

The Punishment that Brought Peace was upon Him! Isaiah 53:1-9 (v. 5)

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I. Historical Background and Biblical Context

The prophet Isaiah had foretold Jesus' selfless, sacrificial love in his prophecies concerning the ministry of the promised Messiah, the Suffering Servant as we see unfolds in the scripture. As a willing substitute for the sins of the world, His suffering would pay the sin debt and guarantee hope for all who were under the oppression of sin. Isaiah's words brought a message of hope to a hopeless world, doom for eternal punishment.

This chapter describes Jesus' sufferings, death, and burial. It explains the why and how of a perfect God is willing to lay down His life for imperfect people. Isaiah prophesied in Judah during the reign of four kings. Book of Isaiah foretold the punishment for the people's wickedness but also the promises of God for comfort. Jesus took on the punishment that due to us that we might on His righteousness. His sufferings, unlike ours, were redemptive.

Down through the centuries, the prophets informed the people of what was to come through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. They were given a preview of His godly mission and earth encounters that would send Him to Calvary Hill where he will be the ultimate sacrifice for the punishment of man's sins. Through Jesus laying down His life in sufferings and death, the punishment He took on, once again the peace of wholeness and restoration of right relationship with God is established to them who believe and received this Suffering Servant as Savior. Christ in His dying took all our sins, past, present, and future. He was punished for them all there and then that we might never be punished because He suffered in our stead.

II. The Lesson: The Punishment that Brought Peace was upon Him!

1. vv.1-2. His Humiliation and Rejection

This chapter is a continuation of verses 13-16 of the previous chapter describing in details we see the prophet asked a couple of rhetorical questions. “Who has believed what we are saying? Who has the Lord’s saving power?” (NIRV) Would a rebellious and stiff-necked people believe the prophet now? It could not be plainly and more fully prophesied in the Old Testament than in Isaiah that Christ would suffer and die for the sins of the world. We see the strength and power of God even in the weakness of the Suffering Servant, Jesus.

The prophet symbolically described situation as Jesus grew up before God like a tender shoot (plant), and like a root out of dry ground. These words are similar to the prophet speaking in Isaiah 11:1, only at that time the people were informed that a shoot (plant) will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The dry ground refers to the lowly conditions and background in which Jesus was to appear. He has neither form nor glory. We mostly see things and people from an outward appearance. During the time of Jesus life, the people of God were under the rule of the Romans. They were looking for their king to come in a kingly way but Jesus came in a meek and humble way. There is no physical description of His characteristics as painted by mankind.

2. v.3. Man’s Response to Jesus

He was despised and rejected. He was of suffering, and familiar (acquainted with) griefs. These words are the most descriptive terms ever used of Jesus’s rejection by men. The words “sorrows” and “griefs” in the Hebrew literally mean pain and sickness. Jesus was never said to have been sick. The pain and sickness may be identified, therefore, with His vicarious suffering for redemption. The appearance of the Suffering Servant was so appalling as to

cause men to hide their faces from him. “We hid as it were our faces from him.”

3. vv. 4-6. His Vicarious Suffering

Jesus suffering vicarious for the world is clearly depicted in these verses. The prophet affirmed. “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.” This involves us all. We cannot escape. The phrases of the passage stand out in awesome vividness. They starkly judge us all. Yet, when considered together comprise the most inspiring evidence to be found anywhere before the crucifixion of the amazing mercy and kindness of God toward sinful mankind. Note their sequence as well as their significance:

- Bore our griefs;
- Carried our sorrows;
- Wounded for our transgressions
- Bruised for our iniquities
- The chastisement of our peace was upon him
- With his stripes we are healed
- The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all

Several conclusions seem inescapable from assertions above:

- The suffering was vicarious
- The suffering was voluntary
- The suffering was in obedience to the Lord
- The suffering was for “us all”

The suffering was mediational, that is, it was to have the power of effecting peace and reconciliation. Many mistaken the voluntary humiliation and affliction of Jesus to mean that God was chastening him. On the contrary, though he was wholly obedient to God the Father and was entirely undeserving of the suffering he bore, it was our transgressions and our iniquities that were the cause of his agony. The chastisement of our peace was upon him is full of meaning. The purpose of his suffering was to lead to peace and reconciliation and to every form of blessing. And with his stripes we are healed brings us to the marvelous assurance that Jesus suffering is adequate to meet our needs. Peter had the

prophet's remark in mind as he wrote, "Who his own self bares our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." (1 Peter 2:24)

4. vv.7-9. His Condemnation and Death

While we may have felt a foreshadowing of the cross and indications as to the reason for the Messiah's humiliation in earlier passages of Isaiah, death does not come fully into view until 53:7-9. Christ opened not his mouth in his trials before the high priest and Pilate, except when questions of his own identity were asked (Matt 36:62-64; 27:12-14). Such patience and self-restraint, as indicated in the prophecy and as revealed by Christ, were not traditional among the Hebrews. Old Testament sufferers characteristically lamented their afflictions and often cried out in complaint against pain and injustice. Easily recalled is the lament of great prophets like Jeremiah and Habakkuk, as well as the complaint of Job. He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. The emphasis on the victim silent submission. He was taken from prison and from judgment describe what to Jesus for the gross miscarriage of justice in the trial. In the latter part of verse 8 and verse 9, Jesus has already taken place, now his burial is at hand. He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of his people, he was punished. 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. He was buried as a criminal would have been and not with honors due him. Although his burial was with the wicked, there was no guilt in him, only absolute purity. Jesus was buried in a rich man's chosen and especially prepared tomb. The crowd which cried for Christ's crucifixion would have him buried disgracefully but God turned the table.

III. Conclusion.

Thank God for Jesus. For His grace and mercy have brought us from a death sentence to eternal life.