

FAITH SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

July 31, 2011

“The Suffering Servant”

Focal Passages: Isaiah 53

Cross References: Isaiah 52;

Leviticus 16:21-22;

John 12:37-43;

Romans 1:16-17; 3:21-26; Hebrews 4:15-16; 1 John 2:1-2

Central Idea: Seven hundred years before Jesus was born, Isaiah received a prophecy about His suffering for the sins of mankind.

Lesson Idea: As we read of God’s plan for Jesus to die for our sins, we should praise God and dedicate our lives to serving Jesus Christ.

Background:

Isaiah was a prophet of the southern kingdom of Judah during the years around 740-700 B.C.. Isaiah was instrumental in helping Hezekiah to depend on the Lord for deliverance of Jerusalem against the Assyrians in 701 B.C..

Isaiah has been called “the Messianic prophet” (see Halley), because so much of his prophecy foretold the coming Messiah and the work He would accomplish as the “Suffering Servant” of the Lord. The New Testament declares that “Isaiah saw the glory of Christ, and spoke of Him” (John 12:41). He is quoted in the New Testament more than any other book of the Old Testament.

About Isaiah 53 Halley writes:

It is a picture of the suffering Savior. It begins at 52:13 and is so vivid in detail that one would almost think of Isaiah as standing at the foot of the cross. It is so clear in his mind that he speaks of it in the past tense, as if it had already happened. Yet it was written seven centuries before Jesus’ death on Calvary. It cannot possibly fit any person in history other than Christ. (Halley, p. 388)

Bible in a Year Readings

July 24-31, 2011

Jul 24: Is 35-36

Jul 25: Is 37-39; Ps 76

Jul 26: Is 40-43

Jul 27: Is 44-48

Jul 28: 2King 18:9-19:37;

Ps 46/80/135

Jul 29: Is 49-53

Jul 30: Is 54-58

Jul 31: Is 59-63

Highlights of the Week:

- Isaiah 36-37: Assyrians attack and are miraculously destroyed
- Isa 38: 15 more years for Hezekiah
- Isa 39: Hezekiah shows off his treasures
- Isa 40: Comfort, o comfort, My people
- Isa 41: Do not fear, for I am with you.
- Isa 42: The Servant of the Lord
- Isa 43: I have called you by name; you are Mine!
- Isa 44: Blessings for Israel

- Isa 45: God will use Cyrus
- Isa 49: Salvation to the end of the Earth
- Isa 50: God helps His Servant
- Isa 52: The Exalted Servant
- Isa 53: The Suffering Servant
- Isa 55: Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters
- Isa 56: Rewards for obedience
- Isa 58: The fasting that God chooses
- Isa 59: Confession of sin
- Isa 60-62: a Glorified Zion

Isaiah 53:1-3 *He was despised and forsaken*

1 *Who has believed our message?*

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

2 *For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground;*

He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him,

Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.

3 *He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;*

And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

DISCUSSION:

- Read Isaiah 52. What does Isa 52:7 say is lovely?
- What does Isa 52:13-15 prophesy will happen?
- How does the question in Isa 53:1 relate to that prophecy?
- Read John 12:37-43. How does John apply this passage to Jesus?
- How do you feel when people you know do not believe the message about Jesus?
- Why do people not believe the message about Jesus and what can we do about it?
- The “arm of the LORD” is a phrase that refers to the power of God. How does the message about Jesus reveal the power of God? (see Romans 1:16-17)
- What do v 2-3 say about the human condition of the Suffering Servant (Jesus)?
- Why would God allow His Servant (His Son, Jesus) to be treated the way described in v 3?

Isaiah 53:4-6 *He was pierced for our transgressions*

4 *Surely our griefs He Himself bore,*

And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 *But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.*

6 *All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.*

DISCUSSION:

- The word “surely” presents a contrast between what men had not “esteemed” and what Jesus truly did when He came to earth. Though men “despised” Him, He was here on our behalf. What did Jesus do for us according to v 4-6?

- Though Isaiah lived 700 years before Jesus fulfilled these verses, the use of the first person plural point of view in this passage (we ourselves, our, us, etc.) gives a universal feel to these verses. How do these verses apply to all people of all time?
- The description of the punishment the Suffering Servant would receive is remarkable in reference to the way Jesus suffered. How did Jesus' trials and death fulfill these verses?
- NOTE: Crucifixion was not invented by the Persians until 400 years after Isaiah wrote. And yet it involved both "piercing" and "crushing" (as the weight of one's own body would eventually crush the lungs). How do these verses support the reliability of God's Word?
- What benefits do we derive from Jesus' suffering? Praise Him for each one.
- Our "well-being" and "healing" are guaranteed through His "chastening" and "scourging." And though God often brings about physical healing as we pray in Jesus' name, this guarantee is for our spiritual well-being and healing. How do you experience the spiritual "well-being" in your daily life?
- Why did all of our iniquity have to fall on Jesus? (NOTE: Read Lev 16:21-22 and think about how Jesus also fulfilled the picture of the scapegoat in atoning for Israel's sin)

Isaiah 53:7-9

He did not open His mouth

7 *He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.*

8 *By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?*

9 *His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.*

DISCUSSION:

- When Jesus was on trial, Pilate was amazed that He did not defend Himself. How did Isaiah foretell this?
- Isaiah says that he was "taken away by oppression and judgment." Oppression implies something illegal or cruel. How was Jesus' death both illegal and cruel?
- According to v 8 who really deserved to be punished?
- How did Jesus' death and burial fulfill the prophecy of v 9? (HINT: Think about who He died along side of and whose grave he was buried in.)
- How does Peter apply this passage in 1 Peter 1:21-25?

Isaiah 53:10-12

He will justify the many

10 *But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.*

11 *As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.*

12 *Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.*

DISCUSSION:

- The NIV translates v 10 as "Yet it was the LORD's will to crush Him..." Why was the LORD "pleased" to crush Jesus?
- How does the LORD's will in Jesus' crucifixion demonstrate His grace rather than cruelty?
- The "He" in v 11 could refer to either the LORD (God the Father) or to the Suffering Servant (Jesus the Son). In what ways could the idea of "satisfaction" apply to each of them?
- How could v 10-11 also be a reference to the resurrection of Jesus?

- In v 11 “By His knowledge” could also be translated as “by knowledge of Him.” How does “knowledge of Jesus” result in salvation? (HINT: remember there is a difference between “knowing about” someone and actually “knowing” that one.)
- Read Romans 3:21-26. How does this passage and Isaiah 53:11 explain how justification comes? (by the way, what is “justification?”)
- Compare v 12 with Philippians 2:5-11. The phrase “he poured out Himself to death” is very similar to “he emptied Himself” in Phil 2:7. In fact some scholars believe that it is based on this verse in Isaiah.
- How does Isaiah 53:12 sum up the work of Jesus Christ?
- How do you feel knowing that Jesus interceded for you as a transgressor? (see Hebrews 4:15-16; 1 John 2:1-2)

APPLICATION

- Praise God for His tremendous salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

New American Standard Bible. La Habra, CA : The Lockman Foundation, 1986