

JPB

**The Only  
Prophecy  
The Jews  
Fear to Read**

*Radio Sermons*



*by  
Wayne Carver*

Mr. & Mrs. John Burket  
2813 Syracuse Drive  
Irving, TX 75062  
(214)-255-5710

## Introduction

Isaiah 53 is the only prophecy in all "The Law and the Prophets" that the Jews fear to read. Orthodox Jews put a black ribbon over this chapter because they say it "confuses" people regarding the claims of Jesus Christ. The Rabbis tell them, "Rather than be confused, just don't read Isaiah 53."

There are two schools of thought concerning Isaiah 53 in Judaism. Some Jewish Rabbis say Isaiah was speaking of himself. But this is impossible. Isaiah could not have fulfilled this prophecy, for he himself declared that he was a man of unclean lips and a sinner before God. Isa. 6:5. Therefore he could not deal with the sins of others if he couldn't take care of his own.

Other Jewish Rabbis teach that this chapter refers to the nation of Israel. But the Israelites could not have fulfilled this prophecy. How could a sinful nation bear the sins of others? The only one who could fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 53 is Yeshua Hamashiach — the sinless One, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 53 is a graphic word-portrait of the Suffering Saviour. It is a wonderful prophecy of Messiah's coming to die a substitutionary, atoning death for the sins of His people so that the sin question might be settled for all eternity.

### A Consistent Reference to the Lord

This remarkable prophecy is referred to a number of times in the New Testament, and in every reference it is applied directly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider Matthew's words: "*That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.*" Matt. 8:17.

The evangelist Luke, in relating the story of Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch, quotes Isaiah 53 in Acts 8:32-35. *"The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."*

The Apostle Peter knew of whom Isaiah was speaking. *"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."* I Peter 2:21-25.

Isaiah presented the Lord Jesus Christ as the sinless Substitute for sinful men. He is the One to whom our sins were imputed so that His divine righteousness might be imputed to us who believe in Him. His lowly life, His rejection by His Own people, His voluntary subjection to the suffering of the cross, His atoning sacrifice, His glorious resurrection and the triumph of His Gospel in the salvation of a great host of sinners are all clearly foretold in this prophecy that the Jews fear to read!

### **A Remarkable Description**

Isaiah wrote this prophecy about 750 years before Jesus was born. Only God could have given this remarkable

description of the character and work of the Lord Jesus Christ so many years before He came into the world. God foreknew all that His Son was to endure, and He gave this message through Isaiah to the descendants of Abraham. But in spite of this, "*He came unto his own (world), and his own (people after the flesh) received him not.*" John 1:11.

The Jewish Rabbis say, "Don't read Isaiah 53. It will confuse you regarding the claims of Jesus of Nazareth." But I challenge those who are the descendants of Abraham to read Isaiah 53. Let God speak to you through the words of His prophet. You will find your salvation, your peace and your Messiah in the Person of Yeshua Hamashiach — Jesus the Christ.

# Contents

Chapter	Page
1. The Servant of Jehovah .....	1
2. "Despised and Rejected of Men" .....	6
3. The Blessed Substitute .....	10
4. Cut Off from the Living .....	15
5. Justifier of Many.....	21
Epilogue .....	29

# 1.

## The Servant of Jehovah

*“Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.” Isa. 52:13-15.*

In the original Scriptures, there were no chapter divisions. These were added later by men for the convenience of the readers. Unfortunately, some of the divisions were made at the wrong places. Such is the case with Isaiah 53. The theme of this chapter actually begins with verse 13 of chapter 52. This theme is the Suffering, Rejected, Atoning, Exalted Servant of Jehovah.

Our prophecy opens with the words “Behold, my servant.” These speak of the Messiah, not Israel. Isaiah previously has used this title to refer to the Messiah.

*“Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God.” Isa. 50:10.*

The Person spoken of in Isaiah 53 is introduced in Isaiah 52:13-15, which comprises the first section of the Servant of Jehovah, the One whose glory equals the shame He endured. The connection of this passage with what has preceded is most significant. Earlier, Isaiah was dealing with deliverance from captivity. He spoke of Israel’s deliverance from the

coming captivity in Babylon. But he also spoke of the deliverance that is yet in the future and is of a final nature. Although the Babylonian captivity is prominent early in Isaiah's prophecy, it is significant that Babylon is not mentioned throughout the rest of the book. Future and final deliverance becomes the main theme as the prophecy unfolds.

### Only Messiah Will Bring Final Deliverance

Future and final deliverance whether for Jew or Gentile, can come only through the Servant of Jehovah. Isaiah first calls attention to His prosperous dealing and then to His exalted position. *"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."* Isa. 52:13.

Isaiah follows this with a brief mention of Messiah's humiliation. *"As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."* Isa. 52:14. Then follows future manifestation of His power and glory. *"So shall he sprinkle (startle) many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."* Isa. 52:15.

These three verses give a condensed form of the theme of Isaiah 53. This theme is greatly expanded in the twelve verses of chapter 53.

The phrase "the Servant of Jehovah" is just one of several designations used that point specifically to the Messiah of Israel. He came to earth to do the bidding of His heavenly Father. The four Gospels record the incarnation and the work of the Son of God. The Gospel of Matthew presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the King of Israel. Luke presents Him as the Perfect Man. John presents Him as the Son of God. But

Mark presents the Lord Jesus Christ as the Servant of Jehovah. His entire Gospel presents the incarnate Son of God in this character, thus fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy.

### Wisdom and Prosperity

"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently." The word "prudently" is more accurately translated "wisely." There are actually two meanings contained within this word, one of which is wisdom and the other is prosperity. Both of these aspects can be combined to bring out the full thrust of this verse:

"Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, with consequent prosperity."

This describes Messiah's life on earth in all that He said and did. It brings out the wisdom of His divine walk and the prosperous effects of His life on earth in maintaining His testimony without surrendering His life until the appointed hour. Certainly no greater prosperity ever accrued from any work upon the earth than from the giving up of that divine life in a voluntary and atoning sacrifice.

God's Servant "shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." The word "extolled" means "lifted up." Three stages of the Servant of Jehovah's future activities are prophesied here. First, there is the prophecy of His resurrection. The word rendered "exalted" signifies to "rise up in exaltation." Secondly, there is the prophecy of His ascension. The thought contained is that of a glorious ascent. And, thirdly, there is the prophecy of His position at the right hand of God the Father.

Concerning this third aspect, Luke wrote, *"Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."* Acts 2:33. And the



Apostle Paul wrote, "*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.*" Phil. 2:9.

### **He Will Astonish and Startle**

Isaiah 52:13 is a statement of fact concerning the Servant of Jehovah, but verse 14 opens with an utterance directed to Him: "As many were astonished at thee." The word "astonied" means "astonished," and the latter part of verse 14 explains why so many were to be astonished at the Servant of Jehovah. It was because of the degradation and disfigurement He suffered at the hands of man.

The similarity of the main verbs in verses 14 and 15 tie these two statements together. In the coming manifestation of His glory, He will astonish (that is, He will cause to leap and tremble in astonishment) many. But verse 15 says, "So shall he sprinkle many nations." In Hebrew the verb root for "sprinkle" and "startle" is the same. From the context it seems obvious that "startle" is meant here, for even the commentators have a hard time making sense out of "sprinkle."

From our vantage point in time, we can understand the reason for the "astonishment" and "startling." It is because "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." The soldiers, one after another, hit the Lord Jesus with a mock scepter. They beat Him on His thorn-crowned brow. As a result, His features were unrecognizable.

By order of Pontius Pilate, the Suffering Saviour also was scourged by Roman soldiers. The form of scourging administered was such that the flesh was cut away from His breast as well as from His back. That is why in Psalm 22:17 the Suffering Saviour Himself said, "I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me."

In the coming day of His unveiling, the astonishment at the power and glory of the Servant of Jehovah will be so great that kings of the earth will be overpowered into speechlessness. They will be struck dumb at the glory of Him whom they refused to open their ears to hear. *“So shall he startle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.”*

In that coming day, the political rulers of the world will be made to grasp the reality and the significance of the revelation of the Servant of Jehovah. It is then “that which they had not heard shall they consider (understand).” All things will be made manifest in that day.

## 2.

### “Despised and Rejected of Men”

*“Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”* Isa. 53:1-3.

The first section of Isaiah’s Suffering Servant prophecy (Isa. 52:13-15) introduces the Servant in His humiliation and then previews His glorification. This section concludes with the statement “that which they had not heard shall they consider.”

The opening verse of the second section of this prophecy gives the reason why these “kings” of many nations have not heard. The fault lies with the nation Israel, God’s chosen people. They, not Isaiah, are the mourning and repentant speakers in Isaiah 53:1. They acknowledge and lament their unbelief. As a nation, the very people who had long waited for their Messiah fulfilled their own Scriptures by rejecting Him when He came.

#### A Reference to the Gospel

This is the significance of the rhetorical question, “Who hath believed our report?” The word translated “report” means “that which was heard, that which was declared.” The prophetic reference is to the Gospel, preached at Pentecost and afterwards, but which was persistently rejected by the nation. The Apostle Paul calls attention to this in Romans

10:16. *"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"*

The Jews failed to see in Jesus "the arm of the Lord" stretched out for their salvation. They also failed to see the manifestation of God's power in Messiah. "To whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" is a prophetic question. It expresses the confession that will be made in that future day of repentance, when the remnant of that chosen nation at last "shall look *unto* (not *upon*) me whom they have pierced." Zech. 13:10. Then it will be acknowledged that Israel had, in her unbelief, failed to recognize what God wrought in raising Messiah from the dead.

In the days of God's earthly visitation, Israel did not realize that "he grew up before him (Jehovah) as a tender plant, and as a root (a sprouting root) out of a dry ground." This "Servant of Jehovah" is the One whose name is "the Branch." Isa. 11:1. He was a "sprouting root" out of the "dry ground" of formal legalistic, apostate, unfruitful Israel. He was the one lovely plant whom the Father gazed down upon with such approval that He could open the heavens and say, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 17:5.

This is exactly what the blessed Servant was to the Father, a tender plant. He was a plant of renown and beauty growing out of the "dry ground" of Israel and the "dry ground" of humanity in general.

To God, the Servant was precious beyond words. But to unbelieving men He had no form, comeliness or beauty. Men did not recognize the moral loveliness that He exhibited. During the days of His childhood and growth into manhood, He is pictured as a tender twig and as a verdant shoot. He is set in contrast with the dry, barren, sin-enslaved nation of Israel.

## Our Lord Was Physically Attractive

Some Bible teachers misunderstand the expression “he hath no form or comeliness.” They teach that the Lord Jesus Christ was physically repulsive in appearance. They say that He was so ugly that no one cared to look upon Him. But this most definitely is not in accordance with Scripture in general. Psalm 45:2 says of our blessed Lord, “Thou art fairer than the children of men.”

The Lord Jesus Christ was the only sinless child ever born into this world. We have every reason to believe that He possessed a perfect human body and that as a child he was flawlessly beautiful. As He grew up like a “tender shoot” in His youth and then later matured, He no doubt was handsome in physical appearance. But it was not Messiah’s natural physical appearance that Isaiah was considering. It is true that the physical sufferings resulted in his visage being marred more than any other man. The abuse He received during His arrest, trial and crucifixion greatly distorted His appearance. But as the Son of man on this earth, He was in His normal natural form, face and features absolutely perfect.

## Some Were Angered By His Teachings

Those who listened to Messiah’s teachings but loved their sins were angered by Him. They looked upon Him with scorn and disdain. His teachings interfered with the lives they loved to live. It was His moral perfection that caused them to see nothing in Him to delight their depraved natural senses. That’s why men said, “When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.”

Isaiah went on to say, “*He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*” Isa. 53:3.

The special reference of the word "grief" is to all the calamity that is common to humanity. "He was acquainted with grief." This marks Messiah's earthly life as one characterized by the inward anguish of experiencing the effects of the sins and sorrows of those around Him. He was uniquely capable of understanding all forms of human suffering and sorrow.

"He is despised and rejected of men." This was fulfilled in the days of our Lord's ministry here on earth. Before His baptism and the beginning of His earthly ministry, Scripture tells us that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke 2:52. There is no hint that He was despised and rejected. Apparently before His public ministry reached its peak He was acceptable wherever He went. In the fourth chapter of Luke's Gospel we're told that Jesus went to the synagogue at Nazareth and was allowed to publicly read from the scroll of Isaiah. Certainly He would not have been permitted to do this if He was in disfavor with His townspeople.

Later in His ministry, when He went out on His great teaching mission, men turned away from Him. That's when they despised and rejected Him. Then "he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." He was suffering in our place. Rejected, despised, He endured patiently all the shame that was put upon Him.

#### A Sad Statement in Scripture

The latter part of Isaiah 53:3 expresses very strongly the attitude of the people as a whole. "And as one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Men hide their faces, or turn away, from what is considered unbearable to behold. Men's estimate of the

Servant of Jehovah is put very strongly. They regard Him as nothing. Isaiah was speaking specifically of the men of Israel when he said, "And we esteemed him not." These words will remain recorded in Scripture through all eternity to remind Israel of her attitude toward the Messiah during the days of His flesh.

### 3.

## The Blessed Substitute

*"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*  
Isa. 53:4-6.

These verses bring us to the very heart of this great prophecy. The voice of the repentant remnant of the nation Israel continues to speak. The sufferings of the cross are in view as the repentant Israelites confess that these sufferings are of a different nature than they had supposed them to be.

"Surely he hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." In the fulfillment of this divine prophecy, men look upon the sorrows that the Lord Jesus Christ endured as divine judgment for His own sins, deserved because of what He was in Himself. They interpreted His sufferings and His rejection as though God were angry with Him. But He was only entering into our griefs and the sorrows that sin had brought upon the race of mankind.

The change of the ideas of those who are speaking in this verse is marked by the opening word "Surely," or "Verily." The continuing statement, "He hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows," expresses much more fully what was mentioned in the preceding verse as to His being "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." It tells how the Lord Jesus Christ bore in His own person sufferings which were other than His own.

All through Messiah's lowly life, He saw what misery and sin had caused. Men said He had a demon, and they called Him a Samaritan. They made Him out to be a deceiver. They considered that the sufferings He had endured were deserved.

Matthew quoted Isaiah 53:4 in connection with our Lord Jesus Christ's deeds of healing and deliverance. "*When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.*" Matt. 8:16-17.

### The "Type" of the Atonement

Matthew's statement does not speak of Messiah's substitutionary atonement. Rather, Matthew directs attention to the "type" of the atonement that the Lord presented during His earthly ministry. His healing of the sick and His casting out of demons stood in figure for what He was to accomplish on the cross. Sickness and demon infestation picture the effects of sin upon the human race. In His earthly ministry, the Lord healed the sick and cast out demons so that He might display the credentials of Messiah. These great works spoke of the even greater work that He was to accomplish on the cross.

**However, Isaiah 53:4 does take us directly to the cross. It**



is only to the cross that this great statement could apply. "Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." In blindness, Israel looked upon His sufferings as the punishment for His own sins. They must have regarded His sins as especially great. Yet when the eyes of the remnant are finally opened, they will be able to see the truth. "Surely he hath borne *our* griefs, and carried *our* sorrows."

When God lifts Israel's blindness and reveals the truth about Calvary, the Jews will have a complete change of mind concerning Jesus' death. This reversal is emphasized by the use of first person plural pronouns: "But he was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities: the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him." Isa. 53:5.

### He Made Peace for Us

This brings us to the cross where our Lord Jesus Christ endured the judgment our sins deserved so that through His stripes we might be healed. There on that Roman cross He was the great Sin Offering, the great Peace Offering, the great Trespass Offering and the great Burnt Offering. It was there that He "made peace through the blood of his cross." Col. 1:20.

The Hebrew words translated "wounded" (or pierced) and "bruised" describe a violent and agonizing death. There is stress on "*our*" in both statements. The chastisement administered to Christ by God made our peace. The Hebrew word for "peace," *shalom*, is comprehensive and describes well-being in general, not simply a peaceful state.

Surely here we have "substitutionary atonement"! There are people who object to this term on the grounds that the word "substitution" is not in the Bible. But when one is in the place of another, when one is taking what another

deserves, that is "substitution." Here in this only prophecy the Jews fear to read we have plain, definite statements: "He hath borne *our* griefs. He was wounded for *our* transgressions. He was bruised for *our* iniquities." The chastisement by which our peace was made fell upon Him, thus, "with *His* stripes *we* are healed."

"Stripes" does not refer to the Roman scourging. The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) renders Isaiah 53:5 as follows: "But he was wounded on account of our sins, and was bruised because of our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his *bruise* we were healed."

The Apostle Peter, apparently quoting from the Septuagint version of Isaiah 53:5, also used the Greek word for "bruise" in I Peter 2:24. The literal rendering of Peter's passage is as follows: "Who our sins himself bore in his body on the tree, that, to sins (we) being dead, to righteousness we may live; by whose *bruise* ye were healed."

The expression used by Isaiah speaks of the stroke of divine judgment inflicted upon the Suffering One. The healing, that is the *spiritual soundness* which we receive as a result of His suffering, is expressly set in direct contrast to the bruising (that is, to the divine stroke) to which He submitted Himself. In Psalm 22:1 we hear Him cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" He who was God was forsaken and bruised of God so that by His *bruise* we might be healed.

Isaiah 53:6 is the confession of a conscience-stricken people. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way." This is followed by the grateful realization of a tremendous fact: "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

## The Books Are Balanced

In Isaiah 53:6 God has balanced the books of the world. He does this with two debit entries and one credit entry. Here are the two debit entries. "All we like sheep have gone astray" — that is, not Israel only, but the whole fallen human race. "We have turned every one to his own way" — that is, each individual's sin.

And then comes that single credit entry that clears the books of God, if men will but receive it. "Jehovah hath laid on *him* the iniquity of *us* all."

Here the entire story of the Bible is brought out. We have man's ruin, both by nature and by practice. And we have God's marvelous and all-sufficient remedy. Man has sinned and come short of the glory of God. But God has canceled man's debt through the shed blood of the Messiah of Israel.

Many have noticed that Isaiah 53:6 begins and ends with the same word. The verse begins with "all" and it ends with "all." The first "all" is the acknowledgement of the universal need of mankind. The second "all" shows how fully that need has been met in the cross of Israel's Messiah, our Christ.

### A Universal Truth

What the nation Israel will hereafter acknowledge is also true of the whole human race. Man is a fallen creature, having substituted his own will for God's will. Man's power of self-determination marks him as being formed in the image of God: But he has used that power to go "his own way" and make himself egocentric instead of "God-centric."

God has responded to this condition of guilt and misery by sending His own Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh" and as an "offering" for sin. Rom. 8:3; Eph. 5:2. He placed upon

Christ the whole weight of mankind's sins, and He received the righteous wrath due that iniquity.

This is the whole message of salvation. How wonderful it is to be numbered among those who have put in their claim and have found salvation through the atoning work on the cross at Calvary!

“And the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

## 4.

### Cut Off from the Living

*“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.”* Isa.53:7-9.

These three verses describe Messiah's false trial, sufferings, death and burial. He was oppressed (that is, he was treated unsparingly); yet he humbled himself (that is, he suffered voluntarily) and opened not his mouth. As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb, He opened not His mouth. This expresses Messiah's voluntary endurance. His action is strikingly contrasted to the straying away of all other men, as was brought out in the first part of Isaiah 53:6.

The mock trial of our Lord Jesus Christ is vividly fore-

told. "He was treated unsparingly." Taken from one judgment place to another, our Lord's case was heard, but there was no one to speak on His behalf. All this was contrary to the law. Yet God permitted it. Luke spoke of the fulfillment of this prophecy (and also of Psalm 2) in the book of Acts. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Acts 4:27-28.

"Yet He opened not his mouth." He said nothing for Himself. Pilate was perplexed by His silence. Herod tried to make Him speak. Yet, brought as a lamb to be slain, "and like a sheep dumb before her shearers, so he opened not his mouth." Without a word of complaint He gave Himself into the hands of wicked men to be crucified.

#### No Other Way of Salvation

Why? Because there was no other way whereby guilty sinners could be saved. "The wages of sin is death...without shedding of blood is no remission" of sin. Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:22.

In verse 7 the scene passes next to the unrighteous judicial verdict passed upon Him. And from the scene of His judgment, we are taken directly to Calvary. "By oppression and judgment (literally, 'by an oppressive judicial sentence') He was taken away."

This was all fulfilled in the trial and sentence of our Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew reported the results of His trial before the religious leaders of Israel. "*Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.*" Matt. 26:65-66.

Matthew also described the Lord's trial before Pilate.

*"Pilate said unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him."* Matt. 27:22-31.

By an oppressive judicial sentence, he was taken away: "and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken." This verse places much stress on what Messiah was to endure. The question is asked, "Who shall declare his generation?" That is to say, "Who shall declare his manner of life?" God was most careful to see that Messiah's manner of life was declared. This was accomplished through a variety of witnesses.

It was because of false evidence that our Lord Jesus Christ was condemned to die as a felon. It was made out as

though He were guilty of sedition against Caesar, the head of imperial Rome. But God saw to it that His manner of life was fully declared. He was fully justified before His judges.

### The Governor's Repeated Declaration

During our Lord's trial Pontius Pilate repeatedly declared, "I find no fault in this man." After Pilate's initial interview with the Lord Jesus, in which he asked Him if He were the King of the Jews, and the Lord had answered him truthfully, John recorded these words. "*Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and said unto them, I find in him no fault at all.*" John 18:38.

After our Lord's accusers had refused to allow Pilate to release the Lord Jesus but asked for Barabbas instead, Pilate turned Him over to the Roman soldiers. The soldiers scourged Him. And they platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They also dressed Him in a purple robe. After this mistreatment of Messiah, John recorded these words. "*Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.*" John 19:4.

John continued to write, "*Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate said unto them, Behold the man! When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.*" John 19:5-6.

Then as Israel's Messiah hung upon that cross, left to die as a criminal, the thief by his side turned to his companion and spoke these words: "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we

receive the due reward of our deeds: *but this man hath done nothing amiss.*" Luke 23:40-41.

God saw to it that this declaration was made, even on a cross. "This man hath done nothing amiss." Isaiah's question is answered. "Who shall declare his manner of life?" It was declared by both Pontius Pilate and by the thief on the cross.

This section of Isaiah's prophecy opened with a description of the character of both His sufferings and the manner of His death. It closes with a statement of His burial. "And he made his grave with the wicked (with sinners), and with the rich in his death."

The first part of this statement seems to refer to the intention of the rulers, who would have had Him ignominiously buried with the two robbers. They were the ones who would have "made his grave with the wicked." This, of course, was man's intention. They would have cast His body out to be devoured by vultures and jackals. Or else they would have allowed that sacred body to be burned in the fires that destroyed the refuse of the city in the Valley of Hinnom. But God saw to it that He lay "with the rich in his death." The Roman authorities granted the body to Joseph of Arimathea, the "rich man." God did this by divine decree. It was done as a testimony to Messiah's absolute holiness and perfection of spirit.

### Two Deaths

The Hebrew word translated "death" in Isaiah 53:9 is in the plural. We should not wonder at this because the atoning sacrifice on the cross did require that Messiah die two deaths. He died physically. His soul and spirit separated from that sacred body. And He died spiritually. He was forsaken of God that we might not be forsaken. He, the Infinite One, endured separation from God (which is the



second death) for a finite time so that we, finite ones, would not have to undergo separation from God for an infinite time. It was while He was undergoing separation from God that He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Psalm 22:1.

This section of Isaiah's prophecy ends with the words "Because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." These words are to be connected with what immediately precedes them, Isaiah's description of His burial. His freedom from sin made it fitting that He should receive an honorable burial. He was not to be cast into a criminal's grave, as His enemies wished.

What a wonderful summary of the whole story of the life, the death, the mock trial and the condemnation of our Lord Jesus Christ is contained here! Isaiah, "moved along" by the Spirit of God, covers all these things in the only prophecy the Jews fear to read.

## 5.

# Justifier of Many

*“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”*  
Isa. 53:10-12.

The last section of Isaiah's prophecy provides a three-fold testimony concerning the experiences of the soul of Messiah. Isaiah's words take us into the inner sanctuary of Christ's Being. Verses 10 and 12 speak of the great transaction that put away sin. These words speak of God's dealings with Him, judicially, in respect to His death. The passage also speaks of His reward. Verse 11 speaks of the results of His sacrifice as it relates to His own satisfaction of accomplishment. This verse also speaks of the justifying grace that He ministers to others.

“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him.” This tells of the permanent counsel of Jehovah in causing man's sin to be subservient to the working of His grace, in the suffering inflicted upon His sinless Servant on the cross. It was not what man did to our Lord Jesus Christ that put away sin. It was what God did to Him when He turned His face away. While the Servant of Jehovah was the Sinbearer, God was forced to turn His face away. There on the cross, during

those hours of darkness, our Lord actually died the second death. This was the "bruise" inflicted by Jehovah. That "he hath put him to grief" speaks of the extreme distress brought upon Christ when He was forsaken of the Father. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief."

The four accounts of the crucifixion, taken together, provide the full meaning of the work of the cross. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of the sin offering, the trespass offering, the peace offering and the burnt offering. Our Lord is presented as enduring the shame and the physical anguish inflicted upon Him by man for three awful hours. During that period He gave no evidence of being disturbed in spirit. During those hours He was in perfect communion with the Father. Christ manifested a tender concern for others. But there was no word of self pity for His own suffering.

#### Judged in Our Place

In those last three hours, those hours of supernatural darkness over the earth, Messiah endured the terrible ordeal of bearing the judgment that our sins deserved. "Immanuel's orphaned cry," His cry of loneliness, is the key to the deeper suffering of those hours. God, the righteous Judge, abandoned Him to the inward spiritual suffering He endured as the Substitute for sinners. It was then that His soul, not merely His body, was made an offering for sin.

Note carefully, it was God Himself who dealt with His righteous Servant in judgment when He hung upon that Roman cross. It was not our Lord's physical sufferings alone that made propitiation for sin. Rather, it was what He endured in His innermost being when His holy, spotless soul became the great sin offering. It was not what man did to Him that made reconciliation. Rather, it was what He endured at the hand of God, leading to "Immanuel's

orphaned cry, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' "Psalm 22:1.

Isaiah follows those words that tell us that it was the LORD (Jehovah) that bruised Him and put Him to grief with the statement, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." This is better rendered "When His soul shall make an offering for sin." The "type" of Israel's trespass offering is in view. That offering had the effect of clearing the sinner from his guilt before God. The sin offering was presented by the priest from the point of view of the offerer. But the trespass offering had especially in view the demands of God's justice. That is what is indicated here. Notice, it was Messiah's soul, not his body, that was offered unto God as the trespass offering. This is the first of the three statements concerning the soul of the Servant.

Messiah's voluntary act of surrendering His life (a life with which God was totally pleased) to meet God's righteous demands concerning man's guilt, has positive and far-reaching results. He was forsaken of God that we might be received into divine favor. Because of this, in resurrection, "He shall see his seed." A Jew was regarded as blessed if he had numerous descendants, and especially if he lived to see them. Here the prophet gives us a view of the exceeding joy of Messiah in seeing the results of His sacrifice in the countless multitude of His spiritual posterity from among both Jew and Gentile.

### A Reference to Eternal Life

"He shall prolong his days." A long life span was regarded as another blessing of high favor among the Israelites. However, the reference here is to the resurrection of that One who died upon the cross. He was resurrected to unending life. There is a reference here to the joy that is contained in His words, "I was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore." Rev. 1:18. God raised Jesus Christ from the dead

and made Him the Head of the new creation unto life. This second creation is made up of all those who are saved through the work that Christ accomplished on the cross. Thus, both His death and His resurrection are depicted here.

“The pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.” Through Messiah’s work on the cross, the predetermined counsels of God shall have their joyous realization. The phrase “in his hand” points to Messiah’s mediatorial and high priestly work, as well as to the exercise of His authority and power in His coming kingdom. Through the pen of David, God declared the eternal decree: *“Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”* Psalm 2:7-9.

“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” This opening clause of verse 11 is the second mention of the soul of Messiah. The glory that follows is viewed by the Servant of Jehovah as the outcome of His atoning sufferings. We are told that these sufferings will never cease to be present in His mind. They are the all-necessary and all-sufficient means by which His inward being is satisfied. These sufferings brought about the work of redemption for those who have become His own personal possession.

The word “travail” refers to but one kind of suffering — birthpangs! The Lord Jesus Christ “travailed” in His soul that millions might be born of the Word (the “water”) and the Spirit of God. It was the “bruising” of His soul by God Himself that brought about this great result. This is to be His eternal satisfaction. The Gospel is based upon what He endured on that cross. In our age, this message goes out to all who have ears to hear. The seven letters to the churches

of Revelation 2 and 3 repeat this message. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches."

### His Righteousness Alone

"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." There is stress upon the word "righteous." We should never misunderstand. There could be no justification for others, no imputation of righteousness, were it not for His flawless righteousness. He alone, as the absolutely righteous One, was competent to render Himself voluntarily as a propitiatory sacrifice.

The phrase translated "by His knowledge" may be rendered in either of two ways. It can be translated "by knowledge of Him" or "by His own knowledge." The first translation considers the phrase in the objective sense. In this sense, Isaiah's words tell us that to know Him is life eternal. This is found in the Lord's high priestly prayer to the Father. "*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*" John 17:3. The Apostle Peter said it in this way. "*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.*" II Peter 1:3.

The second translation takes the clause in the subjective sense. In an earlier passage of Isaiah's prophecy (Isa. 11:2), one of the seven spirits which were foretold as resting upon Messiah is "the spirit of knowledge." One of the qualifications for a priest of Israel was that his lips should keep knowledge. "*For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.*" Mal. 2:7. The people of Israel were to seek the law at the mouth of the priests.

The Lord Jesus Christ said that knowledge of the Father

belongs only to Himself and "to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Matt. 11:27. All of Isaiah 53:11 deals with both the priestly and the mediatorial work of Christ. The prospect of His regal glory is also shown.

The Servant would effect the justification of many because of what He is in His person as well as His threefold office and because of His absolute knowledge as the Son of God. "Justification" means to be declared innocent in the courts of heaven. This righteous One, who offered His soul as the great trespass offering to God, will declare innocent all that come to God by Him. But this can be done only on the ground of His substitutionary sacrifice. This is made clear by the statement, "And he shall bear their iniquities," which immediately follows. He is the great Substitute, and He is also the Eternal Priest. He Himself is qualified to dispense all that accrues from His offering of His own soul as a sacrifice unto God.

The righteous Servant did not end His days when He offered Himself to God; rather, they shall be prolonged throughout eternity. Isaiah's prophecy says that this One who died as a Substitute for lost sinners shall come back from the grave in resurrection life! How significant and wonderful is that promise! And it was made to God's chosen people over 750 years before the actual event took place.

"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong." Evidently, the "strong one" refers to Satan. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." Matt. 12:29.

### Two Categories of Mankind

The "spoil" refers to those born into the sinful race of

Adam. All humanity is considered in this statement. Scripture makes it clear that there are only two categories of mankind: the saved and the condemned. *"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."* John 3:18. The first clause describes Messiah's portion of mankind: "He that believeth on him is not condemned." The portion of the "strong one" is described in the second part of this verse. "But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." There is wonderful encouragement here for those who preach the Gospel. God is now busy making this great division. Many are turning to the Lord by placing their faith in the One who died for them upon the cross at Calvary.

"He shall divide the spoil (mankind) with the strong." Nothing is said about the relative portion of the Lord Jesus Christ's part of the spoil. We know from the standpoint of absolute numbers the Lord's portion is relatively small. But whatever numerical portion is His, He counts it infinitely precious.

In our day God is busily "dividing the spoil with the strong." He is rewarding His Son according to His own valuation of what His Son accomplished. Man may think lightly of Messiah's glorious work, but God never does.

The closing words of this prophecy direct us to the foundation work of the Servant of Jehovah's atoning sacrifice. His sovereignty over the earth rests upon His finished work. Isaiah sets it forth in four statements: "He poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."



The first statement mentions the soul of the righteous Servant of Jehovah for the third time. It was because God bruised Him, making His very soul the offering for sin, that all these great results come about. His soul, His seat of conscious life, actually died the second death while He was there on the cross. *That* is what put away sin.

“He was numbered with the transgressors.” As He was pouring out His soul on that Roman cross, men thought He was a transgressor. He was crucified between the two thieves. It was as though He were dying for His own transgressions. But He was the Divine Substitute for all. He took upon Himself the transgressions of humanity so that He could establish a righteous basis for the salvation of all who come to Him.

#### He Endured It All – For Us

The last two of these statements are set in striking contrast to the fact that He was numbered with the transgressors. The Hebrew word that introduces the statement “He bare the sin of many” should be translated “yet” instead of “and.” The preceding statement points to the opinion of those who pronounced sentence upon Him and handed Him over for execution. “Yet he bare the sin of many.” Little did those onlookers realize that what He endured on the cross was not for Himself but for them. This statement positively declares that He was the Substitutionary Atonement for all mankind.

“He made intercession for the transgressors.” This closing statement refers specifically to His intercessory prayer while He was being nailed to the tree. “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34. It was there that He made intercession for the transgressors. However, in a broader sense this refers to His high priestly work in this present age. He sits at the right hand of God the Father,

making intercession for those who are His through faith. They are the transgressors. And He does make intercession for them.

The details of this “only prophecy the Jews fear to read” grow in vividness and reach a climax in this last section. The meaning of the prophecy is clear. God’s chosen people, and all the peoples of the world, are given a view of the great work of the Messiah of Israel. No wonder the Rabbis say that this chapter “confuses the Jewish people about the claims of Jesus Christ.” Isaiah is so clear that anyone who reads it carefully must acknowledge the claims of Yeshua Hamashiach, Jesus of Nazareth.

## Epilogue

*“Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong.” Isa. 53:12a.*

The prophet Isaiah penned this declaration of God some 750 years before Messiah ever took on the flesh of humanity. God the Father has decreed that there is to be a division of all humanity. A portion of the “spoil” is to belong to the Servant of Jehovah, Israel’s Messiah. Isaiah spoke of Him when he said, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his bruise we are healed.” Isa. 53:5.

The “spoil” includes all humanity, Jews and Gentiles alike. The Apostle Paul’s evaluation of all humanity is found in Romans 3:22-23: *“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”*

Everyone who reads the message of Isaiah 53 has to ask himself, "Which portion of the spoil includes me? Do I belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, or do I belong to Satan?"

### Only Two Portions

There is no third portion! All humanity, Jews and Gentiles alike, fall into one of the two portions. One portion belongs to the glorified Servant of Jehovah and consists of those who have placed their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and His work of the cross. These individuals are described in John 3:36a. "He that believeth (puts his entire trust) on the Son hath (is having) everlasting life."

Then there is that portion which belongs to the "strong one." These have neglected the claims of the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world. They may not have actively opposed Him. It is not necessary to do that. To neglect Christ's claims, which are so firmly established in Isaiah's prophecy, is all that is necessary. John 3:36b describes this second category. "And he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth (is abiding) on him."

### A Clear Prophetic Message

It is difficult to understand how anyone, especially those who are God's chosen people, could read Isaiah 53, realize it was written over 750 years before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and still not believe the truth concerning Him. The details of His substitutionary death and His resurrection to eternal life are brought out so clearly by the great prophet of Israel.

Child of Israel, don't be afraid to read Isaiah 53. The very One Isaiah prophesied of was here in the flesh almost 2,000 years ago. And He said to the children of Israel, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." John 5:39.

**The End**