

The Passion of Christ in
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The Passion of Christ in

Isaiah 52, 53, and 61

On the most diligent inquiry into the life and conduct of our Lord, we shall find that he omitted nothing that was necessary for the effecting of our reconciliation with God. Yet how ill is he requited by the generality of mankind. Notwithstanding he has come down from heaven for our salvation, and accomplished the work which had been given him to do, the ungodly world will scarcely bestow a thought upon him.

Charles Sumner, *Horae Homileticae: Isaiah, XXVII-LXVI, Vol. 8*

Another Easter Season has been granted to us to make yet another diligent inquiry into the person and work of Christ who reconciles us to God. We will focus our attention on the poetic words of the prophet Isaiah in chapters 52, 53, and 61 which declare his prophecies concerning the Suffering Servant and His redemption of God's children. Barry G. Webb captures well the reason for studying Isaiah for Easter when he writes, "In terms of theological significance, the book of Isaiah is the 'Romans' of the Old Testament. It is here that the threads come together and the big picture of God's purposes for his people and for his world is most clearly set forth."¹ May we all grow to see how the threads of Isaiah 52, 53, and 61 reveal God's redemptive plan for His people through the life, death, resurrection, and return of the Suffering Servant!

Isaiah 52 begins with a call for the people of God to finally become what He had created and redeemed them to be. J. Alec Motyer captures God's call to His people when he writes, "Notwithstanding the priestly house of Aaron and the royal hose of David, the ideal of a royal, priestly people

¹ Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah: On Eagle's Wings* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 37-38.

(Ex. 19:4-6) had never been realized, but while Zion slept (1a) a marvel occurred so that on waking she finds new garments laid out (1bc), expressive of a new status of holiness (1d). And this is no delusion, for as she rises, fetters fall and a throne awaits (2)."² The dirty feet of the wandering exiles will become the glorious means for bringing the good news of the reign of God throughout the world!

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 describes in beautifully crafted poetic form the Suffering Servant King who will set God's people free to become the bearers of the good news of redemption from Isaiah 52:1-12.³ Derek Kidner recognizes the structure of the poetry of this Fourth Servant Song to be communicating the exaltation and humiliation of Christ. To this end, he writes, "(The poem) begins and ends with the Servant's exaltation (first and fifth stanzas); set within this is the story of his rejection in sections two and four, which in turn form the centerpiece (v. 4-6) where the atoning significance of the suffering is expounded."⁴ This all serves to tell the story of the broken Man of Sorrows who suffers the crushing weight of death for our redemption. This story looks nothing like the tales of the glorious conquering heroes celebrated in so many other epics and stories from throughout history. As Ronald Bergey insightfully writes, "Suffering and success, so incongruous – and yet the two are so inextricably woven together that to remove the strand of one would unravel the textual tapestry depicting Yahweh's humiliated and majestic servant."⁵ The description in this poem clearly points forward to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As John Stott observes, "Every verse of the chapter (53) except verse 2...is applied to Jesus in the New Testament, some verses several times. Indeed, there is good evidence that (Jesus') whole public career, from his baptism through his ministry, sufferings and death to his resurrection and ascension, is seen as a fulfillment of the pattern foretold

² J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1993), 416.

³ See the Appendix for a closer study of the Fourth Suffering Servant Song.

⁴ Quoted in Geoffrey W. Grogan, "Isaiah" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 6 (Isaiah-Ezekiel)* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 300.

⁵ Ronald Bergey, "The Rhetorical Role of Reiteration in the Suffering Servant Poem (ISA 52:13-53:12)" in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 40, 2 (June 1997), 188.

in Isaiah 53.”⁶ Isaiah 52:13-53:12 grants us a more brilliant insight into the glorious plan of God to redeem His people through the suffering, death, and resurrection of His Suffering Son.

Even more glorious still is the vision of the effects of redemption inaugurated in the first coming of Christ to be completed in His return as described in Isaiah 61. The clear connections to the person and work of Christ move Allan Harman to refer to this chapter as the Fifth Servant Song.⁷ J. Alec Motyer addresses the same idea when he writes, “...what Isaiah sees as a double-faceted ministry the Lord Jesus apportions respectively to his first and second comings, the work of the Servant and the Anointed Conquer.”⁸ Isaiah’s glorious vision of redemption and consummated restoration serves as Jesus’ first sermon text in Luke 4 as He proclaimed the beginning of its fulfillment right before their very eyes. May Isaiah’s finely crafted words and its even greater reality serve as a foretaste of the double portion to come and of the joy that surpasses our present understanding!

We will continue to seek nourishment from our historic faith and the Old and New Testaments for our weekly devotion and worship. The calls to worship will come from **the Messianic Psalms** to remind us of God’s promises to provide a Suffering Servant King who would deliver His people from sin and death. We will confess together each week **Chapter 11,III.** from **the Westminster Shorter Catechism** to remind us of the finished work of Christ on our behalf to reconcile us to God. The assurances of pardon will come from **the Gospel of John** in which John uniquely describes the suffering, trial, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Our benedictory blessings each week will come from **Isaiah 65:17-25** to declare to us even more fully the blessings of what is to come at the return of Christ. The goal of these various elements is to show us that Christ’s suffering, death, resurrection, ascension, and return are promises kept, being kept, and to be kept from long ago by our Abba Father.

⁶ John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 1986), 146. Also Allan Harman notes that this poem is the most quoted from Old Testament passage in the New Testament in *Isaiah: A Covenant to be Kept for the Sake of the Church* (Scotland: Christian Focus, 2005), 409.

⁷ Harman, 455.

⁸ Motyer, 500.

This devotional is designed to encourage daily meditation and prayer in personal devotions and/or family worship. You are encouraged to use it the week prior to the associated sermon so that you and your family are prepared for worship. In addition to the Scriptures and associated questions, there are opportunities to pray for the various aspects of the Church. On Wednesdays, we will pray for the various missionaries, church plants, and missional ministries that we support at CCC through Faith Promise. We also have the opportunity to pray on Saturday for fruit to be born in and through our church through our worship and observance of the Lord's Table. On Sunday, the Lord's Day Sabbath, we can use the suggested prayer focus to prepare ourselves for worship in the presence of the Lord. Our desire is to continue to facilitate and grow in our dependence on the Lord through prayer.

May the Lord use our time in Isaiah 52, 53, and 61 to remind us of the cost of our salvation in Jesus' suffering as the servant of all by whose stripes we are healed! May we wrestle deeply with both Christ's humiliation and exaltation so as to grow further in His image! May we be faithful to share the passion of Christ from Isaiah!

Soli Deo Gloria

Sermon Schedule

Date	Call to Worship	Assurance of Pardon	Benediction	Sacrament
Sunday, 3/17:	<i>Psalms</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>Isaiah</i>	<i>Bread and</i>
<i>Isaiah</i> 52:1-6	69:30-36	14:1-6	65:17-25	<i>Cup</i>
Sunday, 3/24:	<i>Psalms</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>Isaiah</i>	
<i>Isaiah</i> 52:7-12	102:18-28	16:25-33	65:17-25	
Sunday, 3/31:	<i>Psalms</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>Isaiah</i>	
<i>Isaiah</i> 52:13-53:3	118:19-29	18:1-11	65:17-25	
Sunday, 4/7:	<i>Psalms</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>Isaiah</i>	<i>Bread and</i>
<i>Isaiah</i> 53:4-9	22:1-11	19:1-11	65:17-25	<i>Cup</i>
Sunday, 4/14:	<i>Psalms</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>Isaiah</i>	
<i>Isaiah</i> 53:10-12	16	19:28-42	65:17-25	
Sunday, 4/21:	<i>Psalms</i>	<i>John</i>	<i>Isaiah</i>	<i>Bread and</i>
<i>Isaiah</i> 61	22:22-31	20:24-31	65:17-25	<i>Cup</i>

Weekly Confession

III. Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them; and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead; and both, freely, not for anything in them; their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 11, III.

Isaiah 52:1-6

Monday 3/11: *Psalm 69:30-36*: What serves to most revive your heart in your faith in the Lord? Share this with someone this week.

Tuesday 3/12: *John 14:1-6*: Meditate on Jesus going to prepare a place for you and has promised to return to bring you into the presence of God for eternity. How does this reality affect how you live?

Wednesday 3/13: Pray for the Stocks serving in SE Asia that the Holy Spirit would use their efforts to awaken the image of God in the hearts of His people.

Thursday 3/14: *Isaiah 52:1-6*: What are some ways in which the Lord has roused you from a spiritual stupor and revealed His presence?

Friday 3/15: *Isaiah 65:17-25*: Give thanks to God for the blessing that the sins of this world will be old tales unremembered in the New Creation.

Saturday 3/16: Prepare for the Lord's Table with the preparatory letter and prayer. Give thanks for Christ redeeming you at great cost to Himself.

Sunday 3/17: *The Lord's Day Sabbath with the Lord's Table:*

Pray for the bread and cup to nourish you in becoming more aware of the Lord's presence and redeeming work going on around you.

Isaiah 57:7-12

Monday 3/18: *Psalm 102:18-28*: Consider the attributes of God and His mission in this fallen world. Why is it so important to us that these things of God are unchanging? How does this truth impact how we live?

Tuesday 3/19: *John 16:25-33*: Give thanks for Christ having loved us as the Father has loved us and for overcoming the world. Who do you know that needs to know this truth this week? Pray for an opportunity to share.

Wednesday 3/20: Pray for Mike Kennamer with MNA Disaster Response in the TAG Region as he organizes people to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Thursday 3/21: *Isaiah 52:7-12*: Who was it that most effectively shared the good news with you? Take the opportunity to let them (or someone more recent) know the impact that they had on your life for the glory of God.

Friday 3/22: *Isaiah 65:17-25*: How is God currently transforming you into a source of gladness in your spheres of influence for His glory?

Saturday 3/23: Pray for the people of our church to beautifully carry the good news of Christ into their various spheres of influence.

Sunday 3/24: The Lord's Day Sabbath: Pray for the means of grace to comfort us knowing that our God reigns in salvation to the ends of the earth.

Isaiah 52:13-53:3

Monday 3/25: *Psalm 118:19-29*: What are you most thankful to the Lord for in your life? Grab coffee or a meal with someone to discuss this question.

Tuesday 3/26: *John 18:1-11*: What is it that causes Judas and the band of soldiers to draw back and fall down in v. 6? Why does Jesus help them get back up?

Wednesday 3/27: Pray for Jody Stancil and Riverside Community Church in Cartersville to display the glory of the person and work of Christ in their weekly worship and bear eternal fruit through changed hearts and minds.

Thursday 3/28: *Isaiah 52:13-53:3*: Meditate on the physical description of Christ in these 2 stanzas from the Fourth Servant Song. How does this description compare to how we judge the key leaders in our world?

Friday 3/29: *Isaiah 65:17-25*: Consider how blessed it will be for sorrow and death to be no more in the return of Christ. Discuss this with someone.

Saturday 3/30: Pray for the Lord to draw people on Sunday who will believe in the power God's Word that they encounter throughout the liturgy in worship.

Sunday 3/31: The Lord's Day Sabbath: Pray for the means of grace to display what is most beautiful about Jesus as the Suffering Servant.

Isaiah 53:4-9

Monday 4/1: *Psalm 22:1-11*: Have you ever experienced feeling forsaken by God? How did your response compare to that of David's in this Psalm?

Tuesday 4/2: *John 19:1-11*: Consider Christ's suffering leading up to the Crucifixion. Why was He willing to endure this?

Wednesday 4/3: Pray for Byron Johnson with Vision 929 that the Lord would raise up missionaries who will boldly proclaim the sacrifice of Christ to redeem the lost.

Thursday 4/4: *Isaiah 53:4-9*: What was the cost of your salvation to Christ? Give thanks to Jesus for suffering what you could never bear to suffer so that you would be declared a child of God!

Friday 4/5: *Isaiah 65:17-25*: Meditate on how tangible and blessed life will be in the New Creation. What are you most looking forward to doing and enjoying?

Saturday 4/6: Prepare for the Lord's Table with the preparatory letter and prayer. Give thanks for your healing in Christ's wounds and willingness to be crushed so that you would not be under the weight of your sin.

Sunday 4/7: *The Lord's Day Sabbath with the Lord's Table*: Pray for the means of grace to nourish you with a deeper gratitude for Christ's suffering on your behalf.

Isaiah 53:10-12

Monday 4/8: *Psalm 16*: How many different times and ways has the Lord preserved you that you are aware of? Take time to share this with someone.

Tuesday 4/9: *John 19:28-42*: Meditate on the Crucifixion and death of Christ. Ask the Spirit to help you appreciate the weight of this event as well as rejoice in the love of God that it represents for His people.

Wednesday 4/10: Pray for Robertsons with MTW serving in South America to declare the love and redemptive will of God through the death of Christ so that many may be born again to newness of life.

Thursday 4/11: *Isaiah 53:10-12*: What is the relationship to suffering and redemption in this passage? How could the Lord be pleased in crushing His Servant Son?

Friday 4/12: *Isaiah 65:17-25*: Give thanks to the God who responds to the prayers of His people even before they have finished being prayed.

Saturday 4/13: Pray for the Holy Spirit to draw those who need to learn of the person and work of Christ to grant them His righteousness and make intercession for their transgressions so as to become children of God.

Sunday 4/14: The Lord's Day Sabbath: Pray for those who will attend worship today to more clearly see the love of God for them through His crushing of Christ on the cross.

Isaiah 61: Easter

Monday 4/15: *Psalm 22:24-31:* What afflictions has the Lord delivered you from that are worthy of you praising Him?

Tuesday 4/16: *John 20:24-31:* What have you sown spiritually over the last month or so? What do you hope to reap from it in the months ahead?

Wednesday 4/17: Pray for the Caltons with RUF at KSU to bring the good news to those who are spiritually impoverished and healing to the broken hearted on campus.

Thursday 4/18: *Isaiah 61:* What is your story of how the Lord brought you the good news of Jesus Christ? Who could you share this with this week?

Friday 4/19: *Isaiah 65:17-25:* What particular aspect of Creation do you look most forward to being reconciled at the return of Christ?

Saturday 4/20: Prepare for the Lord's Table with the preparatory letter and prayer. Give thanks for Christ dying the death you deserved.

Sunday 4/21: The Lord's Day Sabbath *with the Lord's Table:*

Pray for the means of grace to nourish you to live the resurrected life with many opportunities to participate in rebuilding, repairing, and reconciling the devastations of many generations.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12, as previously discussed in the Introduction, is a beautifully constructed poem used as a means of declaring the humiliation and exaltation of the Suffering Servant.⁹ Isaiah made use of several poetic techniques to construct an intricate vessel worthy of its subject. James Muilenberg recognizes that, “The whole poem is dominated by the contrast between humiliation and suffering on the one hand, and exaltation and triumph on the other. This contrast is developed by the ‘many’ of the transgressors and solitariness of the servant, by the ‘then’ and ‘now’ of the nations’ reflections, by the revelation of Yahweh and the life of the servant and the observations of the nations.”¹⁰ First, note the A₁-B₁-B₂-B₃-A₂ pattern of the 5 stanzas in the table below. The poem begins (A₁) and ends (A₂) focusing on the exaltation of the Suffering Servant in the redemptive mission accomplished. The middle section (B₁₋₃) is dominated by the revelation of the suffering of God’s Chosen Servant. Also notice how the grand paradox introduced in A₁ and fleshed out in B₁₋₃ gloriously resolves in A₂. Another key feature is the changes in who’s speaking in accord with the key themes of exaltation and humiliation as marked in the table below. Ronald Bergey points out the changes in whose speaking throughout the poem: “If the poem is heard from the vantage point of voice or speaker, one hears the narration about the servant from what ‘I’ says (52:13-15), then what ‘we’ say (53:1-6), followed by what someone else says (vv.7-11b), returning to what ‘I’ says (vv. 11c-12).”¹¹ Yahweh’s primarily focuses on declaring the exaltation of the Suffering Servant in the redemptive plan accomplished. Isaiah directs our attention to the Servant’s humiliation as well as the response and responsibility of the people of God. Lastly, there are a number of repetitions

⁹The structure and titles for each stanza in the table are modified from Motyer, 423.

¹⁰ Quoted by Paul R. Raabe in “The Effect of Repetition in the Suffering Servant Song” in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 103, 1 (1984), 79-80

¹¹ Bergey, 178.

and word plays in the Hebrew that are beyond the scope of this devotional that also serve to highlight the paradoxical themes of exaltation and humiliation.¹² The Suffering Servant poem in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 serves as yet another example of the creative breadth and joyous depths that our God goes to in sharing His love for us through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Honor His craftsmanship by meditating upon the construction and beauty of these lyrics. Take the time to read it out loud to better appreciate the glory of the Lord contained in these carefully constructed words.

¹² Both Bergey and Raabe's articles previously cited highlight these language features. Both articles are available online.

Stanza and Structure	ESV Text
<p>1: A₁: 52:13-15</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Paradox of the Suffering Servant: Exaltation in Humiliation <i>(Yahweh Speaks)</i></p>	<p>^{52:13} Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.</p> <p>¹⁴ As many were astonished at you – his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind –</p> <p>¹⁵ so shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.</p>
<p>2: B₁: 53:1-3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Humiliation of the Suffering Servant, Part 1: Suffering Witnessed and Ignored <i>(Isaiah Speaks)</i></p>	<p>^{53:1} Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?</p> <p>² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.</p> <p>³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.</p>
<p>3: B₂: 53:4-6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Humiliation of the Suffering Servant, Part 2: Suffering Inflicted and Healing Accomplished <i>(Isaiah Speaks)</i></p>	<p>⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.</p> <p>⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>4: B₃: 53:7-9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Humiliation of the Suffering Servant, Part 3: Suffering Vicariously Endured and Death Undeserved <i>(Isaiah Speaks through v. 10)</i></p>	<p>⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.</p> <p>⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?</p> <p>⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.</p>
<p>5:A₂: 53:10-12</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Plan for the Suffering Servant: Exaltation in Resurrection and Redemption Accomplished <i>(Yahweh Speaks in v. 11-12)</i></p>	<p>¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand</p> <p>¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.</p> <p>¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors</p>

