

He Bore Our Sins Isaiah 53:1-12

When we think of Messianic prophecies found in the Old Testament we most often reflect on the passages that speak of His coming as an infant. We turn to **Micah 5:2** which announces His birth place. Or from **Isaiah 7:14** describing that He would be born of a virgin. Then there is **Isaiah 9:6-7** that affirms His lineage will come from David and that He will sit on the throne and reign as King.

For centuries the nation and people of Israel contemplated the Messianic prophecies related to His coming. **Yet did they miss the other prophecies telling us why He would come? Did they miss or ignore the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 given by God after man's initial sin and expulsion from the Garden of Eden that a Redeemer would come?** The imagery given by God in that sacrifice made to cover man's nakedness was to depict the covering of sin that would be required in order for man to once again stand before a Holy God.

Our text today is another one of those Old Testament prophecies given to the nation of Israel to show them the purpose of God's Messiah. These words have echoed through the corridors of time to us as we compare its words with the historical facts of the person of Christ and the events surrounding His death, burial and resurrection. They bring legitimacy to the proof of Jesus being the Messiah who fulfills the description with vivid detail the events that occurred 2,000 years ago.

Turn in your Bibles to **Isaiah 53** where the prophet, writing 700 years before this event occurred, captures with accurate detail not only the events surrounding the death and resurrection of the Messiah, but also the reason.

Throughout Israel's history beginning with Moses and ending with John the Baptist, God would send

His messengers, prophets with words rebuking the nation for its rejection of His law, calling them out for their wickedness and disobedience and urging them to repent.

Up until the 12th Century Israel held to the belief that this text was about suffering the Messiah would endure, but from that time forward Rabbis began to interpret the passage to mean that Israel would be the one to suffer. **But how could Israel die on behalf of itself? And how could Israel make the claim that it was innocent and suffered unjustly?**

Our passage today is clearly about the Messiah. Its message is as clear a gospel message as any found in the New Testament. **Old Testament scholar Kyle Yates describes this passage as the Mt. Everest of Messianic prophecy. He further writes that it is at the very heart of the Gospel message.**

Warren Wiersbe states that this passage stands out in beauty and grandeur because it reveals Jesus Christ and takes us to Mt. Calvary. Most of the passage has to do with the suffering and anguish of the Messiah, but we see in the end that the main purpose, the capstone of His suffering leads to exaltation and glory, not just His but ours as well that comes through the resurrection. From it we see three prophetic truths.

The servant of the cross

The suffering on the cross

The satisfaction from the cross

I. THE SERVANT OF THE CROSS – v. 1-3

You probably remember some 5 or 6 years ago when the issue of the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare was being hotly debated in Congress. Still ringing in the minds and ears of Americans are the infamous words of then Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, who said that in order to understand what was in the Bill, it needed to be passed first. We receive in the mail a report from our doctor following a recent physical with recommendations

based on his or her findings only to stick it unopened in our desk drawer.

We are handed an annual report compiled from an independent agency on the health of our business with an assessment on how to be more competitive with our product and we stick it in our brief case.

We receive from a teacher our rough draft that was written for a class at school with suggestions to improve our report only to toss it in our backpack.

Like other prophets Isaiah spoke the word of God to a people who needed to get right with God. They had been disobedient to keep His laws and God's messenger was sent with a message calling them to repentance. Isaiah begins this Messianic prophecy with a rhetorical question. **“Who has believed our report?”** Has anyone taken the time to read it, to listen to it, to heed it? The answer is no. No one had bothered to ponder the implications of the message. The message of salvation had been given to the nation time and time again but met with the same response – disobedience and rejection. There were a few people who would believe the message, but by and large the people ignored the message about the Messiah. Their spiritual eyes and hearts darkened by sin would not hear the message about Him. So Isaiah revealed a heart wrenching depiction of the Messiah. He unveils the person of the Messiah.

This Messiah revealed by the prophet Isaiah is the one in whom the gospels describe as He who came not to be served but to serve and to give Himself as a ransom for many. He is the one who took a wash basin and towel and after washing the feet of the disciples before the Passover meal told them to go and do as He had done. He is the one described by Paul as taking on the very nature of a servant.

As we see in other Messianic prophecies, Isaiah also affirms that the Messiah would come from the seed of David. Isaiah wrote of this earlier.

11:1 “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.”

History has shown us that the kingly line of David ended with King Zedekiah. No one else has sat on the throne as king of Israel. On that day the kingly line of David became a stump. Yet the fulfillment of the promise God made to David will one day come true when a shoot will come up from the stump and once again rule over the kingdom. That King will bear fruit through His sacrifice.

Isaiah 53 says that this servant, the Messiah will grow like a root out of a dry ground. Isaiah is speaking here of the spiritual desert that will be the time when Messiah comes. Jesus came unto His own but His own did not receive Him. They rejected Him. It was a time of spiritual dryness. Israel was in a spiritual desert.

Then as suggested by Isaiah, there would be nothing about Him that would attract many to Him. The word here for beauty speaks about royalty not His physical appearance. Nothing about His birth or life would give any hint of kingly ties. He was born and would live in very humble means. People would question how someone so common could actually be the Messiah. While His words and works attracted many, His common upbringing made Him no different than any other Israelite that they should follow Him. But once they understood the demands He placed on those who would follow Him, many followed Him no more.

They despised Him and rejected Him. While some wanted to crown Him, others wanted to kill Him. He would become further alienated from those He came to save. Not as a result of His own doing, but because of their rejection. He was treated like a slave and in the end He was worth to them the price of a slave – only 30 pieces of silver.

Isaiah further describes this servant as a man of sorrows, one acquainted with grief. He not only

knew grief from physical pain, He also knew grief from mental anguish. The suffering of this servant did not begin with the scourging or beatings at the hands of Roman soldiers. His suffering began in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Matthew 26:36-39 “Then Jesus went with His disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to them, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with Him, and He began to be sorrowful and troubled (NLT – filled with anguish and deep distress). Then He said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow (NLT – crushed with grief) to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with Me.’ Going a little farther, He fell with His face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.’”

This very profound point was written about this passage. “Knowing He would soon give Himself to the great horror of the cross, Jesus embraced the suffocating weight of all that was to come... The fact still stuns us: Jesus, the very Son of God, knew profound despair – He knew every human dread, every anxiety. There is no human temptation or fear that Jesus has not experienced.”

Knowing what was about to take place both physically through the trial, rejection, humiliation, torture and death; knowing the ramifications of bearing the sin of the world – past, present and future; knowing that such an act would incur the rejection of the Father because of the sin He would bear; knowing that the weight of man’s redemption rested on Him He was sorrowful, His soul was in anguish. And as He hung on the cross His disciples had abandoned Him, His mother could not comfort Him, and His Father had turned His back on Him.

I would even suggest that His suffering began earlier that week as He rode into Jerusalem. It is Luke who records that as Jesus rode into Jerusalem

He wept over its people because they did not understand the significance of the events that were unfolding before them. **(Luke 19:41)**

It was a servant Isaiah spoke about who went to the cross.

Isaiah also describes the suffering on the cross.

II. THE SUFFERING ON THE CROSS – v. 4-9

If there is any passage in which we should come with fear and trembling, it is this passage. It is here that we see the horrific result of what our sin has done. It is here that we see someone who is innocent dying for someone who is guilty.

But yet if there is any passage in which we can come with great hope and expectation it is also this one. It is here that we come to the realization of the awfulness of sin, the universality of sin, the penalty for sin and yet we see hope, we see one dying for the transgressions of others.

Think for a moment about your own life and however many years you have traversed this earth and for a brief moment think about all your anxieties, all your sins small or great. Then multiply that by the billions and billions of people that have lived since Adam and Eve and all their multiplied anxieties and sins and dump them on the shoulders of this servant. We will never fully comprehend the burden He bore for humanity, knowing full well that multitudes would still reject the sacrifice He made on their behalf, yet He did it anyway.

Here is the servant dying as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. **I Peter 2:24** explains to us that “**He bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed.**”

Without the shedding of His blood there is no forgiveness of sins. This passage shows us the substitutionary nature of the servant as He suffered

in our place taking on Himself what He didn't deserve in order to give us what we don't deserve. There isn't a one of us who isn't guilty.

There was a Scotsman who was well known for his gambling and fighting who one day got saved. Soon after he began preaching the gospel in churches. One night as he was preparing to preach in another nearby town, someone handed him an envelope. Inside was a list of the awful things he had done in that town. For a moment he debated about what to do and then stepped to the pulpit.

He began his message with these words, "Friends, I am accused of crimes and sins committed in this very city. I will read them to you." One after another he read the charges. After he read each one he would admit that he was guilty. Pausing for a moment he addressed the audience "You ask how I dare come to you and speak of righteousness and truth, with a list of crimes like that against my name? I will tell you: 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.'"

On the cross where this servant hung, all the sins of humanity were laid on Him, because no matter how insignificant they may seem to us, or how we may attempt to excuse them away, they are punishable by death. The Messiah, God's servant, completely and forever paid the debt for all of those sins for any who trust in Him as Savior.

Someone said that for salvation to occur we must come in at the beginning of verse 6 and go out at the end of verse 6. We are all like sheep who have gone astray, every one of us. Without exception, we all are lost, under the same penalty, but because Christ took all our sin we can have eternal life through Him. We can never commit any sin too great, nor is there the accumulation of sins that are too many that He did not take on Himself. He bore every one of them and he did so voluntarily.

I have heard it said that when cows are taken to the slaughter house they bawl and bellow and when pigs are led to the slaughter house they squeal loudly, but when sheep are led to be slaughtered, they don't make a sound. I don't know if that is true or not, but this I know and it is affirmed for us in the gospels that Jesus made no sound. He never spoke in defense of His innocence or demanded a fair trial because it was handled contrary to Jewish law. He never complained about unjust or too harsh a treatment. He was silent.

Remember that when Judas and the soldiers came to arrest Him in the Garden of Gethsemane that He spoke and all the soldiers fell backward. At His trial if He had spoken, the power in His word could have killed everyone. He could have done the same when He was tortured. He could have spoken from the cross and called legions of angels to aid Him. But in it all He remained silent. Silent to their accusations. Silent to their mocking. Silent at the crucifixion. His silence speaks of His submission. He did not fight against the false accusations or the torture inflicted by a corrupt culture. Neither did He fight against His Father's will.

Paul would write these very poignant words about this servant: **"And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:8)**

Peter would add **"When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made not threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly." (I Peter 2:23)**

But I want to make this point. It wouldn't have mattered when Jesus came. Whether 2,000 years ago or 4,000 years ago or today, what was said about Him then would still be true today. What He did then, He would do today. He would be silent.

And we notice in verse 8 that Isaiah spoke about the unjust treatment and trial that the servant would endure. According to what was culturally acceptable He would die before His time. He would die without children.

And verse 9 continues by noting that He would die alongside others who were criminals. Like any other criminal His fate after death was to be a common grave, or more likely just tossed outside the city in the town dump, the valley of Gihenna, but in fulfillment of Isaiah's promise we read in the gospel accounts that a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, requested His body from Pilate to give it a proper burial. He would receive an honorable burial not a shameful one.

Maybe it's just coincidence, but I find it interesting that it was a Joseph who attended to Jesus at His birth and it was a Joseph we find attending to Jesus at His death.

If the prophecy were to end there it would indeed be tragic. What an awful story it would be for some innocent person to be put to death for the guilt of another. It would be reminiscent of many governments down through the ages who kill the innocent for their own political agenda. We are appalled at the stories of the Holocaust. Other nations have slaughtered Christians for their faith. They are tragic stories. But thankfully our story and this prophecy do not end with extreme suffering and death. From a purely human perspective we look at the cross and see tragedy, but from the divine perspective of the Father it was triumph.

We have seen the servant of the cross and the sacrifice on the cross. Let's conclude by looking at the satisfaction from the cross.

III. THE SATISFACTION FROM THE CROSS

– v. 10-12

Man looks at the cross and sees the justice system prevailing. He may look at it from the legal

perspective and say that evidence supports the right decision and He should not only be condemned but He should also die. God has an entirely different perspective.

On several occasions during the ministry of Jesus we hear the Father calling out of heaven about the Son **“This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”** Everything about what Jesus did pleased the Father. He was obedient in everything He was asked to do. We might be tempted to look at the momentary rejection of the Son by the Father when He turned away because of the sin He bore and conclude that the Father was displeased with the Son yet we read in **verse 10** that **“It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.”** The Father is not some maniacal deity unjustly inflicting punishment on His Son for no good reason. It was His plan all along. **Revelation 13:8** tells us that He was slain from the creation of the world. It was the only way possible in one of history's most brutal acts that God is able to bring peace and healing.

In a way, Jesus spoke of it to Nicodemus in that night time rendezvous. **“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)**

Jesus' teachings couldn't procure it and neither could His miracles. It could only come through His death on the cross. Even the sufferings of the servant pleased the Father, because it was accepted by the Father as the payment for sin. **How do we know it pleased the Father? How do we know that His voluntary sacrifice was accepted?** We know that because three days later He rose from the grave. And this passage refers both to His resurrection and to His exaltation. His death did not end His existence, He rose again from the dead and that assures our resurrection as well. His resurrection assures that He will see His offspring. Who are His offspring? They are the ones who will join Him in eternity who by faith believe that He died for them

and trust Him as Savior. He bore our punishment so that we would not have to and to show that it was accepted by God He rose again.

Romans 1:4; 4:25

I Corinthians 15:3-4, 12-22

“This great passage gives a tremendously complete picture of what the death of Jesus Christ accomplished on behalf of Israel and the whole world. His death satisfied God’s righteous demands for judgment against sin, thus opening the way for everyone to come to God in faith for salvation from sin.”

I John 2:2 “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”

What Jesus did on the cross satisfied the heart of God as Jesus said **“The One who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do what pleases Him.” (John 8:29)**

What Jesus did on the cross satisfied the law of God.

Romans 3:22-26

Romans 5:1-2

Romans 8:1-3

So we see that through Christ’s sacrificial, atoning death, the penalty for sin was satisfied. The debt was paid and God was pleased with the sacrifice and pardoned our sin.

Because of what Christ did He is exalted by the Father. He is seen at the front dividing, as it were, the spoils of battle given to the victors. The spoils of victory He gives to us are spoils we don’t deserve. He died for us that we might live for Him and live with Him.

Chuck Colson tells the story about a time he visited a prison in Brazil. Through a series of events the prison was handed over to two Christians to run using Christian principles. At the time of his visit

some 25 years later, Colson said that except for two staff, inmates did all the work. Families outside the prison adopted an inmate they would work with during their time of incarceration.

Colson relates that as he visited with inmates, he found them smiling, particularly the murderer who unlocked the gates and let him in. Wherever he walked men were at peace, living areas were clean, and people were working industriously. The walls were decorated with verses from Psalms and Proverbs. The guide escorted him to the infamous punishment cell once used for torture. The guide told him that the block only housed one inmate. As they reached the end of the long concrete corridor he put the key into the lock. Pausing he asked if Colson really wanted to go in. Colson responded that he had been in many isolation cells all over the world and wanted to visit this one as well. Slowly the massive door swung open revealing the lone figure. Beautifully carved by the inmates was the prisoner Jesus, hanging on the cross. The inmate guide responded softly “He’s doing time for the rest of us.”

There is a story about a mother whose face was hideously scarred by an injury. As her little girl grew and made friends, she became more embarrassed and ashamed of her mother’s horrid appearance. As she would walk down the street with her mother she would notice people moving over to the far side of the walk or even crossing the street to avoid them. Gradually, the girl found ways to avoid being with her mother in public. After the girl grew up to become an adult and get married, she moved to another town. The daughter ignored her mother in spite of the financial setbacks the mother experienced.

One day she discovered her mother’s old diary and began to read the many journal entries. One such entry described a horrible day when the house caught on fire. It described how the mother scooped up her daughter running to safety but in the process

suffered severe burns. The truth of her mother's appearance now dawned on the daughter realizing that those scars were a result of saving her. She went to her mother in shame and asked forgiveness, now seeing those scars as something beautiful. She expressed her gratitude for all her mother did for her and a new love relationship between the two controlled their lives.

When you consider this passage, how do you now see the scars of Jesus? Knowing what Jesus endured for us, does that give us a new love for Him? Do you glory in the resurrection and anticipate the day you will gaze upon the beauty of those scars and be reminded that He took those for me?

Verse 12 "Therefore I will give Him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because He poured out His life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Psalm 130 3-4, 7 "If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with Him is full redemption."

Had it not been for sin, He would have never known death, but that was the price He was willing to pay for our sin. **Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death."**

Had it not been for sin, He would not have known the guilt of sin. **"He became sin for us, who knew no sin."**

Had it not been for sin, He would never have known what it was like to be separated from the Father.

This servant who willingly hung on the cross experienced to the fullest degree God's wrath for sin and because He died for my sin, there is

something I won't have to experience and that is eternal separation from God.

The suffering Servant became our sacrifice on the cross out of His great love satisfying the just demands of the Father and when He rose again on this Easter day He fulfilled for us the promise of our own resurrection and the assurance of eternal life. Knowing that, we should gladly sing "Redeemed How I Love to Proclaim It."