

The Suffering Servant

An Evening with John MacArthur

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Bible Verse: Isaiah 53
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Well, I'm beyond grateful to be here and always when given the opportunity to open the word of God challenged by what of all the wonderful panoply of glorious subjects in the Bible I might bring you, and in my conversations with Don we agreed that the best possible text would be Isaiah 53. So open your Bibles to Isaiah 53 and this was the choice because I wanted to focus on Christ. I am very much aware that if there is an absent subject in the evangelical church, paradoxically as it might seem, it is Jesus Christ himself. I don't hear people preaching Christ. We're not anywhere near Paul saying, "I preach Christ and him crucified. I am determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ." That doesn't seem to be the truth of the evangelical movement today, a myriad of subjects, very rarely is there a focus on Christ.

I preached through the gospel of Matthew, it took me eight years, eight years of Sunday morning and every Sunday morning Christ was the subject. I preached through the gospel of Luke, it took me 9 or 10 years. I preached through the gospel of Mark, it took me, I thin, five years. I preached through John twice and that accumulated to another five years. I spent 25 years essentially preaching on those four gospels and that's not all there is about Christ. You have the anticipation of Christ in the Old Testament, you have the revelation of Christ in the gospels, you have the proclamation of Christ in the book of Acts, you have the explanation of Christ in the epistles, and you have the glorification of Christ in the book of Revelation, and you really have to read around him to ignore him.

The Bible is not a book about marriage and success, it's a book about Christ, and so I thought for tonight to look at the glory of Christ in the Old Testament. I would draw your attention to Isaiah 53. This chapter is really the first gospel. Matthew is the second gospel. This is the first gospel. This is not only the first gospel, the introduction to the gospel as we know it, but this is the greatest single text in the Bible to validate inspiration. What do I mean by inspiration? That the Scripture is inspired by God. There is no possible explanation for this chapter and the details on the life, death, resurrection and ascension and exaltation of Jesus Christ 700 years before he ever arrived except by divine inspiration.

This is also the most profound comprehensive revelation of the work of salvation in the entire Bible. It is the most comprehensive explanation of the theology of the atonement,

substitutionary, vicarious, sacrificial death of the Messiah. This chapter is so formidable that it has no equivalent chapter in the New Testament. Here we find the introduction of the most familiar gospel language. It's amazing, 700 years before Christ we have the most familiar gospel language we are familiar with in the New Testament but this is where it finds its most comprehensive collection of direct references to the substitutionary, vicarious, sacrificial death of the Messiah.

It is the source of countless hymns. Just to list some, "Most sacred Head now wounded. Man of sorrows. Alas and did my Savior bleed. I lay my sins on Jesus. Hail thou once despised Jesus. Stricken, smitten and afflicted. What a friend we have in Jesus. I was a wandering sheep. Christ triumphant, ever reigning. My song is love unknown. When I survey the wondrous cross. O for a thousand tongues. Crown Him with many crowns. What wondrous love is this?" All of that comes out of Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53 has such stunning and specific complex prophecies that no one could ever know them but God. One German commentator back in 1866 wrote, "It is the most central, the deepest and loftiest text that prophecy has ever achieved." And it was Martin Luther who said every Christian should memorize it, and that would be a good thing for you to do.

The New Testament writers, by the way, referred to almost every line. Almost every line. The scope is staggering. The scope of this chapter is staggering. It extends from eternity past to eternity future. It starts with the eternal Trinity, comes to the Son's Incarnation, the Son's humiliation, the Son's rejection, the Son's injustice, the Son's conviction, the Son's sentence, his execution, his resurrection, his ascension, his intercession, his exaltation, and his coronation. And it's all here. It even resolves itself in the eternal kingdom. And if all the New Testament epistles were lost, there is sufficient revelation of the gospel here to save sinners. This is how explicit the gospel is in Isaiah. In fact, it was Isaiah 53 that Philip used to lead the eunuch to salvation in Acts 8.

This chapter is so clearly representative of the Lord Jesus Christ that the Jews refuse to read it in the synagogue readings. They skip it. They have for centuries. It is really this chapter is the torture chamber of rabbis. This chapter is the guilty conscience of the Jews. This is the chapter that I unloaded on Ben Shapiro, some of you remember that conversation? And I was so shocked because that's given-and-take. When I had that conversation with him, we're very close, our knees are knocking and I have no idea what he's going to ask me, and it's really fast and you have to respond immediately, and I just wanted to get him to Isaiah 53 and we got there and I couldn't believe it, I started in and he didn't interrupt me at all, and very unusual to let me go, I think I went almost 20 minutes and he didn't say anything. All I can do is sow the seed, right? Pray for him.

Isaiah 53 has to be understood in another frame of reference as well and that is it is the divine answer to the riddle of the Old Testament. I don't know if you know that but the Old Testament has a riddle and it is the riddle of all riddles. It's found in the 34th chapter of Exodus, you'll recognize it once I read it to you, but it is the riddle of all riddles. Listen to Isaiah 34:6 and 7, "Then the LORD passed by," this is Moses on the mountain, "the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God,

compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth," that's the Hebrew word essentially for grace, "and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin." Now that's clear, right? So the Lord is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness, truth, keeps lovingkindness for thousands, forgives iniquity, transgression and sin, and here's the riddle, "yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished." How is that possible? How is that possible? In fact, he will visit "the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." God will forgive your sins and punish your sins.

That is the riddle of the Old Testament and Paul frames it this way: how can God be just and the justifier of sinners? How can God be gracious and righteous? He can't be a judge who brings the sinner, the perpetrator into his court and says, "You're guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty, but I forgive you, go your way," because he has abdicated justice in the moment that he overlooks the law and its required penalty. So how can God be just and the justifier? How can God be a forgiving God and a punishing God at the same time? How can the sinner be made right with God? By the way, all religion purports to answer that question. That is the question upon which all religion is based. Religion is very simple, whatever religion it is. Religion is answering the question, "How can I avoid the hostility of this deity?" Whatever the deity is or deities are, all religions, ceremonial, sacrificial religion, moral religion, whatever kind of religion it is and however it frames itself always is designed with in mind is this deity that I have to get right with or I'm going to get crushed.

I remember talking to a Muslim on a flight and I said to him, "Do you sin?" And he said, "All the time." And I said, "Well, is that good?" "No," he said, "it's very bad because Allah could send me to hell." And I said, "Well, how could you avoid that?" "I don't know." There is no salvation in Islam so all Islamic people are extremely terrified of Allah and there is no pathway to escape his wrath except maybe to blow up infidels. The extremity comes from the terrifying reality that Allah could send you to hell.

All religion tries to find some way to escape the wrath of the deity, and apart from Christianity every deity is a concoction of hell, right? Whatever the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, so all false gods are demonic by nature so they're not like Yahweh. All religions exist to try to appease this angry god and escape hell, some kind of hell, and if you've got the wrong religion, you get the wrong answer, and if you get the wrong answer, you end up in hell.

So this question is the question of all questions, how can a sinner be right with God, and the 53rd chapter of Isaiah gives this magnificent answer that resolves all the issues. One more preliminary note and this is enigmatic. I think as Christians we look at this chapter and we're so familiar with Christ that we find some level of joy in reading these things, and rightly should we, but this is probably, in my mind, the saddest chapter in the Bible on some level. It is tragic beyond imagination, this chapter. This chapter is a crushingly sorrowful chapter, profound grief without historical precedent or parallel. It is the saddest

chapter in the Old or the New Testament. It is heartbreaking while at the same time being joyous for some. Heartbreaking for most.

Now this chapter is about the slave of Jehovah. Do you see back in chapter 52, look at verse 13, "Behold, My servant," or "My slave." Now in Isaiah, in this section of Isaiah, there are a number of these chapters that are directed to us to instruct us about the servant of Jehovah or the slave of Jehovah, chapter 42, 49, 50, 52, 53. These are messianic chapters. The book of Isaiah puts the Messiah in this strategic place and the subsequent chapters to this look even at the glory of his coming kingdom, so we're talking about a messianic prophecy and it cannot possibly mean anyone else other than Jesus Christ. There are Jewish people over in Israel who will read Isaiah 53 to a Jewish person who hasn't heard it because they don't read it, and they'll ask a Jewish person, there's all kinds of YouTube video on this, "Who is this about?" And Jewish people will say, "Well, it sounds like Jesus Christ." Even nonbelievers can't escape the reality. But here's the most amazing thing and why it's so sad: it is not primarily a prediction about Christ's coming. That may surprise you. It is not primarily about Christ's coming and I'll show you why in a few moments.

So let's begin in chapter 52, verse 13, with the startling and I'll give you some points just to kind of move you along, and I want to give you this chapter, this is my gift to you, to give you this amazing chapter in a way that you can read it in the future and you'll understand it and you'll find it to be an incredible benefit to your spiritual life. So first of all, we're going to meet this servant of Jehovah, the slave of Jehovah, the Messiah, and the introduction comes in verses 13 to 15 of chapter 52, and this is the introduction of the startling slave of Jehovah. And God is speaking, God is speaking. So here is God introducing his servant, his slave, the Messiah, and we're going to read verses 13 to 15. "Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted. Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So His appearance was marred more than any man And His form more than the sons of men. Thus He will [startle is the best translation] thus he will startle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand."

All right, this is God's introduction to this 53rd chapter. First of all, you have an astonishing revelation. It is really astonishing. "My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted." Why is that astonishing? Because the language of verse 13, high, lifted up, greatly exalted, you have the same exact words in Isaiah 6 in the description of the vision of God. Anybody reading Isaiah will go back to chapter 6 and say, "Wait a minute, this is to say that the Messiah is God, exalted, high and lifted up." That is the very language describing the vision that Isaiah had in chapter 6. And by the way, the New Testament actually says that Isaiah saw the Son of God in chapter 6.

So here is the first stunning revelation, the servant of Jehovah, the Messiah will be God. He is God, astonishing revelation, and then you have an astonishing humiliation. You have God in verse 13 and then you have this horrifying statement in verse 14, "Just as many were astonished at you, My people," because of what you went through, "So His

appearance was marred more than any man And His form more than the sons of men." So you have the servant of Jehovah who is actually God in human flesh who is astonishing for what he suffers. So here you have God suffering, God suffering to such a degree that his appearance is marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of men. Astonishing disfigurement, distortion. It is repulsive. How is that even possible that the Messiah who is God could suffer that? And after you've been dropped to the bottom in that shocking realization, immediately in verse 15 you read, "Thus He will startle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand." What is that? That's an astonishing exaltation.

So you have an astonishing revelation that he is God, you have an astonishing humiliation that he will be marred more than any man, and then you have an astonishing exaltation that startles the kings of the world. What exaltation of Christ will startle the kings of the world? When he is put on his throne and becomes, what? King of kings and Lord of lords. Psalm 2, right? Psalm 2. Who is this? Who is this who is God who is humbled and marred and who is exalted over all? This is God's introduction of his Messiah with an economy of words that is just beyond comprehension.

Who is he? Who is he? We come to chapter 53 to answer that question and something dramatic happens here. God has been speaking in the end of chapter 52 but immediately you're struck by this, the pronouns are all plural now. "Who has believed the message given to us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" And further, "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." And you find these plural pronouns. Somebody else is speaking: we, our, us. Who is speaking here? Here's the key to this whole chapter, this is Israel, this is Israel, and this is where this becomes a tragic chapter. Israel is mourning. Listen to the sound of it, "Who has believed the message given to us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 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. 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." There's the sorrow. What's going on here? This is a dirge. This is a requiem. This is a sad song. This is a death song. Why don't they rejoice? Notice the second very important point, not only are the pronouns plural but the verbs are in the past tense. This is not a prophecy of a future event. This is a prophecy of some people looking back. Do you see that? They're all looking back. Verse 3, he was despised, he was forsaken. But it stays with the past tense verb so this is a prophecy of a future time when Israel looks back at the cross and sees the truth of what happened.

We know that time is coming because Zechariah described it, Zechariah 12, and in Zechariah 12 the prophecy is the prophecy of the future salvation of Israel. But listen to this, chapter 12, verse 10, in the future, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication," here's the important point, "so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced," that's the future salvation

of Israel, and it will happen that they will look back on the one they have pierced, "and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn." Why will they weep? Why will they weep when Israel comes to the point in God's purpose that they are saved, why will they look back and weep? Because they will understand that every generation from the crucifixion of Christ to the salvation of Israel rejected the Messiah. You talk about sorrow. I was talking to somebody the other day about evangelizing Roman Catholics and they asked me what is the most difficult thing about getting a Roman Catholic to believe the gospel of grace, and I said the fact that they have to in their minds remove all of their ancestors from heaven and put them in hell. It's not a matter of arguing the gospel, it's a matter of what do I do with my entire understanding of my entire history?

The horror of this realization when Israel looks back is that all generations between Christ and that hour of their great salvation are damned. But verse 11, "In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo. The land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives," in other words, everybody is going to mourn but look at chapter 13, verse 1, "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity." They'll mourn, then they'll be saved.

That's why I say this is such a sad chapter. You know, Ezekiel 36 promises the new covenant for Israel, Jeremiah 31 promises new covenant salvation for Israel in the future, so this passage looks at the future salvation of Israel but when they look on the one whom they've pierced and realize that he was their son, God's Son, their Messiah, and they rejected him, they will sweep their sorrow, unimaginable sorrow back over their entire history and they will say this, Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 will be their mourning song. These are their words as they are the words that fit any sinner's repentance. Let me show you what they're going to say in that day, and what any sinner who is saved says.

First of all, they rehearse in their minds that they completely misjudged the Messiah. Verse 1, "Who has believed our message? Who believed the report given to us? Who believed?" This is an open-ended question. Answer it: nobody. "To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" The arm of the LORD is to do with miraculous power so Jesus came, he declared himself to be the Messiah and we didn't believe him. He came unto his own and, what? His own received him not. And he displayed his power. He did miracles and miracles and miracles for the three year duration of his ministry, so many miracles that the gospel of John says they couldn't even be kept in a record.

"We saw the arm of the Lord but we didn't believe. We didn't believe." Why didn't they believe? Well, first of all, because he had a contemptible origin. Look at verse 2, "He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground." What is that? Well, a tender shoot is a sucker branch. So the Jews looked at Jesus and they said, "This is not the true branch of David. This is a sucker branch." And if you're in an agricultural environment, you know what you do with a sucker branch, right? You whack it off because it unnecessarily draws life. "We thought He was nothing but a sucker

branch and we thought He was nothing but a root out of parched ground." And if you have a trail, one of the things you want to make sure you do is remove the roots that are sticking up to trip people. "We saw Him as nothing more than an unnecessary thing that needed to be removed. A sucker branch, a dry root. And He had no stately form." Oh, by the way, he didn't have a halo or a white robe. He didn't have any majesty.

So he had a contemptible appearance, no royal birth, no royal bearing. In fact, they heaped so much scorn on him that in preaching through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ I've often referred to it as the comedy at Calvary. There was such a mockery that they turned Jesus into the butt of jokes. That's the scorn. There was nothing about him majestic. Nothing fit their messianic anticipation. There was no "appearance that we should be attracted to Him." So he had a contemptible origin, he had a contemptible appearance, and then in verse 3 he had a contemptible life, "He was despised and forsaken of men," and by "men" it is to say that those who were in the leadership. He was, "A man of sorrows. He was acquainted with grief. He was so lowly in our eyes that He's the kind of person you hide your face from like when somebody who is very distorted or disabled comes by and you don't want to be caught staring so you look the other way. He was despised like someone you hide your face from." When it says, "we did not esteem Him," it means we didn't think he was anything at all.

The Jews thought so little of him that they took his name in later years, Yeshua, and changed it to Yeshu. Yeshu is an acrostic that means "let his name be blotted out." He was called in some of the Jewish writings the transgressor. He was called talooe(ph), the hanged one, or he was called Yeshua ben Pandera, the illegitimate child of a Roman soldier who got a Jewish girl pregnant. What more could you say than that he was despised? Oh, you could say he was forsaken of men, meaning all the people of rank rejected him. Some said he did what he did by the power of Beelzebub. They killed him, they killed his followers. His life was marked by sorrow, pain and grief, that's why it's so ridiculous for Jews to accept him as the Messiah because they also would have to acknowledge that even their great revered rabbinical ancestors perished without God. "We didn't esteem Him," that's to say he didn't exist. That's the ultimate scorn. He was a non-person. So that's the confession of unbelief. He didn't fit their messianic view, he didn't fit their theology salvation, and by the way, they didn't need a sacrifice. You understand that? They didn't need a sacrifice for sin in their own minds. That was totally offensive to assume that they couldn't earn by their righteousness and their religion favor with God.

So you meet the scorned slave of Jehovah, then verse 4 is a dramatic shift. After a deep crushing repentance, the Jews in the future will look back and following that deep repentance comes faith. Verse 4 is so dramatic. Now we see it. "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him." That is the epiphany, folks. That is the moment when they look on the one whom they've pierced and

they understand he didn't die for his own sins, he died for theirs. Surely, at last, our sorrows he carried, our griefs he bore. Bore is substitution. Carried is expiation, legal removal. So here you have the vicarious substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ providing propitiation toward God and expiation, and the Jews will say, "Yet we had it so wrong, we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. We thought God was punishing Him." That is what the Jews thought, you understand that don't you? They thought they were the agents of God crucifying a false claimant to the messianic office. "We will not have this man to," what? "To reign over us. This is not our Messiah." And that's exactly why the Romans put "Jesus King of the Jews" to mock them. "We thought we were doing God's work and that this fraud, this impostor was being stricken, smitten by God and afflicted." Stricken means to hit violently. Smitten means to beat even to death. Afflicted means to be degraded. "We thought Jesus was violently hit, beaten and degraded and that was the work of God because He was the devil's impostor but now we see," verse 5, "He was pierced through for our transgressions." Do you understand the epiphany of that moment when the one they thought represented anti-God was in fact God's Messiah?

He wasn't pierced for his own sins, "He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities." So much to say there. Pierced, specifically that is also prophesied in Psalm 22. Crushed. Beaten. Trampled. Chastened, by the way, is the only Hebrew word for punishment, the only Hebrew word for punishment. Scourged, does that sound familiar? Pierced. Crushed. Chastened. Scourged. For our transgressions, for our iniquities. Ultimately on the positive side the chastening was for our well-being, and the scourging and all the rest of it provided our healing.

There you have in unmistakable terms the substitutionary atonement of Christ and the question is answered how can God be just and the justifier of sinners, because every sin ever committed by every person who will ever live will be punished either in the eternal punishment of that sinner or on behalf of that sinner who is saved Christ was punished. All sin is punished. God can be just and the justifier of sinners because God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us. And there's even more depth in their understanding of this, verse 6, "All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way," so you have the references to transgressions and iniquities, and those are deeds of sin but there's something even deeper than that. What's wrong with us is not just what we do, it's who we are. All of us, each of us have turned to his own way. We're like sheep who have gone astray. What is that talking about? It's talking about nature. It's the nature of a sheep to go astray so this is talking about innate depravity. Not only do we do bad things but we are by nature sinners, so this is a profound understanding of the sinfulness of man, not only his deeds and behavior but his very nature, his innate nature is corrupt; as sheep do what sheep do, sinners do what their nature dictates. So the repentance is deep down repentance but all of it is summed up in verse 6 at the end, "But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him." Galatians 3 says, "He became a curse for us."

Verses 4 to 6 is the clearest, most concise and most complete description of substitutionary atonement anywhere in the Bible and it's 700 years before Messiah even

came. There's more. We've seen the scorn of the substitute, here's the submissive slave of Jehovah, verse 7 to 9. "He was oppressed," that's reference, no doubt, to his trial which was an unjust trial in the court of men, and he was literally allowed to be afflicted, abused, yet he didn't open his mouth. We know that from the testimony of the gospel record. He was led like a lamb to slaughter, like a sacrificial lamb, "And like a sheep silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth." He didn't speak. He was like a lamb to the slaughter, like a sheep to shearing. Christ before his accusers makes no defense.

Now anybody who is brought before a judge who is innocent is going to cry from the rooftops his innocence. Innocent people make sure their protest is heard. Jesus said nothing. There was no fair accusation against him. By the way, in the Talmud there's a section that says, this came after Christ, that Jesus was put in prison for 40 days. He was taken from the trial for 40 days before he was crucified which, of course, is a lie because he was crucified the same day that the trial took place. The Jews are trying to historically rewrite history and exonerate themselves and said there was a 40 day period in which no one came to the defense of Jesus and all accusations were confirmed. That's not true and this is clear, he was oppressed, he was afflicted, he was led immediately off of the trial and the abuse, the trial and the whipping, he was led immediately like a lamb that is led to slaughter, verse 8 says by oppression, more of his illegal trial, and judgment, that's the verdict from his oppressive trial and his judgment he was immediately taken away, "And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living." That means he went from trial to abuse to execution. There's no 40 days. And it was all, the end of verse 8, "For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due." If you're wondering what the gospel is, you're hearing it right here. "For the transgression of my people," the Jews will say, "to whom the stroke was due."

You have in verse 9 his burial, "His grave was assigned with wicked men." He would have been thrown in the criminal dump and burned up in the fire of Gehenna, but that didn't happen to him. "He was with a rich man in his death," Joseph of Arimathea, Matthew 27. Why did God spare him that? "Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth." Psalm 16, he was perfect and God would not allow his holy one to see corruption. He wouldn't let him end up in the garbage dump.

This is an amazing amazing chapter and verse 10 says this, not only is this a scorned substitute, a submissive substitute, but wonderfully a satisfied substitute, satisfied slave, "the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief." The Lord is not pleased with the agony, the Lord is pleased with the accomplishment. The Lord is not pleased because he died a martyr's death, the Lord was pleased because he was propitiated, his justice was satisfied in the sin-bearing of Christ.

Then verse 10, mark this, "He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand." How can that be? He's dead. He's been executed. He's been crushed. A guilt offering was consumed on the altar. How does he see his offspring? This is a prophecy of the resurrection. I think about that when I read this, I'd like to see the next couple of generations of my offspring. We're see our great

grandchildren these days. You always wonder what they're going to be as the years go by and what's going to come after that. I won't be around to see that but when the text says he will see his offspring, it means that he's going to live and therein is the reference to his resurrection. His days will be prolonged eternally and forever the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

So you have here this incredible look at the Messiah and his death and resurrection. Then in comes God to give a final word. Verse 11 starts, "As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied." In other words, you remember when Christ is the one, I think it's Hebrews, yes, it says he went to the cross because he knew what the outcome was going to be; with joy he endured the cross because he could see beyond it. Christ died satisfied because he knew what he was purchasing, he was purchasing the people of God for all eternity. Full satisfaction and so the Father comes back to speak and sums it up, by the knowledge of him, by knowing him, the righteous one, my servant will justify the many. How do you make your life right with God? By knowing the righteous one, Christ, as he will bear their iniquities.

And the Father affirms, "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; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors." God comes back in to the close this section. He says, "The Righteous One, My slave, justification comes to those who know Him, who know Him, and though He was once numbered with the transgressors, in the end He will have a portion with the great and the strong because He poured out Himself to death and bore the sin of many and interceded for the transgressors." There was on the cross that there was intercession. What you have really summing up in the final verses as the Father speaks again is the coronation of Christ, the kingdom of Christ, a portion with the great, booty with the strong, satisfaction that he sees in verse 11.

So the servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 53 goes from heaven to earth to heaven, from glory to shame to glory, from life to death to life for us and one day for Israel. You have to be blind, sinfully blind, satanically blind to see that chapter in any other way than to be a specific set of prophecies about the Lord Jesus Christ, right? It's just too unmistakable. And the invitation is by knowing him, the righteous one, justification will come. How to be right with God? Through Christ and Christ alone.

Now that's one chapter in a whole Bible in which Jesus Christ is the main subject, and I think you can see in that one chapter perhaps more grammatically than any other but not exclusively here how if you look closely enough, you will see Christ.

I'll close with a couple of comments. After preaching through all the gospels in all the entire New Testament, I finished going through the entire New Testament verse-by-verse and the people had for 30 some years, 35 years maybe more, had seen Christ; he's the definitive reality in our church. And when I finished the series on the New Testament, the complete New Testament, the people said, "Would you do a series on Christ in the Old Testament?" They didn't want to let go of him. So once you know Christ from the New

Testament, you can find him in the Old Testament. It's like Waldo, if you don't know what Waldo looks like, you're not going to find Waldo, but if you know what he looks like... So I went back into the Old Testament and went through it and through it and through it and we saw Christ everywhere in his glory there, and that's how you need to read the Old Testament. You need to master the knowledge of Christ that comes in the New Testament and you'll find him in marvelous ways in the Old Testament as well, and the whole Bible will point to Christ.

And my heart honestly aches because there's so little of this in the church, so little of it, even like an evening tonight. I basically come to you as the teacher wanting to show you a chapter in the Bible, not to preach a sermon to you but to give you an understanding of one chapter that lifts up Christ and have it so exhilarate your soul that you open your Bible anywhere and everywhere, you don't want to read Christ in but you want to make sure you don't miss him when he's there. We need to preach Christ and it's just not popular. Not popular. But it's right and it's life-transforming.

Father, we do thank You for Your word, we're in awe of it, but it isn't just the truth that produces awe, affection, love, joy, it's knowing You through that truth, to transcend the doctrine and to know the One who is the Author. We feel like the Apostle Paul, that I may know Him. We never have enough and we know this, that when we focus on Christ as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 3:18, as we gaze on the glory of the Lord we are changed into His image from one level of glory to the next by the Holy Spirit. Keep our focus on Christ and, blessed Holy Spirit, move us ever and always closer to His image. This we ask for His glory. Amen.

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