

# THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

## THE COMING SERVANT, PART 4 ISAIAH 52.13-53.12



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*A Scriptorium Study*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

The Coming Servant, Part 4: Isaiah 52.13-53.12  
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## Introduction to *Isaiah 52.13-53.12*

Everything in the book of Isaiah has been moving toward this passage, these verses. In the coming of God's Servant to suffer for the sin of His people, all of history makes a dramatic turn.

This is undoubtedly not what God's people expected, that He Who was coming to deliver them into God's salvation should be brutalized beyond recognition and made to bear the sins of God's people. How could this please God?

Because of what the Servant accomplished through His suffering – the removing of Israel's sin and the beginning of God's great salvation.

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## 1 Astonished

*Pray Psalm 22.26-28.*

The poor shall eat and be satisfied;  
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.  
Let your heart live forever!  
All the ends of the world  
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,  
And all the families of the nations  
Shall worship before You.  
For the kingdom is the LORD's,  
And He rules over the nations.

*Read Isaiah 52.13-15.*

*Reflect.*

1. How is God's Servant described here? What does He accomplish?
2. How shall the nations "see" "what had not been told them"?

*Meditate.*

We enter the most shocking section of the book of Isaiah. The prophet has pulled open the Lord's time spyglass, to awaken the people to the coming salvation of the Lord. It will begin with their return from captivity in Babylon. It will be further elaborated, encompassing all the nations of the world, when the Servant comes to bring the Good News of God's Kingdom. And that work will reach its full realization in a new heavens and new earth, when this world shall be no more.

What an exciting prospect! How will the Lord do this? What power will the Servant wield Who brings such salvation to His people and to the world?

Be assured, Isaiah says, that God's "Servant shall deal prudently" (v. 13). This Hebrew word (יִשְׁכִּיל) means something like "to be wise" or "to make one wise." It is the same verb used to describe the power of the tree of good and evil which Eve contemplated in the garden (Gen. 3.6). What Eve foolishly thought she could achieve by disobeying God, the Servant will now come to accomplish properly, according to the Lord's will and plan. As a result, He will be extolled and exalted (Phil. 2.5-11), which is just what we might expect.

But wait: First, He must endure punishment, like Israel in Babylon, bearing sin and judgment, to the astonishment of all who see Him. In appearance, He will "be marred more than any man." He will be what? Beaten beyond recognition? Bloodied in His face and form (v. 14)? The Servant Who deals prudently?

And yet, He will "sprinkle many nations" (v. 15). With what? His blood (1 Pet. 1.2)?

Kings will be astonished, and their authority silenced (v. 15) as His work unfolds before them. They will hear something they've never heard before, something to make them pause and "consider." Could it be that what they will hear is that this Servant, this bloodied and bowed Servant, has, by His suffering, brought the reign of God to the world?

You betcha.

*Prepare.*

1. How was Israel in Isaiah's and Daniel's day a type of the Servant of God to come?
2. These verses show the Servant exalted and abased. Explain. Why exalted? Why abased? How does keeping Israel in mind, and the captivity in Babylon, help us in understanding the abasement of the Servant?
3. How is the power of the Servant's message portrayed in verse 15? How should that encourage us, to whom that message has been entrusted?

"And kings shall keep their mouths shut." At the manifest demonstration of God's power, those who formerly persecuted him and had dared to blaspheme will restrain their tongues from slander. Then he adds in a clearer vein: "For they to whom no report was brought concerning him shall see; and they who have not heard shall consider." For those who did not receive the prophetic predictions, but who served idols, will see, thanks to the heralds of truth, the might of him who was proclaimed to them, and they will know his power. Theodoret of Cyr (393-566 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 17.52.15

O Lord, You have promised to give me power to be Your witness, and I want this power today. Help me as I...

*Pray Psalm 22.26-28.*

Thank God for the Gospel, for the Good News that "our God reigns!" Pray for the peoples of the world, that God may awaken them to the Good News of His Kingdom.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 22.26-28** (*Darvall: Rejoice, the Lord is King*)

The suffering King shall eat and praise with us the Lord.

Forever we His praise repeat and trust His Word.

Praise God above, all you who keep His vows and who His mercies love!

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord;

All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.

The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

## 2 Incredible!

*Pray Psalm 69.5, 6.*

O God, You know my foolishness;

And my sins are not hidden from You.

Let not those who wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me;

Let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel.

*Read Isaiah 53.1-3.*

*Reflect.*

1. Who is being described here? How is He described?

2. In what sense was He the “Man of sorrows”?

*Meditate.*

What Isaiah just prophesied in 52.13-15 must have so shocked his hearers that they simply wrote it off as impossible. Or perhaps he was referring to his whole career as a prophet, in which case, he would not have been surprised at the lack of response to his preaching (cf. Is. 6.9, 10).

At any rate, it appears no one was listening. God had certainly revealed His plan through Isaiah, but the revelation had not been received by those who heard it (v. 1). Except this must not deter Isaiah. He was entrusted with the Word of God, and he must continue to proclaim it, whether or not the people were listening.

He begins to describe the coming Servant (v. 2). There would be nothing special in His appearance, nothing in His flesh to make Him stand out above His contemporaries (v. 2). He was from the soil of Israel, the root of Jesse and David – an ordinary-looking Jewish Man.

So why did people despise and reject Him (v. 3)? Not because of His appearance, but because He was sent by God to be a Man of sorrows, to know grief, scorn, rejection, disregard (v. 3), and worse, as we shall see. It would be in this role, as the suffering Servant, that the coming One would accomplish the salvation of God’s people.

Jesus came to earth, to know sorrow, grief, scorn, and the hatred of men. He said that, as the Father had sent Him, He was also sending us (Jn. 20.21). Where do we get off thinking that our lives, as branches of this true Vine, should be without trouble or trial or suffering or sorrow?

*Prepare.*

1. The people of Israel *heard* the Word of God which Isaiah was preaching to them. In another sense, however, they were not *hearing* it at all. Explain. How does this happen?

2. Haggai will refer to the coming Servant as the “Desire of All Nations” (Hag. 2.6, 7). If there was nothing in His appearance to attract us, what makes this Servant so desirable? How can you present Him as desirable to the people in your Personal Mission Field?

3. Why is it important that Jesus came to be the Man of sorrows?

*Due to their exceedingly great wickedness, they would not believe in him, as the Lord shows in these words, “Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” And afterward, “Hearing you shall bear and shall not*

*understand; and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive, for the heart of this people has become desensitized.” Therefore, knowledge was taken from them, because when they saw, they overlooked, and when they heard, they heard nothing at all. Apostolic Constitutions (381-394 AD), Constitutions of the Holy Apostles 5.3.16*

*O Lord, help me to hear Your Word, so that hearing, I will...*

*Pray Psalm 69.1-7, 34-36.*

Use this as a prayer of confession. Pay careful attention to the places where your confession overlaps with the work of Jesus in bearing our sins. Praise God for the Savior, our Lord Jesus, Who has borne our sins and sorrows, and carried them away as far as the east is from the west.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 69.1-7, 34-36** (*Greensleeves: What Child is This?*)

“Save Me, O God, deep waters rise and threaten to undo Me!  
No foothold in the mire I find; the floods must soon subdue Me.  
Hear, Lord, My weary cry; My throat is parched, unclear My eye.  
Foes long for Me to die and others’ debts are upon Me.”

O God, our folly all You know, our wrongs from You are not hidden;  
Let those who in Your mercy go not by our shame be smitten.  
“Let none dishonored be because, O Lord, because of Me!  
You make Me dishonor see; on Me reproach is written.”

Let heav’n and earth now praise You, Lord, the seas and all their creatures,  
For You will save us by Your Word and build Your City’s features.  
There we will with Jesus dwell and know His blessings full and well.  
His glorious Name we’ll tell to every man and creature!

### 3 Our Sins on Him

*Pray Psalm 34.17, 18.*

*The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears,  
And delivers them out of all their troubles.  
The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart,  
And saves such as have a contrite spirit.*

*Read Isaiah 53.4-6.*

*Reflect.*

1. What does the suffering Servant accomplish for us?
2. Why was His suffering necessary?

*Meditate.*

Now Isaiah hands us another spyglass, and begins to pull it out. Looking through it unopened, we see the record of prophetic utterances which have fallen on the deaf ears of a people (v. 1). Surely, they have gone so far astray from the Word of their Shepherd, that they can no longer hear His voice, or no longer regard it as important (v. 6).

Pull the glass out further and we see the Servant in His coming, an ordinary Man of the people, with no great beauty or stature to impress (v. 2).

And yet, as we pull the glass out to another length, we see this Servant bloodied and beaten, disfigured and suffering, and the people turning their faces away from Him, as one despised and rejected (v. 3).

Pull it out again, and we are astonished and broken to discover the “Why?” of this savagery. His bruises are *our* fault (v. 4). His sorrows are the sorrows *we* should be experiencing, but do not (v. 4). God Himself has ordained the striking and afflicting of this good Servant, that He might be bruised and wounded with many stripes because of *our* transgressions and iniquities (vv. 4, 5), so that we, through His suffering, might know peace and healing (v. 5).

Do not fail to miss the fact that Isaiah does not say *you* and *your* in these verses. Like Daniel in Daniel 9, he includes himself – and us, who read these words – among the guilty for whom the Servant suffers.

Thus, what we see in the first length of our spyglass – our wandering and clinging to our own way – leads to what we see in its fullest extent – a Servant sent by God as a new covenant, to bear His wrath against us, carry our sins away in His own body, and bring us the promised healing and peace of the Lord.

*Prepare.*

1. Why is this spyglass analogy a good way of looking at these verses?
2. These verses describe the *passive* obedience of Christ, as He accepts the Lord’s wrath against our sins. Why is this part of Christ’s obedience as important as His *active* obedience, in which He perfectly kept the Law of God? How do we benefit from both aspects of Christ’s obedience?
3. In what sense are we “healed” by Christ’s suffering? What is the nature of the “peace” we realize because of Him?

*He bore the sum of human evils and every form of transgression, as well as their recompense and punishment. And as if he were our debtor, the only-begotten Word of God, coming into the world alongside us, fulfilled every law and all righteousness and did not stumble over sin but received it willingly so as to change our punishment into peace and harmony. For undergoing temptation he carried our rebukes and punishments, and by faith we make our own his sufferings, and dying together with him we are saved by grace. He was not delivered by force but as an act of obedience.* Theodore of Heraclea (d. ca. 355 AD), *Fragments on Isaiah*

*Lord, You suffered that I might be healed and know Your peace. Heal me today of everything that...*

*Pray Psalm 34.*

Give thanks to God Who hears our prayers, feeds us by His goodness, sends His angels to encamp around us, and gave His Son Who, though not a bone of His body was broken, bore our sins away.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 34.1-3, 8, 9, 18, 19, 20** (*Alleluia [Lowe]: Might God, While Angels Bless You!*)

I will bless the Lord at all times; I shall praise Him evermore!

My soul makes its boast in Jesus – Him we gladly all adore!

*Refrain*

Magnify the Name of Jesus! Let us lift His Name in praise!

Taste and see how good is Jesus; blessed are all who in Him hide.

None shall lack for any blessing who in Christ will e'er confide.

*Refrain*

When for help we cry to Jesus, He will save, for He is near.

He delivers us from trouble, for He holds us ever dear.

*Refrain*

See the Righteous as He suffers: God will save Him from His pains.

All His bones He keeps through suffering, every one, intact remains.

*Refrain*

## 4 Like a Lamb

*Pray Psalm 22.19-21.*

But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me;  
O My Strength, hasten to help Me!  
Deliver Me from the sword,  
My precious *life* from the power of the dog.  
Save Me from the lion's mouth  
And from the horns of the wild oxen!

*Read Isaiah 53.7-9.*

*Reflect.*

1. Why is the reference to a *lamb* significant here?
2. Why did the Servant have to undergo this terrible suffering?

*Meditate.*

We have said that Isaiah held out two spyglasses for the people of His day. The first was of the coming salvation of the Lord. Beginning with their captivity in Babylon, then the deliverance under Cyrus, the salvation and Kingdom which come with the Servant, and the new heavens and new earth beyond time, the people of Judah and Jerusalem received a telescopic glimpse into their future, which they were called to believe. Oh, what hope this must have engendered in the faithful of Israel!

Then we saw, through Isaiah's other spyglass, a somewhat different picture, focusing, in the third length of the spyglass, on the suffering of the coming Servant. This must surely have puzzled the people of Isaiah's day. How could the Servant be both King, Conqueror, and Sufferer at the same time? He would be like a Passover Lamb (v. 7) – innocent, pure, and devoted to sacrifice, that the angel of death might pass over the sins of God's people and lead them into His salvation.

Without explaining the subtleties of this mystery, Isaiah presses more deeply into the suffering the Servant must endure. Oppression, affliction, stripping and shame, injustice, slaughter, death, and the grave: these are what the Servant comes to suffer, for the transgressions of God's people (vv. 7, 8).

The sins of God's people – and our sins included with theirs – are so vast, so abominable, that not even 70 years captivity in Babylon would put them away. Israel's suffering for sin in Babylon is a type of the Servant's suffering for the sins of God's people – but only a type. No one ever suffered like the Servant of the Lord. Though He was completely innocent of any transgression, and thus merited being buried in a rich man's tomb (v. 9), yet He was brutalized beyond recognition, so that God's people might be saved.

Put these spyglasses together into a binocular, and you can see at once the story of the redemption which Jesus accomplished. He fulfilled all the righteousness of God, yet suffered more than the most abominable of sinners. And in so doing, He acquired the Kingdom of David and God, over which He now reigns unto righteousness, peace, and joy forever.

Jesus accepted the suffering appointed to Him as God's will for the good of the world (v. 7). So we must accept the suffering and hardship that comes our way as we seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God (Matt. 6.33; Acts 14.22), looking to Jesus, to learn from Him how to keep focused on the coming joy, even in the midst of present difficulties (Heb. 12.1, 2).

*Prepare.*

1. Meditate on 2 Corinthians 5.21. How can you see that this verse simply restates what Isaiah prophesies in 53.7-9?

2. Meditate on Exodus 12.1-13. How does Isaiah evoke the Passover in these verses? How does Christ fulfill the Passover?

3. Paul says we must share in Christ's sufferings (Phil. 1.29, 30)? Why? In what ways?

*Receiving the sufferings due to us, [Christ] made them his own and so from a standpoint of faith it is said that he became a curse for us himself.* Theodore of Heraclea (d. ca. 355 AD), *Fragments on Isaiah*

*You suffered for me, Lord; strengthen me to suffer for You today as I...*

*Pray Psalm 22.14-21.*

Let these verses immerse you in the physical suffering Jesus underwent as He bore our sins in His body on the cross. Weep for your sins, and rejoice in the forgiveness and salvation of the Lord.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 22.12-18** (*St. Christopher: Beneath the Cross of Jesus*)

Like raging bulls they bellowed, like lions set to feast.  
Each gaping mouth raged loudly like an all-consuming beast.  
Like water slipped His life away, disjointed hanged He high;  
His tongue clung to His jaws as He prepared His heart to die.

His foes, like dogs around Him, with glee did gloat and stare.  
They pierced His hands and feet; they stole the garments He did wear.  
Though not a bone was broken as He promised in His Word,  
Yet, wounded for our sins, thus died creation's sov'reign Lord..

## 5 The Pleasure of God

*Pray Psalm 22.30, 31.*

A posterity shall serve Him.

It will be recounted of the LORD to the *next* generation,

They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,

That He has done *this*.

*Read Isaiah 53.10, 11.*

*Reflect.*

1. According to these verses, what pleases God? What is the pleasure of God?
2. What does the righteous Servant accomplish by His suffering?

*Meditate.*

The pleasure of God is a great mystery. How can it *please* the LORD to bruise His Servant so violently (v. 10)? Because His suffering causes the *pleasure* of the LORD to prosper. Does it please a parent to have to discipline his child? No, but if it helps the child grow in goodness and wisdom, that is definitely pleasing. Does it please us to work out and deny ourselves certain foods? Not necessarily. But it pleases us to feel better, lose some weight, and stay healthy.

God's pleasure is a mystery, but He invites us into it (Ps. 16.11), having paved the way there by the suffering of the Servant He promised to send. God put the Servant to grief. God made Him an offering for sin, even though He would use the hands of sinful men to accomplish this aspect of His pleasure (cf. Acts 2.22, 23).

Here also we see the promise of new life beyond this sacrifice: "He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days" (v. 10). The result of this, moreover, is that "the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand" (v. 10). The work of the Servant is not finished by His suffering. That's just the beginning. Following His suffering, He causes the good pleasure of God to flourish. This refers to the promised great salvation, concerning which Isaiah will preach joyously in the next chapters.

The Servant will be satisfied in His soul to see many justified and declared righteous, because He has borne their iniquities in His own body (v. 11). As a mother rejoices after suffering to give birth to her child, the Servant rejoices after His suffering to see the good pleasure of the LORD unfolding through His work in His people.

And Isaiah will unpack the great scope and majesty of that work, beginning in chapter 54.

*Reflect.*

1. How can we know what pleases God? Should what pleases God please us as well? Explain.
2. What does it mean to be *justified*? How does the work of the Servant "justify many"?
3. What work is the Servant continuing to do in our day? What is your place in that work?

*Isaiah established that the slaying of Christ was a ransom for humanity's sins when he said, "He has borne the sins of many." And he will free humankind from demons, for as Isaiah said, "He will divide the spoils of the strong." And the same prophet spoke out clearly that Christ did this through his death when he said, "Because his soul was delivered up to death." That Christ*

*would be put in charge over the whole world be revealed by these words of his, "He shall inherit many." John Chrysostom (344-407 AD), Demonstration against the Pagans 4.12-13*

*Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the work You have done for my salvation. Help me today to join You in Your ongoing work as I...*

*Pray Psalm 22.23-31.*

Rejoice in the consequences that God has brought about through the suffering of Jesus, and recommit yourself to your part in making this Good News known.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 22.29-31** (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

All the prosp'rous of the earth shall before His mercy fall;  
Bending low before His worth, hear them humbly on Him call.  
Even those low in the grave He will by His mercy save.

Let the generations all witness to His saving grace;  
Let them to all nations call, "Bow before His holy face!"  
Let the children of the earth hear of Jesus' saving worth!

## 6 Dividing the Spoils

*Pray Psalm 110.5-7.*

The Lord *is* at Your right hand;  
He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.  
He shall judge among the nations,  
He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies,  
He shall execute the heads of many countries.  
He shall drink of the brook by the wayside;  
Therefore He shall lift up the head.

*Read Isaiah 53.12.*

*Reflect.*

1. What is being divided, and among whom?
2. What reason is given for this dividing of the spoil?

*Meditate.*

A reward awaits the Servant through His terrible suffering. “Because He poured out His soul unto death,” “was numbered with the transgressors,” and because “He bore the sin of many” and “made intercession for the transgressors”, the Servant will receive the spoils of victory from God.

And not just the Servant, but “the many” as well.

I want to translate the first part of verse 12 as follows: “I will make an allotment to Him among the many...” The Hebrew word, אֶלְמִלְכָּא, “I will make an allotment,” recalls the dividing of the land of promise under Joshua. Joshua received the land of promise as the Lord’s allotment for His people. Similarly here, the spoils of victory go to the Servant. What are these “spoils”? The earth and all creation, reconciled to God by His Servant, and now being made new by apportionment to “the many” (2 Cor. 5.17-21).

The verse continues, “and He will apportion the mighty as plunder...” The Servant spreads the wealth (cf. Dan. 7.13-18). As Joshua apportioned the land to the tribes, so the Servant apportions the spoils to the “many.” Jesus declared Himself to be in the plundering business in Matthew 12.22-29. He is taking the world back from the devil. He shares the riches of His plundering with “the many” – those who follow Him. This was symbolized by the two miracles of the loaves and fishes and will be fully realized by the faithful at the banquet table of the Lord (Rev. 19).

But there is a sharing of the spoils even now, as the Lord, following the example of Joshua, entrusts His faithful ones with an “allotment” of space – let’s call it a Personal Mission Field – in which, by His Word and Spirit, He unfolds His rule of righteousness, peace, and joy with increasing goodness, beauty, and truth (2 Cor. 10.13-18). In His followers, and throughout their Personal Mission Fields, Jesus intends to fill the world with Himself (Eph. 4.7-10), for He, in the Person of His Spirit, is the great spoil of victory given to all who trust in Him (Is. 44.1-5).

Jesus foresaw this even as He suffered. He was able to endure His trials because of the joy that awaited Him beyond them. Just so, we must press on through our trials, knowing that through them we may realize more of His Kingdom and Presence (Heb. 12.1-11; Acts 14.23).

One more point, and this hints at the magnitude of the Servant’s achievement: He bore the *sin* (חַטָּאת) of the

many. Would we not expect this to be rather “sins”? Surely “many” have more than one “sin.” But the Hebrew is singular. Whereas under the old covenant, the system of sacrifices and offerings could only cover *sins* for a season, it could not take away the problem of *sin* – the heart-rooted condition of rebellion against God that leads to all *sins*. But the Servant, by His suffering, not only forgives the *sins* but *removes the condition of sin* – He *bore* our sin away – thus making this time of plunder and spoil and Kingdom advance a new season of liberation. This was typified in the deliverance from Egypt and the return from Babylon, but now it is truly accomplished through the suffering and resurrection of Jesus. Now we may increase in the righteousness, peace, and joy of Christ’s rule on earth as it is in heaven, for sin has been defeated by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

*Prepare.*

1. What “apportionment” has the Lord given you? Are you filling your apportionment with Him?
2. Why do we say that Jesus is the spoil of victory? How do we receive and enjoy that spoil?
3. How can believers encourage one another in enjoying the spoils of Christ and advancing His Kingdom within our Personal Mission Fields?

*And this fruit swallows up all the shame of the death of Christ, that his majesty and glory may be more clearly seen than if we only beheld him sitting in heaven; for we have in him a striking and memorable proof of the love of God, when he is so insulted, degraded, and loaded with the utmost disgrace, in order that we, on whom had been pronounced a sentence of everlasting destruction, may enjoy along with him immortal glory.* John Calvin (1509-1564 AD), *Commentary on Isaiah 53.12*

*Thank You, Jesus, for sharing Your victory and spoils with me! Help me today and every day to...*

*Pray Psalm 110.*

As you pray, contemplate the work of Jesus, as He sits at the right hand of the Father – what it is, who it involves, and where it is headed. Commit yourself to your calling in that ongoing work of Christ.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 110** (*Aurelia: The Church’s One Foundation*)

“Sit by Me at My right hand,” the Lord says to my Lord,  
“Until I make Your foot stand on all who hate Your Word.”  
From in His Church the Savior rules all His enemies;  
while those who know His favor go forth the Lord to please.

Filled with the Spirit’s power, in holy robes of love,  
from early morning’s hour they serve their Lord above.  
Christ reigns a priest forever, the King of Righteousness  
and King of Peace who ever His chosen ones will bless.

The Lord at Your right hand, Lord, in wrath shall shatter kings,  
when judgment by His strong Word He to the nations brings.  
Then, all His foes defeated, He takes His hard-won rest,  
in glorious triumph seated with us, redeemed and blest!

## 7 For the Sprinkling of the Nations

*Pray Psalm 22.27, 28.*

All the ends of the world  
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,  
And all the families of the nations  
Shall worship before You.  
For the kingdom is the LORD's,  
And He rules over the nations.

*Review Isaiah chapters 52.13-53.12.*

*Reflect.*

1. This passage examines the extremes of the Servant's work, from grief to glory. How do you see that?
2. What results from the Servant's suffering?

*Meditate.*

Everything in the book of Isaiah has been moving toward this passage. All the warnings, admonitions, promises, and exhortations – all find their resolution here, in the suffering of the coming Servant of the LORD. The story of Israel and her covenant with God is consummated here. The promise to Abraham of blessings for all the peoples of the earth is accomplished here. The down payment on eternal glory and a world without sin is deposited with the suffering of the Servant of the LORD.

By His suffering He bears the guilt and shame of His people, takes their sin away, heals their iniquity, and provides a fount of blood for the sprinkling of the nations. His suffering is enormous, but it had to be, because so many and so great are the sins of the human race. Through His suffering the Servant gains the victory over sin and His adversaries, and He receives the world as His allotment, which He divides among His people.

It pleased God to bring His Servant to this great distress, because by that suffering, the good pleasure of God for the world and its salvation begins to be realized. The curse of sin is reversed; the power of God for salvation is sprinkled among the nations, transgressors are transformed into heirs, and the suffering One rejoices to see the labor of His soul bearing fruit for the glory of God.

“‘Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies! Who can explore his strange design?” asked Charles Wesley. We can understand the mystery of redemption and salvation, but only to a certain extent. We rest in the wisdom and grace of God, Who redeems the world and satisfies His righteousness and justice through the suffering of His faithful Servant, our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Prepare.*

1. Without this passage, we cannot understand the book of Isaiah. Why not?
2. What did the Servant accomplish by His suffering?
3. What's your primary takeaway from Isaiah 52.13-53.12?

*“Behold, my servant shall be wise,” that is, shall be illustrious; these words certainly concern our Lord. Indeed, he was called a servant by his Father, because, in the first place, he was sent by his Father in order to fulfill his will in procuring salvation for all*

*humankind, and in the second place, because he assumed the aspect of a servant. "He shall be exalted and lifted up, and he shall be very high" through his virtues and miracles. Ephrem the Syrian (306-373 AD), Commentary on Isaiah 52.13*

*Thank You, Lord Jesus Christ, for...*

*Pray Psalm 22.26-28.*

The suffering of Jesus, God's anointed Servant, was unto our salvation and the salvation of the world (Jn. 3.16). Pray that God will enlarge your vision of Christ's work, and will send you out into it today for the sprinkling of the nations with His blood and grace.

*Sing to the Lord.*

**Psalm 22.26-28** (*Darwall: Rejoice, the Lord is King*)

The suffering King shall eat and praise with us the Lord.

Forever we His praise repeat and trust His Word.

Praise God above, all you who keep His vows and who His mercies love!

All nations shall repent and hasten to the Lord;

All those to whom His truth is sent shall praise His Word.

The Lord is King! His sovereign rule on high now we His people sing!

*The Coming Servant, Part 4: Isaiah 52.13-53.12*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. Why do we say that Isaiah 52.13-53.12 is the key to understanding the book of Isaiah?
2. Why did it please God for His Servant to suffer? What did the Servant accomplish by His suffering?
3. How does the Servant's suffering benefit us? How does it oblige us?
4. How would you explain to an unbelieving friend why it was necessary for the Servant to suffer?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Isaiah 52.13-52.12? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.