

Appointed to Suffer, Resolved to Obey: Christ's Submission to His Father
Isaiah 50:4–8

Isaiah 50 is the third Servant song; the first is in ch. 42 — the equipping of the Servant. In chapter 49 there is a dialog between the Father and the Son, the King and the Servant. Isaiah 50 begins with the Servant speaking.

Isaiah tells us much of this Servant —

1. The Servant is Taught (v. 4)

The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught is the answer to the question of the Pharisees and crowds about how Christ could teach with such authority.

How Christ could be taught by the Father (in His incarnation) is unknown, but here is the truth that the Father taught Him.

What is the question most asked by Jesus? *Have you not read?* He asks the question to religious Jews — what a damning indictment from the lips of the Savior. For 30 years he was molded and instructed and trained so that He could say for three years, “I only say what the Father gave to me.” Can you think of any greater obedience than to say, “I only speak the words of My Master?”

James 3 says that no one has tamed the tongue — but One has. He has tamed what no one else has tamed; no word out of place, no misspeaking even once. His tongue was tamed by the Father. He always knew what to say. He brought peace and healing to those who were broken. He spoke in parables. He speaks to the woman at the well, Nicodemus, His mother and the disciples and He always knows what to say and what not to say.

If you look at His words — even on the cross — they are a masterpiece of pastoral theology. So often His words come straight out of the OT. The OT streams out like a river from His mouth. Because He was taught by His Father.

2. The Servant is Obedient (vv. 5-6)

Everything that Christ did for us and for our salvation was done willingly (note the emphasis on *I* in these verses). If it was not willing it was not obedience. He has opened His ear (a ref. to Lev. 21 and the slave having his ear nailed to a post when he willingly placed himself under his owner when he could be freed).

This led Him to ridicule — this man has a demon. The Son of God, filled with the Spirit of holiness, was declared to be a man who had a demon. It led him to ask the disciples if they would leave Him too (Jn. 6). His obedience led Him to discouragement and temptation.

The Son of Man had nowhere to lay His head — this is where His obedience led Him. And to betrayal (by a man He loved). Gethsemane is the Son coming before the Father, unlike the first Adam, says, “Here I am.” Hugh Martin, *The Shadow of Calvary* says that if He had not made the petitions in the Garden, we might question His sinlessness. He knows that He is going to go into the fury of the holiness of God and if He did not shrink back from that, we might question whether He really was the Christ for only a sadistic fool would go into that. The prospect of the Father turning His face away from Him — how could He not ask, “remove this cup from Me?” “To have such views of the wrath of God...” (Martin)

But those requests were wrapped in the words, “Your will be done.” He was obedient — and it led Him to the cross.

On the eternal subordination of the Son: Christ has a true human will. It’s not a phantom will. It’s a real will. He has two wills and the human will is brought to the brink of despair and He agonizes and pleads and all of that is proper to humanity. But to say that He has only one will is heretical. We must not attribute to the divine will what is proper to the human nature. There was no struggle in the divine will to submit to the Father.

3. The Servant’s Hope (vv. 7-8)

There is an incredible sense of dependence of the Son on the Father. He trusts Him that He will not be put to shame. There is holy confidence coming through the words. It is triumphalistic. He knows that He will be vindicated and glorified — because He prays that in Jn. 17. He trusts His Father and He knows that if He is going to receive His glory, He must go through the cross.

We can say this much about Heaven: it is the eternal vindication of our Savior. Those who accuse Him will have nothing to say.

4. Some Points of Application

- Why can’t Johnny preach? Because Johnny sleeps in. Is Johnny a man of the Word? Whatever else we can say about why Johnny can’t preach it is because he is not a man of the Word. That could never be said about Jesus. He was a Man of the Word.
- God doesn’t give you more than you can handle — He gives *a lot more* than you can handle! He did so to His own Son. The cries from the cross are those that are from One who has been given more than He can handle — otherwise we wouldn’t need God. It leads to heartache and tears — and also Heaven. So Christ had to live by faith. Is that not our struggle daily? Once Christ had been forsaken by the Father, then we had a merciful Savior who could minister to us in every situation (cf. Heb. 5:9; 7:19...). Our God *does* understand;

our Savior too was in a time of need. So we can be glad when the Lord gives us more than we can handle, for in those times, we can ask, “Have mercy on me,” and we can be sure that He *will* have mercy on us.

- Notice Christ’s obituary (vv. 8-9). He has not been rebellious; God has helped Him; God will vindicate Him. Our churches are a vindication of the Servant who was obedient. The Father’s reputation was on the line when it came to the Servant — the Father vindicated the Servant and the Son vindicated the Father. How will I spend my ministry — to vindicate myself or to vindicate the Father.