

The Servant Exalted, Part 3 (Isaiah 53:1–12)

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Introduction

We have examined the prologue (Isaiah 52:13–15) introducing the exaltation of the Lord’s Servant because He acted *wisely to success* regarding the will of the Father. This section also raised an astonishing disparity. The first aspect of this disparity involves the exalted Servant’s appearance. The second aspect of the disparity is that, it seems, the marring enabled the Servant to *sprinkle* (apply redemptive sacrifice) to many nations. On the other hand, Israel has not believed the report (53:1).

The second part examined the report not believed. The content of the report is found in Isaiah 52:8–10. This is how Yahweh bared His holy arm before all nations. The ends of the earth will see His salvation, which the New Testament clearly indicates is fulfilled in Jesus Christ and His new covenant people, His *ecclesia* (assembly, congregation, the church).

Zion reports that the Lord is keeping His promise. The Lord is sovereign and will accomplish His purpose without fail (Isaiah 46:10, 11, 13).

The question remains, who believes this report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Certainly not Israel, the rebellious nation already under judgment (see the first chapter). The “we” of chapter 53, however, does relate to the remnant within Israel. On the other hand, the Lord hid the Messiah from Israel’s view. Their expectations would lead them to reject and crucify their Messiah. In this apparent tragic move, the will of God would be fulfilled in two ways: (1) Messiah would suffer for the sins of His people, and (2) Israel’s condemnation would be sealed. Christ’s substitutionary sacrifice would end the sacrificial system forever, rendering temple and priesthood obsolete.

IV. Hidden Glory (vv. 1–4)

1. The promised Messiah/ Servant was *despised* and *rejected* by the very people to whom He came (John 1:10, 11).
 - a. Christ was not esteemed because He Himself “*hid His face* [His glory]” from those who observed Him (as the text may be read, v. 3).
 - 1) They could not see His glory because, when He appeared, “*He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him*” (v. 2).
 - 2) Unless He chose to reveal His glory, no one would ever see it. Nevertheless, what was revealed was rejected, thus making Israel fully responsible for its judgment (Matthew 11:20, 20, 24–27).
 - 3) Christ came announcing the promised kingdom of God and working signs and wonders to prove His claims, as demonstrated in Isaiah 11 (Matthew 3:1–3; 4:12–17).
 - 4) However, His works and message were disregarded because the *arm of the Lord* was not revealed to them as per their expectations (John 12:36–41).
 - b. Jesus emptied Himself of the natural glory of His incarnate deity in order to make satisfaction to the justice of God on behalf of His people (Philippians 2:6–8).

2. Nevertheless, the Jews must own responsibility in the matter, for they rejected Jesus out of their prejudice against His person despite the clear evidence to the contrary.
 - a. He was disdained because the Jews saw only a sucker plant out of dry ground. Jesus was the supposed son of a lowly carpenter from Galilee, from which nothing notable was expected, “*Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee*” (John 7:52).
 - 1) The Jews held that the greater Son of David would be as David, a great man of the earth (2 Samuel 7:9).
 - 2) Instead, Christ grew up before His Father as “*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*” The reason for this is that He took upon himself the curse of Adam due to his disobedience (Genesis 3:17, 18).

Indeed, He was regarded as one “*smitten by God, and afflicted*” (v. 4; Matthew 21:43–45).
 - b. The consequence of this disbelief? Their rejection cost them the kingdom and brought the day of the Lord upon them (Matthew 21:43–45).

What Can We Take Away?

1. What are your expectations of Jesus? Are your expectations biblical? Is your Jesus the biblical Jesus or one of your own concoction? “*And blessed is the one who is not offended by me*” (Matthew 11:6).
2. Scripture clearly reveals that our testimony in the world will be denigrated and disregarded because we pattern our Savior (Acts 4:13). Should the last phrase be taken as a compliment or a criticism? Consider carefully 1 Corinthians 1:26–31.