

# Isaiah 53

by John Hunter

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*The sermon explores the themes of humiliation and exaltation, suffering and death, substitution and salvation, and triumph and dominion in Isaiah 53, highlighting the significance of God's Servant, Jesus Christ, in bringing salvation to humanity.*

**Duration:** 41:11

**Scripture:** Isaiah 52:13, Isaiah 52:15 - 53:1, Isaiah 53:4-6, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Substitutionary Atonement", "Divine Salvation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the prophet decodes the concepts of substitution and salvation. He explains that the suffering servant, who is identified as the Lord Jesus Christ, took on our griefs and sorrows. He was wounded and ruined for our transgressions and inequities. The prophet emphasizes that all of humanity has gone astray and turned to their own ways, but the Lord laid the iniquity of everyone on the suffering servant. The sermon concludes with God affirming that it pleased Him to bruise the servant.

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## Transcript

The reading and exposition will begin at verse 13 of chapter 52. I have before me to speak to you on this Song of the Sabbath, one of Isaiah's songs about Christ. The passage is well known.

That can create problems. We read it, and it passes through our minds, because we think we know it all. I want to take time in my reading to begin with to make certain expository remarks as I go through.

I want to place before all of you what I hope are some considerations, maybe a little original, on this passage. Now, the passage, the last three verses of 52, the twelve verses of 53, bring before us five stanzas of three verses each. In each of these stanzas there are different speakers.

I will indicate the speakers to you. I will indicate reading ideas in each verse, make a number of remarks, and then I'll spend the rest of the time expounding main ideas in the verses. Now, I can't touch everything, but I hope there'll be a basis in your soul today concerning the person and work and glory of Christ.

Verse 13 of chapter 52, God himself is speaking. Behold, my servant shall deal cruelly. He shall be exalted and extolled and be very happy.

Verse 14, the first sentence, God addresses Christ personally. As many as were astonished at thee. The opening of verse 15, please.

So shall he sprinkle or astonish many nations. You can see the connection between as and so. As many as were astonished at thee in his humiliation, so shall he astonish many in his glory.

The words in between should be in brackets. His visage was so mad, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. And in that passage, God is telling you what he saw as to Christ.

Verse 15, so shall he sprinkle or astonish many nations. The kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them shall receive, and that which they had not heard shall they consider. Notice please, God is speaking.

Victory through humiliation is the theme. Verse 13, the window of the serpent, he shall act wisely. Verse 14, the humiliation of the serpent, many shall be astonished at him in the day of his humiliation.

Verse 15, the glory of the serpent, when he comes in a future day. Now, verses 1 to 3 of chapter 53, and the nation is speaking, looking back to the days of their unbelief. The verses tell us what Christ was before God and before man.

Verse 1, you have to read our report. And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed. The arm of the Lord is a divine title.

More about that later. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire.

He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hate as it were our faces from him. He was despised and we see him not. What he was before God and before man.

Verse 1, the serpent revealed as the arm of Jehovah. Verse 2, the serpent revealed as the plant and the root. Verse 3, the serpent revealed as the man of sorrows and grief's acquaintance.

Or if you like, verse 1, the message rejected. We have to read our report. Verse 2, the serpent rejected.

Verse 3, the serpent despised. Now verses 4 to 6. The prophet is speaking. He has before him substitution and salvation.

Surely he hath borne our grief and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions.

He was ruined for our iniquities. The justicement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we appealed. All we like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Verse 4, the leading idea, confession.

Verse 5, the leading idea, substitution. Verse 6, the leading idea, sin bearing. You will notice please in verse 6. All we like sheep have gone astray collectively.

We have turned every one individually to our own way. But Jehovah hath made to meet upon him the iniquity of us all. Verses 7 to 9, death and burial.

The prophet is speaking. He was oppressed and he was afflicted. Yet he opened not his mouth.

He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep before us shearers is done, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken to God's prison and conjecture.

Who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.

Because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Death and burial. Verse 7, the servant of the uncomplaining sufferer.

He opened not his mouth. Verse 8, the servant in his violent death. He was cut off out of the land of the living.

Verse 9, the servant in relation to his burial. You will notice verse 9 carefully. Should read like this.

Man appointed his grave with the wicked. That is, they would make his grave testify to his association with criminals. The two themes.

Man appointed his grave with the wicked, but he was with the rich, singular, in his death, plural. What that means I shall indicate in the exposition. For who, the rich man, is Joseph of Arimathea.

He was with the rich in his death. The reason for that was this. Because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

The tomb will bear witness to the moral excellence of the servant. Finally, please, verses 10 to 12. Triumph and dominion.

God, sorry, that's 10, the prophet is speaking. Verses 11 and 12, God is speaking to close the psalm as he began. Verse 10.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him. He had put him to grief. Then the prophet looks up into the face of God.

When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Now God speaks. He shall seal the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.

By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many. For he shall bear their liquidate. Therefore will I divide his affliction with the grave.

And he shall divide the spoil with the straw. Because he hath poured out his soul unto death. And he was numbered with the transgressors.

And he bear the sin of man. And the intercession for the transgressors. Triumph and dominion.

Verse 10. The prosperity of the servant. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

Verse 11. The satisfaction of the servant. He shall seal the travel of his soul and shall be satisfied.

Verse 12. The dominion of the servant. One thing to note please, will you? Verse 10.

It pleased the Lord to bruise him. Now brethren, it didn't give God any pleasure or happiness to do that. The Lord's pleasure here has in view the future.

It pleased Jehovah in the light of the future of his purposes. It pleased him in that sense to put him to grief. Now notice please the middle of verse 10.

For now shall make his soul a trespass offering. Not a sin offering precisely. It's not a sin offering that's in view as a trespass offering.

The reason for that being is this. That the sin offering was negative. Sin was put away and that was it finished.

But a trespass offering produced a result. You remember that, don't you? You will remember that in the trespass offering, the man offered his land to God and he not only restored the principle, the amount in which he had wronged his brother, but he added 20%. He gave a fifth.

So there's a result from a trespass offering, no result from a sin offering. And so it says here, for now shall make his soul a trespass offering. For there's going to be a result from this offering, this aspect of the death of Christ.

You see, what's the result? Recall, he shall feel sin. He shall prolong his days. And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands.

Now back to the first stanza, please. Just a few comments on each of these passages. Verse 15.

God is speaking. He's speaking about Christ. He says, Behold my servant shall I advise you.

Here you are Christ brought before you on earth as the wisdom of God. The Revised Version of Matthew says, Behold my servant shall prosper. So it's the idea that he shall act wisely in view of consequent prosperity.

And of course that is true. Because out of this life and death and resurrection of the servant shall come an amazing prosperity that will be known throughout the whole of the world and the whole of the universe. Look again please, verse 13.

He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. Two aspects, please. One, he shall be exalted in his resurrection.

He shall be extolled and lifted up in his ascension. He shall be very high in his enthronement. Or of your life, taking it farther to the future.

Because you will note that this idea of exalted and very high is taken from Isaiah 6. The glory of Adonai. High and lifted up in Adonai. And so there's coming a day when the servant shall be lifted up in the day of his glory.

High and extolled and lifted up will Christ be. That's what it is. God speaking.

As many as were astonished at this. And he's drawn attention to the ignorance, solid gaze of the masses as he gazes upon Christ in the day of his humiliation, in the day of his humbling. Many stood there ignorant, unable to come to a right testament, unable to come to a true appreciation of all that was taken

place.

Their hearts and their lives were abhorred away. God will be sad. As many as were astonished at thee in your humiliation, their 15 souls, shall he astonish many nations in his glory.

In his humiliation, he is distinct in the preeminence of his suffering. In the day of his exaltation, he shall be distinct in the preeminence of his glory. Now you'll notice me, won't you? That is verse 15.

Your authorised version says, so shall he sprinkle many nations. If that is, if that is the idea, then it's Christ coming forth as a holy priest to sprinkle the unclean, lecherous nations. In this poetic justice, as many as were astonished, startled at thee in the day of your humiliation, so shall he astonish and startle many nations in the day of his glory. Verse 15.

Kings shall be bound all into silence before the transcendent glory of the Christ. For these nations, there shall be told them that which they have never heard. They shall see that which they have never considered.

So follow, brethren and sisters. It's the day of Christ's glory. He's coming down to us.

Do you remember Acts 1? Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This day Jesus shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go. Is that right? How did he go? Slowly he ascended. How will he come back? Slowly he shall descend.

Where did he ascend from, Acts 1? The Mount of Olives. Where shall he come back to? Back at Aiah 14. The Mount of Olives.

Slowly he shall descend. When shall we see the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens? The Shekinah cloud. Every eye shall behold him as slowly the Christ of God descends, coming right down to split up this mountain and to make for Jerusalem.

Then shall he be brought to pass, Psalm 24, which is not the ascension. It's the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, ye everlasting doors, and let the King of glory in.

And when Christ comes back, note carefully, please, as the Son of Abraham, he'll claim the land. As the Son of David, he'll claim the throne. As the Son of Man, he'll claim the earth.

Got that? Now please, the code of Acts 14. God speaking. His image was so much more than that of a man, and his form more than the sons of men.

Now God's telling you what he saw. If you press me a little today, brethren, I'm inclined to the viewpoint that you haven't reached the expression the terrible effect upon the person of Christ because of the three hours of darkness. I don't think it's primarily the punishment we took from there, but God's looking down.

Down in the day, when he made an appointment, and God tells us the terrible physical effects upon Christ in that terrible hour, those terrible hours of which you and I know so very well. Now the second stanza, please, will you? Notice. The question is raised to whom is the arm of the Lord with you? Now that's the title of Christ.

The arm is the member by which work requiring strength is accomplished. So that Christ is the arm of Jehovah, the active member of Godhead, when it comes to be doing work for God. Now notice the

context, please, will you? Drop your eyes to verse 9 of Isaiah 51.

Awake, awake, who comes when the arm of the Lord? That's Christ. Awake as in the ancient days in the generations of old. Art thou not it that we have that Egypt and Luke and the dragon? Art thou not it that the dry and the red sea, the waters of the great deep, hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? He was the arm of the Lord that divided the sea.

He was Christ who opened the way for the nation to go through. O the power of the arm of the Lord. Now put your feet, please.

That's 10. The Lord hath made there his holy arm. He stood at his feet.

He's the revelation and manifestation of Christ in the kingdom. The Lord hath made there his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and on the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. So there you have the power of Christ to bring to fruition divine counsel and divine purpose in the coming day of perennial glory.

Isn't this wonderful? The arm of the Lord at the beginning of Israel's history cut the sea in two. The arm of the Lord shall accomplish divine counsel in relation to the nation. And it's this glorious person whom we have come to know as the Lord Jesus Christ.

The power of Christ to accomplish things for God. Verse 2. He grew up before God as a chamber of silence and as a living shoe out of dry ground. The dry ground is Israel.

And here we have Christ in the eyes of God. In the midst of the arid waste, in the midst of a world of ugliness and world rottenness, there came, came, arrived on the scene one person unfolding in all his moral excellence, in all his freshness and holy beauty, his Christ, a living shoe, fresh and brilliant in his holy beauty. That's what he was before God.

Now before man. He hath no form nor loneliness, no grandeur by which to attract and award the sons of man. He hath no form nor comeliness.

And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire. Isn't that true? Isn't that true today? Unattracted to sinners. That's real.

Here he despised and left alone of man. Held alone. A man of sorrows and griefs acquaintance.

That's what he was down here in the midst of sinners. We hid as it were our faces from him. Hiding as it were our faces from him.

They didn't recognize him. They gave him no place. He had no status.

They had proven the system for seizure of the emperor and hereticate and pirate the governor. There's even proven the system for Judas the traitor. There's no proven the system for Christ.

They kept their faces away from him. They had no time for him. He was despised.

And we see him not. That's what the world thinks of Christ. That's one of the reasons why you can have no chocolate cup.

They are not infallible to you in your appreciation of the Son of God. Now that's the fourth aspect. Can I say this to you? That you can probably link up the five stanzas with the Pentateuch.

In the closing verses of Isaiah 52 you have brought before you what you have in the rest of the psalm the humiliation and exultation of Christ. Just the same as in the book of Genesis you have brought every seat thought for the ultimate divine revelation. The arm of the Lord it links you with the book of Exodus.

But now wait. In verses 4 to 6 you have come to Leviticus and the wife of the sanctuary is playing upon the death of Christ. Here now there is the nation speaking in the day when they shall receive Christ born in the day.

Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet igniting we did esteem and stricken smitten of God and afflicted. We thought he was suffering for his own sins.

Now the record lies. It's all different. Verse 5. Now you preach it brother and all of you.

Remember that verse 5 primarily belongs to the nation of Israel. Verse 5 is the impassioned song in the day of your deliverance. Don't walk away of the wonder and glory of it all while you take the truth to yourself.

It belongs to the ancient people. That being the book of Christ we shall make a confession. He was wounded for our transgressions.

He was bruised for our iniquities. The justicement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed. Isn't it wonderful by the grace of God that we have anticipated this? Time and again you've sat down with your Bible and you've read so much of Christ from verse 5 of Isaiah 53.

Wounded for me. Wounded for me. There on the cross he was wounded for me.

Bruised. His boldness, his sensitive soul heals for the thousands of others. All, all the terrors of Calvary wounded, bruised, healed.

That you and I might be healed. Thus says All we like have gone astray. The universal associated wandering as of a whole flock.

We have come everyone to our own way. A wandering in which each individual member of the flock actually shares. Come as the universal associated wandering of a whole flock.

All we like have gone astray. Now it says that it's a wandering in which each member actively shares. We have come each one to our own way.

And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Have you got that? Watch now the language and I'll explain it to you. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

That is all that was ours was transferred to Christ. Now the background is the day of atonement. The day of atonement.

Now let me say this. You don't understand, do you? That in Hebrews 9 when the inspired writer is dealing with truth and the background is the day of atonement, that he's dealing with the day of atonement as a whole. Now you've got that? Now please, if you don't see that you'll be mixed up.

He's dealing with the day of atonement as a whole. Every aspect of the service brought together. That's why it says in its statement without shedding of blood there is no remission.

That's all it says. When come to Leviticus 16 the high priest entered three times into the house. Now the first time he entered in was four times full of incense.

No blood. That's why I told you that when you come to Hebrews 9 you must look at it as dealing with the day of atonement as a whole. Then the high priest went in the second time and he sprinkled blood on him before the mass received for his sins and for the peaceful house.

Then if you can get a member of blood of the goat for the sins of the people. Now the whole thing is viewed as one action. The first time, incense.

Four times full of incense. Oh by the way, by the way, tell me, have you ever noted that at least once in the scriptures atonement was made by incense and not by blood? That's why I told you that the inspired writer is viewing the day of atonement as a whole. Now, the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He's not referring to the high priest going into the sanctuary. Oh no. He refers to when the high priest came out and there's the living goat standing.

You remember he walked forward and he pressed his hand upon the head of the live goat and he confessed over it the iniquities of the nation. Then it says that they laid the goat away into a land uninhabited there to their iniquity. And it was in time that the sins of the nation were transferred to the head of the substitute.

And yonder in the distance it was thrown away. And so you turn to Christ on the cross. The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Oh brethren, can you gather that? Millions upon millions upon millions of sinners saved. And the Lord laid upon Christ the iniquity of every one of us. It's a Lord that's gigantic.

It is sins absolutely innumerable. Oh the greatness and glory of the Christ who is able to be of the sins of many. Thousands, millions of sinners.

Oh the wonder and glory of the sin-bearer. He has laid upon him the iniquity of us all. Verses 79.

The death and building of the Sabbath. This is the numbers aspect because the book of numbers is distinctive amongst other things bringing before you times of the death of Christ. So here he says this.

Verse 7. He was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before our sheers he opened not his mouth. It's Christ as the lamb in his ability to suffer uncomplainingly.

Never a laugh of invocation. Never a cry of protest. You understand please.

A whisper from Christ of protest and the voluntary aspect disappears. Notice notice carefully he is laid as a lamb to the slaughter. He is laid the voluntariness of his death.

He is laid as a lamb the vicariousness of his death. He is laid as a lamb to the slaughter the viciousness of his death. And during it all when he was reviled he reviled not again.

When he suffered he threatened not. Isn't that wonderful? Nor that point his back. Nor thorns that tore his brow.

Nor nails that pierced his hands and feet could weight on him one cry. Twenty people I gave him each and each to weight the cry. Eli Lamar Sabach the man.

That's it. He was hurried from prison and from judgment. Jerusalem declared his generation.

He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people was his trick and brethren have you ever noted that it was a verse like that that struck his opinion? He is reading about the man cut off. You see this man is interested. By his side no wife had ever stayed.

The eunuch will weave this world without a sheet to perpetuate his name. He is interested in this man. That's not man appointed his grave with the witness.

But God overrode him and he was the great one in his death and fluency. Now what death is in the fluency? It's what a heathen scholar would call the majestic fluency. It's a word used in an intensified way.

I suppose it has a number of ideas with it. Possibly it hasn't unified that the name of Christ covers every aspect that sin has created. Tell me you good men and women that read your Bible.

Have you ever noted that there's only one type before the fall? After the fall there's a multitude of types like the Passover and one of the offerings. Now, the reason why you have a multitude of offerings is this. That sin has penetrated so deeply and far reaching that God has to introduce a multitude of types to teach us the various aspects of the death of Christ to meet the end of sin.

You see the entire little idea that only Christ can do to the whole human race and the human creation. So that it's spoken of as death. Now, please.

God overwhelmed. He was a prolific man in his death. It is indicated then that the new tomb received his body.

Well, that's good. Because he had done no violence neither was the sin in his mouth. No corruption had ever touched his holy humanity.

So no tomb that had received the corruption of human flesh will receive his body. Listen brothers and sisters. Don't miss it.

He who came forth from the virgin womb must be laid in a virgin tomb. Have you got that? He who came forth from the virgin womb can only be laid in a virgin tomb. Finally, please.

Verses 10-12. It pleased Jehovah to bruise him. He hath put him to grief.

When thou shalt make his soul a trespasser he shall prosper. The result will be this. He shall see his seed.

Can you see that? Can you see Christ looking forward down through the ages to see the vast multitude that would crush him? He shall prolong days of resurrection and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify their iniquities.

For he shall bear their iniquities. Can you see Christ? Can you see the Deuteronomy character having in view the culmination of the purposes and counsels of God in relation to Christ? And so there is brought before us the satisfaction of Christ for the sinner. Listen.

Do you ever think about heaven? Do you ever think about when Christ gathers us all around himself? He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. Imagine the Son of God thinking it was all worthwhile to save you and me. Can you see the infinite eternal value of every believer to Christ? And at the end of the road you'll find that you'll have found it to be worthwhile.

He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. And as God wills it. He indicates that he has victory and triumph under him.

Tell him, therefore will I divide him a portion with the great. He shall divide the spoil with the straw. He'll hear it in the day of his glory based on the day of his suffering because he poured out his soul unto death.

He has nothing with the transgressors. He bears the sin of man and he's in possession of the transgressors. Thank you.

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