

CHRIST'S WORK AT CALVARY  
Isaiah 53:4-6

Intro: We are all aware of the fact that, when Isaiah wrote this part of his prophecy in particular, he was writing about the Messiah, Christ, the Lord Jesus. No other person fits here.

It is interesting to note the development of what Isaiah had to say about Him.

In 52:13-15 we see the tremendous contrast between His terrible sufferings, and His indescribable and continuing glory. We could never find such a contrast with any other person.

In 53:1-3 we see that He was not physically attractive, and that He was to be both despised and rejected of men, esteemed to be nothing. And because of this Isaiah felt great discouragement concerning his own ministry. Who would believe such a report, such a testimony, such a message?

But we still have not been told the reason for the sufferings of the Servant of the Lord--at least, not until we come to this third paragraph.

The outstanding emphasis in this passage is that His sufferings were substitutionary. That is, He did not die for His own faults, not because of any wrongdoing on His part, but He suffered and died for others.

This is in perfect agreement with the NT. See the following verses:

- 1) 1 Pet. 2:24.
- 2) 1 Pet. 3:18.
- 3) Rom. 5:8-10.
- 4) Rom. 8:32.
- 5) 2 Cor. 5:21.
- 6) 1 Cor. 15:3.
- 7) Eph. 1:7.
- 8) 1 John 4:9, 10.

So, by His death He provided both forgiveness and justification for those for whom He died.

But there is another truth that strikes us for the first time in these verses, and that is the part that God had in His death. Vv. 1-3 tell that He was rejected and despised by men, but now we read in v. 4 that He was "smitten of God, and afflicted." V. 6 tells us that "the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all."

This can only mean that it was God the Father Who was dealing with His Servant, His Son, in such a severe way. In a most

the Father was somehow demanding from His Servant that which we owed Him because of our sins, our iniquities, our transgressions.

But we also see in these verses the limited design of the work of the Messiah. Nowhere in the chapter did Isaiah say that the Servant of the Lord would die for all men. Over and over again he said, speaking to the redeemed of Israel,

- "our griefs,"
- "our sorrows,"
- "our transgressions,"
- "our iniquities,"
- "our peace,"
- "we are healed,"
- "All we . . . we have turned . . . the iniquities of us all."

Keep this in mind when we come to the last two paragraphs. The Messiah's death would be totally efficient for all those for whom He was a substitute.

But the point that is especially emphasized in this paragraph has to do with the many ways in which our Lord's work at Calvary is described.

If you were to ask Isaiah what the death of the Servant of the Lord would mean, these are the answers He would give you. Any one of these would tell you what was taking place on the Cross.

- 1) "He hath borne our griefs" (v. 4a).
- 2) "He hath carried our sorrows" (v. 4m).
- 3) "He was wounded for our transgressions" (v. 5a).
- 4) "He was bruised for our iniquities" (v. 5m).
- 5) "The chastisement of our peace was upon him" (v. 5m).
- 6) "With his stripes we are healed" (v. 5b).
- 7) "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (v. 6b).

Seven descriptions of Calvary! What do they mean?

- I. "He hath borne our griefs" (v. 4a). With this we need to take the second expression: "He hath . . . carried our sorrows" (v. 4m).

Both words have to do with our sicknesses, or it is possible to translate the first as sicknesses and the last pains, or as they are given in Matt. 8:17. (Read Matt. 8:16, 17.)

What does this mean--that healing is in the atonement? Did Christ die that we might no longer have to be sick?

The answer is, No, this is not the point that Isaiah was making. Instead, he was showing the full extent of the work of the Redeemer. Sickness and death are the direct result of sin. The whole work of redemption includes the

redemption of the body.

David Baron, a Hebrew Christian, says on this verse,  
The blessed results of His redeeming work to us  
therefore are not only pardon and regeneration,  
but the ultimate redemption of body as well as of  
spirit in resurrection life (The Servant of Jehovah,  
p. 86).

Our Lord's ability to heal the sick and raise the dead  
foreshadowed that coming redemption.

Cf. Rom. 8:18-23; 1 Cor. 15. This is Isaiah's teaching  
on the resurrection and glorification of the body.

II. "Wounded for our transgressions . . . bruised for our  
iniquities" (v. 5a).

What are "transgressions"? They are rebellious acts against  
a sovereign whereby one refuses to give him the obedience  
and homage which is due him. It has to do with violations  
of the law.

What are "iniquities"?

These are described in the latter part of v. 6: ". . . we  
have turned every one to his own way . . ." It means to  
turn, knowingly or unknowingly, from that which is right to  
that which is wrong. It is to go in the wrong way.

We can see from both of these expressions that God is the  
One Who requires our submission and obedience, and He is the  
One Who determines what is right and what is wrong. Any  
deviation from His will is SIN.

"Wounded" means pierced, stabbed. It can picture His awful  
suffering on the Cross, but also the inner pain that He  
experienced because of the sins of those for whom He died.

"Bruised" means that the Lord experienced the most severe  
suffering in His body as well as in His inner being. This  
is involved in His being made sin for us.

And so the results of His work are not in view here, but  
the dreadful extent of His sufferings.

III. "The chastisement of our peace was upon him" (v. 5m).

This has reference to all the divine requirements which He  
had to satisfy in order to establish peace with God for those  
for whom He died.

This is Isaiah's doctrine of reconciliation and propitiation.

Cf. Rom. 5:1.

IV. "And with his stripes we are healed" (v. 5b).

This is the strongest statement to indicate that, when Christ died for us, He did not just make a provision, but He really accomplished what He came to do. "We are healed" -- not we can be healed, but we are!

Thus, our Lord undoubtedly guaranteed the salvation of those for whom He died. He accomplished their redemption. He did not die in vain. See v. 11.

V. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (v. 6b).

"The Lord" has to be the Father. "Him" is Christ. The Father exacted from His Son all that was necessary for the salvation of those for whom He died.

There is nothing to be added. He left nothing undone. The Father made Him totally responsible for our salvation. To offer our works is to despise His. Thus in this we have Isaiah prediction of what the Lord meant when He said, "It is finished"(John 19:30).

Concl: When you put all of this together, you can see that we have an amazing account of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary:

- 1) The redemption of the body.
- 2) The forgiveness of our sins.
- 3) The provision of peace with God.
- 4) The accomplishment of our redemption.
- 5) The finished work to which nothing can be added, nor does anything needed to be added.

Now we understand the meaning of the first two paragraphs. It is no wonder that the prophecy of Isaiah has been called, the fifth Gospel. His message was entirely in harmony with the four Gospels in the NT, and His preaching accords perfectly with that of the NT apostles.

Hallelujah, what a Saviour! Let us come back to these verses again and again to remind ourselves of what we have in Christ, and to praise Him for the fulness of the salvation that we have in Him, the Servant of the Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ!