



Handout for week of 4/8/19 Luke 22:14- 23:56 & Is. 50: 4-7  
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Is. 50: 4 The L-rd GOD hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I should know how to sustain with words him that is weary; He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught. 5 The L-rd GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward. 6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my checks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting. 7 For the L-rd GOD will help me; therefore have I not been confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

COMMENTARY:

<p><b>c. 732-540</b></p>	<p><b>621 Hilkiah finds Deuteronomy text</b>          Editing of OT material</p> <p><b>Prophecies of Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk</b></p>	<p><b>587 Babylonians conquer Judah, destroy Temple, deport people to Babylon</b></p>	<p><b>* Persia: Zoroaster</b>  <b>* Greece: Aesop's Fables; Sappho; laws of Solon</b></p>
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### Servant Songs

Poems contained in the Book of ISAIAH. They tell of a faithful servant of God who suffers on behalf of the people. They are found in Isa. 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12. They have been interpreted as referring to the Jewish people or to particular historical individuals.

This is the third of the four "servant songs" in Second Isaiah (cf. 42:1-9; 49:1-7; 52:13-53:12). The servant, in my opinion, is either Israel as a whole or the prophet as the embodiment of Israel. Sometimes both understandings seem to be presupposed. The sufferings of the servant were used in the New Testament and in the early church to understand the significance of the suffering and death of Jesus.

The servant was a good listener to the divine word, and he was empowered by that word to give support and encouragement to the weary among the exiles of Israel. (vv 4-5). The servant is willing and resolute in his suffering--suffering from whipping, from having his beard pulled out hair by hair, and from being spat upon. His confidence stems from his conviction that God will help him and will vindicate him. (vv 6-8a).

He challenges his opponents to face up to him: Let us stand up together; let them confront me; who of them will prove the servant guilty (vv 8b-9a). The lectionary omits v 9b, which expresses the servant's confidence that the opponents will perish like a moth-eaten garment. I personally think it is a mistake to omit such imprecations. Rather, let them stand in some tension with "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." There is a place in our worship for the public processing of pain. Note that vv 7 and 9 both begin with an affirmation of God's role as helper. That is the servant's reason for boldness in suffering: if God is for us, who can be against us?