

CHRIST, DESPISED AND REJECTED
Isaiah 53:1-3

Intro: As we move from the last three verses of Isa. 52 to the first three verses of Isa. 53, there is obviously a change of speakers.

- 1) In Isa. 52:13-15 it is God, the Father, Who is speaking. The Lord Jesus, the Messiah, was pre-eminently His Servant!
- 2) In Isa. 53:1-3 the one who is speaking has obviously been giving a "report," and so it must have a primary reference to Isaiah and the work of the other prophets. We could actually say that it might apply to any of the people of God within the nation Israel who had given the report.

Thus, we can speak of our text as indicating THE PROPHET'S CRY OF DISMAY. To say that he was distressed, is to state it mildly! Thus, verse 1 gives us . . .

I. THE PROPHET'S CRY (Isa. 53:1).

His ministry seemed hopeless. He had preached, but no one had responded. The "report" had to do with the revelation concerning the coming Messiah and Redeemer.

We probably are not to think that no one responded, but percentage-wise the response was not even worth considering. It was even true in those days that "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:18a).

Re: Isa. 52:13-15. One reason for the disappointment of the prophet and of the elect within the nation is to be seen in the contrast between the latter part of chapter 52, and the portrayal of the Messiah that we have in verses 2 and 3 of chapter 53.

How important it is for us to understand the ultimate outcome of things in order to continue to be faithful in our day-to-day living and serving the Lord! This is true as far as our individual salvation is concerned. This is why we are told so much in Scripture about what we shall be, about our hope. This is what sustained Paul when he was in Rome, according to his Epistle to the Philippians.

Do you see the difference between the two questions in Isa. 53:1?

The prophet was asking both about what he (and others) had done, but he was also (in the second question) wondering why God had not done more than He had done.

Not only are the ways of God with His Son confounding to us, but also we have difficulty understanding why the preaching

of the Gospel is not more effective than it is.

So there is no doubt but that here we have the Lord's messengers questioning Him!

— This is followed with . . .

II. THE REASONS FOR THEIR DISMAY (Isa. 53:2, 3).

There are two of them -- one in verse 2; the other in verse 3.

A. The Messiah's origin and physical appearance (v. 2).

By origin we mean His earthly origin, His family background and the circumstances of His birth.

1. His lowly beginning (v. 2a): "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground."

Matthew and Luke go to great lengths to tell us about the relationships that Christ had to David and to Abraham, but His birth did not resemble in any way the birth of one who was of royal blood!

— From that day until this Mary has been under the suspicion of being immoral. And Jesus Christ was born in a stable!

Surely if God had wanted to attract the attention of men throughout the world to the coming of His Son, He could have done it differently!

But add to this what is said about . . .

2. His physical appearance (v. 2b).

Three things are stated here to indicate that the Messiah would not attract people by His personal charisma:

- 1) "No form."
- 2) "Nor comeliness."
- 3) "No beauty."

— He was not like Saul. He was not even like Moses. If you think of the Lord Jesus as a Person Who would move people to trust Him just by His appearance, you have the wrong picture yourself.

Isaiah said that there was absolutely nothing about the Lord that would attract you to Him.

But add to this what is stated in verse 3.

B. The Messiah's rejected ministry (v. 3).

Now it certainly could be said that, if the Lord had nothing to commend Him by His birth nor by His physical appearance, He certainly could have been sensational in His work.

It is true that He performed miracles, but, since He was not trained as a Pharisee, nor was he a member of the Sanhedrin, His miracles only stirred up jealousy.

Besides, He seemed intent on doing those miracles on the Sabbath Day. He surely could have refrained from offending the Jews in that way.

The masses of the people did not like His teaching. John 6 even tells us that on that occasion "many of His disciples turned and walked no more with Him."

Even John the Baptist sent disciples to Him asking, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"

He was not a particularly happy person. There is no reference in the Gospels that He ever laughed. Why could He not have been different.

The general consensus among the people was that He was worth nothing! They even preferred the criminal Barabas to the Lord Jesus.

Concl: We might even find ourselves asking the question, Why did God not do all of this another way?

Let me give you some answers from what we learn in the Word of God.

- 1) To show that God's ways are distinctly different from man's. We will learn more about this in chapter 55. We know very little about the ways of God if we think that God works as man works.
- 2) To demonstrate that the ways of God are foolishness to man.
- 3) To show that man by nature will never turn to God. Even when the Lord Jesus came, their reaction was just as belligerent--and even more so!
- 4) To show that God never intended to save all men.
- 5) To claim all of the glory for Himself when anyone does turn to Christ--because they would never do it on their own!

And so . . .

We must never try to change the message in order to attract people to Christ. The message must be preached as it is to men as they are. Our tampering with the Gospel will only bring the chastening of the Lord upon us.

Finally, we must learn that the results of the preaching are to be left with the Lord. Again--in Isa. 55, see vv. 10, 11. He always uses His Word as He sees fit, in accordance with His eternal plan. It is not for us to decide who is going to be saved, and when they are going to be saved. We must be faithful in preaching the Word, but leave the fruit of that preaching to the Lord.

There are wonderful lessons for all of us in this passage, and it will be to our great blessing to accept what God has said, and to serve Him accordingly. It is a very common thing in our day for men to change the Gospel for the sake of results, but this must never be done by any who desire to be true servants of the Lord.