

The Path of the Suffering Servant, 2 Isaiah 52:13-54:1. The Minor Prophets

"He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him. he was despised and we esteemed him not." Isaiah 53:3.

We saw in our last lesson the stated mission and results of that mission by the Messiah. His mission: "my servant shall deal prudently, he shall sprinkle many nations." The result of the mission is that "he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." The results in themselves testify to the fact that this passage can not be talking about the nation Israel, Jerusalem or even Jews in general. They are not exalted, extolled or lifted high. This only matches Jesus Christ, the real Messiah, Who is now exalted and sits at the right hand of the Father. He is honored and praised, both here and in eternal glory. The phrase that "He shall sprinkle many nations" with His blood by His saving grace is a prediction of the New Testament concept stated by John the Baptist, "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" John 1:29. Not only was Jesus Christ foretold by the prophets, but He was predestinated to fulfill the promises of God in the Old Testament. Without predestination then the promises of God would have questionable fulfilments and doubtful outcomes. Our entire future would be in doubt, and our security as believers would not actually be secure. If He doesn't have the power to fulfill His promises, then they are in danger of being voided by the powers of darkness. How many would think that the powers of darkness would pass up a chance to thwart and destroy even one of God's promises? No real Bible believing Christian doubts God's promises, because that is what his faith is based on. That is why we are considered the "children of promise." If God said it, He will make it come to pass. There is no sin offering in the Old Testament for the sins of the world. A sin offering could be made for the nation of Israel according to Leviticus chapter four, or on the Day of Atonement according to Leviticus 16:8-34. This was for Israel only. Individuals had to bring their sacrificial offering to the Temple, personally, to have the priest make a blood atonement for them. That is why Jesus is a personal Savior. He deals with individual hearts and needs. Jesus Christ fulfilled the law and atoned for the Israel of God, which is made up of the believers in the Promise of the Redeemer. One must be a believer to be redeemed, as a consequence. Unbelievers are and remain outside the blood covenant of redemption for as long as they remain unbelievers. This fact doesn't lessen the idea of Christ taking away the sin of the world, for as we see ultimately in the Book of Revelation, He does redeem the world back to its original condition, and remove the curse that is on mankind as well as the entire world. Revelation chapters twenty one and twenty two displays a redeemed world. As the Beatitudes so state, the meek shall inherit the earth. Realistically, Christ was speaking there in Matthew 5 of Himself in the Beatitudes. He shall inherit the earth, He is the One poor in spirit. He is the One mourning over sin. He is the One that really hungers

and thirsts after righteousness. It is His Church, that is those in Christ that will be blessed with Christ being in Him that the Beatitudes is talking about. Let us move on in our Sacred Text.

“...for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” That which was being told here in the first part of this, is the report referred to in the last portion of the verse. That which was told is the news of the Messiah, and of His redemption. Those who received and believed the report were ones for whom the report was not directly addressed to. The intended receivers of the Good News, aka. The Gospel, were originally the Jews, first. However, those who received and believe it turned out not to be the nation of Israel, but those who were considered heathen, or the Gentiles. The phrase, “our report,” doesn’t mean that the report was stated by Israel, but it rather means it was the report intended for them. The second line of 53:1 clarifies this in poetic form. “and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” The revelation of God’s Messiah was given to be believed by those to whom the arm of the LORD was revealed, that would be the nation Israel during the original Passover, and the parting of the Red Sea. God revealed His power to save. It is Israel through the prophet Isaiah who is speaking now in verse one.

:2. “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 him.” The “he” refers to the Messiah, and the “him” is referring to God the Father. This refers to Christ’s childhood, and that He was always before the watching eye of His loving Heavenly Father. A “tender plant” is referring to what is called a “suckling” small starter shoot growing off a branch or trunk of a tree or bush. These are commonly cut off being viewed as undesirable. “Out of a dry ground,” similar what is found in Isaiah 11:1, refers to the dryness of Israel in regard to there being prophets active during this time. The “years of silence” in regard to prophecy often referred to as the “inner-testament period,” about four hundred years in length, came to a close with the advent of Christ our Lord. These years were barren years in regard to Israel bearing any fruit. Yet Christ as a root out of this parched dry earth appears at an unexpected time in history, which Paul states, that it was “in the fullness of time” (Gal. 4:4). Christ is not described as a tall, magnificent cedar but rather a lowly root. From the description we can gather that Jesus Christ perhaps did not have the expected appearance of a leader such as King Saul did, standing head and shoulders above everyone else. He didn’t look the part in many ways of what was normally looked for as noble features. This lowness of stature that is described here, pictures His humiliation stated in Philippians chapter two. The nation of Israel saw nothing in Christ’s appearance that would suggest a king, but this only proves, if anything, that outward appearances are not to be trusted. The Bible is completely silent in regard to Christ’s

actual physical appearance, and one must also realize that this description is in poetic form, so we are not to take it as a literal description. It is probably more of an accurate summation of how people viewed Him, that is lowly and unimportant, rather than actual physical appearance. He did follow the Davidic line and thus was in all probability not physically unattractive, but lowly in demeanor. Also, what this verse is telling us, is that He was plain and simple, nothing fancy in attire that would attract attention to Himself. This is an indication of how His story should be told, plain and simple, nothing fancy. We therefore offer the plain truth, the trappings of intellectualism, philosophy, statistical facts, science so called, entertainment, beautiful architecture, pomp and circumstance rituals, titles, rank, storytelling, pride and arrogance are all foreign to original Christianity. Christ was "My Servant" here on earth, and we should be God's servant also, in true humility, faith and love. Remember the Gospel went out to the poor, and was rejected and still is quite often rejected by the rich and powerful of this world. This doesn't mean that we need to be poor to follow Christ, nor ignorant and uneducated. The Bible encourages prosperity, happiness, education as well as a proper outlook on life and family. We should, however, keep things plain and simple.

:3. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." Christ is here described as not only rejected of people in general, but despised. Some just can't stand to hear or think about Him. Some people get upset, disturbed and just plain sick when Jesus Christ and His Salvation is brought into their presence. This is how the world, then and now treats Christ and those who follow Him. There has always been an effort to remove Jesus Christ out of the market place, out of open view of all passers-by, and have His story forgotten and trampled underfoot. It is up to us, His Church, to uphold the Name and story of Christ while we live on earth, and to serve God well, even if, like Christ, it brings us grief. We turn from Him in the face of sickness, sin and disease when we should be turning to Him. The word despised is used twice in just this one verse for a reason. It is as Paul puts it in Romans 8:7, Because the carnal mind is enmity against God..." That is, the natural human tendency is to be at odds with God, setting up barriers and treating Him as an actual enemy in the mind and heart. The main barrier is usually the fact that people do not want to admit their sin nor their separation from God. Some won't even admit that there is a God. They prefer to present themselves as being okay, and nothing wrong in their lives, heart and mind. They desperately refuse to surrender to God

The life of a true Christian is the life of constant surrender to God. It is "Thy will be done, on earth as well as it is in heaven," that is the rule of conduct. "If this cup not pass me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Followers of Christ follow the Path of the Suffering Servant.