

Substitution

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Isaiah 53

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I am going to bring you a message today on the subject, "Substitution." And I will be using the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. I would like very much for you to take your Bibles and follow along as I read the Scriptures and comment on each verse. There are 12 verses in Isaiah 53 and I will touching each one of them.

Now, Isaiah is quoted in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament prophet. Some people call Isaiah's book the gospel according to Isaiah. It is so clear on the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And then when our Lord went to Nazareth and spoke in Luke chapter four and they delivered the Scriptures to him, he turned to the book of Isaiah chapter 61 and read and spoke from that chapter.

Now let's look at Isaiah 53 and start with verse one. And it says, "Who hath believed our report?" What is our report? It is our message? "Who has believed our message and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

You know, there never has been a prophet or a preacher of the gospel who has not grieved over this fact that not many people believe our report and our message, not many believe the message that we preach.

What is our message? Well, it is the record that unto us is born a Savior, Christ the Lord. That is what the angels announced on the hillside of Judea. "Unto you is born this day... We bring you good news. We bring you a great message. Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord." It is the record that God has given us eternal life and this life is in his Son. That is our message and Isaiah starts off this chapter. "Who believes it? Who believes it?"

And then he asks this question. "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" His arm, what is the arm of the Lord? Well, the arm of the Lord is Christ who is the power of God. He said, "My ear is not heavy that I can't hear and my arm is not short that I cannot save. To whom is the arm, the power and the wisdom of God revealed?"

Isaiah chapter 40 identifies this arm. Listen to this Scripture, Isaiah 40 verse 10. "Behold the Lord God will come with a strong hand and his arm will rule for him and his reward

is with him and his work is before him. Who hath believed our report, our gospel, our message? To whom is this power of God unto salvation, this gospel, this arm of the Lord revealed?"

I will give you a little key to this 53rd chapter of Isaiah. The pronoun he, him and his is used in these 12 verses 43 times. We are talking about a person. We are talking about a person, this arm of the Lord. This report, this message, this record is talking about a person. He, him and his, 43 times.

Now, following in verse two is a description of his arm, this Savior in the work of redemption. Now listen to it. You follow, verse two. "And he, the arm of the Lord, shall grow up before him as a tender plant." That is, he will be born of a woman, a helpless babe come forth like all babies come forth, helpless, baby, made flesh, nursing from a mother's breast, dependent totally upon her care, just a tender plant, just a helpless babe. And he will grow up. He will start as a tender plant. He will grow up, this Redeemer, this arm of the Lord, this Savior. He will be a boy in the home subject to his parents, grow in stature and wisdom, favor with God and man. He will be a man. He will be a carpenter. That is what they called him, the carpenter. He will grow up as a tender plant.

Now watch the next line. "He is a root out of a dry ground." What does that mean? Well, that is Israel.

Now, according to the Word of God this arm of the Lord, this Redeemer is a king. He is a son of King David according to the flesh.

You see, in Romans one Paul said he is a, "I a bond slave of Jesus Christ, separated to the gospel, concerning his Son who was made of the seed of David and declared to be the Son of God."

So when Jesus Christ came into the world as a tender plant he came as a root out of a dry ground. The kingdom of David was down to nothing, nothing. The Jewish nation was down to nothing. It was like a dry ground. It was a powerless state under the heel of the Roman Empire. And here the king of Israel Jesus, son of Mary, line of the tribe of Judah, is the heir to the throne of David and here the heir to the throne of David lies asleep in a cow stall on hay. That's right. The King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Son of David, the rightful heir to the throne is in a manger because there is no room for him anywhere else. Now that is a root out of a dry, dry ground. Yes, who believes our report? To whom is this mighty arm of the Lord revealed? But I will tell you. He will grow up a tender plant. As a root out of a dry ground, now listen. He was in the world and the world knew him not. He came unto his own and his own received him not.

But it says in verse two, "He hath no form, no comeliness, no beauty we should desire him." There is no royal form. There is no majesty. There is no great court following him. There is no army. Our Lord took upon himself humanity, the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, a human being, despised and rejected of men.

Everybody that was anybody turned thumbs down on Jesus of Nazareth. Look at verse three. “He is despised. He is rejected of men.” Why? Why is he despised? Well, I’ll give you several reasons. One is because of the poverty of his parents, the poverty of his town.

They said, when they talked about we found the Messiah and he is from Nazareth. They said, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”

Because of his friends he was despised. They said he is the friend of sinners. One time these Pharisees, the Sanhedrin asked his disciples, “Why does your master eat with publicans and sinners? Why does your master associate with those kind of people?”

He is despised because of the truth he preached. He said, “I and my Father are one.” And they took up stones to stone him.

He said, “Before Abraham was, I am.”

One of them said, “Well, you are not 50 years old. How did you see Abraham?”

He said in John 6:37, “All that my Father giveth me shall come to me and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

And somebody said, “That’s a hard saying. Who can hear it?”

Despised because of the death he died. When he was hanging on the cross this is what they said, “He saved others. Himself he cannot save.”

And then they said, “If you be the Christ, the Son of God, come down from the cross and we will believe on you,” mocked him while he died, despised and rejected of men.”

The next verse says he is a man of sorrows acquainted with grief. A man of sorrows, what a name, what a name for the Son of God who came, ruined sinners to reclaim. [?]

Once he said in Lamentation one, “Behold, ye that pass by and behold my sorrows. Is there any sorrow like unto the sorrow with which the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?”

Despised, rejected of men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. But here is the answer. He hath borne our sorrows. He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He is a substitute. That is what we are talking about. This is substitution.

Our Lord Jesus Christ bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. And watch these next four statements. You have got the Scripture there, Isaiah chapter 53 verse four. Now listen. “Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.” In his life on this earth—there is the first statement—in his life on this earth and on that cross Jesus Christ actually, literally bore our griefs and our sorrows in his body. He bore our spiritual sicknesses. He

bore our spiritual diseases. He bore our iniquities and our transgressions. This is the picture in the Old Testament of him bearing our sins.

When the high priest Aaron brought the lamb for the atoning sacrifice he put his head on the head of the lamb and confessed the sins of Israel. And those sins were transferred in type, in picture to that lamb. And then the lamb died. And when he brought the scapegoat in the same manner he put his hand on the head of the scapegoat and confessed the sins of Israel. And those sins in type were transferred to that scapegoat and that scapegoat was taken off into the wilderness and they never saw him again.

So Christ, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, but he bore our griefs and our sorrows. They were literally laid on him.

Now watch the second statement. "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God." Smitten of God? "And afflicted."

See, the law of God and the justice of God because Christ was numbered with the transgressors and bore our sins, the law of God found him guilty and the justice of God executed him. That's right. He was found with sin. Our sins, our griefs, our sorrows but they were transferred to him and he literally bore them in his body on the tree and he died, justice put him to death.

Now when a criminal, a man who commits murder is arrested and tried and found guilty and he is executed, the person who pulls the switch, he doesn't kill him. The person who puts the gas in the chamber, that person is not killing that man. It is the law that is putting him to death. It is the law that demands his death. It is justice that demands his death. And that is what Christ...that is why he suffered and died. He bore our sins in his body on the tree. And justice of God put him to death. That's right.

"He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God," the justice of God, the law of God put him to death.

Now the third, the third statement. "He was wounded, wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquity and he chastisement of our peace was upon him." He was chastened and purchased peace. "And by his stripes we are healed."

You see that? He made peace for us by his death on the cross. We had no peace with God until Christ put our sins away. And when he bore our sins and carried our griefs and our sorrows and paid the penalty, we are set free. The prison door is open. He said, "I came to set the captives free. I came to restore you to freedom and liberty." That's right. When a man pays the price, justice demands he is set free.

There was a man called Barabbas who was in prison that day condemned to die. There were three thieves scheduled to die, those who died on the right hand of Christ and one who died on the left and Barabbas was scheduled to die, a criminal. And Pilate asked the crowd, "Whom shall I release unto you? Jesus which is called the Christ or Barabbas?"

They said, "Give us Barabbas."

And he said, "Well what shall I do with Jesus which is called the Christ?"

"Crucify him."

So they took our Lord out there and nailed him to that cross. And Barabbas walked out of that prison a free man. That is a picture of what Christ did for us. He bore our sins. He died our death. That's substitution. He paid our penalty and we go free. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. By his stripes we are healed. And payment God's justice cannot twice demand first at my bleeding surety's hand and then again at mine. He bore our sins. We don't bear them. He paid the debt. We don't owe it. Justice is satisfied. Barabbas is free. Barabbas is free.

And it would do us well to stand out on that hillside and look towards that cross and realize that is our cross on which he hangs. That is our death that he dies. That is our sins and our debt that he is paying and we are free. Because he died, we live. That's substitution. And that is what that is saying. He was wounded for our transgression. He was bruised for our iniquities and the chastisement of our peace, we have peace with God. Therefore being justified by Christ we have peace with God. Sins are gone.

All right. Here is the fourth statement. "All we like sheep have gone astray." Now, boy that is a fact, isn't it? "We have turned everyone to his own way." That's the reason they don't believe our report. That's the reason the arm of the Lord they don't see because they turn their own way. They want their way, their way. We do, all of us. "But the Lord laid on him..." Who did it? The Lord. This is God's doings. This is the Lord's doings. "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all."

And I will give you two words. Now you remember these two words. This sums up the Lord's redemptive work. The first word is substitution, substitution. And I will tell you what I want you to do, Isaiah 53 verses four, five and six. You read that with me now and everywhere you see "our" you put your name in. That's right. Whatever your name is, George, Andrew, Patrick, whatever. But listen to it now. Sure...I am going to put my name in there. This is substitution.

"Surely, he hath born Henry's grief. He carried Henry's sorrows. He was wounded for Henry's transgressions. The chastisement of Henry's peace is upon him and by his stripes old Henry is healed."

Do you see that? That is substitution. That is what it is. And the next word that goes with substitution, if he is my substitute, the next word is satisfaction. By his stripes I am healed. He didn't come to attempt to save us. He came to save the Lost. He didn't come to attempt to put away sin, he put away our sin by the sacrifice of himself. That's what God said about him in Isaiah 42 verse one. "Behold my servant."

I wish I could get people to behold him. Quit looking at preachers and churches and all these and start looking to Christ. "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delights. I put my Spirit on him. He will bring forth judgment and peace to the Gentiles and he will not fail and he will not be discouraged."

Old William Russell wrote this hymn, "Because my sins on him by God were laid, he who never sinned for me sin was made. Therefore let all men know that my God is satisfied and all who believe on him, by God, are justified." That's a promise, the substitute has died and those for whom he died are set free.

Now look at verse seven. Here are two or three things about him I want you to see about our Lord. It says in verse seven...now he was a willing sacrifice. That is what we are saying here. He was oppressed. He was afflicted. Yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, opened not his mouth, not one word of objection, not one word of desiring to be free. He said, "I delight to do thy will oh, my God. No man takes my life from me. So I lay it down."

He is our willing sacrifice. He said, "I know my sheep. I love my sheep. I lay down my life for the sheep." The willing Savior.

All right. Look at verse eight. He was...and the single Savior who died alone, now listen to this. "He was taken from prison and judgment and there was no one to declare his pedigree, no one to take his part, no one to declare his generation. He was lone, cut off, cut off from the land of the living. For the transgression of my people he was stricken."

Our Lord by himself Paul said in Hebrews, purged our sins by the sacrifice of himself and by himself. He had no help, by himself he walked the winepress of God's wrath alone. When he cried, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he was alone as no human being has ever been alone because even God was not with him. He was in the darkness of hell bearing our sins in his body alone.

And then verse nine. Watch this. He is a willing Savior, he is the only Savior. He accomplished it by the sacrifice of himself. Thirdly, he made his grave with the wicked.

What does that mean? He died between two thieves. He laid in a rich man's tomb. He made his grave with the rich in his death. Joseph of Arimathaea, a wealthy man, had a grave in which man had never laid and he gave it to the disciples and he helped to bury the Lord.

Our Lord was rich, but for our sakes he became poor, so poor...can you imagine how poor? The Son of man didn't have a place to lay his head. He didn't own a foot of land. But through his poverty we might be made rich.

You see, as a babe he slept in another man's manger. He sailed on another man's boat. He rode another man's donkey into Jerusalem. He died on another man's cross and he

laid in another man's tomb. That, my friend, is poverty. He laid aside all of his glory and became a servant, obedient to death. Though he had done no violence. Look at verse nine.

He says, "Though he had done no violence. There was no deceit found in his mouth," and yet, verse 10, "it pleased the Lord to bruise him. It pleased the Lord to put him to grief. It pleased the Lord to make his soul an offering for sin."

You know our Lord's sufferings were not just physical sufferings. We are prone to be, to get taken up with the physical suffering, the pain and the agony and the blood and these sort of thing, but his greatest sufferings were...he made his soul an offering for sin, you see, the soul. He cried out, "My God," he said, "Why have you forsaken me." That's his soul.

In the Garden of Gethsemane he cried, "Father, if it be thy will let this cup pass from me. My soul is sorrowful unto death." That's before they ever laid a whip on his back.

But it pleased God to bruise him. What does that mean that it pleased God? Well, let me show you. It pleased God to bruise him. That's maybe a little difficult to understand, but you will see when I explain it to you. It pleased God, it was God's will, the Father made him our surety before the foundations of the world. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world by the will of God. It pleased God to do that. It pleased God to make him your Savior. It pleased God that in him should all fulness dwell.

Secondly, it pleased the Father to send him into the world and have him made in a virgin's womb and be born and take this abuse and humiliation and suffering. It pleased God to put him here as our substitute and our Savior, to take what we deserved.

It pleased God to determine the death he would die. You know, it says over there in Acts four that these people who crucified Christ did what God determined before to be done. And when they had fulfilled everything that was written about him they took him down from the tree. It pleased God.

And let me show you this. God was pleased with his obedience. He said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am pleased."

My friends, these sacrifices in the Old Testament never pleased God, never gave him any satisfaction, never honored his law of justice, but Christ's death and substitutionary work and obedience pleased the Father.

You have the success of his work here in verse 10 and 11. Listen. "He shall see his seed, his family, his children the Lord gave him and be satisfied. He shall prolong his days. He shall live forever and all whom he purchased will live with him. The pleasure of the Lord shall..." Now these are shall. These are not maybe, perhaps or might. This is shall. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands."

“My sheep hear my voice. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. Nobody is going to pluck them out of my hand.”

“He shall see the travail of his soul.”

What is the travail? Birth pains. Women know something about that. But when they see that baby the pain goes away. He sees the travail of his soul for his people and the pain goes away, nothing but the joy.

“For the joy set before him he endured the cross.”

“By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.”

His knowledge? Yeah, he knows them and they know him. That’s right.

“For,” here is the way he did it. “He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore the Lord God saith, ‘I will divide him an inheritance and he shall divide the spoil with the strong because he has poured out his soul unto death. He was numbered with the transgressors. He bare the sin of many, he made intercession for the transgressors.’” That’s the reason. See that? He shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. He shall see the travail of his soul and be perfectly satisfied.” That is the reason he is seated at the right hand of God instead of standing.

“By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore God said, ‘I will divide him an inheritance, give him a name above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that he is Lord.’” Why? He poured out his soul to death. He was numbered with the transgressors. That’s representation. He bare the sin of many, substitution. And he maketh intercession. He ever lives to make intercession for us.

All right. Send for the tape. Here is the address, two dollars. We’ll mail it to you. Substitution, that’s the gospel. Until next week God bless you.