

The Lord's Suffering Servant

Isaiah 52:13 - Isaiah 53

Isaiah 52:13 begins a prophecy of the Lord's suffering servant—“*Behold, my servant...*”—Identified as Jesus Christ in Acts 8:32-35 (not the nation Israel, cf. Isaiah 49:5-6). Also called “*my righteous servant*” in Isaiah 53:11.

Isaiah 52:12-15 is a prologue to God's description of the suffering of His righteous servant.

➡ **The PRUDENCE of the Servant** (52:13a). The Lord's servant (Jesus) will “*deal prudently*” (wisely). [See 1 Corinthians 1:18-24; 2:6-8]. Jesus was never caught off guard. His prudence is seen before the chief priests (Luke 66-70; John 18:19-23) and before Pilate (1 Tim. 6:13).

➡ **The LIFTING up of the Servant** (52:13b).

- “*...exalted...*” First coming- Raised up / Lifted up / to elevate (John 3:14. cf. Acts 2:33; 5:31; Phil. 2:9).

By raising up Jesus upon a cross the Romans meant to humiliate Him. But it had the opposite effect. As the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness for all who were snake bitten could be healed, the lifting up of Jesus on the cross brought salvation to all who would turn to Him.

- “*...and extolled, and be very high*” — Second advent. Praised and magnified (Phil. 2:10-11; Rev. 5:12-14).

➡ **The SCARRING of the servant** (52:14).

- “*astonied*” (not astonished). Root word “stone”—they were petrified.

➡ **The SPRINKLING by the servant** (52:15). “*sprinkle*” (e.g. “*with blood*” — Lev. 4:6; 16:18-19 cf. Heb. 9:12-14, 19-21).¹

➡ **The SILENCING before the servant**—“*...the kings shall SHUT their mouths at him...*” out of respect for Him (cf. Job 29:9)

READ Isaiah 53 in it's entirety.

¹ “*Sprinkle*” may also refer to a *scattering* of the nations, as a baker would “*sprinkle*” (scatter) sugar particles on the top of a cupcake. The nations will be scattered in amazement at His coming.



Isaiah 53 is one of the most remarkable chapters in the Bible. It is *incredible* in its prophecy. It is *inexplicable* in its perfection. It is *intense* in its power. It is *incomparable* in its portrayal of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Portions of Isaiah 53 are quoted in all four Gospels, the book of Acts, Romans 10:16, and 1 Peter 2:25.

53:1—Two questions. The people who should have believed Isaiah's report are the ones to whom God has revealed His mighty arm.

God's arm often represents His mighty power (Ex. 6:6b; Ps. 98:1). The arm "*made bare*" (Isa 52:10; 53:1) pictures an arm with the sleeve rolled up revealing His strong muscles (cf. Dt. 4:4).

➡ Israel should have believed (cf. John 12:37-38). Why didn't they believe? They were blind about the TWO comings of the Messiah (1 Pet. 1:11). When Jesus came the first time He came as a "*tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground*" (v. 2) or "*a lamb*" (v. 7). At Christ's first coming He had "*no form nor comeliness...no beauty*" that any would desire Him (v. 2). Humanly speaking Jesus was an unattractive, common Jewish carpenter. Israel didn't want a carpenter—They wanted a conquerer. They were looking for someone wearing a crown, not someone bearing on a cross.

I. His violent SUFFERING.

A. His APPEARANCE (v. 2—"*...he hath no form nor comeliness... no beauty that we should desire him*").

- Isaiah 52:13—Bodily mutilated and disfigured (cf. 50:6). Beaten, bruised, bloodied, brutalized, bludgeoned (swollen) beyond recognition as a man.²
- B. His **ABANDONMENT** (v. 3—“...*despised and rejected... we esteemed him not.*” cf. John 1:11).

➡ **Four ways Jesus was rejected** during His life on earth:

1. He was rejected at His birth—no room—relegated to a manger with animals (Luke 2:7).
2. He was deserted in His ministry (Luke 9:58; John 6:66).
3. He was abandoned by His disciples (Mt. 26:56b).
4. He was forsaken by His Father on the cross (Mt. 27:46).

➡ Jesus is still rejected by the masses today. “...***we esteemed him not.***” [Cf. verse 4—“...***yet we did esteem him stricken...***”). *Esteem* means to estimate the value of something. Instead of esteeming Jesus as high and holy, the lost esteem Him as worthless.]

If people despise Jesus and “*esteem him not,*” don’t be surprised if they think little of you. Your worth isn’t determined by what others say. It’s not even what you say. It’s only what God says. He thinks you are worth dying for.

C. His **AFFLICTION** (vs. 4, 5, 7, 10).

- v. 4—“...***STRICKEN, SMITTEN, AFFLICTED.***”
- v. 5—“...***WOUNDED*** (cf. Zech. 13:6)... ***BRUISED... CHASTISEMENT... STRIPES...***”
- v. 7— “...***OPPRESSED... brought as a lamb to the SLAUGHTER***”
 ➡ “...***he opened not his mouth...as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.***” (Mt. 26:63; 27:12-14; Mk. 15:3-5; Luke 23:9; John 19:9 cf. 1 Pet. 2:22-23). He never spoke a word in retaliation. The only time Jesus spoke before the Sanhedrin was when He was “***adjured by the living God***” or concerning His doctrine.

² **Scotfield note:** “The literal rendering is terrible: “So marred...that His appearance was not that of a son of man”—i.e. not human—the effect of the brutalities described in Mt. 26:67, 68; 27:27-30.

Since Jesus never uttered a word in His own defense, Isaiah asks, “*Who shall declare his generation?*” Pilate’s wife answered, “*Have thou nothing to do with that **JUST man...***” Pilate himself confessed publicly, “*I find **no fault in him***” (John 20:4, 6). Even one of the thieves who was crucified with Jesus declared His generation (Luke 23:41).

- v. 10—“*Yet it **pleased the Lord to BRUISE him...***”

It was the Lord who carried out the bruising of Jesus (v. 4—Jesus was “*smitten of God,*” cf. Acts 2:23). God made Jesus “*an offering for sin.*” Why? Because God loves you and I so much that He would do whatever was necessary to save us (Rom. 5:8). Amazing love! How can it be?

Notice the references to Christ’s “*soul*”

- v. 4—“...*he hath **borne** our griefs, and carried our sorrows...*”
- v. 5—“*But he was **wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him...***” For me to have peace, Jesus took the chastisement (whipping), that I deserved, in my stead (Col. 1:20).
- v. 6—“...*the Lord hath **laid on him the iniquity of us all.***” Verse 6 describes our *sin* and God’s *solution* for our sin.

➡ **Essentially sin is turning from God to do your own way**
[self-will]. Cf. Psalm 119:176

➡ Begins with “**ALL we...**” [universal fact of sin] and ends with “**us ALL**” [universal atonement for sin]. The Calvinistic teaching of “limited atonement” is false! Christ bore the sins of ALL people.

An anxious sinner asked a preacher, “How can I be saved?”
The preacher answered, “Read Isaiah 53:6. You come in at the first ‘**all**’ and go out at the last ‘**all**.’ Accept this and be saved.”

➡ “The Record Book of Sin” illustration (*Evangelism Explosion*)—
Imagine I am holding a book in my left hand. My hand represents me and God loves me. God wants me in heaven. But the book represents my sin. God must punish my sin. God cannot allow sin into heaven. To solve this problem, God sent his Son, Jesus. Imagine that my right hand represents Jesus. Isaiah 53:6 says, “*All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid upon Him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all.*” At that point, I transfer the book (representing my sin) from my left hand to my right hand which represents Jesus. So my sins have been placed on Jesus. He died for my sins. He took my sins cast them as far as the east is from the west!

- v. 8—“**for the transgression of my people was he stricken.**”
- v. 9—“*And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death...*” (v. 12—“...*and he was numbered with the transgressors...*”). Jesus was crucified between two thieves (Luke 22:37; 23:33) and buried in the grave of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathaea (John 19:38-42).

Since Jesus “*was numbered with the transgressors,*” we must also take our place among the transgressors to be saved. No one can be saved until he admits he is a sinner.

- v. 10—“*thou shalt make his soul an OFFERING FOR SIN.*” The reason it says “*his soul*” is because the soul is eternal, whereas the body is not. Jesus’ soul was made “*an offering for sin.*”
- v. 11—“*... he shall bear their iniquities.*”
- v. 12—“*...he bare the sin of many...*” —“*many,*” not in the sense of election, but in the sense of abundance (cf. Mt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6).

III. His victorious SALVATION (vs. 10-12).

- v. 10—“*...he shall PROLONG his days, and the PLEASURE of the Lord shall PROSPER in his hand.*”

How are His days prolonged since He is “*cut off out of the land of the living*” (v. 8)? His days are prolonged because He did not stay dead. Jesus triumphantly arose from the grave in His resurrection.

- v. 10—“*he shall see HIS SEED*” [offspring]. That’s us—those who are born again. After Christ’s resurrection He will have a “seed” (children). Cf. Ps. 89:29-36 [David is a type of Christ (Acts 2:29-35)]. Therefore, the “seed” of David is a type of the Christian].
 - Cf. John 12:23; 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23; James 1:18; 1 John 3:9; 5:1).
- v. 11— “*...shall be SATISFIED... JUSTIFY many...*”
 - The Father is “*satisfied*” by Christ’s blood shed at Calvary (1 John 2:2). The whole issue of Christ’s death was to satisfy the righteous demands of a Holy God. The sin debt is “paid in full.” Now, by Christ’s sacrifice of His blood we may be *justified*.
- v. 12— “*...divide the spoil with the strong...*” The spoils of war go the victor (Zech. 14:1; Mt. 12:25-29; Luke 11:22). Today, the kingdoms of the world belong to Satan (Luke 4:5-6; 2 Cor. 4:4;

Gal. 1:4; 1 John 5:19). When the battle is over, Satan will be bound (Rev. 20:1-3), Jesus will be victorious and the spoils will be divided unto Him—*“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever”* (Rev. 11:15; 20:4 cf. Luke 19:15-19).

- v. 12—*“...and made INTERCESSION for the transgressors.”* He prayed for them (Luke 23:34) and still prays for them (Heb. 7:25).

SUMMATION. Jesus fulfilled over 20 prophecies in Isaiah 53. Isaiah wrote this prophecy about 700 years before Jesus was born! Amazing!