



*"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."*

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### **ISAIAH 53 – THE FIFTH GOSPEL**

**~ By William M. Dyer ~**

The Book of Isaiah has been rightfully called the Fifth Gospel in many cases due to its heavy usage by the Gospel writers of the New Testament to show that Jesus fulfilled prophecy.

If this is held true, then we must see that **Chapter 53** is the condensed version of the Gospel, or the Gospel in a nutshell.

Isaiah lays out the basic essentials to the Gospel, which are the Messiah taking on human form so that He could bear the sins of man, being afflicted yet pleasing to God, and His death, burial and resurrection so that He may intercede for those who follow Him. The Gospel can and should be preached from **Isaiah 53**.

One must remember that the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church did not have all the books of the New Testament as we know it today, and the Scriptures that they used were from the Old Testament. This would be prevalent since they were preaching to only Jews for the first ten years.

We can see from **Acts 8:32ff** that early Christians could and did use **Isaiah 53** to preach Jesus to men. What exactly was preached, or can we understand in greater detail what men like Philip would have said when they used **Isaiah 53**?

If we take a closer look at the text of **Isaiah 53**, we can outline what exactly it is that Isaiah was prophesying.

**Isaiah 53:6a**, "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;" is a condensed version of his entire book which proclaims the characteristics of all men.

In the earlier Chapters, Isaiah preached destruction to the enemies who fought against Israel and destruction to Israel, except the remnant, if they do not repent. Thus, all men have gone astray from God and are in need of a Savior. This is the very first idea you must drive home to any man that you are evangelizing, namely, his own unworthiness because he has sinned against the Holy and Righteous God. There is no need to talk about repentance, baptism, Holy living, etc. until you get someone to understand their Spiritual need.

When a man knows he is in need of a Savior, we can proceed to show how God provided one. **Isaiah 53:2** states, "For he grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no *stately* form or majesty that we should look upon him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to him."

We cannot help but notice the humble beginnings of the Messiah that is being shown here.

He will not grow up in a King's palace like Moses. In fact, men sometimes did not even know where He lived.

**John 1:35-39**, "35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; 36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! 37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? 39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour."

Good looks will not be His defining feature like other kings that preceded Him.

**I Samuel 9:2**, "And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and *there was* not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people."

On the contrary, He is going to be a small twig coming from a desolate earth.

**John 1:46**, "And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."

His bodily features will be nothing to brag about so that men would even have to ask who He was when they sought Him amongst a group.

**John 18:3-6**, "3 Judas then, having received a *band of men* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? 5

They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground."

The Messiah will have a humble beginning so that men would not look to temporal things as portraying His beauty but rather look to what He did for them Spiritually as to what makes Him beautiful.

We have seen man's need of a Savior and the servant's humble beginning and now we will see the servant's suffering. This Chapter is overflowing with the characteristics of the suffering servant.

**Isaiah 53:3** begins this section of the suffering servant with "He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."

Surely one can understand how He was despised and forsaken in the fact that He committed no sin and yet suffered the death of a criminal. The interesting part is when Isaiah states that this servant of a man of sorrows and knows grief.

A life in the flesh is a life full of pain and anguish because we live in a fallen world with a dying planet, corruptible bodies, and evil men. The world will give you all the pain and frustrations you would like, even if you do not ask for it, but we must produce our own joy.

Understandably, Jesus suffered those same pains of a fallen world when He took on the form of flesh. **Philippians 2:6-7**.

One can only speculate how many friends and family He must have seen die knowing fully that this was never part of the perfect creation of God made in the beginning. We know from the Scriptures that He was hungry, thirsty, tired, frustrated, and weary. **John 11:33; 4:6-7, Matthew 21:12-13; 4:2, John 19:28**

His suffering was not limited to just His fleshly pains but it extended even to a greater pain in His Spiritual grief. He bore our sins, was smitten of God, God caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him, and He was crushed by God. **Isaiah 53:3-6**

All of this made Him grieve even to the point of death before the cross. **Matthew 37:46, II Corinthians 5:21**. For this is the heart of the Gospel message, that God took our sins that we could not pay and laid them on or reckoned them to the only one who could pay them.

Next, we see that this servant was even to die, which is also part of the Gospel message. **Isaiah 53:7-9a**, "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a

sheep that is silent before its shearers, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due? His grave was assigned with wicked men."

Just in this passage alone, we see many Scriptures being fulfilled by Jesus to show He was the suffering servant. **Matthew 26:63, 27:12-14, 27:38, 27:57-60, Hebrews 4:15, Luke 23:41**

The only way our sins could be reckoned to someone else is if God was willing for that person who was sinless to suffer the penalty of sin on our behalf. **Hebrews 4:15, I Peter 2:24, Galatians 3:13**

Not only was this servant to suffer and die, but He was also destined to be raised from the dead because of His righteousness.

**Isaiah 53:10**, "But the Lord was pleased to crush him, putting *him* to grief; if he would render himself *as* a guilt offering, he will see *his* offspring, he will prolong *his* days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in his hand."

How could a man who is going to die see His offspring, have prolonged days, and the good pleasure of the Lord prosper in His hand? The only logical answer is that this servant, who was destined to die, was also destined to be raised from the dead. **Psalms 16:8-11, Acts 2:25-32**

So we see here in Isaiah that the servant:

- × Will have a humble beginning.
- × Would suffer the pains of the world so that He could bear the sins of men
- × Would die with the sinners
- × Would be buried with a righteous man
- × And then would be raised to see His offspring and have prolonged days.

There is one thing left that captivates all readers. Why would this servant go through all the pain to be born a man and suffer the death of a sinner yet He Himself was without sin?

**Isaiah 53:12**, "Therefore, I will allot him a portion with the great, and he will divide the booty with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors."

The suffering servant is so he could bridge the gap between man and God; Isaiah puts it, "And interceded for the transgressors."

No man could hope to be justified by the Law of Moses (**Romans 3:20**), so God provided the way of **Grace (John 1:17)**. Men who now choose the look to the Son for salvation (**John 3:14-15**) and obey the Gospel now have

an Intercessor or Advocate (**I John 2:1**). This was only made possible through the suffering servant that Isaiah foretold in **Chapter 53**.

We have seen in **Isaiah 53** the Gospel in a nutshell. Isaiah declares mans need for a Savior because of his own unworthiness. He continues to paint the picture of a servant who took on the Spiritual grief of the world and bore their sins so that He could bridge the gap between God and man that was lost when we sinned.

If one was to only read the first part of Isaiah, he might wonder why so much pain, sorrow, and anguish? Isaiah does not stop with the pain, though; no, he continues to proclaim the best part of the message, which is the resurrection from the dead. He shows that this servant, although suffering and stricken of God, would see His many offspring and because He was raised they too could have hope of eternal life. **Romans 8:23, I Corinthians 15:12-13, I Thessalonians 4:13-18**.