

Strength from God

Key Verse: *“The Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.”*
—Isaiah 50:7

Selected Scriptures:
Isaiah 49:5,6; 50:4-9

SPEAKING PROPHETICALLY

of Messiah at his First Advent, Isaiah acknowledges God as his instructor. “The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.”—Isa. 50:4

Throughout his ministry, Christ relied upon the Heavenly Father for his every undertaking. Immediately after his baptism he was filled with the Holy Spirit and received enlightenment from God concerning his mission on earth. While fasting in the wilderness, he meditated upon the Scriptures to learn how he was to fulfill various prophecies regarding himself.—Matt. 4:1,2

Prayer enabled Jesus to receive strength to do the Father’s will. Before selecting the twelve apostles, Jesus communed all night with God to determine how this crucial task was to be executed. When he delivered his sermon regarding attitudes to be manifested by his disciples, the wisdom and insights he received from above were clearly manifest.—Luke 6:12,20

Jesus did not shirk from proclaiming the good news of a future kingdom of blessings for mankind

even though it was not well received by the scribes and Pharisees. "The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." (Isa. 50:5) He realized the shameful and horrifying death of crucifixion that awaited him, in order to deliver Israel from condemnation because of their failure to keep the Law Covenant.—John 3:14,15; Gal. 3:13,14

On his final night on earth, Jesus endured many indignities while submitting to the Father's will. The source of his strength was the knowledge that God was well-pleased with his faithfulness in bearing these painful and demeaning experiences. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."—Isa. 50:6

After being sentenced to death, many thoughts must have entered Jesus' mind. Israel was unwilling to receive him as their Messiah. Peter had denied knowing him and Judas had betrayed him. The previous evening the apostles were arguing among themselves as to who would be the greatest.—Luke 22:24

Our Key Verse illustrates the mental attitude of Jesus as he walks towards Golgotha, speaks to the weeping daughters of Jerusalem en route, and ultimately is nailed to the cross. "The Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." Christ was able to faithfully endure every difficult experience contained in the cup that was poured for him. (John 18:11) The source of his strength was his total reliance upon the Heavenly Father.

Each footstep follower of the Master similarly must derive strength from the precious promises of the Scripture for sustaining grace in the quest to successfully "walk, even as he walked."—I John 2:6 ■