

1. Isaiah 53 is one of the greatest chapters of the Bible. There was a brilliant young man with a Ph.D. in psychology. He was raised in an Orthodox Jewish home and avoided anything to do with Christianity. He was staying for a brief time at the Dutch L'Abri, a Christian place where people came to ask questions and study Christianity. Someone read to him this chapter from Isaiah and asked him what he thought of it. He responded, "That could have been written by anyone who was there or knew about the crucifixion of Jesus." That was the beginning of events that led this young Jewish man to the Kingdom of the true Messiah.

2. This chapter is called a servant song and actually begins at the end of chapter 52. It begins and ends on a note of high triumph. The word resurrection is not used or the idea clearly stated, but it is clearly implied.

3. It is clear that the suffering servant is Jesus Christ. This along with Psalm 22 is a remarkable and specific piece of Messianic prophecy, written 700 years before its fulfillment.

4. There are three major things to understand about this passage of scripture. First, it is a significant prophetic passage. Second, it is the only Old Testament passage to give us the meaning and purpose of Christ's death, the sprinkling of the blood. This passage gives prophecy and interpretation together. Third, this passage tells us that Jesus did not die for Himself, but He bore our sins.

5. Jesus' death was **voluntary**. He was the suffering servant because He chose to be. He predicted His own death. He chose death so we might have life.

6. Jesus' death was **vicarious** or "substitutionary". He died for us. He bore our sins.

7. Jesus' death was **victorious**. God accepted the sacrifice and the proof was the resurrection. Remember these three words and you will be able to explain the real meaning of the cross to others.

8. Verse 4 tells us that he not only took on Himself our sins but our infirmities or sicknesses as well. Matthew quoted Isaiah 53:14 saying, "this was done to fulfill the scripture..." This means that God not only cares for our spiritual self, but our physical bodies as well.

9. It reminds us that we are called to be servants like Jesus. If we pay attention to the call, it will mean: 1. submitting ourselves to the will of God, 2. Suffering, 3. and we must live for others instead of ourselves.

1. In chapters 54 and 55 Isaiah is looking into the future, past the chastisement and exile the Lord will bring on His people, to the time of the re-gathering of the people of Judah. In chapter 56, Isaiah sees that when salvation that came through Abraham to Israel, it was freely offered to all the nations of the world. God told Abram, "All the nations of the earth will be blessed."

2. Chapter 54 pictures Zion as a woman living in her own tent. She is told to "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back..." Zion is to spread out and take over the earth in the name of God. This has always been God's plan and purpose, but sin entered and marred the plan. Then God sent the flood and after the flood repeated the same plan to Noah. Again sin marred the plan. Jesus again repeated this as he drove the money changers out of the court of the Gentiles. After the resurrection, the Great Commission was given to preach the gospel "to every creature" and God allowed persecution to drive the disciples from Jerusalem into the world. We need to be careful not to exclude the foreigners in our lives.

3. The description of the rebuilt Jerusalem in chapter 54 is a figurative one, meant to remind Israel of how valuable they were in God's eyes. It is similar to the city John describes in Revelation 21. John and the other apostles were so steeped in the Word of God that it influenced everything they saw and experienced. We need to be that full of God's Word. This chapter is a treasure of scripture quotations, starting with the invitation, "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters;..." This was the basis for the invitation Jesus issued to the woman in John 4.

4. The second invitation of Isaiah 55 is equally well known. "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while he is near." This is just as relevant and compelling in our day.

5. The next paragraph is excellent theology relating to the nature of God. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

6. A fourth familiar portion of Isaiah 55 is the promise about the Word of God. "So it is with my word that goes out from my mouth. It will not return to me empty. But will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." God's eternal purposes stand.

7. The last familiar verses of chapter 55 are ones we sometimes sing in a chorus. "You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace. The mountains and the hills will break forth before you. There will be shouts of joy and all the trees in the field will clap, will clap their hands." These words would have had great meaning to the Israelites as they looked forward to a 70 year captivity and would have given them great hope as they endured affliction.

8. The chapters end on a somber note because the short term prediction was punishment and exile because the watchmen of Israel were asleep and uncaring. Today many watchmen are asleep and because of that many church goers who think they are Christians are rushing headlong toward their doom with no one sounding the warning. We must be watchmen and warn them.

1. Things were really bad in Judah in the time of Isaiah. Some of the particular sins of the people were occult practices, sexual immorality, a spirit of mockery, idolatry and the sacrifice of children to idols. Isaiah says it looks like God does not know or does not care what is going on, or is unable to stop it.

2. Christians have always claimed that God is all good, all knowing, and all powerful but the existence of evil in the world poses an insurmountable problem to this belief set. If this is true, why doesn't God act to restrain or remove evil from the world. Isaiah tells us that our sins have separated us from God and hidden His face from us. Isaiah is saying, "wake up people." Dealing with evil is the Christian's responsibility. We must start obeying the commands of the Lord and things will change.

3. In Chapter 59:15-19 we see a pattern that God lays down beginning with the flood all the way through the Bible to the book of Revelation. He looks for people to obey. When they ignore His commands He raises up a few righteous people to defend it. If that doesn't happen, after a long period in which He gives people many opportunities to repent, He will finally judge sin and execute judgment. He will judge evil. (Read Romans 1.)

4. The solution for society in spiritual decline is for God's people to repent and obey. Notice how Isaiah identifies with the sins of the people of God. He prays a prayer of confession and repentance on their behalf. Isaiah identified with their sin. Jesus actually took on our sins.

5. Our world is much like Isaiah's and the church like Israel, asleep and weak. If the church would obey, revival would follow. We need to intercede when we pray and identify ourselves with the sins of the church. We need to confess our sins before God.

6. Fasting is mentioned in chapter 58. It was denounced because the people were not sincere in their fasting. It was not accompanied by repentance and obedience. The Bible does not oppose fasting. Fasting is a spiritual discipline. Not many people fast today. Fasting can be a means God has provided for our growth in holiness and power.

7. Many Bible saints and saints through the ages have fasted. It clearly had a place in the early churches. It is not confined to any theological school. Fasting has been a channel for God's power throughout history.

1. Isaiah is looking ahead into the distant future. Isaiah describes the glory of Zion to come when God's program for the nations has come to an end. The imagery reminds us of the Book of Revelation - in particular the description John gives to the New Jerusalem. John's words in Revelation are similar to Isaiah's.

2. Is Isaiah talking about the millennial kingdom, after Christ's return but before the creation of the new heavens and new earth and Christ will reign for a 1,000 years while Satan is bound? Or is Isaiah, like John, speaking in familial language about the final period of history – the new heaven and new earth. There are differing opinions about this.

3. Another example of the same thing found in Isaiah 63 as well as Revelation 19 is the description of God's day of vengeance and redemption. Jesus is pictured riding on a white horse "dressed in a robe dipped in blood".

4. Isaiah 61:1-3 is clearly Messianic in nature. The word servant is not used here because it is the servant who is speaking. He is talking about His mission. Some commentators have attempted to explain the first part of chapter 61 by saying it applies to Isaiah. Jesus himself gives us the definite interpretation. Luke tells us that Jesus said, "The spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." When Jesus finished reading from Isaiah 61 He said, "This day the scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

5. Jesus intentionally stopped reading in the middle of a sentence, leaving out "and (to proclaim) vengeance of our God." This was because bringing vengeance or judgment would happen at His Second Coming.

6. This is the calling of every Christian because we are servants of God and this is what servants do. We are to be servants to the poor, the brokenhearted, the captives and prisoners, but isn't that who we try to avoid? Helping needy people cost us too much in time and energy.

7. We are challenged to minister to these people because they are ready to acknowledge that they have a need that is bigger than their resources. In ministering to them we are giving to people who many times have nothing to give back. We are becoming the servants of God.

8. This passage ends with a prayer. Isaiah has seen by faith the glorious hope to come. He knows there is tremendous affliction to come. He knows that hope will be a long time coming and that he will see affliction and death before it comes. He is confident that God will bring it to pass because he has faith in what God has done in the past.

9. In the prayer of chapter 63, Isaiah reminds us that in Exodus it was the Holy Spirit who was present and working among the people of Israel. This is because the full teaching of the Bible is that all three members of the trinity are involved in the work of redemption.

1. You have finished reading through one of the major Old Testament prophetic books. Today sit down and reflect on how the Book of Isaiah has affected you this month. Sit down in a quiet place and ask God to help you remember what you have read, then write what is important to you. The name of God – “the Holy One of Israel” has become important to me.
2. Isaiah was a prophet, a seer, to whom God gave an enormous amount of faith. He saw what God wanted to do in history, for and through Israel.
3. Isaiah 64 begins with a prayer. This is a prayer for revival, to see the glory and power of God so that the hearts of the people would be turned back to God. God’s anger has been kindled by the continual sin of His people. Isaiah observes that “all of our righteousness is as filthy rags”.
4. Isaiah acknowledges the inability of the righteous to change the state of affairs in which they find themselves. Isaiah recognizes we are clay in the hands of the potter. We have no say in what the potter does.
5. Chapter 64 ends with the prophet throwing himself on the mercy of God. We live in a society that has violated all the principles of godliness and righteousness. The church is asleep and dull. No one calls upon God’s name. We are impotent to change the situation.
6. We must acknowledge our brokenness and pray. Only God can change things. Will we pray and cry out to God once again? We can only pray.
7. In chapter 65 there is a section in which God promises to create the new heavens and a new earth. Again we have the imagery that appears at the end of the Book of Revelation. We expect him to talk about heaven and the eternal state, but what follows seems instead to be a description of the millennial age. This is a wonderful time, but a time that is still human time when people do die and babies are born, an age of grace and favor, but not heaven. This future age will be a time when “before they call I will answer and while they are still speaking I will hear.”
8. In the last sentence of Isaiah, God reminds us in words that Jesus Himself chose to repeat that there will be a different eternal destiny for those who rebel. It is a place where “the worm will not die, nor will the fire be quenched.” In the New Testament that place is called “hell.” It is very real and will be the eternal dwelling place of those who reject the salvation of God offered through Jesus Christ.
9. In the end there will be only two groups of people, the righteous and the ungodly. In the New Testament they are called the saved and lost.
10. God’s warning from Isaiah 65 is: “My servants will eat but you will go hungry. My servants will rejoice but you will go thirsty. My servants will sing but you will cry out from anguish of hearts and wail in brokenness of spirit...” We need to share what we have learned with others who are right now destined for destruction.