

## ISAIAH 53

### I. The authorship of Isaiah 53 is attacked.

- a. One of the favorite things critics do with Isaiah is attack his authorship.
  - i. They claim this section was written by some unknown scribe in Babylon.
  - ii. While claiming this, they also acknowledge that such an idea was not thought of for nearly 2,500 years.
- b. The only reason such an idea has ever been presented is because of all the predictive prophecy in Isaiah.
  - i. But even if it was some unknown scribe, which it isn't, how could he have been so accurate?
  - ii. There is no other reason to attack the authorship of this part of Isaiah.
- c. In the New Testament, the 53<sup>rd</sup> chapter of this book is attributed to Isaiah.
  - i. Matthew 8:17.
  - ii. John 12:38.
  - iii. Romans 10:16.

### II. The One about whom the chapter speaks is attacked.

- a. A member to the Lord's church wrote that the Messianic view of chapter 53 "must be viewed as tentative at best".
- b. The supposed Christians who don't believe that the chapter is about Jesus think this way because of their disbelief of predictive prophecy.
- c. Jews do not believe it is Messianic because it points to heavily to Jesus.
- d. Both view it as a prophecy of the Jewish nation.
- e. The view that it is not Messianic was not the Jewish view until the Middle Ages.
  - i. "Our ancient commentators with one accord noted that the context clearly speaks of God's Anointed One, the Messiah. The Aramaic translation of this chapter, ascribed to Rabbi Jonathan ben Uzziel, a disciple of Hillel who lived early in the second century c.e., begins with the simple and worthy words: 'Behold my servant Messiah shall prosper; he shall be high, and increase, and be exceeding strong: as the house of Israel looked to him through many days, because their countenance was darkened among the peoples, and their complexion beyond the sons of men (Targum Jonathan on Isaiah 53, ad locum).'"
  - ii. This was from a Messianic Jewish commentator named Rachmiel Frydland.
  - iii. There were three arguments made by those that continued to believe it was Messianic in nature and not referring to Israel itself.
    1. All the ancient Jewish commentators believed it was Messianic.

2. The use of the singular throughout (He was despised and rejected, he was wounded for our transgressions, by his stripes we are healed).
  3. Isaiah 53:8 – they argued that the Jews were never cut off from the land of the living.
  4. Also, it says “for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”
  5. If this was about Israel nationally, the sinner would also be the sin-bearer, which is impossible.
  6. Also, verse 9 says that there was no deceit in his mouth and the Jews were never sinless.
- iv. Rabbi Moshe Kohen Iben Crispin of Cordova, who lived in the fourteenth century, said of the Israel as servant interpretation, it “distorts the passage from its natural meaning” and that Isaiah 53 “was given of God as a description of the Messiah, whereby, when any should claim to be the Messiah, to judge by the resemblance or non-resemblance to it whether he were the Messiah or not.”
- f. It is interesting that when the eunuch was talking with Philip about this chapter that he asked about whom the writer was speaking, himself or another, and then we are told that Philip preached unto him Jesus.
  - g. Philip sure believed it was a Messianic chapter.

### III. The suffering Servant of God.

- a. Isaiah first describes the unbelief He would face (Isaiah 53:1).
  - i. God revealed Himself through Jesus by the miracles Jesus performed.
  - ii. However, the vast majority of the Jews failed to believe in Jesus.
  - iii. John viewed this passage as a look ahead to Jesus’s miracle working capability (John 12:37-38).
  - iv. Notice it is “who hath believed our report”.
  - v. This indicates Father and Son working together but being rejected together as well.
- b. Isaiah then described the rejection of Jesus (Isaiah 53:2-3).
  - i. From our view, looking at Jesus would never lead us to believe He was God in the flesh.
  - ii. Jesus was treated shamefully by the Jews because they despised who He was as a person and from where He had come.
  - iii. This treatment led Him to be acquainted with grief and sorrow.
- c. Isaiah then describes the atoning death of Jesus (Isaiah 53:4-6).
  - i. This chapter shouts out that the Suffering Servant would use Himself as a substitute for us.

- ii. He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and we are healed by his stripes.
  - iii. This chapter plainly teaches the vicarious suffering of Jesus for us.
  - iv. Verse 6 points out at least three very important points:
    - 1. The universal sinfulness of man – all we like sheep have gone astray: without the Suffering Servant, we would have no hope.
    - 2. This situation of being sinful is of our own making – we were not born astray; we have gone astray.
    - 3. The opportunity for all men to be saved is there: “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all”.
  - v. So, yes man has sinned, but was not born that way, having gone there by choice, but there is a way given by God for our sin problem to be resolved.
- d. Isaiah then describes the submissiveness of our Lord before His tormentors.
  - i. Jesus refused to open His mouth before the council.
  - ii. He made no defense in an attempt to save His life.
  - iii. Instead, Jesus meekly submitted to them and the suffering of the cross.
- e. Isaiah then prophesied that Jesus would not be treated fairly.
  - i. Notice that Isaiah wrote “He was taken from prison and judgment”.
  - ii. Though no crime was committed by Him and He was found innocent by Pilate, Jesus was still put to death.
  - iii. Numerous Jewish laws were broken over the course of that fateful night, but ultimately, Jesus was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God (Acts 2:23).
- f. Isaiah then gives us a picture of the events surrounding the death of Jesus.
  - i. Jesus was killed with the wicked but buried with the rich (Isaiah 53:9).
  - ii. In most instances, one crucified was not even buried by the Romans or allowed to be buried.
- g. Isaiah finally shows that all of this was in God’s plan for saving mankind (Isaiah 53:10-12).
  - i. Jesus was made an offering for sin so that the just nature of God could be satisfied.
  - ii. The Lord’s days were prolonged by His resurrection from the dead.
  - iii. The Messiah would be victorious is the point of the beginning of verse 12.
  - iv. Because of this, it is only through the Messiah that man would be able to be reconciled to God.

Outline came from an article by Wayne Jackson.