

## *"You Who Seek the LORD, Listen, Look, Look and Learn" Isaiah 51:1-2*

51 "Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. <sup>2</sup> Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him."

Isaiah 51:1-2 (NKJV)

I. *The first command is to "Listen" and the first thing to consider about this "listening" is who it is that is commanded to "listen" –*

1. *The command to listen is a common, repeated command, we see it in various forms throughout Scripture –*

A. *It is applied to theology and God's command of love –*

<sup>4</sup> "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! <sup>5</sup> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (NKJV)

B. *The command to "listen" was for the benefit of God's people –*

<sup>4</sup> "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. Deuteronomy 4:1 (NKJV)

C. *It is commanded repeatedly by Jesus –*

<sup>15</sup> **He who has ears to hear, let him hear!** Matthew 11:15; 13:9; 13:43 (NKJV) Mark 4:9; Mark 4:23; Mark 7:16 & Mark 8:18; Luke 8:8; & Luke 14:35

D. *In the Book of Revelation Jesus applies the listen / hear command to each of the Seven Churches -*

<sup>7</sup> **"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**

Revelation 2:7 (NKJV) Revelation 2:7, 2:11; 2:17, 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22

2. *Here in Isaiah 51, the command to listen is given to a singled out, specific group of people, described with two beautiful phrases –*

**you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the LORD:**

A. *Note in Isaiah's lifetime this was a smaller and smaller group of people –*

B. *I believe Isaiah had seen better days, but by this time, those who were godly were FEW, they were a small remnant –*

<sup>9</sup> **Unless the LORD of hosts Had left to us a very small remnant, We would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah. Isaiah 1:9 (NKJV)**

3. *Those who follow after righteousness, who seek the LORD, are NOT –*

A. *Those who are SATISFIED that they have already found enough "righteousness" –*

Matthew 5:6 (NKJV) <sup>6</sup> **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.**

B. *Like Paul, they have not already attained –*

<sup>12</sup> **Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Philippians 3:12 (NKJV)**

C. *They seek the Lord, whole-heartedly –*

<sup>11</sup> For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:11–13 (NKJV)

D. *God is not speaking here to the ungodly –*

<sup>9</sup> One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, Even his prayer is an abomination. Proverbs 28:9 (NKJV)

*God is speaking to a minority, a possibly persecuted group, a likely discouraged group!*

*Evil they see prospering and growing both in number and in boldness, while true and godly shrink (in number) and may be hiding!*

II. *The second command is to “Look” –*

1. *First at a rock and a hole –*

**Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. Isaiah 51:1 B**

A. *Note these descriptions are HUMBLE, even humiliating!*

B. *“Rock” here is not like the is NOT like the “Rock” described in Deuteronomy 32:4 –*

<sup>4</sup> **He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He. Deuteronomy 32:4 (NKJV)**

*“Rock” is used in Scripture metaphorically to describe God – Deuteronomy 32:4 or Christ -*  
<sup>4</sup> **and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4 (NKJV)**

*Rock when used for God or Christ is referring to strength and stability!*

C. *Rock & Hole here are used to describe Abraham and Sarah and not in their strength but in the weakness / in the feebleness of old age -*

<sup>2</sup> **Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him.” Isaiah 51:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> **By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. <sup>12</sup> Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. Hebrews 11:11–12 (NKJV)**

2. *Look at Abraham and Sarah as a rock and a hole – rocky ground does not usually bare much fruit –*

*The promise of children was given when they were younger, but not fulfilled until Sarah was past the age and Abraham was good as dead! Hebrews 11*

*Rock & hole used for Abraham and Sarah are referring to lifelessness, and the lack of fertility usually associated with AGE, and also with a long time of TRYING, without SUCCESS!*

*This “look” “look” command given to you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the LORD:*

*In as time of spiritual and moral decline, when the godly are a very small remnant!*

*Isaiah 51:1-2 is a command to see Abraham and Sarah not as heroes doing what is impossible for us today! But rather as EXAMPLES of what God can do even with weak and few!*

III. *The reason we are to “LOOK” is to LEARN God blessed and increased Abraham when he was “alone” He can bless and increase us, though we are few –*

*... For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him.” Isaiah 51:1–2 (NKJV)*

1. *A tendency, the norm when following after righteousness and seeking the LORD, DOESN'T SEEM TO BE WORKING IS TO GROW WEARY –*

**<sup>9</sup> And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)**

2. *This is a walking by SIGHT and not by FAITH, it is what Asaph almost slipped into –*

A. *For a time he was envious of the wicked, he almost gave up what was right and good -*

**A Psalm of Asaph. <sup>1</sup> Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart. <sup>2</sup> But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. <sup>3</sup> For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. <sup>4</sup> For there are no pangs in their death, But their strength is firm. <sup>5</sup> They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men. <sup>6</sup> Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment. <sup>7</sup> Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish. <sup>8</sup> They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; They speak loftily. <sup>9</sup> They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth. <sup>10</sup> Therefore his people return here, And waters of a full cup are drained by them. <sup>11</sup> And they say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?” <sup>12</sup> Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches. <sup>13</sup> Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, And washed my hands in innocence. <sup>14</sup> For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning. <sup>15</sup> If I had said, “I will speak thus,” Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. <sup>16</sup> When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me— Psalm 73:1-16**

B. *But he came to his senses –*

**<sup>17</sup> Until I went into the sanctuary of God; Then I understood their end. <sup>18</sup> Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. <sup>19</sup> Oh, how they are brought to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. <sup>20</sup> As a dream when one awakes, So, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image. <sup>21</sup> Thus my heart was grieved, And I was vexed in my mind. <sup>22</sup> I was so foolish and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. <sup>23</sup> Nevertheless I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. <sup>24</sup> You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory. <sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. <sup>26</sup> My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. <sup>27</sup> For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry. <sup>28</sup> But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, That I may declare all Your works. Psalm 73:17-28**

3. *How easily we can be distracted from walking by faith –*

<sup>25</sup> Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup> And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, “It is a ghost!” And they cried out for fear. <sup>27</sup> But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “**Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.**” <sup>28</sup> And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” <sup>29</sup> So He said, “**Come.**” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!” <sup>31</sup> And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, “**O you of little faith, why did you doubt?**” <sup>32</sup> And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Matthew 14:25–32 (NKJV)

4. *We as a little church, in a time when the wicked winds of an ungodly world are boisterous (meaning they make a lot of NOISE) need to*

A. *Listen to God! His wisdom is LOUD too –*

<sup>20</sup> **Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. Proverbs 1:20 (NKJV)**

\* *Sermon Audio*

\* *Books galore, internet ministries and much more ...*

B. *Look to the rock and the hole, Abraham and Sarah who tried as younger to have children but did NOT!*

C. *We need to see Abraham not as a hero but as an EXAMPLE, God blessed and multiplied him when he was weak, old and as it says in Scripture - as good as dead – Hebrews 11:12*

• *He (Abraham) is even our father when we are in Christ, even if we are gentiles –*

<sup>8</sup> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “**In you all the nations shall be blessed.**” <sup>9</sup> So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. Galatians 3:8–9 (NKJV)

<sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:29 (NKJV)

5. *Again, let us not be distracted by the troubles and NOISES of an ungodly world (this is not our Heaven) but let us keep looking, not only to Abraham and Sarah, but beyond them to our Lord Jesus Christ –*

<sup>12</sup> Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1–2 (NKJV)

### Looking & Listening -

<sup>23</sup> **If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.** <sup>24</sup> Then He said to them, “**Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. <sup>25</sup> For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.**” Mark 4:23–25 (NKJV)

<sup>27</sup> **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.** John 10:27 (NKJV)