

# The Songs Of The Servant #2

**Introduction.** Isaiah 53 is one of the best loved passages of scripture (cf. Acts 8:29-35). The nation was to be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6), but the Messiah would be the high priest who would be an offering for the sins of the world. Cyrus was introduced in chapter 41 as a deliverer from Babylon, but the Servant would deliver the world from the prison of sin. "Servant" is a term also applied to Cyrus (45:1-4), God's prophets (44:26), and Israel as a nation (41:8-9; 42:19; 44:1-2, 21; 45:4; 48:20). However, redemption for Israel must come from the "ideal Servant," the Messiah, who will accomplish what the servant-nation cannot do.

## I. ***The Servant Suffers For Sin (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)***

- A. The Servant is to conquer as a sufferer, not as a warrior (cf. Revelation 5:4-6). From His shameful suffering and inhumane treatment He is to emerge in triumph and glory.
- B. The Servant will be "exalted and extolled and be very high" (Isaiah 52:13), which speaks of three stages of His exaltation:
  1. Resurrection (Romans 1:3-4).
  2. Ascension (Acts 1:6-11).
  3. Seated at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33; Hebrews 1:3).
- C. "His visage was marred more than any man" (Isaiah 52:14).
  1. Pilate ordered Christ to be scourged (Matthew 27:26).
    - a) Christ was not whipped, flogged, or striped -- He was scourged!
    - b) The Romans called it "halfway death."
    - c) A scourging could only be administered by a trained Roman "lictor."
  2. Christ was stripped of all clothing and His hands tied above His head.
    - a) The flagellum was a leather whip made up with thongs of leather. Each strip had a piece of bone or lead tied to the ends so it would cut deeper into the flesh
    - b) The Romans did not limit the number of their lashes (2 Corinthians 11:23-24).
      - (1) Scourging left the body a mass of swollen and bloody flesh.
      - (2) Josephus speaks of a man named Ananus who was "whipped until his bones were bare."
      - (3) Eusebius speaks of one in Smyrna who was scourged until "the deepest veins and arteries were exposed, and even the inner organs of the body were seen."

- D. He would "sprinkle" many nations (Isaiah 52:15).
1. This is a technical word used of the priests (cf. Leviticus 8:11; 14:6), and this prepares us for further sacrificial language later in the passage.
  2. The purpose of sprinkling was not decontamination, but to obtain ritual purity; hence, the one who does the sprinkling had to be pure (Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 1:2).
- E. Men would entirely misjudge Him (Isaiah 53:2).
1. There was no physical beauty that drew others to Him.
  2. Men hid their face from Him -- they regarded Him as nothing.
- F. "We esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted" (Isaiah 53:4).
1. They looked upon His sufferings as the punishment for His own sins.
  2. The reason for His suffering was our sins (1 Peter 2:21-24)!
- G. "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).
1. The soldiers hit Him and smote Him with the a reed, which served as a mock scepter (Matthew 27:27-31).
  2. "I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me" (Psalm 22:17). The servant will not remain in humiliation (Acts 3:13, 26; Philippians 2:9-11).
  3. The words "wounded" and "bruised" are the strongest terms to describe a violent and agonizing death. There is a stress on the "our" in both statements.
    - a) The crossbeam or patibulum weighed about 75 pounds. It was tied across His shoulders and the procession was led by a Roman centurion through the Via Dolorosa to the place of the crucifixion. Despite His efforts to walk erect He falls and rough wood gouges His body, and the bleeding continues. The Roman centurion compels Simon to carry the cross part of the 650 yards from the Fortress Antonia to Calvary (Luke 23:26).
    - b) Anyone who wanted to watch a crucifixion could do so. Cicero called crucifixion "the most cruel and hideous of tortures." At Golgotha, the "place of the skull," Jesus is thrown back onto the rough wood and spikes are driven into His hands and feet. A projecting block supported the backbone or the feet; unless mercifully killed, the victim would linger there for two or three days, suffering the agony of immobility, unable to brush away the insects that fed upon his naked flesh, and slowly losing strength until the heart failed and he died.

- H. "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" (Isaiah 53:6).
  - 1. The essence of sin is going one's own way, rather than God's way (Proverbs 16:25).
  - 2. There is a common misconception of Jesus being a substitute or taking our place or having our sins transferred to Him. However, the term "laid" speaks of sacrifice.
- I. His voluntary endurance (Isaiah 53:7-9).
  - 1. The scene passes to the unrighteous judicial verdict passed upon Him.
  - 2. Who can set forth or declare the wickedness of His generation?
- J. "They made His grave with the wicked -- but with the rich at His death" (Isaiah 53:9) refers to the intention of the government to give Him a common burial, but Joseph of Arimathea was granted His body (Matthew 27:57-60).
- K. The Lord was pleased with His suffering (Isaiah 53:10; cf. John 10:15-18). "He shall see His seed" (Isaiah 53:10) was fulfilled in Christ as proven by Peter (Acts 2:29-36; cf. 2 Samuel 7:12-16).
- L. In vs. 12, God honors the Servant for His faithful work (Luke 24:26) and the Servant in turn distributes the spoils of battle to others (Ephesians 4:8; 6:10-17).

**Conclusion.** Why did Christ come to earth as a man (Hebrews 2:14-18)? He was the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29; Acts 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19; Revelation 12:11), but He is now "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16). Jesus tasted death for everyone (Hebrews 2:9), even you. Will you obey Him and be saved?

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