joshua, 'be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there be more with us than with him', now where did he get that phrase from? 'there be more with us than with him', where did that come from does anyone know? That's Elisha, remember when Elisha prayed that the eyes of his servant might be opened and He opened his eyes and he saw the chariots of fire and all the angels; 'there are more with us', says Elisha, and Hezekiah beautifully takes up the words of Moses and of Elisha, as he encourages the people and speaks a word in season to Israel of his own day, in verse 8 he says, 'With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is God to help us and to fight our battles. And the people **rested (5564) themselves upon the words** of Hezekiah king of Judah'. The margin says 'they leaned upon him', 'My Lord Yahweh hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary'. To a people that were wearied and fatigued with the advance of the Assyrian, and desperate of heart, a wise king who was a faithful servant spoke a word in season to encourage his people in their time of need. That's a lovely fulfilment I think, in the life of Hezekiah concerning that very phrase.

Have you ever had a time in ecclesial life, b&s, where you've had someone with a problem and you've longed to go up and help them and comfort them, because you know that they need help and you feel that you ought to do something and you go up and you don't know what to say! Then an older person comes up and in a few short and well chosen words, provides the very comfort that you would have loved to have provided, but you didn't know what to say but they did! They just had that greater level of wisdom in divine things, a greater experience of life and the outworking of divine principles, and they were able to speak a word in season to him that was weary. This is one of the great secrets of the servant, something that we strive to do in our lives. 'A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth and a word spoken in due season, how good it is' says Proverbs 15 verse 23, and Hezekiah was such a man! The Lord, of course, Himself in His own day, how many people leaned upon the words of Christ? as He spoke words in season to the people of Israel.

Then verse 5 says, 'My Lord Yahweh hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back'. I was not rebellious, says the song, so the servant is not one that shrinks from his responsibilities; the servant is one who manifests an unswerving loyalty now to the demands of his ministry. The servant is not one who is insubordinate, he is always obedient to the principles that he utters and to the God whom he serves. Because we know now who the Master is, don't we? it's the God whom he serves. I was not rebellious neither turned away back was the spirit of this one, as he faces now

whatever responsibilities might come upon him. Now what's the key here now to the 5th verse? From whence comes this spirit of absolute dedication of unswerving loyalty to serve his Master? Well, I think the key is actually the opening phrase of the verse, 'That the Lord God hath opened mine ear', now you'll probably know that that's an allusion actually to another Old Testament passage, what Old Testament passage is this? the opening of the ear, that takes us all the way back to Exodus, doesn't it? and to the special chapter, Exodus 21 concerning the servant pledge, the servant pledge of loyalty, 'My Lord Yahweh hath opened my ear'. Now let's just have a look at that then of what Exodus says about this idea, Exodus 21 and reading from verse 1, 'Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them. If thou buy a Hebrew servant, 6 years he shall serve: and in the 7th he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself: if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. But if the servant shall plainly say, verse 5, I love my master, my wife, and my children: I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl;' (My Lord Yahweh hath opened mine ear, or digged my ear), and he shall serve him for ever'. So the opened ear of the servant in Exodus 21, is as a result of the fact that he has **now pledged himself to absolute loyalty to his master for all time**; I will serve him for ever. The open ear was a token of that, as it was bored through with the awl by the master. By the way, of course, you realize what that symbolized was that the ear of this servant would **now forever be attentive to his master's requirements**. That's what the boring open of the ear symbolized, that the ear of this servant would now forever be attentive to his master's requirements. Now you see, I think that's the secret of Isaiah 50 verse 5, to the man who says, 'My Lord Yahweh hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious neither turned away back, from whence this resolve to serve his master to the ends of the earth, and to never swerve from that, and there's only one thing, there's only one principle that governs that, he's learnt to love his master. If we want to be God's servant and to learn unswerving loyalty, then we will first learn **to love God!** Only when we truly love God, b&s, and when we can say that we love our Master, will we understand the spirit of service and of loyalty to Him. Because true service to the Father is borne out of an appreciation of what God has done for us. The true servant of the Lord hath understood that in his life, to the point where he says, 'I love my Master, mine ear hath He opened, I will serve Him for ever'. That's the secret to the loyalty of this servant, his loyalty isn't based on his own self confidence, or on his own personal determination, it's based on the powerful principle of love itself.

It's love for his Master that enables him to endure the indignities that now come upon him in the 6th verse. Do you see what they are? '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 from spitting'; these were the dreadful indignities that the servant will endure in the course of showing loyalty to his master. I don't think that all of that applied, by the way, in the life of Hezekiah, and yet we do read this, that Hezekiah says these words, 'many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me; the

plowers ploughed upon my back, they made long their furrows' (Psalm 129 verses 2 and 3), so Hezekiah at least in symbol felt that he had endured indignity and difficulty in his life. The Jerusalem bible captures the drama of this verse when it says this, 'I offered my back to those who struck me; my cheeks to those who tore at my beard. I did not cover my face against insult or spittle; the Lord Yahweh comes to my help so that I'm untouched by the insults'. The servant is prepared to endure all of these things because he's learnt now to love his Master.

Interesting thing, you know, b&s, as we come to the gospel record, do you know that in John 18 (we might just turn to this one) in John 18 when they come into the garden to arrest the Lord, there's a very interesting comment made that I think fits the spirit of the third servant song. We're told in John 18 at verse 3, 'Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them. Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, **I am He**. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground'. Have you ever noticed those words in the gospel of John, **they went backward, and fell to the ground**, you see, there was obviously something absolutely awe-inspiring about the man that stood before them. But to me, what those words show in John 18, is the very spirit of the third servant song, which goes on to say, '**I gave my back to the smiters**'; they didn't take it from Him, **He gave it!** that's what the song says, He voluntarily gave it. It wasn't that they took it from Him. They, when they heard Him, fell backwards to the ground, but He voluntarily surrendered to the indignities and the insults that would be heaped upon Him.

So they would be! if you come to Matthew 26, we're told in Matthew's gospel that the very spirit, the very words of the song had its outworking in the life of Christ, as His end drew near in Matthew 26 verse 66, 'They said, What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in His face and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands, Saying Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote Thee?' 'I hid not my face from shame, from insult', the very words of the servant song were going to come to pass, weren't they? b&s, in the life of Christ. Luke 22 adds in the 65th verse, that not only did they smite Him, and spit upon Him, and buffeted Him, but they openly blasphemed against Him; they blasphemed Him, says Luke 22 verse 65, which we'll come back to in a minute. You see, what I think the spirit of the servant song was this, he says this, he was prepared to give his back, he was prepared to give himself to the smiter and to the plucker and to the spitter, to all those, but there was one thing, b&s, as far as the servant was concerned that they would never get, he says, 'I gave my back to the smiters; my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting; but there was one thing that he'd never give them, never yield them, and that was his ear, because his ear was given to his master. Therein laid the secret of his strength! and the secret of how he was able to continue in the midst of all these insults!

You know, there was an outworking of this also, I think, in the life of Hezekiah again. Because in the life of Hezekiah there was, in the course of all this crisis, there was someone who insulted him, who reviled, who offered words of blasphemy. Now who was that? Rabshakeh! you see, this worked its way up in the life of the king himself, and so we're told in Psalm 44, which is one of the psalms of the sons of the Korah, but I believe has reference to the Hezekiahanic period, as we might call it, it says in Psalm 44 verse 15, 'My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me, For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger'. The great reproacher and blasphemer of the day of Hezekiah was none other than Rabshakeh, who came and uttered words of blasphemy against the living God of Israel, and also against the king, who reigned over His nation. So as a result of that, we believe, the prophet Isaiah would take up these words later on in Isaiah 51 verse 7, 'Hearken to 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' and 2 Kings 19 which is the historical record of this incident. You see, of course Hezekiah took the whole matter to God in prayer, didn't he? and having taken the matter to God in prayer, the answer of Almighty God came back in answer to Sennacherib, the threatening letter of Sennacherib, 'whom hath thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom has thou exalted thy voice and lifted up thine eyes on high, even against the Holy One of Israel'. The marvellous thing about 2 Kings 19, b&s, is that Almighty God takes up the challenge of Sennacherib and of Rabshakeh and takes it and lifts it right out of the hands of Hezekiah and says, 'this is My challenge now; this is My argument with them' says God. God Himself takes up the matter that He might destroy Sennacherib because of his blasphemy and because of his insults and because of the revilings of Rabshakeh his spokesman. Oh yes, b&s, I think in the life of Hezekiah, there was an outworking of the spirit of this song, 'I'm untouched by the insults; I remain unmoved by the revilings and the blasphemies of those who come against me'.

So it was! there's a real paradox here, isn't there? Isaiah, we've said, loves to paradox and here's another paradox! **that the man who speaks such gentle words** in verse 4, a word in season to him that is weary, **should endure such violent hostility against Him**, in verse 6, 'I gave my back to the smiters'. So there's a paradox here, isn't there? and it's a paradox that all those who are the servants of God will eventually find in their lives. You see, the fact is that those who are transformed by the truth, and those that are loyal to the truth, and those that serve God heartedly and faithfully, for some strange and peculiar reason, that tends to excite the hostility of the flesh. Those who think according to the flesh, those who are the seed of the serpent, there's always a sense of hostility, isn't there? between the seed of the serpent and the seed of woman; there's an enmity that's been there from the very beginning, and it works; in fact, the very formality of the servants of God arouses the antagonism of others. I think that Rabshakeh was livid about the faithful integrity of Hezekiah and that he could not break him. I think the Pharisees were hostile to the absolute purity and steadfastness of the Lord in His own day, and the Lord warned us about this, didn't He? Didn't He say in John 15 that, 'if they've hated Me then they'll hate you'? and those that are the servants

of God, find that sometimes despite whatever good we might endeavour to do, whatever right we might endeavour to stand for, that **we'll suffer!** as does this man in this chapter despite his gentle ways.

He suffers the worst of indignities and yet the spirit of the servant, verse 7 is, 'My Lord Yahweh 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**'. My Lord Yahweh will help me, by the way, b&s, that's interesting because you know that's the very same word that Hezekiah used in 2 Chronicles 32, when he encouraged the nation when it says he spoke to them. 2 Chronicles 32 verse 8, it says, 'With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is Yahweh our God to help us', so that's the very word by Hezekiah to comfort the nation. God will **help us**, 2 Chronicles 32 verse 8, and now the servant says in verse 7, 'My Lord Yahweh will **help me**', and there's a lesson here, isn't there? that those things that the servant speaks to others, he must believe in, for himself. Just as he encouraged the nation that God would help them, so he must believe that in his own life. So in distress, the servant learns to lean upon God, to trust in His protective power and to make loyalty to his Master, the prime consideration of his life; to the point where he says in the 7th verse, 'I've set my face like a flint', so the servant does not approach hostility with a fearful attitude, but with the spirit of courage and stern inflexible resolve. He does so because of the loyalty that he's decided upon, but I think the courage, b&s, of the 7th verse, this face like a flint of the servant, we've got to be careful here, because I don't think we ought to confuse **courage** with **stoic resignation**. How is it that the servant is able to face his enemies with a face like a flint? and the answer is, not because he's hardened his emotions in feign self sufficiency, not because he has an artificial indifference to suffering (got to be careful here) there are some who march forth into death and disaster with a stoic endurance that's really made up of pride and secret despair. That's not the spirit of the servant when he says, 'I've set my face like a flint'; you see, the servant is one who has arisen from the ashes of self confidence to a courage in his God. That's why he's able to do this! he's got no faith in himself, this man; but he's got absolute faith now in the Master he has surrendered to; My Lord Yahweh will help me, **therefore** have I set my face like a flint, it's all based on the fact that he implicitly trusts his God.

So he says at the end of verse 7, (and how's this for a paradox?) 'I know that I shall not be **ashamed**', and yet there's a paradox because hadn't verse 6 said, 'I hid not my face from **shame**'. So in verse 6 he says, I didn't hide from shame, and yet in verse 7 he says, I know that I shall not be ashamed, so how is that paradox unravelled? so the answer is this, that the concern that the servant has is not for the shame of man, the only concern the servant has is for the divine appraisal of him, that he might not bear shame before God! That's the only thing the servant is worried about and he knows that that which will bring shame before him in the presence of God is that he has compromised the principles of the truth. He says, 'I'll never do that; it doesn't matter what shame I endure from man, but I want to be in a position where I'm never ashamed before my God; He's the One whom I serve, He's the One I want to be faithful to! Luke 9 verse 51 is a good cross reference to that verse, by the way, (we won't turn it up) but

you'll remember there was an occasion as the Lord steadily marches towards Jerusalem it says, 'He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem', and when you read that word in the gospels you almost hear the echo of Isaiah 50 verse 7, 'I've set my face like a flint'. His disciples didn't know what had come over Him, He steadfastly set His face to move forward, says the record in Luke 9 verse 51.

Then you'll notice as we come to verses 8 and 9 of this song, that we sort of have like a judicial scene here. You notice that the language is almost that of a trial. '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?' So what we have here is a judicial scene presented in verses 8 and 9, that the servant faces. There's a trial about to take place, now you see, what's interesting as far as that's concerned in the life of Christ, is that Christ was in the garden of Gethsemane in the second servant song, and in the third servant song He walks straight out from the garden **immediately into the trial**, doesn't He? That's exactly where the Lord goes when He leaves the garden of Gethsemane, so the third servant song as far as the life of Christ is, is that it shows Him coming straight into the trial that He would now face between Jew and Gentile. In the life of Hezekiah, I think that the trial that Isaiah has in mind, is the dramatic confrontation between Rabshakeh and Hezekiah's servants in 2 Kings 18. The accuser in that trial was Sennacherib, and in the dock on trial that day, was Hezekiah and the counsel for the prosecution was Rabshakeh, and the counsel for the defence was Eliakim and Shebna and Joah. The galleries were packed with the nation of Israel who all stood to witness to this trial on that day. Hezekiah's kin felt the pressure as the Assyrian came against him and taunted him with insults and with revilings. But Hezekiah knew one thing about that trial, b&s, in his own day, in his own time, that Rabshakeh didn't know, Hezekiah knew who the Judge was, and he knew that ultimately he was on trial before one person, and that was Almighty God Himself. Hezekiah's great concern was his standing in the presence of the God whom he served; not Rabshakeh, not Sennacherib, not all the insults! and don't we have a superb spirit in these verses of the supreme confidence now that the servant has that God will vindicate him, God will acquit him of guilt, God will vindicate his integrity.

You see how these two verses build up in intensity. Let's just read them again! '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, my Lord Yahweh will help me; who is he that shall condemn me?' (you can see the supreme confidence now of the servant in the knowledge that God will acquit him of all guilt and vindicate his integrity). Who cares what might come upon him? who cares, says the servant, what I might have to endure? who cares what shame might come? who cares concerning the revilings and the blasphemy of others? who cares what suffering might come upon me as long as I stand in the right with my God? That's the only thing that Hezekiah cared about! and the only thing that the Lord did, in the day of His trial!

Verse 9, 'My Lord Yahweh will help me'. Come and have a look at Psalm 118 because

this is one of these psalms which I think, have overtones of the life of Hezekiah. Psalm 118, Adonai Yahweh will help me, well here it is in Psalm 118, and I'm not sure I'm confident enough to say that this was written by Hezekiah, but I do think it stands in a group of psalms of which a number of them were written by Hezekiah. Certainly Psalms 115 and 116, I like to think that 118 may have been under the hand of Hezekiah as well, because there are a number of remarkable connections with his life. What I do know is that the Psalm says this in verse 6, 'Yahweh is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? Yahweh taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. It is better to trust in Yahweh than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in Yahweh than to put confidence in princes'. This is the same spirit of the servant in Isaiah 50, superb confidence now in his God that his God will redeem him and acquit him of all charges that are laid against him, by the blasphemers and revilers about him.

So come back to the song for a moment then and let's just see how the servant song finishes in Isaiah 50 verse 9. What does it say? It says (let me just take up the spirit of that first phrase of verse 9). So what is the spirit of the servant here? when he says that God will help him, who will condemn him? the spirit really is that of verse 10 which isn't part of the servant song, but is going to go on to talk about the spirit of the servant. Verse 10, 'Who is among you that feareth Yahweh, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and that hath no light? **let him trust in the name of Yahweh, and stay upon his God**'. Now you see, what I think verse 10 is saying is, who is there among you that feareth God and that obeys the voice of his servant? If you want to be like the servant, then be like him; and what was the servant like? He **trusts in the name of his God**, you see, that's the spirit of these closing two verses, 8 and 9, is that of a man who has absolute trust in his God, and you see, that was the spirit of the king. 2 Kings 18, we're told concerning Hezekiah, 'he trusted in the LORD God of Israel so that after him was none like him among the kings'. You see, this was the supreme virtue of king Hezekiah! He **trusted implicitly in his God**, that's the spirit of the third servant song, isn't it? You see, verse 19, 'what confidence is this wherein thou trustest? verse 20, 'now on whom dost thou trust? verse 22, 'but if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God', verse 30, 'neither let Hezekiah make you trust in Yahweh'; Psalm 125, a song of degrees of Hezekiah, 'They that trust in Yahweh shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed', this was the outstanding quality of Hezekiah and I think that's the spirit of this song, you see, when in verses 8 and 9 he says, 'He is near that justifies; who will contend with me? let us stand together', this is a man who trusts implicitly in his God. That was the spirit of the king, you see, now he didn't learn that overnight, did he? he didn't learn that spirit overnight, this was something that developed slowly but surely in the life of Hezekiah, and of course, was portrayed even more completely and wonderfully in the life of the Lord Himself, who marched forth into trial knowing that His trust in His God was complete and absolute!

Do you see how verse 9 ends? 'Lo they all shall wax old as a garment: the moth shall eat them up', and in the margin there's a cross reference to a psalm, and it just happens to be a psalm of Hezekiah which is Psalm 102. We might just turn there

because I think it captures the spirit of this phrase for us. This is the phrase, 'lo they all shall wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up', now the same words are in Psalm 102, I'm not quite sure, by the way, whether Isaiah is quoting from Hezekiah or Hezekiah is quoting from Isaiah, but the two are certainly linked together. Verse 26, now let me read those words to you in the next 3 verses with what I think the emphasis ought to be: '**They** shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change **them**, and **they** shall be changed: But Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy **servants** shall continue, and their seed shall be established forever'. You see, I think, that the spirit of this psalm and the spirit of those closing words in the 3rd servant song, is that there are 2 different groups here. Those that oppose Him, and Almighty God Himself; **they shall perish** but Thou shalt endure' and what the servant is saying therefore, as the servant song closes, is this, I recognize the eternal value of the divine approval; and I know the inevitable end of the wicked; I know that they shall perish, and I know that my God shall endure. I know there are two sides here to this story, and I know what side I desire to be on! He stands with his God, he is concerned with his eternal status in the sight of his God, but he also knows that those who stand against his God, will not live forever, they shall ultimately perish and wax old as a garment.

So you see, the servant that's come through into the third servant song, is a man far more determined now, isn't he? far more definite in his resolve, supreme confidence in his God, implicit trust, despite the difficulties that increase about him on every side! Now where's the spirit of that song for us in the New Testament? Well, just come and have a look at this! this is a crackup, Romans chapter 8, let's just see if we can see the third servant song, because here it is, taken up beautifully by the apostle Paul in Romans 8, and the confident spirit of a man who has no confidence in himself, but who has supreme confidence in the God and the Master, whom he has learned to love, I love my Master! Now, verse 31, you can see the spirit here of the third servant song: 'What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (now look at these next words carefully) 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Christ that died? Yea rather, that is risen again? who is even at the right hand of God? who also maketh intercession for us?' (You see, that's the very spirit and words of the third servant song, isn't it? the same supreme confidence!) 'Who, verse 35, shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress? persecution or famine? nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter (a quotation by the way from Psalm 44, written in the times of Hezekiah, and in that psalm you'll find that the Psalmist goes on to say, that the reason why the servant will be saved is because they have **not deviated, they have not gone backwards from what God has asked them**). 'Nay, verse 37, 'in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor **any other creature**, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'. From

whence, b&s, I think we assume, that the only creature that can separate us from the love of God is ourselves only. But not if we be the servant! and not if we've learnt the superb trust and confidence of the third servant song, and not if we have learnt to love our Master; there lies the secret of the steadfast resolve of the man that we see in this song, captured, b&s, in the words of a hymn that you'll all know and with which we will close our gathering together. Whilst written from a psalm of David, it's the spirit of this song, hymn 11,

God is my strong salvation
What foe have I to fear?
In darkness and temptation
My light, my help is near.
Though hosts encamp around me
Firm to the fight I stand.
What terror can confound me?
With God at my right hand!