

Isaiah 53: God's Suffering Servant

Isaiah was a 'prophet', an Old Testament preacher who brought inspired messages from God to kings and people in Israel around 700 years before Christ.

Much of his ministry was challenging people to remain faithful to the God Who had saved their forefathers and established their nation in this 'Promised Land'. He urged them to keep His commands and not be fooled by the sensual but powerless alternative 'idols' of their neighbours.

The prophets foretold trouble and exile in the short term if people persisted in disobedience, but also God's restoring grace for future generations. They predicted a 'Messiah', a king specially authorised by God to bring about new righteousness and blessing. The famous 'Unto us a child is born...' passage from Isaiah ch 9 is read at Carol Services each year.

The poignant irony contained in this chapter 53 is that this 'Servant' King would please and satisfy God by *suffering* on behalf of others like a sacrifice offered in the Temple, His life given so ours might be spared.

Vs 5+6 are central: '*He was pierced for our transgressions (wrongdoing)...we have gone astray...and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity (sin) of us all.*'

Christians see this as an accurate prophecy of Christ's suffering on Calvary. There's even a strong hint of resurrection in the closing verses of the chapter.

This chapter should be read slowly, reverently and with deep thankfulness!