

CHRIST, GOD'S ASTONISHING SERVANT
Isaiah 52:13-15

See Paley's
Evidences of
Christianity,
pp. 311-320.

Intro: Of all of the great passages in Holy Scripture, none is greater than Isa. 52:13-53:12. That it speaks of Christ is beyond question. See, as proof, Acts 8:26-35. This is the reason for its greatness.

But to say that it speaks of Christ is not enough. It is the way in which it speaks of Christ.

Some say that it speaks primarily of His sufferings. Others say that it speaks primarily of His glory. The fact is that it speaks of both, the former issuing into the latter.

We see His humanity throughout the whole passage. His Deity is indicated by the references that are made to His perfection. And the character of His earthly mission is brought out clearly by the title, "my servant."

This section is made up of five stanzas, each containing three verses. In each stanza there is a separate and distinct theme. Tonight we want to consider the first one--and what a fitting passage this is as we prepare to observe the Lord's Supper. In fact, we could go from any of these paragraphs to the Lord's table. They all prepare us to remember Him.

But the first question we must ask is, How does this fit in with what has gone before?

We have had two things in the passage that precedes this:

- 1) The future glory of Israel.
- 2) The good tidings of the Gospel.

Both of those rest on the work of the Messiah which is now described in great detail from Isa. 52:13 to 53:12. So this shows us the connection. There could be no glory for the people of God, nor any Gospel, if it were not for the work of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ.

I want you to be reading this section over and over during the five Sunday nights that we will be considering it together, memorizing it, if possible. But let me ask you to do another thing, just for your own blessing and edification: Seek to find a title of not more than five words each for the five paragraphs.

Let us look at the first one: vv. 13-15 of Isa. 52. (Read.)

I. THE WORD, "BEHOLD."

This is a word which directs attention to something very important, something which no one can afford to miss. It is like John the Baptist's message when he said, "Behold

the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"
(John 1:29).

Isaiah not only wants us to listen, to pay attention, but to look at Him, to concentrate on Him, to learn about Him and to understand Him! He does not want us to miss out on this message of the greatest importance.

How easy it is for us to read about Christ, even in the Word, and yet not see Him! Tonight, seek by the grace of God and the help of the Holy Spirit to "behold" Him!

II. HOW TO BEHOLD HIM: "MY SERVANT."

The word "servant" gives us in one word the whole purpose of the Messiah's mission to the earth. He came to do the Father's will. He came to do the Father's work. His whole life was devoted to serving the Father.

See this in Phil. 2:5-8; John 6:38; 17:4.

III. HIS WORK DESCRIBED: "shall deal prudently."

This means that all of His action was directed appropriately toward the end which He came to accomplish. And thus He was successful. He accomplished what He came to do because He acted in accordance with the infinite wisdom of God.

His disciples were known to have tried to hinder Him, but He could not be turned aside because He knew that there was no other way for Him to accomplish what His Father had sent Him to do.

Thus by His dealing prudently we are brought to realize that He fully accomplished the work of the Father!

IV. HIS REWARD: "He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."

Notice that there three stages to His glorification. This can mean all of three things:

- A. It points to His ever-increasing glory.
- B. It teaches that His glory will continue--never ending.
- C. Several commentators see in this a reference to His resurrection (the first phase of His glory), His ascension (the second phase of His glory), and His being seated at the Father's right hand, His eternal place (the third phase of His glory).

Cf. Phil. 2:9-11. There never has been, and never will

be, a glory greater than that of the Lord Jesus Christ. His glory is permanently established. None will ever come who is greater than He is.

Illustration: the statue of William Penn high above the city of Philadelphia. Up to now, the city fathers would not permit any building to rise higher than that statue. But now it seems that all of that will be changed. His glory at least will be diminished. No longer will people be able to say that William Penn stands the highest! But Jesus Christ will never lose His glory-- not in heaven, nor on earth!

V. THE EFFECT HE HAS (vv. 14, 15).

There are two references to the astonishment which He will cause--at the beginning of v. 14, and again at the beginning of v. 15.

Note that the 14th verse is addressed to the servant.

"Astonied" means astonished.

"Sprinkle" has also be translated, to startle. It can mean to spring up with amazement. This fits the context better than the sprinkling, and Delitzsch brings out that this word is never used in this tense to denote the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices, as some commentators interpret it.

So here again we have the idea of amazement. But WHY?

It is because of the contrast between what happened to Him when He suffered as compared with the glory that He experienced afterwards, and which He will display at a later day. The world has yet to see the greatest glory of the Servant of the Lord.

But let us notice the contrast as best we can. Remember that this is what we are to "behold" about the Lord Jesus Christ.

- A. In our Lord's suffering He was not only disfigured more than any other man ever was, but He was disfigured to the point that He no longer appeared to be human.

People would not only say as they looked at the Cross, "Who is that?" but they would say, "Is that a man, or some other kind of a creature?"

This is to describe the indescribable sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But where does the amazement come in?

From comparing the suffering with His glory. Verses 13 and 14 to not belong together. The reason that they do not impress us is because we do not really understand either one of them.

- B. The kings of the earth are singled out as trembling because they will see and hear what they never thought that they could possibly see nor hear.

I cannot help but relate this to Psalm 2. The whole Psalm applies.

See also Zech. 12:9-13:1.

Concl: When the Lord Jesus returns to the earth to reign, how will He come? He Himself said, and the words are recorded in Matt. 24:30,

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

Oh, the indescribable glory of the Lord Jesus Christ! No one can possibly anticipate what it to come. The half has not been told us. It cannot be put into words. But it was revealed to Isaiah approximately 2700 years ago.

Let me give you another consequence of this truth which Isaiah did not take up. It has been stated by Paul and Peter especially in their Epistles. Let me use Rom. 8:18. Here we see how the glorification of Christ relates to us. Paul said,

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Our glory will never be like the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. But our glory will nevertheless be more wonderful than we can comprehend now. Some day you will say about me, "How could that ever have happened?" And I will tell you, "The Lord Jesus did it."

One other word about beholding the Lord as we are to do tonight as we are meeting around the Lord's table. It is found in 2 Cor. 3:18. Let me read it from the NIV:

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Let us come to the Table worshipping our Lord Who has made such a destiny possible for us!