

The Song of the Servant; Isaiah 53:4-6

I. Messiah?

- A. This text is so valuable to us — we need to know who the Messiah is and how his life (and death) relate to us
- B. The concept of the Messiah that the Jews were waiting on was completely opposite of this text
 - 1. Psalm 89:27 (ESV); And I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.
 - 2. Many commentaries say this is a reference to the Messiah — verse 20 begins, “I have found David, my servant”
 - 3. But we know that David was not a firstborn son, but the youngest of Jesse’ sons
 - 4. David was not Israel’s first king, that was Saul
 - 5. David was given the promise that one from his lineage would always be on the throne
 - 6. This same idea presents itself in the apostles understanding of the Messiah and His mission
- C. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 doesn’t show us a victorious King driving out Israel’s oppressors
- D. It gives us a look at a sacrificial lamb
 - 1. The Jews were very familiar with the concept of sacrifice
 - 2. They had been providing sacrifices for sins on a regular basis since Moses brought the tablets down from Mount Horeb
 - 3. Somewhere between the prophecy of the Messiah in Deuteronomy 18:15 and the birth of the Christ they had gotten completely confused — even with this text in Isaiah
- E. We have seen the Messiah right here in Isaiah 52-53

II. My Servant

- A. Isaiah 52:13–15 (ESV); ¹³ Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted. 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 — ¹⁵ so shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see, and that which they have not heard they understand.
- B. Success!
 - 1. We are given the end right at the beginning
 - 2. The Messiah will be successful in completing the plan God has laid out
 - 3. Philippians 2:7–11 (ESV); ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- C. But right after this success we are given a different view of the Messiah
 - 1. The movie *The Passion* gives us a very good idea of the physical punishment that the Messiah went through
 - 2. The Messiah was beaten with a staff and had a crown of thorns beat down on his head
 - 3. Matthew 27:27–31 (NIV84); ²⁷ Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. ²⁸ They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. ³⁰ They spit on him, and

- took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. ³¹ After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.
4. While the Jews were limited to 39 stripes, the Romans were not
 5. The Romans were very adept at flogging people, inflicting as much pain as they could without killing them
 6. The crucifixion was very painful, designed to inflict torment with every breath — and to prolong that torment as long as possible
- D. The picture has morphed from victory to sacrifice
- III. Despised
- A. Isaiah 53:1–3 (ESV); ¹ Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ² For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
 - B. Paul gives us some insight on these verses
 - C. Romans 10:14–17 (ESV); ¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.
 1. The “Arm of the Lord” has been revealed to His apostles — and ultimately to us!
 2. And they did not believe Him because He didn’t fit their idea of a Messiah
 - D. Form and Majesty
 1. Coffman says this refers to Jesus’ station in life — a carpenter’s son, no power, no kingship, nothing that would get anyone’s attention — Here I agree with Coffman
 2. Coffman speaks against this passage referring to His physical appearance
 3. He points to the woman with the jar of perfume who washes His feet with her tears and hair and anoints him with perfume (Luke 7:37-38)
 4. He continues into Luke 8 pointing to all the women who were following Him — “women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities” (Luke 8:2)
 5. Here I disagree with Coffman
 6. It was not Jesus’ physical appearance that drew people to Him — It was His power to heal and authority, His message of the coming Kingdom (even though they misunderstood Him)
 7. Matthew 7:28–29 (ESV); ²⁸ And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹ for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.
 8. And, to this day, it is the message and not the speaker who has authority — the Gospel, not the preacher, has the power for salvation!
 - E. Despised and Rejected
 1. Jesus apostles were common men, not men of distinction
 - a) A tax collector and fishermen
 - b) He did not count among his supporters those who were powerful, distinguished
 - c) Even the rich young ruler turned away from Him

2. "Men still persist in avoiding facing the 'real Jesus,' preferring what they call 'the historical Jesus' who would not trouble them with the Cross."¹
 - a) We generally want to avoid coming face to face with our own sins
 - b) Jesus on the cross puts our sins right in front of us and forces us to make a decision
 - c) Taking a hard, introspective look into ourselves can be difficult, but eye opening
 - d) Only then can we come face to face with our need for salvation

IV. Salvation

- A. Jesus suffered for us
- B. He was our atoning sacrifice
- C. Don't reject Him

¹ Coffman, James Burton. "Commentary on Isaiah 53:4". "Coffman Commentaries on the Old and New Testament". <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/isaiah-53.html>. Abilene Christian University Press, Abilene, Texas, USA. 1983-1999.