

The Man of Sorrows

Isaiah 53: 4-6

As I consider the Bible as a whole, there are specific chapters that seem to stand out above the rest. I do not imply these are any more inspired, or needful than the rest, but they are of such rich substance that I feel inadequate to enter their eternal standing. Among those deep and rich passages are John, chapter three, Romans, chapter eight, Philippians, chapter two, Hebrews, chapter ten, and of course, Isaiah, chapter fifty-three.

Isaiah penned these words some 700 years before the birth of Jesus, as he described the coming Christ would bear the sin of humanity and provide for our salvation. These eternal words would be fulfilled to the letter as Jesus offered Himself the atoning sacrifice for sin. It is said that Martin Luther so revered this chapter that he proclaimed it should be written on a parchment of gold, with the words being inscribed of pure diamonds.

As we look in on the [details](#) of this powerful passage, I would like to consider: [A Man of Sorrows](#). We discover first:

I. The Suffering of the Savior – Although written hundreds of years prior to the birth and crucifixion of Jesus, Isaiah’s prophetic words were fulfilled by Christ. He spoke of:

A. His Emotional Suffering (4a) – [Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows](#). Isaiah declared that Jesus would bear the grief of humanity and carry our sorrows as He faced the cross of Calvary. Bearing our griefs carries the idea of our “sickness,” and yet is also refers to the grief associated with sickness. Jesus bore the grief and sorrow of humanity as He walked upon this earth and prepared to face the cross. He endured the rejection of those who should have embraced Him, the mockery and ridicule of those He came to save. Jesus endured great emotional suffering for you and me! [Isaiah 53:3a – He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief](#).

B. His Physical Suffering (5a) – [But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities](#). We will discuss this further in a moment, but here we find that Isaiah prophesied of the physical abuse and suffering Jesus would endure as He offered Himself the atonement for our sin. His being wounded has the idea of “*being pierced physically unto death*.” The word bruised speaks of literally being “*crushed*.” Jesus endured such suffering for our transgressions and iniquities. We cannot imagine the physical pain and suffering Jesus endured prior to the cross and during the crucifixion.

C. His Spiritual Suffering (5a-5b, 6b) – *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.* ^[6b] *and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* I am convinced this would have been the most difficult suffering to endure. The holy, sinless, righteous Son of God endured the sin of humanity as He hung on the cross. Never had His fellowship been broken with the Father; there had never been a time when Jesus had known or committed sin. On the cross, Jesus bore our sin as the Father placed all our iniquity upon Him. Jesus became sin so we could be forgiven of sin and restored unto a right relationship with God. *2 Cor.5:21 – For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

II. The Substitution of the Savior – Not only did Isaiah prophecy of the great suffering Jesus would endure, he also spoke of Him assuming our place on the cross, literally becoming our substitute. Consider:

A. The Severity (4b) – *yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* As we consider the crucifixion, we think of the awful suffering Jesus endured at the hands of sinful men. No doubt, that was worse than any man ever endured, being beaten and humiliated beyond recognition. However, the physical abuse cannot compare to the judgment He endured on our behalf. God judged the sin of humanity in the body of His Son. The unfiltered wrath of holy God in judgment of sin was poured out upon Jesus. He was smitten by the Father as the substitutionary sacrifice for our sin! God judged our sin in the body of Christ our Lord.

B. The Penalty (5a-5c) – *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him.* Jesus died on the cross with purpose – to pay the sin debt for sin and redeem us from sin. Sin causes enmity with God. Because of sin, all are separated and condemned before God. Sin had to be atoned; the penalty of sin was death, and there had to be an offering to secure payment for sin. Jesus alone was worthy to provide such atonement. He endured the penalty of sin, which is death, in our place!

C. The Sovereignty (6b) – *and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Although Isaiah prophesied of Jesus' crucifixion hundreds of years before it happened, the majority failed to see the sovereignty involved. Most assumed Jesus was condemned and crucified because the Sanhedrin had convinced Pilate to condemn Him. The Lord did not endure the cross because men consented to His death. He was not at the mercy of His captors. He was crucified to fulfill the plan of redemption made before the foundation of the world. Jesus came to earth with purpose – to die for our sin. This was not some tragic mistake or accident. Jesus was there because this was the

sovereign plan of God. He alone was worthy to become the atoning sacrifice for sin and He willfully submitted to the plan of God to redeem us!

D. The Reality – As we consider the gracious substitution of Christ on the cross, we cannot miss the fact that He endured the horror and extreme suffering for us. Consider what Isaiah declared in this passage. [Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him. The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.](#) Jesus took our place! He died so we might live! The Son of God endured the wrath of the Father and tasted death so we could be forgiven and reconciled to God. He went to the cross for you and me!

III. The Salvation in the Savior – Isaiah spoke beautifully of Jesus' suffering and His substitutionary atonement for our sin. He also revealed the salvation afforded humanity through His suffering and sacrifice. Consider:

A. The Transgression (6a) – [All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way.](#) Isaiah declared truth that is reaffirmed multiple times throughout Scripture, particularly in the New Testament. We are born in sin; there are none righteous. Because of Adam's sin in the Garden, all are born with a sinful nature. [Rom.5:12 – Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.](#) This sinful nature we are born with separates us from God. Apart from the provision of God through the sacrifice of Christ, all remain in sin and accountable to God for their sin. We have all gone astray; we all seek the ways of the flesh, engaging in sin. The penalty for sin is death. All are sinners, and all needed a Savior to provide salvation to atone and redeem from sin!

B. The Transfer (6b) – [and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.](#) Isaiah lived in the Old Testament time, prior to Calvary, and yet he prophesied of grace. We were born in sin, condemned because of sin, and without hope. We had no way of obtaining the righteousness that God required. Thankfully, in His grace, God provided a way. He laid our guilt upon His sinless Son. The righteous Father willingly placed the sin of mankind on the Son and allowed Him to pay the price for our sin. The holy Christ bore our sin so we could be reconciled to God. Through His great sacrifice, dying for our sin on the cross, the righteousness of God was appeased as Christ offered Himself the atonement for sin!

C. The Transformation (5d) – *and with his stripes we are healed*. As Jesus died on the cross as the sacrifice for our sin, the Father was pleased, and sin was atoned. Salvation was provided for all who look to Christ in repentance and faith. Through His gracious sacrifice, we have the opportunity for salvation and reconciliation to God. Those who are in Christ, saved by His grace, are now viewed as righteous in the eyes of God. We are justified, literally declared righteous, through the finished work of Christ on the cross. Truly, we are healed of sin and death through the suffering and sacrifice of Christ on the cross! The Father laid our sin upon the Son, judging our sin in His body as He died on the cross, and the Father imputes the righteousness of Christ to those who come to Him by faith unto salvation! *Rom.5:8-10 – But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* ^[9] *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.* ^[10] *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* 1 Peter 2:24-25 – *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.* ^[25] *For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*

Conclusion: While I admit I lack the wisdom and comprehension to adequately deal with this gracious and powerful passage of Scripture, I am thankful for the truth it reveals and the promise it assures. Clearly, we were all guilty of sin and condemned to death and judgment. Christ endured much suffering as He took our place, being our substitute, and obtaining salvation for all who come to Him by faith. There is no reason for anyone to remain accountable for sin, condemned to eternal death and judgment.

Do you have a personal relationship with Christ? Have you repented of sin and believed in the finished work of Christ by faith? If you are yet unsaved, there is no need to remain accountable to God for sin, facing His righteous judgment. Jesus paid the price to secure your salvation. Come to Him in repentance and faith!