

WHO HAS BELIEVED?

*An ancient story of suffering
that impacts you today.*

Some things stand the test of time. Think of classic books like "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey", a movie like "It's a Wonderful Life", or anything passed down from generation to generation. While many items, stories, and memories fade into history and are forgotten, some things just remain. In order for something to remain, there must be a perceived value in it.

The book of Isaiah is a great example of something that has stood the test of time. It was held onto because of its perceived value. It was written hundreds of years before years started being counted in the other direction (BC to AD), and here you are today reading about it nearly three thousand years later...



How did this book stand the test of time?
Could it be that the book of Isaiah was passed down from generation to generation because it is the word of God? Could this be proven? Isaiah, the writer of this great book, outlines the qualifications for how one could know that a word is from God in chapter 46, verses 9 and 10:

***Remember the former things of old,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like Me,
Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things that are not
yet done...***

One might accurately predict that something will happen in the near future. Maybe that a certain sports team will win a championship in the coming year, perhaps even the final score of a season's final game could be guessed, but many of Isaiah's prophecies ended up being fulfilled several centuries later! Surely only God could accomplish something like this, especially in the detail that follows.

A Few Examples

In Isaiah, God calls an individual being written about his "servant", and because of the suffering the servant is prophesied to undergo, Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is commonly subtitled "The Suffering Servant". Here is how Isaiah explains the servant's coming suffering.

***Just as many were astonished at you,
So His visage was marred more than any
man, And His form more than the sons of
men; (Isaiah 52:14)***

Isaiah seems to stop his thought in order to explain what the suffering servant would look like. He would be so disfigured that he wouldn't look like other humans. His audience preserved this detail for centuries before it was fulfilled in the suffering servant.

***So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.
And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns
and put it on His head, and they put on Him
a purple robe. Then they said, "Hail, King of
the Jews!" And they struck Him with their
hands. (John 19:1-3)***

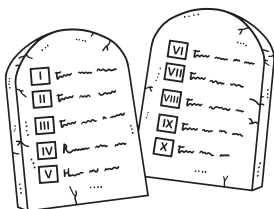
Jesus was brutally beaten. Those who saw Jesus later on reported that they didn't recognize him at first. One had to hear his voice, and others had to see his nail-scarred hands. Even the way Jesus would receive these scars was written for us.

***But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities; (Is. 53:5)***

Isaiah goes on to say that the servant would be despised and rejected by men, and this is precisely what happened, according to multiple eyewitnesses.

Why Does This Matter To Me?

You might be wondering why the servant had to suffer. Isaiah lays this out for us as well. You read above that the servant was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He adds later that the servant “bore the sin of many”. He references our transgressions, iniquities, and sins multiple times throughout his prophecy. Remember, Isaiah was writing to people who wouldn't live to see this servant, and yet he wrote “our transgressions”.



It's important to realize that you and I are sinners as well. We lie, steal (even if it's something small or immaterial), covet, and look lustfully at others. If we're honest, we have all sinned according to God's law. If you need to, pause and think about that for a second. Be honest with yourself. Isaiah included himself in "our sins", "our iniquities", and "our transgressions". Aren't you included as well?

Isaiah writes in verse 6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way..."

To put it simply, we **ALL** need help!

Because God is holy, righteous, and just, He can't just let sinners get away with it. Sins must be paid for. If they weren't, God would be a bad judge. We should all receive the penalty we've earned for our sin. Isaiah tells us much about the suffering Jesus would go through in order to bear our sin.

As you read in the beginning of Isaiah 53:5, the servant was wounded and bruised for us, and the rest of the verse adds more detail.

***The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.***



We deserve to be bruised and wounded by God, but the servant took this punishment for us.

Isaiah writes a few verses later that the servant was cut off from the land of the living (killed) and stricken for our sins. Remember, his appearance was marred beyond human semblance.

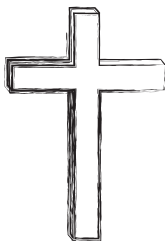
The servant, Jesus, gives more detail on the just punishment we should've received.

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left... "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:... And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'" (Matthew 25:31-33,41,46)

The Good News

God would've been just to let us receive eternal judgment, but instead, he provided a substitute for us, a sacrifice that he would accept because of its perfection. That sacrifice is detailed for us in this great prophecy from Isaiah.

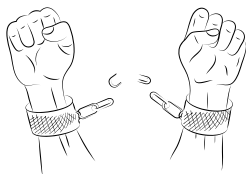
As we've seen, his chastisement brought us peace, with his wounds we are healed, and the end of 53:6 says, "the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." The first part of verse 10 says, "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin..."



This was all part of God's plan! It was his will to bruise his Son on our behalf, in our place. The suffering servant was made "an offering for sin". Because of this, sinners like you and me, don't have to receive eternal punishment but can receive eternal life. We can be in God's presence for eternity, in a perfect kingdom. No more sin or illness.

God is calling a people that will be healed, some on this earth (like Matthew writes about when referencing Isaiah 53:4), to reflect what his kingdom will look like, and *many*, as Isaiah says, will be considered righteous and permanently healed and restored in Heaven.

You can be freed from your life of sin and darkness!



How Can I Partake In This Gift From God?

Isaiah gives us a hint, centuries before it was more clearly revealed, of how we can receive this gift of salvation from God. In Isaiah 53:1, he writes:

Who has believed our report?

This was written about Jesus when he was on this earth, in the gospel of John.

But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" (John 12:37-38)

Though Jesus showed people many miraculous signs, many still did not believe in him. Many still ignore, reject, and despise him today. But Jesus' ministry was not complete in chapter 12 of John. Isaiah tells us what was to come in the other half of Isaiah 53:10.

He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

God's will was that the suffering servant would not only be the perfect sacrifice for sinners but that he would also rise again. Isaiah tells us he would "prolong his days," meaning that the sacrifice was not the end of the story. Jesus tells us the same thing before he went to the cross to fulfill all that was written of him.

For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." (John 10:17-18)

Jesus did just that. He suffered on a Roman cross, was buried, and was raised again. This same Jesus, after he arose, sent the Holy Spirit, who worked through ordinary people to build his church.

When Peter, an ordinary man who followed Jesus, preached this message of salvation after Jesus was resurrected, his hearers wanted to know how to partake in this gift.

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:37-38)

Repent. Turn away from your sins and believe that Jesus is the suffering servant who died in our place and who prolonged his days by his resurrection, and you will receive eternal life and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Become A Disciple

Believing the gospel of Jesus Christ is not something you do once and then return to your normal way of life. Jesus calls us to follow him and to be his disciples. He told his disciples that he was “the way, the truth, and the life” and that no one could come to his father in heaven but through him. As Isaiah asked, who has believed? Do you?

Please, find a local church, perhaps from the person who shared this with you, and grow in your relationship with Jesus.

This was only a small glimpse into what was written in Isaiah 53 and fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I encourage you to read Isaiah 52:13-53:12 in its entirety and then go and read the gospel of John. These are books of the Bible that can be read from any number of free Bible apps.

Want to share this message with others? Visit
nonametracts.com or scan the QR code below.



No Name Tracts

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®.
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by
permission. All rights reserved.