Bible Student's Notebook The Herald of His Grace Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume 28 Issue 691

Messiah

In Both Testaments

Part 6 of 7

by — Dr. Fred John Meldau (1899-1969)

To Him give all the prophets witness (Acts 10:43).

In the volume of the Book it is written of **Me** (Psalm 40:7; Hebrews 10:7).

(2) Isaiah 53

This remarkable prophecy of the sufferings and exaltation of Messiah was written 700 years before the time of Christ. It reads more like "an historical summary of the Gospel narrative of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, instead of [like] a prophecy."1

This chapter is a bundle of paradoxes, or apparent contradictions, as numerous as the verses in the chapter. In fact, it was designed to present a prophetic enigma which only the Person (and work) of the Christ of the New Testament can solve. He is a root out of the dry ground - yet fruitful; He has no form nor beauty - yet He is the chosen Servant of God; He is despised and rejected of men – yet He is the appointed Savior; He suffers unto death - yet He survives; ... men would make His grave with the wicked – yet He is buried with the rich; He suffers unbelievable adversity - yet He enjoys prosperity; He is triumphed over – yet He triumphs; He is condemned - yet He justifies the condemned. These paradoxes remained a problem until the cross was set up, the sepulcher burst open, and the Son of God Who came to die went up to reign.2

Unfortunately, the chapter division³ comes at the wrong place. It should begin with Isaiah 52:13, which starts with the words, "Behold My Servant" ... and that is the subject of this entire section, Isaiah 52:13-53:12. It is a graphic portrayal of the suffering Messiah ... "Iehovah's Servant."

The first question to be answered is,

Of whom speaketh the prophet? Of himself, or of some other? (Acts 8:34).

The only possible correct answer is: this prophecy speaks of an individual, Messiah, and there is only One Person in the history of the world Whom it fits: Christ of the New Testament.4

- 2. A.T. Pierson, Living Oracles, page 110.
- 3. [Editor:] For more information on Bible punctuation and chapter/ verse divisions, see:
 - Verses, Chapters, Paragraphs and Punctuation, Eugene Charles Callaway, Bible Student's Notebook #480.
- 4. While some unbelievers have sought to interpret this chapter as referring to "Suffering Israel," the nation, rather than to the "Suffering Messiah," these five facts prove the theme of Isaiah 53 to

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Let anyone steep his mind in the contents of this chapter, then read what is said about Jesus in the Gospels, and, as he stands underneath the cross, see if there is not the most perfect correspondence between the two. In Jesus of Nazareth alone in all history, but in Him perfectly, has this prophecy found fulfillment.5

We wish now to call attention in more detail to some of the prophetic wonders, descriptions of Messiah's rejection, sufferings, death, resurrection and exaltation, in this chapter. As we do so, we will call attention repeatedly to this bewildering phenomenon: when Jesus of Nazareth came 700 years later, and died on the cross, these predictions were fulfilled with a literalness that astonishes and an exactness that parallels mathematical certainty.

(a) Messiah's Astonishing Exaltation

Behold, My Servant shall prosper; He shall be

be Messiah, not the Jewish people.

- (1) This prophecy speaks of an INDIVIDUAL all the way through. It is "He shall grow up" (:2), "He is despised ... a man of sorrows" (:3), "He was wounded" (:4), and so all through the chapter.
- (2) Verse 8 is conclusive: the Sufferer was stricken for the transgressions of "My people" (Israel), and so He is an individual; hence, He cannot be "the people."
- (3) He is an INNOCENT Sufferer (:7, 9), which could never be said of the nation Israel.
- (4) He is a VOLUNTARY Sufferer, who willingly "pours out His soul unto death" (:12) - again depicting the death of an individual, not a nation. Moreover, Israel as a nation has never suffered voluntarily.
- (5) He is an UNRESISTING Sufferer, who "opened not His mouth" (:7), which could never be said of the nation Israel. Words could not make the meaning more clear to those open to truth; Isaiah 53 describes a sinless, voluntary, unresisting individual who suffers.
- 5. Professor James Orr.

exalted, and shall be extolled, and shall be raised very high (Isaiah 52:13, Literal).

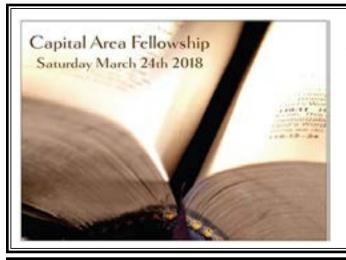
Before this section (52:13-53:12) presents the depths of Messiah's humiliation, we are initially assured of His final victory and glory. The revelation of Messiah's final end is intended to prepare us, as it were, for the shock of His temporary abasement.

The New Testament makes very clear the final exaltation of Christ after His sufferings and death:

Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrew 1:3).

Christ Jesus, Who being in the form⁶ of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but ... humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name⁷ (Phi-

- **6.** [Editor:] For more information about Christ as God's Image, see:
 - The Image of God, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student's Note-
- 7. [Editor:] For more information on the names of God the Father and His Son, see:
 - The Use of Names and Titles of God (Part 1), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student's Notebook #511;
 - The Names of Jesus, E.W. Bullinger, Bible Student's Notebook
 - "Christ Jesus" and "Jesus Christ," A.E. Knoch, Bible Student's Notebook #325;
 - God is God, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Daily Goodies (May 27) book (see order form);
 - Companion Bible, E.W. Bullinger, Appendix #4 (see order form);
 - The Divine Names and Titles, E.W. Bullinger (see order form).



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lippians 2:6-11; see also Matthew 28:5-6; Acts 1:3, 9; Ephesians 1:20-23, etc.).

(b) Messiah's Shocking Abuse

Just as many were astonished at Him, for so disfigured was He that His appearance was not human, and His form was not like that of the children of men (Isaiah 52:14, Delitzsch).

If Messiah's "exaltation" (:13) is astonishingly "high," His sufferings are even more astonishing. The word shamem here rendered "astonished" by the RV means "startled, confused, as it were petrified by paralyzing astonishment."8

During the terrible hours before His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus was brutally manhandled, buffeted, scourged⁹ and abused in other ways. Then on the cross, the crown of thorns, the nails driven through His quivering flesh, and the consequent agony of crucifixion in which every nerve, every muscle became "a flame of torture," added to the excruciating mental agony and soul suffering, so affected Him that His features became so marred and distorted that He no longer resembled a man. This horrifying fact is nearly unbelievable, but it is clearly revealed of Messiah in the Old Testament, and just as clearly given in the records concerning the sufferings and death of Jesus the Christ in the New Testament.

Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him, And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns and put it on His head¹⁰ (John 19:1-2).

Then they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands ... and they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head ...

and mocked Him, and took the reed and smote Him on the head (Matthew 26:67-68; 27:27-30).

Before the cross, but leading up to it, His face was marred; on the cross, His form was marred, so the fulfillment of the prediction was complete. The bloody sweat, the traces of the crown of thorns, the spit on His face, and the result of the smiting on the head, disfigured His face; while the scourging, the buffeting, the nails driven through His hands and feet, the weight of the body, pulling it out of joint, and the final spear-thrust through His side, distorted His body. Add the extreme mental anguish and soul grief, and the result is One so marred that He no longer resembled a man.

How much He loved; how much He paid for our redemption!

(c) A Message that Will Be Disbelieved by Israel

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? (Isaiah 53:1).

In the New Testament we read of the fulfillment of this prediction.

But though He had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, "Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (John 12:37-38).

(d) Messiah's Supernatural Birth and Spiritual Growth

For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground ... (Isaiah 53:2).

Messiah's supernatural birth is intimated in the phrase, "as a root out of a dry ground." A root growing out of dry ground is a miracle: one essential element (moisture) is missing. Messiah's birth was to be a miracle – the miracle of the virgin birth.

He was to "grow up before Him as a tender plant." ▶



^{8.} David Baron.

^{9.} The scourging itself was violent, inhuman. The scourge was often made of leather thongs, fastened to a handle. At the ends of the thongs, at times, were fastened bits of sharpened metal or rock that cut and lacerated the flesh of the victim, and turned the back into a bleeding pulp.

^{10.} We saw thorns in Bible lands having spines two to three inches long. When dried, they were very hard, pointed – and sharp as needles. Such a "crown" if pressed down on the brow, would puncture the skin in a score of places and cause both pain and a gory trickle of blood, which would result in matted, disheveled hair, presenting a horrible appearance.

In the New Testament we read of the child Jesus,

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him (Luke 2:40).

(e) He was Despised and Rejected of Men

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).

He will have no men of high standing, no "important" men, few men of distinction, to support Him with their authority and influence, and so it proved to be in the life of Jesus the Christ. The following record from the New Testament reveals these facts:

The Pharisees said, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" (John 7:47-48; see context).

Who but the infinite God, Who knoweth the end from the beginning, would dare frame a prophecy like that, presenting Messiah as being without the support of the leaders of the people? However, history fully confirmed the truthfulness of the prediction.

(f) Messiah Will Be Known as a Man of Sorrows

... a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him (Isaiah 53:3).



Bible Proofs of Universal Salvation

by — J.W. (John Wesley) Hanson 137 pages, PB (see order form) This work presents Bible proof of universal salvation containing the principle passages of Scrip-

ture that teach the final holiness and happiness of all mankind. The author attempts to present the prominent considerations that are contained in the Bible in support of the final redemption of all souls.

The point here emphasized, and true in its fulfillment, is that Messiah will be "a man of pains" (Hebrew) - sorrow in all its forms. Jesus' sorrow came as He compassionately suffered with the ills of human-

(g) Messiah Will Suffer Willingly, Without Complaining

He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth (Isaiah 53:7).

Other sufferers usually register murmuring or complaining, especially when they are unjustly treated but not so the suffering Messiah. He voluntarily submitted Himself to His appointed task of and went as a lamb to the slaughter.

In sublime and magnanimous silence Messiah will endure to the uttermost, because Jehovah wills it. ... And here we look down into the unfathomed mystery of infinite love.

In the New Testament, when Jesus the Christ was beaten, falsely accused, mistreated, mocked, spat upon, persecuted, manhandled, scourged and crucified, there was no flame of resentment, no incriminations against His executioners, no loud complaining. After many false witnesses appeared against Him, Jesus "held His peace." The High Priest wondered about it and said, "Answerest Thou nothing?" (See Matthew 26:59-63).

Here is Jesus' prayer, while suffering the tortures of crucifixion:

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34).

This whole procedure is so unusual, so contrary to nature and human experience, one cannot help but be struck, startled, by both the strange prophecy and its even more remarkable fulfillment.

(h) Messiah Will Have *No Advocate* to Plead His Cause

He was taken [Hebrew: snatched away, hurried away] from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? (Isaiah 53:8).

An alternate reading of the last phrase is,

And who among His generation shall declare (His innocence)?

The Sanhedrin had the custom in "trials for life" to call on those who knew anything in favor of the accused to come forward and declare it.¹¹ This was not observed in the trial of Jesus of Nazareth, but rather the proceedings at His hasty, mock, illegal trial before the Sanhedrin were in flagrant contradiction with their own regulations, and against all standards of right and fairness.

Jesus had to appear alone, and undefended, before the corrupt Jewish hierarchy and the representatives of the greatest Gentile power on earth at that time. Not one person appeared to take His part. Judas betrayed Him; Peter denied Him, with oaths; and the other disciples "forsook Him and fled" (Matthew 26:56).

In the hour of His greatest need, humanly speaking, not one person stood by Him. True, later on, after the weary hours of suffering had numbed His broken

body, Mary His mother, a few faithful women, and John His beloved disciple, "stood by" at the cross; but during His trial and the early hours of His crucifixion He was left alone.

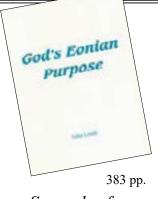
"False witnesses" were suborned to witness against Him "to put Him to death" (Matthew 26:59). He was tried at night, which was illegal. In the Roman court, when Pilate sought in vain for a cause to justly condemn Him, he asked the people, "What evil hath He done?" The only answers he got were the unreasonable shouts of the mob, edged on by their leaders, "let Him be crucified, let Him be crucified" (see Matthew 27:23). Then, when Pilate saw that words of reason and justice "prevailed nothing" and that a worse "tumult" was developing, he weakly washed his hands of the affair and turned Jesus over to them that they might crucify Him (see Matthew 27:24-26). This was the worst miscarriage of justice in the annals of all history.

Christ's innocence was not only attested to by Pilate – "I find no fault in Him" (John 18:38) – but also by the Messianic prophet of old: "He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth" (Isaiah 53:9).

(i) Though Men Planned Messiah's Burial "with the Wicked," Providence Planned It "with the Rich"

They (men) appointed Him His grave with the wicked (but) He was with a rich man after His death (Isaiah 53:9, Delitzsch).

11. David Baron, The Servant of Jehovah, page 106.



God's Eonian Purpose

by — Adlai Loudy

First printed in 1929, this work is a review of God's plan and purpose, gathering together many of the most basic themes of Scripture, including *The Beginning of Creation, The Eons and Administrations, Justification, The Conciliation, Completeness in Christ*, and *The Goal of the Universe*. These and other vital subjects are presented in an interesting and informative manner. The book contains charts and illustrations which provide a welcome visual supplement to the text. (*Available in Hardcover & Paperback*)

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Dying as a criminal, ordinarily His body would have been flung over the wall to be burned like offal in the fires of Topheth¹² (west of Jerusalem); but when His vicarious sufferings were finished no further indignity was permitted to His lifeless body¹³

The Jewish rulers would have given to Jesus the same dishonorable burial as that given to the two thieves, but the Roman authorities handed over His body to Joseph the Arimathean, a "rich man" (Matthew 27:57) who placed it in his sepulcher in his own garden. At once we see an agreement between the Gospel history and the prophetic words which could only be the work of the God of both prophecy and its fulfillment, inasmuch as no suspicion could possibly arise of there having been any human design of bringing the former into conformity with the latter.¹⁴

The reason assigned for His honorable burial, which was so different from what had been planned or "appointed" for Him by His enemies, is, "He hath done no violence, neither was any deceit found in His mouth" - another reiteration of the absolute innocence of the Divine Sufferer.

Re-read the New Testament account of Jesus' burial, to find the perfect fulfillment:

When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb (Matthew 27:57-60).

(j) God Would Prolong Messiah's Days, in Resurrection

When thou shalt make His soul a trespass offer-

- 12. [Editor:] For more information on the "fires of Topheth" (i.e., Gehenna), see:
 - Gehenna: the "Hell" of Matthew 18, Bible Student's Notebook
 - Israel, the Law, and the Judgment of Gehenna, Charles Rutsch, Bible Student's Notebook #306;
 - The Synonymous Words for "Hell," etc., E.W. Bullinger, Companion Bible Appendixes #131 (see order form).
- 13. A.T. Pierson.
- 14. Franz Delitzsch.

ing for sin, He shall see seed, He shall prolong His days, and the will of the Lord shall prosper in His hand (Isaiah 53:10, literal translation).

After Messiah's offering¹⁵ of Himself as a trespass offering, God will "prolong His days" in resurrection and He shall "see seed" - the result of His sacrifice.

The fulfillment of this paradox is in the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ, Who "Died for our sins according to the Scriptures ... and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

This fact of Messiah's resurrection is in accord with other Old Testament Scriptures, such as:

Thou wilt not leave My soul in Sheol; neither will Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption (Psalm 16:10).

Moreover, the will of God will "prosper" in Messiah's hand – Messiah will accomplish God's will with zeal, and He will indeed bring salvation and righteousness to both Israel and the nations.

He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He hath set judgment in the Earth: and the isles shall wait for His law (Isaiah 42:4).

The New Testament not only tells of the glorious resurrection of Christ, but also of the beginning of His ministry after His resurrection - working through His disciples – by which multitudes were saved (Acts 2:41; 4:4).

The "Captain of our Salvation" is "bringing many sons unto glory" (Hebrews 2:10).

(k) God Will Be "Satisfied" with Messiah's Sacrifice, and Many Shall Be Made Righteous

He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant make many righteous; for He shall bear

- (Article): The Approach Present, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student's Notebook #436;
- · (Video): The Approach Present, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., <u>Stu-</u> dyShelf Videos

^{15. [}Editor:] For more on this glorious Approach Present, see:

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their iniquities (Isaiah 53:11).

Here we are given a forecast of the tremendous truth, so fully developed by Paul, that Christ died for sins and purchased a full redemption for all.

(l) In Messiah's Death He Would Be Numbered with the Transgressors

He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isaiah 53:12).

Similar to the mention of the disposition of Messiah's garments in Psalm 22, we here have a concomitant¹⁶ incident showing true *detail* in prophecy, which marks it as genuine – for details in prophecy are the marks that immediately set it off as being of Divine origin; that is, if the fulfillment matches the prophecy.

The point here is, in this prophecy (:12), the word "transgressors" does not refer to ordinary sinners but to "criminals" (Hebrew, poshim, criminals, open transgressors of the law of God and man).

So, as Delitzsch observed, this prediction and its fulfillment became "one of those remarkable coincidences which were brought about by Providence between the prophecies and our Saviors' passion," that Christ should have been crucified between two thieves (literally, "robbers"; see Luke 23:39-43).

Many volumes have been written that show the wonders of Messianic prophecy in this chapter (Isaiah 53), and the fulfillment in the atoning death of Jesus the Christ as described in the New Testament. We believe, in touching the high spots as we have, and so calling attention again to these phenomena, these miracles in print, that the faith of many will either be generated or confirmed in both the supernatural character of the prophecies and their fulfillment. This shows clearly that Scripture has upon it "the stamp of its Divine Author - the mark of Heaven." Therefore, it is "beyond even the wildest credulity to believe that the resemblance in every feature and minutest detail between this prophetic portraiture in Isaiah 53, drawn centuries before His advent, and the account of His life, death and glorious resurrection, as narrated in the Gospels, can be mere accident or fortuitous coincidence."17

(to be continued)

Topics:

Major: Divine Inspiration; Isaiah 53; Jesus Christ; Messiah *Minor*: Crucifixion; Death; Prophetic Fulfillment; Prophetic Paradoxes; Resurrection; Suffering

16. [Editor:] "Occurring or existing concurrently." — American Heritage Dictionary

17. David Baron, ibid, pages vii-viii.



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by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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Editor's Zesk

The Nature of Quotes

For some readers, a word of explanation may be beneficial regarding the nature of some of the quotations used in the *Bible Student's Notebook*. We make copious reference to the writings of others in our articles, text boxes and page toppers, as well as in our other ministries (*Daily Email Goodies, Daily Quick Quotes*, etc.)

It is not even uncommon for us to cite material from unbelievers as a matter of course. We believe that the glimmers of understanding found among those not granted faith provide remarkable inroads with those whom we seek a discourse.

Of course, this doesn't mean that we endorse all of our sources. Like Paul, we will quote just about anybody, even a pagan poet (Acts 17:28), if the quotation presents itself well to the truth.

In the steadfast love of Christ,



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- the affirmation that God will save all mankind through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 1:1-3);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:

- total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
- union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
- adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

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