

Isaiah 53, The Centrality of the Gospel

Isa 53:7-9 ⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. ⁸ **He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.** ⁹ And they made His grave with the wicked — But with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.

As I read the prophetic word of Isaiah my thoughts turned to what Peter wrote in his first epistle, verses 10 thru 12; “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into.” So although Isaiah knew that it would not transpire in his life time yet it would appear that there were certain things which he was aware of concerning the promised Messiah: 1. He knew that as a sinful people, we have all gone astray, we have each one turned to our own way. (v. 6); 2. He knew that this coming Messiah would be rejected by a rebellious people. (v. 3); 3. He knew that although this Servant would be rejected He would not fail in the purpose for which He has come rather He would fulfill that purpose by becoming a ransom for those who have gone astray (v. 5); 4. He knew that this Messiah would suffer death, but at the last He will be triumphant. (v. 8/10.11); 5. And as we noted earlier Isaiah knew that in all this, this Messiah would be exalted and lifted up very high. (52 v.15)

But beyond what Isaiah saw as future we look back and see that this passage is both revelation and confirmation. It is revelation because it reveals things about God and his plan of salvation that we cannot know on our own. And it is a confirmation in that Jesus the Christ fulfilled the prophecies that had been given some 700 years earlier down to the very details as to how the coming Messiah would suffer, die, be buried, and in the end be exalted. This should not come as a surprise to us in that God had only revealed to Isaiah what He had purposed from all eternity.

Last Sunday we saw the lamb like character of our Lord’s response to His arrest and ill-treatment at the hand of His enemies. We now come to verses 8 and 9 where we shall consider the reason for His death and the resulting victory and finally, the burial of the servant and what has been called the strange and hopeful twist that would result in His vindication and promise of His coming victory.

- A. The reason for His death. - *He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken*
1. His arrest and trial.
 - a. The word translated prison is probably not the best meaning of what is written in the passage.
 - b. Rather the meaning here is that he was apprehended and brought to judgment.
 2. We know they found Him worthy of death when He acknowledged that He was indeed the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.
 - a. Since they had no authority to put to death a man, they brought Him for judgment before Pilate.
 - b. Pilate found Him innocent and asked what he should do with their King.
 - c. With political astute they responded we have no king but Caesar.
 - d. When Pilate sought to release him they used another political tactic warning Pilate that if he released Jesus it would not be pleasing to Caesar.
 - e. Thus Pilate ordered Him to be crucified. - *For He was cut off from the land of the living;*
 - (1) He was not just led to the slaughter.
 - (2) He was cut off from the land of the living.

3. The word "cut off" is a term that does not describe a gentle death, but rather is used to describe a violent death.
 - a. Cut off in a violent way from the land of the living.
 - b. The crucifixion was a violent death
 - c. God said, cursed is He who is hung on a tree.

*Gal 3:13-14 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), **that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus**, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (see. Dt. 21:22,23)*

4. Once again the question "Why?" is forced upon us and Isaiah gives us the answer. - *for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.*
 - a. As a lamb, as other lambs of the Passover he was cut off (slaughtered) not for His own transgression, but for the transgression of the elect of God.
 - b. We deserve death because of our transgressions, but he suffered death instead.
 - c. Now these words "he was cut off" make it crystal clear, Jesus died to redeem us.
 - d. In 1 Corinthians 15:3 Paul sums up the gospel with these simple words: "**Christ died for us according to the scriptures**." "Christ died"—"he was cut off out the land of the living."
 - e. "For us"—"for the transgression of my people." "According to the scriptures"—Just as it is recorded for us here by Isaiah here in verse 8 - - - 700 years ago.

B. The Resulting Victory

1. His enemies no doubt thought this is the end of Him and His generation. - *who will declare His generation?*
2. But oh how they were mistaken when they said; - *Ps 2:3 Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.*
3. For God responded thus declaring His generation.

Ps 2:7-8 I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.

- a. And beginning at Jerusalem, then Judea, then Samaria and finally to the uttermost parts of the earth for God has continued to add to His church daily.
- b. We here this morning who are trusting in Christ our Savior are a part of His continuing generation of saints.

Barnes in his commentary on the passage writes: 'He shall be indeed cut off out of the land of the living. But his name, his race shall not be extinct. Notwithstanding this, his generation, race, posterity, shall be so numerous that no one shall be able to declare it.'

- c. Truly a number beyond ones ability to declare it.

Rev 7:9-11 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

CONCLUSION: This is the centrality of the gospel. The very heart and soul of the gospel.

Review carefully and you will see this has been the central theme of Isaiah's prophecy.

He was wounded for our transgressions.
 He was bruised for our iniquities.
 The chastisement of our peace was on him
 And by his stripes we are healed.
 The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.