

The Redemptive Impact of Isaiah 53: (part two of a four part series)

Did the rejection of the promised Messiah by the Jewish people catch God by surprise? Of course not! God in His omniscience anticipated this tragic event. Ironically, Israel's unbelief, resulting in our Lord's death on the Cross, became the key factor in the fulfillment of God's plan of redemption, on behalf of a lost and fallen world. How? His death would not be that of a martyr victimized by injustice. Instead, it would consist of a substitutionary sacrifice for sin; not only for the nation of Israel, but the entire world. Consider what Isaiah says next in Isaiah 53:4-5 –

“Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.”

The implication of v4 is obvious. The Jewish people concluded that Christ's sorrow and suffering was the result of His sin. Yet, Jesus didn't suffer and die for His own sin, for He had none. It was for our sin that He surrendered His life to a brutal death on the Cross. The specific reason for His being disavowed by His own people involved their preconceived notions as to what the Messiah should be. But on a more comprehensive and universal level, the deeper reason is given in v6 –

“All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

The underlying motivation for Christ's rejection resulting in His death was not misguided Messianic expectations. It is the sin nature in each of us which causes every one of us to turn away from God and follow a path of our own sinful pursuits. In order to overcome the problem and obstacle of our sinfulness, the ultimate purpose of our Savior's death on the Cross demanded a payment for the penalty of sin, on behalf of the human race. This is the redemptive impact of Isaiah's oracle in chapter 53.

On the other hand, is the prophet contradicting himself in what he proclaims to us immediately preceding this incredible chapter, in Isaiah 52:13-15? Not at all. As we will discover in our next segment, God's plan of redemption required a crucifixion which would culminate in a resurrection, producing a Savior who would touch the entire world.