

The Greatest Prophecy Ever Made (Part 2) – Is 52:13-53:12

Welcome to our Palm Sunday services; Always a great time of celebration as we remember Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem . . .
And look forward to Easter

It's also the Grand Opening of our new addition, and I'm so relieved, so thankful, and so hopeful; The space is so good . . .
And we're hopeful that God will use it to build his church, and grow our ministries, and enable us to influence more and more people for Christ and his kingdom
So when we're done here – be sure to stop by, wander through for a bit, and celebrate all that God has done in bringing this to fruition

➤ Is 53; We found last week that this is a prophecy about a servant sent by God, who would rescue/redeem us from our bondage to sin; And as such, it's . . .

Isaiah 53 is the **greatest** prophecy in the Bible

The first part of which, is that . . .

Prophecy #1: God's servant would shock the world with his suffering and methods (v13-15)
And it was fulfilled by Jesus when he . . .

Fulfillment: Jesus was bloodied and humble (Mk 15:15; Phil 2:5-11)

So that at his name we too would respond in . . .

Response: Humility and submission (Phil 2:10-11)

Bending the knee, and ordering our lives around Jesus and his purposes (**Summary**)
That was Part 1 and *Prophecy #1*

Prophecy #2, from v1-3, is that . . .

Prophecy #2: God's servant would be despised and rejected (v1-3)

[1] *Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*

Isaiah's speaking now, on behalf of *all* of us – everyone who believes; And he can't believe that others don't; That's the gist of his questions

It's like – “Wow God; What gives? We believe in your promise to save us; We see your hand at work thru your Servant; But it doesn't seem like anyone *else* does”
All we see is complacency and hardness of heart; Just like Elijah did 150 years *earlier*

And the Apostle Paul 750 years *later*; Saying in **Rom 10:16** that people are *hearing* the gospel – *But they have not all obeyed the gospel* [they don't all believe it].
For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”

He cites Isaiah to say that the same thing that was happening *then*, is happening now – people aren't seeing it, and they aren't believing it; What gives?*****

➤ And the answer, is that this suffering servant is practically persona non grata; It's like he doesn't even exist; That's why people aren't getting it
There's nothing *noteworthy* about him

[2] *For he grew up before him* [i.e. God's servant grew up in his sight] *like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground*; He wasn't very noticeable
He grew up like a sapling in a forest of tall trees, or a root that's out of place, unsightly, and barely shows

What's more – *he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.*

IOW he was about as common as they get; Instead of a drum *major*, he was a drummer *boy*; Instead of a *crowd* pleaser, he was just another face
Under the radar and underwhelming; Like a baby in a manger
Or a boy who isn't missed on a journey to the temple

➤ I'll never forget the experience of a former business partner on that note, who accidentally left his 8 year-old daughter at a gas station while on vacation
And this was long before cell phones mind you
They got out, filled up, went to the restroom, got a few snacks, and took off

And about 20 minutes down the road, one of their other 3 kids said – “Dad, where's Kaitlyn?” And Tim kind of glanced in his rearview mirror, smiled at his wife . . .
And was like – “Whatever; You guys aren't fooling me; She's obviously hiding in the back”; And Tim's son, Luke, said – “No she's not”
And Tim was like – “Very funny Luke; Good straight face”
And then the other kids chimed in, and were like – “Dad, he's not lying; She's not here”

And that was the point where Tim began to get mad, and said – “Kaitlyn, you knock it off right now, and get up here this very second”; At which point the kids began to cry
And Tim said he's never turned around so fast to get to a gas station, in all his life
And sure enough, there she was; Sitting on the curb, right in front of the store
Virtually unnoticeable; *Like a young plant*; Out of sight out of mind

And that's exactly how Jesus is for a lot people; Maybe even you; He's out of sight out of mind; In the biggest blind spot of your entire life

And for those in *his* day, even when he was in sight there wasn't much to behold
He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. And still doesn't
At least from our short-sighted, temporal-minded, selfie point of view

➤ And when he was noticeable, when he *did* make himself known . . .
He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows [pain], *and acquainted with grief* [well familiar with it]; *and as one from whom men hide their faces* [out of shame, and guilt, and rebellion] *he was despised* [loathed, shunned, scorned, detested], *and we esteemed him not* [we didn't respect him; we didn't value him; we didn't honor him].
We; B/c chances are had we been there, we would have joined with the crowds; Crying “Hosanna” this weekend, and “Crucify him” next

Which is why the fulfillment of this prophecy is found in Jesus; B/c he . . .

Fulfillment: Jesus was hated and abandoned (Mt 27:39-44; Jn 6:66)

The Pharisees hated him; The Sadducees hated him; And depending on which way the wind was blowing, the people hated him
Top to bottom, he was about as despised as you can be; Just like Isaiah said

But it's the derision on the *cross* that takes the cake; And that's found in Mt 27:39-44
[39] *And those who passed by derided him* [ridiculed him, disparaged him, demeaned

him], wagging their heads [40] and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” [41] So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, [42] “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. [43] He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God [I hold a special place in his heart].’” [44] And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. Top to bottom he was hated; A direct fulfillment of Is 53

➤ And he was also abandoned

Like in **Jn 6:66** after Jesus taught that he’s the bread of life, and gives eternal life to all those who believe in him that way
After this [it says] *many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.*
As in, they left him; They rejected him; Once again, just like Isaiah said

Don’t go there; Don’t be a part of that fulfillment; Don’t be a part of that crowd*****
Difficult as his teaching and way might be, stay the course; Follow on
B/c abandonment is certainly not God’s intended response; He’s looking for . . .

Response: Belief and commitment (Jn 12:36b-43)

That’s his desire; Belief that Jesus is, the *arm of the Lord* as it says in Is 53:1 – the power of God unto salvation
And commitment, even in the face of adversity, or persecution, or loss
That’s *our* response to this prophecy; Or should be

Which we find by way of a *negative* example in **Jn 12:36b-43**

[36b] *When Jesus had said these things* [these urgings to believe in him], *he departed and hid himself from them* [he wasn’t wasting his time on them anymore]. [37] *Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him,* [38] *so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord [the power of the Lord through his servant] been revealed?”* [39] *Therefore they could not believe.*

They *didn’t* believe, and *couldn’t* believe, b/c the Scriptures *said* they wouldn’t
You see, God’s written word doesn’t just *explain* reality, it determines it; In this case, the lack of *belief* on the part of many who heard him
God *said* they wouldn’t believe back in Isaiah, therefore they *couldn’t* believe – v39

And if you’re thinking that infringes on their free will, you’re absolutely correct
But that doesn’t make it any less true; B/c our free will is not the be-all/end-all; *God’s* is
And if he says something’s going to happen, it’s going to happen

➤ And it’s almost like John *anticipates* our objection on that note, and gives us *another* reason for their unbelief – v40

For again Isaiah said, [40] “He [God] has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.” [41] *Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him.*

He cites Is 6:10 as one more reason that some people *don’t* believe, and *can’t* believe
Namely, b/c God has hardened their heart
That’s what it says – *he has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart*

IOW they’ve made their bed of sin and rebellion, and God has lost his patience
He’s longsuffering, yes; And doesn’t want any to perish, correct
But he’s also just, and won’t tolerate the sin of unbelief forever

➤ [42] *Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him* [believed in Jesus], *but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it* [they didn’t come out with it; they didn’t fully commit], *so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; [43] for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.*

They *believed* in Jesus, but they didn’t follow him; They didn’t *commit* to him
B/c they loved the applause of man more than the favor of God – how about you?
They loved their station in *this* life, more than the promise of the next – how about you?
They loved their *religious* standing, more than their eternal one – how about you?

Do you believe? If so, does it show? B/c if it doesn’t show, you’re not committed; And if you’re not committed, you don’t really believe; Not God’s way you don’t
Believe and *commit*; And don’t be afraid to let it show; That’s prophecy #2

The 3rd, is that . . .

Prophecy #3: God’s servant would bear our sins to make us whole (v4-6)

Is 53:4-6 – *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows* [the ill-effects of our sin and sin nature]; *yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.*
Instead of realizing that he was suffering for us, people would think that God was simply giving him what he deserved

[5] *But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities*
The word *pierced* often associated with death in Isaiah’s day
So he would be pierced and crushed to the point of *death* for our sins

Upon him was the chastisement [the punishment] *that brought us peace* [shalom, wholeness, completeness, well-being] *and with his wounds we are healed.*
It’s called substitutionary atonement – his sacrifice, in our place, for our redemption
The result of which, is our healing – both spiritually *and* physically; Yes, physically
B/c Mt 8 tells us that when Jesus healed the sick, he was fulfilling this very passage

But it’s not complete; Our *total* physical healing still awaits; And the Scriptures attest to that; With several examples of people who *weren’t* healed
Spiritually we’re healed; Spiritually it’s complete – justified/sealed with the Holy Spirit
But *physically* we’re not there yet; And only get glimpses every now and then when God chooses to work a *miracle*
In the meantime, we await our glorified bodies when Jesus returns
With his wounds we are healed

➤ And then, just in case we still don’t get it, he says in v6 . . .

All we like sheep have gone astray; Prone to wander Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love
We have turned—every one—to his own way and the LORD has laid on him [his servant] *the iniquity of us all.*
He would bear our griefs, our sorrows, our sins, and our punishment

➤ There's a short story titled **Ragman** that illustrates this as good as any
It was written and published 30 years ago by a pastor and writer named Walter
Wangerin (Jr), and I'd like to read it to you (*Ragman and Other Cries of Faith*, p3-6)

The prophecy***** is that God's servant would bear our sins, and pain, and griefs – to
make us whole; And the fulfillment is found in Jesus; The one who . . .

Fulfillment: Jesus died for our sins to give us life (1 Cor 15:3; 1 Pet 2:24)

Eternal life; The *epitome* of wholeness and peace

Which is found *throughout* the NT, b/c it's the main reason it was written; To proclaim
the gospel – the good news that Jesus died for our sins, so that we wouldn't have to

Like **1 Cor 15:3** where the Apostle Paul says – *I delivered to you as of first importance
what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures*

What Scriptures? Is 53; The death of Jesus, for our sins, is the fulfillment of God's
prophecy through Isaiah; It fits

It fits the *event* that was prophesied – that he was pierced and crushed . . .

And it fits the *reason* for it – to bear our sins and make us whole*****

➤ Something the Apostle Peter also made clear, even using some of the same *verbiage* as
Isaiah; **1 Pet 2:24**

He himself [referring to Jesus] bore our sins in his body on the tree [the cross]

Sound familiar? *He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows?* (Is 53:4)

And upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace? (Is 53:5)

And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all? (Is 53:6)

*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to
righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.* Ding, ding, ding

Two things are going on here

1. Jesus died *for* our sins that we might die *to* our sins; That is, that we might turn from
them in the strength he provides, and be released from their bondage/consequences
2. He died, that we might *live*; That we might have life; And not just any old life, but a
life of righteousness

Which is part of our . . .

Response: Righteousness and repentance (1 Pet 2:24-25)

He bore our sins, *that we might die to sin and live to righteousness* (1 Pet 2:24)

That we might be holy, pure, blameless, and Christlike

That's the point of all this – that we'd live like the One who died

That we'd be holy as he is holy

And then check out v25 – *For you were straying like sheep* [just like Isaiah said], *but have
now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

That's repentance; When you change one direction for another; When you *forsake* your
sin and live for him; When you stop wandering and start following

When you give up the things *you* think are best, to receive the things *he* knows are best

When you stop pursuing the things of this *world*, and start pursuing the things of *God*

When you stop doing things for *yourself*, and start doing them for the Lord (**Summary**)

That's the *rightful* response to these prophecies

Repent, believe, commit, and *live* like the One who died

Prayer – Lord, how thankful we are that you've taken our rags, washed us clean, and
clothed us in righteousness; Forgive us when it doesn't show; Forgive us for our
unbelief and fear of man; We repent, and renew our commitment

And we give, b/c you gave; Asking that your eyes may be open night and day toward this
house (1 Kings 8:29), with neither adversary nor misfortune (1 Kings 5:4); Especially as
we open and dedicate a new portion of it for your glory