

Welcome to: - Bible House of Grace.



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Isaiah 50.

(2015)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

If you think items presented on this site to be in error, please let me know and I will gladly reconsider the content.

Isaiah 50.

Topics.

- Where is your mother's certificate of divorce, with which I sent her away?
- Israel became so corrupt they had turned from the LORD.
- I gave my back to the striker; my cheeks to those who pull out the beard.
- All who equip themselves with burning torches will lie down in torment.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).
3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22). The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

Where is Your Mother's Certificate of Divorce, with which I Sent Her Away?

Isaiah 50:1 ----- ¹Thus says the LORD: "Where is your mother's certificate of divorce, with which I sent her away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away.

The instruction, "Thus says the LORD," is directed to the Jews in captivity to Babylon who felt that the LORD had unjustly dealt with them and with as much cruelty and carelessness as a man did with his wife when he gave her a writing of divorce and put her away without any just reason.

In the last three verses of the previous chapter the LORD comforted His people with an assurance that they would be delivered from the tyrannical power of Babylon.

In this chapter the LORD vindicates His justice in allowing Israel to be brought to such ruin by showing that they were the cause of their own afflictions and calamities. This message is continued in the next chapter with the main scope of both being upon vindicating God's justice and convincing those Jews that were blaming God for all their calamities that they brought their afflictions upon themselves by their own hardness of heart and wickedness.

Israel's mother: the following verses not only show that the people of Israel are referred to as God's wife, but also pictures Zion and Jerusalem and the people of Israel all being married to their land with God as the Husband rejoicing over Zion, Jerusalem, the land and the people. The idea is that the people of Israel cannot be separated from their land and their land cannot be separated from them.

- Fear not, for you (Israel) will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. ⁵For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. ⁶For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. ⁷For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. (Isaiah 54:4-7).
- You (Zion and Jerusalem) (v1) shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. ⁵For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. (Isaiah 62:4-5).
- Return, O faithless children, declares the LORD; for I am your master; (for I am married unto you in KJV): I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. (Jer. 3:14).

It would not be wrong to liken the heartfelt bond that the Jews have toward the land that God promised their fathers to the marriage bond a man has toward his wife. It is very likely that they are figuratively likened to being married to their land, because God originally designed that a married man and woman would remain together and not separate which has also, always been God's plan and purpose for Israel and their land.

- Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Gen. 2:24)
- Jesus said to, the Pharisees, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." (Matt. 19:8).

Jerusalem is personified: as a bride adorned for her husband and as a mother with daughters.

- Then I (John) saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:1-2).
- For I heard a cry as of a woman in labour, anguish as of one giving birth to her first child, the cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands, "Woe is me! I am fainting before murderers." (Jer. 4:31).

The daughter of Zion refers to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They are likened to a woman in labour and great anguish giving birth to her first child, because Isaiah in this prophetic vision is seeing their land and cities being invaded by their enemy

- All who pass along the way clap their hands at you (Jerusalem); they hiss and wag their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem; "Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty, the joy of all the earth?" (Lam. 2:15).

The daughters are the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Throughout Scripture Jerusalem is often personified as a mother with children. Her children are all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, prophets, husbands, wives and their children. When they are spoken of as virgin daughters it carries the idea of them having only one husband (God) in contrast to the surrounding nations having many gods.

Where is your mother's certificate of divorce? In this context the mother figuratively refers to the people dwelling on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem which was Judah. It was the inhabitants of Jerusalem and those dwelling on Mount Zion that Babylon lead away in chains from their city and their land and took into captivity for seventy years.

The law of divorce: the certificate of divorce refers to the written legal document that a husband was by Jewish law required to give a wife when he chose to put her away. Nowhere does Moses define in detail the exact causes for which a husband might put away his wife, but left it to be judged by the people themselves.

But he did ordain a law which acted as a check that the husband was not acting on hasty feelings or on a whim of his passions or simply from some excited feeling, but that he should take the time to examine his reasons for wanting a divorce and should he still go ahead with it he was to give his wife a written legal document releasing her from the marriage bond.

This certificate gave her the freedom to pursue her desires in regard to future marriages. It was a law designed to vindicate the wife's innocence; secure her inheritance from being taken from her because of her husband unjustly divorcing her and protect her from any shame by showing that the cause of the divorce was the husband's will and pleasure.

Produce a certificate of divorce: God foreseeing Israel in captivity and knowing that the people of Israel were often prone to murmur and quarrel against Him and accuse and blame Him for their sufferings to vindicate themselves challenges those who were feeling that He had unjustly cast them off without sufficient reason or cause to produce their certificate of divorce.

God had formerly espoused the Israelites to Himself in a kind of matrimonial covenant, but cast them off when he sent them to Babylon. However He did not regard them as the children of a divorced wife or as giving them a bill of divorcement, but simply put them away for a time and therefore can by right as

their husband take them back upon their humble repentance, their forsaking of their wicked ways and their gods and their desire to be once again united to Him.

Which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? This is an allusion to the following verses that show that it was a common practise for daughters and sons, manslaughters and thieves that could not pay their fine and those in debt who could not pay their creditors were sold as slaves or servants until they had worked off what was owing to their creditors or the year of release came.

- When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. (Exod. 21:7)
- If the sun has risen on him (a manslaughter and thief), there shall be bloodguilt for him. He shall surely pay. If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. (Exod. 22:3)
- If your brother becomes poor beside you and sells himself to you, you shall not make him serve as a slave (Lev. 25:39)
- The wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried to Elisha, “Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD, but the creditor has come to take my two children to be his slaves.” (2 Kings 4:1)
- Since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. (Matt. 18:25).

God used Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon as His servant (Jer. 25:9) to take the people of Judah into captivity, (it is this sense that they are spoken of as being sold), but it was the people themselves that broke the covenant by their spiritual adultery and not God taking them into captivity to Babylon. This act of God was not a divorce, but a punishment that Israel brought upon themselves by their spiritual adultery in worshipping idols and pagan gods and their gross wickedness. It was by their own sin that they sold themselves to Babylon.

I have not made you over to any creditor to satisfy a debt: carries the idea that God never gave them over to Babylon because he was obliged to Babylon or owed them a debt and therefore He still has the right of a Father over His people and can receive them back at a time of His choosing which in this case was upon their repentance and the forsaking of their idols and gods and seeking Him only.

Which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Among the Hebrews, a father had the right by the Law of Moses, if he was oppressed with debt, to sell his children in like manner, if a man had stolen anything, and had nothing to make restitution, he might be sold for the theft. If a man also was poor and unable to pay his debts, he might be sold. God says that he had not dealt with them as a poor father sometimes felt himself under a necessity of doing, when he sold his children, to a creditor he was not able to pay. God acted from an entirely different motive and had punished them only on account of their rebellion, spiritual adultery, wickedness, lusts and sinful pleasures.

For your iniquities you were sold: they can blame no one else, but themselves and their own sins for all their calamities and miseries. The only reason they have gone into captivity is on account of their sins. It had been their own act they had been sold into Babylon and become captives to a foreign power, by their own choice, because of their own rebellion and wickedness.

For your transgressions your mother was sent away: your mother here refers to the people of Judah, they were considered the mother of Israel, because they dwelt upon Mount Zion God's holy mountain and in Jerusalem God's holy city and they had the temple, the high priest, the Levitical priesthood and the altar of sacrifice. Added to this it was from the bloodline of Judah that the Messiah the Christ came.

The LORD is saying, the blame and the fault is not His, He is not governed by any evil motive nor can He be tempted to act from any evil attitude as an earthly husband maybe. They have sold themselves into captivity by their own iniquities, spiritual adultery and foolishness.

Following is a just a few (of the many) Scriptures that shine a light upon the magnitude of how far Judah had fallen from the LORD: -

- You trusted in your beauty and played the whore because of your renown and lavished your whorings on any passerby; your beauty became his. ¹⁶You took some of your garments and made for yourself colourful shrines and on them played the whore, the like has never been, nor ever shall be. (Ezek. 16:15-17).
- You took your sons and your daughters, whom you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your whorings so small a matter ²¹that you slaughtered my children and delivered them up as an offering by fire to them? (Ezek. 16:20-21).
- At the head of every street you built your lofty place and made your beauty an abomination, offering yourself to any passerby and multiplying your whoring. (Ezek. 16:25).
- Adulterous wife, who receives strangers instead of her husband! (Ezek. 16:32).
- Thus says the Lord GOD: I will deal with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, ⁶⁰yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish for you an everlasting covenant. (Ezek. 16:59-60).

Clearly God was justified in using Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon as His servant (Jer. 25:9) to take the people of Judah into captivity, especially since it was not for their harm, but for their good. While in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar, Israel and Judah went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations that had turned away from the LORD to idols and other gods.

Seventy years later, Cyrus (King of Persia) who the LORD called His anointed shepherd (Isaiah 44:28) and took by His right hand (Isaiah 45:1) to conquer the Empire of Babylon gave written permission for Israel to return to Jerusalem.

Under Ezra and Nehemiah God brought Israel and Judah back to their beloved city Jerusalem as one united nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to idols or pagan gods again) Multitudes of Jewish families who had been scattered throughout the nations returned to Jerusalem and the land of Israel with triumphant joy and rejoicing. When the temple of God was completed their faith was once again established and a golden time of prosperity and peace followed.

A Brief Overview of Verse One.

God foresaw that while the Jews were in captivity they would murmur and quarrel against Him believing He had cast them off without sufficient reason which they were often prone to do, accusing God and vindicating themselves. However the LORD in response asks them to produce their certificate of divorce. It was the law of Israel for husbands who put away their wives for their own reasons or gain (i.e., marry a younger woman or just got tired of them etc.), to give the divorced wife a certificate of divorce.

This certificate vindicated the wives' innocence, and declared that the husband's will and pleasure was the cause of the marriage ending. In simple language God is saying, produce your bill of divorce that shows that I have put you away for my own advantage and gain, and that shows that you did not first forsake me and go after other gods, and by your spiritual adultery you violated the marriage covenant that I had entered into with you.

The certificate of divorce is final; it means the two parties are totally cut off from each other. The LORD is saying, Jerusalem and Judah Israel's symbolic mother is destroyed, but there is no certificate of divorce meaning that the LORD has not given up on them. God did not sell Israel into Babylon because He owed anyone anything, but because of their rebellion. The reason God can use the language of sales is because Babylon profited from taking Israel captive, because they used them as servants and slaves.

Israel became so corrupt they had turned from the LORD.

Isaiah 50:2-3 ----- ²Why, when I came, was there no man; why, when I called, was there no one to answer? Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, by my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a desert; their fish stink for lack of water and die of thirst. ³I clothe the heavens with blackness and make sackcloth their covering."

Why, was there no man when I called: (v1) refers to the people of Judah setting their hearts diamond hard against the word of the LORD and the prophets instead of heeding God's call to repentance.

By my rebuke I dry up the sea: (v3) is an allusion to Israel's exodus from Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea.

I make the rivers a desert: (v3) is an allusion to God withholding the River Jordan so the people of Israel could cross over on dry land and enter the land of Canaan.

I clothe the heavens with blackness: (v3) is no doubt alluding to God's great power in creating all the host of heaven and placing the stars amongst the vast expanse of the darkness of the heavens.

The LORD (almost in a bewildered state) asks, "Why when He called did they not respond?" Is their faith so fallen that they believe their idols and gods had more power than He had. Have they forgotten the miracles and wonders He had done for them in days gone by, do they really think He is powerless to deliver and redeem them? The sense is of God's utter disappointment that He cannot even find one man with integrity and honesty of heart amongst the rulers, priests and common people of Judah that would stand up and speak against the prideful, hypocritical and corrupt opinion of the rulers and priest and the wickedness of the common people and proclaim the truth.

I gave My Back to the Striker; My Cheeks to those who Pull Out the Beard.

Isaiah 50:4-7 ----- ⁴The LORD God has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. ⁵The LORD GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious I turned not backward ⁶I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. ⁷But the LORD GOD helps me therefore I have not been disgraced therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

In contrast to the previous verses in which God could not find a faithful man to stand up for Him amongst the rulers, priests and common people, these verses speak of a man who was prepared to suffer the most extreme pain to stand up for God and be obedient to His will. This passage can apply to Isaiah (with limitations) since he was scorned and mocked by the people for proclaiming the word of God, but the following New Testament verses show that they are prophetically echoing the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Then he (Pilate) released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. ²⁷Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. ²⁸And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matt. 27:26-29)
- They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. (Matt. 27:30).
- Then they spat in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, ⁶⁸saying, "Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?" (Matt. 26:67).
- They were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. (Mark 15:19).

- They clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. ¹⁸And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Mark 15:17).
- When they had mocked him they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him. (Mark 15:20).
- Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him. ⁶⁴They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" ⁶⁵And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him. (Luke 22:63).

Jesus ultimate disgrace: -

- If a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, ²³his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. (Deut. 21:22-23).
- Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree." (Gal. 3:13).

In these verses the wonder and majesty of Bible prophecy is clearly seen. Hundreds of years before Jesus came, Isaiah prophesied that one would come with words that would sustain the weary; who would give his back to those who strike and his cheeks to those who pull out the beard and would not hid his face from the disgrace of spitting. Many think that the Christian faith is relatively new compared to some of the more ancient religions, but these amazing prophecies of Isaiah show that the Christian faith goes back to the beginning of time. It was planned and purposed in God's eternal mind before time began, that Jesus would be the Saviour of the world.

A few in the Christian faith teach that these verses apply to Israel since there are various Scriptures that do teach that they are God's servants to the nations and they have suffered greatly for the faith, but the following shows why this chapter cannot apply to Israel. The person in focus: -

- Was not rebellious and did not turn back from the LORD in any way.
- Was not a disgrace and was not put to shame.

Whereas Israel was rebellious, turned from the LORD, was disgraced and put to shame. Others who teach the traditional Christian teaching that Jesus is God, believe that the following prophetic words of Isaiah, "I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting," (v6) apply to God Himself and use them to support their belief that Jesus is God, but this is reading far more into Isaiah's prophetic words than what is intended. They are an amazing prophecy of the coming Messiah the Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world the Lord Jesus Christ and not a doctrinal teaching that Jesus is God.

Words of comfort and encouragement: since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states: -

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim: -

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say: -

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

For further information see the title: -

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity) in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

All who Equip themselves with Burning Torches will Lie Down in Torment

Isaiah 50:8-11 -----⁸He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. ⁹Behold, the LORD GOD helps me who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up. ¹⁰Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the voice of his servant? Let him who walks in darkness and has no light trust in the name of the LORD and rely on his God. ¹¹Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches! Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled! This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.

The scene presented in these verse is of Isaiah (and more fully of Jesus) standing amongst the assembly of Israel who trust in their own self-efforts for righteousness or are trusting in idols and pagan gods. It is of Isaiah calling those who accuse him of some form of guilt to come and stand face to face with him (in contrast to murmuring behind his back as was common for the people to do) and prove their case. Isaiah is confident that he has done nothing falsely before the LORD and that the LORD will vindicate and justify him. This is why he is able to say to his accusers that they will die before they can prove him guilty of profaning God's name or speaking falsely concerning His word.

He asks is there any among the assembly who is faithful to the LORD and will obey His word (i.e., the words Isaiah has been speaking to them) which implies that there is not. He then tells them that those who walk in darkness, meaning who trust in their own religious works and self-effort to be saved or are trusting in idols and pagan gods to save them rather than trust in the name of the LORD their God that they are utterly devoid of any true light.

You who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches: (v11) during these ancient days torches were either a lantern with a wick that was dipped in oil that burned or a stick with rags dipped in oil wrapped around the end of it and set on fire so the flame would give light.

The idea is that they are walking in their own light, meaning that they are trusting in their own understanding and what they presume to be the right way according to their own reasoning rather than trusting in the LORD and His way of salvation they rely on the work of their own hands and their own self-efforts and abilities or are trusting in their idols and gods to save them. The LORD is saying rather than being saved they will lie down in torment.

Though the primary focus is upon God's faithful prophet Isaiah, the words, "Behold, the LORD God helps me who will declare me guilty?" (v9) more fully and perfectly fit the Lord Jesus Christ. There is only one man that has ever walked upon this earth that the Scriptures speak of in the following way: -

- Jesus was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom. 1:4).
- He who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him. (John 8:29).

- I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me. (John 14:30).

Jesus has been the only man who God vindicated and justified on the ground of his own righteousness.

The prophetic words, "Who will contend with me?" (v8) reached their peak when Jesus stood before the religious leaders of his day (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) who accused him of all sorts of falsehoods, and could not prove any of them and therefore called in false witnesses to lie and testify against him. At this time the hatred and opposition against the Lord reached its highest point and manifested itself in the brutal, bloody and cruel suffering of Jesus upon the bloodstained cross of Calvary.

Though it is certainly true that God cannot vindicate and justify us on the ground of our own righteousness, it is equally true that those who place their trust in Christ for their salvation will be vindicated and justified not by their own self-righteousness, but by the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace as the following Scriptures show: -

- By the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (Rom. 5:19).
- Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit. (1 Peter 3:18).
- We have a high priest who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. (Heb. 8:1).

Providing those in Christ are not trusting in outwardly adhering to ceremonial rights and keeping holy days or in strictly adhering to religious customs and traditions or their own righteousness, self-effort and works, but trusting in Christ's righteousness and God's grace then they should have no fear of being rejected by Christ their Saviour on that day when he returns in glory to gather the faithful to himself.

- By the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (Rom. 5:19).
- He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. (Rom. 8:32-34).

End.