

Isaiah 49:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God.

Analysis

The Servant's lament 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought' expresses the apparent futility of faithful ministry when people reject the message. Yet the confidence 'my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God' demonstrates perseverance grounded in divine approval, not human response. This models ministry faithfulness when results seem absent - God evaluates effort and faithfulness, not visible success.

Historical Context

Isaiah preached for decades with little positive response (6:9-13), anticipating Jesus' rejection by the majority. The principle that 'judgment is with the LORD' sustained prophets, Christ, apostles, and missionaries through apparent failure.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. When your faithful service seems fruitless, how does knowing 'your judgment is with the LORD' sustain you?
2. What is the difference between measuring ministry success by human response versus divine approval?

Interlinear Text

וְבַל לֹת הַז גַּם עֲמָתִי לְרַק אֶת רְתִי וְאַגְּבָנִי
H589 Then I said in vain I have laboured for nought and in vain
H559 H7385 H3021 H8414 H1892

יְהִי הַז אֶת מִשְׁפָט יְאַכֵּן כָּל יְתִי כָּחַ
my strength I have spent yet surely my judgment is with the LORD
H3581 H3615 H403 H4941 H854 H3068

אַת וְפָעַלְתִּי אֶלְפִּי
and my work with my God
H854 H430

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 35:4 (References God): Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.

Galatians 4:11 (Parallel theme): I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Isaiah 62:11 (References Lord): Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

Isaiah 40:10 (References God): Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

Isaiah 65:23 (References Lord): They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them.

Matthew 23:37 (Parallel theme): O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Matthew 17:17 (Parallel theme): Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

2 Corinthians 2:15 (References God): For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

2 Corinthians 12:15 (Parallel theme): And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.

Ezekiel 3:19 (Parallel theme): Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.