

ISAIAH, PART 2 (COMFORT FOR HIS PEOPLE)  
PROGRAM 21 (#911136)  
WEEK 5 (#911328) (Guest Teacher David Arthur)  
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**SERIES: Isaiah, Part 2 (Comfort For His People)**  
**TITLE: Program 21 – Listen To Me!**  
**(Guest Teacher David Arthur)**

**MONDAY**

**INTRO**

**Kay:** O Beloved, I am so excited. I have a surprise for you today. That surprise is I am not teaching. Now don't say "O no! What's going to happen?" Well, my son David Arthur, who's our new Vice-President of teaching and training, is going to be doing the teaching. And like others you may say "I'm disappointed," until you hear him and then you're gonna say, "Hey, didn't miss you because I got the Word explained to me in power."

**OPEN**

**David:** Has your mother ever said to you, "Son, daughter, listen to me, I have something to tell you, very important." You know that what she says next is gonna be serious. We have today, in the book of Isaiah in chapter 51, a message from God. He says, three times, "Listen to Me. Pay attention." Join us today as we hear what God has to say.

## PART ONE

**David:** Several times in our text today, we're gonna see God say: "Listen to Me." It's a pretty understood fact that when God says, "Listen to Me," He's trying to get our attention. Three times He says, "Listen. Pay attention, give ear. Listen up Israel, I have a message to tell you." What is that message? Come with me to Isaiah chapter 51 and we'll look at it together. The first one I want to take you to is verse 1. Verse 1 starts off with that verb, "Listen." He says: **"Listen to me...who pursue righteousness, who seek the LORD: look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the quarry...which you were dug. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain; [and] when he was but one I called him, [and] then I blessed him and multiplied him."** (Isaiah 51:1-2) Now these first two verses, what we have here is God saying, "Listen to Me." What does He ask them to do in this listening? Well the first thing He wants them to do is, He wants them to look to their origin. Look again down at the verse, beginning in verse 1. He says, **"...Look to the rock from which you were hewn..."** go to where you came from, **"...[look] to the quarry from which you were dug."** (Isaiah 51:1) And then He defines that in verse 2 as Abraham: **"Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain..."** (Isaiah 51:2) Well oftentimes when God wants to encourage us, He wants to take us back into history and remind us. To show us His past history, tells us that there's something we can trust in. There's a God that we can rely upon. He's proven Himself. He says, you notice what He says about Abraham and Sarah. He says in verse 2, **"...When he was but one I called him, then I blessed him and multiplied him."** (Isaiah 51:2) There He's referring to Abraham when Abraham was an old man with an old wife. He approached Abraham and said: ["Abraham, I'm gonna make you a great nation and from you will come descendants like the sand of the sea, like the stars in the heaven, and I will bless the whole world through you."] (PARAPHRASE, Genesis 22:17) There was a problem. Abraham was an old

man. Abraham was past the time in his life when he was to have children. And yet God says, “Remember. Look to your origin. Look backwards and you will see.” The second thing that He tells them in this listening is that, we are to be comforted. Look what He says in verse 3: **“Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD....” (Isaiah 51:3)** Eden, garden of the Lord; this is a theme that we see often in Isaiah. It’s a theme that describes God as saying, “Listen, I want to take you back to the original design.” And if you were to go to Scripture, if you looked at the whole Bible in one big picture you would see at the beginning of the Bible, a tree in the Garden of Eden. It’s the tree of life. If you read through the entire Bible and you get to the very last chapter in Revelation, you see that same tree again. The story of the Bible fits between these two trees. Literally, though, it’s one tree. It’s a tree that says: “I am the God of creation. I am the One who takes small things and makes them big. I am a God who blesses those, who quite honestly, don’t deserve My blessing or even expect My blessing.” And God says, “Listen, I want you to listen up, and here’s My message: ‘Be comforted.’” Oh, what a great message for us: to “be comforted.” How does He base that on? Well He’s already told us to “Look to your origin.” **“...Look to the rock from which you [came]...[look] to the quarry from which you were dug.” (Isaiah 51:1)** Remember Abraham? Remember Sarah? And how He brought them from a womb that seemed to be dead, He brought an entire nation that He blessed; that He carried through. And now He says: “Be comforted. Be comforted.” Well what’s the source of that comfort? Well He tells us in verse 3 that “I’m going to restore you.” Look what He says: **“Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion....” (Isaiah 51:3)** How will He do it? He will start with her “waste places,” her “wilderness.” What will the wilderness look like? It says the wilderness will be like Eden. You remember Eden? There was no sin. It’s where the Lord, daily, walked with Adam and Eve. It’s where creatures

had the right position, the right relationship with man. Man was in dominion and man was fulfilling the earth and fulfilling God's mandate on him as His image bearer. It was perfect. It was the way God had designed it. It was His pattern for creation. And God says, "I have a message of comfort for you. A message of comfort that starts with: 1) Looking at your origin; but 2) "Know that I will restore you. I will take your waste places and I will make your waste places like the Garden of Eden." Like the desert, He says in verse 3: "The desert will be like the garden of God." So what does that look like? What does it look like when the deserts become gardens? What does it look like when non-Eden goes back to Eden? The end of that verse tells us. This is what will be found in her. **"...Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and [a] sound of melody."** (Isaiah 51:3) His restoration, His comfort—is marked with joy! It's marked with gladness. It's marked with a sense of song in the heart. You know when you've got a song in your heart. It's something you can't keep down. You can't keep it out. It's, joy and pleasure bubbling its way out of your chest, out of your heart, out of your lungs. You sing out to the Lord. He says, "This is what My comfort will be like for My people. This is the first time He tells us about listening. Now what I want you to do, if you're following along in your Bible, I'd like for you to mark the word "listen" or any phrases that are similar to that. So what I do is, I draw a real simple drawing of an ear. Just a little half moon shape and then a little dot in the middle for your ear, and I just draw that out next to the word "listen", or "give heed", or "pay attention". You know, different phrases that do that, and I'll draw that out there and you'll be able to use this kind of marking system as you study through the Bible. If you've not done it yet, I would encourage you to go to [preceptsforlife.com](http://preceptsforlife.com) where you can download a free study guide that we have prepared for you to assist you in your study of God's Word. Now let's look at the next one. Verse 4 tells us the next mention of "listen." It's actually here described as "Pay attention," or to "Give ear." Let's read verse 4 together. **"Pay attention to Me, O My**

people, and give ear to Me, O My nation; for a law will go forth from Me, and I will set My justice for a light of the peoples. My righteousness is near, [and] My salvation has gone forth...My arms will judge the peoples; [and] the coastlands will wait for Me, and for My arm they will wait expectantly.” (Isaiah 51:4-5) Okay, a couple of questions we need to ask the text. First, who is He talking to? Who is He telling to “Pay attention”? Who is He telling to “Listen up”? Well if you look back down at the text, you see in verse 4, He describes them as “My people; My nation.” We understand from the context that this would be Judah or the people of Israel—God’s covenant people that He has brought out of Abraham, as we’ve seen earlier. So He’s talking to His people, to his nation, why does He say, “Listen”? Why does He say, “Pay attention”? Look at verse 5. He tells us something is near, something is coming. Look what He says, verse 5: **“My righteousness [God’s righteousness] is near, My salvation has gone forth....” (Isaiah 51:5)** There’s a sense of expectation now. There’s a sense of anticipation that God is bringing something. “Pay attention.” “Be alert,” He says. “Give ear.” It’s what my Mom would say to me when she knew she didn’t quite have my full comprehension of what the instruction was. She would say to me, “David.” She’d give me that look. Sometimes she’d use my middle and last name, I knew I was in trouble when that happened. “David Lee Arthur, listen to me.” There’s something coming. Now in my case it was usually a punishment or a mandate: “Clean the room, one more time.” But here in Isaiah 51, verse 5 He says, “[Listen] **My righteousness....” (Isaiah 51:5)** “The thing that you have been waiting for, the thing that I have designed, the gift from Me that reunites My people to Me. The thing you’re gonna need to cling to desperately. My righteousness and My salvation are near. Be in expectation.” (See Isaiah 51:4-5) Well what does it look like? Two things I want you to see here again from the text. In verse 4 He says, “[My] **law will go forth from Me....” (Isaiah 51:4)** This is gonna be a manifestation of His righteousness and of

His salvation. He first describes as His “law going forth from Him”. Well what would that law look like? The next phrase tells us that it will be like a **“...light for the [nations.]” (Isaiah 51:4)** A light is something that exposes. A light is something that illuminates. A light is something that says, “Listen, there’s something important for you to see. You need to be aware.” A light for the nations; well what is that light? He says in verse 4: **“...I will set my justice for a light of the peoples.” (Isaiah 51:4)** If you’ve been studying along with us, you’ll remember Isaiah chapter 2 tells us that is what’s gonna come out of Zion. That is what’s gonna be part of a manifestation. (See Isaiah 2:3) [“My light will be My justice that I will set for all the nations.”] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 51:4) And then He says, secondly, “Look around you, just look around you.” **“...The coastlands will wait for Me....” (Isaiah 51:5)** [The peoples will be judged.] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 51:5) He says, verse 6, **“Lift up your eyes to the sky....”** And then He describes all these cosmic things and He says very simply: **“...[They] will vanish....” (Isaiah 51:6)** If you’re gonna listen to God, sometimes you have to look around. You have to compare it to the message that you’re hearing from the world and from those around you. And as you think about what God is saying, He says, “I want you to know, My salvation, My righteousness is near. And there’s gonna be a temptation to look around and to place your trust, or to have a reason for anxiety from other things that are competing with My message. But I want you to know something very clearly: ‘...[they] will vanish like smoke...but [I] My salvation will [never end]....’” (Isaiah 51:6)

## **PART TWO**

**David:** Welcome back. I’m so glad you’re studying the book of Isaiah with me. As we saw earlier, God had said, “Listen, I want to comfort you. Part of My message is a message of comfort. And part of that message you will receive when you look around you and see reality through My eyes.” We saw earlier that He said, “Look at those things around you.” **“...[They] will**

**vanish like smoke...but My [righteousness] will be forever....” (Isaiah 51:6)** Let’s continue to look at that. Look with me at verse 7. I love this in verse 7, He says: **“Listen to Me...,”** here you go. You’ll mark it again with a little ear. So you want to draw your little half moon, ear shape with a little hole in the middle. **“Listen to Me...,”** verse 7, **“...you who know righteousness, a people in whose heart is My law....”** Here’s the message: **“...Do not fear the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings.” (Isaiah 51:7)** Why? Verse 8: **“For the moth...,”** He says, **“...will eat them like a garment, and the grub will eat them like wool. But...,”** in contrast, **“...My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation to all generations.” (Isaiah 51:8)** Okay, so let’s back up and look at, again, the text. We see in verse 1, He says to **“Listen to me....” (Isaiah 51:1)** We see in verse 4, **“Pay attention to Me...,”** or **“...give ear....” (Isaiah 51:4)** And then in verse 7 He says, **“Listen to Me....” (Isaiah 51:7)** All three times it’s a message of who He is and who we are in relationship. [“Listen to Me,” He says. “I want to bring you comfort. Start by looking at your origin. Remember who I brought you from. I brought you from Abraham and Sarah. I made a nation out of an old woman and an old man past child-bearing age. And I will make you like the Garden of Eden,” He said, “the garden of the Lord. I will bring you back to restoration.”] (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 51:1-3) And then He says, “My law,” in the second one, “My law will go forth like a light for all the peoples.” And that His righteousness and His salvation are to be expected; anticipated, that they are coming. (See Isaiah 51:4-5) But then He goes on and describes the looking around in verse 6 as we’ve recently seen. He says, **“Lift...your eyes [up] to the sky, then look to the earth beneath....”** He goes on to say, **“...for the sky will vanish like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants will die in like manner....”** But again, in contrast: **“...My salvation...will not wane.” (Isaiah 51:6)** Now verse 7, who is He talking to? He says, **“Listen to Me, you...,”** here’s the answer: **“...who know righteousness....” (Isaiah 51:7)**

Well what does one who knows “righteous” look like? Well one who knows “righteousness,” He says in verse 7 is: **“...a people in whose heart is My law....” (Isaiah 51:7)** Reminds me of God’s promises; of His covenant. He says in His new covenant which is yet to come. In Jeremiah 31, He says, “It’ll be a covenant in which I will write My law, literally, on their hearts. My law will be part of who they are. It’ll be part of what they’re about. I will write My law in their hearts.” (See Jeremiah 31:33) But He says, “This is what I want you to do. I want you to listen to Me, and I want you to listen very carefully. I don’t want you,” He says in verse 7, **“...[to] fear the reproach of man....” (Isaiah 51:7)** You see, Israel was about to go into exile with Babylon. This has been prophesied already to the people of Israel in the book of Isaiah, that Babylon exile is coming. But he wants to remind them that even in exile; “Even when you’re taken by this powerful, pagan nation of Babylon, do not fear.” **“...Do not fear the reproach of man....” (Isaiah 51:7)** Why is that Isaiah? Well, he tells us. It’s like a moth eating a garment. It’s like a grub that eats wool. Man will not last. So what will last? What can we rely upon? He says in the end of verse 8, it’s His righteousness. **“...My righteousness will be forever...My salvation to all generations.” (Isaiah 51:8)** Now we have in verse 9, the next mention of “Listen,” except this one’s a little different, isn’t it? Look at verse 9: **“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake as in the days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not You who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon? Was it not You who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a pathway for the redeemed to cross over? (Isaiah 51:9-10)** What’s He doing here in verse 9? Well the the “Listen,” is going from God to the people, but now in verse 9 it’s turning it back around. This is the people’s response back to God. This is often done in the prophets. The prophets would, in a sense, through divine inspiration would speak back to God what really should be in the mouth of the people. The prophets speak back to God what really should be spoken



for the people, to God. What is the message? **“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD....” (Isaiah 51:9)** We’ve seen this reference to “arm” already, right? Let’s look at chapter 51, verse 5. He says, **“My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, and My arms will judge the peoples....”** Later on He says, **“...The coastlands...wait for Me, and for My arm they will wait expectantly. (Isaiah 51:5)** Now I’ve got written down in my cross references a couple of verses you might want to explore. Chapter 52, which we’ll see later on, in verse 10 it’s mentioned. (See Isaiah 52:10) We’ll also look at chapter 53, verse 1. (See Isaiah 53:1) But each time it mentions “arm,” He’s talking about strength. He’s talking about power. In the Hebrew context, the right arm was the arm of power. I have this friend, his name is R.V. Brown. R.V. has been called by God to do evangelism to kind of the “hard core” folks in the inner city, to the down and out, to the rough folks—folks who are desperate. Uh and his his technique’s pretty simple. R.V. played professional football. R.V. is an enormous man. He has biceps, last time I checked, were 25 inches around. That’s, I mean, that’s, those are some guns! And R.V. his technique is very simple. He walks into a public high school in a inner city. He has up on the platform a bench press with 500 pounds mounted on it. The bar begins to bend at the weight! R.V., without saying a word, walks up, sits down on the bench press and pumps out five, six, up to ten times, 500 pounds. Immediately, he has their attention. Immediately, there’s not, you know, “Does this guy have legitimacy? Is this guy,” you know, “does he know what he’s talking about?” Because of his strength, he now has an audience. The people of God are saying here, they’re saying, “Wake up! Awake, O Lord.” Now not in an irreverential manner, but in a calling out: “Based upon Your promises in the covenant, Lord, would You wake up? Would you bare Your arm of strength? Would you show Your manifestation of Your power? Would You manifest Your power? Would you show who You are with Your strength?” Now let me show you what he says. He gives a couple examples in verse 9,

he says, “**...Was it not You who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon?**” (Isaiah 51:9) There he’s referring to Job 26, verse 12, and Rahab—not Rahab, of Joshua’s time, but Rahab was a Canaanite deity that lived in the sea and that was known for her power and her manifestation. If you go back to Job 26, you’d hear Job reminding Eliaphaz, and the other guys talking to him, that God is a powerful God. He is the One that stirs the seas. He is the One that “**...cut Rahab in[to] pieces, [and] pierced the dragon.**” He then says this: “**Was it not You who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a pathway for the redeemed to cross over?**” (Isaiah 51:9-10) There he’s referring to the Red Sea crossing in Exodus as God supernaturally split the Red Sea to deliver His people. So what’s gonna happen? In verse 11 He says, “**So the ransomed of the LORD will return...,**” and here it is again: “**...and come with joyful shouting...and everlasting joy will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.**” (Isaiah 51:11) The conclusion is this: The ransomed will return. God has a message for His people and His message is this: “Listen to Me. Remember from where you’ve come from. Remember who I am in My power. Listen, pay attention and give heed. For I have a message of comfort, a message of salvation, and My righteousness is near.” Are you ready for His righteousness? For His salvation?