

THE
GOSPEL
IN
ISAIAH 53

“But He was *wounded*
for our transgressions,”

CONFERENCE
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CHAPTER 52 The Final Redemption of Israel

This chapter leads up to the climax of the book, Chapter 53, and is an essential introduction to its content—the Messiah on the cross.

It is worth taking note that in v. 1, we read “*Awake, awake,*” and in vv. 11–12, “*Depart, depart.*” It is clear from this that personal salvation must precede practical sanctification. We do not give up our sins to come to Christ, but we come to Christ to be delivered from our sins! This call to sanctification surrounds an appeal to hear and believe the Gospel, the “*glad tidings*” of salvation (v. 7). This is the introduction to the final “Servant Song” of Isaiah, from 52:13–53:12—the key to the whole book.

The Servant Songs in Isaiah

1. Isaiah 42:1–8: In the first Servant song, the Servant is introduced as “*My Elect One.*” This is the first occurrence of the word “elect” in the Bible. Here, we have the key to the biblical Doctrine of Election, which Jesus Himself defines in the parable of Matthew 22:1–14 and also explains the meaning of the phrase “*many are called, but few are chosen*” (Matt. 22:14). In this introduction, we have an amazing description of the earthly ministry of the Lord.
2. Isaiah 49:1–7: Here, we see that the term “*servant*” is used both of the nation of Israel (v. 3), and of Israel’s Redeemer (v. 5). The nation is God’s servant in the sense that they gave us the Old Testament Scriptures, and brought the Lord Jesus Christ into the world. But all this was to bring the focus of the world to “*My Servant*” (vv. 6–7), the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Isaiah 50:4–11: Here, we find the Lord Jesus Christ speaking of His preparation for ministry, ending in His scourging and abuse. In all of this, His confidence in the vindication of the Father never wavers, as He “*committed Himself to Him who judges righteously*” (1 Peter 2:23).
4. Isaiah 52:13–53:12: Here, we have the final and greatest of the Servant songs—the story of Jesus’ life, essentially from birth to resurrection, summarized in twelve verses!
5. To these we could add Isaiah 5:1–7, “*A song of my Beloved, regarding His vineyard*” (v. 1). Here, we see the love and care of God for Israel, and the nation’s failure to bear good fruit. Jesus’ message in John 15 is a counter to this text, where Jesus identifies Himself, “*I am the true vine*” (John 15:1), the faithful and fruitful one, in contrast to the failure of Israel.

Principle: One fact often overlooked by commentators is that, in Isaiah, there are two servants addressed: Israel the nation, and Messiah the Redeemer. The whole point is that one servant is an abject failure, while the true Servant will faithfully execute all the will of the Lord God.

I. Isaiah 52:1–6 The “Wake Up” Call Repeated

V. 1 “*Awake, Awake.*” This call goes out to those who “*have ears to hear*” (Matt. 13:9). It is repeated from Isaiah 51:9 and 17, and goes with the appeal, “*Listen to Me*” (Isa. 51:1, 4, 7). This same appeal is given in Ephesians 5:14–16 to every believer to fight off the lethargy and inertia of this world.

The “*beautiful garments*” speak of practical sanctification, obedience to God’s Word in the power of the Spirit. Compare the “garments of praise” in Isaiah 61:3. Paul speaks of being clothed with Christ, in “putting on the new man” (Rom. 13:12; Eph. 4:23–24; Col. 3:12–14).

Sanctification

1. The term “sanctification” has the basic meaning of being set apart unto God.
2. The root word *hagios* is the basis for three important theological terms for the believer.
3. The first is “saint,” the identity of the believer. The second is “sanctify,” which refers to the process of spiritual growth and maturity, and the third is “holy,” which looks to our final eternal condition.
4. These words demonstrate the three phases of the work of salvation: phase one is justification by faith; phase two is sanctification through growth; and the third is glorification, which completes the work in eternity.

VV. 2–5 Israel is indicted for her unfaithfulness, which has led to repeated enslavement. We must never forget that anything that takes the place of the Lord in our lives eventually enslaves us. Yet, the Lord always stands by ready to forgive and to liberate us “without money” (see Isa. 55:1).

V. 6 Gives the promise to those who “*wake up,*” that “*My people shall know My name,*” that is, the “I Am” who speaks.

The Eight “I Am” Sayings in the Gospel of John

1. “I Am the bread of life” (John 6:35).
2. “I Am the light of the world” (John 8:12).
3. “I Am He” (John 8:24; this one is most often missed by commentators).
4. “I Am the door of the sheep” (John 10:7).
5. “I Am the good shepherd” (John 10:11).
6. “I Am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25).
7. “I Am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).
8. “I Am the true vine” (John 15:1).

II. Isaiah 52:7–10 Beautiful Feet Upon the Mountains

In this section, we are introduced to the figure of the “beautiful feet” of the bearers of the Gospel. It is worth taking note of the various elements of the Gospel message listed here:

1. Good news. The Gospel is the greatest “good news” ever proclaimed to mankind.
2. Proclaiming peace. Through justification by faith, we have “*peace with God*” (Rom. 5:1).
3. Glad tidings. The angel said to the shepherds, “*good tiding of great joy*” (Luke 2:10).
4. Good things. Including all “*spiritual blessings in heavenly places*” (Eph. 1:3).
5. Salvation. Deliverance from the curse and power of sin (Rom. 3:23–24; 6:23).
6. Your God reigns. He alone can heal all hurts and right all wrongs (Isa. 61:1–3).
7. All the ends of the Earth shall see the salvation of our God (v. 10 with Matt. 28:18–20).

The effects of the Good News being proclaimed is great joy and singing (vv. 8–10). While Israel has always been suckers for false “*watchmen*” (Isa. 56:10), the truth of the Gospel brings liberation and singing (Exod. 15; Rev. 5:8–14; 14:3).

V. 10 The figure here is that the Lord has “rolled up His sleeves” and “*made bare His holy arm.*” How interesting that Jesus, after the resurrection, pulled up His sleeves to show the marks of the crucifixion (Luke 24:30, 39; John 20:27), so the disciples would know “*that it is I Myself*” (Luke 24:39).

“And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (v. 10). We are assured that “*every eye shall see Him*” (Rev. 1:7) and that “*every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Phil. 2:10–11).

III. Isaiah 52:11–15 The Ultimate Exodus

V. 11 The call “*Depart! Depart!*” is a call to separation for the people of God that is often repeated in the Bible (Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 45; 2 Cor. 6:16–18; Rev. 18:4).

Believers are the “vessels of the Lord,” and are to be clean and useful for His service (2 Tim. 2:20–22).

V. 12 The figure of the Lord as both Guide and rear Guard comes from the Exodus (Exod. 13:20–22; 14:19–20). The Pillar of Cloud before and of Fire behind is the promise of being encapsulated in the protective grace of His coming kingdom. This is closely connected to “*My Servant*” who is coming. Remember that this is how the Messiah was introduced in Isaiah 42:1–4, the “*Elect One*” in whom the Lord, God the Father, delights. His perfect servanthood is highlighted in Luke 22:27 and Philippians 2:5–9.

With the connection of the Messiah to this coming glorious “exodus,” it is worth noting that, on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about His coming “exodus,” as the original Greek has it (Luke 9:30).

V. 13 “*He shall be exalted, and extolled and be very high*” speaks in anticipation of His resurrection, ascension, and present session at the Father’s right hand (Phil. 2:9–11).

V.14 Here, we see the effects of what is described in Isaiah 50:6—His scourging and the pulling out of His beard. He was so mangled that He could not be identified as a man. Interestingly, these are details about the crucifixion that are not contained in the Gospels.

V. 15 “*So shall He sprinkle many nations,*” is an Old Testament figure for purification before God, as when Moses sprinkled the blood of the Ram/Lamb on the Temple and the priests (Exod. 29:16–21). This figure is picked up by the writer of Hebrews as to our cleansing in the sight of God (Heb. 9:13–14; 10:22—Read these!).

Practical Applications

1. We who believe need, each and every morning, to “Awake” to God, and to “put on” the garments of our salvation.
2. We must always beware of the entangling effects of this world (Heb. 12:1–3), and to keep “*looking unto Jesus,*” lest we should “*become weary and discouraged in [our] souls*” (Heb. 12:3).
3. God’s Word is our constant source of comfort and encouragement, and we “*draw near*” to Him (James 4:8) as we enter prayerfully and submissively into His Word. In this way, we “depart” from the evils of this world.
4. Each day we should seek the “beautiful feet” of an ambassador of Christ (2 Cor. 5:20–21), bearing witness to Him with a defense of the Gospel (1 Peter 3:15).
5. The joy of the Lord should always bring us to songs of praise, on our lips and in our hearts (Eph. 5:19). In reality, our outward songs of praise should always be the expression of our inward joy and spiritual celebration (see Col. 3:16).
6. We are enabled to do these things as we live in the conviction that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Guide and our rear Guard. To follow Him in faith and obedience is to be assured that He is guarding us from all evil. Nothing can touch us apart from His plan and permission.

CHAPTER 53 The Suffering Servant: Salvation Provided for Sinful Mankind

Portions of this chapter are quoted seven times in the New Testament (Matt. 8:17; Luke 22:37; John 12:38; Acts 8:32–33; Rom. 15:21; 16:16; 1 Peter 2:22). Oblique references to Chapter 53 occur over 30 times in the New Testament.

A Prophecy of the Crucifixion

There is good reason this chapter is often called “The Holy of Holies” of the Old Testament. Not only does it give, 700 years before the event, a detailed description of the crucifixion of Jesus, but in this chapter, all the major doctrines of Soteriology, the study of salvation, are presented. This chapter is quoted in all four Gospels, the book of Acts, and in 1 Peter.

It should be pointed out that our chapter division is in the wrong place, and **Chapter 53 should begin in v. 13 of Chapter 52**, where the Servant-Savior, introduced in Isaiah 42:1–4, would be exalted by God, but rejected and tortured by men—all to bring about salvation for sinful mankind.

When the prophet asks, “*Who has believed our report?*” (Isa. 53:1), he is referring back to Isaiah 52:6–8, where the speaker is the “*I Am,*” who calls the feet of those who carry the “good news” (the Gospel of peace, see Isa. 57:19, 21; Rom. 5:1–2; 10:14–15; Gal. 5:22) “*beautiful upon the mountains.*” The “*watchmen*” of Isaiah 52:8 include Isaiah and all the prophets who anticipated the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This leads us to Isaiah 52:13, where the suffering Servant is introduced.

We are going to take our time in this chapter. We will find not only many details about the events surrounding the crucifixion but, more amazingly, some of the inner working of the heart and mind of the Lord Jesus, as He endured the judgment for our sins. We will divide the chapter into four sections.

Who Has Believed Our Report? (Isaiah 53:1)

Note: This amazing chapter is both a prophecy and a fulfillment of a previous, active portrayal of the **Crucifixion**, acted out on Mt. Moriah by Abraham when he offered his son Isaac on the altar. This drama would be fulfilled at Golgotha as God the Father offered His uniquely begotten Son on the cross for the sins of the world.

It is worth mentioning that not only did Abraham's act anticipate the **Resurrection** of Jesus, spoken of in Isaiah 52:13 and 53:10–2, but it also anticipated the **Rapture**. Isaac disappears from the narrative, Abraham comes down the mountain alone (Gen. 22:19), and Isaac is not seen again until he comes out to meet his bride, Rebekah (Gen. 24:62–67)—an anticipation of the fulfillment of John 14:1–4 and 1 Thess. 4:13–18.

When I was a new believer, I used to read this verse and think, what a strange way to begin a chapter! What is the report? Who is included in the “*our*?” It was very confusing to me, because, at the time I did not understand the value of context.

A full understanding of this amazing chapter requires a broad knowledge of both Old and New Testament revelation. It is astounding to learn that in this brief chapter all the major doctrines related to the plan of salvation are introduced, and the message of the New Testament is condensed into just twelve verses.

We need to back up into Chapter 52 to get the answers to the questions posed above, but before that, let's do a quick review of Isaiah's prophecies concerning Jesus earlier in the book:

Major Messianic Prophecies of Isaiah

1. The virgin birth, Immanuel (Isa. 7:14).
2. The Stone of stumbling and rock of offense (Isa. 8:14).
3. A Child born, a Son given (A kingdom formed Isa. 9:6–7).
4. A shoot from Jesse, a branch from his roots (Isa. 11:1–2).
5. The precious cornerstone laid (Isa. 28:16–17).
6. The Elect One, His ministry described (Isa. 42:1–4).
7. A Light to the Gentiles, salvation to the whole earth (Isa. 49:6).
8. His learning process, obedience, scourging, and ultimate vindication (Isa. 50:4–7).
9. The Suffering Savior (Isa. 53).
10. The Servant Savior (Isa. 61:1–2).
11. His coming again in glory (Isa. 63:1).
12. His creation of the new heavens and earth (Isa. 65:17; Rev. 21:1).

Other Major Old Testament Prophecies

1. The Seed of the Woman (Gen. 3:15).
2. The Seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3).
3. The Ruler from Judah (Gen. 49:10).
4. The King of David's lineage (2 Sam. 7:8–13).
5. The Ruler of the Nations (Psalm 2).
6. The Ruler born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
7. The crucified and resurrected Lord (Psalm 16:9–11; Zechariah 12:10–14).

Review: Isaiah 52:6–15 Highlights

I. Isaiah 52:6–10 The Gospel of Peace—the Message and the Messengers

We find that the “*report*” of Isaiah 53:1 is the “good news” or gospel of peace. We also see that the “*our report*” defines the messengers as Isaiah and the other Messianic prophets, who are the “*watchmen*” of Isaiah 52:8. Though mostly rejected by men, in the end they will be vindicated, and will “*sing together*” when “*all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God*” (Isa. 52:10).

Pay Close Attention to the Speakers

1. In Isaiah 52:6, it is the “I Am” who speaks. Compare the eight “I Am” sayings in John.
2. In Isaiah 52:13–15, God the Father speaks concerning the Son.
3. In Isaiah 53:1–11, the prophet Isaiah speaks for the Nation: of Israel’s rejection of the Messianic message, of His humble appearance, His sufferings, and of the cost of our salvation.
4. In Isaiah 53:12, God the Father concludes with the promise of His resurrection glory.

The Doctrine of Redemption/Reconciliation

1. The Doctrine of Redemption speaks of Christ’s payment for our sins on the cross, setting us free from slavery to sin and death (Rom. 6:5–10). Reconciliation teaches us that we are now reconciled to God in a relation of grace and peace.
2. The book of Philemon demonstrates these twin doctrines in Paul’s willingness to pay for the wrongdoing of Onesimus, “*If he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. I, Paul ... will repay*” (Philemon 18), and his encouragement to Philemon to receive him back, “*no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother*” (Philemon 15–16).
3. The single best passage on these twin truths is Romans 5:1–21. By His finished work, we are brought into a relationship of “*peace with God*” (Rom. 5:1).
4. This gives us a permanent standing before God in His grace (Rom. 5:2) and the assurance and hope of sharing in His glory.
5. We are the permanent objects of the infinite love of God (Rom. 5:5).
6. All this was accomplished in spite of the fact that we were “*without strength*” (Rom. 5:6, i.e. unable to save ourselves), we were “*ungodly*” (Rom. 5:6b), “*sinners*” (Rom. 5:8), and “*enemies*” (Rom. 5:10).
7. This reconciliation was purchased by His death, and is affirmed and made effective by His life in resurrection (Rom. 5:10–11).
8. Our reconciled status brings us “*much more*” than just deliverance from the sin of Adam (Rom. 5:12–21).
 - a. We have access to the totality of the grace of God (v. 15).
 - b. We are fully justified, declared righteous before God (v. 16).
 - c. We have His righteousness reigning in our lives (v. 17, 20–21).
 - d. The effect of all these things is summarized in Romans 8:28–39. We are “*more than conquerors through Him who loved us*” (Rom. 8:37).

II. Isaiah 52:13–15 Messiah’s Exaltation will Exceed His Humiliation

The Savior rejected by men will be exalted by God the Father. The apostle Paul, in **Philippians 2:5–11** captures the ideas of this section beautifully. Isaiah uses three ascending terms of Messiah’s vindication: “exalted ... extolled ... very high.” These align with resurrected ... ascended ... seated at God’s right hand (Psalm 110:1). What God has done for Christ, is applied to every believer in Jesus (Eph. 2:4–7). This is theologically called positional truth – the fact that every believer in the Church age shares fully in Christ’s victory and exaltation.

The Doctrine of Christ’s Present Session

Most Christians know what Jesus has done at the cross, at least superficially. However, few have delved into what He is doing for us now, at God’s right hand. When we speak of this doctrine we are referring to the present ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, seated at the right hand of God, the Father. As depicted in the book of Hebrews, this is His ministry on our behalf as our High Priest (Heb. 4:14–16; 5:5–10; 7:11–28; 9:11–15, 23–28; 10:11–25). In His present session, the Lord Jesus performs the following ministries on our behalf.

1. He is our **Advocate** before God (1 John 2:2), defending us against the charges of the devil.
2. He is our **Intercessor**, praying with us and on our behalf (Rom. 8:34).
3. He is our strong **Helper** (Heb. 13:6), working with and through us by His power.
4. He is our ever-present **Friend** (Matt. 28:20; 1 Cor. 1:9).
5. He has taken us in our weakness, and has become to us **wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption** (1 Cor. 1:27–31).

III. Isaiah 53:1–3 The Man of Sorrows: The Messenger and His Message Rejected by Men

V. 1 The “*arm of the Lord*” refers to His power to save sinful mankind (Exod. 6:6; 15:16; Deut. 4:34; Psalm 44:3; 89:10; Luke 1:51). This verse is quoted in John 12:37–38, “*But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*” In John 12:37–41, John quotes from both Isaiah 53 and Isaiah 6, three times referring the quotes to the same Isaiah, thus demolishing the deuterio-Isaiah fallacy, which ascribes the book to two or more authors.

That which was proclaimed to the shepherds as “*good tidings of great joy*” (Luke 2:10) is scorned by the majority of mankind.

The Power of Salvation in the Gospel

“*For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes ... for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, the just shall live by faith*” (Rom. 1:16–17).

In Acts 8:26–40, we read the story of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. This very passage from Isaiah was what the Eunuch was reading, and which Philip used to bring him to faith in Christ. When Isaiah says, “*who has believed our report,*” we can include ourselves in the long list of those who have believed and received eternal life!

The “*root out of dry ground*” (Isa. 53:2) is connected to a series of prophecies utilizing the figures of a root, shoot, and branch for the Messiah.

The Doctrine of the Branch

1. In Isaiah 11:1, the Messiah is called the stem and branch of Jesse.
2. In Isaiah 53:2, this idea is picked up in the phrase “*a root out of dry ground,*” a growth from an unexpected and unpromising place.
3. Added to this figure are the several prophecies regarding the “Branch.”
 - a. The **Branch of the Lord** (Isa. 4:2). This is Jesus as presented in **John**.
 - b. The **Branch of David** (Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15). This is Jesus in **Matthew**.
 - c. **My Servant the Branch** (Zech. 3:8). This is **Mark’s** depiction of Jesus.
 - d. **The Man** whose name is **The Branch** (Zech. 6:12). This is Jesus in **Luke’s** Gospel.
4. These prophecies are all summarized by Matthew 2:23, “*And He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, ‘He shall be called a Nazarene.’*” Both the root word for Nazareth and Branch is *Netzer*. It is believed that members of the tribe of Judah, on returning from the exile, settled in this place and called it Nazareth, in the hope of the coming Branch of the Lord.
6. In Revelation 22:16, The resurrected Jesus declares, “*I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning star.*”

V. 2 “*There is no beauty that we should desire Him*” (v. 2b). The Jews expected the Messiah to be a mighty warrior who would drive their enemies into the sea and scoffed at Jesus’ humble origins and appearance. Many years ago, I read that some ancient Rabbi’s taught that, due to all His sufferings, though He was a young man, yet He would look old from His sufferings. We are simply not given a physical description of our Savior in the Gospels.

V. 3 In verse 3, the title “*Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief,*” is a summary of the entire life of the Lord Jesus. Psalm 69:7–16 and Jeremiah 14:8–9 reveal much of His lonely and misunderstood life. Throughout His entire life, He bore the weight of all the sins and sorrows of those around Him, yet the Gospels portray Him as one who loved social gatherings with the poor and the outcasts. This was so evident that the Pharisees scornfully gifted Him with one of His most endearing titles (Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:34), “*Behold, a glutton and winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.*”

The Man of Sorrows

1. In Hebrews 4:15, we are told that Jesus was tempted, or tested, in all ways as we are. This includes bearing within Himself all the tests and temptations of every human being. No other human being has ever been assailed by every temptation which is common to mankind!
2. In Psalm 69:6–21, we have a prophetic record of the early years of Jesus, leading up to the cross, and his sorrow and broken-heartedness at how mistreated He was.
3. In Jeremiah 14:8–9 He is pictured as a “stranger and pilgrim” (see 1 Peter 2:11) who has no place to rest (see Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58), and as a “mighty man,” who in spite of His great power is unable to save (Matt. 27:42–43).
4. Even the place of His early years, Nazareth, was considered a backward and uncultured place (John 1:46).

5. Jesus' three temptations in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–12) simply illustrate all the categories of human temptation (1 John 2:15–17).
6. Truly, He was *"A Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief,"* and yet, at the same time, one who enjoyed the company of the rejects and outcasts of society (Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:34 above).

IV. Isaiah 53:4–6 The Crucifixion: The Wisdom of God, and the Foolishness of Men

In 1 Corinthians 1:18 Paul says, *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."* Then, in 1 Corinthians 25, he says, *"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."* The mighty saving *"arm of the Lord"* (Isa. 53:1) is a tortured man on a cross!

The "healing" that comes from Jesus' crucifixion is spiritual immediately, in restoring us to God, and ultimately includes all physical healing in the resurrection body. In the healing ministry of Jesus, we see a preview of what our resurrection life will be, free from all disease and affliction, all of which is due to the curse of sin.

Note: The "healing," mentioned in v. 5 begins with the *"peace"* found in Him. The word "peace" connotes reconciliation with God (Rom. 5:1, 6–11). Those who believe in Him find peace with God, but for the unbelieving, *"There is no peace, says the LORD, for the wicked"* (Isa. 48:22; 57:21).

Illustration: In the Arizona desert, when we see the cactus bloom, we have an illustration in nature of the curse of *"thorns and thistles"* (Gen. 3:18) that ultimately give way to the *"lilies of the field,"* which the Lord blesses with grace and beauty (Matt. 6:28).

Both the Curse and the Cross are All-Inclusive

*"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned **everyone** to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us **all**"* (v. 6). Look at the word "all" in 52:10 and 53:6. Compare this to the *"all"* in Romans 3:23; 5:12; 11:32 and 1 Timothy 2:1–7, as well as *"world"* in John 3:16–19 and 1 John 2:2. To teach a doctrine of limited atonement is simply not scriptural.

The Doctrine of Sin and Death

1. God told Adam that the consequences of disobedience in the Garden would lead to death. The Hebrew of Genesis 2:17 actually says, "Dying you shall die." Two deaths are anticipated: first, spiritual, which Adam and Eve received immediately, then physical, which would be the final result.
2. To this ultimate penalty of sin is added the immediate and practical effects we experience when we commit sin. James 1:14–15 tells us, *"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death."*
3. Here, we have the genealogy of sin. Think of lust as the tempting harlot (Prov. 7:6–27), who leads the young man astray. She then conceives, and gives birth to the daughter, which is sin. This daughter, sin, then grows up, and also conceives, and brings forth death.

4. This is what Paul is talking about when he speaks of “*the law of sin and death*” in Romans 8:2b. It is a spiritual law, established by God from the beginning, that sin will always result in death. Only “*The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*” (Rom. 8:2a) can set us free from this law.
5. “*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Rom. 6:23). Wages are what you have earned and deserve, but a gift is what you have not earned nor deserved.
6. “*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to **all men**, because **all** sinned*” (Rom. 5:12).
7. But what does the Bible mean when it says that sin brings forth death? From the very moment that we commit sin, death begins to work, to grow and spread, through every area of our life.
 - a. First, it is the death of **fellowship** with God (1 John 1:6). From the instant we commit sin, whether mental, verbal, or overt, our fellowship with God is broken.
 - b. As a result, it begins the death of **fruitfulness** (Matt. 7:17–19). The fruit will always reveal the root, whether of the Spirit or of the flesh. Jesus made it clear in the Upper Room that we cannot abide in Him and bear fruit, unless we obey His commands (John 15:1–14).
 - c. Next, sin in our lives produces death within the **family**. As David’s sin with Bathsheba illustrates, his sin brought sorrow and suffering to Bathsheba by the death of their child (2 Sam. 12:15–18); to Tamar, in her rape by Amnon (2 Sam. 13:1–21); to Amnon, who was killed by Absalom (2 Sam. 13:23–33), and finally to Absalom, who was first exiled (2 Sam. 13:34–39), and ultimately killed for his rebellion (2 Sam. 18:1–18). Thus, as Nathan implied, David paid “*fourfold*” for his sin (2 Sam. 12:6–7).
 - d. From our immediate family, sin continues to spread, bringing death among our **friends**. Again, David’s sin illustrates this, in the breach of his friendship with Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:30–31; Psalms 41:9; 55:13–18). In the same way, the sin of Judas, broke his friendship with Jesus (John 13:18; see Matt. 26:50).
 - e. Finally, sin brings death into our **future**, as our lack of fruitfulness results in judgment at the Bema Seat of Christ, and loss of eternal rewards (1 Cor. 3:10–15; James 1:6–8).

The Cross: the Manifold Wisdom and Grace of God

“To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church To the principalities and powers in the heavenly places ...” (Ephesians 3:10)

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10)

1. The word “manifold” in Greek is *polupoikilos* in the quote from Ephesians, and simply *poikilos* in the Peter reference. The general idea contained in the words is “varied, multi-faceted, diverse, rich beyond measure.” Also of interest is that this same word is used by James of the varied nature of our temptations (James 1:2).

2. The wisdom of God is manifested in His redemption plan of grace, a concept that is so rich that it defies full definition or comprehension. In essence, grace is **God's Riches At Christ's Expense**. He pays the price; we receive the benefits.
3. The work of God, through Jesus Christ at the cross, is the masterstroke of history in the invisible war against Satan and his fallen angels.
 - a. It was **punitive**, in that it takes God's judgment against sin, and pays the debt in full (Rom. 5:12–21; Gal. 3:13–14; 2 Cor. 5:21).
 - b. It was **substitutionary**, in that the Lord Jesus died in the place of sinners (Lev. 1:4; Isa. 53:4–6; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24–25).
 - c. It was **voluntary**. Jesus went willingly, resolutely, to the cross, to fulfill the will of God for our salvation (Isa. 50:7; Matt. 16:21–23; John 10:18).
 - d. It was **redemptive**. Jesus Christ entered into the slave market of sin and by His death and resurrection paid the price to set sins captives free (Gal. 3:13; 4:5). Four words are used in the Greek New Testament to convey this.
 - 1) *Agorazo* means “to buy, redeem, ransom from the slave market.”
 - 2) *Exagorazo* adds the prefix to the above word, “to remove from the slave market.”
 - 3) *Lutroo* means “to liberate, deliver, set free what has been redeemed.”
 - 4) *Apolutroo* means “to release/transfer into freedom (see Gal. 5:1).
 - e. It was **Propitiatory**. It satisfied God the Father in His righteous demand for a perfect sacrifice for sin. Jesus was “*The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*” (Isa. 53:10–11; John 1:29, see also Rom. 3:25; 1 John 3:2).
 - f. It was **Reconciling**. By the finished work of the cross we are restored to a right relationship with God (Rom. 5:1–11).
 - g. It is **Unlimited**. Note the use of “*we*,” “*our*,” “*everyone*,” and “*all*” in Isaiah 53:4–6. The Lord Jesus died for every member of the human race (John 3:16–19; Rom. 3:23–24; 5:12–21; 1 John 1:2).
 - h. It was **Efficacious**. It fulfilled God's plan of grace for sinners and is effective in providing salvation to all who believe (John 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:29; 10:9, 27–28; 14:1–6; Titus 2:14).
 - i. It was **Revelatory**. By the cross, we learn of the matchless love, mercy, and grace of God. The cross reveals the essence or character of God to mankind (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:9–10).

The cross reveals the **Sovereignty, Righteousness, Justice, Love, Eternal Life, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Immutability, and Veracity** of God. So, **Stop and Remember** Jesus' Love, so that **Every Obstacle** becomes an **Opportunity** to press **On In Victory**!

V. Isaiah 53:7–9 The Silence of the Lamb

In this section, we have three distinct prophecies relating to the crucifixion of Jesus. The first relates to His silence under judgment, which is repeated twice in the text. This silence before His accusers is reported in all four Gospel accounts. The second is that He was “*cut off*,” or executed, for the transgressions of others. This truth is magnified throughout the New

Testament. Then comes the specific and seemingly contradictory prophecy that He was “buried with the wicked and the rich.”

V. 7 The Silence of the Savior

When Jesus defined Himself, He used the terms “*meek and lowly in heart*” (Matt. 11:29, KJV). This humble submissiveness was tested to the maximum during His trials, as the Holy One of God was blasphemed and accused by the sinners for whom He would die.

“He opened not His mouth ... as a sheep before its shearers is silent.” Isaiah 53:7

The silence of the Lord under false accusations has in it the elements of dignity and defiance. Both He and His accusers knew the charges against Him were false. Joseph’s silence when falsely accused by the wife of Potiphar is a preview and type of this response (Gen. 39:11–21) and is one of approx. 30 parallels between his life and that of Christ’s.

Jesus actually went through six trials. In each of the trials before the Jews, there were not only false charges but violations of Jewish law (see Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1). In His trials before Pilate and Herod—the ultimate authorities—He was declared innocent three times.

Jesus Six Trials. And verdicts

1. Before Annas: declared guilty (John 18:12–14).
2. Before Caiaphas: declared guilty (Matt. 26:57–68).
3. Before the Sanhedrin: declared guilty (Matt. 27:1–2; Luke 22:63–71).
4. Before Pilate: declared innocent (John 18:28–38; Luke 23:4).
5. Before Herod: declared innocent (Luke 23:6–15).
6. Before Pilate: declared innocent (Matt. 27:24; John 18:39–19:6).

Seven Witnesses of Jesus’ innocence

1. Judas (Matt. 27:4).
2. Pilate (Luke 23:4; John 19:4).
3. Herod (Luke 23:15).
4. Pilate’s wife (Matt. 27:19).
5. Dying thief (Luke 23:41).
6. Roman Centurion (Luke 23:47).
7. Roman guards (Matt. 27:54).

Jesus’ Silence Before His Accusers

1. “*But Jesus kept silent*” (Matt. 26:62).
2. “*He answered nothing ... But He answered him not one word*” (Matt. 27:12, 14).
3. “*But He kept silent and answered nothing*” (Mark 14:60).
4. “*But He answered nothing*” (Mark 5:3).
5. “*But He answered him nothing*” (Luke 23:9).
6. “*But Jesus gave him no answer*” (John 19:9).

Two Times Jesus Answered

1. When Pilate asked Him, *“Are you king of the Jews? He answered and said to him, ‘It is as you say.’”* (Mark 15:2; Luke 23:3).
2. When Caiaphas put him under an oath to God (Matt. 26:63–64; Luke 22:70) *“Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God! Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said.’”*

V. 8a The Substitution of the Savior

“He was taken from prison and from judgment ... He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.”

It is believed that the *“prison”* refers to a deep pit, which was strangely under the house of Caiaphas. A prisoner had to be lowered into this pit by a rope. It was cold, dark, and foreboding. Many of us have stood in this very pit on our visits to Jerusalem.

This verse makes it clear that Jesus was judged, not for any sin on His part, but for the sins and transgressions of others. This introduces the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, the death of the innocent Son of God for the sins of the world (John 3:16–19; 2 Cor. 5:21).

The Doctrine of Substitution

1. The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus’ death was vicarious and substitutionary for sinners. In other words, He died in the place of, and paid the spiritual debt, of all sinners.
2. Jesus died for all sinners of all of history (John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:2).
3. Because the debt for sin is *“paid in full”* (John 19:30), all one must do to enter into eternal life is to *“believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved”* (Acts 16:31).
4. Since God imputed our sins to Christ on the cross, He is free to impute the righteousness of Christ to all who believe (Isa. 53:10–11; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).
5. In Matthew 26:28, in the Upper Room, Jesus made it clear that His death would bring the blessings of the *“new covenant”* to those who believe in Him.
6. In Ephesians 1:7, Paul writes, *“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”* (see also Col. 1:14).
7. In Revelation 1:5, John dedicates the book *“to Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”*

V. 8b A Spiritual Genealogy

“Who will declare His generation?” The question implies a dilemma: how could Jesus have any offspring? The answer will come in v. 10 concerning *“His seed,”* that is, we who believe in Him (Gal. 3:26–29).

The phrase *“He was cut off”* is from the Hebrew word *gazar*, which means *“to be cut down, to be slain in battle.”* In Daniel 9:26, we have the same phrase, which uses the Hebrew *karath*, suggesting *“execution”*. In both cases, the verb is in the Niphal passive stem, suggesting His submissiveness in the face of His death.

V. 9 The Sanctity of the Savior

In this verse, we find what appears to be a contradiction. “*He made His grave with the wicked ... [and] with the rich.*” On first reading, it might appear that wickedness and riches are synonyms. Furthermore, it says, “*He made his grave,*” meaning that His burial was under His plan and command.

The phrase, “*Because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth,*” deserves some consideration. It is explanatory of the previous sentence. Why did He make His grave with the wicked and the rich? According to Jewish law, common graves were considered unclean. However, if a grave was cut out of stone, it was considered clean. This gives significance to the grave of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 23:1–9; 25:7–10), where both Isaac and Jacob were also buried (Gen. 49:29–33).

In Jesus’ case, Joseph of Arimathea buried Him in his own tomb “*hewn out of the rock*” (Matt. 27:60; Mark 15:46) “*where no one had ever laid*” (Luke 23:53; John 19:41). Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50), but a secret disciple of Jesus (John 19:38). He was “*a good and just man.*”

So, in the end, what we see is that Jesus was buried among sinners, by a rich man, who was also a believer, who had a tomb that was “clean” in every respect to Jewish law. What amazing detail we find in the prophecies of Jesus’ death and burial!

Note: The fact that the prophet Isaiah, over 700 years before the cross, predicted that Jesus’ grave was “*with the wicked—But with the rich at His death*” (v. 9) combines both the thieves crucified with Him, as well as believing Joseph, whose tomb He “borrowed” for three days, shows that God was guiding all these events to fulfill His perfect plan of redemption for all mankind!

The Thief on the Cross

Recently, Alistair Begg, a very fine Bible teacher, taught a class based on the thief on the cross who believed in Jesus. His message was humorous and entertaining, and no doubt was aimed at pointing unsaved people to faith in Christ for eternal life.

But what are the implications of the thief on the cross for those of us who believe? I think there are some vital lessons that we can learn, both as we look back at our salvation by faith and as we consider our present lives.

1. First of all, we should not consider one thief to the exclusion of the other. The two thieves present the condition of the whole world. Paul tells us, in 1 Corinthians 15:22, “*For as **in Adam** all die, even so **in Christ** shall all be made alive.*” The one thief believed in Jesus and entered into eternal life, the other died in his sins and entered into eternal condemnation. All mankind falls into either the “in Adam” category, or the “in Christ” company. “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ...*” (Rom. 3:23–24). Take careful note that the **all** who are sinners may be justified by faith in Christ Jesus.

2. This being the end of all men, what is our debt to those who are yet outside of Christ? In Romans 1:14–15, Paul writes, *“I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.”* As Lewis Sperry Chafer points out in his *Systematic Theology*, grace does not incur debt. In other words, we do not pay anything for our so-great salvation, either before or after we are saved. It is a gift of God, without any payment whatsoever. From whence, then, comes the debt? It is a debt of gratitude, pure and simple.
3. This sense of indebtedness from a thankful heart, compels us to be a witness to those who are lost. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:14–15, *“For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One dies for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should not live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”* Our lives belong to Him, and we should serve Him in gratitude and thanksgiving. *“We are His witnesses”* (Acts 5:32).
4. This debt to witness of His grace begins, not with words, but with our lives. *“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live”* (Rom. 8:12–13). Our first, and perhaps greatest witness, is the evidence of the life of Christ in us.
5. The thief on the cross could do nothing to earn or deserve his salvation. But we erroneously say often that he had no opportunity to serve the Lord, and this is false. He was also a witness to the other dying thief, who heard his testimony and the Lord’s response, and had an equal opportunity to believe and receive eternal life. Even in the closing moments of his life, this thief was a witness, not only to the other thief, but to the whole assembled company at the foot of the cross, that faith in the Lord Jesus brings peace with God and the gift of eternal life. I have no doubt that, not only by his words, but by his whole demeanor from that moment on, was a glorious testimony to the power of redemption and reconciliation with God.
6. This is why Peter tells us to *“... sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience ...”* (1 Peter 3:15–16a). Here, Peter makes it clear that our lives should prompt others to question why we maintain such hope and joy in a dark and gloomy world. Have you ever had someone ask you “What makes you so different?”
7. As a final thought, remember that it was Barabbas who was supposed to die on Jesus’ cross. Barabbas was a thief and a murderer (Luke 23:18–19). But Mark, who wrote under Peter’s direction, stated that both Barabbas and his cohorts were guilty of murder (Mark 15:7). It is most likely that the two thieves crucified with Jesus were those cohorts, and thus shared in the guilt of murder. I have often wondered, as Jesus was dying on the cross, was Barabbas there watching? Jesus died on his cross, and Barabbas was given the gift of life. Can you see yourself in Barabbas’ place? Do you realize that you are just as guilty as he was (Rom. 3:10–18)? Jesus died in your place and mine, and for each and every member of the human race. The question for Barabbas, and for each of us, was that asked by Pilate, *“What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?”* (Matt. 27:22).

VI. Isaiah 53:10–11 The Pleasure of the Lord

In this section, we find another precious truth about the effects of the cross, and that is the Doctrine of Propitiation. Propitiation speaks of the satisfaction of God the Father in the death of Christ as a payment for sin. God's righteous demand that the penalty for sin be paid was satisfied and, by extension, He is pleased with all who put their faith in Him. The cross satisfied both the justice and the mercy of God, by the payment of the price of sin, and the provision of a way of salvation for all who believe in Jesus Christ.

The ideas expressed above are found in two phrases:

First, *"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him"* (v. 10), has to do with **propitiation**. The terrible agonies of the cross are called a *"bruise,"* first, in fulfillment of the first Messianic prophecy, directed to the serpent, *"He shall bruise your head [a death blow], and you shall bruise His heel [a small wound]"* (Gen. 3:15b), because He could not be held by death.

As Peter said in his first message on Pentecost, *"Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it"* (Acts 2:24).

Second, Isaiah says here in v. 10, *"The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand,"* which anticipates the work of **reconciliation**. This reminds us that Jesus spoke of those who trust in Him as being held in His hands, and in the Father's hands (John 10:28–30).

The pleasure of God in the work of the cross continues in the lives of each and every believer. However, there is one—and only one—condition for this to be true in your life and mine. **You must choose to make His soul the offering for your sin.**

"When You make His soul an offering for sin." The "You" here speaks first of the work of the Father, in sending Christ to die in our place. But it also implies the personal option of every soul to appropriate that offering by a personal choice to receive Him as Savior.

It is at the point of personal belief that *"He shall see the labor of His soul and be satisfied"* (Isa. 53:11). To put these thoughts together, we can say, "It pleased the Lord" to send Christ to the cross, and He takes "pleasure" in every soul that believes, and is "satisfied" with Christ's transaction on their behalf for forgiveness and eternal life. **What a Gospel we find in this passage!**

As a final note, the word for **propitiation** found in Romans 3:25 and 1 John 2:2 is the same root word used in Hebrews 9:5 for *"mercy seat."* The mercy seat as portrayed in the tabernacle, sitting on top of the Ark of the Covenant, is now in Heaven in the Person of Jesus Christ. And we are urged to *"Come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need"* (Heb. 4:16). The mercy seat is available; the question is, will we draw near?

*"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, **let us draw near** with A true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water ..." Hebrews 10:22.*

The above passage is a call to exercise our priesthood (1 Peter 2:5, 9) by boldly approaching the Throne of Grace (Heb. 4:14–16) in daily, effective prayer, not only for ourselves, but especially for others in need (James 5:16–18). The satisfaction of God the Father in the cross of Christ, not just being torn in body, but much more having laid down His soul an offering for sin (Isa. 53:10, 12), was demonstrated in the rending of the veil. This indicated graphically that the way into the Holy of Holies was now open to all who come through Jesus Christ.

The “sprinkling” speaks of once for all purification through His blood (Heb. 10:22) and is the fulfillment of Exodus 24:8, and the “washing of water” is the daily purification of “*the washing of the water of the word*” (Eph. 5: 26)—the fulfillment of Exodus 30:17–21.

In summary: Jesus Christ on the cross did everything necessary to satisfy the righteous demands of God. The question that now remains is this: Will we avail ourselves of His provision? Propitiation demands accountability! Propitiation brings reconciliation, which results in **peace** with God, which brings **hope** and **joy** (Rom. 5:1, 6–11, note the words: “*justified ... peace ... access ... reconciled ... saved*”).

The Doctrine of Propitiation and its Implications

1. The fact that God is satisfied with the work of Christ on the cross, and that how men respond to this one fact of history will determine their eternal destiny, is filled with rich implications.
2. Accountability implies ability. Those who preach that we are accountable to God, but that not everyone is able to respond, blaspheme the just and righteous character of God (Psalms 89:14; 97:2).
3. Responsibility demands the potential to respond. God does not hold men responsible and then withhold from them the ability to respond, whether in faith or unbelief.
4. When Paul declares that all mankind who fail to come to God in faith are “*without excuse*” (Rom. 1:20), he is declaring categorically that they were able to believe but were not willing!
5. The Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ personally enlightens every soul that comes into the world (John 1:4–5, 7, 9 with Isa. 42:6; 49:6b).
6. The Bible teaches that every soul in the world is convicted of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:7–11). Therefore, every soul is aware, at some point in life, of their need for a Savior (Acts 16:30–31).
7. The Bible also teaches that Jesus Christ personally exerts a drawing influence on every soul to come to Him in faith (John 12:32).
8. Every soul must choose to receive or reject Jesus Christ. What Pilate asked applies to every soul, “*What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?*” (Matt. 27:22 with Joshua 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21; Acts 2:38–39).
9. Every soul must give an account for their decision and, by the evidence of the above points, will be forced to admit that “*Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God*” (see Phil. 2:9–11; Rom. 14:11–12).
10. The word “*world*,” repeated five times in John 3:16–19, is inclusive of every member of the human race throughout all of history. Every soul will be judged based on their choice to either believe or to not believe.

VII. Isaiah 53:12 The Division of the Spoils of Victory

In this final verse, we have the promise of eternal inheritance and the potential for great eternal reward. Every believer is an heir of God (Gal. 3:26–29; 4:6–7). The question is, what portion of the spoils of Christ’s victory will I receive?

“Therefore I [God the Father] will divide Him [Jesus Christ] a portion with the great [the family of faith], and He shall divide the spoil with the strong [the heroes of the faith].”

This verse introduces the idea of eternal reward, which will be given according to our growth and obedience in service during our time on this Earth.

V. 12b *“Because He poured out His soul unto death ...”* In the Hebrew, the word “death” is plural, **“deaths.”** In essence, Jesus died twice on the cross.

First, He died spiritually in paying the penalty of sin, which is separation from God.

Second, as a result of having fulfilled the Father’s will, He died physically. These are the same two “deaths” implied in Genesis 2:17, which literally says, *“For in the day that you eat of it, dying, you shall die.”* Spiritual death precedes and results in physical death.

This introduces the spiritual factor of the cross. Far beyond His physical sufferings, was the judgment He bore in our place, being judged for all our sins.

The Spiritual Death of Christ on the Cross

1. In teaching about the crucifixion of Christ, almost all teachers and commentaries focus solely on the physical sufferings of Jesus.
2. However, it must be made clear why, under these sufferings, Jesus remained totally silent. Then, at the critical point of the crucifixion, after three hours on the cross (Matt. 27:45–46), Jesus screamed out the words from Psalm 22:1 (Matt. 27:45–46), *“My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”*
3. This explains why Isaiah tells us that *“He poured out His soul unto death”* (Isa. 53:12). This occurred before Jesus died physically.
4. It was during this time that God the Father poured out the sins of mankind on Jesus and He paid the ultimate penalty for sin, which is spiritual death—separation from God (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23). The question is, did Adam die *“in the day”* that he ate the fruit? Since he was still alive physically, we know that the death was spiritual separation from God. Literally, in Genesis 2:17 (in the Hebrew), God says, *“For in the day that you eat of it, dying (spiritually) you shall die (physically).”*
5. Going back to Isaiah 53:12, the Hebrew says, *“Because He poured out His soul unto death[s] [plural].”* First, He died spiritually, to pay the debt of sin, then He died physically, which is the result of spiritual death.
6. Thus, the cry from the cross, *“My God, My God [I believe addressed to both the Father and the Spirit] why have you forsaken Me?”* Jesus was paying the penalty for sin, which is spiritual death, that is, separation from God.
7. It is this penalty, above all physical suffering, that sets the death of Christ apart from every other person who has died. It is impossible for us to comprehend the agonies of this death. In Psalm 22:12–13 and 16, the implication is that Jesus visibly saw around Him the very demons from hell, gloating at His anguish.

8. It is because Jesus paid this debt that no child of God will ever experience it. When Jesus says, for example, *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die [physically], he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die [spiritually]. **Do you believe this?**”* (John 11:25–26). His last question to Martha is the ultimate question for every soul!

“And made intercession for the transgressors.” Isaiah 53:12b

Not only did Jesus pray for His enemies on the cross (Luke 23:34), but He continues now, at God’s right hand, to intercede for us and for the world (Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:2). In Hebrews 7:25 we read, *“Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”* This shows that His saving work is not just from eternal condemnation, but also from the power of sin in this life (see Rom. 8:34).

It is the will of the Lord that each of us will grow in grace and truth (2 Peter 3:18), that we will become spiritually mature and fruitful (John 15:11; 2 Cor. 13:9), and that we will receive a full reward in eternity (2 John 1:8).

The Doctrine of Eternal Reward

“Therefore, do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.” Hebrews 10:35

1. It was Jesus, in His first major message, who introduced the idea of eternal reward in the New Testament (Matt. 6:1, 2, 4, 6, 18, 20).
2. Eternal rewards will include those for faithfulness in the smallest acts of obedience (Matt. 10:42).
3. The Parable of the Talents teaches that reward will be in accord with our faithfulness to the task we are given (Matt. 25:14–29; Mark 13:32–37).
4. Two phrases from the above cited passages are worth noting: In Matthew 25:15 we read, *“to each according to his ability.”* Then in Mark 13:34, *“to each his work.”* Every believer is given his own work to accomplish, according to his ability. We are not judged based on the standards of others, but by our own allotted work and our own ability.
5. The statement of Jesus, concerning the gift of Mary, illustrates the individual evaluation of our works. *“She has done what she could”* (Mark 14:8).
6. The Scripture makes it clear that at the moment of salvation, the Holy Spirit gives each believer a spiritual gift. This gift matches and defines the work we are to do (Rom. 12:1–8; 1 Peter 4:10–11).
7. Each of us will be evaluated at the Bema Seat of Christ, to determine what remains of lasting and eternal value from our lives (Rom. 14:12–13; 1 Cor. 3:10–15; 2 Cor. 5:9–10).
8. The highest level of rewards is called crowns, of which five are listed in Scripture:
 - a. The **Incorruptible Crown** (1 Cor. 9:24–27). This crown is given for exercising spiritual self-discipline in life. Note that Paul realized that failure to do this would result in being “disqualified” for the crown.
 - b. The **Crown of Joy** (Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19–20). This is often called the “soul winners crown,” given to those who are effective leading others to Christ.

- c. The **Crown of Life** (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10). This crown is given for enduring temptations and trials, overcoming them by faith.
- d. The **Crown of Righteousness** (2 Tim. 4:7–8). This crown is given for living in light of our Lord’s return, and running our race to the finish (Heb. 12:1–2).
- e. The **Crown of Glory** (1 Peter 5:1–4). Given to pastors who are faithful to shepherd the flock.

Note: These crowns are the highest forms of eternal reward and are gained by determined effort in life to grow, be fruitful and remain faithful to the end.

12 Prophecies Given and Fulfilled

1. Messiah would be exalted (Isa. 52:13; Phil. 2:9).
2. He would be brutally disfigured (Isa. 52:14; 53:2; Mark 5:17–19).
3. He will make a blood atonement for sin (Isa. 52:15; 1 Peter 1:2, 18–19).
4. He would be rejected by many (Isa. 53:1, 3; John 12:37–38).
5. He would bear our sins and sorrows (Isa. 53:4–5; Rom. 4:25; 1 Peter 2:24–25).
6. He would die as our substitute (Isa. 53:6, 8; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18).
7. His substitutionary sacrifice was voluntary (Isa. 53:7–8; John 10:11; 19:30).
8. He would be silent before His accusers (Isa. 53:7–8; Matt. 26:63; 27:12–14; Mark 14:61; 15:5; Luke 23:9; John 19:9).
9. He would die for all sinners, but be buried in a rich man’s tomb (Isa. 53:9; Matt. 27:57–61; Luke 23:50–54; John 19:38–42).
10. He would eternally justify all who believe in Him (Isa. 53:10–11; John 3:16; Acts 16:31; 1 Peter 1:3–5).
11. He would die childless but have a multitude of spiritual offspring (Isa. 53:8, 10; Gal. 3:26–29).
12. He will richly reward all who follow Him (Isa. 53:12; Matt. 6:4, 6, 18; 10:42).

Conclusion

In this marvelous passage of Isaiah 53, the prophet Isaiah takes us from the birth of Christ to His death on the cross and into eternity future. Every major doctrine of the New Testament is anticipated in these twelve verses.

The fact that this was written over 700 years before the birth of Christ leaves no room for doubt about the identity of Jesus of Nazareth, or the purpose of His coming into the world. As I have stressed many times, prophecy proves inspiration, and history confirms prophecy, and the divine source of our Bible is beyond question.

To each and every soul on this earth, the ultimate question of life remains, “What will you do with Jesus, who is called Christ?” Your eternal destiny depends on how you answer this question for yourself. So, ***“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved”*** (Acts 16:31).