

4. ISAIAH 53 : THE CROSS DESCRIBED

About the Book of Isaiah

Written about 750 B.C. (estimates range 795-722 B.C.)

Mini-Bible, 66books, Chs 1-39, deal with law and judgment, Chs 40-66 deal with comfort, salvation and future glory.

Isaiah the prophet served under four Jewish kings and may have had a ministry that lasted 50-70 years. Isaiah was a married man. His wife was also a prophetess. They had two children. (Isaiah 8:18).

About the authenticity of the book of Isaiah itself:

Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament was written about **400 BC**.

So the completion of the Old Testament was about 400 BC in the time of Ezra.

The oldest available copies of the Old Testament books were about **900 A.D.**, which is 1,300 years from the completion of the last book of the OT. **The 'time gap' was about 1300 years.**

The Dead Sea Scrolls found in caves near the **Dead Sea, in 1947**, included scrolls of every book of the Old Testament except Esther, all copied prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., many of them dating from the first and second centuries B.C. **The most important of these scrolls was a leather scroll of the complete book of Isaiah which has been dated 100 to 200 B.C.**, hundreds of years older than any copy of Isaiah previously found! It had rested in the cave undisturbed for more than 2000 years. This copy varied from the generally accepted text of Isaiah only insignificantly. **What we are reading today, is the same as what we have from 200 B.C. In other words. the book of Isaiah remains essentially unchanged after more than 2000 years!!**

The time gap (700 B.C. to 200 B.C.) was just about 500 years.

Compare this with the time gap of the manuscripts we have of Greek philosophers like Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC) and Plato (424 BC - 347 BC) that have a time gap of 1,300 to 1,600 years. Their ancient writings have been accepted and classified as "unquestionably authentic" by historians. How much more then can we rely on the authenticity and accuracy of the Scriptures!

Behold, My Servant

Isaiah 52:13 Behold, My Servant ('ebed' = bondservant) **shall deal prudently** ('sawkal' = intelligently, wisely, and prosper); **He shall be exalted** ('room' = raise up, be high, *talking resurrection*) **and extolled** ('nawsaw' = to lift up, *talking about ascension*) **and be very high** ('gabah' = raised up to high places, *talking about exaltation*).

Isaiah chs 42-61 have several 'servant songs' where Isaiah speaks of 'the Servant of the Lord'.

The Hebrew for Servant is 'ebed'. Isaiah is speaking of 'ebed Adonai', the Servant of the Lord. Who was a 'bondservant'? An Israelite was unable to pay a debt, lost his land, etc. would come under an agreement to become a servant and to serve the person he owed money to, for a period of 6 years. The 7th year he would be released, and if possible, he would try to buy back his land. However, if the servant, because of how well he was treated and out of his own desire choose to continue as a servant, he would be given a special ear-ring, and he became a 'bondservant'. So a bondservant is someone who willingly, out of a sense of love and gratitude has chosen to live the rest of their lives doing the will of their master. Essentially, they have let of their own plans and ambitions and submitted themselves willingly to their master.

Isaiah foretold the resurrection, ascension and exaltation of Jesus Christ. We know this was fulfilled (Philippians 2:9-11).

His Visage Was Marred

Isaiah 52:14 Just as many were astonished (stun, grow numb) at you, So His visage (appearance) was marred (disfigured) more than any man, And His form (figure, appearance) more than the sons of men;

He Shall Sprinkle Many Nations

Isaiah 52:15 So shall He sprinkle many nations (gentile, nations). Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider.

sprinkle - has to do with the sprinkling of the blood on the sacrificial altar or on the people. it expresses the "throwing" or "sprinkling" of blood against the sacrificial altar or on the people atoning for sin. (This is also referenced in the New Testament Hebrews 9:19-22; Hebrews 10:22; Hebrews 11:28; 1 Peter 1:2; Hebrews 12:24)

Kings, leaders, rulers, heads of nations will stand in amazement at Jesus Christ.

They will see, hear and understand things they have never known - on His influence over many nations.

The Arm Of The LORD Revealed

Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

What a way to proceed to describe the news about the Messiah's crucifixion on the Cross.

Isaiah is referring to the prophetic message he is about to deliver about the Cross? People find it hard to believe. And yet this message is what reveals the "arm of the LORD", or the power of God.

Who really believed what we heard? Who saw in it the LORD'S great power? (Easy to Read Version)

Paul wrote that the Gospel is the power of God (Romans 1:16) and that the message of the Cross is both the wisdom of God and the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

John 12:36-43

36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,
38 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?"

39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

40 "HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HARDENED THEIR HEARTS, LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, LEST THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEARTS AND TURN, SO THAT I SHOULD HEAL THEM."

41 These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue;

43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Romans 10:16

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?"
The "report" here is the Gospel that is preached.

As A Tender Plant, A Root Out of Dry Ground

Isaiah 53:2 For He (the Servant) shall grow up before Him (God the Father) as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness (magnificence); And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.

before Him = under His watchful care,

as a tender plant = referring to God's hand of nurture and protection over the Messiah's childhood.

a root out of dry ground = coming up in difficult times

When we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him : He came without any pomp or show. He came with utter simplicity.

John 1:45-46

45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46 And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

Philippians 2:6-9

6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

2 Corinthians 8:9

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

A Man Of Sorrows And Grief

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised (scorned, to treat with contempt, to treat like a vile person) and rejected (abandoned, left aside) by men, A Man of sorrows ('makob' pain, affliction) and acquainted with grief (choliy = disease, sickness). And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

despised = the way Jesus was treated by the Roman soldiers, Jewish leaders

rejected, abandoned, left alone = even by His own closest disciples

John 1:10-11

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

(ERV) People made fun of him, and even his friends left him. He was a man who suffered a lot of pain and sickness. We treated him like someone of no importance, like someone people will not even look at but turn away from in disgust.

The Lord Jesus became a Man who suffered a lot of pain and sickness.

This does not mean His whole life He suffered pain and sickness. It was on the cross He became a Man who suffered a lot of pain and sickness.

It is interesting that Isaiah presented this aspect of Christ's work first.

He bore this so that we do not need to bear it.

He Bore Our Grievs And Carried Our Sorrows

Isaiah 53:4 Surely (firmly, certainly) He has borne ('nawsaw'=to life up, rise up, carry away, cast away) our griefs (choliy = disease, sickness) And carried our sorrows ('makob' pain, affliction); Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

Matthew 8:16-17

16 When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick,

17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND BORE OUR SICKNESSES."

Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

But we thought that God was punishing him, that God was beating him for something he did. (ERV)

For Our Peace

Isaiah 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions (sins, rebellion, trespasses), He was bruised (to beat to pieces, crushed) for our iniquities (perversity, evil, faults, guilt); The chastisement (punishment) for our peace ('shalom'=total wholeness) was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed ('rapha').

He took the punishment we deserved, and this brought us peace. We were healed because of his pain. (ERV)

Exodus 15:22-26 Jesus, The Tree Who Turns Our Bitter Into Sweet

The is where the Lord revealed Himself as Jehovah Rapha

1 Peter 2:24

who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

The Iniquity Of Us All

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid ('paga'= to fall upon, lay upon, also to entreat, to make intercession, to meet together) on Him the iniquity of us all.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

As A Sheep Before Its Shearers

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed (driven as an animal, harassed, distressed, painfully abused) and He was afflicted (deal hard, looked down upon, forced down, treated badly), Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

Matthew 27:12-14

12 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.
13 Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?"
14 But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

1 Peter 2:17-25

17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.
18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.
19 For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.
20 For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.
21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:
22 "WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH";
23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;
24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.
25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

From Prison And From Judgment

Isaiah 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

from prison (held overnight in the palace) and from judgment (before Pilate)
Matthew 27:27-37

With The Wicked And With The Rich

Isaiah 53:9 And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

made His grave with the wicked (died between two thieves)
with the rich at His death (Joseph of Arimathea a rich man pleaded for His body. Jesus was buried in the tomb that belonged to Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57-60)

He Shall See His Seed And Prolong His Days

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise (as in vs5, to beat to pieces, crushed) Him; He has put Him to grief ('khwlaw' = to make sick). When You make His soul an offering for sin ('an offering for sin' one word = sin offering,

trespass offering), He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

..He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days,..

A literal fulfillment (He arose to see His descendants):

Now the servant will live to see his own descendants. He did everything the LORD had planned. (CEV)

Even after giving himself as an offering for sin, he will see his descendants and enjoy a long life. He will succeed in doing what the LORD wanted. (ERV)

A figurative fulfillment (life came because of His offering Himself)

The plan was that he give himself as an offering for sin so that he'd see life come from it—life, life, and more life. And GOD's plan will deeply prosper through him. (MSG)

..And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand..

Shall Justify Many

Isaiah 53:11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.

(ERV) After his suffering he will see the light, and he will be satisfied with what he experienced.

(ESV) Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;

(GNB) After a life of suffering, he will again have joy; he will know that he did not suffer in vain.

(LITV) He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul; He shall be fully satisfied.

(MSG) Out of that terrible travail of soul, he'll see that it's worth it and be glad he did it.

sin had to be punished...His sacrifice completed the demands of God's justice toward sin..He was satisfied with what He did...

Romans 3:23-26

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,

By His wisdom, the Lord put to nought the wisdom of this world....

1 Corinthians 2:7-8

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

For He shall bear their iniquities.

A Portion With The Great

Isaiah 53:12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

(ERV) For this reason, I will treat him as one of my great people. I will give him the rewards of one who wins in battle, and he will share them with his powerful ones. I will do this because he gave his life for the people. He was considered a criminal, but the truth is, he carried away the sins of many. Now he will stand before me and speak for those who have sinned."

Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,
Christ triumphed at the Cross (Colossians 2:14-15; Hebrews 2:14) and entered into a place of honor at the right hand of the Father, exalted over all powers (Ephesians 1:20-21, Matthew 28:18).

..And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,...
Christ shares His triumph with us....we become "his powerful ones"...

...Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.
He interceded for us on the Cross. He still lives to make intercession for us.

Hebrews 7:25

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.