

Christ in Isaiah

Part 6

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[00:00:01] We are going to read together Isaiah chapter 52 verse 13 to the end of 53.

Isaiah 52 Isaiah 52 verse 13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently. He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

As many were astonished at thee, his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.

So shall he sprinkle many nations. The kings shall shut their mouths at him.

[00:01:06] For that which had not been told them, they shall see. And that which they had not heard, they shall consider.

Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

For he shall go 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.

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.

[00:02:05] Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

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 done, so he openeth not his mouth. [00:03:03] He

was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death.

Because he hath done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief.

When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. [00:04:02] By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoiled with the strong.

Because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bear the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

For the beginning of our meeting this evening, I should like to go right back to the very beginning. At the point where we started last Tuesday evening, in going over again the story of those two who were walking out from Jerusalem to Emers, seven miles.

[00:05:17] They were accustomed to walking, but this particular afternoon, the third day after Jesus died, their feet were led and their hearts were stoned.

And we can very well imagine them with their faces lined with sorrow, and trudging along with their heads together, and talking with each other about their sorrow. And so engrossed were they in this that they didn't see a stranger who came, and coming alongside them, fell in step and joined in the conversation. [00:06:02] What can be the things that you're talking about to make you, Luke, so sad? And the stranger said, What things?

And they stopped and said, You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem these days who hasn't heard about the things that are happening there. And he said again, What things?

And they said, The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene. We had hoped that he would be the deliverer of Israel, but our rulers delivered him up to the Romans, and he was crucified.

And all this took place three days ago.

But this morning, some of our women made us very surprised by saying they'd been along to the sepulchre, and they had found it empty. And someone else, the men had gone to see, and they came back and said that they'd seen an angel who had said to them that Jesus was not there. [00:07:08] He was risen, and it was very true that they did not find his body. And that's the rest of the astonishing story that we have to tell. And the stranger said to them, Oh, how foolish, how slow you are to believe those very scriptures that you've been telling me about. You said that they had led you to think that he would be the redeemer who would deliver Israel. And beginning at the beginning of the scriptures in the book of Genesis, he went through all the Bible, telling them of the things concerning himself. By this time, the afternoon had worn on, and they said it will soon be dark. And although he would have

made to go on, they persuaded him to come in with them, and they soon had a meal ready. But then they got the last big surprise, because the stranger became the host. [00:08:06] And he took the food and blessed it and gave to them.

And suddenly they knew him.

It was Jesus, and in an instant he vanished out of their sight.

And they sat looking at each other and said, Did you realize that while he was talking to us, our hearts of stone suddenly began to warm up, and they began to burn with fire. And at that same instant, tired though they were, they arose and they walked back the seven miles to Jerusalem. Now I wonder if you can, like I can, see myself in those two believers trudging along from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

They were terribly disillusioned with the faith that they had embraced as they saw things at that moment. [00:09:05] And their disillusionment made them sad, and their hearts of stone were so depressing that it gave them feet of lead.

Where did they get the energy to walk that seven miles back to Jerusalem? They got it because of the burning heart.

And the fact that when Jesus spoke to them, it made their hearts burn within them, by the way. This was what gave them the energy to burn up their disillusionment and to send them back to meet again with the disciples. And very shortly afterwards, in the power of that same heart of burning love, responding to the Lord, they were amongst those who went out into all the world to preach the gospel. And we might well ask ourselves, can we have an experience like that? Do you think that the Lord Jesus Christ included the book of Isaiah in the things in all the scriptures concerning himself? Indeed he did. [00:10:07] And what we have prayed for this week, and I am thankful to say that I believe that in some measure the Lord has already granted our request, what we have prayed for is that we might have the burning heart.

We ask him to give us the burning heart, to burn up our disillusionment and the fact that we are so often sad and cast down.

And to make us, enable us to know him by the way along life's journey. And in the midst, in the church, where there is so much privilege and at the same time often such disappointment. And also out there in the world, to use the language of this book, beautiful upon the mountains are those who preach good tidings of peace. And so what we are aiming for, what we have been aiming for this week, and what we are aiming for and praying for tonight, [00:11:08] is just this simple thing that the Lord may make our hearts burn within us as he speaks to us by the way of the things in the scriptures concerning himself. Now we have, in order to attain that aim for which we have asked the Lord, we have tried to go together through the book of Isaiah, to open up the book and especially we have sought to see in it the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And believe it or not, except for these eight chapters, which are the subjects of our meeting this evening, we have dipped into every chapter in the whole book of Isaiah. And I don't know whether you have ever heard of a marathon, but it seems to me that the brothers and sisters who have been here, [00:12:02] they have really done a marathon in giving their prayerful attention to dip into every

chapter in the book of the prophet Isaiah, seeking to have the book opened up to them and seeking to find the Lord Jesus Christ therein. Now the chapters that surround this central chapter that we have, Mr. Vernon was just reminding me during the interval what I have read before, that if we take the last part, the twenty-seven of the sixty-six chapters of the book, then chapter fifty-three, where our eyes behold the Savior in his suffering love, this is the central chapter of these chapters, and of that chapter itself, if we take the proper confines of it as he read it, then the central verse of that central chapter, [00:13:08] and indeed something which every believer must recognize, lies at the very heart of our knowledge of the Lord. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the justicement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. Now regarding these chapters that form this particular section, chapters forty-nine and fifty-seven, I want to contrast this section, just for a few minutes by way of background, with the chapters we had before us on Friday evening, that is chapters forty to forty-eight. In a couple of sentences, in chapters forty to forty-eight, we saw God's people, the Israelites, [00:14:02] in the rigors and sorrows and hardships of their captivity in Babylon, and crying to the Lord, thinking that he had forgotten, we saw them unable to look forward to their liberation from that city where they were captives, and their restoration to their holy and beloved city, Zion. We saw that in announcing this to them, the prophet, in announcing this to them, delivering his message from the Lord, he entered into God's controversy with his people when he thought about that backward look, about idols. And we saw that this, although we may not immediately be able to cause a matter to spring to mind, there is always a possible controversy between the Lord and his people about idols. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

[00:15:03] I had a letter from a brother in Germany the other day in which he said that one of the causes of the weakness amongst us, is what he said, is the materialism that has swept over the Western world and is adored by everybody. He saw the point. He cannot serve God and mammon. There is a controversy now between God and his people about idolatry. Little children, keep yourselves from idolatry, from whatever takes the place in your love and your devotion and the employment of your time, that only God in Christ Jesus ought to have. The people were taught to look forward in these chapters to their liberation from bondage, and in looking forward, the prophet opened up the controversy that they had forsaken God and they turned to idols.

Now in these chapters, and this may surprise you, but I would like to ask you to make an effort to take the point. [00:16:06] In these chapters, they're looking backward to Calvary.

Have you ever wondered why this story of Isaiah 53 is in the past? He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities.

The reason is that it is primarily the confession and the affliction of soul to which God's earthly people will give expression when they look upon him whom they have pierced, and therefore they're looking back and seeing what they saw in him and confessing their dreadful error, but in the end saying he was wounded for our transgressions and by his stripes we are healed. So they're looking backward to Calvary, and the prophet is opening up a far greater controversy between God and his earthly people [00:17:03] in that they rejected the Messiah. When he came to his own people and stood at his own door, they refused him, and this matter had to be gone into between God and his people, and it resulted in this conviction and this confession, and then the fact that through his stripes and their faith in him they were healed.

Now that's the general aspect that this section of the book presents to us. It is that God's earthly people are looking backward to Calvary, and they in the end are brought to confess their sins. Now,

once again, I must ask you, open your Bibles, chapter 49, and bow your heads to look at them, and please strive to follow with me while I assume that you've got the words under your eyes, and we go through the remaining nine chapters of the prophet Isaiah to complete the tally of 66 chapters of mighty privilege. [00:18:12] In chapter 49, Israel speaks first and says that he is Jehovah's servant.

He says, Israel says in verse 1, The Lord hath called me from the womb, and in verse 3, And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Now, one of the difficulties of understanding this book is in the question, who is the servant of the Lord? Again and again, we are assured that the servant of the Lord is Israel, but it's perfectly plain from every word of quotation in the New Testament that the servant of the Lord in these wonderful four servant poems that we've begun to study, the servant of the Lord is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Christ, [00:19:02] undoubtedly the one who came here to do a work on the part of the Lord. He was undoubtedly the one who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities and by whom we can be healed. But at this point is where the explanation occurs and the transition takes place. In verse 3, Israel says, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. In verse 4, Christ speaks and says, I have labored in vain, I've spent my strength anote, yet surely my judgment is with the Lord and my work is with my God. And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, there is Emmanuel again, that formed me from the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob again to him. It would very well, might very well be concluded by those with an external view who saw the lifetime of the Lord Jesus Christ upon earth, that he had labored in vain. [00:20:02] He had spent his strength anote. It might have looked so, but then the Lord said to him, the true servant, the Lord Jesus Christ, verse 5, Though Israel be not gathered at that time, this emphasizes the backward look, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord and my God shall be my strength. And he was going to be in the future, not only the restorer of the tribes of Jacob, but in the end of verse 6, he was going to be for God's salvation to the end of the earth.

In verse 7, he speaks very wonderful words about himself. It says, He was the one whom man despised, whom the nation abhorred. And this was the description of him when he was here amongst men. In verse 8, after the servant poem is finished, [00:21:01] the Lord speaks and he indicates that Israel will come from afar and they will come back to Zion. Verse 9, Go forth, he says to them that are in darkness, show yourselves.

They shall feed in the ways and their pastures shall be in high places. They shall not hunger or thirst. In verse 12, These shall come from far and lo, these from the north and the west and these from the land of Sinim. In other words, a universal recovery, not only of the Jews, a universal recovery of all God's earthly people in that future time are going to come back to Zion.

And then we have a very remarkable part indeed when Zion is likened to an astonished widow who has lost all her children. And she says, verse 18, [00:22:01] Lift up thine eyes round about, the Lord says to her rather, Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold, all these gather themselves together and come to thee.

As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee as a bride doth. For thy waste and thy desolate places and the land of thy destruction shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away.

The children which thou shalt have after thou hast lost the other shall say again in thine ears, The

place is too straight for us, give place to me that I may dwell. In other words, Zion is being addressed as a mother bereft of all her children. And then to her astonishment, she suddenly finds children she never dreamt of gathered to her so that her habitation is too small for them.

And that is very plainly explained when the Lord addresses her [00:23:03] when she says, Who hath begotten these, seeing I have lost my children? Verse 21.

The Lord says in verse 22, Behold, I lift up mine hand to the Gentiles and set up my standard to the people and they shall bring thy sons in their arms and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. In other words, the explanation is that God himself has set the nations to restore all the dispersed of Israel back to their mother, Zion.

Now in chapter 50, once again, very definitely from the standpoint of that future gathering, the Lord said, Why were you away from me, seeing I did not put you away? Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement whom I have put away? Or to which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? No, he says, it's your iniquities for ye have sold yourselves and your transgressions. [00:24:01] Wherefore when I came, was there no man? There's the controversy, you see. When Jehovah, as the humble Nazarene, appeared and spoke to them, when he came, there was no one to answer him.

But when we come to verse 4, we find the voice with which the Lord Jesus Christ spake when he came on the part of the Lord to be his servant.

Verse 4, The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

Verse 5, Not only his tongue, but his ear. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the slights, smiters, and so on.

Verse 9, Behold, the Lord God will help me. Now let us notice very particularly the last two verses, in the verse 10 and 11 of chapter 50.

Who is among you, [00:25:02] this is addressed once again to these restored people, who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light. Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled, this shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lay down in sorrow. So that these people of God, in view of their restoration, they are divided, you see, into some, we know by other passages, the majority, who walk in the light of their own fire and the sparks they had kindled, but there were some who listened to the voice of his servant. And here, we have very plainly, the remnant of the Jews in a future day. We read about them in Matthew 24. We find that just as the disciples were these people [00:26:01] in the gospel story, so there will be in the future people in exactly the same situation who will be Jews but believers in Jesus and they will be the remnant through whom God will bless his people in a future day. So just as in Matthew 24 you deal with the disciples of the past and the remnant of the future, the instructions to the disciples of the past become word for word the Lord's instructions to the remnant of the future who will be his disciples immediately prior to the coming of the Lord and then from that point, that remnant here in chapter, beginning in chapter 50 verse 10, that remnant is taken on to the point of their full salvation when they look upon him whom they have pierced. Now, it's a very remarkable piece of symmetrical poetry in which this is done. You notice the three times

hearken unto me.

Chapter 51 verse 1, [00:27:01] verse 4 and verse 7.

Three times hearken unto me. The first one says your father Abraham and Sarah they were alone but I increased them until there were many and so that remnant that are only a tiny few when they first believed in the Lord they will be increased until they made a blessing to the whole of God's people. And so the second hearken verse 4 hearken my people a law shall proceed for me and I will make my judgment a rest for a light of the people. My righteousness is near my salvation is gone forth. Verse 6, lift up your eyes to the heavens and look upon the earth for the heavens shall vanish away but my salvation shall be forever and my righteousness shall not be abolished. And lastly in verse 7 hearken unto me and once again it ends by saying [00:28:01] my righteousness shall be forever and my salvation from generation to generation. In other words these few tiny few believers of the future who are Jews they're encouraged step by step to establish and increase their faith in the Lord. And then you have three times over awake, awake.

Verse 9 of chapter 51 verse 17 of chapter 51 and verse 1 of chapter 52.

In verse 9 of chapter 51 it is the arm of the Lord that is addressed. Now this is very important because of the occurrence of the expression the arm of the Lord in chapter 53.

To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? What does the arm of the Lord mean? It tells us here awake as in ancient days in the generations of old. These few are calling upon the power that liberated Israel from Egypt to liberate them [00:29:01] and to bring them into blessing. Awake O arm of the Lord as in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab or Egypt and wounded the dragon? And so on.

They're calling upon the strength of the Lord personified as the arm of the Lord to be their deliverer. And then Zion is addressed in verse 17 and again in verse 52 Zion is addressed. And just see what it says to them there in view of the salvation that's so soon coming. Put on thy beautiful garments O Jerusalem, the holy city. For henceforth thou shalt no more come unto thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust. Arise O Jerusalem.

Verse 7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings. What are the good tidings? The good tidings is that the Lord Jesus Christ as the King is reigning that saith unto Zion [00:30:01] Thy God reigneth.

When that moment comes as far as his earthly people are concerned they shall see eye to eye. They shall sing together when the Lord shall bring again Zion. And so they are called to depart from the place of their dispersion and captivity and to come together.

And so we come to the part that we have read Behold my servant shall deal prudently. And there we have the last of these four servant poems.

And we have the Lord speaking saying my servant behold my servant oh this is what we want to do this evening we want to look to him we want to behold him we want to contemplate him he'll be exalted and very high.

But then Israel speaks and they say who hath believed our report and they're looking back to his earthly life which occupies the first three verses and then in the verses four to six [00:31:03] we have this central point where they do recognize the fact that it was for their transgressions just as we can say for our transgressions that he was bruised and by his stripes we were healed and so we find that it goes on to speak about his death and his burial and yet the fact that he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand and he shall see of the trouble of his soul and shall be satisfied. Now chapter fifty-four returns again to the idea of Zion as a mother who has been bereft astonished at the restoration of all these children all the people of Israel to her sing oh barren thou that didst not bear break forth into singing and cry aloud thou that didst not trouble this child for more are the children of the desolate [00:32:02] than the children of the married wife and this goes on to call them to enlarge the place of their abode to make room for all the children who have been given to her and this goes on to encourage them although they have been afflicted in the past verse eleven for thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colors and lay thy foundations with sapphires and so to the end no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and the righteous is of me, saith the Lord Now the remaining three chapters fifty-five, fifty-six, and fifty-seven they come, change entirely in order to impress upon God's people [00:33:02] the behavior that is in accordance with what God is going to give them and of course there are words that spring out of the page to us take for example in verse two wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which satisfieth not it has been said that this might be written large over all the world at the present time and why are you spending your money on that which is not bread and how we need to face such a word as this to make sure that we are not spending the precious currency of our life's treasure upon that which is not bread when there is presented to us old and young the very delights of the bread of God and the bread of life and so it calls upon the people to seek the Lord while he may be found and call upon him while he is near [00:34:04] there's a very interesting part which is well known to us in verse eleven so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth it shall not return unto me void but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing to which I send it and so we have right on to the end in the last chapter of fifty-seven there is a warning to the wicked the wicked are like the troubled sea when it can't rest whose waters are cast up mire and dirt verse twenty and so to the end there is no peace saith my God to the wicked now I would like to come back and to consider these three servant poems that we have in these chapters in a little more detail [00:35:02] very little indeed for the first two but afterwards in more detail as I've said in back to chapter forty-nine in the second of the servant poems the first one being in chapter forty-two then in verse four and five the Lord Jesus Christ substitutes himself for Israel as the Lord's servant now of course there are several parallels for this if we find it difficult in other parts of the word for example when the Lord Jesus Christ says I am the true vine that's a very important parallel because Israel was the vine brought out of Egypt we have had in our own book this song in chapter five of the vine that the Lord planted and how he tended it that it brought forth wild grapes [00:36:01] and because it brought forth wild grapes God tore down its fences and the wild boar of the forest tried it and it failed altogether to be the vine for Jehovah's pleasure giving joy to him and when the Lord Jesus Christ said I am the true vine it meant that he took the place of Israel where they had failed and he would not fail in rendering true joy and delight by his fruit to God and to his people or in another case in a similar kind of way concerning the Lord Jesus the evangelist quotes I've called my son out of Egypt rehearsing again the fact that the history of failed Israel is to be taken up and their work is to be done by the one who would not fail but in the meantime although it is certain that he is going to be for God's salvation unto the ends of the earth [00:37:02] in the meantime think of these amazing words to him whom man despiseth the Lord said this to him whom man despiseth and to him whom the nation abhorreth to a servant of rulers that's what it was in

the past he was despised what a fate what a lot to come to the very king of heaven what a thing to befall the one who came to earth as the father's delight it would have been a terrible thing to say that they rejected him but they set him at naught they made him of no value they despised him the king of heaven the one whom man despiseth that's the estimate of man we can never be sure that the estimate of man is of any worth whom man despiseth to him whom the nation abhorreth then the future will hold [00:38:01] that kings shall see and arise and princes shall worship because of the Lord who is faithful and the Holy One of Israel now let us take out of this second of the servant poems this point he is going to raise up the tribes of Judah the middle of verse six and to restore the preserve of Israel it's going to be his work and he won't fail in it and the rest of the verse he's going to be for a light to the Gentiles that he might be God's salvation unto the end of the earth now when we come to the third of the servant poems we find that there is a contrast with the way the Lord can speak he can clothe the heavens with blackness in verse three of chapter fifty he can make sackcloth their covering but when the Lord's servant came verse four the Lord God hath given me [00:39:01] the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary oh right out right beyond stretching to the very bounds where mankind can be found is this that that servant is able to speak here is the tongue of the servant of the Lord he was and he is and he ever will be able to speak a word in season to him that is weary the class of weary is very wide indeed there's physical weariness there's heart weariness there's the weariness of the slave at his toil there's the weariness of those over whom the afflictions of life have trampled and torn their hearts very wide indeed is the class of the weary and some of us here this evening are bound to be feeling ourselves amongst those weary in spirit and cast down [00:40:01] it is true and all the thousands and millions of those who've proved him have found that it's true our master, our saviour, our lord to speak a word in season to him that is weary and these sentences that spring out of this old writing to us how many times have there been already words in season to us when we are weary to speak a word in season to him that is weary he wakeneth morning by warning he wakeneth mine ear to hear us the learned we might suppose that the lord Jesus Christ didn't need to learn but we can only take holy scriptures we find it he did increase in wisdom and in stature with God and man he never ceased from his conception and his birth from the manger at Bethlehem he never ceased to be fully God [00:41:03] but the same word that assures us that he was Emmanuel, God with us assures us that he increased in wisdom and stature and favour with God and man and this verse tells us that morning by morning morning by morning his ear was opened to hear so that he became the one who had learned oh what a lesson for us we might be able to speak words in season on the part of God to bring words of comfort to the weary that only God himself could bring if only morning by morning by morning our ears are opened so that we may learn the comfort that we could then pass on to others verse 5 the lord God hath opened mine ear and I was not rebellious neither turned away back oh the sadness of the words that speak to us of the way he suffered at the hands of men [00:42:03] I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair I hid not my face from shame and spitting we are so familiar with what happened to the lord Jesus Christ that the wonder of such a prophecy can pass us by seven centuries before he came this is what it says about the saviour the divine comforter the one who will be God's salvation to the ends of the earth he gave his back to the smiters and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair and hid not his face from shame and spitting the lord God will help me therefore shall I not be confounded there have I set my face like a flint and I know I shall not be ashamed it's our habit and it's surprising how wide the habit has become and there's absolutely no harm in it but it's our habit to put together two scriptures one from Isaiah chapter 50 [00:43:01] and one from Luke chapter 9 and say and I've surprised more than one Christian looking for the passage that said he set his face like a flint to go to Jerusalem in the gospel story it says when they saw that he was set to go to Jerusalem it's true he was set to go to Jerusalem but the two aren't the same scripture although there's no harm in our putting them together but here it is he set his face as a flint

the one who was so gentle the one so ready to comfort the weak he was the one who says he set his face as a flint I remarked when we were speaking about the first servant poem in chapter 42 how he did not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax but he would not fail nor be discouraged till he had set judgment in the earth there is this delightful this lovely combination of tender sympathy for the weak and the suffering [00:44:01] and the most gigantic strength when it comes to the establishment of the will of God on earth and in heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ the same one who spoke a word in season the same one who gave his back to the smiters he set his face like a flint when the moment came to go and be offered at Jerusalem in obedience to the will of God as a sacrifice for our sins now turning over to chapter 52 verse 13 to the end of chapter 53 I did remark before how this chapter is really the confession of Israel now although we do deeply desire that our hearts [00:45:01] may be reached and touched by this I think a little word of explanation is perhaps permissible I don't know whether you remember the feasts of the Lord in Leviticus chapter 23 you had first of all the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread then we had the Feast of Firstfruits then after fifty days the Feast of Weeks then in the seventh month a new beginning we had the Feast of Trumpets and after this the Day of Atonement when Israel were called to afflict their souls and finally the joy and rejoicing of the Feast of Tabernacles you see how this is very plainly a summary of the prophetic future from that time the Lord Jesus Christ when we think of the Passover we read [00:46:01] even Christ, our Passover is sacrificed for us therefore let us eat the feast not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness but the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth all our knowledge of what the cross means is tested by this that we are not to eat the feast all our lives long with the leaven of malice and wickedness but the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth that's what the cross really means for us if we see it for our lives as God sees it then the Feast of Firstfruits represents the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead he's the firstfruits of them that slept the Feast of Weeks which is Pentecost is exactly the moment when the Holy Ghost was given and the church was formed and this concludes you might say the events relative to Christianity that these feasts of the Lord foretell [00:47:01] but there is a second series applying to God's earthly people, the Feast of Trumpets when they would be gathered from all the world including the land of Sinim they would be gathered, the Lord would call and they would come that's the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets and then when they come they would have a day of atonement they would afflict their souls in another passage they would look upon him whom they pierced and they would mourn for him and here in Isaiah chapter 53 we have God's people afflicting their souls when they say we saw no beauty in him that we should desire him he was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief and we hid as it were our faces from him then they realized that it was our sins and our griefs and our sorrows and so they were healed and they were able to rejoice [00:48:01] in his resurrection now this poem begins by in the end 13th verse of chapter 52 I've already referred to it, we'll begin there again behold my servant and there for the last time in the fourth servant poem where the whole thing is brought to its climax and conclusion the Lord Jehovah is saying to his people as he said to us behold my servant one of the most wonderful beholds of which there are so many in scripture comes to us sitting here this evening the Lord God Jehovah we may well say our father he urges us to look at to contemplate his servant at the moment of his suffering before it all begins we are assured of his victory but we are assured of his victory [00:49:01] in the most tremendous terms relative to his suffering as you have in verse 14 and so you have in verse 15 as many were astonished at thee was not that Roman centurion when the people went over beating their breasts were he not astonished at what he had seen as many were astonished at thee and then in brackets his visage was so marred more than any man in his form more than the sons of men those sufferings of the saviour whether we understand it from the straight forward record in the gospels or not I believe that this verse out of the page of Isaiah tells us that so intense were the physical sufferings of the Lord Jesus that he was bruised and beyond recognition as a man his face would marred more than any man's and his form more than the sons of men [00:50:01]

if it be indeed true that the physical sufferings of the Lord Jesus had such a result what can we think of the moment of the hours when darkness came upon the scene and when he cried my God why hast thou forsaken me deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts the deep of the divine love that gave him the deep of the divine justice that had to be satisfied called to the deep of the saviour's sufferings and all God's waves and billows passed over him that was what took place when he passed out of the situation when the eyes of man could see him and there darkness shrouded the scene and from it came my God why hast thou forsaken me but just as we have this as in verse 14 so we have the so in verse 15 just as those who saw there [00:51:01] were astonished at the unbelievable sufferings that came upon him even in the bodily way so shall he sprinkle and I am assured that this word signifies also astonish so shall he astonish many nations kings shall shut their mouths with astonishment at him for that which had not been told them shall they see and that which they had not heard shall they consider why because the one who was so despised the one who so suffered the one who was so bruised and smitten he shall be exalted and he shall be very high and so we begin by the assurance that the one who stooped so low shall be with all the meaning that God himself puts into the words he shall be exalted now if you come back to the first verse of chapter 53 it's plain isn't it that the first [00:52:01] three verses of chapter 53 represent Israel those who pierced him looking back and recollecting what those who pierced him saw who could have believed that in the lowly form of Jesus the carpenter of Nazareth there could be the arm of the Lord it was the arm of the Lord that had smitten Egypt and dried up the sea and made it away for the ransom of the Lord to pass over and a few chapters back they're calling upon the arm of the Lord to come to their rescue and the deliverance but they didn't know they didn't see only the eye of faith which few possessed could see under the lowly form of Jesus the carpenter of Nazareth the very arm of the Lord that had destroyed the sea and destroyed the enemy and liberated and redeemed his people with power who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed [00:53:01] the Lord Jesus Christ was here for all his meekness and lowliness for all his gentleness and his words of comfort he was the very arm of the Lord come down for the liberation of all who trust in him he shall grow up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground now that's a very wonderful statement about the earthly life of our Saviour he grew up he grew up in a place where there was absolutely nothing to sustain the divine life he grew up as a plant that can grow without sustenance from the ground but gets it from somewhere else as a root out of a dry ground but with his ear wakened morning by morning and where within he read the secrets of the divine comfort that was never absent from his heart as a man he grew up as a root out of a dry ground [00:54:01] but there was no form nor comeliness that they could see nor should desire him he was despised and rejected I often think of these two pairs of participles and how transiently they speak to our hearts as we meditate upon them despised that's the estimate in which they held him our beloved Saviour the very treasure of heaven he was despised this is what man does he also rejected him but the answer is that he will be exalted and we shall come to the fact that he shall be satisfied in times past despised and rejected but in the future exalted rather exalted in the past and in the future satisfied now let us look in the middle of verse three a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief [00:55:01] a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief this is what they thought of him now these are very striking expressions aren't they they've passed over our minds so many times that they can pass over without our attending to them properly a man of sorrows that doesn't mean a man who at a moment experienced a sorrow it doesn't mean a man who was frequently experiencing sorrow it means a man the principal mark of whose life in the eyes of those who saw him was that he was a man of sorrows he wasn't a man of laughter he wasn't a man of rejoicing except in the inward sense that we read of in the private way but he was seen to be by others a man of sorrows and just think of this acquainted with grief that doesn't mean a passing nod that doesn't mean that he knew it occasionally but acquainted [00:56:01] all the time again and again it was seen that grief was his companion every day and every moment by those who saw him

that's what they saw but what was the truth they're now beginning to see the truth it says in the middle of verse 3 a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief were our faces from him but did you ever notice in verse 4 it refers to griefs and sorrows again the first two lines of verse 4 griefs and sorrows again this was the thing that now staggers them when they come to verses 4 to 6 they're now realizing the truth the griefs that they saw in him were our griefs and the sorrows that were his hourly companions they were our sorrows surely he hath borne our griefs and our sorrows [00:57:01] and it was our griefs and our sorrows that made him a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief in him was the well of everlasting joy, in him was the well of unmovable peace but it was our griefs and our sorrows that made him a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief in these two verses of their affliction then it dawned upon them that the sorrows they saw and the griefs they observed were our griefs and our sorrows although they esteemed him stricken smitten of God and afflicted but the truth is he was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed we've already spoken about the the distinction that we are bound to make between the outward sorrows [00:58:01] and they saw that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and that which he sustained at the hand of God in order that we might be justified and that we might be healed but it's all here in this verse all the terrific afflictions, strokes that can fall upon man, the whole of languages ransacked in order to let us know what he there suffered he was bruised, he was wounded he was smitten but it was for our sins and our transgressions and the immediately joint result is that we are healed. I often think of the Ethiopian eunuch it's not surprising is it when he was reading this passage and Philip directed by the spirit of God joined up with him in the chariot and said understandest thou what thou readest, this was his question this he, him his, who is this he that the prophet speaks about [00:59:01] is it himself or of some other man, but when you look down it, it's not surprising that he said this he hath borne our griefs he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed and although all we like sheep have gone astray, the Lord hath caused to meet on him the iniquity of us all oh what a load is hidden in that little expression caused to meet upon him the sins of all who trust in thee, not for ours only but for the whole world there were caused to meet upon him oh what a load we say was thine to bear, no thought of ours can extend to the width or plumb the depths of what came upon him there when the Lord caused to meet upon him the iniquity of us all he was oppressed, he was [01:00:01] afflicted, he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter you know this word slaughter in English and I believe it's quite true to the original languages this word slaughter is the is the same class of words as the word slain if a beast was slain then the act was called slaughter the two words belong to each other slain is one form, slaughter is another form, and when I read in Revelation chapter 5 that the lamb there appears as a lamb as it had been slain directly paraphrased that is he was a lamb fresh from the slaughter, here we read he was taken [01:01:01] like a lamb to the slaughter but there in heaven where there is every crown upon his brow he is there from the slaughter and we know the result of this that the one who was there so abased is now crowned with glory and so I must hurry on to the familiar statements that they appointed his grave with the wicked presumably the common grave of the crucified felons but he was in fact with the rich in his death in the grave the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea and then in the last three verses we have a summary of the results but first of all the assurance that hasn't directly occurred before that the sufferings by which we have been healed the sufferings that have dealt with our sin they were inflicted by Jehovah, it was under his hand that the real suffering was endured by which we are set free, I pointed out a few [01:02:01] minutes ago how he was to be God's salvation to the end of the earth now there are many schemes for salvation to the ends of the earth but without exception they ignore the facts of the situation and they are sin and sorrow and death you know there are some people who are benighted enough to think that Christianity is dope that it ignores the real facts of life and the human plight did you ever hear such nonsense as this? hear in

these words of a prophet written so long ago planted right down at the heart of the human plight in sin he was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our sins in sorrow he was a man of sorrows unacquainted with grief, in death because he died and they appointed his grave with the wicked but he is God's salvation to the end of the earth [01:03:01] because these mighty problems the mighty deep enemies of men have been overcome by what he suffered in the manner that's described in this passage and therefore only can he be God's salvation to the end of the earth there's no chance of any human scheme for the salvation of the world it has no chance of success not even in part but this really has got success we can now proclaim on the basis of this the liberation of men from the sins that bring them to condemnation and bring them comfort from the saviour who died for them and bring them absolutely certain of salvation in the end and we know we know we don't need to do anything about that because our saviour will be on this ground God's salvation to the ends of the earth and in verse 11 he shall see of the trouble [01:04:01] of his soul and shall be satisfied we've often meditated upon this is it not a matter of the deepest wonder and the greatest joy to us every time we contemplate his passion and his suffering that the story does end like this the one who had the human sadness of being despised and rejected and the one who suffered the appalling stroke of Jehovah's wrath falling upon him we are assured not only that he is exalted but that he will be satisfied not only within the horizon the earthly horizon of the prophet when Israel is gathered and they acclaim him as their king and they make this confession that he was wounded for their transgressions and now lives to be their intercessor but I suppose we are [01:05:01] entitled to say that God in his love and wisdom has made a provision whereby in pursuance of his own word that it is not good that man should be alone in the bride of Christ to be with him to be ready for him in the day of his joy and the day of his power in these ways perhaps in a manner far exceeding the horizon of the prophet but open to us and made good to our souls and made our rejoicing by the spirit of God in the new testament we rejoice tonight in the fact that our savior will be satisfied and by the infinite mercy of God he has picked us up and given us to be amongst that body that will contribute in that day to the satisfaction of the one whose travel was so deep and so we come in the last words to say he makes intercession as we [01:06:01] have thought about the disciples in Luke chapter 24 and how they met with him and how he commissioned them in the end of the story we read how in front of their eyes with his hands uplifted he went into heaven and there with those uplifted hands of blessing and also of intercession we can now think of him and know him day by day as the one who can save us to the uttermost because he ever lives to make intercession for the saints according to the will of God now shall we sing number 162 and I'll read the last verse our joy unhindered then with thee our eyes undimmed by glory see whilst worthy praise we give through that eternal [01:07:01] cloudless day our burning hearts with rapture say he died that we might live number 162 the great eternal God of grace shall freely unfold through endless days when the mind shall cease to be round and around the Lord shall stand as each people joined together by [01:08:01] all to love and be free he shall the Savior's blindness bear a royal crown his crown shall bear and his crown shall be his crown shall be his crown shall be his [01:09:01] crown his crown shall be his crown shall be his crown shall be his crown