

The Suffering Servant



Identification (Part 2)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, sharing with you precious truths and insights out of Scripture that have made the difference between success and failure in my life, and can do the same in yours.

Today I'm going to speak about the ultimate purpose for which Jesus became the Son of Man, just how God's purpose could only be fulfilled in this way. Even the closest disciples of Jesus failed to understand this purpose until after his death and resurrection. Nevertheless, the whole plan of God was unfolded in amazing detail and accuracy by the prophet Isaiah 700 years before it was actually fulfilled in history. This prophetic revelation is contained in Isaiah, chapter 53. In my message I'm going to read that entire chapter, but I'm going to read it in four successive sections, each section containing three verses. I'll begin now with the first three verses of Isaiah 53:

> "Who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? [He, that's the arm of the Lord, this person] He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not." (NIV)

Let's pick out just a few of the main features of that part of the prophetic revelation, see how they apply to Jesus.

First of all, we're warned right at the beginning against unbelief. "Who has believed our message," that's very important. The great barrier to understanding this is unbelief. And then we see that a person is unfolded who's called, "the arm of the Lord." The arm of the Lord is that part of the God, if I may use that phrase, with which he acts, with which he operates, with which he performs His will. So this person is somehow God's main instrument to perform His will.

And then it speaks about his own frailty, "he was like a tender shoot." And you remember in my talk yesterday I emphasized

how the type of bar anush, Son of Man in a Aramaic, particularly focusing on human frailty. And then it speaks about the spiritual barrenness of the situation, "he was like a root out of a dry ground." And then it emphasizes his humility as a person and also his social humility, he was not a prince, he was not a ruler, he was not from the priestly tribe or caste, he was just a humble man; he had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him. Furthermore, he went lower still, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering."

Then we go on to the next three verses, verse 4, 5, and 6, about this same person, this bar anush, this Son of Man:

> "Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrow, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (NIV)

This passage particularly emphasizes that the sufferings of Jesus on the cross so vividly described there were substitutionary, it was not for his own sake. It's emphasized all the way through, "he took our infirmities", that first phrase in chapter 4, "surely he took up our infirmities." The Hebrew language used particularly emphasizes the "he," there's a form of speech I won't go into which places all the emphasis on the "he,", "He took all our infirmities," "he was pierced for transgressions, he was crushed for iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him," "we all have gone astray," "the Lord has laid on him the iniquity on us all." So we see that everything that came upon Jesus on the cross, it was not that it was due to Him, it was due to us, the judgment, the punishment, the humiliation, the shame. But though it is due to us by divine appointment, it came upon Him, upon Jesus. Where it says "the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all," that Hebrew word that has "laid on" means has made to meet together. So the shame, the sin, the rebellion and all the evil consequences thereon, were made by God to meet upon Jesus. He became the last Adam, as I said in my talk yesterday. In Him the entire evil inheritance due to the sin of Adamic race was exhausted. He left nothing that He did not take upon Himself. He bore every burden, he was totally our substitute, he was our God-appointed representative, Son of Man, bearing in Himself the imperfect nature of humanity, and all humanity's problems, griefs, and agony.

I'm going on with Isaiah, chapter 53, verses 7, 8, and 9:

> "He [this Son of Man] was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment, he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth."

There are various things emphasized there, all of which applied with perfect accuracy to the trial and the death of Jesus. First of all his innocence is consistently emphasized. It says in the closing verse,"he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth." Also it's emphasized that he did not attempt to defend himself or to plead his own cause, "as a sheep before her shearers is silent so he did not open his mouth", he did not justify himself, he did not defend himself, he was the lamb laid willingly to the slaughter.

Then it's emphasized that his trial was unjust by oppression and judgment he was taken away. It was a judgment but it was a judgment of oppression, it was unjust. And it emphasizes that he died, he was cut off from the land of the living but he didn't die for himself. "For the transgression of my people," Isaiah says, "he was stricken." And then with amazing accuracy it gives the details of his death. It says "he was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death," but the remarkable fact is that in the original Hebrew the word "wicked" is in the plural but the word "rich" is singular. True enough in the record of the gospels, Jesus was crucified with the two thieves, the two wicked men, but then his tomb was the tomb of Joseph Arimathea, the one rich man. So we see every detail, exactly fulfilled in Jesus.

Now we go onto the last three verses which sum it all up, Isaiah 53, verses 10, 11, and 12:

> "Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his soul [or his] life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he

> poured out his life [or his soul] unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (NIV)

We see that although there was oppression and injustice, yet it was the fulfillment of God's purpose, it was the Lords' will to crush him, God had foreordained that it should be this way.

Then we see by implication his resurrection, it's already spoken of his death, but it says after his death "he will see his offspring and prolong his days," that's after death. And then it says in the next verse "he will see the light of life and be satisfied." And then it's emphasized that all this was to justify many to acquit them of their guilt. Says "my righteous servant will justify many," and then it goes on to say "he will bear their iniquities." That's how justification or righteousness or acquittal is made possible to us by the knowledge of Jesus. The Lord's righteous servant bore our iniquities, suffered our punishment, and therefore turned away the wrath and judgment of God from us. It says also "he poured out his life [or his soul] unto death." That's so vivid because in the Old Testament it says "the soul of a life of the flesh is in the blood" and on the cross Jesus poured out his whole life his entire blood as the sinners substitute. It says also that he "was numbered with the transgressors", we pointed out already that he was crucified with the thief. And finally that he made intercession for the transgressors. And that began even while he was on the cross. He said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." So you see how perfectly accurate in every detail is this amazing picture of Messiah suffering, the sufferings of the Son of Man given 700 years before it took place.

Well our time is up for today, I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll return to this prophetic picture in Isaiah and show you just how God's plan is perfectly fulfilled.

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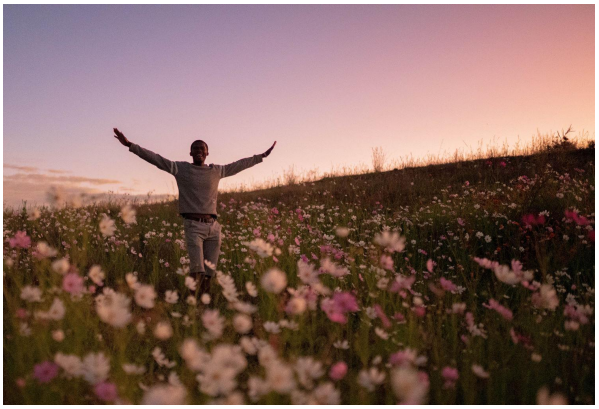

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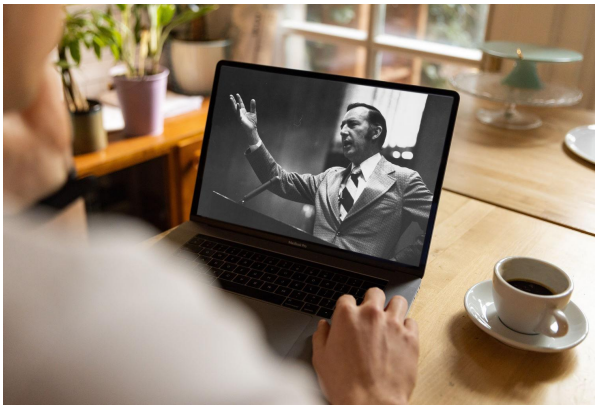

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