

The Death of Jesus

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[0 : 00] And this week I'm looking at Isaiah chapter 53, but in actual fact beginning in chapter 52, verse 13.

Isaiah, the big prophet, first of the prophets, there at 52 and 13. Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

As many were astonished at him, his appearance was so marred beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men.

So he shall startle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him. For that which has not been told, they shall see, and that which they have not heard, they shall understand.

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of the dry ground.

[1 : 29] He had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities.

Upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way.

The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. And then there's just one verse in Luke chapter 24. Jesus is speaking in verse 44.

[2 : 43] Then Jesus said to them, These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses, and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

Amen. May God bless these readings. May they be to his praise and his glory. From Matthew's Gospel, Jesus himself indicated that the Old Testament had a great deal to say about him.

And we can only touch a little bit of that theme this morning. There was a minister who told this story. As a little boy, his father was a minister, and his grandfather was a minister.

And in the way that little boys ask questions, he asked the grandfather how long he'd been preaching. And the grandfather said, I've been preaching 60 years.

So the next question was, did you ever repeat yourself? And the grandfather said, no, I never did.

[4 : 07] And so the third question was, why? And the grandfather said, because I've got an inexhaustible theme.

Isn't that a good thought? This is an inexhaustible theme. When we come to Isaiah 53, we find that there are four portions in Isaiah that speak of the servant that is to come.

This is the fourth one here. The first one is in Isaiah 42. And Matthew quotes that in Matthew 12, verses 18 to 21, where he seeks to apply the passage to the healing ministry of Christ.

But this passage speaks to us of the death of Christ and all that is involved in it. So we start the sorrows of the servant who has believed what we have heard.

To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? And we find that in the first three verses, the theme of the sorrows of the servant who is to come is indeed explained.

[5 : 38] Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom the arm of the Lord has been revealed? And that particular verse is quoted in John's Gospel chapter 12.

Though he had done so many signs before him, yet they did not believe him. It was that the word spoken by the prophet I've just quoted might be fulfilled.

Writing in Romans 10, the apostle Paul also quotes that same verse. Sorrows. sorrows. The sorrows the like of which none of us has ever experienced.

For example, we find that Jesus himself goes to his own synagogue in Nazareth. And his own people took offense.

Is not this the carpenter's son? Are not his brothers and sisters where did he get all this from? Jesus said, a prophet is not without honor except in his own country and among his own kindred and in his own house.

[6 : 56] And then we find that Jesus marveled because of their unbelief. And that's only the beginning. The beginning of sorrows.

So we move forward. And we now move forward from the first year of the ministry of Jesus to the crucifixion. And we find that in Matthew 27, 46, at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, which is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Had God forsaken him at that moment? The gospel of John tells us that he came to his own and his own people did not receive him.

The epistle to the Hebrews has some definite insights into the sufferings and sorrows of the Son of God. So, Hebrews 2, verse 9 says this, Let's think about that last phrase, that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

The word grace, and I have to say this because it's important to what I want to say, in Greek it is charis. You get the charismatic word comes from it.

[8 : 42] But, one of the things we find reading the manuscripts of the New Testament is that there are variations on the readings. And there's a variation here.

There's a word that's spelt exactly the same except for the second consonant which instead of being an A is an O. Chorus. And chorus is a Greek word that means without.

So, that without God he tasted death for everyone. And if that reading is correct, what is being said here by the writer to the epistle to the Hebrews is that when Jesus died there for your sins and mine, his fellowship with the father evaporated.

He had known it constantly through his life. But at that moment, when the sky grew black and he shouted out these words, why have you forsaken me?

he was no longer conscious of it. That is the depth of the sufferings of Jesus for you and for me.

[10 : 09] Moving on, the identification of the servant, the Lord has laid on him the iniquity with us all. We've seen something of the sorrows of the Son of God.

Surely it continues, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, verse 4, yet we esteem him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

The root of the sorrows of the Son of God is us. It is we who have caused this pain on the cross.

The next verse says, he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes.

And in undergoing this, in the garden of Gethsemane, when he went and prayed, take this cup from me, yet not as I will, but as you will.

[11 : 38] we need to remember, dear friends this morning, the great cost the Son of God has endured in obtaining your forgiveness and mine.

In the Old Testament, in the book of Leviticus, there's a developed system of sacrifice for the atonement and forgiveness of sins.

In Leviticus chapter 4, if you care to read it, you'll find it's all about the law of the sin offering, which is applied towards four different groups of people.

Firstly, the anointed priest, then the whole congregation, then the ruler, and then the common people. And in each case, the provision is the same.

If it is thus the anointed priest who sins, thus bringing guilt upon the people, then let him offer for the sin which he has committed, a young bull without blemish, to the Lord for a sin offering.

[12 : 53] And the problem with this system was it only dealt with one sin at a time, so the process had to be repeated day after day after day.

The epistle to the Hebrews is the New Testament commentary on the book of Leviticus, and it offers this statement in Hebrews 10. Every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.

And so the prophecy of Isaiah is the prophecy of the permanent replacement. It is the replacement of this sacrificial system by Jesus Christ, the sacrifice for us.

Hebrews 10 once again, but when Christ had offered all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. And for a single offering, or by a single offering, he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

So Jesus Christ, with his own sufferings, with his own physical death, with his own rejection by God his Father, at that great cost has procured our salvation.

[14:24] The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. But Isaiah moves on and he sees the fact that the servant will be vindicated.

So we read in verse 11. In the RSV it reads like this, he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities. 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered and in Cave One was a long scroll of the entire book of the prophet Isaiah.

Is it any different to the ones that we are accustomed to? Not a great deal. Except in this verse, there's a word being restored, which is there in the Greek translation, but it's somehow fallen out of the Hebrew.

And that word is the word light. So the beginning of verse 11 now reads like this, out of his anguish he shall see light.

[15:49] He shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The servant will make many to be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities.

So this idea of the servant in the midst of death, in the midst of gloom, in the midst of depression, seeing light, it's a prophecy of the resurrection.

and that were thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls that we've now recovered it and you'll find it in all the modern versions. The light is the light of an empty tomb.

On the first day of the week at early dawn, the women went to the tomb taking spices which they had prepared and they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

when they went in, they did not find the body of Jesus. Instead, they got a surprise.

[17:00] They saw two angels. They said, he is not here. See the place where he lay. He is risen.

And so what has happened? is that what would appear on the face of it to be seeming defeat with the Son of God dying on the cross in that cry of anguish was turned round into glorious victory. And that glorious victory is seen in the last words that Jesus uttered from the cross, which are, it is finished.

Finished for all time. Nobody needs to add to it. You don't need a good work to be accepted by God. What you need is the acceptance in your heart and in your mind of Jesus Christ, the sin bearer, who was vindicated on the third day as he said he would be.

So the appeal is this, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

[18:27] Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. This is a troublesome world.

You don't need me to tell you that. But if you are looking for peace, for rest, for blessedness and hope for the future, Jesus says this, come to me.

Amen, may the Lord bless these considerations, may they be to his praise and to his glory. Bring our service to conclusion by singing the hymn, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.