

Isaiah 50:1-11

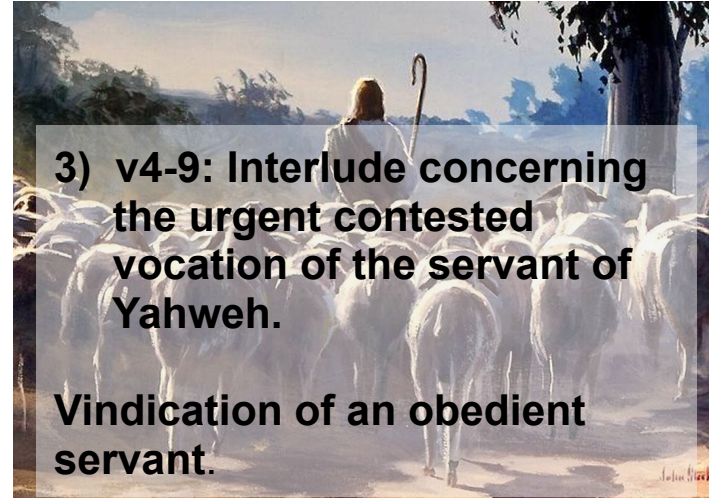
# Isaiah 50

1) v1: Trial - Yahweh not at fault for exile



3) v4-9: Interlude concerning the urgent contested vocation of the servant of Yahweh.

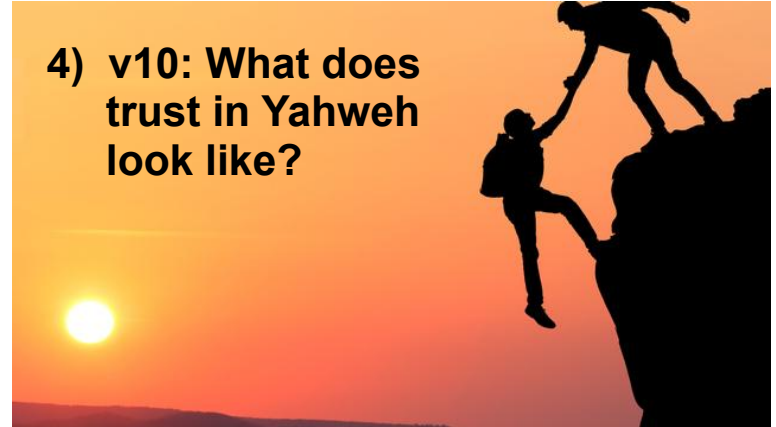
Vindication of an obedient servant.



2) v2-3: Yahweh's Unrivaled Power



4) v10: What does trust in Yahweh look like?



# Isaiah 50:1-4 (The Message)

God says:

“Can you produce your mother’s divorce papers  
proving I got rid of her?

Can you produce a receipt  
proving I sold you?

Of course you can’t.

It’s your sins that put you here,  
your wrongs that got you shipped out.

So why didn’t anyone come when I knocked?

Why didn’t anyone answer when I called?

Do you think I’ve forgotten how to help?

Am I so decrepit that I can’t deliver?

I’m as powerful as ever,

and can reverse what I once did:

I can dry up the sea with a word,

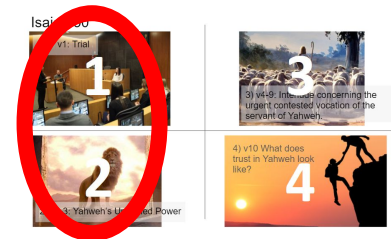
turn river water into desert sand,

And leave the fish stinking in the sun,

stranded on dry land . . .

Turn all the lights out in the sky

and pull down the curtain.”



# Who is at fault for the exile?

**God:**

Where is your mother's bill of divorce with which I put her away?

Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?

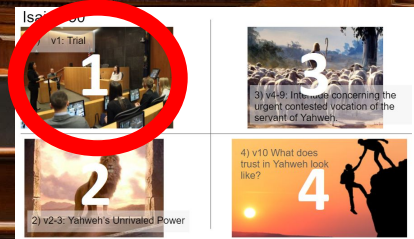
No, because of your sins you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was put away.

**Israel:**

Silence.

Why was no one there when I came?

Why did no one answer when I called?



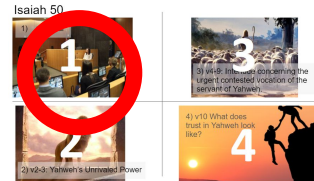
# Who is at fault for the exile?

*“There is a discernable note of disbelief in YHWH’s response. How can Israel possibly charge him with abandonment or estrangement? He asks for proof in the form of a divorce decree or a bill of sale (verse 1). If he had put them away or sold them, where is the evidence? He reminds them that the real problem has always been their iniquities and transgressions. He asks why none of them had bothered to respond to his previous invitations (verse 2).” (Cloyce Sutton II)*

Israel is silent and has no case to make.

**Verdict:** Yahweh is not the cause of the exile.

The cause is Israel’s fickleness.



# Did Yahweh lack power to prevent the exile?

**God:**

Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem?

Or have I no power to deliver?

**Israel:**

Silence.

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

I clothe the heavens with blackness,

And make sackcloth their covering.

Isaiah 50

1) v1: Trial 	3) v14-18: In what way concerning the urgent, contested 'vocation' of the servant of Yahweh? 
2) v2: Yahweh's Unseen Power 	4) v10: What does trust in Yahweh look like? 

# Is Yahweh Powerless?

Yahweh's reply (verse 2-3) suggests that Israel has at least entertained the possibility that Yahweh is powerless. He reminds them of his mastery over nature in his past deliverances (e.g., the Exodus: "By my rebuke I dry up the sea").



*“God neither lacks the desire nor power to deliver his people. The only issue is whether they are willing to step forward in repentance and faith to meet him when he comes and answer him when he calls”*

(Oswalt, John N. *The Book of Isaiah*)

Isaiah 50



# Non-Violent Communication

Is it possible to view this interaction in the language of non-violent communication and take the blame and accusation out of it?

Expressing how **I am** without blaming or criticizing:

1. Observations  
“When I (see, hear)...”
2. Feelings  
“I feel...”
3. Needs  
“Because I need/value...”
4. Request  
“Would you be willing to...?”

Empathetically receiving how **you are** without blaming or criticizing:

1. Observations  
“When you (see, hear)...”
2. Feelings  
“You feel...”
3. Needs  
“Because you need/value...”
4. Request  
“Would you like...?”



# NVC Translation: Who is at fault for the exile?

**God:**

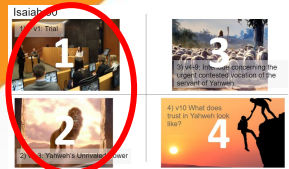
I sense you are feeling alone and powerless and have a need for security.

**Israel:**

Yes, when we see our captivity we feel abandoned and dislocated. We have a need for safety, security, and autonomy.

Would you be willing to overthrow the Babylonians and make us king?

So you are feeling oppressed and have a need for freedom. When I see you follow a destructive path I feel powerless because I value the path of harmony. Would you be willing to trust me and a new way?





## Another way to pray?

Maybe this is what prayer can look like. The kind of prayer that God can really answer.

When we communicate what we are feeling and our actual needs and are honest about how we want them met, this might expose how unreasonable our expectations are and open us up to trusting God more.

# Four Servant Songs



<i>Text</i>	<b>Song I</b> 42.1-4	<b>Song II</b> 49.1-6	<b>Song III</b> 50.4-9	<b>Song IV</b> 52.13-53.12
<i>Identity</i>	YHWH's Servant (Individual)	"Israel" (v 3) embodied in an individual (v 4-7)	YHWH's Servant (Individual)	YHWH's Servant (Individual)
<i>Task</i>	Bring justice to the oppressed	Restore Israel & bring light to the nations	Teach the weary & suffer humiliation	To bear the iniquities of others
<i>Endowment</i>	Spirit & Word	Word	Word	Exaltation & vindication
<i>Attitude</i>	Quiet faithfulness	Despondency	Shame	Suffering

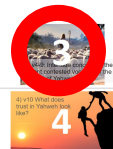
Motyer, J. A.



# Isaiah 50:4-9 The 3rd Servant Song (The Message)

The Master, God, has given me  
a well-taught tongue,  
So I know how to encourage tired people.  
He wakes me up in the morning,  
Wakes me up, opens my ears  
to listen as one ready to take orders.  
The Master, God, opened my ears,  
and I didn't go back to sleep,  
didn't pull the covers back over my head.  
I followed orders,  
stood there and took it while they beat me,  
held steady while they pulled out my beard,  
Didn't dodge their insults,  
faced them as they spit in my face.

And the Master, God, stays right there and  
helps me,  
so I'm not disgraced.  
Therefore I set my face like flint,  
confident that I'll never regret this.  
My champion is right here.  
Let's take our stand together!  
Who dares bring suit against me?  
Let him try!  
Look! the Master, God, is right here.  
Who would dare call me guilty?  
Look! My accusers are a clothes bin of  
threadbare  
socks and shirts, fodder for moths!



# Four Servant Songs



<i>Text</i>	<b>Song I</b>	<b>Song II</b>	<b>Song III</b>	<b>Song IV</b>
	<b>42.1-4</b>	<b>49.1-6</b>	<b>50.4-9</b>	<b>52.13-53.12</b>
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Motyer, J. A.

Isaiah 50



# Who is the servant?

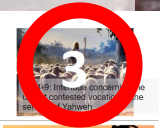
Song III (50.4-11) starts with a change of speaker. YHWH has been speaking since 49.7, where he is addressing Israel.

The new speaker is:

- distinct from YHWH and speaks of him in the third person.
- distinct from those whom he helps (verse 4),
- distinct from those who seek to hurt him (verses 5-9).

His identity is not clear until verses 10-11, where YHWH calls the subject of Song III, “His [YHWH’s] servant.”

Isaiah 50

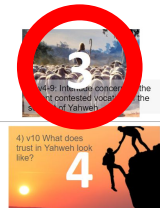
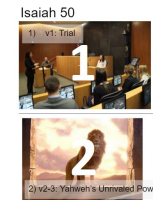


# Four Servant Songs



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# The Servant's Tasks:

## 1) To teach the weary:

The sustaining word of the servant is a word about Yahweh.

*What do you expect from “a word”? What is a life changing “word” that you have received?*

*Do they come often or consistently or rarely?*

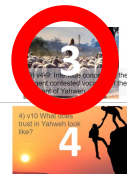
simple and elusive

like a gentle breeze

listening and acceptance

a shift in disposition, hopeful energy.

at the request of an inner  
cry for help, if only a groan



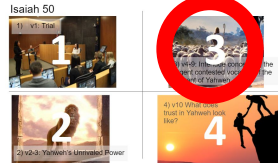
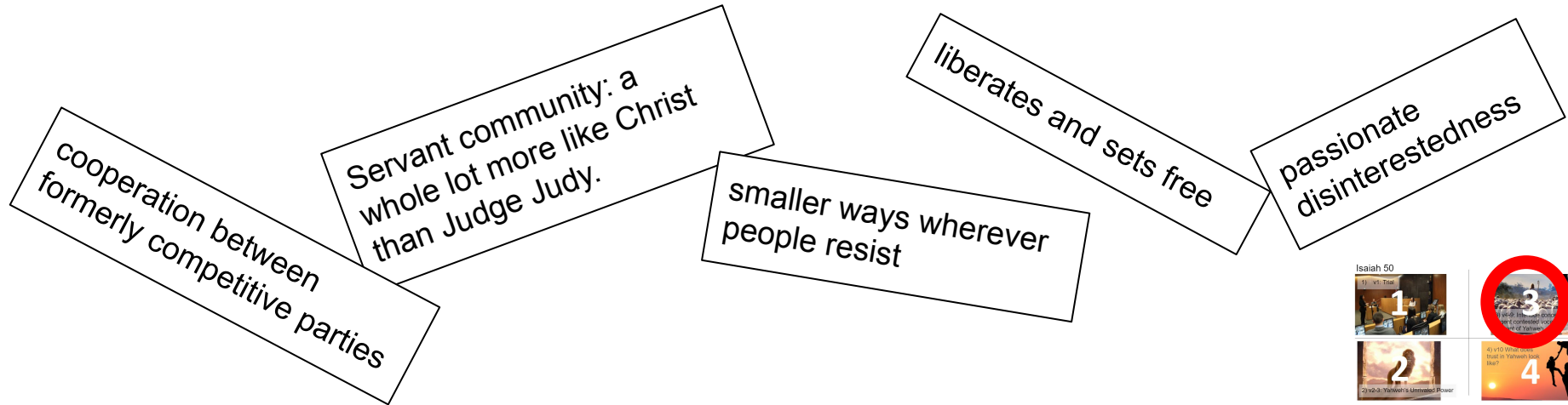


# The Servant's Tasks:

## 1) To teach the weary cont.:

This word insists that the truth of Yahweh contradicts and denies the power and erodes the authority of Babylon.

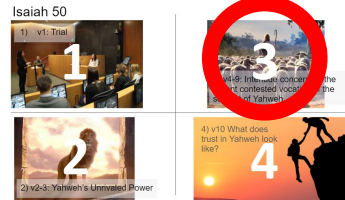
*Do you see examples in life where the truth of Yahweh contradicts the power and authority of the powers that be?*



# The Servant's Tasks:

## 2) Suffer humiliation:

The servant faces abusive opposition from Babylonian authorities and from members of the exilic community who have worked out a sustainable compromise between Yahweh and the empire. These are people for whom homecoming and distinctive identity is extremely disruptive.

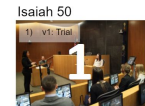


# Four Servant Songs



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Motyer, J. A.



# Endowment - the Word of God

Servant song 3 continues the idea of the servant being endowed with the Word of God. But the reason he is able to speak a life giving word is because he is ready to listen. He only speaks what he has heard from Yahweh.

He serves as an example to Israel of readiness to hear Yahweh and obey.

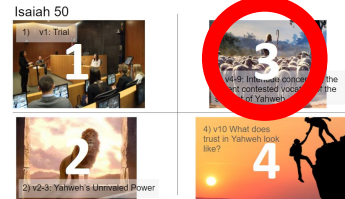
Even the greatest of God's prophets had moments of hesitancy:

- Moses first excused, then refused (Exodus 3-4);
- Elijah was ready to quit (1 Kings 19);
- Jeremiah frequently complained (Jeremiah 20);
- Jonah first ran, then pouted (Jonah 1, 4).

The Servant responds with perfect obedience.

“I was not disobedient, nor did I turn back.”

In response to YHWH's provisions, and in contrast to the persistent disobedience of Israel.



# Four Servant Songs



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Isaiah 50

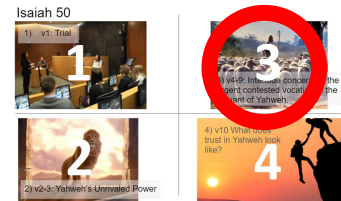


# Attitude: Shame

## *The Servant's Suffering & Humiliation (50:6)*

*“What is significant about the Servant’s suffering is that it is not simply passively endured. Rather, he offers himself to his aggressors: “I gave my back... I did not cover my face.” It is clear that the Servant understood this to be part and parcel with his obedience as a disciple (verse 5). In this regard, all disciples must count the cost (Luke 14.25-35; 2 Timothy 3.12)” (Cloyce Sutton II)*

*“Knowing that suffering and humiliation will come, he remains nonetheless resolute in his task. First he affirms that the basis of his submission is the Lord God (adonāi YHWH, used four times in this section) who will provide help. Consequently he is not disgraced, and he steels himself for it. All of which reaffirms his confidence in YHWH: “I will not be ashamed.” (Cloyce Sutton II)*



# What does trust in Yahweh look like?

50:10

Who out there fears God,  
actually listens to the voice of his servant?  
For anyone out there who doesn't know where you're going,  
anyone groping in the dark,  
Here's what: Trust in God.  
*Lean on your God!*

This first group fears YHWH and needs his servant

50:11

But if all you're after is making trouble,  
playing with fire,  
Go ahead and see where it gets you.  
Set your fires, stir people up, blow on the flames,  
But don't expect me to just stand there and watch.  
I'll hold your feet to those flames.

This group is self-reliant. The light in which they walk is a light of their own making

