



Isaiah 52-53

Tape #7267
Isaiah 52-53
By Chuck Smith

In the fifty first chapter, verse nine, the people in their dilemma, in their need, in their facing, an overwhelming enemy, and in their being defeated by this enemy, cried out to God to wake up. "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord. Awake as in ancient days. Lord again, manifest your power for your people, as we have read that you did in our history, when you delivered us from the hand of the Egyptians and all. Wake up Lord! Look what's happening!"

There are some times as I see this overwhelming flood and tide of evil, that seems to be just washing over this nation. I am prone sometimes to say, "Wake up God! Don't you see what's happening? Don't you see the, the conditions that are existing? Lord, wake up!" But you know, it's not the Lord who's asleep, it's His people, who are asleep!

So in chapter fifty two, it begins with God calling to the people, and basically He is saying, "I'm not asleep, you wake up!"

Awake, awake; put on strength, O Zion (52:1);

So God is calling for His people to awake. Now at one time there was described as a silent majority in the United States. How that many of the things that were transpiring in our nation that were manifesting a downward trend, did not really represent the majority of the people.

For a long time, I believed in the silent majority. I believed that maybe the majority of the people were opposed to the whole breakdown of the moral structure of our nation, the breaking down of the family and all. Surely those who were advocating the evil were the most vociferous, and, it seemed that they were the most active. It seemed that they were the ones that were pressing the issues in the courts, and winning in the courts. That as these decisions were coming down, as the liberal legislation was being enacted, that we just, you know, that the majority objected to it, but just said nothing. It was silent.

I am beginning to wonder now if there isn't a silent, if there really is a silent majority, or if the majority of the people just don't care. I don't know. But surely we have been asleep. We have allowed this creeping liberalism. Liberal attitudes, lax attitudes towards evil, we've allowed it to get a grip upon our nation. The, oh, I could go on, but it's getting off of the spiritual issues, and, but issues, it touches all, the taxes, it, the fact that government has become so inept! Of course, I guess it does deal with spiritual things too, because this national endowment for arts, the use of millions of dollars to support pornography, and, and we don't seem to be concerned, we don't seem to be raising our voices.

I can understand God saying, "Awake, awake; O Zion! I'm not sleeping, you're asleep! These things are happening and you're not raising any voices against it! You're not doing anything about it!" God is calling for His people to awake. Paul in Romans, the thirteenth chapter, says, "Now it is high time that we awake out of our sleep!" Surely that is a good exhortation for the church today! It's time to wake up, O people of God. "Put on thy strength, O Zion." What is our strength? What is our strength? The Lord is our strength. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ", we are exhorted, "make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, [For the church, it is that garment of His righteousness, by which we are clothed, through faith.] for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean (52:1).

Now this is looking forward to that day yet future, when Jerusalem shall be indeed the city of our Lord. When Jesus shall come, and shall reign over Zion. That day, that purity, "there shall not come into thee, the uncircumcised, or the unclean."

Jerusalem had been conquered by the Babylonians. They had trodden down the city. There was an interesting prophecy made by Jesus, and that is, "Jerusalem shall be trodden under the feet of the Gentiles", which in the scripture, uncircumcised is almost a synonymous term to Gentiles, "until the fullness of the Gentiles come in." But the day is coming when the Lord is going to come and reign. There shall no more

enter into Jerusalem those uncircumcised in spirit. Those who live, and operate after the flesh. But it will be a spiritual, holy city once again. "Thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city." Far from that right now, but one day, thank God again it shall be the holy city of God. The Lord is saying...

Shake thyself from the dust, arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem, and loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion (52:2).

Now the Babylonians had ground the inhabitants of Jerusalem into the dust. Those that they took away captive, they took away with rings around their necks, with chains. So you'd see this chain of captives, with the rings around their necks, and, and attached to each other with chains. A very sad picture indeed. The Lord is saying, "Loose these bands from around your neck, O captive daughter of Zion." For they were taken captive.

For thus saith the Lord, You have sold yourself for nothing, and you will be redeemed without money (52:3).

This sad and tragic thing that a person sells themselves for nothing. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The three requirements for discipleship. Denying of self, taking up of my cross, and following Jesus Christ. But having said that, He then gave two questions that brought up an interesting point of rationale. He said, "For what should it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Now He's calling you to deny yourself, your own ambitions, your own desires, that you might take up the cross, which is submission to the will of the Father, and follow Jesus. Then He is saying, "For what will it profit you if you go on in your own self ordered way, after your own ambitions? What would it profit you if you would be able to gain the whole world, but in so doing, lost your own soul?"

Now very few people have gained the whole world. Alexander the Great is one. But what profit do you suppose that it is to Alexander the Great tonight, that once he ruled the world, when he lost his own soul? Then Jesus gave the second question which is also very important, He said, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Or, "What will you trade your soul for?"

If Satan should meet you outside as you leave the church tonight, and say, "Psst! Come here! Let's make a deal. I want you. I want your soul. Sell me your soul. Tell me, what price would you ask?" What would you give in exchange for your soul? How much would you charge him? What would it take to cause you to sell out to Satan? Million bucks? Two million? Five? Ten? Hundred? Of course when you get that you know, get into those kind of figures, it doesn't really make any difference anyhow. From then on it's just numbers, meaningless kind of numbers. What would you give?

Now I'm certain that most of us would say, "Get lost buddy! Not for sale." But God said of Israel, "You've sold yourself for nothing." You know, that is so true of so many people today. They've sold themselves for nothing, a few glass beads, shiny bobbles. Satan holds up a little glamour of the world, and he dangles in front of you these little bobbles, and people are grabbing at it! They're forsaking the Lord for emptiness, for empty promises. What will a man give in exchange for his soul? God said to Israel, "You've sold yourself for nothing!" To some of you tonight, the Lord is saying, "You've sold yourself for nothing! Look at what you've got for what, you've given your soul, but look what you've got, emptiness, nothing, you've got heartache, you've got pain, you've got misery, because you followed after the flesh, the allurements, and the enticements that Satan held before you, and it's left you empty. You've sold yourself for nothing.

It is interesting, the Lord said, "you will be redeemed without money". As Peter says, "We are redeemed not with silver and gold", from that vain life that we were living, but we're redeemed. "Not with money, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ." Priceless the cost of redemption! You can't redeem yourself with money. You can't buy your redemption. All of the money in the world could not redeem you from your sins! But we have been redeemed through the precious blood of Jesus, who was slain as a lamb without spot or blemish.

For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down before into Egypt and they sojourned there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without a cause (52:4).

So there were three times when Israel actually went into captivity. One was when Jacob went on down

to Egypt, and they lived there for some four hundred years, until the Egyptians had made slaves out of them. God brought them out of the slavery of Egypt. Then, the Assyrians came, Tiglath-pileser, and he conquered them, and Shalmaneser. They went into captivity to Assyria. Because they had forsaken God, they had forsaken the path of God, they had disobeyed God, and they were sold into slavery because of their disobedience to the Lord.

Now therefore, [The Lord said] what have I here, that my people is taken away for nothing (52:5)?

“You’re going now into Babylonian captivity, but I’m getting nothing for you! You’re my people! But they’re taking you, and I’m getting nothing for it!”

They that rule over them make them to howl, [They were going to go into very oppressive kind of conditions, and under those conditions,] my name [He said] continually every day is blasphemed (52:5).

Now it is interesting how that we, through our own folly, and our own sin, can get ourselves in such a mess. Then, when we are in that mess, we start to blame God, which is sort of a blasphemous thing. “Why would God allow this to happen to me?” We start blaming God for the tragedies that we brought upon ourselves because of our own disobedience, our own folly. God has established certain spiritual laws. He said, “Obey these laws, and you’re gonna have a good, prosperous, happy life. Disobey these laws, and you’re going to experience pain, hardship, captivity, you’re gonna become a slave.”

So we say, “Well I don’t understand how that law works! I don’t think it really applies to me. I don’t like that! I want to do my own thing. I want to do it my way!” So we go ahead, and we rebel against the law of God to do it our own way, and then we begin to suffer the inevitable consequences of violating that law of God.

God has established the law of gravity. How many of you truly understand the law of gravity? Do you understand the physics, and the whole formula that they have created for the law of gravity? Do you understand why it is that mass attracts? Now, we know it does, but do you understand why it does? Maybe some of you have studied physics, and you do understand. Fine! But, most of us don’t understand why mass attracts. We don’t really, we, we know it does, we can see an apple fall to the ground, like Newton. I mean, I, I understand that you know, what goes up, comes down. I understand that! Why it comes down I don’t know. Why mass attracts, I don’t know. I know it does.

Knowing that it does, though I don’t understand it, I yield to that law of gravity. I respect the law of gravity. I don’t go jumpin off of the roofs of buildings! Because I respect the law though I don’t understand it. I know that if I violate the law, it’s going to bring discomfort and pain.

Now let’s say that because you don’t understand the law of gravity and how it works, you’re angry with the law of gravity. You think you ought to be able to fly like a bird! It’s not fair that you have to walk around on the ground when, when a bird can fly! God’s keeping you from a good time! It should be fun to fly! Looks like it would be exciting! Get in a thermal and just soar around! I hate that law of gravity that keeps me bound to this earth! I don’t think God’s fair! I don’t understand it anyhow, so I’m gonna fly! So I go up on the elevator to the top of the South Coast Plaza Hotel, out on the roof, and I jump, and I hold my arms out. Get their little ventricle out on the end. But you know the results. Smashed, broken, and bruised, and beaten!

Now if I did survive, there crushed and broken in body, how foolish it would be for me to be cursing God when they come up and say, “Are you hurt?” Are you kidding man? But you lie there cursing God, and saying, “God you’re not fair! Why did you let me get hurt? Why did you allow me to have this pain and this suffering? God you’re not fair!” To be blaspheming God, and cursing God, and blaming God for the pain that I’m experiencing. I’m experiencing the pain because I was stupid enough to try to violate the law of God!

Now the same with the spiritual laws that God has elucidated for us. I may not understand how those spiritual laws work. I may think that those spiritual laws are restricting me from a pleasant experience, an uplifting experience. The excitement of flying! Though I don’t know how they work, I know they do work.

God’s people had forsaken God, and they were suffering the consequences. They had forsaken the ways of the Lord, and they were suffering the consequences. They were going to go into captivity in Babylon, they were gonna go into hard servitude, and when they did, they began to curse God, and blame God for it.

“Awake, Awake, O God! Why, you know, we’re in trouble! Why aren’t you helping us?” God said, “You wake up! You’re the one that’s been asleep. You’re the one that has been playing the fool!” So the day is coming though, when God is gonna deliver them from that captivity, and...

Therefore my people shall know my name: [In contrast to those that are blaspheming the name of God everyday, “My people shall know my name”,] *and therefore they shall know it in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I (52:6).*

They will know God, they will know the voice of God. They will know that God has spoken. So this beautiful scripture that is quoted by Paul, in Romans, chapter ten.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigns (52:7)!

So those who bear the news to man, that God reigns, that bring them the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet who carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to a dying world, to a world that’s in captivity, and slavery to sin! Who come and say, “Your God reigns and He will set you free from the power of darkness! He will free you from the chain of sin that is holding you!”

Thy watchmen [The Lord said] shall lift up the voice; and with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion (52:8).

The day is gonna come. God’s gonna bring again Zion, into her glory, and the watchmen there on the walls will join together in singing the praises unto God. So...

Break forth into joy, sing together you waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord has comforted his people, and he has redeemed Jerusalem. [Glorious day, yet future, breaking forth into joyful song!] *The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all of the nations; [Or He has shown His strength, His power.] and all of the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God (52:9-10).*

“For He shall reign where ere successive journeys run.” Psalm, chapter two the Lord said, “Ask of me”, speaking to Jesus His Son, “ask of me, and I will give to you the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” He will reign to the ends of the earth. They will see the salvation of our God.

Depart ye, depart ye, go out from there, don’t touch the unclean thing; go out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord (52:11).

Now the priests were the ones that carried the vessels of the Lord, and the Lord is calling to those who carried His vessels, that they should be clean. “Depart from iniquity. Don’t touch the unclean thing. Keep yourself pure, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord.” One of the worst conditions that can prevail in a nation is when you have a corrupted priesthood. When the spiritual leaders of the nation become corrupt, you’ve come to the end of the road. I mean, that’s the last. Those that bear the vessels of the Lord, have the responsibility of being clean before God.

For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the Lord will go before you; [You don’t have to be in a hurry, God will go before you, wait upon the Lord. But not only does He go before you, but He’s also going behind you, He is your rearward, that He is, He’s coming up behind. It’s great to be surrounded by the Lord. He’s before me. As the Psalmist said, there in Psalm 139, “Thou hast beset me before, and behind, and thine hand is upon me.” That isn’t quite the way it is, but that’s the idea. “You’re in front of me, you’re in back of me, your hand is on me!” As Paul said, “In Him we live, we move, we have our being.” Surrounded by God. What a glorious place to be! The Lord is in front of us. You don’t have to go out in haste, you don’t have to worry about the future, the Lord is going before you, but the Lord is also bringing up the rear. He’s coming behind you. Thus, my life encompassed by Him!

Now many believe that verse thirteen belongs with chapter fifty three, and that when they were making the chapter divisions, that this is one of the places where they made a mistake. I am prone to believe that that is true. I believe that the word of God is inspired, but I don’t believe that the chapter distinctions are necessarily inspired. That was done by man to help you find particular passages. They’ve separated them into chapters and verses, and it makes it easy to reference. But that was done by man, and it is very valuable. It helps us in referencing certain passages of scripture. But those men who did that were not necessarily inspired by God in their separations. I think that they did make a mistake. But yet, they’re much smarter than

I am, so maybe they had their reasons for doing it. But surely verse thirteen, through the end, fits with the fifty third chapter.

As the Lord declared that they would be redeemed without money, He now begins to speak to them of the cost of redemption. What it would cost to redeem man from his sin, from his transgressions. The redemption would be wrought by His Servant, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I came not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me." He said, "I delight to do thy will O Lord." In the garden He prayed, "Nevertheless what I will, thy will be done." Paul tells us that, "though He was in the form of God and thought it not something to be grasped, or robbery to be equal with God, yet He emptied Himself and came in the form of a servant. Being obedient even unto death", the death of the cross, and "therefore, God has also highly exalted Him, giving Him that name that is above every name." But now he's gonna talk about God's servant, Jesus Christ, who without money, is going to pay the price of redemption.

Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, [Or wisely] he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high (52:13).

That's an interesting phrase in the Hebrew. When the Hebrew scholars who created the Septuagint version, which was the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek some two hundred years before Christ, so that the Jews who now spoke Greek instead of Hebrew could have the scriptures in a language they understood. They used a particular Greek word to translate "very high", which was the same Greek word that Jesus used to refer to His death on the cross, "And I, if I be lifted up." This word "very high" is the same Greek word that Jesus uses as speaking about His being lifted up. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me", and this He says signifying by what manner He was to die.

Now let me just say that they're, this, this is often taken in a wrong sense, and, and sort of misinterpreted even in some of our choruses, and it just causes me to sort of curdle one in when I, when I hear the chorus, "Let's lift Him higher, let's lift Him higher that all the world may see. For He said, "If I be lifted up, I'll draw all men unto me." People say, "Oh all we have to do is lift up Jesus, and He'll draw men unto Him". That's not what Jesus was talking about. He's talking about, "I'm gonna be lifted up on a cross." So for us to be sing, "Let's lift Him higher", ooh, you know bothers me.

So those who put the chapter and verse distinctions weren't necessarily inspired. Nor are all of the choruses necessarily inspired. Sometimes people are not really understanding the scriptures fully. Jesus was signifying the fact that He was going to die on the cross. "And when the Son of Man is lifted up", He said, "then you will know that I am he." So it's referring to the cross. Thus, here is an old testament reference, such as is Psalm twenty two, to the cross of Jesus Christ.

As many were astonished at thee; for his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men (52:14):

A literal rendering of the Hebrew here was that "His face", or His visage, His face, "was so marred that He could not be recognized as a man."

Now we read that they plucked out His beard, that they put a sack over His head, and hit Him with their fists. That they beat Him with sticks. This kind of plummeting on His face no doubt disfigured His face horribly! You ever seen a person that's been really beat up in a fight? Where they have these big swellings under their eyes, and their faces are just really disfigured? That's what it's talking about. Only with Jesus, a face so disfigured you wouldn't even know He was a human being. He wasn't recognizable as a human being. "His form more than the sons of man." Or, so much that you wouldn't know that He belonged to the Homo Sapiens. But...

So shall he sprinkle many nations (52:15);

In this, He is going to be sanctifying people of many nations. The sprinkling idea is the sprinkling of the blood that they use to sanctify the vessels of the temple and all. "And so shall He sprinkle many nations"...

and kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard they shall consider (52:15).

So the message of the Savior will be born to the world, the kings of the nations.

Chapter 53

Then Isaiah said...

But who has believed our report? to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed (53:1)?

Now the interesting thing is that when Jesus came, the Jews did not believe the report! And, “to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”, it seems that their eyes were blinded to Jesus! Jesus spoke of their blindness. He said, when He healed the blind man, He said, “I came to open the eyes of those that were blind, and to make blind those that see.” The Jewish people seemed to be blinded to Jesus. In fact, Paul the apostle said, “Blindness has happened to Israel in part, until the fullness of the Gentiles come in.” He spoke about how that when Moses came down from the mountain, his face was glowing, they had to put a veil over his face, that they would not see the diminishing of that glow. He said, “Even so there is a veil over their face when they try to see Moses today”, or, “read Moses, to understand the law of Moses.” They really don’t understand that there’s this veil that is still over their face.

“To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” Well, to many of you the arm of the Lord has been revealed. The Holy Spirit has given you understanding of, of the work of Jesus Christ, of His death for you. You’ve been brought into this relationship with God through Him. You’ve been redeemed from your old life, and you now walk in fellowship with God, and so to you, this arm of the Lord, the work of the Lord, has been revealed! How you should thank God for that! What a blessing that God has revealed to us, so that we’ve come to understand, and we’ve come to know, and we’ve come to receive this glorious work of redemption through Jesus!

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant (53:2),

You remember the earlier prophesy of Isaiah, that there should come this stem out of the root of Jesse. This tender plant, out of, out of the seed of David, out of the house or the family of Jesse.

he will be as a root out of a dry ground (53:2):

This Davidic, David’s succession of, of kings coming from David had, had ceased during the Babylonian captivity. The Davidic line was cut off, because of the transgressions. God had given a conditional promise to David, and to Solomon, that if they would continue, if their descendants would continue in, in the ways of the Lord, there would never cease to be a descendant of David sitting upon the throne. It was a conditional promise, and they didn’t fulfill the conditions, and thus it was a dry ground. It was cut off. The succession of kings from David was cut off.

But, here will be out of the root of David a king to rise, to sit upon the throne of David. “Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, the government will be upon His shoulder, His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and at the increase of His government and peace, there will be no end upon the throne of David, to order it, and to establish it in righteousness and in justice, from hence forth, even for ever.” So here is this root out of the dry ground, coming out of the root of Jesse.

he hath no form nor [beauty] comeliness [is, is handsomeness] and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him (53:2).

You will not be attracted to the physical handsomeness of Jesus. Now it is interesting that artists have many times sought to depict Jesus in their paintings. I’ve always shied away from paintings of Jesus. There is the law that they were not to make any likeness of things that are in heaven, to bow down to worship them. Thus, the paintings of Jesus, I question whether or not we should even depict what Jesus looks like in Albany. Surely they were not to make any graven images, try to depict God in a graven image, and, and I think that the images of Jesus, and pictures of Jesus fall in the same category myself. But you know I’m a little weird anyhow. Ha, ha! And, if you like pictures of Jesus, that’s alright! I’m not gonna condemn you for it. I’m not gonna come to your house, and say, “What do you got that up there on the wall for?” You know, but that’s just my, me personally, and as I allow you your liberty, allow me my weirdness. But, one of the most popular pictures, it was painted by a man by the name of Salmon. This Salmon’s head of Christ has become very popular. I think people, when they get to heaven, if they’re looking for the fellow that looks like that, will probably be looking for a long time.

Though that is an artist’s rendition, feeling, I don’t think that Jesus looks like that. Because the man in Salmon’s picture is rather attractive, strong features. But when we see Jesus, it won’t be the handsomeness, or the beauty that attracts us. “For He has no form or handsomeness, and when we shall see Him, there is no

beauty that would be attractive, or attract us to Him.” Why? Because His face is so marred that you can’t recognize Him as a human being.

He is despised and rejected (53:3)

People despised Him, they rejected Him. Why? Because He dared to tell them the truth. We like people to tell us we’re okay. “I’m okay, you’re okay!” So many times when a person comes to a counselor, all they want is affirmation, “Well you’re alright, yes, you did the good thing. Yes you did the right thing!” You go away, and you say, “My they’re tremendous counselors!” If they say, “You stupid nut! You did that? Where are your brains man? You’re crazy!” You go stomping out! “I’ll never go back for counseling from them! They didn’t tell me what I wanted to hear!” Romaine gets rid of a lot of counselors! He dares to tell you as it is. A lot of counselors won’t.

Jesus told it as it was, “You blind guides! You strain at a gnat, and you swallow the camel. You encircle the whole earth to make one proselyte, and when you have found him, you make him twice more the child of hell than you are! You blind guides!”, and He goes on, “Hypocrites!” Because He dared to tell it as it is. Because He dared to stand up against the traditional corrupted religious practices of His day. Because He dared to take a whiff and drive them out of the temple precincts overturning their money tables, and driving out the cattle and the sheep, and the birds and all, that they had come to use as ripping off people in a religious connotation. He dared to say, “My Father’s house was to be known as a house of prayer to all nations, but you’ve made it a den of thieves!” They despised Him, and they rejected Him.

he became a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief (53:3):

We read of Jesus weeping, we read of His being grieved in His spirit. Isaiah said...

and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not (53:3).

That idea of “we hid our faces from Him”, has and could have the idea of again this visage so marred you cannot recognize Him as a man, when you have seen someone who has been horribly disfigured, it is a shock to us. It’s hard to look at a person who has been horribly disfigured. Sometimes in the movies they like to you know portray the elephant man or something, where the, the features become so distorted, you just, you know, you hide your face. You turn, you don’t want to look. Sometimes a person who has been in an automobile accident, who’s gone through the windshield, all cut up and all, their face has become so disfigured that you, you just, it’s hard to look at them. It does something to us emotionally. With Jesus, His face so disfigured you can’t recognize Him as a human being, so, “We hid as it were our faces from Him. We esteemed Him not.” But then the prophet tells us that...

Surely in all of this he has borne our griefs, [The grief that results from our sin, He was bearing.] he has carried our sorrows (53:4):

Sin brings grief, sin brings sorrow, what horrible grief sin can bring! What great sorrow sin can bring! But He bore our grief, He carried our sorrows.

yet we did esteem him stricken, and smitten of God (53:4),

The Jews thought that they were doing God a service! That this is God’s judgment. “Stricken, smitten of God”...

and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, [He was a substitute, He was taking the wounds that I deserved because of my transgressions.] he was bruised, [The word “wounded” there is in the Hebrew, “pierced”, perhaps referring to the pierced hands and feet, He was “bruised”, and the word in Hebrew there is “crushed”.] for our iniquities: and the chastisement [literally] for our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we were healed (53:4-5).

Jesus Christ through His death has made peace possible between man and God. In Ephesians, chapter two, verse fourteen, Paul said, “For He is our peace who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments that was contained in the ordinances. For to make of Himself of the two, one new man, and so making peace.” The Bible says, “Be reconciled with God through Jesus Christ.” As Paul wrote to the Colossians, in chapter one, verse twenty, “And having made peace through the blood of His cross by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. So you that were one time alienated, and enemies from, of God in your mind, by your wicked works, He has now

reconciled in the body of His flesh, through death, that He might present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable in His sight.” So Christ was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement that He took was for our peace, that we might have peace with God.

For all of us like sheep had gone astray; we had turned every one of us to our own ways; and God laid on him the iniquities of us all (53:6).

Jesus died for your sins, for my sins. God laid on Him the iniquities of us all. It is ridiculous to try to place the blame for the crucifixion on the Jews. It’s ridiculous! The Jews did not crucify Jesus. It is ridiculous to try to place the blame of the death of Jesus on the Romans. The Romans didn’t crucify Jesus. My sins crucified Jesus. If you want to blame someone for the crucifixion, you have to blame me. But also, you’ll have to blame yourself. “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities. We like sheep had gone astray. We turned, every one of us to our own ways, but God laid on Him the iniquities of us all.”

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth (53:7).

He will not speak a word in His own defense. He will not try to defend Himself, is what the prophet is saying.

Now this is the thing, when Jesus was standing before Pilate, that when they made all of these accusations, Pilate marveled that Jesus didn’t answer the accusations that were being made. So Pilate asked Him a question, “Are you the King of the Jews?”, and Jesus said, “Do you really want to know? You ask this of your desire to know, or did someone else tell you?” Pilate said, “Hey man! He better have respect for me! Don’t you know that I have the power to release you or to crucify you?” Jesus said, “You wouldn’t have any power unless my Father gave it to you.” But then as Pilate was trying to question Him, Jesus became silent. He said, “Don’t you answer me man?” He marveled at the silence of Jesus. “But He opened not His mouth.” He didn’t seek to defend Himself.

When He was sent then from Pilate to Herod, Herod was glad. He had heard about Jesus. He had beheaded Jesus’ cousin, John the Baptist. But he had heard that Jesus was doing a lot of miracles. He thought, “My maybe you know, He’ll do some trick. He’ll work a miracle so I can just sort of watch, and be astounded.” When Jesus came before Herod, and Herod started questioning Him and all, Jesus didn’t speak a word. He just remained silent. Herod finally just said, “Take Him back to Pilate. I don’t want anything to do with Him.”

Now Jesus could’ve spoken in His own defense, He didn’t. When He was chastised, or scourged, He opened not His mouth. Now the purpose of the scourging was to get them to confess. It was to force them to confess. You talk about third degree torture, the scourging was just that. It forced the confessions from the prisoners. But, “As a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth.”

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who will declare his generation? for he was cut off [He didn’t live out His life, He was cut off.] out of the land of the living: [He was put to death, but then here is God’s cry,] for the transgression of my people he was stricken (53:8).

Now some nine times in our text here, it is affirmed by Isaiah that the suffering of Jesus, and the death of Jesus was for us. He was bearing our sins, our iniquities, our transgressions. Here again, God is crying, “For the transgression my people, He was stricken.”

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death (53:9);

Now Isaiah’s gonna go ahead and refine that. He’s gonna tell us that He was numbered with the transgressors in His death. But it was prophesied that He would be crucified, or, and, and also that it would be with the transgressors. So it was no accident that Jesus was placed on a cross, between two thieves who were murderers. That was no accident. That was a part of God’s prearranged planning. God tells you seven hundred and forty years before the event, of what He’s planning to do. It’s prearranged.

Now when you realize that these things are prearranged, then the question always arises, “Why would God prearrange this? Why would God have Him crucified between two thieves?” There are several possible reasons. Maybe God wanted to show His sovereignty in salvation. Here are two men equally close to death, and equally close to salvation. I mean they’re both in the same boat. They’re both dying. One dies a believer,

the other dies an unbeliever. One is with Jesus in paradise, and the other is separated from the Lord eternally.

So it is. God is sovereign in salvation. There are people who are equally close, equally exposed to the gospel. They sit side by side, and they hear the gospel message. One, when they hear, believes and receives. The other, rejects. You're equally close to life, the life of God. One is saved, one is lost.

Maybe God had the one thief there in order that Jesus might receive some comfort on the cross. You see, the Bible tells us that He endured the cross though He despised the shame of the whole thing. But it was for the joy that was set before Him that He endured the cross. What joy? The joy of being able to redeem the lost, to forgive the transgressions and the sins of the people. The joy of being able to bring men to God. To say, "Your sins are forgiven."

Now that was the thing that kept Jesus, the thought, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus", that thought of being able to redeem, was the thing that, that sustained Him through this horrible suffering.

As we were sharing the other day, to just take that kind of an abuse for yourself would be tough. Even if you deserved it! But if you were hanging there on the cross as a substitute for your child, your child was the one that was condemned to death, but by a grant of the court, you were able to take your child's place. So that they would not have to go through that suffering, they would not have to go through that shame. They could be spared because you were there as their substitute. I think I could handle that. Just to be there, to be there would be tough! To think that it wasn't accomplishing anything, would be extremely hard. But, if hanging there, I felt, "Well you know this is horrible, I hate it but at least my children are being spared. My little granddaughter doesn't have to hang here, because I'm here for her." She would be in my heart, and she would be in my mind. The fact that I'm able to spare her, I could endure it.

Jesus was thinking of you. For, He loves you. In thinking of you, realizing that it wasn't His transgressions, it was for our transgressions, He was pierced. It was for our iniquities that He was crushed. His thinking of you gave Him the strength to endure the cross. But even while there on the cross, in the midst of this whole debacle, here is a man that is saying, "Lord when you come into your kingdom will you remember me?" Jesus was able to say, "Today you will be with me in paradise." That's what it's all about! So that man can be in paradise with the Lord, is the reason why He died, and God was giving Him there on the cross, as He was tasting the bitterness of the cup, God was giving Him some of the sweet benefits of the bitter cup. Being able to grant salvation and the forgiveness to that dying thief.

Now when Jesus died, with the rich in His death, Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man came to Pilate and he begged for the body of Jesus. Pilate said, "Is He dead already?", and he called the centurion, he said, "Is that fellow dead already?", he said, "Yep, He's dead." So Pilate said, "Go ahead." Joseph took the body of Jesus down from the cross, and with His friend Nicodemus, they wrapped it, and they put it in a new tomb that Joseph had cut out for His family. Thus He was with the, the rich in His death, or in His burial, buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Now the prophet goes on to say...

but he hath done no violence, [He was innocent.] neither was there any deceit in his mouth. [He was pure!] Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; [Or to crush Him.] and he has put him to grief: for he has made his soul an offering for sin, but he shall see his seed, [That is the offspring.] he will prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. For he shall see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied (53:9-11):

Jesus seeing the fruit, seeing you and seeing me, who He's able to redeem, and cleanse from our sin, able to bring us to God, and reconcile us to God, able to make us children of God, that we might be joint heirs with Him in the glory of God's eternal kingdom! For these things He sees, and He saw the fruit of His death on the cross, and He was satisfied.

for by his knowledge [Or that is the knowledge of Jesus] shall my righteous servant justify many; [And so we've been justified before God, we have been declared innocent before God of any sin that we've ever committed because of our knowledge of Jesus Christ, and our faith in Jesus Christ, we have received that justification before God tonight!] for he shall bear their iniquities (53:11).

I'm justified before God. My sins have been taken care of. They've all been wiped off of the slate, and I

am, before God justified. I am as though I had never ever done any wrong. God sees me pure and clean and righteous, in His Son Jesus Christ! Because Jesus did pay this price, and redeem my soul...

Therefore [God says concerning Him] I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he has poured out his soul unto death: [Jesus shall reign, He shall rule!] and he was numbered with the transgressors; [That is in His death, between the two thieves.] and he bore the sin of many, and he made intercession for the transgressors (53:12).

While they were nailing Him to the cross, Luke tells us that He prayed, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" Oh my this is so powerful how that seven hundred and forty years in advance, so many of the details of the suffering of Christ, and the cross of Christ were given to us by God, to let us know that the death of Christ was no accident! The death by crucifixion was no accident, the scourging was no accident, the two thieves were no accident! It was all a part of God's prearranged plan, to redeem man from their sin, in order that lost man might be saved, and have fellowship with the eternal God once again!

Now it says here, "He bore the sin of many", really He bore the sin of all, but not all have accepted the provision. So those who have accepted the provision, their sins have been borne by Jesus Christ. But, those who do not accept the provision, their sins are not borne by Him. They will have to answer for their own sins.

You see, there's only one of two things that can happen to your sin, and that is it is totally and completely forgiven through Jesus Christ, and the work of Jesus Christ by your trusting in Him, and your faith in Him, or one day, you're gonna have to stand before God and answer for your sin. Those are the only two things that can happen. "He bore the sin of many." For those who have come to trust in Him, and believe in Him, their sins have been washed away.

Oh the beautiful, wonderful, redemptive work of Jesus Christ for you and me! I'll tell you, you ought to read this chapter once a week, just to rejoice in what God has wrought for you! The price that Jesus was willing to pay, in order to bring you unto God!

Shall we pray?

Father we thank You for that finished work of Jesus Christ, who, once, and for all offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sins. That He might reconcile us Lord unto You, through the blood of the cross, and make us children of God. Lord we thank You that You were willing to bear our sins, that you were wounded and pierced for our transgressions, You were crushed for our iniquities. Lord may we walk in the glorious light of the gospel, drawn by Your love to this fellowship with God. In His name we pray, Amen.

May the Lord be with you and watch over and keep you in His love, through the strength and the power of His Spirit. May you live a life of real victory in Christ this week! May you know the power of God's Spirit, delivering you from the power of the flesh. May indeed we deny ourselves, and take up our crosses to follow our Lord Jesus Christ. May the joy of the Lord, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the comfort of God's love, keep you in your walk, and in your faith, in Jesus' name.