

- exhort one another (from the written word) lest their hearts be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin . . .
- D. Satan is able to transform himself into an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14); quote scripture (Matt. 4:5-6); perform lying wonders (Rev. 13:11-18); and he is able to enter the mind of man by the power of thought . . . he is a spirit of disobedience, etc.
- E. Some examples of people who thought they were doing God's service when following the subjective feelings of their hearts:
1. The disciples, led by Judas, thought that Mary "wasted" the ointment by pouring it upon Jesus and it could have been sold and given to the poor (Mt. 26:9; Mk. 14:5; Jn. 12:5) . . . THEY HAD TO HAVE AN OBJECTIVE REVEALED TO THEM IN THE WORDS OF JESUS TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THEIR CROOKED SUBJECTIVE THINKING.
 2. Peter thought that defending the life of Jesus against His enemies was the proper thing to do, but it was Satan whispering to Peter (Mt. 16:21-23; Mk. 8:32-33).
 3. Paul said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth . . ." even to the persecution and killing of Christians (Acts 22:4; 26:9-11; I Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6; I Tim. 1:13) . . . he lived in all good conscience in so doing . . . IT TOOK AN OBJECTIVE REVELATION TO PAUL TO STRAIGHTEN OUT HIS THINKING.

5. ATONE, CHAPTER 53

a. SHUNNED

TEXT: 53:1-3

- 1 Who had believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed?
- 2 For he grew 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 see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.
 3 He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we esteemed him not.

QUERIES

- a. What message was not believed?
- b. What is the "dry ground" from which He grew?
- c. Why was the Servant a "man of sorrows"?

PARAPHRASE

But when the Suffering Servant comes, who will have believed this message of the exaltation of the Servant from such a state of deep degradation? who will have recognized in this the victorious, powerful "arm" of Jehovah? It was the plan of God that His Servant take the form of man and grow up like a fragile, green plant sprouting from dry and sterile ground. In our eyes there was nothing in Him to make Him attractive as king or Messiah. We saw nothing in Him that made us want Him or want to follow Him as our leader. In fact, we despised Him and rejected Him; He suffered the sorrow of rejection and grief of our unbelief as well as our physical persecutions. We went out of our way to shun Him and ignore Him.

COMMENTS

v. 1 UNBELIEVING: Chapter 53 is still in the *predictive present tense*. It is as if the Servant has come, been rejected, slaughtered and the people of Israel are looking at it all in retrospect! The overall reaction of the nation to Jesus' claims to be the Messiah was scoffing, mockery, rejection and persecution. He gained a few disciples, but at the arrest in Gethsemane, they all forsook Him and fled (Mk. 14:50). The nation, as a whole, could not believe that Jehovah was at work revealing His "Arm" in the itinerant Galilean carpenter's son. It was especially difficult for any who had been attracted to Him during His life to believe that He was God's Servant when they

gathered at Golgotha and saw His humiliating death, (cf. Lk. 24:13-27). The believing, penitent Jews after their baptism (Acts 2:37, etc.) still marvelled that they could have been so unbelieving. They are represented here by the prophet as continually marvelling as they reflect on their blindness. Twice in the N.T. this very verse of Isaiah's prophecy is quoted as Jesus (Jn. 12:38) and Paul (Rom. 10:16) express shock that the Jews did not believe when Jehovah's Servant came to them.

Is there any question as to the identity of this Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53? Servant of Jehovah, *'ebed Yahweh* in Hebrew is prophesied at least 20 times in Isaiah chapters 40-53. Sometimes it refers to Cyrus, king of Persia; sometimes it refers to the nation of Israel (41:8; 42:19); but most often it refers to the Messiah (42:1-7; 49:1-9; 50:4-9; 52:13—53:12; 61:1-3). The Servant is the same *person* (not nation) previously described in 7:14; 9:6ff; 11:1-5. He is also the "Branch" of 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5ff; 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12ff. The inspired authors of the New Testament specifically confirm the following prophecies of the Servant are fulfilled in Jesus Christ; Isa. 42:1-4 fulfilled in Mt. 12:18-21; Isa. 52:13—53:12 fulfilled (or quoted) in Mt. 8:17; Lk. 22:37; Jn. 12:38; Acts 8:32ff; Rom. 10:16. The Servant's *mission* can only be fulfilled by Christ:

1. Birth (Isa. 49:1; 53:2; Lk. 1:31-35)
2. Anointing (Isa. 42:1; 48:16; 59:21; 61:1; Mt. 3:16; Lk. 4:18ff)
3. Ministry (Isa. 49:8-13; Acts 10:36-43)
4. Rejection (Isa. 49:4-7; 53:1-3; Acts 3:13-18)
5. Obedience (Isa. 40:4-7; Phil. 2:5-11)
6. New Covenant (Isa. 42:6; 49:8; 55:3; Mt. 26:26-29)
7. Vicarious death (Isa. 53:4-12; I Pet. 2:22-25)
8. Resurrection (Isa. 53:10-12; Acts 2:24-36)
9. Salvation Offered (Isa. 49:8; 61:2; Lk. 24:46-49)
10. Mission to Gentiles (Isa. 42:1, 6ff; 49:6, 12; 60:3, 9; Mt. 28:18-20)
11. Glorification and Intercession 49:3; 53:12; Acts 2:33-36; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 7:24ff)
12. Jesus came to *serve*. (Mt. 20:28; Jn. 12:13-20, etc.)

v. 2-3 **UNCIVIL:** What Jew in his right mind would ever have dreamed or imagined rejecting his Messiah or Jehovah's Servant in such an odious way as Isaiah predicts? Only the most shameful incivility prompts men to deliberately "hide" from another human being. Yet these verses vividly portray the scandalous hatred the Jews will manifest toward the Incarnate Servant. It is the life-story of the Servant from the cradle to the grave. The Servant's entry into this world was so inglorious; born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), of poor parentage, in a stable. When He grew up as a lad in Nazareth He was just like any other lad according to all outward appearances (Lk. 2:51-52) (with the one exception of confounding the scholars at Jerusalem, Lk. 2:41-50).

"He grew up before him . . ." means the Servant grew up in the eyes of Jehovah, or, by the foreordained plan of God, "as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." Jehovah sent His Servant to the world through the Jews, despised and harassed people by the Roman world of Christ's day. He grew up in Nazareth which was in Galilee (which means, "circuit of the Gentiles"). "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (Jn. 1:46) was the attitude toward that infamous village. That the Servant of Jehovah, the Messiah, should come from a carpenter's family would be unthinkable to Jewish theology. A tender, green plant in dry parched ground is regarded with skepticism as to its origin and its survival. So Christ was looked upon.

Among all ancient peoples (even as among some modern advertisers) ideal physique, refined facial features, etc., were considered necessary prerequisites of future greatness, along with "right" parents, "right" birthplace, "right" schools, etc. These verses are not intended to describe Christ's facial features or His physique. They are simply predicting that men would judge Him by that inauspicious human appearance and completely reject Him because of their presuppositions. When Jesus was only a baby, Simeon the aged prophet took Him in his arms and predicted He was the "consolation of Israel and a light unto the Gentiles" but that He would become

a "sign that is spoken against," (cf. Lk. 2:22-35). When He was arrested and mocked and tortured by the Sanhedrin, Pilate and Herod, there was no "form or comeliness" in Him that any of the nation desired Him to be king. Why would God plan it that His Servant come into the world in such untoward surroundings? In order to put men into the "refiner's fire." All who beheld His glory through eyes of faith and saw beyond the humiliation of the incarnation that He was the Son of God became sons of God. All who were blinded by their own carnal standards of "comeliness" and judged Jesus by them became "sons of disobedience." God wanted to get at the heart of man, for that is what He judges, not outward appearances.

Jesus was seldom treated with indifference. When He spoke or acted, people either clamored after Him or plotted against Him. But even most of the clamoring of the multitudes was only superficial. It was motivated by fleshly hunger for more "bread and fish" or for instantaneous healing of sicknesses. The Sadducees and Pharisees hated the Servant and plotted His death because He stripped away their facade of orthodoxy and exposed their immoral and rebellious hearts. And, in the end, these pretentious theologians and greedy legalists seduced the carnal-minded multitudes to clamor for His crucifixion! He was despised and rejected of men; forsaken and shunned. The two Hebrew words *makeoyoth* and *kholiy* are literally, "pain" and "sickness," but are translated, "sorrows" and "grief." When people saw that His earthly life was characterized by trouble, pain, rejection, sorrow, poverty, humiliation, absolute honesty and purity, few wanted to have anything to do with Him. Misunderstood by all—even His select disciples and His own human family—He was a "man of sorrows" (see comments on 49:4). How could Jesus have been a "man of sorrows" and yet speak so much of his "joy"? Because the *object* of His joy was beyond this world! (Heb. 12:1ff). All men who live godly in this world will suffer persecution (II Tim. 3:12; Jn. 15:18ff; 16:33), but they may also have joy if the *object* of their joy is beyond this world (Jn. 4:34; 15:11; 17:13, etc.).

What people turned away from the Servant of the Lord for when He was in human form on the earth they still turn away from Him for today—His substitutionary atonement. Some are superficially in agreement with what they think is His pacifistic humanitarianism or His socialistic human-rights stance, but they absolutely will not surrender to the truth that Jesus had to die for their sin. This is what was so unacceptable to the self-righteous Pharisees of Jesus' day. It remains a threat to the self-righteousness of men today!

QUIZ

1. How extensive was the unbelief predicted by Isaiah?
2. Who, alone, could fulfill the predictions of the Suffering Servant?
3. Would it have been a normal thing for the Jews to reject their Messiah?
4. Why did they reject the Servant-Messiah when He came?
5. Why did God foreordain such an inauspicious incarnation for His Servant?
6. What was the fundamental issue over which people turned away from Jesus?

b. SUFFERS

TEXT: 53:4-9

- 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
- 5 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.
- 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

- 7 He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.
- 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them 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 And they made his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death; although he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

QUERIES

- a. How did He bear our "griefs and sorrows"?
- b. How did Jehovah lay on Him the iniquity of us all?
- c. Did any of His generation consider that he was cut off . . . for the stroke that was due them?

PARAPHRASE

And yet, it was the suffering that should have been ours He suffered; it was our pain He bore. All the time we were thinking that His suffering and humiliation was a sign that He was a blasphemer and God was punishing Him! But He was not a sinner—we were, and it was because of our sins He was wounded and because of our evil that He was willing to be scourged and crucified. Because of His substitutionary punishment for our sins we are vicariously justified and cleansed of iniquity and declared at peace with God. We are the ones who strayed away from The Shepherd. We are the ones who acted like dumb sheep wandering into unsafe and self-destructive pathways. We are the guilty ones, but God laid on Him the guilt of everyone of us. He was treated unjustly and cruelly, but he endured it willingly and without retaliation; He was

innocent, and like an innocent lamb that is sacrificially slaughtered, He surrendered to death for us. Like a sheep that submits to being sheared without fighting back, so He did not resist His persecutors. He was tried, sentenced and led away to be crucified when He was completely innocent, and no one cared or understood that He was suffering the penalty that should have been every man's. Paradoxically, He was buried like a criminal but in a rich man's grave. He had done no wrong and had never spoken falsehood.

COMMENTS

v. 4-6 ATONING GRACE: Unusual pain, sorrow and grief was equated with unusual guilt in the ancient world. Job's three friends told Job his calamities were punishment from God for his sinfulness. The man born blind was stigmatized as a sinner both by the disciples of Jesus and the Pharisees (cf. John 9:1ff). Jesus *corrected* this concept in Luke 13 by saying that those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell were *not* worse sinners than others but that all calamities were warnings to the world to repent. And the Jews rationalized their prejudice against Jesus by mocking Him as a criminal at His crucifixion. Rather than admit their own ideas about God's Messiah were contrary to the Old Testament, they accused Jesus of blasphemy and pointed to His violation of their traditions and His humble life-style as proof that God was punishing Him for being such a sinner.

But there was nothing wrong with Him. We (all mankind) were the guilty ones. The rejection, misunderstanding, poverty, humiliation, slander He endured should have been ours. He was finally forsaken by God, suffered the second death (Mt. 27:46) and was *made to be sin* on our behalf (II Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13). He bore our sins on the tree (II Pet. 2:22-25). The Righteous died for the unrighteous (II Pet. 3:18). Christ did not deserve any of what He suffered. He was hated without cause (Jn. 15:24-25). The great capsulation of the atonement

is Romans 3:21-26. The real suffering of the Servant was spiritual, not physical. Many men have suffered physically (perhaps even more torture than crucifixion), but He was innocent, without sin, and actually became sin and suffered spiritual separation (death) from the Father for those who actually deserved it. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew verb *meholal* translated "wounded" means literally *pierced, perforated*, a precise prophecy of the piercing of Christ's body by the Roman soldier (John 19:34-37).

Do verses four and five indicate that the atonement of Christ also provided miraculous healing of physical sicknesses for all mankind? Some modern faith-healers contend that all men who believe in the atonement of Christ may expect God to heal their bodies. T. J. McCrossan in his *Bodily Healing and the Atonement*, pg. 16, says, "Again all Christians should expect God to heal their bodies today, because Christ died to atone for our sickness as well as for our sins." Warren C. Roark, compiler of *Divine Healing*, pub. The Warner Press, Anderson, Ind., 1945, records a statement by a modern advocate of this view, E. E. Byers, pg. 58, "God . . . in the atonement . . . made provision for the healing of man's mortal body so long as he lived in this world." Although honest exegesis must admit that the Hebrew words *makeoyoth* and *kholiy* may literally mean "pain" and "sickness," one must understand they may also be figuratively translated "griefs" and "sorrows." The following considerations make it clear that Isaiah's prophecy of the atonement by the Suffering Servant did *not* mean to include physical healing for *all* believers:

1. The *context* (all important in proper exegesis) indicates the subject is sin, spiritual sickness, not physical sickness. If the atonement made provision for the healing of man's mortal body so long as he lived . . . he would live forever in this world! Death is the cumulative effect of one physical malady or another.
2. In Matthew 8:16-17 a *portion* of Isaiah's prophecy is quoted in connection with Christ's healing of some physical

sicknesses. However, it is highly significant that verse five was *not* quoted by Matthew (“with his stripes we are healed”). Furthermore, Jesus was fulfilling verse four three years before the atonement was made. Verse four was fulfilled in His divine ministry of healing, and not when He hung on the cross. Matthew was simply claiming, therefore, that Christ in performing miracles of healing, was fulfilling what Isaiah prophesied of His healing ministry and not His atonement.

3. There is no statement in the whole Bible suggesting that Christ “bore our sicknesses in his own body on the tree,” or that he was made to be “sick, diseased, or possessed with infirmity” for us.
4. The New Testament plainly shows that not all of the healings of Jesus demanded faith in Him. Thus, the efficacy of His atonement could not apply to the healing.
5. The New Testament plainly shows that many people with faith in the atonement of Christ were *not* healed of their sicknesses, including the great apostle Paul!

Some questions on healing in the atonement:

- a. If the atonement provides for physical healing, why does not one receive healing at conversion—the place where the efficacy of the atonement is applied?
- b. If the atonement provides for physical healing, why do not all believers receive healing? (cf. Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” II Cor. 12:7-10).
- c. Why is there as large a *percentage* of sickness among believers as there is among unbelievers?
- d. Why did Paul prescribe a medical treatment to Timothy for his “oft infirmities”? (I Tim. 5:23)
- e. Why are there so many failures among faithful, honest, believing people who so earnestly and diligently seek healing?

THE HEALING MIRACLES OF CHRIST

Case	References	Nature of Malady	Nature of Cure	Comment
Nobleman's son	John 4:46, 54	Sick at the point of death	Healed the same hour	Father believed, but not the son
Impotent man	John 5:1-47	Infirm 30 years; couldn't walk	Made whole at once	No faith, except to walk
Demoniac in the Capernaum Synagogue	Mark 1:21-28 Luke 4:33-37	Possessed spirit of unclean demon	Instantly delivered	No faith indicated
Peter's wife's mother	Matt. 8:14-15 Mark 1:29-31 Luke 4:38-39	Possessed of a "great fever"	Fever left her immediately	No faith required
Man in Capernaum	Matt. 8:16-17 Mark 1:32-34 Luke 4:40-41	Demoniacs, sick, diseased	Instantly healed	No faith indicated
Leper	Matt. 8:1-4 Mark 1:40-45 Luke 5:12-16	Full of leprosy	Heal at once	Had faith; not required
Palsied man	Matt. 9:1-8 Mark 2:1-12 Luke 5:17-26	Palsied, could not walk	Instantly healed	Faith of others

Case	References	Nature of Malady	Nature of Cure	Comment
Man with withered hand	Matt. 12:9-14 Mark 3:1-6 Luke 6:6-11	Hand deformed	Instantly healed	No faith required but to extend hand
Many in Galilee	Matt. 4:23-24 Mark 3:7-12 Luke 6:17-19	All manner of sickness	Instantly healed	No faith indicated
Multitudes	Matt. 12:15-21	Not stated	Healed all	No faith
Blind and dumb demoniac	Matt. 12:22-24 Luke 11:14-15	Possessed a devil; blind and dumb	Healed at once	No faith required
Centurion's servant	Matt. 8:5-13 Luke 7:1-10	Palsied, tormented, and nearly dead	Made whole instantly	No faith of servant
Widow's son of Nain	Luke 7:11-17	Dead	Instantly sat up and spoke	No faith possible
Demoniac	Matt. 9:32-34	Dumb and demoniac	Instantly delivered	No faith evident
Two demoniacs at Gadara	Matt. 8:28-34 Mark 5:1-20 Luke 8:26-40	Possessed legion of devils. Fierce, couldn't be bound	Devils instantly cast out	No faith evident

Case	References	Nature of Malady	Nature of Cure	Comment
The daughter of Jairus	Matt. 9:18-25 Mark 5:34-43 Luke 8:43-48	Dead	Made alive at once	No faith possible
Woman with the issue of blood	Matt. 9:20-22 Mark 5:25-34 Luke 8:43-48	Afflicted 12 years Grew worse, suffered much	Made whole at once	Faith present, but not required
Two blind men	Matt. 9:27-31	Blind	Eyes opened immediately	Faith required
Healing of many	Matt. 14:34-36 Mark 6:5-5-56	Diseased	Made perfectly whole	No faith required
Daughter of Syrochonecian woman	Matt. 15:21-28 Mark 7:24-30	Demoniac	Made whole instantly	No faith of daughter, but of mother
Many near Galilee	Matt. 15:29-31	Lame, blind dumb, maimed	Healed at once	No faith indicated
Deaf and dumb man	Mark 7:31-37	Deaf with impediment of speech	Healed at once	No faith indicated
Blind man at Bethsaida	Mark 8:22-26	Blind	Saw at once	No faith indicated

Case	References	Nature of Malady	Nature of Cure	Comment
Demoniac child	Matt. 17:14-21	Lunatic; sore vexed; fell in fire and water	Cured that hour	Faith of the father, but not of child
Blind man	John 9:1-41	Blind from his birth	Saw at once	No faith required but to wash
Woman with infirmity	Luke 13:11-17	Bowed for 18 years	Immediately made straight	No faith required
Man with dropsy	Luke 14:1-6	Dropsy	Healed at once	No faith required
Lazarus	John 11:17-46	Dead	Made alive immediately	No faith possible
Ten lepers	Luke 17:11-19	Leprosy	Healed at once	No faith required
Two blind men	Matt. 20:29-34 Mark 10:46-52 Luke 18:35-43	Blind	Saw immediately	No faith required, but present
Servant of Malchus	Matt. 26:47-56 Mark 14:43-52 Luke 22:47-53 John 18:2-12	Ear severed	Ear replaced immediately	No faith required or indicated

Verse six plainly states the healing we receive from His stripes is the healing from sin. Sin is "going astray" (cf. Rom. 3:10-20). Sin is spiritual, psychological, mental sickness that needs healing. Paul calls sin insanity (I Cor. 15:34). Sin is spiritual disorientation. Man was not spiritually created for sin—it is against his spiritual nature. Spiritually, psychologically, emotionally and mentally man deteriorates when he sins. He begins to die, morally and spiritually when he begins to sin. Sin even causes some physical illnesses. Originally, of course, it caused all human illness and death as a constant reminder to man that he was not made for sin (cf. Rom. 1:27—men receive in their physical and psychological selves the "due penalty" for their sins). Jesus came and died and was raised to make us whole. Upon Him was the chastisement that allowed us to regain our innocence (our healing from sin). He takes the guilt and frees us from the deception of Satan's lies that we may come to our right minds (I Cor. 15:34). We still must suffer physical illnesses and death because of Adam's sin, but no longer do we have to suffer spiritual illness and death! Sin is soul-sickness. It fractures, incapacitates, ineverates and destroys the personhood of man. Forgiveness through Christ's atonement heals and saves us and restores us to the wholeness for which God created us.

v. 7-9 ACQUIESCENT GOODNESS: The Lord's servant was utterly innocent and totally submissive. He said nothing to answer the charges of the Sanhedrin (Mt. 26:63); He said nothing to answer the charges of Pilate (Mt. 27:14); He did not answer Herod's questions (Lk. 23:9). Pilate declared Him innocent; the Sanhedrin could bring no true accusation against Him (Jn. 18:19-24). Why did Jesus not argue His case? Would it have persuaded the Jews not to crucify Him even if He had? Jesus' mission as a "lamb" to be slaughtered was unique! He was the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29)! He was the only Person ever with that mission. His death was preordained. He was the Lamb, foreordained from the foundation of the earth to be slain (cf. I Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8; Acts 2:23). He willingly gave up His life, no one took it from

Him (cf. Jn. 10:17-18; 19:11; Heb. 10:1-10; etc.). We are not obligated to follow His acquiescent surrender to be illegally executed without reasonable defense. We cannot die for the same reason He died! We should never, of course, take the law into our own hands resisting evil. We must, if the occasion arises, suffer unjust trial and death without personally and individually using force to overthrow crooked judges. But that does not mean we cannot use peaceful, rational means to insist that justice be done. The apostle Paul insisted on correcting injustices (cf. Acts 16:35-39; 25:8-12, etc.); he also wrote that Christians should appeal to their civil governments to uphold justice (Rom. 13:1-7).

The Servant was "cut off" from life in this world (cf. our comments on Daniel 9:24-27 where the same phrase "cut off" is used in connection with the atoning death of the Messiah). And although there were a few plain announcements from Christ Himself that He was to die for the "ransom" of man's sins (cf. Jn. 1:29; Mt. 20:28; Mt. 26:26-29; Jn. 14:1-31; 16:10; 17:11), and many Old Testament types and prophecies (Lk. 24:25-49), none of His contemporaries (not even His own disciples) would accept the doctrine that the Messiah was to die as a substitutionary sacrifice for man's sins. The O.T. has at least four plain prophecies that the Messiah will die (Isaiah 53:1-12; Dan. 9:24-27; Zech. 12:10—13:1; Psa. 22:1-31). Still, even those honest, courageous, Jewish fishermen and tax-collectors who confessed that He was the Son of the Living God, refused to accept the predictions of Jesus Himself that He was to die as a ransom (Mt. 16:21-23; 26:30-35; Mk. 8:31-33; 14:26-31; Lk. 9:43-45; 24:13ff; Jn. 12:27-36 [the crowd said, We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever—does not die]; Jn. 8:32-36). Isaiah graphically foretells that the Messiah would be slain as if He were a wicked person—a criminal—and yet, paradoxically, He would be buried in a rich man's grave. History records the exact fulfillment of this! Jesus was sentenced as a blasphemer by the Jews, a seditious by the Romans and executed on a criminal's cross between two thieves. But He was buried in the rock-hewn tomb of the

rich man, Joseph of Arimathea.

It is rather astounding that not one of Jesus' own generation comprehended that He was to die an atoning death. Especially since a few of them confessed that He was who He claimed to be, The Son of the Living God. The prophet, overwhelmed by the importance of the substitutionary atonement involved, falls back once more upon it as the only explanation of an outcome so strange. It was the Messiah's own people who had all the revelations of it in their Law and Prophets, and yet they are the ones who, at first totally rejected it; and ever since only a very small minority of Jews will accept it.

QUIZ

1. Why did the Jews "esteem" Jesus as "smitten of God"?
2. Why do we say that the real suffering of the Messiah was spiritual?
3. Do verses four-five indicate Jesus' atoning death also provided physical healing to all believers? Why not?
4. How is sin sickness?
5. Are we to follow Christ's example of acquiescing to death if illegally prosecuted and sentenced? Give examples.
6. How plainly does the O.T. and Christ Himself predict His atoning death?

c. SUCCEEDS

TEXT: 53:10-12

- 10 Yet it pleased Jehovah 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 Jehovah shall prosper in his hand.
- 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant

justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities.

- 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

QUERIES

- a. Why did it "please" Jehovah to bruise Christ?
- b. How would the Servant be "satisfied" with His travail?
- c. What "portion" did the Servant receive?

PARAPHRASE

Although it was God's purpose for the good of man to allow His Servant to be pierced to death and to suffer, when the Servant's death has become expiation for sin, then He will produce a multitude of spiritual descendants. He will then live forever and God's purpose for the good of man will have succeeded because of Him. And when He sees that God's plan has succeeded, He will rejoice with satisfaction. And because He knows and fulfills perfectly Jehovah's plan of salvation, He shall be able to impart righteousness and justification to many people through His atoning sacrifice. On account of His absolute victory over sin and death, He will be rewarded with a glory commensurate with His victory! He will be the greatest among the great. He is the greatest of all because He was servant of all pouring out His life unto death, allowing Himself, though He was sinless, to be made sin for others, putting His sinless innocence down as an offering on behalf of evil and wicked mankind.

COMMENTS

v. 10 PERPETUITY: The Hebrew word *khaphetz* means, "delighted" or "desired" and indicates that the death of the Messiah involved more than a sterile, unfeeling, deterministic plan of an unfeeling God. It is incomprehensible to the finite mind of sinful man how God could "delight" in the death of His Son, but He did. The Hebrew word translated *bruise* is *heheliy* and means to *make painful*. The Isaiah Scroll from Qumran has the word *vyhllhv* which means *that he might pierce him* (see comments on 53:5).

These verses are some of the strongest of the Old Testament on the resurrection or immortality of the Servant-Messiah. The Servant dies, but He also lives on, succeeds and carries out the work of atonement, redemption, justification, sanctification and intercession that the Father has entrusted to Him, just as it was predicted He would do (Lk. 24:25ff). Other O.T. prophecies of the resurrection of the Messiah:

Psa. 16:1-11 -----Acts 2:25-33

Psa. 110:1-7 -----Acts 2:34-36

Psa. 22:1-31 -----Mt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34

II Sam. 7:12; Psa. 89:3-4 -----Acts 13:34 (The enduring throne promised to David's Messiah-Son presupposed victory over death.)

Gen. 22 (Abraham and Isaac; Heb. 11:17-19). Abraham, on Mt. Moriah, participated in a dramatic typical event portraying Calvary and the Empty Tomb. Perhaps Jesus was alluding to this when He said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day . . . and was glad." Jn. 8:56

Psa. 118:22 (The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner).

There is no doubt that Isaiah 53 is Messianic and that it is predicting His atoning death and resurrection. Philip, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, interpreted it thusly, Acts 8:26-40.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a well established fact of history:

Proof of the Resurrection of Christ:

1. The historical records, by competent, credible, honest, numerous *eyewitnesses* say the tomb was empty. There is *no* historical testimony or evidence to the contrary. The only explanation is Mt. 28:11-15, soldiers were paid to say His disciples stole the body while the soldiers were asleep. How absurdly incredible!
2. Credible, competent, honest *eyewitnesses* testify they saw Jesus after his death, alive, talking to them, eating fish with them, even saw the nail prints in His hands.
3. The conversion of the enemies of Christianity can only be accounted for by the historical factuality of the resurrection of Christ (Saul of Tarsus; great company of the priests; even some of Caesar's own household).
4. The Catacombs of Rome depict the resurrection of Jesus and testify to the belief in it by first century saints.
5. The existence of the church and its ordinances testifies to the resurrection. The fact of the New Testament itself is inexplicable apart from it.

It is not a question of *could* the resurrection occur or not. It is a question of *did* it occur or not—not a philosophical question, but a historical, scientific question!

Merrill C. Tenney says, "The event is fixed in history, the dynamic is potent for eternity."

Unbelievers say Christ was not raised from the dead—I say prove it! All the reliable evidence we have says He was!

The church began in the city where Jesus' burial was known, among those who could have refuted the testimony of Peter (Acts 2) and proved it false. All they would have to have done was produce the body of Jesus! But 3000 testify that He had arisen and Peter was telling the truth.

There are Imperatives to the Resurrection.

1. There is power in it. The power of Christianity is not in the esthetic value of great cathedrals, somber ritual and tradition, nor emotionalism but in the *historical fact* of the

resurrection of Christ.

- a. Gives hope that is living (I Pet. 1:3)
 - b. Brings joy unspeakable and full of glory (I Jn. 1:1-4)
 - c. Sanctifies and purifies (I Jn. 3:3; Acts 17:32)
 - d. Gives power to evangelism (Acts 4:33)
 - e. Gives steadfastness (I Cor. 15:58)
2. There is only one alternative to the resurrection. That is a life of eating, drinking, for tomorrow we die (I Cor. 15:12-19 —15:32).
3. But, if Christ is raised from the dead, and we shall be also, then:
- a. The Bible is God's Word!
 - b. Heaven and Hell are real places!
 - c. Man will live forever, one place or the other!
 - d. A man's sins may really be forgiven!
 - e. The plan of salvation in the N.T. is the only valid one!
 - f. Christ is coming again!
 - g. There is only one church, the universal body of Christ which consists of all who believe in Christ, are repenting of their sins and have been immersed in water in obedience to His command!
 - h. No one will be saved who is not a member of that church!

The resurrection of Christ makes all the above imperative! There is no middle ground on any of that because His resurrection establishes beyond any question His deity and His authority!

The Servant shall produce "seed" or descendants. He shall have a family, but it will be a spiritual family (cf. Rom. 9:8; Gal. 3:15-20; 3:23-29). So, it is in being lifted up He will draw men unto Him (cf. Jn. 3:14-15; 8:28; 12:32). He shall fall into the ground like a grain of wheat and die, and then bear much fruit (Jn. 12:23-26). And the *khephetz* (delight) of Jehovah shall succeed through His efforts. The delight of Jehovah is, of course, His eternal plan for the redemption of man! What wonder, what unsearchable grace, that Jehovah's delight should be the salvation and regeneration of a planet full of wicked

rebels. But more wonderful, His Son should come to this planet in the form of a man and willingly submit to humiliating death allowing Himself, though absolutely innocent, to become sin on man's behalf!

v. 11 PLEASURE: The Servant will have "travail of . . . soul" (cf. 49:4ff). But He will be "satisfied." For the joyous reward that was set before Him, He could endure the cross (cf. Heb. 12:2). He will look back from His enthronement at the right hand of the Father and see that He has succeeded in accomplishing the once-for-all-time redemption and regeneration of the Father's creation (man and cosmos). As Young points out, the suffix on the Hebrew word *beda'etto* is difficult of interpretation. Is the suffix subjective or objective—that is, is Isaiah speaking of the knowledge that the servant himself possesses or of knowledge of the servant on the part of others? We think the context is emphasizing the successfulness of the Servant Himself and that it is through His own incarnation (human experience) that He performs His work of justification. It was through the experience of obedience as a Son that He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him (cf. Heb. 5:7-9; Phil. 2:5-11). The righteous servant (*tzaddiyk 'aveddiy*) will make many righteous (*yatzeddiyk*). He makes it possible for us to become the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. 5:21). This was the "grace that was to be ours" which the prophets prophesied (cf. I Pet. 1:10-12). He bore our iniquities and became a "curse for us" (cf. Gal. 3:13).

v. 12 PORTION: On account of the Servant's victory over sin, Satan and death, Jehovah will exalt Him above every other man. The exaltation of the Servant of Jehovah is clearly predicted by the prophet earlier (Isa. 49:7; 52:15). When the Servant made purification for sins, he was enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3-4). When He ascended, He took captivity captive (Eph. 4:8) and dispensed His gifts according to His will and purpose for the ongoing of the kingdom of God here on earth. The Servant whom the Jews crucified, God made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). There is no other name under heaven given among men by

which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). The reason for this exaltation is summarized in the statement, "because he poured out his soul unto death." "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5:12).

A whole volume could justifiably be written on this chapter alone. Perhaps the most intriguing question about Isaiah 53 is: "If the New Testament is so clear about its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, why do the majority of Jews not see and understand it?" A few references to The Servant of Jehovah in Jewish literature, both ancient and modern, may provide a partial answer to this question:

Jewish Apocrypha and The Suffering Servant concept:

The apocalyptic literature of the Jewish apocrypha are such books as I Enoch, The Sibylline Oracles, The Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, the Psalms of Solomon, II Esdras, II Baruch and others. They were written in the years 165 B.C.—100 A.D.

In a book entitled, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, by D. S. Russell, pub. Westminster, we learn, "There is no serious evidence of the bringing together of the concepts of the Suffering Servant and the Davidic Messiah before the Christian era." Mr. Russell continues, "The Targum (Jewish Targums are rabbinical interpretations of the O.T.) on Isaiah 53 has often been alluded to, but it cannot be the Suffering Servant Isaiah predicted. The Messiah presented in this Targum is one who will triumph over the heathen and all the enemies of God's people! The suffering he has to endure is minimal and devoid of all vicariousness. In fact, it is hardly suffering at all, for it consists simply in the exposure of himself to those dangers he will have to face in the coming struggle with the heathen before his final victory is assured. There is no mention of an *atonement death*—no reference to a *suffering and dying Messiah*."

II Esdras and II Baruch (cir. 90 A.D.) use the word "servant" to describe the Messiah from the seed of David. However, there is no suggestion of a suffering Messiah, or an atoning

death. He is not killed by enemies or disease—he simply ceases to exist. The reference to his death is with the same casualness as any human death. He establishes his kingdom, dies, and presumably will rise with other humans at the general resurrection of the people of God.”

Modern Jews:

1. A Jewish woman doctor, recounting her conversion to Christ in a book called *Pursued*:

While recuperating from illness she began reading a Bible. She read Isaiah 53. She was forced to acknowledge it must be talking about the Messiah. But then she said she refused to accept the consequences of that passage for her Messiah. Suddenly she realized that she was reading from the KJV, “A Protestant Bible! Of course, it was slanted to sound that way. I went to sleep that night, confident I had caught the gentiles at a not-too-clever trick.”

But then she read it in a Jewish Bible and it was basically the same message!

2. “Chapters 52-53 (of Isaiah) and other chapters contain the prophecies concerning the ‘suffering servant’ which the Christian church later interpreted as referring to Jesus, but which, *in Jewish tradition, refer to the people of Israel*,” pg. 151 from, *The International Jewish Encyclopedia*, by Rabbi ben Isaacson and Deborah Wigoder, compiled and produced in Israel for Prentice-Hall.
3. *History of the Jew*, by Heindrich Graetz, pub. The Jewish Pub. Soc. of America, 1893, in chapter entitled “Messianic Expectations and Origins of Christianity,” indicates the idea of a *suffering* Messiah was completely foreign to Jewish thinking.

It it not difficult now to understand the “rebuke” Peter had for Jesus (Mt. 16:22) when Jesus predicted His death!

4. *Non-Messianic Interpretations:*

- a. Most prevalent among Jewish writers is that Isaiah 53 means *the nation of Israel*. Some say *empirical* Israel; some say *ideal* Israel; some say the *pious remnant* of the true Israel.
 - b. Isaiah 53 means the *prophetical order*—i.e. the collective body of the prophets . . . as the sacrificial victim taking upon itself the sins of the people.
 - c. Isaiah 53 means *an individual* (Hezekiah, Isaiah, Josiah, but most frequently, Jeremiah), but a *human* individual. Some said, an *unknown sufferer* (sounds like the apostles first answer to Jesus at Cesarea Philippi, Mt. 16).
5. Aaron Kligerman, in his book, *Old Testament Messianic Prophecy*, pub. Zondervan, paperback, thinks there were some Jewish interpretations which believed the Suffering Servant was to be the Messiah. He refers to *Yalkut* and *Rambam* which are Talmudic and Midrashic literature of the days of Maimonides (cir. 1135-1204 A.D.). These are so obscure, however, they are not worth considering as having direct reference to the Messiah as an individual. They could be understood in any of the categories listed above. Furthermore, they are of such late date they are probably concessions to Christian interpretations of Isaiah 53.

Jews are not alone in disavowing the biblical doctrine of the substitutionary atonement. Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, former head of the World Council of Churches says in his book, *A Testament of the Faith*, pg. 144, Boston, 1958;

“We hear much of the substitutionary theory of the atonement. This theory to me is immoral. If Jesus paid it all, or if He is the substitute for me, or if He is the sacrifice for all the sin of the world, then why discuss forgiveness? The books are closed. Another has paid the debt, borne the penalty. I owe nothing. I am absolved. I cannot see forgiveness as predicted upon the act of some one else. It is my sin. I must atone.”

It is not trite to repeat that Philip, by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, applied Isaiah 53 to the atoning death and justifying resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is difficult to see how one may claim to be a disciple of Jesus and contradict this doctrine!

QUIZ

1. How do these verses teach the resurrection of Jesus Christ?
2. Is the resurrection of Christ historically valid?
3. What "knowledge" of Himself was involved in the Servant's justifying work?
4. Why do you think the Jews will not accept Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Isaiah 53?

EXAMINATION

CHAPTERS FORTY-NINE THROUGH FIFTY-THREE

DEFINITION

(Define the following words or phrases as they were discussed in the comments.)

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Israel</i> | 7. <i>cup</i> of staggering |
| 2. <i>acceptable</i> time | 8. <i>sprinkle</i> man nations |
| 3. <i>Sinim</i> | 9. <i>griefs</i> and <i>sorrows</i> |
| 4. <i>graven</i> on palms | 10. <i>wounded</i> |
| 5. face like <i>flint</i> | 11. <i>pleased</i> , <i>pleasure</i> |
| 6. <i>monster</i> | 12. <i>bruised</i> |

MEMORIZATION

Surely he hath _____ our griefs, and carried our _____; yet we did esteem him _____, smitten of God, an _____.

But he was _____ for our transgressions, he was _____ for our iniquities; the chastisement of our _____ was upon him; and with his stripes we are _____. All we like sheep have gone _____; we have turned every one to his own _____; and Jehovah hath laid on him the _____ of us all. (53:4-6)

EXPLANATION

1. Explain the prediction that the Messiah would experience frustration.
2. Explain how the Messiah was to *become* a covenant.
3. Explain why the Servant (Messiah) was to be "as one who was taught."
4. Explain how O.T. people could have God's law *on their heart*.
5. Explain how the cup of staggering was taken out of Jerusalem's hand.
6. Explain how Christ bore our griefs and sorrows in His death.
7. Explain why Isaiah 53 does not teach divine healing for today.
8. Explain why the Messiah would be satisfied with the travail of His soul.
9. Explain why the majority of the Jews did not accept Jesus as the Servant.

APPLICATION

(In its context every scripture has one meaning—the author's intended meaning. How may the following be applied in the believer's life?)

1. Is there an application for overcoming frustration in our own human experience from the Messiah's overcoming?
2. How may we apply the proofs we have that God bared His holy arm in Jesus Christ?

I S A I A H

3. Does the humiliating entrance and exit of the Messiah in history apply to modern man's relation to God?
4. Does the personal refusal of Christ to defend Himself at His illegal trial and death mean Christians must never defend themselves? Why?
5. How can modern men accept and apply the death of a Jewish man (Jesus) nearly 2000 years ago for the atonement of their personal sins?
6. Are there any definitive manifestations of God's *love* in this section that may contradict the allegation that the God of the O.T. is *only* a God of wrath?
7. Are there any teachings in this section which may be applied to the idea that there is salvation for the world *only* in Jesus Christ?

SPECIAL STUDY

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD AS MANIFESTED BY THE PROPHETS

by John Butterman

INTRODUCTION

I. God is Righteous in Judging His People

1. God is the judge over all the earth
 - a. From the beginning in the Hebrew community the judges were acting on behalf of God (Deut. 1:17)
 - b. It was unthinkable that he would act unfairly (Gen. 18:25)
2. God is the fountain of justice
 - a. Everything he does may be relied upon as just (Deut. 32:4; Zeph. 3:5)
 - b. God's equity as judge will be seen most clearly "in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5)