

Isaiah 53-56

- This is the fourth and most important of the "Servant" passages within Second Isaiah
 - The first section was Isaiah 42:1-4 - mission of the Messiah
 - The second was Isaiah 49:1-13 - the trials of that mission
 - The third was Isaiah 50:4-9 - the suffering of the Servant
 - The fourth began at the end of 52:13 and continues into chapter 53

"The profoundest thoughts in the Old Testament revelation are to be found in this section. It is a vindication of the Servant, so clear and so true, and wrought out with such a pathos and potency, that it holds first place in Messianic prophecy." - George Robinson

- Also, remember that we saw in Isaiah 51 the reference to the arm of Jehovah
 - If you remember this was a reference to Christ, Who is the arm of the Lord
 - The "arm" and Jehovah are two different entities in the text
 - Remember from last time that when the Gentiles people look upon arm of the Lord, they see salvation (Yeshua)
 - Finally, we saw Isaiah proclaim that God's people wouldn't be redeemed with money
 - But the statement suggests they will be redeemed but in a different way
 - This chapter describes how that redemption takes place
 - To get the full sense of the death as it's portrayed in the text, let's read the entire Servant song, beginning with the end of 52

Is. 52:13 ¶ Behold, My servant will prosper,
He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.
Is. 52:14 Just as many were astonished at you, My people,
So His appearance was marred more than any man
And His form more than the sons of men.

Is. 52:15 Thus He will sprinkle many nations,
 Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him;
 For what had not been told them they will see,
 And what they had not heard they will understand.

- Looking at the passage, we read the final three verses of Chapter 52 last week, and they are a mini outline of the chapter to follow
 - Christ will be exalted (though at first He seems to fail)
 - But not before His appearance is marred more than any other man
 - In the end, He will rule over the nations
- Now chapter 53
 - There are 80 references to Isaiah in the NT...most come from this single chapter

Is. 53:1 ¶ Who has believed our message?
 And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

Is. 53:2 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.

Is. 53:3 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.

Is. 53:4 ¶ Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
 And our sorrows He carried;
 Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
 Smitten of God, and afflicted.

Is. 53:5 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.

Is. 53:6 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.

Is. 53:7 ¶ 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.

Is. 53:8 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?

Is. 53:9 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.

Is. 53:10 ¶ 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.

- Keeping in mind all that was written here was prepared centuries before Christ's arrival
 - Ironically, some Bible critics have tried to discount the possibility that this book was actually written by Isaiah because of its accuracy
 - They say that because the book was so accurate in foretelling future events, it must have been written afterward
- The next thing to note is that chapter 53 describes both a near term fulfillment and a long term fulfillment
 - The near term is Christ's crucifixion and death
 - The long term view is the end of Tribulation when the Jewish nation comes to know Christ as Messiah and turns to Him in faith
 - In vs.1-10 we have the near term fulfillment
 - For example, Isaiah gives a vivid description of Jesus in His human form
 - A root from parched ground, a reference back to Isaiah 11 and the root of Jesse
 - Not from David, the King, but from Jesse the unremarkable one

- A man without remarkable form or appearance
 - An ordinary Joe
 - It's easy for us to imagine Jesus in a form so naturally attractive that we assume we would have seen His divinity with our eyes
 - Isaiah says God chose a plain appearance for Christ
 - He was probably a little shorter than you assume
 - And more than plain, He repelled men

In Israel today, orthodox Jews hold the name of Jesus in contempt. His true name is Yeshua, but orthodox Jews have taken to calling Him Yeshu, which is a word made up of the first three Hebrew initials in a line of Hebrew, which reads "May His Name and Memory Be Blotted Out." - Fruchtenbaum

- Why did God chose such a humble appearance
 - Because no flesh will be glorified
 - This has always been His pattern
 - Remember, the nation chose a king in Saul who looked the part
 - Meanwhile, the right king for Israel was a young shepherd boy
 - No doubt Jesus' appearance challenged the faith of Israel all the more in that they didn't see a mighty figure
 - Remember God will often call the unlikely man or woman to serve Him...don't judge on appearances
- Look at the remaining details of His life
 - Despised and forsaken (v.3)
 - Not merely on the cross, but in His ministry and probably before, as a man from Nazareth
 - Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief
 - The Hebrew word for sorrows is pains and the Hebrew for grief is disease

- He was acquainted with pain and disease
 - Whether in Himself or others
- He grieved over the loss of friends, including Lazarus
- He grieved over Joseph's death at some point
- He grieved in His own death of course
- In vs.4-6, you have a mini version of Romans
 - If you've ever heard it suggested, as I have, that the doctrine of substitutionary atonement is only a New Testament invention of Paul
 - Then consider vs.4-6 of this chapter
 - He bore our grief, our iniquity fell on Him and we are healed
- Then in vs.7-10, the death of Christ is described
 - But more than the process, Isaiah also describes the purpose
 - Christ was silent and like a sheep, predicting the Messiah's willingness to go to death
 - His life was taken by oppression and judgment
 - And His own generation has no idea what's happening (v.8)
 - His grave was with criminals (hanging on a cross with the thieves)
 - But Jesus was ultimately buried in a rich man's tomb (Joseph of Arimathia)
 - And Jesus was innocent (v.9)
 - Who brought the Messiah to this end? The Father
 - But the Lord will bring Christ to see His offspring and prolong His days
- That was the near term prophecy, in all its perfect accuracy
- Now the long term prophecy is clearly seen in v.12

Is. 53:11 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.

Is. 53:12 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.

- Ultimately, Jesus is victorious over death and receives His reward and divides it with the strong, those He has redeemed
 - Looking back over the entire passage, we can see further evidence that this passage looks into the distant future
 - Specifically to the moment Israel turns to Christ and calls out for Jesus

Zeck. 12:9 "And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Zeck. 12:10 ¶ "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

- Remember that prophecy...now compare it to the first person statements on Isaiah 53 starting in v.2
 - Look at all the first person pronouns
 - This is Israel speaking from the first person during the last moments of Tribulation
- And what happens in response to Israel's cry out to the Lord at that moment?

Is. 54:1 ¶ "Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child;
 Break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed;
 For the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous
 Than the sons of the married woman," says the LORD.

Is. 54:2 "Enlarge the place of your tent;
 Stretch out the curtains of your dwellings, spare not;
 Lengthen your cords
 And strengthen your pegs.

Is. 54:3 "For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left.
 And your descendants will possess nations
 And will resettle the desolate cities.

Is. 54:4 ¶ "Fear not, for you will not be put to shame;
 And do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced;
 But you will forget the shame of your youth,
 And the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.

Is. 54:5 "For your husband is your Maker,
 Whose name is the LORD of hosts;
 And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel,
 Who is called the God of all the earth.

Is. 54:6 "For the LORD has called you,
 Like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,
 Even like a wife of one's youth when she is rejected,"
 Says your God.

Is. 54:7 "For a brief moment I forsook you,
 But with great compassion I will gather you.

Is. 54:8 "In an outburst of anger
 I hid My face from you for a moment,
 But with everlasting lovingkindness I will have compassion on you,"
 Says the LORD your Redeemer.

Is. 54:9 ¶ "For this is like the days of Noah to Me,
 When I swore that the waters of Noah
 Would not flood the earth again;
 So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you
 Nor will I rebuke you.

Is. 54:10 "For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake,
 But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you,
 And My covenant of peace will not be shaken,"
 Says the LORD who has compassion on you.

Is. 54:11 ¶ "O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted,
 Behold, I will set your stones in antimony,
 And your foundations I will lay in sapphires.

Is. 54:12 "Moreover, I will make your battlements of rubies,
 And your gates of crystal,
 And your entire wall of precious stones.

Is. 54:13 "All your sons will be taught of the LORD;
 And the well-being of your sons will be great.

Is. 54:14 "In righteousness you will be established;
 You will be far from oppression, for you will not fear;
 And from terror, for it will not come near you.

Is. 54:15 "If anyone fiercely assails you it will not be from Me.

Whoever assails you will fall because of you.

Is. 54:16 "Behold, I Myself have created the smith who blows the fire of coals

And brings out a weapon for its work;

And I have created the destroyer to ruin.

Is. 54:17 " No weapon that is formed against you will prosper;

And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn.

This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,

And their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD.

- What a beautiful song sung by the Lord to Israel in response to their sorrow over piercing their Messiah
 - The Lord is truly full of mercy, even to Israel who rejected His Son
 - One note worth making of that passage is in v.17
 - Have you heard v.17 quoted in other contexts before?
 - Perhaps in conjunction with a Christian or the Church?
 - Considering how it appears in Isaiah, we should be very careful to apply this passage broadly to anyone other than Israel
 - While it may be true that those in faith expect a similar vindication upon our resurrection
 - Proper Biblical scholarship must separate interpretation from application
 - The proper interpretation of this verse is that God is speaking to Israel and about Israel alone
 - But a reasonable application of this verse would be that God makes similar assurances to Gentiles believers
 - Isaiah's next two chapters record another beautiful sonnet from God
 - This time to audience is both Jew and Gentile, all men
 - It's His invitation to salvation, first to the Jew in chapter 55 and then to the Gentile in 56

Is. 55:1 ¶ "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters;
 And you who have no money come, buy and eat.
 Come, buy wine and milk
 Without money and without cost.

Is. 55:2 "Why do you spend money for what is not bread,
 And your wages for what does not satisfy?
 Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,
 And delight yourself in abundance.

Is. 55:3 "Incline your ear and come to Me.

Listen, that you may live;
 And I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
 According to the faithful mercies shown to David.

Is. 55:4 "Behold, I have made him a witness to the peoples,
 A leader and commander for the peoples.

Is. 55:5 "Behold, you will call a nation you do not know,
 And a nation which knows you not will run to you,
 Because of the LORD your God, even the Holy One of Israel;
 For He has glorified you."

Is. 55:6 ¶ Seek the LORD while He may be found;
 Call upon Him while He is near.

Is. 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way
 And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
 And let him return to the LORD,
 And He will have compassion on him,
 And to our God,
 For He will abundantly pardon.

Is. 55:8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
 Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD.

Is. 55:9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
 So are My ways higher than your ways
 And My thoughts than your thoughts.

Is. 55:10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
 And do not return there without watering the earth
 And making it bear and sprout,
 And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;

Is. 55:11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth;
 It will not return to Me empty,
 Without accomplishing what I desire,
 And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

Is. 55:12 "For you will go out with joy
 And be led forth with peace;
 The mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you,
 And all the trees of the field will clap their hands.

Is. 55:13 "Instead of the thorn bush the cypress will come up,
 And instead of the nettle the myrtle will come up,
 And it will be a memorial to the LORD,
 For an everlasting sign which will not be cut off."

- This chapter makes an invitation to Israel that they might receive this Suffering Servant
 - The open invitation uses three drinks to picture the receiving of this spiritual life
 - Water is for refreshment, wine for enjoyment and milk for nourishment
 - A reflection of three benefits of our relationship with the Lord
 - But notice none of this can come through a purchase
 - For we have no money to buy these things
 - It must come by grace, an invitation
 - Christ's own words in Matthew 11 echo this statement

Matt. 11:28 ¶ "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

Matt. 11:29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.

Matt. 11:30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

- The answer is found in an everlasting covenant, the New Covenant
 - And this is assured by the mercies shown to David
 - Meaning that the same God who assured David concerning His descendant ruling on a throne is giving a similar assurance to us
- In v.5 we see that this chapter is speaking to Israel
 - As a nation they will see a foreign nation run to them because of a calling
 - This is a prophecy of how the saved nation of Israel will attract the Gentile nations of the kingdom

- As chief nation on the earth, Israel receives streams of Gentiles coming to the temple
- Then before it's too late for each person, call upon the Lord and seek Him
 - Repent, turn to the Lord and He will have compassion
 - The gospel message again
- Finally, consider vs.10-12 in their context
 - No doubt we've heard Isaiah 55:11 quoted many times
 - God's word will not go forth from His mouth and not return empty
 - The context of the second part of Second Isaiah has been the Suffering Servant doing the Father's bidding to bring a people back to God
 - The Servant is the Word, according to John 1
 - It would seem that in the context, the meaning of this passage is directly at the Son Himself going out and not returning without accomplishing the Father's purpose concerning Israel
 - And of course, that same principle holds true for God's word
 - What God proclaims will come to pass
 - And the proof will be seen in an Israel that will bloom again in new ways

Is. 56:1 ¶ Thus says the LORD,
 "Preserve justice and do righteousness,
 For My salvation is about to come
 And My righteousness to be revealed.

Is. 56:2 "How blessed is the man who does this,
 And the son of man who takes hold of it;
 Who keeps from profaning the sabbath,
 And keeps his hand from doing any evil."

Is. 56:3 Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say,
 "The LORD will surely separate me from His people."
 Nor let the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree."

Is. 56:4 For thus says the LORD,
 "To the eunuchs who keep My sabbaths,
 And choose what pleases Me,
 And hold fast My covenant,

Is. 56:5 To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial,
And a name better than that of sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off.

Is. 56:6 ¶ "Also the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
To minister to Him, and to love the name of the LORD,
To be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the sabbath
And holds fast My covenant;

Is. 56:7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain
And make them joyful in My house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar;
For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."

Is. 56:8 The Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares,
"Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered."

Is. 56:9 ¶ All you beasts of the field,
All you beasts in the forest,
Come to eat.

Is. 56:10 His watchmen are blind,
All of them know nothing.
All of them are mute dogs unable to bark,
Dreamers lying down, who love to slumber;

Is. 56:11 And the dogs are greedy, they are not satisfied.
And they are shepherds who have no understanding;
They have all turned to their own way,
Each one to his unjust gain, to the last one.

Is. 56:12 "Come," they say, "let us get wine, and let us drink heavily of strong drink;
And tomorrow will be like today, only more so."

- Now the invitation is extended to the Gentile
 - In vs.1-2 the invitation for salvation is repeated
 - And in v.3 the audience for this repeated offer is identified
 - Isaiah talks about not profaning the sabbath
 - Understanding that the Sabbath is Christ for the believer'
 - We rest in Christ's work, so our Sabbath is perpetual in Christ
 - Therefore, to believe in Christ is to observe the Sabbath today
 - Then Isaiah talks about two groups of Gentiles who now have hope to attach themselves to the assembly of Israel
 - Here's evidence of Gentiles grafted into the root of Israel

- First the foreigner in v.3 and the eunuch in v.4
 - Those who observes the Sabbath (in Christ) can now have entrance into the assembly of Israel
- Why these two groups?
 - There is another time that two groups like this are mentioned together in the OT
 - Deut 23:

Deut. 23:1 ¶ "No one who is emasculated or has his male organ cut off shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

Deut. 23:2 "No one of illegitimate birth shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of his descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

Deut. 23:3 " No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the LORD,

Deut. 23:4 because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you.

- In this passage, the Ammonites and Moabites, decedents of Lot are banned from entering the assembly of the Israel
 - The assembly specifically referred to a participation in Temple services
 - They might become a faithful follower of YHWH but they still had to wait until the tenth generation before they could participate in the Temple services
- Now by faith in Christ, this prohibition has been removed (v.7)
 - Remember Acts 8 when Phillip meets the Ethiopian eunuch on the road?
 - That encounter is provided in Acts to demonstrate how this prophecy of Isaiah was coming true
 - Remember what the Eunuch was reading? Isaiah 53
 - And immediately afterward, the Eunuch asks what prevents me from being baptized? The sense of the question is in relationship to the lifting of this prohibition

- The original prohibition was given under the Mosaic Law, but now that we are under the Law of Christ, grace is made available to everyone
 - For what Law couldn't do, grace will do
- Also notice in v.7 that their attaching to Israel will allow them to come to the Temple, which is the Temple of the Millennial reign
- Finally, vs.9-12 give us a transition to the final chapter of the second part of Second Isaiah
 - Isaiah turns his attention back to the corrupt leadership of Israel who leads the Jewish people astray and against their Messiah
 - This reminds us of the way the Pharisees convince the people of Israel that Jesus is possessed by Satan Himself
 - And as a result, the nation is devoured by Gentile nations (Rome in AD 70) called "beasts"
 - And the cause for this calamity are the corrupt Jewish leaders
 - This is a transition to the final chapter where Isaiah returns to condemning the evil in Israel that stands opposed to God and His Suffering Servant