



# Isaiah 51

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# Isaiah's urgent message from God

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- God detests Judah' immorality, social injustice, religious hypocrisy
- God's impending judgement and imminent disaster. Only solution – repent, turn back to Him
- Assure them of God's continuing love and purpose for them when the inevitable catastrophe came
- Encourage Judah (and us!) by telling them the future



## Historical background to Isaiah 51

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- **701 B.C.:** God saved Judah from the Assyrians
- Because of continuing disobedience to God, Isaiah warned Judah of conquest by the Babylonians (Isaiah 39:5-7)
- **587 B.C.:** Jerusalem destroyed by the Babylonians, 114 years after their deliverance from the Assyrians
- **539 B.C.:** Overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus the Persian king (Isaiah 41:2)
- **538 B.C.:** Judah allowed by Cyrus to return home (after 70 years in captivity)



## ... historical background

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- **2 Peter 1:20-21:** *“No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”*



## A. God's righteous judgment

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### ‘Cup of wrath’:

- Metaphor for tragedy or disaster
- A symbol of God's just punishment
- Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before His crucifixion (Luke 22:39-46): *“Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done”* ([Luke 22:42](#)).
- Jesus bore the full and complete wrath of God on mankind onto himself. Not for his wrongdoing, but for ours.



## B. His unchanging love

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### 1. God is almighty and all-powerful:

- In the creation of the world (v.13,16)
- Over his creation (nature) (v.15)
- Over all peoples and nations (v.12-14)
- Over Satan (v.9)
- Therefore, look to the Rock (v.1): God is called the Rock in the Old Testament (Isaiah 17:10; 26:4; 30:29; 44:8; Dt. 32:4, 15,18; Ps 19:4)



## ....His unchanging love

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### **2. God's faithfulness to them in the past:**

- Blessing Abraham, their forefather (v. 2)
- Miraculous deliverance from Pharaoh (v.10).
- His tender love and care for them (v.16): *"I have covered you with the shadow of My hand"*. We need not fear man.
- **The LORD's past faithfulness is a promise of future faithfulness**



## ....His unchanging love

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**3. God would restore them from captivity (v. 3,11,13-14, 22-23):**

- Their salvation is coming (v. 5). God will bring justice to them.





## Isaiah's prophecies of the future

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- Rise of Cyrus the Persian king ([Isa. 44:28; 45:1](#)), 150 years before it happened.
- Cyrus conquers Babylon (Isa. 41:2). Happened in 539 B.C.
- Cyrus would allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem after 70 years of exile in Babylon. Happened in 538 B.C.
- God's sovereignty - says of Cyrus, "*He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please*" ([Isaiah 44:28](#))
- Coming of the Messiah (Isaiah 9:6), 600 years before it happened
- End of human history, and the coming of God's rule on earth (v. 3-8,11)



## Lessons for today

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1. Mankind is facing God's wrath and judgement
2. God is a God of mercy, compassion, and grace: Jesus's death a "propitiation" for our sins (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10)

**Propitiation:** Deflecting, turning away God's righteous punishment on us. Jesus stood in the way of God's wrath.

3. Isaiah 51 foreshadows the end of time:
  - Jesus will return as judge
  - Judgement day - separation of those who accept or reject Christ
  - Christ will rule over new Jerusalem and new earth
  - No more tears, sorrow, or pain, or sin, or evil.