

THE TRIUMPH OF THE SERVANT (53:10-12)

¹⁰ Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

¹¹ After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, ⁿ and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

1. According to Isaiah, how do we benefit from Christ's death?
2. When Isaiah speaks of "dividing the spoils" he is referring to the plunders of war. What are some of the additional benefits that Christ "has divided among us?"



Our more fantastic stories usually begin with a line like, "You're not going to believe this!" When someone starts a conversation with those words, you know you are about to hear something wonderful, astonishing or maybe even horrific. You're prepared for an incredible tale.

Isaiah begins the fourth servant song, in a similar fashion. "No one has believed our message." He is not simply bemoaning the fact that many will not believe the gospel, he is also reflecting on the fact that the gospel is so amazing that it is beyond belief.

Throughout his prophesy, Isaiah has dropped hints about an enigmatic "servant of the Lord." At times he speaks of the servant as if he were God. At other times the servant seems all too human. Additionally, Isaiah frequently refers to "the arm of Lord," or the power of God to rescue his people.

When we come to the fourth servant song (in Isaiah 52:13-25), we begin to realize that this humble servant is the arm of God. And that this servant wins a decisive battle over sin and death by allowing himself to be crushed.

Even though Isaiah is writing nearly 750 years before the time of Christ, it is as if he just witnessed the death of Christ, and sits down to pen an epic poem celebrating his victory.

THE WISDOM OF THE SERVANT (52:13-25)

52:13 See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. 14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him— his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness— 15 so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him.

1. The phrase “act wisely” means to “be effective.” Jesus succeeded where so many had failed. You might recall the failures of Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Israel and David. How was Jesus effective in ways we and they were not?
2. Verse 14 describes the horrors of the cross. Jesus’ agony began in the garden where he was “anxious to the point of death.” He was beaten mercilessly by Roman soldiers then nailed to the cross. Jesus must have been extremely hard to look at. What does the horror of the cross teach us about the grace of God?

THE REJECTION OF THE SERVANT (53:1-3)

For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand. 53:1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

1. One of the extraordinary things about Jesus, was how ordinary he appeared. If you were to walk by the carpenter shop in Nazareth and see him working at his father’s side, you would’ve never thought, “That kid is going to be the next big thing.” He didn’t look like a king or a conquering hero. What do we learn about the heart of God from the fact that he was willing to be ordinary?
2. What do we learn about the heart of God from the fact that he allowed himself to become a “man of suffering who was familiar with pain?”
3. Why do you think Jesus was rejected as Israel’s messiah?
4. Why do so many reject him today?

THE SUFFERING OF THE SERVANT (53:4-6)

4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

1. If you witnessed Jesus suffering, you might have thought to yourself, “Surely God wouldn’t allow an innocent man to suffer such a horrible death!!” What is the greater reality that lies just beneath the surface?
2. When the hymn writer wrote, “Prone to wander, Lord I feel it; prone to leave the One I love,” he may have had Isaiah 53:6 in mind. What are some of the ways we tend to go astray? What is the most significant way we go astray?
3. Why is the cross necessary?

THE INNOCENCE OF THE SERVANT (53:7-9)

7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. 9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

1. The brutality of the cross is magnified by the innocence of its victim. Isaiah foresaw our Lord’s refusal to offer a defense. Why do you think Jesus was silent before his accusers?
2. What is our first response when someone accuses us of something we didn’t do?
3. Why do you think the people around Jesus were silent when they knew he was being falsely accused?
4. How does Christ’s innocence make the horrors of the cross that much greater?
5. How amazing is it that Isaiah wrote this 750 years before the gospels told us that Jesus was crucified between two criminals, and his body was claimed by a wealthy landowner and placed in his own tomb?