

- 1 Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
- 2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground.  
He had no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him,  
Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.
- 3 He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief;  
And like one from whom men hide their face. He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
- 4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried;  
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
- 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities;  
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.
- 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way.  
But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.
- 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth  
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,  
He did not open His mouth.
- 8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away.  
And as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living  
for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?
- 9 He grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death,  
Because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.
- 10 But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief  
if He would render Himself as a guilt offering.  
He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days,  
And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand.
- 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied.  
By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many as He will bear their iniquities
- 12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong  
Because He poured out Himself to death and was numbered with the transgressors;  
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.

Today we begin our searching of the Old Testament Scriptures for passages that most clearly reveal Jesus, though never mentioning His name. Each week in this series we will examine an ancient Scripture that Jesus might well have used on the road to Emmaus in teaching Cleopas and friend how the sacred Hebrew scrolls spoke of Himself.

We begin today with Isaiah, Chapter 53, for It is (arguably) the most obvious passage describing Jesus and specifically the one most clearly depicting His sufferings, as well as hinting at His glory. Remember that last week we learned from both the Road to Emmaus account in Luke 24 and from 1 Peter 1:10-12 that the primary two-fold emphasis in the OT Scriptures regarding Jesus was about His (1) sufferings and (2) glory to follow.

It is from Luke writing in Acts Chapter 8, in his account of Philip evangelizing the Ethiopian eunuch, where we learn that Isaiah 53 is clearly speaking of Jesus. This Ethiopian court official, returning from worshipping in Jerusalem, was reading from Isaiah 53 – specifically what we know as verses 7 and 8. **The eunuch asked Philip, who had been called by God to his chariot, “Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or someone else?” (Acts 8:34).** Note that this Ethiopian perceived that the passage was speaking of a person. Jewish Rabbis have taught that this passage is referring to the nation of Israel, and most do so to this day, denying that the passage is referring to Jesus or

even any other coming Messiah. Yet, the Ethiopian understood that the Suffering Servant Isaiah refers to must be a person. He only questions Philip whether Isaiah is speaking of himself or of another.

Philip, sitting in the chariot with the questioning official, answers him by opening the Scriptures (which **he carried with him!**) to this Isaiah passage and **“preached Jesus to him.” (Acts 8:35).** Philip, by the prompting of the Holy Spirit knew without a shadow of doubt that Isaiah 53 was all about Jesus. More than likely, Jesus had taught this very lesson to his followers, including Philip, during the 40 days on earth after He had been resurrected. If so, Philip was reiterating to the Ethiopian what he had learned directly from the mouth of Jesus. Isaiah 53 is all about Him!

So with this Spirit-led perspective, let us look at Isaiah 53 to see what we learn about our Savior and His sacrifice for mankind. Before we proceed in some detail, here is a verse by verse simple outline:

1 **Oh how few have believed and understood the depths of Jesus’ sacrifice for mankind!**

Jesus in His life and death was ...

- 2 **HUMBLE** He grew up in humble and ordinary fashion, not attracting any particular attention.
- 3 **REJECTED** His life knew many sorrows and rejections, never esteemed for Who He was as God with us.
- 4 **VOLUNTARY** He willingly took on our grief and sorrow, though mankind saw Him as being afflicted by God.
- 5 **SUBSTITUTIONARY** His piercing was our piercing. His crushing was for our sins. His chastening brought about our spiritual health. His scourging brought us spiritual victory.
- 6 **ATONING** Each of us are like wandering sheep, charting our own course. Yet God allowed Him to bear the punishment for each of our sins.
- 7 **ACCEPTING** He never complained. Like a lamb led to slaughter, He allowing His sacrificial fate to unfold without opposition.
- 8 **MISUNDERSTOOD** It was judged that He was simply one oppressed and taken. Who could have known that He was killed for the sake of His people who deserved this fate?
- 9 **HONORED** He was supposed to be buried in mass grave with wicked men, yet he ended up in a rich man’s tomb, **because He was blameless in His words and deeds.**
- 10 **LOVED BY GOD** God was pleased in His grief and death because they were an offering for the guilt of others.
- 11 **VICTORIOUS** Because of His willing anguish, He will see the result of His sacrifice. This Righteous One and Suffering Servant will justify many and bury their iniquities.
- 12 **REWARDED** Because He willingly died, bearing the sin of many and interceding for their sin, He will be awarded a high position of greatness and honor and blessing.

Let us now reflect on what we, some 2500 years after Isaiah and 2000 years after Jesus, should apply to our lives from Isaiah 53.

**From verse 1** - I must be sure that as the truth of this passage has been revealed to me, I now believe this death of Jesus has been provided FOR MY SALVATION and THAT I RECEIVE JESUS AS MY SAVIOR. May it not be said of me that I heard but did not respond in faith.

The disciple John wrote:

**John 12:37-38** But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not *believing in Him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”*

John quoted from Isaiah 53:1. **People wouldn’t believe in Isaiah’s day, nor in Jesus’ day.** And even today many hear the truth of Jesus’ death for them and they choose not to respond to His provision for them. **Don’t** let this be your response. Believe.

**From verse 2 and 3** - A “tender shoot” speaks of the fragility of the baby in which the Son of God came. The Almighty God became totally dependent on His earthly parents. The all-knowing God laid

aside his super-knowledge and grew “increasing in wisdom” (Luke 2:40) as does every other earthy child. The Almighty God became like every other baby – hungry, uncomfortable, and needy.

**That He was “a root out of parched ground”** implying that he was an anomaly, just like a growing plant in a dry desert land. For anyone that could have known, He didn’t belong. He was the self-sufficient God needing no spiritual sustenance apart from Himself (like a plant in the desert receives little or no nourishment from the ground), yet He needed full physical help to survive. He was displaced.

**That He had “no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him”** shows that He was nothing special physically speaking. He was ordinary – commonplace. The superlative “star” of heaven who held everyone in awe was now nothing special. He was the son of a poor carpenter in a small village causing little notice from anyone.

**Jesus was nothing special, as the earth defines “special.”** Yet how special He was to God and to others He touched. Never let your “ordinariness” keep you from realizing your value to God and to others. Just as Jesus laid aside his right to greatness, we are to lay aside our need for greatness and humble ourselves to be the servant of God for the sake of others. Our life is not our own, for we have been bought with a price. (1 Corinthians 6:19,20)

All this reinforces the works of Paul to the Philippians:

**Philippians 2:6-7** Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

That He was “rejected” as verse 3, we further note his humility in accepting his role as one who would not be esteemed or appreciated by men, yet be their loving Savior. Find and accept your role in life.

Oh the condescending of the Son of God to become the Son of man on our behalf! May we ever be in awe of his humility and willingness to suppress His “godliness” to save us from our “humanness” and sinful condition. And may we ever esteem Him as our Lord and King.

**From verses 4-6** - In Oaks Bible Church’s doctrinal statement, speaking of Jesus the Son of God, it affirms our belief in the “voluntary, substitutionary, atoning death” of Christ. Each of these in turn are addressed in verses 4, 5 and 6 of Isaiah 53. His death was voluntary in that he was not a martyr or victim, but chose to die. He gave his life – it was not taken from Him. His death was substitutionary – or it is sometimes called “vicarious” in that His role was that of a “vicar” – a substitute. Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:21 says that “He became sin” – that is, he took on our sin as His and died in our place as our substitute. His death was atoning in that it “covered” or better, removed completely the stain, shame and deserved punishment of our sin.

Therefore, I must affirm and teach this tri-fold truth of Jesus’ death: (1) voluntary, (2) substitutionary and (3) atoning. Any other assessment is heresy and is not the gospel unto salvation.

**And further, my application of all of this will be eternal gratitude.** I don’t live in guilt or condemnation, but in freedom and victory. I live to honor His sacrifice in a life given back to Him.

**From verses 7 and 8** – We note his silent response to it all. Yet it is not the silence in and of itself that is so noteworthy – but rather the fact that he did not have the need to complain or defend, because He knew that this was God’s plan from the foundation of the world and was the best for mankind. When we know we are doing the right thing we don’t need to complain or defend ourselves. Help others to know that Jesus was lovingly willing to lay down His life and become sin that God the Father might be satisfied and that we His people would be redeemed. Yes He was misunderstood. Who would have guessed that He was going through exactly what had been planned for them from eternity? Jesus was and is the eternal Lamb of God. Praise His name!

**Romans 12:1** Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

**From verses 9, 10, 11 and 12** – For this amazing sacrifice that will affect Jesus for eternity (He will always be in human “lamb of God” form forever with nail scars) he has been honored in his death (a private, respectable tomb), loved by the Father for His offering, victorious in setting a host of captives free from their bondage of sin and rewarded for eternity as the Crown Jewel of heaven. Any less than

a life dedicated to worshipping and serving Him as Lord would be inappropriate response and personal application.

Just as Jesus was honored by the Father for His willing sacrifice and righteous life, so we can be assured of the same, measured to what we deserve. Yet our chief motivation will not be the reward, but to ever serve the God we love!

Help others to know how beautifully Isaiah 53 shouts of Jesus. It describes His life of humility, sacrifice and victory perfectly - **and all from the “Old” Testament, that is still vitally new!**