

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #80

Isaiah 53:7-9

It is relatively easy to submit to the will of God when the will of God is a positive assignment. It is easy to endure life when things aren't all that bad. But when God's will means that just about everything turns negatively against you, doing the will of God, for us, becomes a real struggle.

The will of God for Jesus Christ was filled with sorrow and grief. The will of God meant that He would come to this earth and be mocked, brutalized, and executed. God's will meant that Jesus Christ would physically die in the prime of His life. It meant that He wouldn't appear to be successful at all. It meant He would be deprived of a good long life. It meant that He would be very lonely, even deprived of most normal family and friends. It also meant He would be deprived of justice. But in spite of how nightmarish His assignment was, the one thing Jesus Christ could say that none of us will ever be able to say is, "I always did My Father's will."

This section in Isaiah is all about the will of God in the life of Jesus Christ in providing an amazing sacrifice for a sinful nation and for sinful individuals. What happened to Jesus Christ was no accident or case of simple misunderstanding. Everything that happened to Him was the will of God.

In order for us to have a relationship with God, something must happen to take care of our sin problem and appease the holy wrath of God. God's plan was Jesus Christ came into this world to take our place and become our substitute to save us from our sin. It is God who is actually calculating the amount of suffering, but it is the Savior who must endure it. This text reveals to us how and why Jesus Christ suffered.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is a Hebrew poem comprised of fifteen total verses. This poem is like no other you will ever read or study. It is a poem comprised of five grammatical stanzas and each one is designed to reveal special and sacred truth about the amazing work and life of Jesus Christ. This is a poem of specific prophecy about Jesus Christ.

Stanza #1 introduced us to God's Servant/Savior and it was shocking. 52:13-15

Stanza #2 revealed to us the rejection of God's Servant/Savior who was suffering. 53:1-3

Stanza #3 revealed to us the substitution of God's Servant/Savior for the purpose of saving sinners. 53:4-6

Now we come to **Stanza #4** and what we see here is staggering. In order for a righteous, Holy God to save us, He cannot just overlook our sin nor can He just forget about our sin. Perfect Justice and Perfect Holiness will not let Him do that. So God had a plan and the plan was to send His Son into this world to save us. What we see here is this:

GOD'S PERFECT SERVANT/SAVIOR/SON, JESUS CHRIST, SILENTLY AND WILLINGLY SUBMITTED HIMSELF TO TERRIBLE OPPRESSION AND DEATH IN ORDER TO FULFILL GOD'S WILL THAT WOULD SAVE US FROM ALL OUR SINS.

No matter what we ever do for God, our work on this earth will not be redemptive like that of Jesus Christ. We can clothe the poor and feed the hungry. We can visit the sick and help the helpless. **But we cannot save anyone from sin.** Only Jesus Christ can do that. It seems to me the great thing that is lacking in much of what is called Christian service is a failure to accurately communicate what Isaiah communicates right here. Jesus Christ is our only salvation. He is our only redemption. He is the only One who can save us from our sins.

What we learn in these verses are twelve prophetic facts that are profound:

Prophetic Fact #1 – Jesus Christ would be oppressed. **53:7a**

The word “oppress” is one that means He was pressed or harassed to the point of being totally weary and fatigued (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 533).

This term was very appropriate in regard to all the trials of Jesus Christ. Pilate, Herod, Annas, and Caiaphas all oppressed Him.

Furthermore, God’s wrath was on Christ; Satan hated Christ; men tortured Christ; people rejected Christ. He was oppressed by everyone everywhere He went. It is amazing that He did not speak a word and destroy His oppressors. Why? Why would He give in to this? Because our sin-case rested upon His work on that cross.

Prophetic Fact #2 – Jesus Christ would be afflicted. **53:7b**

The word “afflicted” means that everything about what was happening to Jesus Christ was oppressive, miserable, and depressing (*Ibid.*, p. 642).

Do not ever forget this critical theological point. Jesus Christ was oppressed and afflicted voluntarily.

Prophetic Fact #3 – Jesus Christ would not open His mouth. **53:7c**

This point is really emphasized three times in this one verse. I don’t know of anything more evil than to be falsely accused and mistreated when you are innocent. There would have been nothing more normal or natural than for Jesus to start yelling in His own defense. We need to understand this point; just one whisper from Jesus Christ, just one word of protest and He could have stopped this whole thing.

Jesus Christ never said a word. He never complained, He never protested, He never offered some verbal self-defense. When they disrobed Him and mocked Him, when they called Him names and spit on Him, He never opened His mouth. He never shied away from His task. He knew what He had to do, He knew what His assignment was and He quietly did it.

It is interesting that the Apostle Peter takes this very truth and tells us to follow Christ’s example. In I Peter 2:21-22, Peter says:

“For you have been called for this purpose since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.”

When a person is doing the will of God as Christ did and really zeroed in on what God wants Him to do, he will just quietly and silently go about his business. A Christlike servant won't be shooting off his mouth and filling the air with threatening words. He will just go about doing God's will even when that will is negative.

Prophetic Fact #4 – Jesus Christ was led to the cross like a lamb to slaughter. **53:7d**

The only metaphor that is stressed in this section is the metaphor of a lamb or sheep. Israel was used to seeing thousands of sheep slaughtered in the animal sacrifices at the Temple. Men brought sheep to slaughter all of the time and those lambs just willingly went to their death.

Why is Jesus Christ compared to a slaughtered lamb? Because He is the only one who can take away our sins. It is interesting that in the last book of the Bible, Revelation, Jesus Christ is identified as being the Lamb some 28 times. This Lamb is the only One who can keep you from experiencing the wrath of God.

What is predicted is that the Lamb of God would come into this world and would submit Himself to death (John 1:29, 36). Here was God just willingly being led to slaughter like a lamb. He voluntarily endured all of this.

Prophetic Fact #5 – Jesus Christ was silent like a sheep. **53:7e**

This was the thought that really stuck in the mind of the Ethiopian eunuch who was in charge of the treasury. He was reading this very verse and wanted Philip to explain it (Acts 8:32-34). Philip showed him how this very verse connected to Jesus (Acts 8:35).

Jesus Christ appeared before a bunch of false accusers and murderers. But he didn't try to verbally stop what was happening to Him. He was like a sheep in that He was silent and submissive.

Jesus Christ would not even defend Himself (Matthew 26:63a; 27:14; I Peter 2:23). He willingly allowed Himself to be led like a lamb to His own execution. He knew that this act would save sinners who would believe on Him.

Sometimes the best way to serve God at the highest possible level is to say nothing.

Prophetic Fact #6 – Jesus Christ was taken away by oppression and judgment. **53:8a**

There were oppressive evil things happening at this court scene. Dr. Alexander said, “Every clause of this verse has been made the subject of dispute among interpreters” (*Isaiah*, p. 299).

The word “oppress” used here is different than in **verse 1**. This word means that Jesus was silenced and restrained. He was detained by various authorities (*Ibid.*, p. 648).

The Hebrew words here are tricky and there are several possibilities of meaning:

- 1) They could mean that after His arrest and judgment He was taken away to the cross.
- 2) They could mean that by oppression and without judgment He was taken away to the cross.
- 3) They could mean after He was oppressed and crucified He was taken up into heaven.

The overall sense of these words, however, is very clear; **Jesus Christ was the victim of a horrible miscarriage of judgment and justice.**

All judgments against Christ were oppressive and wrong. He went through six mock trials. They took place during the middle of the night. No jury, no justice. There were times in those trials when it was clearly stated this man is innocent. Think of that, the leaders could find no fault in Him. He was innocent yet He was confined and He was brutalized and He was taken away.

The idea of being taken away is the idea of being forced to endure terrible oppressive things even to the point of death. They hurried Him through these trials and convicted and sentenced an innocent man.

What most didn't realize is that there truly was a judgment taking place; but not so much an oppressive judgment of men, but a judicial, salvific judgment of God. Jesus Christ was taking our place. He allowed Himself to go through those trials so He could save sinners. This judgment was about resolving all of the judicial matters that He had to resolve on our behalf.

When the Apostle Peter referred to this event he said concerning Israel that Jesus was "delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to the cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death" (Acts 2:23).

Prophetic Fact #7 – Israel believed that Jesus Christ had been cut off by God from the land of the living . **53:8b**

The idea of being cut off from the land of the living not only includes dying a premature death, but also dying as a result of a just judgment of God. Almost every one thought, poor Jesus, He was cut down in the prime of His life.

Here was God's perfect servant and He was cut off from all His contemporaries. He didn't even get to reach the normal "seventy" mark. None of His own disciples were cut off at His age. His days had been few.

Prophetic Fact #8 – Israel did not know that Jesus Christ died for their transgressions . **53:8c**

G. Campbell Morgan said that here is "the inner meaning of the death" of Jesus Christ in words "that flame with light of infinite grace" (*The Prophecy of Isaiah*, Vol. 2, p. 133).

The death of Jesus Christ was substitutionary in nature. William Kelly said "the plague-stroke was upon Him for the transgression of the people of Jehovah" (*An Exposition of the Book of Isaiah*, p. 340).

Christ is dying for the sins of a nation and for the sins of individuals. He is not dying for His transgressions but for ours. Israel needs to know that and so do we. We are the ones who deserve to be cut off from God.

Prophetic Fact #9 – Jesus Christ died and would be buried with wicked men. **53:9a**

The burial of Jesus Christ is part of the gospel (I Corinthians 15:3-4). This is what proves Jesus Christ was really and truly dead. Now most people who die have a memorial service or funeral, but not Jesus Christ. The intention was to take His dead body off the cross and bury it.

Dr. H. A. Ironside said the intention of men was either to cast His precious body out to be devoured by vultures or jackals or to have it burned in the refuse dump in the valley of Hinnom (*Isaiah*, p. 303).

Geoffrey Grogan said, “Although innocent, He is given a felon’s grave” (*Isaiah*, p. 303). Christ died between two wicked thieves and apparently the soldiers intended to bury His body with them.

Prophetic Fact #10 – Jesus Christ was with a rich man in His death. **53:9b**

Man had his plan but God overruled. God wanted His Son to have more honor than being burned or devoured by vultures. So God raised up a man named Joseph to take care of His son’s body. The Romans authorities would grant the body of Jesus to Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57). God would not allow His Son to be buried in some shameful place. He would not allow His son’s body to be burned or eaten.

Joseph, a rich man, would get the body and would bury it in his own grave (Matt. 27:57-60). Even though Christ would die with and for the wicked, God would not let Him be buried with the wicked.

Prophetic Fact #11 – Jesus Christ never did anything violent. **53:9c**

He had not done anything violent to deserve the crucifixion. In fact, Jesus asked, “Which one of you convicts me of sin” (John 8:46)? He never sinned. He never attacked His attackers. He never physically defended Himself in any way.

Prophetic Fact #12 – Jesus Christ did not have any deceit in His mouth. **53:9d**

There was not one thing Jesus Christ ever did to merit this treatment. He never offended anyone in deed or word.

When we silently submit ourselves to doing God’s will, we are truly Christlike.