

Isaiah 53

Introduction – This paper was written by a high school and college mathematics instructor. It was not written or produced by any particular church or denomination. It is provided free of charge as an expression of God's love for mankind.



Who is the person described in Isaiah chapter 53? In Acts chapter eight, a man from Ethiopia was reading Isaiah fifty-three and he asked asked Philip, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?" Philip's response was very clear. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35 KJV). Many early Jewish rabbis rightly said that Isaiah 53 spoke of the coming Messiah. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies in Isaiah chapter 53, but the rabbis now say that the person described in Isaiah 53 should be the nation of Israel. Isaiah 53:10 says that His soul was made an offering for sin. No group or regular person, myself included, can be a pure and righteous offering for sin. Isaiah 64:6 says that our righteousness is like filthy rags. So, who is the Savior? Billions of crosses on every continent of the world bear testimony to the suffering of the Messiah.

¹"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? ²For 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. ³He 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" (Isaiah 53:1-3 KJV).

Isaiah the prophet was rightly skeptical of the willingness of his people to believe a true report. The arm of the Lord was revealed to Israel on many occasions, but they chose to rebel against God. Consider Nehemiah 9:26 (KJV): "But they became disobedient and rebelled against You, And cast Your law behind their backs, And killed Your prophets who had admonished them so that they might return to You, And they committed great blasphemies." The Messiah grew up as a

tender plant, born in a stable in Bethlehem. He did not arrive in a chariot of fire to crush the enemies of Israel and establish the kingdom envisioned by the religious leaders of the day. He was not a charismatic leader with a striking physical appearance. The Messiah did not come as one of the beautiful people. Isaiah said that He had no beauty or attractiveness. He lived a life of sorrow and grief. The Messiah was despised and rejected, then and now.

"⁴Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵But 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. ⁶All 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" (Isaiah 53:4-6 KJV).

Verses four and five say that while He bore our grief, our sorrow, our transgression, and our iniquities, we had the shameless contempt to unjustly conclude that the Messiah had been smitten of God for His own transgression. Christ had no transgressions. He was wounded for *our* transgressions. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrew 4:15 KJV). The Messiah did not come to sin; He came to save sinners. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:13 KJV). However, man continues to rebel against God. We have all turned to our own way, to the way of sin and God laid all that burden of sin and guilt on the Messiah.

"⁷He 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. ⁸He 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. ⁹And 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" (Isaiah 53:7-9 KJV).

The Messiah could have called a mighty army of angels or simply spoken one word to destroy His enemies in a second, but He willingly died on the cross to redeem mankind from the curse of sin and death. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John 10:18 KJV). Why did the Messiah weep over Jerusalem? "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 23:37 KJV). He wept over Jerusalem because He loved its people. It is absolutely heartbreaking to see people you love choose the road of destruction and reject the way of eternal life.

¹⁰Yet 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. ¹¹He 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. ¹²Therefore 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" (Isaiah 53:10-12 KJV).

God sent His prophets. They were rejected and killed. God sent His Son, the Messiah. He was rejected and killed. "But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy" (2 Chronicles 36:16 KJV). The day of grace and remedy is passing away. Will you hear the word of the Lord? Isaiah 53:12 says that the Messiah was numbered with the transgressors and poured out His soul unto death. He bore our sins and made intercession for us. He continues to intercede on our behalf as a high priest. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25 KJV). Hear the word of the Lord. God loves you! "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16 KJV).

If the Spirit of God is speaking to you today, then today is your day of salvation. Second Corinthians 6:2 says that at just the right time, God heard you. If you cry out to God, He will hear you. On the day of salvation, He will help you. He will send the Holy Spirit to guide you and draw you to Him. Certainly, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation! There is no guarantee of tomorrow. Your heart may become hard and your ears deaf to His call. Today, if you are fortunate enough to hear His voice, I urge you to say yes to Christ and His love.

You can experience a spiritual rebirth today. Romans 10:9 (KJV) says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Will you pray today and begin your journey with Christ? "Lord Jesus, I confess with my mouth today that You are the only begotten Son of the living God. I repent and turn from my sins. I believe that You died on the cross to save me from my punishment and I receive You as Savior and Lord of my life. Please help me to grow in Your fellowship and serve You all the days of my life. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

If you prayed that prayer today from your heart, then you have become a child of God. You have been born again and your adventure with Christ begins. Read the Bible each day, beginning with the book of John. Talk to God each day and ask for His help. Find a church that loves Jesus, loves people, worships God with enthusiasm, and teaches the Bible. They will help and encourage you on your journey with Christ.

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