

**The Suffering Servant
(Part One)
How Jesus Christ Pays for Our Sin
Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12**

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The book of Isaiah is a book of prophecy. For validation, prophets would be given visions from the Lord that would be fulfilled in the very near future, then they would be given prophecies that would not be fulfilled for a few centuries, and then some that are still waiting to be fulfilled. All of this assumes a belief in an omniscient God who knows the future. And if the Bible, including the book of Isaiah, contains such predications of the future, they are a sign of the Bible's divine extraterrestrial origin.

Isaiah contains two types of prophecy, Messianic and non-messianic.

There was the prophecy concerning Assyria and the impending fall of Syria as well as the Northern Kingdom. Fulfilled shortly after the prophecy was given (Isaiah 8:1 – 8).

There is the prophecy of Judah going into exile in Babylon being rescued by a gentile leader named Cyrus. This was fulfilled within 200 years (Isaiah 44:28).

There are the prophecies of the end of the age and the rescue of Messiah some of which we just finished studying in Isaiah 52.

Then there are the Messianic prophecies.

As part of the Messianic prophecies, we are introduced to the Servant of YAHWEH, who is Messiah and who we would know as Jesus Christ.

This is reflected in four Servant songs in Isaiah.

In Isaiah 42:1-4 the Servant is presented as one with a mission for YAHWEH

In Isaiah 49:1-7 the Servant is shown to have great difficulties in the execution of His work. This includes apparent rejection of His message.

In Isaiah 50:4-9, the Servant describes the suffering He will face.

Now with the fourth Servant song in Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12, the pieces are drawn together for us. He is described as the arm of the Lord in this song. Things hinted at in the other songs, are disclosed in this one. “There is nothing uniquely new here, although many details here, particularly of his suffering, were only hinted at in the earlier places. But everything that is here: the worldwide consequences of his work after apparent failure, the lack of understanding, the willingness to undergo undeserved suffering, the certain success, all of these are present in embryo form in the earlier descriptions.” (Oswalt 1998, 375-376)

The theme here is truth and for those in Judah who have just been told of their impending salvation at the end of the age, they are about to learn that the arm of the Lord, the Messiah, will indeed have power, but the emphasis will be on redemption, not on the destruction of the enemies of Israel. “The Servant takes on himself the sin of Israel and of the world, and, like the scapegoat (Lev. 16:22), bears (nāšā’; cf. 53:4) those sins away from us.” (Oswalt 1998, 377)

The message being conveyed here begins in Isaiah 52 and goes into Isaiah 53. This is another of those places where we wonder what it was that Stephen Langton, an Archbishop of Canterbury, was really thinking when he produced chapter divisions for the Bible around 1227 AD.

The New Testament was first published with verse divisions by Robert Stephens in 1551. The first Bible to be published entirely divided into verse was the Geneva Bible of 1560. (Duffield and Van Cleave 1983, 7-8)

Chapter and verse markings were not in the original text, and they were not inspired.

That becomes incredibly obvious in places such as Isaiah 52:13.

Here in Isaiah 52:13, YAHWEH speaks. What is it that must happen for the salvation He has been talking about to become reality? He is about to outline it all for us.

We have arrived at the business plan from the throne of God describing how the atonement of mankind will take place and who it is that will achieve that.

This is the same section of scriptures that were being read by the Ethiopian official in Acts 8:26 – 39 and was used by Philip. “The eunuch asked Philip, “I ask you, who is the prophet talking about? Himself? Or someone else?” Then Philip began to speak, and, starting from this Scripture, he told him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, “Look, there’s some water. What keeps me from being baptized?”” (Acts 8:34–36, ISV)

It is still being used today.

The following things may be said concerning Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12:

- It is “a fifth Gospel”;
- it is “a summary of the four Gospel narratives”;
- it is “the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament”;
- it is “the Mt. Everest of Old Testament prophecy”;
- it is “the heart of the book of Isaiah”;
- it is the most preached-on portion of the Old Testament, and
- it is the section of Scripture most used to convince the unsaved Jews that Jesus is their Messiah. (Gingrich 1993, 65)

Before we examine this 4th Servant Song, we need to read it all the way through to pick up the majesty of what it is YAHWEH is telling His people and us about Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 52:13–53:12

“Behold, My Servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted. Just as many were appalled at you, My people, So His appearance was marred beyond that of a man, And His form beyond the sons of mankind. So He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what they had not been told, they will see, And what they had not heard, they will understand. Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of dry ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we would look at Him, Nor an appearance that we would take pleasure in Him. He was despised and abandoned by men, A man of great pain and familiar with sickness; And like one from whom people hide their faces, He was despised, and we had no regard for Him. However, it was our sicknesses that He Himself bore, And our pains that He carried; Yet we ourselves assumed that He had been afflicted, Struck down by God, and humiliated. But He was pierced for our offenses, He was crushed for our wrongdoings; The punishment for our well-being was laid upon Him, And by His wounds we are healed. All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the wrongdoing of us all To fall on Him. He was oppressed and afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off from the land of the living For the wrongdoing of my people, to whom the blow was due? And His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But the LORD desired To crush Him, causing Him grief; If He renders Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, For He will bear their wrongdoings. Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the plunder with the strong, Because He poured out His life unto death, And was counted with wrongdoers; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the wrongdoers.” (NASB 2020)

What we have here is a prophecy straight from the throne room and given to Isaiah to be written around 700 BC. It can only be fulfilled by one person.

By the time we are done looking at this, you will know the base prophecy in Isaiah and learn the exact fulfillment to at least 18 separate prophecies about the Messiah and you will see that this is only possible because of Jesus Christ.

This section of scripture is all about the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ for our sin and it is so crystal clear, it causes serious issues within synagogues even today.

It is quite common today to hear rabbis say that this passage speaks, not of Messiah, but of Israel suffering in a Gentile world. They may even go as far as to say that this has always been the traditional view of Judaism. At that point they are entirely dependent on the ignorance of their listeners. All of the ancient Jewish writings—the Mishnah, the Gemara, (the Talmud), the Midrashim and many others—all regard this portion of Scripture as relating to the Messianic Person. The first rabbi to suggest otherwise was Rashi, around 1050 A.D. Every rabbi prior to Rashi, without exception, viewed this passage as describing Messiah. When Rashi first proposed that this passage spoke of the nation of Israel, he sparked a fierce debate with his contemporaries. The most famous of these was Rambam, perhaps better known as Maimonides. Rambam stated very clearly that Rashi was completely wrong in going contrary to the traditional Jewish viewpoint. (Fruchtenbaum 1998, 54)

Isaiah 52:13

“Behold, My Servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.” (NASB 2020)

The first thing YAHWEH wants us to know about His Servant, based on the command to watch, is that the Messiah will prosper and be exalted. When you compare this to our initial introduction to the Servant in Isaiah 42, there is no connection. But with the second song in Isaiah 49, the pieces begin to come together but there is a tension left between Isaiah 49:4 and Isaiah 49:5 – 7. The Servant will be ignored by those He comes to initially, yet He is the one who not only rescues His people but will be “a light to the nations.” Here we obtain clarity. He will prosper.

There is more to the word prosper than what we see in the English translation. In Hebrew, the word used is יָשָׁקֵל (yaskil) used here as a verb. The sense is to thrive or make steady progress. Biblically, this word carries the following senses:

- to understand (cognitive) v., to perceive (an idea or situation) mentally.
- to prosper (thrive) v., to make steady favorable progress or succeed.
- to act wisely v., to act or behave in a way that demonstrates wisdom.
- to instruct (teach) v., to impart knowledge to.
- to consider (respect) v., to regard or treat with consideration, respect, and esteem.
- to study ⇔ give attention to v., to study something, conceived of as paying attention to something.
- to take note v., to observe with care or pay close attention to.
- to cause to prosper v., to cause to make steady favorable progress or succeed.
- to heed v., to listen, hear, or pay close attention to, and usually respond in conformity.
- to succeed v., to attain success or reach a desired goal. (Lexham Press 2017)

The word is never applied to such prosperity as a man enjoys without any effort of his own, but only to such as he attains by successful action, i.e., by such action as is appropriate to the desired and desirable result. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 501)

Because of the action of the Servant, His wise actions in the fulfillment of His mission, “He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.” (Isaiah 52:13b, NASB20)

The terms used in the Hebrew for high and lifted up, are terms that Isaiah likes to use. He has used them in Isaiah 6:1, 33:10 and 57:15.

יָרִים (rwm) be high, and נִשָּׂא (nissa) lifted up, as used in combination in the previous places Isaiah used them, describe God. No one else combines these two words in the Old Testament the way Isaiah does.

“Exaltation” speaks of Jesus’ resurrection, “lifted up” describes His ascension, and “very high” refers to His session at the right hand of God the Father. (Fruchtenbaum 1998, 54)

Hebrews 1:1–4

“God, having spoken in former times in fragmentary and varied fashion to our forefathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by a Son whom he appointed to be the heir of everything and through whom he also made the universe. He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact likeness of his being, and he holds everything together by his powerful word. After he had provided a cleansing from sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Highest Majesty and became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is better than theirs.” (ISV)

Because of the way Isaiah used these terms in the past, we see that the Servant, who is YAHWEH’s Servant, is God. Paul confirms this for us.

Philippians 2:5–11

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee

should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (ESV)

Isaiah 52:13 is our first prophecy that we see fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. His exaltation began on Palm Sunday when those who were aware of the prophecies concerning Him were waiting outside the eastern gate for Him to present Himself, which He did fulfilling Daniel's prophecy.

1. Messiah is to be exalted
 - Prediction – Isaiah 52:13
 - Fulfillment - Matthew 21:9. “Both the crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed him kept shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! How blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”” (ISV)

Isaiah 52:14

“Just as many were appalled at you, My people, So His appearance was marred beyond that of a man, And His form beyond the sons of mankind.” (NASB 2020)

First off, the Hebrew does not have “My people” in it. This was added by the translators for the NASB. It might have been added to deal with YAHWEH speaking to the Servant then to the people to make it consistent that this is all to the people. It might even make sense to compare what happens to the nation as genuinely appalling and comparing it to the Servant, but again, this is not in the original language at all.

Isaiah 52:14

“As many were astonished at you— his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—” (ESV)

YAHWEH first speaks to the Servant, then to His people. Grammatically, the Hebrew leads to that conclusion.

There is something that Paul pointed out for us when we looked at Philippians 2:5 – 11 a few minutes ago. He clearly talked about the exaltation, but he also clearly states there was humbling, and suffering connected with the ultimate exaltation.

Yahweh first addresses the Servant directly. That is a supreme honor, if it is compared with the usual relationship between a ruler and his servants. It confirms that the Servant has been received into the heavenly sphere, as the preceding verse, v. 13, has described. (Baltzer 2001, 398-399)

Many will be appalled by the condition of the Servant and what happens to Him. The question is who are the many? We get a hint in the very next verse, “many nations.”

You could also look at the second part of Isaiah 14 as a parenthetical thought from YAHWEH. “The first line of v. 14 is to be followed up by the first line of v. 15, the two intervening lines constitute a kind of parenthesis.” (Leupold 1971, 224)

The text is clear, no matter which view you decide to take, the Servant will be beaten so severely and the disfigurement so complete, that it will become difficult to determine if he is human. We see this clearly in the NT text.

Luke 22:63–65

“Now the men who were holding Jesus under guard began to mock him and beat him. They blindfolded him and asked him repeatedly, “Prophecy! Who hit you?” They also said many other things against him, reviling him.” (NET)

Their passions, indeed, intensified their bitterness, for they were fierce Jewish bigots. He was to die as a false prophet, and as such they treated Him, racking their ingenuity to invent insult and injury. Having blindfolded Him, some struck him violently on the head with their fists, or perhaps with the vine-stick which the Roman centurions and other officials carried as their sign of rank, and were wont to use on the face or head of the soldiers; for some of the captors of Jesus had such staves with them; others struck Him with their open hands, while still others, adding the greatest indignity an Oriental could offer, spat in His face; crying, as they insulted and tortured Him, Prophecy to us, Thou Messiah, who is it that did it? (Stout 1891, 30)

Recall the Servant already told us He would be beaten, and His beard would be plucked (Isaiah 50:6).

Matthew 27:24–31

“When Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but that instead a riot was starting, he took some water, washed his hands before the crowd and said, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. You take care of it yourselves!” In reply all the people said, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!” Then he released Barabbas for them. But after he had Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the governor’s residence and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe around him, and after braiding a crown of thorns, they put it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand, and kneeling down before him, they mocked him: “Hail, king of the Jews!” They spat on him and took the staff and struck him repeatedly on the head. When they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.” (NET)

We read that and think of a simple whip for the purpose of flogging. That was not the case. Prior to arriving at this point, Jesus had already been beaten around the head multiple times.

As a prelude to his crucifixion, Jesus is scourged (Mark 15:15). Scourging was apparently standard precrucifixion procedure in Roman times (cf. Digesta 48.19.8.3; Josephus, J.W. 2.306). It was done with a whip made of several leather straps, to which were attached sharp, abrasive items, such as nails, glass, or rocks. Scourging resulted in severe laceration of the skin and damage to the flesh beneath. Jesus son of Ananias should be mentioned again. His prophecies of Jerusalem’s doom resulted in his being brought before the Roman governor. Although in the end the man was not executed (as the ruling priests wished), he was “flayed to the bone with scourges” (J.W. 6.304), the same word used in reference to Jesus of Nazareth. Indeed, Jesus himself warned his followers that they too face the danger of scourging (cf. Matt. 10:17; 23:34). (Evans 2008, 29-30)

The overall evidence is overwhelming. Jesus was beaten, more than once and by Jewish guards and Roman execution professionals. The flogging would have been enough to kill many as the intent was to open up the body by stripping the flesh off of it.

Isaiah 52:14

“Many people were shocked when they saw him; he was so disfigured that he hardly looked human.” (GNB)

Jesus did this willingly to pay for our sins. To provide atonement for our sins to use a good Jewish term. This would have been shocking to the many, the nations.

2. Messiah would be horribly disfigured and would suffer.
 - Prediction – Isaiah 52:14
 - Fulfillment – Matthew 27:27 – 32

Isaiah 52:15

“So He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what they had not been told, they will see, And what they had not heard, they will understand.” (NASB 2020)

What is the outcome from the shock of seeing what happened to the Servant?

“So He will sprinkle many nations.” (Isaiah 52:15a, NASB2020) The word translated “He will sprinkle” is the word נָזַח (yazzeh) from nazh

“The verb he shall sprinkle is a technical word, found in the Mosaic law for the sprinkling of oil, water, or blood as a cleansing or purifying rite. Thus, “And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times” (Lev. 14:7a); “And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the veil of the sanctuary” (Lev. 4:6); “And he sprinkled thereof upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar and all his vessels, both the laver and his foot, to sanctify them” (Lev. 8:11). The purpose of the sprinkling was not decontamination, but to obtain ritual purity; hence the one who does the sprinkling must himself be pure and innocent. It is the work of a priest that is here set forth, and the purpose of this work is to bring purification and cleansing to others.” (Young 1972, 338)

The word being used is a technical term used for the dispensing of purity. The meaning is clear based on this word usage. The Servant, because of what takes place as His appearance becomes less than human, can bring purification and cleansing of sin to the nations. He has reversed the curse.

All that was stolen by Lucifer in Genesis 3 at the fall, has now been paid for.

Hebrews 7:23–28

“There is another difference: there were many of those other priests, because they died and could not continue their work. But Jesus lives on for ever, and his work as priest does not pass on to someone else. And so he is able, now and always, to save those who come to God through him, because he lives for ever to plead with God for them. Jesus, then, is the High Priest that meets our needs. He is holy; he has no fault or sin in him; he has been set apart from sinners and raised above the heavens. He is not like other high priests; he does not need to offer sacrifices every day for his own sins first and then for the sins of the people. He offered one sacrifice, once and for all, when he offered himself. The Law of Moses appoints men who are imperfect to be high priests; but God’s promise made with the vow, which came later than the Law, appoints the Son, who has been made perfect for ever.” (GNB)

When Jesus returns at the end of the Great Tribulation, it will be to the shock and consternation of the nations. This one who was so mistreated when He was here the first time, has now been so exalted and so raised up, that the leaders of the world are speechless.

Revelation 19:11–16

“Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True, for he judges fairly and wages a righteous war. His eyes were like flames of fire, and on his head were many crowns. A name was written on him that no one understood except himself. He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his title was the Word of God. The armies of heaven, dressed in the finest of pure white linen, followed him on white horses. From his mouth came a sharp sword to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron rod. He will release the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, like juice flowing from a winepress. On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords.” (NLT)

This Servant, whom many have not considered important at all, will actually provide the most important thing for nations and their kings, namely, cleansing from sin (cf. John 1:29; Heb. 10:14). That is why they will shut their mouths. They will be appalled that they had miscalculated the situation so badly. Realizing their great mistake, they will have nothing to say. Eventually, when they see Him exalted in His Second Advent, they will finally understand and see clearly. (Martin 1985, 1107)

3. Messiah will amaze the Gentile kings and nations
 - Prediction – Isaiah 52:15
 - Fulfillment – Matthew 2:1 – 2 “After Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who was born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.” (ISV) and Acts 8:26 – 39

Isaiah 53:1

“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?” (NASB 2020)

As part of the song, we hear from the remnant in Jerusalem. They are disappointed in the numbers who have heard about the Servant but have chosen not to believe. This is not very different than the lament that came from Jesus just prior to His crucifixion.

Luke 13:34–35

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who have been sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her young under her wings, and you were unwilling! Behold, your house is left to you desolate; and I say to you, you will not see Me until you say, ‘BLESSED IS THE ONE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!’ ” (NASB 2020)

Speaking of the remnant, when Jesus was here on earth the first time, not many of His own people believed His message.

John 12:37–38

“Even though he had performed all these miracles in their presence, they did not believe in him, so that what the prophet Isaiah had said might come true: “Lord, who believed the message we told? To whom did the Lord reveal his power?”” (GNB)

Romans 10:16

“But not all have accepted the Good News. Isaiah himself said, “Lord, who believed our message?”” (GNB)

This points back to what we see in Isaiah 53:1, the remnant lamenting the lack of belief in Messiah. The arm of the Lord is His Servant. We are talking about Messiah, who the majority rejected.

To understand the outworking of missing the Messiah by the Jewish people, two important points need to be understood. The Jewish people down through the years have embraced 46 false messiahs and the disillusionment of the Jewish people has occurred for 20 centuries to this present time. As was mentioned previously, the LORD had given to Israel time tables for events of less significance than the coming of the Messiah; it would be completely out of character for God not to give them the time of the Messiah’s coming. In Daniel 9:24–27, God gave to Daniel the timetable of Moshiah’s coming and historically the Jewish people of the first century understood that it was time for Him to appear. The rabbis over the centuries since they missed Yeshua have gone to numerous passages in Daniel and Genesis to calculate the time of the Messiah’s coming, but at the same time avoided Daniel 9:24–27 because of what it clearly teaches. (Fruchtenbaum, Forward 2010, 493)

The arm of the Lord is Messiah, the one which the nations could share with Israel. But most of Israel was in unbelief except for “a remnant which had eventually come to its senses, that here inquires, Who hath believed our preaching, i.e., the preaching that was common among us? The substance of the preaching, which had not been believed, was the exaltation of the servant of God from a state of deep degradation. This is a work performed by the “arm of Jehovah,” namely, His holy arm that has been made bare, and that now effects the salvation of His people, and of the nations generally, according to His own counsel (Isa. 52:10; 51:5).” (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 505)

It is also the remnant that, after recognizing that they had missed the truth about who Messiah truly was, as one, turn to Him at the end of the Great Tribulation. We see the results of that echoing what we see here in Isaiah.

Zechariah 12:10

“I will pour out on the kingship of David and the population of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication so that they will look to me, the one they have pierced. They will lament for him as one laments for an only son, and there will be a bitter cry for him like the bitter cry for a firstborn.” (NET)

Isaiah 53:2

“For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of dry ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we would look at Him, Nor an appearance that we would take pleasure in Him.” (NASB 2020)

The remnant continues with their internal considerations of what it is most of the nation has missed as they recount the some of the details of their Messiah first coming.

The people closest to Christ couldn't understand him. Knowing him personally as a man in the neighborhood—many knew him that way—didn't make unbelief impossible. It took faith to see the glory of God in Jesus of Nazareth. It still does. (Ortlund Jr. and Hughes 2005, 355)

Consider what each of us thought about Jesus Christ prior to becoming believers. I, for one, still had Him in the manger. He was the baby Jesus that we sang about at Christmas time, He was not someone I was interested in getting to know.

That all ended though as a result of a Bible study I went to, just to get out of the house, that made me confront who He really is. I still remember the Holy Spirit working to help me understand that it was all true. I decided I would check it out and see. It is the best decision I ever made.

For those in Israel, they had very different ideas about what they thought Messiah would look like. They were looking for a military leader who would end the Roman occupation and fully embrace the structure of the Sanhedrin as it existed. Messiah would be a serious law keeper, just like the Pharisees were.

But here in Isaiah 53:2, we find out that His background and appearance will not be what they would expect. For example, Saul looked like a King, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders up (1 Samuel 10:13) but he also had his issues. Then there was David, who also became King, he was God's choice versus Saul who was in response to the nation clamoring for a King. He did not look like a King, but his heart was in the right place.

Israel was looking for a military leader who would free them from Rome. They had ideas of who this Messiah who look like and where he would come from, and Jesus did not come close to their idea.

This man does not fit that picture at all. We are not drawn to him and his plans; rather, we are repulsed by him and them. Instead of bursting on the scene like a mighty oak or a fruit tree in full bloom, he appears as a sprout or “sucker,” the normally unwanted shoot that springs up from an exposed root of a tree. It is a matter of seconds for the gardener to snip it off. Or he is like a little plant struggling for life in unwatered ground. Far from forcing its way on all around it, its survival is in doubt. (Oswalt 1998, 382)

Jesus was born in a manger out with the sheep who were being raised to be sacrificed in the Temple.

His family quietly escaped to Egypt to keep Him safe from Herod and when they returned, they lived in the backwards hamlet of Nazareth.

Now this was all prophesied but ignored by the Jewish leaders.

He was not taller than everyone else or extremely charismatic looking, in fact the only way those coming to arrest Him could identify Him was if Judas made the positive identification by kissing Him.

He was distinct from the Lord (before him). He was also plainly human, with a natural growth (tender shoot), and a traceable human ancestry (root out of dry ground). Furthermore, he looked unimpressive (no beauty ... to attract). (Motyer 1999, 376-377)

The meaning therefore is, "We saw Him, and there was nothing in His appearance to make us desire Him, or feel attracted by Him." (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 506)

The one time He allowed His followers to make a big deal about Him was on the day He was supposed to arrive at the Temple via the eastern gate, Palm Sunday. But the leadership of the Jews even called that into question as they were expecting someone else apparently.

4. Messiah and His ministry would not be believed
 - Prediction: Isaiah 53:1 & 2
 - Fulfilled: John 12:37-38

Isaiah 53:3

"He was despised and abandoned by men, A man of great pain and familiar with sickness; And like one from whom people hide their faces, He was despised, and we had no regard for Him." (NASB 2020)

Now comes a big shock as related by the remnant. Messiah would be despised and abandoned. He did not meet the standards of the public for leadership. He wasn't taller than others, He wasn't stronger than others, He was rather ordinary in appearance. He did not exude command authority by entering the room, but at the same time He is the God of the Universe and had all authority. Those who measured solely by worldly standards, He was contemptible in appearance.

For many when Jesus was here the first time, and for many today, the problem is the same, "humans have ceased having any relations with the Servant because they do not see him as having any significance for them. The importance of this dismissal, this failure to give him any consideration, is emphasized by the occurrence of the thought in both the first and last cola of the sentence." (Oswalt 1998, 383)

Stop and look at His requirements after all.

He is exclusive. "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6, ESV)

He demands loyalty. "Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62, ESV)

He also expects us to obey Him. "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46, ESV)

The sickness and sorrow talked about is ours, not His. He spent, according to the world, too much time with needy people. He spent time together with tax collectors, prostitutes and drunks after all. He did not even hang out with the in crowd. "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by all her children." (Luke 7:34-35, ESV)

5. Messiah will be despised.
 - Prediction: Isaiah 53:3
 - Fulfillment: Mark 3:20 – 22. "Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying,

“He is out of his mind.” And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” and “by the prince of demons he casts out the demons.”” (ESV)

There is much more to come. Details of the atonement included.

Romans 10:8–10

“But what does it say? “The message is near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart.” This is the message about faith that we are proclaiming: If you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with his heart and is justified, and declares with his mouth and is saved.” (ISV)

His light, His salvation is indeed near and available to all who accept it.

Salvation is a Gift

- Admit you are a sinner.
- Believe in your heart that Jesus died for your sins, was buried and He rose from the dead three days later.
- Call on the name of the Lord.

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