
TRIUNITY OF ISAIAH 52-54

SUFFERINGS, FOLLOWED BY GLORY
Israel, Israel's Messiah, Israel's God

By Arlen L. Chitwood

Isaiah chapter fifty-two presents *the sufferings of both Israel and Israel's Messiah, Who is Israel's God, followed by glory.*

Then chapter fifty-three deals extensively with *the sufferings*, and chapter fifty-four deals extensively with *the glory which follows the sufferings.*

Sufferings, as seen in Isaiah chapters fifty-two and fifty-three, MUST ALWAYS PRECEDE GLORY, as seen in chapters fifty-two and fifty-four. There can be *NO such thing as glory* (inseparably associated with *regality*) apart from *preceding sufferings.*

This is true of *God's three firstborn Sons (Christ, Israel, and the Church [following the adoption]; Ex. 4:22, 23; Heb. 1:6; 12:23; cf. Rom. 8:14ff; Eph. 1:5ff);* and, in relation to Messiah's coming reign over the earth, this is equally true of *God Himself.*

Isaiah chapter fifty-three — forming a commentary on the sufferings introduced in chapter fifty-two — has, over the centuries, been either ignored by the Jews or seen by their Rabbis as Israel suffering righteously for the sins of the unrighteous nations. But this chapter *MUST* be studied *NOT ONLY* in the light of the exact wording of the text *BUT* in the light of its context and other related Scripture as well.

The Jewish Rabbis though, contrary to common thought among Christians, *are NOT entirely wrong;* but they are far from being correct. And the Christian commentators, seeing *ONLY* the sufferings of Israel's Messiah in this chapter, on the other hand, *are NOT entirely correct either.* Note that the chapter is introduced by the sufferings of both *Israel and Israel's Messiah, Who is Israel's God.*

Thus, *there is a triunity seen throughout these three chapters in both the sufferings and the subsequent glory.*

Isaiah chapter fifty-three, as will be shown, is somewhat like the Book of Jonah, *having to do with sufferings, followed by glory, with both encompassing NOT ONLY Israel's Messiah BUT also Israel and Israel's God.*

In the Book of Jonah, the center of attention in this respect is directed toward *Israel;* in Isaiah chapter fifty-three, the center of attention in this respect is directed toward *Israel's Messiah;* but in both the Book of Jonah and Isaiah chapter fifty-three, *sufferings preceding glory can be seen relative to Israel, Israel's Messiah, and Israel's God.*

In reality, Isaiah chapter fifty-three forms both *a confession and a declaration which Israel will carry to the nations during the Millennium concerning themselves, their Messiah, and their God.*

Sufferings of Messiah

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: for that which had not been told them shall they see: and that which they had not heard shall they consider (Isa. 52:13-15).

Isaiah chapter fifty-three centers on Israel's Messiah, rejected and crucified by the nation at His first coming.

(Note that Christ was the Paschal Lamb [I Cor. 5:7]. *This Lamb was given to Israel, and ISRAEL ALONE could slay this Lamb, an act clearly attributed to Israel in Scripture* [Ex. 12:1ff; Acts 2:23, 36; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 7:52].)

The Jewish people in Isaiah chapter fifty-three had previously been seen in Isaiah chapter forty-three in their role as God's witness to the nations:

"Who hath believed our report?...
He is despised and rejected of men...
But he was wounded for our transgressions..."

The Jewish people are the ones whom God has chosen to carry His message to the nations. And, during the coming Messianic Era, after they have been dealt with during and immediately following the Tribulation, they will then fulfil their role in this respect.

Israel's Messiah, at His first coming, suffered rejection at the hands of His Own people throughout His ministry. And this rejection, ultimately resulting in His crucifixion and indescribable sufferings, left Him in the condition seen in Isa. 52:14.

Note the literal and more accurate translation of this verse from two Hebrew word study books:

"Just as many were astonished at thee: so disfigured, his appearance was not human, and his form not like that of the children of men" (Keil & Delitzsch).

"As many were shocked at thee — so marred from man his look, and his form from the sons of man" (Alexander).

God allowed His Son to suffer to the extent described in this verse for a single, solitary reason — in order that His plans and purposes regarding man, brought into existence in the beginning, in Gen. 1:26-28; 2:7, might ultimately be worked out and realized (*cf. Rom. 11:29*).

And this would *NOT ONLY* involve the suffering and death of His firstborn Son, *Jesus* (after the previously described fashion), *BUT* also the suffering and death of His firstborn son, *Israel* (after a similarly described fashion).

Then, this would ultimately be followed by the resurrection from the grave of both Sons, *occurring after two days, on the third day* (John 2:18ff 11:6ff).

Sufferings of Israel

Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourself for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

Now therefore, what have I here saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for naught? They that rule over them make them to howl [lament replacing joy], saith the Lord; and my name continually every day is blasphemed (Isa. 52:2-5).

The Jewish people, down through centuries and millenniums of time, *have suffered like no other nation*. And apart from Divine intervention and preservation, *this suffering nation would have passed out of existence long ago, at some time in the distant past*.

Why has God allowed His people, His firstborn son, to suffer in this manner? Where was God when they were enduring these untold sufferings? And, Why has God brought about this nation's continued existence under such circumstances?

Their sufferings and continued existence result from: 1) *their identity* and 2) *their breaking the covenant which God made with the Jewish people through Moses at Sinai* (Ex. 19:5, 6ff).

The Jewish people form the nation which God called into existence to *NOT ONLY* be His witness to all of the other nations *BUT* the people through which God would also bless these nations as well.

And the covenant has to do with the rules and regulations governing the Jewish people in the theocracy. with both *blessings* and *curses* seen in connection with the covenant, reiterated in Leviticus chapter twenty-six and Deuteronomy chapter twenty-eight.

IF the Israelites *obeyed the covenant*, keeping God's Sabbaths, *they would be placed at the head of the nations, with the nations being reached and blessed through them*. However, *IF* the Israelites *disobeyed this covenant, not keeping God's Sabbaths, EXACTLY the opposite would occur. The nations would NOT be reached and blessed, along with the Israeli nation finding itself at the tail of the nations*.

And the latter is *EXACTLY what occurred*, with God taking different measures over centuries of time to effect correction (about seven and eight centuries).

But finally, when Israel's cup of iniquity was full

(*cf.* Gen. 15:16), God allowed the Gentile nations to come into the land and carry His people away into Gentile lands (during the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.), beginning the Times of the Gentiles.

The purpose for the Times of the Gentiles is to *bring about correction, to bring about the son's correction through Gentile persecution. And matters will continue in this respect with persecution becoming more and more intense with the passage of time, UNTIL correction is achieved, UNTIL Israel repents* (Lev. 26:21-39).

The preceding will account for *the intense nature of the WWII Holocaust in Europe*, during which 6,000,000 Jews were slain, though repentance was not forthcoming. And this, as well, will account for *the intensified nature of the Holocaust about to overtake Jews worldwide*, in which two-thirds of the Jews will be slain (Ezek. 5:12; Zech. 13:8 [over 9,000,000 by today's count]), with repentance this time forthcoming.

And this is where Isaiah chapter fifty-three can also be seen applying to the Jewish nation. There is an evident resonance of the statements in this chapter describing Jewish suffering in that coming day as well — “despised,” “rejected,” “wounded,” etc.

Sufferings of God

For he said, Surely they [“the house of Israel,” v. 7] are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour.

IN ALL THEIR AFFLICTION HE WAS AFFLICTED, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old (Isa. 63:8, 9).

Now, two related questions...

WHERE was God when His firstborn Son, Jesus, was being rejected, humiliated, and ultimately crucified?

Then, *WHERE* was God at different times over the centuries, extending into millenniums — 3,500 years of time, extending from the brickyards in Egypt to the Holocaust of WWII, into today — when His firstborn son, Israel, was/is being persecuted — *severely at times* — at the hands of the Gentiles?

On the first question, *God was THERE*, being rejected, humiliated, and ultimately crucified in the person of His Son. The Passover, 33 A.D., was the day God died, raising Himself from the dead on the third day (Acts 2:24; 13:30). It was God Who suffered and died. It was *the blood of God* which paid for man's redemption (Acts 20:28).

On the second question, the answer is, in reality, *the SAME*. *God was THERE/is HERE*, in the midst of His son, inseparably identified with the son in *ALL* of the rejection, humiliation, and suffering, experiencing *ALL* of this right along with His son — “*In ALL their affliction he was afflicted*” (Isa. 63:9; *cf.* Ex. 3:1-8; Deut. 32:10; Dan. 3:10-28; Zech. 2:8 [ref. the author's pamphlet, “The Pupil of God's Eye”]).

God was in Auschwitz, in Belzec, in Treblinka, in *ALL* the death camps, suffering *EXACTLY* what His people suffered. God was on the end of the Nazi bayonets when Jewish children were thrown into the air and caught on these bayonets. God was in the gas chambers, in the ovens. *He was there for ALL of it, suffering the SAME things that His people suffered*.

And God is presently THERE/HERE and will be THERE in the future Holocaust about to overtake His people, in EXACTLY the same manner (*cf.* Matt. 25:31ff).

He has been THERE over centuries of time and will continue to be THERE, withholding His hand of deliverance, UNTIL that day when His people repent. THEN, AND ONLY THEN, will He step in and put a stop to all of it (*cf.* Isa. 55:8, 9).

These Divine actions are *the extremes* to which God has gone and will go to *NOT ONLY* effect man's redemption *BUT* to have a people who will both carry His message to the nations and through whom He can then bless these nations.

God Himself has endured millenniums of sufferings, extreme sufferings at times, in order to bring man back into the position wherein man can realize the purpose for which he was created in the beginning.

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