

Introduction/Review

- Last time, we talked about John the Baptist as Jesus’ forerunner.
- We introduced the concept of the “Servant Songs” at Isaiah 42:1-7, 49:1-6, 50:4-11, and 52:13-53:12. Jesus is the prophesied Servant of YHWH.

1. Wounded For Our Transgressions: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

52:13 Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

- In this song, we see God discussing His Servant.
- He will behave wisely.
- He will be lifted up very high, which refers to the manner of His death.

52:14 Just as many were astonished at you, so His visage was marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men...

- Just as people were amazed at Israel, so they will be amazed at the Servant.
- In particular, they will be amazed at how much He has suffered. So, it can’t be that the Servant is Israel.
- His form was more marred than the sons of men – to the point of not even appearing human. A Roman flogging was usually sufficient to kill someone.

52:15 So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for what had not been told them they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall consider.

- The word for *nations* here is *goyim*, meaning Gentiles. What the Servant accomplishes purifies Gentiles.
- The message of salvation will come to Gentile nations, and they will encounter the God of Israel through the suffering of this servant.

Isa 53:1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

- The answer to both questions is one and the same. The Jewish people, by and large, were the ones who did not believe the report
- To believe in Jesus is to believe the report or testimony that God has given about Jesus: *“He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son.”* (1 John 5:10)

2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

- The Father protected Jesus. He had to live all the way to the Cross!
- Having no beauty can mean that He was ordinary throughout His life here, or it can refer to the horrors of His Passion.

3 He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

- Jesus was the Man of Sorrows

4 Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

- The people thought Him stricken by God – which He was, but not as they had imagined. He was suffering as our Substitute.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

- The Good Shepherd receives the blow for the wandering sheep.

7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

- Jesus was silent in the face of injustice.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

- This must be someone who was being struck for the transgression of Israel!
- He was cut off (that is, killed) without having any heirs.

9 And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.

- Fulfilled quite literally by Jesus.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

- We must make His life an offering for sin in the place of the blood of animals. When we do this, He will see His offspring.
- When we make His soul an offering for sin we become God’s offspring.

11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.

- Through His knowledge (or what He has experienced) He has justified us!

12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- Christ has spoiled Satan and plundered his house.
- He was willing to bear their sin and to pray for them.

2. The Sign Spoken Against

Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against... (Luke 2:34)

The Cross was where the bruising of the heel and the crushing of the head that God prophesied in Genesis would take place.

The offense of the cross

For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Cor. 1:22-25)

- The Jews were looking for a kingly and conquering Messiah, but crucifixion was the death of a slave and a criminal. The Law had said that anyone who hung upon a tree was under a curse. (Deut. 21:23)
- Crucifixion was a display of weakness and humiliation, not a show of power.

- The Cross was also foolishness to the Greeks. What good was such a pointless death? What could it accomplish?

The Cross is personally offensive to men

1. *The Cross teaches the accountability of Man to God.* The Cross says I need to answer to God, and that He will examine my life.

2. *The Cross teaches the guilt of Man before God.* The Cross says we have all gone astray like sheep, and are guilty before God.

3. *The Cross teaches the inability of Man to please God.* The Cross offends because it says Man isn't capable of reaching God or standing in God's Presence without it.

- The Cross is also offensive to the spirit of religion, because religion seeks to control people and profit by them through manipulating their guilt before God, as well as their religious desires to know God.
- If you want the offense of Christianity to cease, or if you want to please men rather than God, take away the Cross – for when you do, all you have left is moralizing.

3. Messiah Takes Away The Sin of the World – Psalm 22

This is the Psalm Jesus quoted on the Cross, and so it makes sense to say that He was drawing our attention to it.

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Deer of the Dawn." [Ayeleth HaShachar] A Psalm of David. 1 My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning? 2 O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season, and am not silent.

- Some have speculated that the title is a prophetic reference to the Messiah, who was pursued like a deer by the wild animals in this Psalm.
- Verse 1 contains the exact words said by Christ on the cross.
- Look at the keen sense of abandonment as He became the sin offering and object of God's wrath.
- There is a continual crying out to God without answer.

3 But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel. 4 Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. 5 They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed. 6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people. 7 All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 8 "He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"

- The Psalmist still confesses the holiness and faithfulness of God.
- The mockery Christ experienced is set forth here. His persecutors used these exact words to taunt the Lord.

9 But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. 10 I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God. 11 Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. 12 Many bulls have surrounded Me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. 13 They gape at Me with their mouths, like a raging and roaring lion.

- This lifelong faithfulness applies uniquely to Jesus.
- Bashan was the region of northern Israel that was considered evil, near the place where it was believed the fallen angels had descended in Genesis.

14 I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. 16 For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; 17 I can count all My bones. they look and stare at Me. 18 They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.

- A graphic description of crucifixion, which had not even been invented yet.
- Dogs was a common expression for Gentiles.

19 But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! 20 Deliver Me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog. 21 Save Me from the lion’s mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen! You have answered Me.

- Gentile nations were often represented as ferocious animals.

22 I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You. 23 You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! 24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard. 25 My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.

- He will again declare the Name of God before his brothers. He will praise God in the midst of the Church. (*Hebrews* applies that verse to Jesus.)
- The Cross is not ultimately a sign of God’s disfavor or displeasure. Contrary to what the Jewish leaders thought, when Jesus cried, He was heard.

26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever! 27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. 28 For the kingdom is the LORD’s, and He rules over the nations. 29 All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship; all those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him, even he who cannot keep himself alive. 30 A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation, 31 They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done this.

- All the nations will now remember God. They will join His ancient people and serve Him together with Israel.
- A people will serve the Lord and be counted as their own generation. This is likely a reference to the Church.
- Those people would declare that God has done this – that He has accomplished all these things.
- Some think that the last verse that says “He has done this” is the “it is finished” or “it is accomplished” that Jesus said on the Cross.

*All quotes NKJV except as noted. New King James Version®
 Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*