

ISAIAH

ISAIAH 51:1-8, ENCOURAGING ISRAEL

In these verses, there are three commands to listen or to pay attention to what is being said (vv. 1, 4, 7), and each time listening is connected to doing something. They are 1) to listen and remember what Yahweh has done for them which should be comforting; 2) they are to listen and remember who their God is, understand their role in God's plan for history and that Gentile salvation is part of God's plan for history, and 3) they are to listen and remember what God has promised to do for them which is to destroy all who oppose Him, and who also therefore oppose Israel, and that His purposes and His salvation are eternal.

Most theologians believe this is directed to the Babylonian exiles, but that situation did not yet exist. Certainly, this information should exhort those exiles to stand firm, that is, to be faithful in the midst of that dark walk when it happened to them in the future, but it is much broader than that. This is truth that is applicable to circumstances the nation has faced and will continue to face throughout its history. This truth is just as relevant today as it was then, and it will be just as relevant in the future Day of the Lord as it was then. "There is a connection between seeking God, pursuing righteousness and receiving the benefits (eschatological salvation) [v. 3] of having a relationship with God" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 391]. If the Babylonian captivity is referred to here at all, which is doubtful, then it is as a type of the much greater deliverance to take place in the future.

Isaiah 51:1, 2 ¹"Listen [שָׁמַעַ] to me, you who pursue [רָדְפוּ] righteousness, Who seek [בְּקִשׁוּ] the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn And to the quarry from which you were dug. ²"Look [בְּבִטְ] to Abraham your father And to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain; When he was *but* one I called him, Then I blessed him and multiplied him."

This verse is a command to listen to what God is saying through the prophet. Listen, שָׁמַעַ, means to hear and to listen referring to using the sense of hearing to perceive a message with the ears and to process the information. The implication is that not only is the message heard, but the response to the message is one of conformity and obedience.

This revelation is directed to those who pursue righteousness, that is, to those who fear Yahweh, who obey the voice of the Servant, who trust in the name of Yahweh, and who rely on God (Is. 50:10). That is applicable to the remnant living then, living now, and who will be living in the future. Living in the midst of the satanic world system means that even the most righteous are existing in darkness to some degree at all times, but sometimes the darkness of our circumstances may be overwhelming. Nevertheless, those who are in Him are to pursue righteousness in the midst of whatever degree of darkness they find themselves at any particular point in time. Certainly, unbelievers are welcome to heed this call, but that depends on whether or not they respond to the drawing and convicting ministry of God (John 6:44, 12:32, 16:8) and turn and be saved.

Pursue, פָּרַדַּק, means to means to pursue, to chase, to follow after referring to making linear motion with considerable effort and focus. The sense is to follow in, or as if in, pursuit. This implies deliberation and effort. What are they to pursue? They are to pursue righteousness, which is adherence to a standard and to doing what is just, and they are to seek Yahweh who is the One who sets the standard. Being righteous involves obediently acting in ways that God has set as the standard for righteous behavior and in following the example He has set. This is a revelation designed for those who make up the faithful Israelite remnant.

Seek, בָּקַשׁ, means to seek, to search, to look for, and to try to obtain referring to trying to learn information about an object, implying diligence in the procurement of that information. This verb is intensive in form; the Israelites are to intensely seek after Yahweh. The act of seeking implies that God is not hidden from those who seek Him. He can be sought out, found, and known by means of both general and special revelation, by all those who diligently seek Him out. God told them that even during the times that He has removed them from the land, they can seek Him and find Him if they desire to do so.

Deuteronomy 4:29 ²⁹“But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.

Proverbs 8:17 ¹⁷“I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me.

“[B]oth verbs belong to the vocabulary of religious devotion. Both simply express determination or commitment; just as ‘pursue’ does not picture something out of reach, neither does ‘seek’ imply something lost. The faithful ones pursue *righteousness*—that is, persevere in conforming their lives to the revealed norms of God’s law—and seek God’s presence” [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 320].

The metaphor of mining is used to reflect the fact that God created Israel. He did not create the nation *ex nihilo*, out of nothing. He used Abraham and Sarah as the starting point which is reflected in the mining metaphor of hewing out of rock, which was an already created material, and quarrying it to subsequently use it in order to fashion the nation out of it. He did use signs, wonders, and miracles to advance His creative plans for establishing the people and the nation, but that is not necessarily *ex nihilo* creation, although it could be. The verb forms for hewn and dug are intensive meaning that God intensely worked at creating the people and the nation. “The metaphor refers in a genealogical sense to the origin of the nation in the electing love and gracious manifestation of God’s power in the birth of Isaac, the promised seed, which was actually the birth of the nation, for Sarah was barren, and Israel’s birth was a miracle of God’s power” [Merrill F. Unger, “Isaiah” in *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1286]. This is correct, except that I would question that the birth of the nation was with the birth of Isaac. If the nation is to be attributed to any one man, it has to be Jacob, or Israel, but I believe the nation came into existence in Egypt through the miraculous power of God to protect them, grow them into a large people group, and then deliver them with signs, wonders, and miracles. The birth of the nation in Egypt was accompanied by the pain of slavery just as Sarah’s delivery of Isaac was accompanied by the pain of childbirth. If God can create a great people and nation out of this man and his wife, He can build on that with the people throughout the nation’s history. Abraham believed God’s promises, and they should believe them as well.

This is simply a command to consider the origins of the Israelites and their nation and thereby gain some confidence in who they are in relation to the God who created them. God made unconditional covenant promises to Abraham that He must fulfill, and God's relationship with Abraham was one of faithfulness. Will He be any less faithful to those who the heirs of those promises? Absolutely not! He built the nation from nothing and He can therefore sustain it and continue to build it.

Look, **רָא**, means to look, to observe, to gaze, or to have regard referring to using the sense of sight to see or detect objects which implies gaining the interpretation and understanding of what is observed. The sense is to focus attention on what is being looked at. The verb form here is an imperative; the translation could be, "You, yourselves look." The focus here is on the fact that the nation was derived from a single couple. They knew, or should have known, the history of their nation and God's intimate, miraculous, faithful involvement in it with them. They should have known how God took a single man and turned him into a nation of millions of people, and they should have known that His work was authenticated by many signs, wonders, and miracles. No one and no thing could have accomplished the things Yahweh accomplished in connection with Israel.

"Look is the same verb that God used in Gen. 15:5 to command Abraham to gaze at the night sky and count the stars. Just as Abraham was called on there to look and believe for a numberless progeny to come from the womb of barren Sarah, Israel is here called to look at the faithfulness of God in the past and to believe that God could yet again keep his promises to people barren Zion with children from around the world" [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 335]. The end of this quote may be based on replacement theology, which makes it untrue, but if Israelites are the focus, it is correct, because he could be referring to gathering the Israelites out of the *Diaspora* and back into the land which would be true.

These things should have given Israel confidence that the God who created them is the same God who could restore them and comfort them. The next verse is clearly eschatological. The waste places of Israel were not restored when the people returned from Babylon and the nation was certainly not made to be like Eden.

Isaiah 51:3 ³Indeed, the LORD will comfort [**נָחַם**] Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden [**עֵדֵן**], And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy [**שִׂשׂוֹן**] and gladness [**שְׂמֵחָה**] will be found in her, Thanksgiving [**תּוֹדָה**] and sound of a melody [**זִמְרָה**].

Comfort, **נָחַם**, means to be comforted, that is, to be in a state or a condition of finding a measure of relief from sorrow and distress and therefore be consoled or encouraged. The sense is that of alleviating sorrow or distress and to give emotional strength. This verb refers to consoling the dis comforted. The verb form is intensive; God will intensely comfort the nation which is personified here. Obviously, if the nation is comforted, the people will be comforted along with it. The use of "comfort" twice emphasizes the fact that God will, without doubt, comfort Zion; it is a Hebrew idiom denoting certainty [Alec J. Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 320]. Isaiah used this word a number of times to

express the comfort Israel was going to enjoy once the Tribulation is ended and the Messianic Kingdom begins (Is. 12:1, 49:13, 52:9), which is the situation in this verse as well.

Eden and the garden of Yahweh are synonyms referring to the garden Adam was assigned to tend in Eden (Gen. 2:8). Ezekiel 28:13 identifies "Eden" as "the garden of God." The point is that Israel's wilderness areas and its desert places are going to resemble the garden of Eden once the Kingdom is inaugurated. This description cannot fit any other period of time in Israel's history. The only time the word "Eden" is used in the Old Testament, and is not referring to a person by that name, is as a reference to the Garden of Eden. Eden, עֵדֶן, was the place where God placed Adam and Eve to live and to do the work that He assigned them to do. Clearly, the reference here is to that pristine place which proclaims the truth that restored Israel is going to resemble it to a significant degree.

We cannot go as far as some theologians do and make the claim that this is a reference to the new earth, but we can say that the curse that was placed on the earth at the Fall is at least largely removed at this time in history when God restores it to the point that it largely resembles the garden of Eden. In this transformation, formerly unproductive land will be restored to a state of fertility and will become incredibly productive (Amos 9:13).

Joy, gladness, and thanksgiving will be experienced by all the people living in the land that God promised them so long ago and those emotions will be expressed in music. After the horrors of the Tribulation and the deliverance of the Israelites (Mt. 23:39; Rev. 19:21) when all Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26), those emotions are understandable, and these conditions will exist for at least the duration of the Messianic Kingdom, and, it seems, on into eternity. This refers to the joy of covenant promises realized, both physical and spiritual.

Joy, שִׂשׂוֹן, means joy, exultation, rejoicing, and jubilation referring to being in a state of happiness with the focus on the sounds being made and the expressions of joy. Joy is an emotion expressing great happiness.

Gladness, שִׂמְחָה, means joy, gladness, mirth, and delight referring to an attitude of joyful happiness and cheerfulness. It may refer to joyful banquets. "It is practically equivalent to the Israelites' days of feasting and celebrating over their God and His blessings" [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. "שִׂמְחָה," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 1161]. This word is specifically connected to the feasts (Num. 10:10; Neh. 8:12; Zech. 8:19). If the Wedding Supper of the Lamb is considered to encompass the entire Kingdom period, which many theologians believe it does, then this concept of gladness as it pertains to joyful banquets is quite appropriate.

Thanksgiving, תּוֹדָה, means thanksgiving which is a confession of thankfulness, i.e., to speak words of personal praise. It has the sense of thanksgiving in the religious context by offering thanks for a deity's past or present deeds in the life of an individual or a community and which is often accompanied by a sacrificial thank offering. "The word depicts worship by the presentation of songs of thanksgiving and praise that extolled the mighty wonders of Yahweh" [Baker and Carpenter, s.v. "תּוֹדָה," *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament*, 1216].

Melody, זמרה, means music or song, and it may represent singing and instrumental music. Singing refers to a chant or melody expressed through the instrument of the voice, with a focus on the content of the words of the song. Implied in the meaning is that the song is an expression of joy. In this context, it refers to one of the responses of Israel for their restoration in terms of giving thanks to Yahweh.

Isaiah 51:4–5 ⁴“Pay attention [קשב] to Me, O My people, And give ear [אזן] to Me, O My nation; For a law [תורה] will go forth from Me, And I will set My justice for a light of the peoples. ⁵“My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth [צדק], And My arms will judge the peoples; The coastlands [אִי] will wait for Me, And for My arm they will wait expectantly.

“Pay attention” and “give ear” are synonyms in the imperative verb form used as figures of speech to call the people to listen to what God has to say to them and then to appropriately respond to what has been heard.

Pay attention, קשב, means to listen attentively, to pay attention, to give heed, and to obey. It refers to accepting information as true and then appropriately responding to that truth. When it is God speaking, obedience is expected.

Give ear, אזן, means to listen, to give ear, to hear. Understanding and obedience are elements of this word. “Most references to the ear or hearing involve a response from the hearer. To hear, or to incline the ear, means to pay close attention ... Hearing and understanding are closely linked on occasion, and ‘ears’ can almost mean ‘mind.’ Horst noted: ‘The ears are regarded as the instrument by which speech and orders are noted, not the brain, as with us. Hence the ear is the seat of “insight”’” [Harris, Archer, Jr., and Waltke, s.v. “אָזן,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 28-29].

People and nation are also parallel terms. Both are singular here, referring to the people and the nation that God exclusively calls His own. “Who are the people who pursue deliverance and seek the Lord? They are *my people* and *my nation*. No matter what is past, no matter how they have sinned, if they are truly seeking God, he calls them his own. All his promises are theirs” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 335]. While עַם (people) may be a reference to the nations of the world, it is also used as a reference to Israel alone.

It is unclear who is doing the speaking. Much of what is being said here relates to information in the earlier Servant songs, so it may be the Servant. It could be God the Father, the Servant, or both working together since the Triune nature of one God accommodates the use of singular pronouns in the verse.

Law, תורה, is not necessarily a reference to the Pentateuch here; it is a reference to direction, teaching, or instruction which is the better translation in this context (CSB, LEB, ISV, TANAKH). Given the context, this instruction must be related to worldwide salvation for all people. God's restoration of Israel will serve as instruction for the world. His promises to save all Israel will reinforce the promises He is making concerning Gentile salvation; therefore, the Gentile world may be assured that He will do what He said He will do.

“Justice” as the concept is presented here is more than a forensic, courtroom decision making process. “This is the fair, equitable, and blessed governing of a world by its Creator according to the purposes for which it was created. The opposite of *mišpāṭ* is not injustice but chaos, which of course includes injustice but is much more far-reaching.... This is not merely to pass judicial sentence upon, but to govern according to creation principles” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 336]. This situation will not only remedy the injustice problem in Israel, but in the world as well.

The second use of the word אֲמֵ, peoples, is plural and is a reference to the nations of the world. This is not new; Gentile salvation has been revealed in Isaiah a number of times leading up to this chapter (9:7, 11:4, 42:1-4, 49:6), and it will be further revealed in the upcoming chapters. We have discussed the concept that God is light, and that Light will be a light to the world.

John 1:4 ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

John 9:5 ⁵“While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.”

God’s attributes of righteousness and justice go hand-in-hand. He can be nothing but righteous and just in His dealings with mankind, both Jew and Gentile. His righteousness and justice will result in salvation, both physical and spiritual, and also result in an honest, judgment applied to the peoples which are understood as being a reference to the nations. Only those who are found to be part of the righteous, Jew and Gentile, will ultimately live in the Servant’s light in the Messianic Kingdom. In verse 1, the righteous are the Israelites, but Gentiles require righteousness to enter the Kingdom as well.

The word coastlands, יָם, refers to land in coastal areas. It stands for the coastlands of the world. Between the prophecy of Gentile salvation and the fact that the coastlands are waiting for Him, there is no doubt that this prophecy cannot be restricted to the return from Babylon. This prophecy has worldwide implications. They will be waiting for the power of God, represented by the arm of the Lord, for deliverance. Only God, has the power to destroy Satan’s world system and put mankind and the world on the path He originally created them to be on. Taking righteousness and salvation to the coastlands, i.e., to the world, is clearly an evangelistic enterprise which is not restricted to the end, but culminates at that time.

Not everyone, of course, will welcome God’s powerful intervention in world affairs, and they will be judged for rejecting it. Why will other people be waiting for it? Very few people in the world seem to be waiting for it now; the majority of the world is in rebellion against Him. In the end, when the arm of the Lord is revealed wielding perfect power, many people will welcome His intervention in the world situation as it exists at that time. Remember, the circumstances in which the world will find itself at the end will be the most cataclysmic times the world has ever seen. Human government will not only be incapable of setting things right, human government will be an even bigger part of the problem than it is now! Many people are going to come to faith during that terrible time, but many more will not.

“Should the world look forward in hopeful anticipation to the perfecting of human laws and human systems of government? Surely not! If the 20th century should have taught us anything, it should have taught us that the confident 19th century claims of imminent human perfection were not only highly fallacious but ludicrous. Instead of looking to the light of which Isaiah spoke twenty-seven hundred years ago, however, we have been willing to settle, as humans have for five thousand years or more, for the trappings of personal pleasure, comfort, and security, while human civilization crashes down around us. We have fastened a spurious light to ourselves, and it is rapidly devouring us” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 336]. Note: this commentary was published in 1998.

Apparently, some theologians believe these two verses are not properly understood because they say that the verses are only about Israel and not about the world; however, these verses clearly refer to both Israel and the world. Israel and the nation's relationship to God has a huge role to play in working out world history. The Abrahamic Covenant stipulated worldwide blessing (Gen. 12:3). Israel was privileged to have the light, but their light had a purpose. Not only did the Light of the world come from Israel, the nation itself was supposed to enlighten the world. The world and Israel, while being a nation set apart from the world, are nevertheless inextricably linked together.

Isaiah 60:1–3 ¹“Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. ²“For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon you. ³“Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

Salvation is obviously not only an end times event; it has already gone out throughout the world. Gone forth, *נִצַּח*, means to go out, to go forth. “Gone forth” is a perfect verb meaning completed action, and, in this case, the verb represents action that is ongoing. Salvation has gone forth from the beginning, it continues to go forth, and it will go forth making this verb a prophetic perfect. It is so certain to come to pass, that it is as good as completed because God Himself guarantees it. Since the beginning, people have been saved based on faith. The Israelites were saved based on faith (Gen. 15:6), and Gentiles are saved by faith (John 3:16; Eph. 2:8-9), and the people living at the end will be saved based on faith (Rev. 13:10, 14:12).

Everything about the earth is transient, but salvation, righteousness, and the Word of God are eternal. The creation looks permanent to mankind with the very limited point of view we possess, but it is subject to the governance of the Creator. No one should presume to think that the creation is permanent, and there is no excuse for failing to know that it will someday vanish, because the Word of God clearly reveals that truth. At some point in time, the world is going to be destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:10) and recreated as the new heavens and the new earth (Is. 65:17, 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:10). The end times judgment was discussed in detail in Isaiah 24. The destruction is contrasted with the eternal nature of salvation.

Isaiah 51:6 ⁶“Lift up your eyes to the sky, Then look to the earth beneath; For the sky will vanish [תִּלָּחַח] like smoke, And the earth will wear out [תִּבְלֶה] like a garment And its inhabitants

will die [מוֹת] in like manner [כְּ]; But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not wane [תֵּהָרָם].

Luke 21:33³³“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away. [cf. Mt. 24:35; Mark 13:31]

Psalms 119:89⁸⁹Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.

Vanish, בָּלָה, means to tear away, to dissipate, to flutter away referring to being dissipated by being spread thin and scattered with the result of eventually disappearing and no longer in sight. The comparison here is made with smoke that drifts away and vanishes into thin air never to be seen again.

Wear out, בָּלָה, means to become old and worn out, to fall or fall away, and to be exhausted referring to becoming old in relation to the normal time which occurs for an object or person and which implies a useless or obsolete state. The comparison here relates the earth to an old garment that has worn out, and once something has worn out, it has exhausted its useful life span.

Mankind is no more permanent than the rest of the created realm. Death is a part of the sinful, broken, fallen world system (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12), but God's judgment at the end of history will find the multitudes who are in rebellion against Him will result in their death for their transgression. Die, מוֹת, means to die, to be dead, to be killed, to be put to death or executed which results in a state of being without life. This was not the God's original intention for mankind; death was not part of life until mankind, אָדָם ('ādām), rebelled against God in the garden.

Manner, כְּ, means gnats or lice. If the gnats are the issue, then the word is referring to annoying little insects, gnats or lice referring to dying like gnats. But it may also be translated as thus or so conveying equality, or expressing the realization of something previously spoken. English translations are about evenly split on which way to interpret the word: gnats: CSB, NET Bible, LEB, YLT, LSV; like manner: NASB, KJV, NKJV, ASV, ESV. I lean towards using “like manner” because it fits the context better. Just as the sky will vanish and the earth will wear out, in like manner the earth's inhabitants will die. The problem is there are about four words with the same spelling.

His salvation is forever. עוֹלָם means a long duration, everlasting, forever, eternity, referring to an unlimited duration of time, usually with a focus on the future. The simplest way to understand the word is to understand it as denoting a very long time. It does not have to mean eternal. It may refer to lasting for a duration meaning an undetermined duration of time without reference to other points of time with a focus of no anticipated end, but nevertheless may have limits. In this context, it is obvious that eternity is the meaning.

Wane, תֵּהָרָם, means to be shattered, to break or to be broken. Nothing God is can be broken or shattered; therefore, God's righteousness will always be what it is. This word may also mean to be terrified or broken down with fear. Since this word is negated, it may be intended as a word of comfort. Because God's righteousness never wanes, those who are believers have no cause to worry that His righteousness will change or disappear.

"These promises give every believer a solid foundation for their faith in God; they can live in hope as they face the future even though the events of life may be difficult and appear quite hopeless. Assurances based on God's salvation are really the only worthwhile hope in this world" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 397].

The fact is that the only permanent thing in the universe is the one true God and the salvation that is found only in Him. Unbelievers can only turn to pagan practices that, in the end, prove to be worthless.

The next two verses also convey words of comfort. The righteous ones need not fear other men; God will deal with them.

Isaiah 51:7-8 ⁷"Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, A people in whose heart is My law; Do not fear [יָרֵא] the reproach [תְּרִפָּה] of man [אֲנוּשׁ], Nor be dismayed [תִּהְיֶה] at their revilings [גְּדוּפָה]. ⁸"For the moth will eat them like a garment, And the grub will eat them like wool. But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation to all generations."

This verse begins with another exhortation to those who know righteousness to listen to the words being spoken to them. Righteousness, adherence to a standard whose source, in this context, is identified as the instruction of the Torah, has been personally accepted by them as the Word of God, which is powerfully relevant to their lives and they know it. More importantly, God is acknowledging that they know it; He sees them as His righteous ones who adhere to His law.

"But the *Torah* includes much more than just a set of laws; it is fundamentally a revelation of God's power over creation and history, his promise that his presence with them will bring about the fulfillment of his plans, plus a theological explanation of how to maintain a holy relationship with him. This means that these people have rejected the worldview of their day and completely accepted God's perspective on life and eternity. A heart acknowledgment of these ideas implies an emotional commitment to God, not just an awareness of a set of rules. That kind of devotion to God's way of thinking implies some sort of personal relationship with God that is the basis for a continual knowledge of his presence" [Gary V. Smith, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Isaiah 40-66*, 398]. This is talking about the believing remnant. These truths have a universal application in terms of knowing God's Word and then operating one's life according to the revelation contained therein.

Those who are righteous have nothing to fear from man's reproach and reviling.

Fear, יָרֵא, means to tremble, to be afraid or frightened, to fear relating to being in a state of feeling great distress and deep concern over pain or unfavorable circumstances.

Dismay, תִּהְיֶה, means to be shattered, to break or be broken, dismayed, filled with terror. It is the same word translated "wane" in verse 6.

The Lord addressed the fear of men during His ministry when He was presenting some truth concerning what it means to be a disciple. Physical harm is the least of our worries

in this life. We should really be fearing a separation, a death, from God for that is an eternal state that cannot be changed. If we are believers, the worst thing that can happen here does occur—our death—then we immediately step into His presence for eternity. Death is not a good thing, but the result for believers is a good thing.

Matthew 10:28 ²⁸“Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

John 12:24–25 ²⁴“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵“He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.

Reproach, הַרְפָּיָה, means reproach, scorn, disgrace, taunt, contempt referring to assigning someone to a state of dishonor and low status. It has the sense of casting blame or scorn on someone and displaying open disrespect for a person or thing.

Reviling, גְּדוּפָה, means reviling, reviling words, a taunt, or abuse referring to words that scorn. That sense of the word is that of aggravation by deriding, mocking, or criticizing. “The verb is only once used of verbal hostility to people ('revile', Ps. 44:16); its seven other occurrences concern blasphemy against God. This indicates the strength of the word Isaiah chose” [J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary*, 322].

Man, אָנוּשׁ, means man, human, and mortal referring to an individual human being with a focus on one of a class of animate life that dies, and is non-deity. This word is used when the frailty of man is the focus. “The verbal root of 'ēnôš is uncertain. If it is a derivation of 'ānaš 'to be weak, sick,' the basic emphasis would be on man's weakness or mortality.... While it is true that the word frequently emphasizes man's frailty and humanness, these concepts may derive from the theological framework in which the ancient Hebrews viewed mankind and not necessarily from an inherent root meaning. The word frequently has a general sense and its usage in parallelism with other general terms for man such as 'ādām ... The basic meaning of 'mankind' is evident ... A major theological concept underlying the use of this word is the fundamental distinction between God and man” [Harris, Archer, Jr. and Waltke, s.v. “אָנוּשׁ,” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 59]. The concept of frailty certainly fits the context.

This is a warning to the believing Jews that they will be persecuted. This relates to physical abuse as well as psychological abuse, but they are not to fear it or be dismayed by it. They cannot allow their fear to compromise their sanctification salvation by abandoning the Lord under pressure.

Being hated is the lot of Jewish believers, and, by means of application, for all who are in Christ and therefore belong to the group who know righteousness.

John 15:18, 25 ¹⁸“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated you*.... ²⁵“But *they have done this* to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE' (cf. Ps. 35:19, 69:4).

Luke 6:22 ²²“Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

Why shouldn't they fear the people doing those things to them? They should not fear them because they will get justice when God judges those people and destroys them.

The Servant said He was going to suffer abuse (Is. 50:6), but He also said He knew God would help Him and vindicate Him (Is. 50:7-8). Those who condemn Him will wear out like a moth-eaten garment (Is. 50:9). “The figures imply that the garment and the wool are already moth- and worm-eaten. The seeds of their own destruction they bear within themselves. The figures correspond to the use of *'ēnôš* (*frail man*) in the preceding verse to denote man” [Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah: A Commentary*, vol. 3, 3:312]. Young seems to be saying here that unbelieving man has the seeds of his own destruction sown within him that, without divine intervention based on faith, will certainly complete their destructive work.

Just as a moth destroys garments and grubs or worms eat wool, so the believing remnant's accusers will be destroyed. This refers to the gradual destruction of God's enemies over time, but that does not negate the fact that there will be a sudden end to all of them at once when the Lord saves all Israel (cf. Rev. 19:21). Ultimately, this is simply a metaphor revealing the ultimate destruction of God's enemies who are persecuting those who believe in Him.

“The believer need not be neutralized by the opposition of the passing world. Those who have made it and its gods ultimate have chosen the way of time: the moth and the insect. Those who have made God and his Servant ultimate have chosen the way of permanence, certainty, and joy” [John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, 339].

God guarantees the vindication of those who know righteousness. His righteousness is forever and His salvation is to all generations which also refers to eternity. No human agency can thwart God's Kingdom program for history.