

"After the great anguish of His soul, he will see the light and be fully satisfied! By knowing Him, the Righteous One, My Servant, will make many to be righteous, because He, their Sin-Bearer, carried away their sin!" (Isaiah 53:11, Passion Version)

As you'll remember from our lesson last week on Isaiah 53:1-6, Isaiah began the great chapter of Isaiah 53 with the very poignant question (perhaps wondering), "who would believe his report" (or prophetic message), and "to whom it would be revealed"--a message he had received himself by special revelation from God and which he was about to deliver for all people everywhere to (eventually!) read, and hear and believe! The unfathomable revelation of how the eternal God of all creation would send His Son, Jesus Christ, into a fallen world, "as a tender shoot, and a root out of parched ground" (referring to what Jim Battle described as the "failed and captive nation of Israel on spiritual life-support"! Growing up as an ordinary man (but really God "in the flesh"! God "incarnate"!), yet with no distinguishing beauty or outward splendor that would catch anyone's attention, and (would you believe!) be rejected (and crucified on a cross!) by the very people He would come to save!

Isaiah prophesied that He would be "despised and rejected" by man, a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (and yet not bearing His own sorrows and grief, but "carrying" ours!), and then (would you believe?) actually "smitten by God and afflicted--pierced through for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities"! The "chastening" by God (for our sin!), Isaiah writes, would "fall upon Him...and by His scourging we would be healed"! Speaking of what we have come to understand as His work accomplishing redemption for us through His "substitutionary atonement"! (Peter would later write, in I Peter 2:24-25, how He would "bear our sins in His own body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness! The apostle Paul, in Romans 5:19, "For as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many would be made righteous!" And in II Corinthians 5:21, that "God would make Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"! A righteousness not of our own, but one "imputed" to us because of Christ's work on the cross!)

Isaiah would explain, in verse 6, why it was so necessary to come about in this way! Because, "all we like sheep have gone astray;" each and every one of us "has turned to our own way" (and are in effect "dead in our trespasses sin"! ) and (so) "the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him"! Again, speaking of the "substitutionary atonement"!

Who would, or could, possibly believe this account, Isaiah must have wondered! And to whom would this great prophetic message of God's redemption story be graciously revealed, and received? A message which still requires, as it did in Isaiah's day, a special "revelation" from God (and through the work of His Holy Spirit!)--and the exercise of faith--in order for one to truly believe, and receive, and experience redemption, and eternal life!

But Isaiah was not finished "revealing" details of this amazing story, and has more to say about it in Isaiah 53:7-11--and that was what we dealt with in our lesson last night!

In Isaiah 53:7, Isaiah continues with the "sheep metaphor," but this time applies it to the Servant, symbolizing Christ, as the "Lamb of God"! A term, Wiersbe notes, would be used 28 times in the book of Revelation alone, referring to Jesus--and tying it all back to Levitical law where, on Passover day, each household would slaughter a spotless lamb, which would offer no resistance, as it was offered up as a sacrifice, to "cover" (temporarily!) their sin, for another year! A picture, foretelling and looking forward to how Christ, as the perfect Lamb of God would one day be "offered up" (by God!) as the supreme

sacrifice for our sin! But "not as a helpless victim," as Constable writes, but one who would "knowingly and willingly" submit Himself to massive abuse, and death on the cross"! (Verse 7 says, "Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep before its shearers, so he opened not his mouth"!)

Verse 8 says He was "taken away...cut off from the land of the living...and assigned a grave among the wicked, by taking on the transgressions His people"! And not only that, but Isaiah says that God Himself was "pleased to crush Him, and put Him to grief"! Why, you ask? Because He bore the wrath of God's judgment for our sin, as the "Passover Lamb, bearing our sins, by offering Himself as the "guilt-offering," and becoming our substitute for all the sin and guilt we would otherwise be condemned for! Thus, verse 11 says that God "would see it all," and "be satisfied" with His Servant's way of dealing with the "sin question," and actually, delight in how it would "justify the many"! Constable writes that "He would be God's anointed Servant to restore humanity to Himself, and accomplish what the Old Covenant sacrificial system prefigured and anticipated but was unable to do"! (And interestingly, while "assigned" a grave with the wicked, Matthew 27:57-66 records how He would actually be buried, publicly, in a "rich man's tomb," as Isaiah prophesied, by Joseph Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin, who became a believer! Which led to the "empty tomb," as a witness to all of Christ's resurrection!)

John writes (in John 2:2) that "He Himself is the 'propitiation' (or appeasement) for our sins..."--meaning that His sacrifice on the cross "satisfied" God's holiness for the punishment of sin! Hebrews 12:1-2 identifies Him as the "founder and perfecter of our faith...who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God"!

(As a footnote! What an amazing story, recorded in Acts 8:26-40, about the "Ethiopian eunuch" who "came to Jerusalem to worship" and, while sitting in his chariot, was "just happening" to be reading this passage (apparently as one knowing about the importance of seeking God through the Scriptures!) and, while pondering its meaning, was supernaturally joined by Philip (the first missionary named in the Bible)--sent by the Holy Spirit--who not only explained its meaning but used it as the starting point, Acts says, "for preaching Jesus to him! After which he believed, and was saved, and baptized! Wow! The saving power through the "revelation" of His Word!)

But back to Isaiah 53:11-12, where Isaiah seems to repeat himself (presumably for emphasis!) as he adds that, "because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and bore the sin of many..." God would "allot Him a place with the great, and divide the booty with the strong"! What does that mean, you might ask? Good question! Constable writes that "He would (or will!) give Him a reward with the great ones whom He had justified, and divide this booty (Amplified calls it "spoils," or "captives"!)) with the many who would become strong by virtue of His work for them"! (Ephesians 4:4 says that "when He ascended (or ascends) on high, He led a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men"!)

Constable notes that this "final promise of exaltation returns to the thought (in Isaiah 52:9) with which this section of Isaiah began--the Servant's (Christ's) exaltation for accomplishing redemption"!

Philippians 2:5-11 sums it up best! So! "Have this mind among yourselves (as fellow "MOBsters!)), which is your in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above

every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!"

Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Lowell