



THE
SAVIOUR'S
DEFINITE
REDEMPTION

Studies in Isaiah 53



W.E. BEST

**THE SAVIOUR'S DEFINITE
REDEMPTION
(Studies in Isaiah 53)**

by
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INTRODUCTION **(Isaiah 52:13-15)**

The introduction to the section of Scripture that vividly describes the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ is recorded in Isaiah 52:13-15. It should be studied with Isaiah 53. The following is an outline of Isaiah 52:13-53:12—(1) God the Father introduced His Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ (Is. 52:13-15). (2) The history of the Servant of God is unfolded (Is. 53:1-10). (3) The sufferings of Messiah the Servant will be rewarded (Is. 53:11-12).

The Messiah is introduced in the Old Testament with the word “behold.” The word calls attention to matters of utmost importance. Each of four references to the Messiah has a vital connection with one of the gospels. (1) The Messiah is called the “Branch of the LORD” in Isaiah 4:2. This is connected with the gospel of John where Jesus Christ is presented as God (John 1:1). (2) The Messiah is called the “Branch” of David in Jeremiah 23:5-6. This is associated with the gospel of Matthew which portrays Jesus Christ as the Son of David according to the flesh (Matt. 1:1). (3) The Messiah is called “my servant the BRANCH” in Zechariah 3:8. This is joined with the gospel of Mark where Jesus Christ is described as Servant. (4) The Messiah is referred to as “the man whose name is The BRANCH” in Zechariah 6:12. This is united with the gospel of Luke where Jesus Christ is seen as the perfect Man. The reverse order of the references reflects the Man, the Servant, the Son of David, and the Son of God.

Hebrew scholars say that the Servant “dealing prudently” primarily means to act wisely; but since wise action is effective and leads to prosperity, it is sometimes a synonym for prosperity. Therefore, the Holy Spirit through Isaiah said that Jesus Christ would be prosperous in the work He came to accomplish. Christ did not die to procure forgiveness of sins of those who can never be forgiven. Remember that there is no forgiveness for those who blaspheme against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:31). The simple explanation is that the work of Jesus Christ on the cross extends no further than the grace of God the Father. Any statement to the contrary would be ridiculous.

The Lord Jesus Christ was prosperous. He finished the work the Father sent Him to perform. He is prosperous now. He is accomplishing the very thing He ascended to execute. Hence, the very introduction to Isaiah 53 on the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ proves that the prosperity of Christ should captivate the thinking of every rational person. Here, assurance is given at the very outset that the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand (Is. 42:4; 53:10).

Isaiah prophesied that the Servant would be exalted, extolled, and lifted very high. He would be exalted above Abraham, lifted above Moses, and raised higher than the ministering angels. When Jesus Christ came forth from the grave, He was given a name above every name and lifted very high. He is now seated at the right hand of the Father. The whole path of the Messiah is set forth in the introductory statements in Isaiah 52:13-15.

The prophet predicted man's reaction of astonishment at Christ's coming in humiliation to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The nations of the world will be startled when He comes the second time as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Israel's contritional confession is recorded in the first part of Isaiah 53. The first division of this chapter refers to what will occur when Jesus Christ comes as King. Therefore, this section of Scripture prophetically portrays what Israel will confess when they look upon the Lord Jesus Christ who they were instrumental in putting to death. Israel's remorse over their sins and rejection of the Lord will be fully revealed at the glorious manifestation of Christ.

The Scriptures regard the work of Christ as that of obedience. He was obedient even to the death of the cross. The Lord came not to be ministered to but to minister and give His life a ransom for many. Many of the puritans made a distinction between passive and active obedience. However, should the life that Jesus Christ lived be termed active obedience and His suffering and death be termed passive obedience? The Lord Jesus Christ was actively obedient. He never did anything contrary to the will of God the Father (Ps. 40:8; Heb. 10:7). The Lord's vicarious obedience demands not only the full discharge of the law's precepts but the infliction of penalty for all infractions and shortcomings. A twofold demand of the law is taken into account to speak of the active and passive obedience of Christ. The term passive cannot indicate that anything Christ did was passive. Any such concept would contradict the very notion of obedience. He was supremely active, not passive, in His sufferings. Obedience is not artificial or abstract. His obedience extended from His incarnation to His vicarious death on the cross. Conclusively, the Lord Jesus Christ was active in all His life, sufferings, and death.

Scripture sets forth the atoning work of the Saviour in the specific categories of sacrifice, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption. These categories are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The atoning work of Jesus Christ is set forth in Scripture as a "sacrifice." Old Testament sacrifices were basically expiatory. They made satisfaction. Guilt can be removed only by suffering. That is the reason Jesus Christ came, suffered, and died. Christians have their standing in His death. They have been perfected forever through the once-offered Christ. Sin involves a certain liability arising from the holiness of God. The gravity of sin contradicts God's holiness. Until a person sees himself as a sinner and his sin as a contradiction to God's holiness, he has no hope. When the grace of God comes into his heart, he is brought to the realization of the heinousness of sin and its contradiction to God's holiness. The sins of Old Testament saints were not taken away, because the death of the Testator had not taken place. Hence, their sins were covered until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, when Jesus Christ became their Substitute. The sins of all the elect were legally taken away when Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary (Heb. 9-10).

The atoning work of Christ is set forth in Scripture as "reconciliation." "Propitiation" focuses attention on the wrath of God and provision for the removal of that wrath. Whereas, reconciliation focuses attention on man's alienation from God and the Divine method of restoring him to God's favor. Alienation is twofold—man from God and God from man. Every person who comes into the world has gone away from God, and God has withdrawn His favor from him (Is. 53:6). All men fell in Adam, but God's alienation from man and not man's alienation from God comes to the forefront in reconciliation.

More is involved in reconciliation than the removal of enmity. God the Father must be satisfied. He is satisfied only in the redemptive work of His Son. The work of God the Father through the work of His Son has accomplished reconciliation. Therefore, the elect one stands reconciled before God because the Father has been satisfied by the Son paying the supreme sacrifice. Reconciliation begins with God the Father and is received by the believer. Religionists reverse the order, believing they do something and afterward God reconciles them. However, the believer's understanding or receiving reconciliation is the fruit of the accomplishment of the sovereign God.

Reconciliation does not refer to the subjective enmity in the heart of the person said to be reconciled. It denotes the alienation of the Person to whom the individual is said to be reconciled. The elect are reconciled to God. Therefore, attention is drawn not to the subjective realm of man's attitude toward God but to the Divine attitude as it is demonstrated in the historical event of the death of the Saviour. Reconciliation is received (Rom. 5:10). It is the work of God (Rom. 5:18; II Cor. 5:18-21). It is finished and cannot be repeated. The message has been committed to faithful men to tell others that the Father has accomplished the work through His Son whereby lost sinners can be reconciled to the holy, righteous God.

The atoning work of Jesus Christ is set forth in Scripture as "redemption." The word redemption must not be reduced to the general notion of deliverance. It speaks of ransom, which is securing a release by paying a price. The price was paid in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The elect are recipients of that release. They are not redeemed from the law, that is, from obligation to love God. The chosen of God are redeemed from the curse of the law, but not from the law which says, "...Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matt. 22:37-38). The curse of the law is its penal sanction. It is the displeasure which rests upon every infraction of God's holy law.

Christ's satisfactory work was perfect. Religionists mistakenly believe that the perfection of Christ's work means that sins committed after conversion, or after baptism, must be satisfied in this life by the individual. In opposition to any such notion, Christians correctly contend that the satisfaction of Jesus Christ is the only satisfaction for sin. Christ's satisfaction is so perfect, so final, that it leaves no penal liability for any sins of the believer (Heb. 10). The work of Jesus Christ on the cross satisfied a person's sin before and after regeneration. It is true that believers are chastened in this life for their sins. That chastening is corrective and painful. To approximate chastisement, however, with satisfaction for sin is to infringe on the perfection of Christ's work and upon the very nature of Jesus Christ Himself.

An individual is regenerated by the Spirit of God. He then has a conversion experience which comes through a knowledge of the word of God. There is no condemnation of those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). A person cannot make satisfaction for the sins he commits as a believer any more than he could make satisfaction for his sins before he was regenerated. Chastening is one thing and satisfaction is another. Satisfaction is in Jesus Christ and Him alone. That is the reason the redeemed are perfected forever by the finished work of Christ. It has been said that a person pollutes the river of the streams that make glad the city of God to allow the notion of human satisfaction to intrude itself in his construction of either justification or sanctification.

THE SAVIOUR INTRODUCED, MISUNDERSTOOD, AND REJECTED (Isaiah 53:1-3)

The section of Scripture beginning with Isaiah 52:12 through 53:12 begins and ends with the description, exaltation, and glory of the righteous Servant of Jehovah. Many in the realm of higher criticism assert that the Scripture portion refers to Israel who was called the servant of Jehovah. However, a Christian cannot stretch his imagination to say his sins were laid on Israel and Israel bore his sins. A Divine commentary on the Person spoken of is recorded in Acts 8:26-35. Philip used the same Scripture and preached the Lord Jesus Christ to the Ethiopian eunuch. Between the first and last verses of Isaiah 52:12 and 53:12, the deep valley of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ are recorded. This section of Scripture shows Jewish enmity and Roman cruelty inflicted on Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 53 is filled with Divine paradoxes: (1) Jesus Christ was a root out of a dry ground but was fruitful. (2) He had no form nor beauty but was God's Servant. Scripture titles Jesus Christ "the lily of the valley," "the bright and morning star," "the rose of Sharon," etc., but only by the grace of God can a person detect that beauty. From the human viewpoint, the human nature He assumed in the incarnation was unattractive. (3) He was despised and rejected of men but was the anointed Messiah. (4) He was without human generation but has numerous seed. (5) He suffered unto death but ever lives. (6) He was rejected and beaten but prospered. (7) He was cut off but prolonged His days. (8) He grew up but is the eternal Son of God. (9) He was a tender plant but bore and endured an awful storm. (10) He had no beauty to lead anyone to desire Him but is desired by many. (11) He was wounded to death, but those wounds are life to the elect. (12) Jehovah laid iniquity on Him, but He is Jehovah Himself. (13) He died but lives to divide the spoil.

There are passages of Scripture that serve as a Divine commentary on each phrase of Isaiah 53:1-3—(1) "WHO hath believed our report..." corresponds with "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him" (John 12:37). (2) "...To whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" corresponds with "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). (3) "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant..." corresponds with "I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman" (John 15:1). (4) "...As a root out of a dry ground..." corresponds with "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). (5) "...He hath no form nor comeliness..." corresponds with "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Is. 52:14). (6) "...When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him" corresponds with "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). (7) "He is despised..." corresponds with "And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews" (Matt. 27:29). (8) "...And rejected of men..." corresponds with "Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas..." (John 18:40). (9) "...A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief..." corresponds with

“Jesus wept” (John 11:35). (10) “...We hid as it were our faces from him...” corresponds with “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life” (John 5:40). (11) “...He was despised, and we esteemed him not” corresponds with “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (I Cor. 1:23).

Three things should be considered concerning the Person of the sacrifice in Isaiah 53:1-3—(1) The Sacrifice is introduced (v. 1). (2) The Sacrifice is misunderstood (v. 2). (3) The Sacrifice is rejected (v. 3).

1. Isaiah’s first question, “WHO hath believed our report?” referred to the doctrine of Christ. Who has believed the truth about the glorious Servant of God? The Lord Jesus Christ through self-humiliation and vicarious suffering unto death accomplished salvation for all who have believed or ever shall believe. Faith to believe the doctrine of Christ is not in the power of man. Natural faith gives mental assent to the record of God, but faith that saves is the fruit of grace. A concise record concerning Jesus Christ is found in I John 5:9-13. The record includes (1) God’s gift; (2) the gift is given to the elect; (3) the gift is eternal life; and (4) life is in God’s Son. Conclusively, the gift is Divine, personal, lasting, and in Jesus Christ.

Isaiah’s second question, “To whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” is the answer to his first question. One of the New Testament quotations of this question was by the Saviour and the other by the apostle Paul. The Lord had performed miracles in the presence of the Pharisees who were the religionists of His day, but they did not believe on Him (John 12:34-41). The apostle Paul quoted Isaiah’s question as he addressed the religious Jews who were ignorant of God’s righteousness (Rom. 10:1, 14-16). None believe except those to whom Jesus Christ is revealed. The Lord “...Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you” (Gal. 3:1). He has been placarded before men. Nevertheless, the death of Jesus Christ means nothing to an individual until God by His Spirit reveals its significance to him. The answer to the first question is that none have believed unless the Spirit has revealed the death of Jesus Christ to his heart. Spiritual things are hidden from the worldly wise and prudent and revealed by the Spirit to babes. Therefore, “...no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” Both questions are answered by the Lord Himself in Matthew 11:25-27.

The arm of the Lord is a frequently repeated, significant phrase in the prophecy of Isaiah. The title reveals the Lord Jesus as the executive of the Godhead: “...Be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble” (Is. 33:2). “...He shall gather the lambs with his arm...” (Is. 40:11). “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old...” (Is. 51:9). The fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 2:9). The arm of the Lord is revealed to each one to whom the Spirit of God has revealed the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

2. The Saviour was misunderstood (Is. 53:2). The Jews looked for one to come in majesty and glory, not in humility. They expected Christ to come in pomp and pride, as the Captain of the Lord’s host did in olden days (Josh. 5:14). This expectation was part of Israel’s stumblingblock. The Lord’s coming was predicted as His becoming the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). The Son being given would not take place separate from a child being born (Is. 9:6). The Jews’ prejudice blinded them to that truth. They made the word void through their traditions (Mark 7).

The pronoun “He” in verse 2 refers to Jesus Christ, God’s righteous Servant. He is not an influence, a system, an education, a philosophy, or the nation of Israel. He is a Person. Isaiah predicted that He would grow up before Him—God the Father. A Person was born, lived, died, was buried, and was raised again. That same Person is seated at the right hand of the Father and will come again.

Isaiah prophesied that Jesus Christ would grow up before the Father as a tender plant. He increased in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man (Luke 2:52). Growing up marks the distinction between the work of God and the work of man. A human work cannot grow. A Divine work alone can grow. Therefore, the One who gives life causes it to grow.

The Lord Jesus Christ was as a root out of dry ground. A root springing from dry ground is contrary to the course of nature. He sprang from the decayed stump of Jesse (Is. 11:10). Men are represented as turning away in disappointment from this tender plant springing up out of such unpromising surroundings. During the early days of the Lord’s personal ministry, men asked if any good thing could come out of Nazareth (John 1:46). The attitudes of the world and religionists toward Jesus Christ remain the same. The Jews did not desire Him. Their attitude toward His birth may be described as political impotence and religious decadence. The dry ground used in Isaiah’s prophecy describes the then existing state of the enslaved and degraded nation of Israel. It also expresses the character of the religious age in which Jesus Christ was born. Furthermore, it portrays the corrupt age today. Despite all the adverse circumstances of Christ’s earthly environment, He grew up before the Lord God of heaven.

The entire fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is a repentant confession of the Jews. The prophet addressed the Jewish people; therefore, the prophecy pertained primarily to them. Prophetically, the scales were beginning to drop from their eyes. Although Christians receive valuable lessons from the teaching of this chapter, it is primarily a contritional confession of the Jewish people projected into the future to the time that Israel as a nation shall look on Him whom they pierced, and a nation will be born at once (Is. 66:8).

When the scales begin to fall from Israel’s eyes, they will remember the passover lamb. The Jews set the passover lamb for sacrifice aside until the tenth day of the month (Ex. 12:3). During those ten days, the lamb was before Jehovah. His eyes alone rested on and delighted in the lamb. The Jews will recognize what was taking place during that time. The Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, assumed human nature. Little is recorded about His life during that time. Nevertheless, He was always before the eyes of God the Father, growing up before Him and awaiting the time He would go to the cross of Calvary.

When the scales fall from the eyes of the Jews, they will confess that at the Lord’s first advent they saw in Him no form nor comeliness and no beauty that they should desire Him. There was nothing in His surroundings or appearance that attracted religious or worldly-minded people. The Jews will confess that they were looking for one to come with pomp and pride. They expected Him to come as King, riding on a white horse. Instead, He humbled Himself, rode on an ass the foal of an ass, and came to suffer and die. He will come to reign as King at His second coming. The proclamation of Jesus Christ in all His beauty and glory has no attraction to the flesh. The Lord Jesus did not answer to the ideal of the Jews at His first coming, and He does not answer to the ideal of the religious world today. His greatness is not shaped to the thoughts of men.

The Jews misread the prophecies. They imagined that another deliverer than God had promised had come. The religious world continues to look for the attractiveness of the flesh. They have no desire for the holiness of God or for the holiness of life in individual Christians to evidence regeneration. God has a way of concealing His choicest treasures. The Lord Jesus Christ is the unspeakable gift of God the Father, but He is concealed from the world. Only the outward man is visible to them. The treasure of God's grace manifests itself, but not to its fulness in this life. Men look upon Jesus Christ and see no beauty that they should desire Him. The grace of God alone enables a person to penetrate the human nature of Jesus Christ to see the Divine nature of the eternal Son. Men must be enabled to look not only at the vessel but at its contents.

3. The Saviour was despised and rejected of men (v. 3). The repentant confession of the Jews will proceed to set forth their positive hostility which they manifested toward God's righteous Servant in their former ignorance at His first advent. Man in his natural state despises the Lord Jesus Christ. Evil men hate the Light and refuse to come to Christ (John 3:19-21). Every person saved by grace confesses that he formerly despised the Lord. The nation of Israel abhorred Christ: "Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee" (Is. 49:7). They demanded His crucifixion.

The Saviour is rejected of men: "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). The chief men of His nation and the great men of the world withdrew their hands from Him. The rulers of the world and the religious Pharisees did not believe on Him (John 7:47, 48). The unsaved person refuses to allow the Lord to rule his life. However, the greatest blessing to the child of God is to be under the rule of Christ. That is freedom indeed.

Christ was a Man of sorrows. Grief and sorrow have been prevalent through the ages. One sorrow does not make a person a man of sorrows. One meeting with grief does not make an individual acquainted with grief. Christ's life was one of constant, painful endurance. He did not have a weak, sickly body; but the wrath instigated by sin and the zeal of self-sacrifice burned like the fire of a fever in His soul and body (Ps. 69:9). Therefore, His sorrow was heart-sorrow, and His grief was soul-grief: "...Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger" (Lam. 1:12).

The repentant Jews will confess that they did not esteem the Lord Jesus. They formed a very low estimate of the Son of God. They held Him in contempt. Only in the way of conviction of sin and repentance and not in the way of speculation can Jesus Christ be known. The Lord's vicarious work that was before Him at the time of Isaiah's prophesying is now behind Him. He has finished the work and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He lives in the eternal joy of an accomplished work (Heb. 12:2).

THE SAVIOUR SMITTEN (Isaiah 53:4)

Verses of Scripture that serve as a Divine commentary on Isaiah 53:4 are given: (1) “Surely he hath borne our griefs...” corresponds with “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). (2) “...And carried our sorrows...” corresponds with “Jesus therefore again groaning in himself...” (John 11:38). (3) “...Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted” corresponds with “And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God” (Luke 23:35).

The love of Jesus Christ is manifested in a threefold manner in Isaiah 53:4—(1) The certainty of Christ’s love for His own is expressed in the word “surely.” (2) Christ’s acts of obedient love are expressed in the words “borne” and “carried.” (3) The objects of Divine love are seen by connecting the words “griefs” and “sorrows.”

Repentant Israel will confess their unthankfulness toward Jesus Christ. They esteemed “him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” Their guilt was in esteeming Him smitten of God for His own sin. The Jews considered the Lord’s suffering as deserved because He sought to lead them from their religious beliefs. They despised both Jesus Christ and those who witnessed to them concerning Him. Religionists continue to detest those who magnify the unsearchable riches of God’s grace, thinking they are trying to persuade them from their religious traditions. After the Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed to the Jews in regeneration, they will confess their sin of the past.

The disease of sin is set forth in the text under consideration. Strange and erroneous deductions have been drawn from Isaiah 53:4. The verse refers to the disease of the soul, not to the disease of the body. Many religionists believe Jesus Christ carried into the Calvary experience all of the Christian’s sicknesses and pains; consequently, they should never be sick or suffer. The work of Jesus Christ was perfect and finished Godward. Therefore, He is the propitiation for the sins of the world of believers (Rom. 3:25; I John 2:2). However, His finished work is not now applied to the bodies of believers. Their bodies are imperfect. Sin resides in them, and they must mortify the deeds of the body (Rom. 7:17; 8:13). Their bodies remain under the power of death, which is the last enemy to be destroyed (I Cor. 15:26). The finished work of Jesus Christ will not be applied to the believer’s body until the morning of the resurrection. The Lord Jesus Christ had authority on earth to remove the effect of sin; hence, He made Himself responsible for the cause. His work included redemption from the whole sweep and sway of sin, but the full blessings of Calvary will not be experienced until the Lord declares that “it is done” (Rev. 21:6). Until the full blessings of Calvary are realized, the Christian will grow older and feel pain. This is the reason the apostle Paul said that his outward man was perishing but his inward man was renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16).

The Divine commentary on Isaiah 53:4 is Matthew 8:16-17. The prophecy was fulfilled in the performance of miracles by the Lord during His personal ministry. It was not fulfilled on the cross. A careful study of Matthew 8:16-17 will reveal that Jesus Christ bore sicknesses “sympathetically”

during His personal ministry. Two different Greek words are translated “to bear.” The one used in Matthew 8:16-17 means to bear in the sense of sympathy. The one used in I Peter 2:24 refers to the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ on the cross. The sympathetic work of Christ is contrasted with His sacrifice on the cross in Isaiah 53:4-5.

If Christ purposed that people no longer be ill, Why did He not destroy disease? Disease is part of the curse, and the curse remains. There is a danger of being misled by the sound of certain expressions in the word of God through failure to ascertain their real sense. The following are some examples of that misleading among religionists: “Our attitude toward sickness should be the same as our attitude toward sin. Christ was made sin for us who knew no sin; likewise, He was made sick who knew no sickness. In the same way that we receive the firstfruits of our spiritual salvation, we can receive the firstfruits of our physical salvation. How can God justify us and at the same time require us to remain under the curse from which He has redeemed us?” The spiritually ignorant may be misled by such erroneous statements. The Lord Jesus Christ did not become sick or infirm. He did not bear sicknesses in that sense.

The words “iniquity” (v. 6), “transgression” (v. 8), “sin” (v. 10), “iniquities” (v. 11), and “sin” (v. 12) announce that Jesus Christ went to the cross of Calvary to pay the penalty for the sins of the elect. The disease He bore there was the disease of sin. It is a wasting, painful, loathsome, infectious, and mortal disease. Bodily sickness represents the serious nature and terrible consequences of sin. Sickness in the body is a type of sin in the soul; therefore, the various words used within the context are used to describe sin.

A study of the New Testament evidences that the apostle Paul knew nothing about the erroneous doctrine of “Divine healing” that is propagated by religious shysters. Paul taught that the outward man is perishing but the inward man is renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16). He reminded Christians that the salvation of their bodies is nearer than when they first believed (Rom. 13:11). He taught that death is the last enemy to be destroyed (I Cor. 15:26). He spoke about the humiliation of the body (Phil. 3:21). He exhorted the believers who are risen with Christ to seek those things which are above (Col. 3:1-3). Christians will be like the Lord Jesus Christ when they see Him as He is (I John 3:2-3). All imperfections will then be removed “That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

Salvation is finished and unfinished. The Lord’s statement on the cross in John 19:30, “It is finished,” means that it was completed, executed, concluded, finished, and accomplished. What was accomplished? Jesus Christ finished the work of offering Himself for the sins of the elect, the purpose for which God sent Him into the world: “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4). God had sent Christ into the world not to be a teacher, although He taught. He did not send Him to be a healer, although He healed. God sent His Son to give Himself, an offering for sin. He sent Him to stand in the place of those the Father had given the Son in the covenant of redemption. The Lord Jesus Christ accomplished that work.

Believers stand between Christ’s two statements: “It is finished” and “It is done” (John 19:30; Rev. 21:6). The latter statement does not occur until all things are made new (Rev. 21:5). We stand between the finished work of Calvary and making all things new.

The finished work of Christ is typified by (1) the covering of coats of skins (Gen. 3:21), (2) Abel's more excellent offering (Gen. 4:4), (3) Noah's sheltering ark (Heb. 11:7), (4) the offering of Isaac (Heb. 11:17), (5) the blood of the passover lamb (Ex. 12:1-14), (6) the life-giving fountain (Ex. 17:6), and (7) the serpent of brass (Num. 21:9).

The finished and unfinished works of Jesus Christ include the following things: (1) His work as Redeemer is finished, but His work as Restorer will remain unfinished until the perfection of every elect person. (2) Christ's work as Saviour at the cross is finished, but His work as Sustainer is unfinished. Those who have been reconciled to Christ are saved or sustained by the living Christ (Rom. 5:10). "Saved" is added to "saved." (3) His work as Atoner is finished, but His work as Advocate is unfinished. Provision is made for the sinning believer (I John 2:1). (4) Christ's work as Sanctifier is both finished and unfinished. The elect are positionally sanctified at regeneration, progressively sanctified in their Christian lives, and shall be ultimately sanctified in the presence of Jesus Christ. (5) The Saviour's work of putting away sin "from" the believer is finished, but His work of putting away sin from "within" the believer is unfinished. Sin was judicially put away from the elect in the death of Jesus Christ. Sin is put away from within the believer by Christ's living at the right hand of the Father and the Holy Spirit's living within the believer. (6) Christ's dying to destroy sin's penalty in the elect of God is finished, but His living to destroy sin's power over him is unfinished.

The completed and incompleted works of Jesus Christ point to an important truth in the lives of God's people. The Christian's standing in Jesus Christ is finished: "THEREFORE being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1). He is positionally secure because he had nothing to do with his standing. His standing in Christ is wholly of God. Nevertheless, the Christian's condition of life is unfinished. His state is imperfect. Therefore, he must work out his own salvation, which God has worked in him, with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12-13). He must add to his faith, which is God's gift (II Pet. 1:1-11).

Christ's work and the believer's work will both be consummated. The completion of Christ's work will occur after He has made all things new: "...Behold, I make all things new...It is done..." (Rev. 21:5-6). The conclusion of Christ's work will include a new body for the elect. The believer's work will not be consummated until he receives his new body. His work does not cease at death: "...Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13). The believer's influence continues living because works follow death. His influence will not cease until Christ makes all things new. Therefore, the believer desires that his influence be for truth and righteousness.

Christ's redemptive work is finished; therefore, He ascended to the Father to intercede for His own. The application of that redemption to the believer's body is future. In the flesh, the Christian groans and travails in pain awaiting the redemption of his body. That which is born of the flesh remains flesh (John 3:6). The body is mortal (II Cor. 4:11). It is a corruptible body (I Cor. 15:42). It will remain thus until the morning of the resurrection. The body remains unchanged in regeneration, which guarantees the new body. There is now constant warfare between the flesh and the spirit (Gal. 5:17). Therefore, the believer should present his body a living sacrifice unto God (Rom. 12:1). The body is saved by hope (Rom. 8:22-25). Christians are not gradually regenerated, and they are not gradually glorified. Regeneration is instantaneous. Furthermore, glorification of the body will be instantaneous on the resurrection morning.

The Jews will confess that in their former blindness and ignorance, they regarded Jesus Christ plagued and smitten of God for His own sin. They will realize that the transgression was theirs, and the stroke for it was the Lord's. The iniquity was theirs, and the wounds for it were His. The sin was theirs, and the death for it was His. They will acknowledge the baseness of their ingratitude, the intenseness of their ignorance, the thickness of their darkness, and the profoundness of their blasphemy against the holy One of Israel. This is the confession now by every individual illuminated by grace. It will be the confession of the Jews when they are illuminated by grace.

The contrast is great between esteeming Christ stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted and regarding Him extolled, exalted, and made very high. This is the transformation that occurs in the mind of every person regenerated by the Spirit of God. The Lord's suffering on the cross is the believer's satisfaction.

THE SAVIOUR'S VICARIOUS SUFFERING (Isaiah 53:5)

A Divine commentary on Isaiah 53:5 is given in the New Testament: (1) "But he was wounded for our transgressions..." corresponds with "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Pet. 3:18). (2) "...He was bruised for our iniquities..." corresponds with "THEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him" (John 19:1). (3) "...The chastisement of our peace was upon him..." corresponds with "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself..." (Col. 1:20). (4) "...With his stripes we are healed" corresponds with "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10).

Two entirely different aspects of human nature are expressed in verses 4 and 5 of Isaiah 53. The Jews will confess that they did not esteem the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 3). They will also confess that they did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted for His own sin (v. 4). Then, they will admit that He was wounded for their transgression and that He had none of His own (v. 5). They will acknowledge the transgressions, iniquities, and chastisement of peace He bore was theirs, and they were healed by His stripes. Grievs and sorrows are not necessarily direct results of the transgression of God's law. They are indirectly associated with transgression of the law of God but directly with complicity with Adam in his fall in the garden of Eden. The Lord Jesus Christ bore the sinner's griefs and carried his sorrows sympathetically during His personal ministry. Nothing is recorded in verse 4 concerning the vicarious suffering of Christ.

A different aspect of human nature is revealed in verse 5. The Lord Jesus suffered vicariously for the transgressions of His people. He was bruised for their iniquities. The chastisement of their peace was upon Him, and they are healed by His stripes. The death of Christ was a propitiation for the sins of those the Father gave the Son in the covenant of redemption. Christ's wounding and suffering were not a possibility but a certainty. The healing of the elect is also a certainty and not a mere possibility. The Lord Jesus Christ did not die in vain. All have wandered in various directions from God. The iniquities of the elect meet as filthy sewers into one mighty flood upon the eternal Son of God. Transgressions, iniquities, and spiritual diseases are far more heinous than the filth of any human sewer. Some sinners go in the direction of immorality and others in the direction of religious sin. In either direction, sin is rebellion against God. Nevertheless, the Father caused these sins to converge on Jesus Christ at Calvary. He suffered in the sinner's place.

Jesus Christ was wounded for the transgressions of the elect. Isaiah was not stressing the human but the Divine aspect of Calvary. The apostle Peter reminded the Jews that they were the instruments responsible for the death of the Son of God (Acts 2:22-23). However, he did not eliminate the Divine aspect. The Jews' actions were determined by God. Peter emphasized both the Divine and the human aspects of Calvary. The Lord Jesus was inflicted with severe, mortal wounds. His bruising indicates that He was crushed. His chastisement and suffering secured the reconciliation of His own. His stripes were received for the elect of God. Some erroneously gloss over the words in

verse 5 to say that Christ was wounded by our transgressions. However, that is not the statement in the verse. They present it from a human viewpoint by saying that Jesus Christ died by the hands of sinful men. They fail to emphasize Christ's substitutionary, vicarious atonement on the cross.

Some mistakenly believe that Jesus Christ died for men to set a perfect example of patience and submission under suffering. Others erroneously assert that all the passages of Scripture speaking of propitiation should be explained in a figurative sense. They also state that the apostles borrowed those terms from the Jewish law and applied them to Christ only by way of analogy, intimating that His blood did not expiate for sin any more than the blood of animal sacrifices. They further assert that Jesus Christ died as a pledge to assure men that God would forgive and accept them upon their repentance. That is as far as they carry the subject of the vicarious sufferings of Jesus Christ.

Born-again believers accept the Scriptural interpretation that the apostles never spoke of Christ's death merely by way of analogy to the Jewish sacrifices. The Jewish sacrifices simply foreshadowed the vicarious suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross. The Biblical view is that the Lord Jesus Christ bore the sins of His chosen ones by way of imputation. The imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity was real and immediate, but the imputation of the sins of the elect to Jesus Christ is not the same. Christ was not involved in human depravity. The sins of the elect were not actually transferred to Him so as to become His. They were not reckoned His. It is impossible to reckon them what they were not. Their sins' transference was no more than the "punishment" of them actually laid on Jesus Christ. The sins of the elect did not become Christ's, but they were imputed to Him so that He stood in their place and suffered the penalty for their sins. He died the death they should have died. The sins of the Jewish people were not transferred from themselves to the victim when they offered their sacrifices, but the victim was slain for the sins of the offerer (Lev. 16). The sin of a man can in no sense be transferred to a beast.

The Saviour suffered vicariously as Substitute for His people. There are instances where one man takes upon himself the penalty of another's recklessness or folly in the realm of natural law. Men have been willing to die the death of a martyr for a cause they embraced. Christ's love for His elect excelled that. His love for them is eternal. He went to the cross of Calvary and bore the penalty for their transgressions and was bruised for their iniquities. They are healed by His stripes. He took the debt of sin upon Himself and carried it "as" His own.

The chastisement that leads to the peace of God's elect was upon Him. Peace to the individual results from his having been justified before God (Rom. 5:1). Healing goes beyond justification to include sanctifying grace in the souls of the justified. Hence, the Holy Spirit who accomplishes regeneration within an individual delivers him by sanctification from spiritual disease and moral blemish so that he may become conformed to the image of Christ. A person does not enjoy the peace of justification unless he has been healed from (1) inattention and unconcern about spiritual things, (2) unbelief and ignorance of spiritual things, (3) love of the world and the pleasures thereof, (4) love for sin and the commission of it, (5) self-indulgence and self-seeking, (6) an accusing conscience, and (7) a slavish fear of God.

Prayer cannot heal. It is a request for healing. Trust does not heal. The individual himself cannot apply the remedy. God alone can apply it. Jesus Christ was content to be in the winepress alone that the recipients of grace can have Divine joy (Is. 63:3). The Lord Jesus went to the cross and suffered vicariously. There was none to help Him. His arm brought salvation.

The truths in verse 5 are not mere possibilities but a certainty. Some say that propitiation is unlimited and substitution is limited. However, propitiation and substitution must be of equal extent. Christ became Surety for those for whom He died and redeemed. The erroneous thought of universal redemption repudiates every attribute of God: (1) It opposes His foreknowledge because it represents God as striving to do what He knows He will not do. (2) It rejects the love of God. What sort of love would be manifested in dying for all, when many of them will be punished with everlasting damnation? (3) It renounces the wisdom of God. What is wisdom that would form a redemption that fails of its intended purpose? (4) It opposes the justice of God. Where is justice that would demand two payments for the same crime? (5) It disclaims the power of God. If Christ died for all and all are not saved, it must be from want of power. (6) It rejects the immutability of God. It would intimate that He loves at one time, and then that love changes to hatred. (7) It repudiates the satisfaction of Jesus Christ. He said He will see His seed and be satisfied. (8) It denies the efficacy of Christ's death. If every one is not saved, Christ died in vain. (9) It renounces the work of Christ, because it separates His redemptive work from His work of intercession. However, He intercedes for all for whom He died. (10) It is a contradiction to those who commit the unpardonable sin. Since salvation of some is impossible, How could Christ die to render salvation possible for all men?

The Lord Jesus Christ was wounded for the transgression of the elect and bruised for their iniquities. The chastisement of their peace was upon Him. They are healed with His stripes. That is the pure gospel penned by the prophet Isaiah. Anything taught to the contrary is another gospel. It is not the gospel of Christ.

THE SIN-BEARING SAVIOUR (Isaiah 53:6)

Certain New Testament references serve as a Divine commentary on Isaiah 53:6—(1) “All we like sheep have gone astray...” corresponds with “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). (2) “...We have turned every one to his own way...” corresponds with “For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s” (Phil. 2:21). (3) “...The LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” corresponds with “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Cor. 5:21).

Isaiah 53:6 shows the necessity for the sufferings of Christ spoken of in verse 5. Because men are wholly estranged from God, Jesus Christ suffered and died. Scattered sheep are portrayed in the text. Scripture does not call all men without exception sheep. Some are sheep, and others are goats. Sheep are under the headings of saved and lost. In the penitential confession of the Jews at the time of their regeneration by the Spirit, they will confess that they have gone astray like sheep. They will realize that their scattering was general and particular and they had turned every one to his own way.

The Lord commissioned His disciples to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:6). Later, He said He had other sheep not of the fold of Judaism (John 10:16). They were Gentile sheep. All the regenerated sheep from among the Jews and the Gentiles will be brought by Christ into His fold. They were not saved sheep at the time the Lord spoke concerning the lost Gentiles. They were lost sheep for whom Christ would die. The Holy Spirit would regenerate them by applying Christ’s work of redemption to them in time.

Unlike the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15, Isaiah stated that “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is. 53:6). The whole flock of sheep that are given to Christ in the covenant of redemption are under consideration. The only office Isaiah described was that of suffering. He did not present Jesus Christ as Teacher, Lawgiver, or King. Christ’s suffering shows Him as the sheep’s sin-bearing Substitute, Surety, Mediator, and Intercessor. When He comes the second time, He will come as the Messiah, the reigning King. The latter is accepted by orthodox Jews, but the former is rejected. They have a legend that states that Messiah will be found sitting with the lepers at the gate of the city of Jerusalem. Their fable has in it the deep truth that Jesus Christ who saves must suffer with and for those He saves. Today, the orthodox Jew does not believe that Messiah has come as the suffering Saviour. He fails to see the real significance of his legend.

The seekers in Isaiah 53:6 will be Jewish penitents. They will have learned how much they misunderstood the Lord when He came the first time as the sympathetic Sufferer during His personal ministry and the vicarious Sufferer on the cross. The spiritual application of their future confession applies to all penitents, whether Jews or Gentiles.

The mistaken view of Christianity is its failure to see the true meaning of Isaiah 53:6, which teaches universal depravity and redemption by Jesus Christ. Those two truths are misunderstood by the majority of religionists. Such misunderstanding is at the foundation of false doctrine. The evil done by all goes forth in the form of deed but returns in the form of guilt. The evil that proceeds from them is from innately evil hearts. Wherever grace has operated, there is repentance.

Depravity is universal—“All we like sheep have gone astray....” Although this is the confession that penitent Jews will make, depravity includes all lost sheep. All the redeemed were lost sheep. They were sheep because they were given to Jesus Christ in the covenant of redemption, but they were as depraved as goats who were not given to Him. Paul addressed Gentiles when he said, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Every person who has been born again confesses his depravity.

Departure from God is represented by the sheep straying. The text implies that the sheep were at one time in the fold, but they have strayed. All sinned in Adam (Rom. 5:12). The imputation of sin to mankind was real and immediate because all sinned in Adam. In Adam, all went astray, but each individual is responsible for his own going astray. The first man was originally in the fold in the state of created uprightness.

No creature is more prone to wander and lose his way than a sheep without a shepherd. When Adam fell, he first sought to hide himself from God. He did not seek the Lord. The Lord sought and found him. All sheep have wandered and will not return to the fold until the Lord seeks and finds them. Jesus Christ came to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). When the Lord Jesus finds the sheep, He places it on His shoulder of strength and carries it to the fold (Luke 15:4-7). The sheep does not return to the fold in its own strength. It is unable to return or bring itself to the right way. A lost person is incapable of returning by “his faith.” The Lord Jesus is the Seeker and the Saviour.

The lost sheep is ready to follow evil example because his disposition is evil. A child may be given good instruction, but he will turn from it to evil instruction because his disposition is evil. He may quote Biblical phrases and sing Biblical songs, but he will more easily remember foul language. The sheep wanders by himself, but he cannot return by himself. He must be sought and found by the Lord Jesus Christ, whose first advent was for that purpose.

Departure from God is an indictment. Obligation has been violated. Guilt has been contracted. Adam should have remained in the fold, but he did not. Due to his self-chosen course, the state of man is one of error, sin, helplessness, and alienation from the righteous, holy God.

The modes of manifestation of depravity are many: “...We have turned every one to his own way....” All have wandered, but each to his own way. Every person is involved in the sin of the mass. Moreover, he stands under a load of personal, individual guilt. That renders every person responsible. None can excuse himself. Everyone has his own errors, sins, miseries, and dangers. The forms of human sinfulness are as varied and numerous as man’s natural inclinations. Each person has gone in the way that he himself has chosen. Some follow after fame and do anything to gain it. Another desires fortune and would sell his soul for a mess of pottage. Others choose the religious way which is most heinous. The harshest words of the Saviour were spoken not to the immoralists but to the moralists (Matt. 23). They were haters of God and made void the word of God by their religious training. The Lord told them that the harlots and whoremongers would go

into the kingdom of heaven before them. All do not worship the same idol, neither do they give equal devotion to their idols. Idols vary. Some are idols of wood or stone, but anything that stands between an individual and the Lord is an idol. These people suppose they are right, but their thoughts proceed from evil dispositions: “there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 16:25).

Departure from the fold means departure from brotherhood. The world manifests selfishness and greed because men have departed from the fold. Selfishness is the leading principle of the unredeemed (II Tim. 3:2). They live for themselves and not for a common cause. Conversely, the Christian lives first for Christ, then for others, and then for himself.

The weary soul finds rest where sorrow reached its climax, in the sufferings of Christ. At the cross where Christ finished the work of redemption, the sinner finds joy, rest, peace, and contentment. Bruised hearts are healed by the bruising of the Saviour. An individual must have low thoughts of himself before he will have high thoughts of Christ. God the Father caused all the sins of all the elect to meet upon Jesus Christ. On the cross, Jesus Christ paid the debt of sin that was against all the sheep. The sins of the elect are represented as coming from all directions—north, south, east, and west—and as coming from all time—past, present, and future—and meeting upon Jesus Christ. They caused the death of the Son of God for the Father’s satisfaction and for the elect’s salvation.

All the sins of the elect are collected and expressed in the text by the one word “iniquity.” Hence, iniquity can be transferred from one being to another; whereas, an “act” of iniquity cannot be transferred. Instead of allowing the elect to be devoured, Jehovah spared not His Son but gave Him for them (Rom. 8:32-34). Iniquity in the sense of punishment was transferred to Jesus Christ, but iniquity as an act could not be transferred to Him. The Lord Jesus Christ bore the punishment for iniquity on Calvary. The sheep are recipients of that accomplishment.

A seriously wounded person would be unable to go to the hospital on his own strength. Likewise, lost sheep have gone astray and are incapable of returning. Luke presented the helpless sheep in Luke 10. A certain man went from the place of blessing to the place of curse. He was wounded and left half-dead. The priest and the Levite could give him no assistance, but the good Samaritan did. The good Samaritan saw him unable to help himself, dressed his wounds pouring in oil and wine, placed him on his own beast, and told the innkeeper to care for him until his return. That is what Jesus Christ does for His chosen ones. Oil is typical of the Holy Spirit, and wine is typical of Divine joy. They are both imparted to the elect in regeneration.

THE SILENT SAVIOUR (Isaiah 53:7)

Scripture verses serving as a Divine commentary on Isaiah 53:7 are given: (1) “He was oppressed...” corresponds with “And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44). (2) “...He was afflicted...” corresponds with “Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man” (John 19:5). (3) “...Yet he opened not his mouth...” corresponds with “Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (I Pet. 2:23). (4) “...He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter...” corresponds with “And after they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him” (Matt. 27:31). (5) “...As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth” corresponds with “But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God” (Matt. 26:63).

There are two major subjects with two divisions in each taught in Isaiah 53:7—(1) Jesus Christ was the suffering Substitute. He suffered because of man’s sinfulness, and He suffered because of the Father’s ordination. (2) The disposition by which Jesus Christ endured His suffering was represented. Christ was represented as a lamb led to the slaughter and as a sheep dumb before her shearers.

The Saviour suffered vicariously for the sinfulness of the elect. Although that is not stated in the text, it is in the context (v. 6). The sheep went away from the Father in Adam. Jesus Christ was oppressed (v. 7). A demand was made that Christ go to the cross to become Substitute for the sheep the Father gave Him in the covenant of redemption. The liability of the elect was exacted by the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without His becoming the Divine Substitute, exactness would have been made of the elect. Then, they would have no hope now or in the future.

Amnesty, a frequently discussed subject, is a general pardon to a class of persons as a whole. People ignorant of Scripture desire amnesty from God. They prefer living as they please. Scripture does not teach mere pardon. Salvation is forgiveness based on redemption. Therefore, sinners are purchased from the slave market of sin by the sufferings of Jesus Christ on the cross (I Pet. 3:18). The price of redemption was the shed blood of Christ (Heb. 9:22). An individual is saved not by the dismissal of sin but by Jesus Christ paying the deserved penalty of the sinner.

God the Father was satisfied with the exact obedience of Jesus Christ: Judgment was done; the law was magnified; the Father was satisfied because justification was made through righteousness (Rom. 5:21). The “origin” of the exactness was God the Father: “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God...” (Acts 2:23). The “nature” of the exactness was the suffering of the Just for the unjust: “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (I Pet. 3:18). The Just One suffered for the unjust upon unjust causes, under unjust judges, and by

unjust punishments. The “result” of the exactness was salvation, sanctification, and ultimate glorification of the elect. The guilt of the elect was laid in righteousness and love on the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, the elect have a Substitute and Surety in Jesus Christ. Had the punishment been required of the elect, it would be forever.

Jesus Christ was afflicted. He submitted Himself and became responsible for the righteous demand of God. He paid the penalty when He declared that He had finished the work (John 19:30). His sufferings were voluntary. He was not dragged or driven but led to the cross (Is. 53:7; John 10:17-18). His voluntary submission to suffering was as important as the Father’s ordination of it. Jesus Christ desired to do the will of the Father: “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:8). He willingly gave Himself (Phil. 2:5-8). Mere suffering will not atone for sin. Eternal suffering in hell will never satisfy Divine justice. The substitutionary, vicarious work of Jesus Christ on the cross was required to atone for sins. The infinite One must suffer for the finite to pay the penalty of the finite one’s infinite sin against the infinite God.

The first time the statement “he opened not his mouth” was used was with reference to His suffering, and the second time, to the disposition in which He suffered. Christ’s miracles are frequently discussed, but His silence is seldom mentioned. The silence of Jesus Christ is one of the greatest proofs of His Deity. Silence by individuals in the world denotes weakness; but in Christ, it denotes strength. The Lord did not perform for man’s convenience. He did nothing for a show. Whereas, religionists desire performers and performances. Christ’s silence was a subject of dispute. He was accused of making Himself equal with God, but He remained silent (John 19:7, 9). He is the Son of God and God the Son.

Christ remained silent in the presence of the Sanhedrin, the Governor, and the King (Matt. 26:57-64). To answer every accusation is servile. The Lord knew His accusers were false witnesses, and no matter what He said to them their witness would remain false. The high priest used the devil’s language when he said, “...I adjure thee by the living God...” (Matt. 26:63; Mark 5:7). The high priest accused Christ of blasphemy when the Lord said, “...Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 26:64).

The Lord was taken before Pilate the governor (Matt. 27:2). This was part of Christ’s humiliation. He who is life expected the sentence of death. He who shall judge the nations of the world stood to be judged by a human being. Pilate was influenced by his fear of man. The Lord explained nothing to Pilate. He only replied, “...Thou sayest,” when asked if He were the King of the Jews. The Lord was never silent while blessing people, but He was silent in His suffering. The Lord Jesus Christ came not to be His own Advocate but to be the Advocate for the elect. His silence was full of vicarious and expiatory suffering. His enemies alleged only lies; therefore, He remained silent. There are times in a Christian’s life that he should react as David when his enemies laid snares for him and sought to harm him by speaking mischievous things to him: “But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth” (Ps. 38:13). Enemies afflict the just. “Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time” (Amos 5:13).

The Saviour knew God’s appointed time was near and His enemies resolved to have His blood. The doctrine He had preached and the life He had lived were sufficient testimony. He needed to say nothing more. It is impossible to influence a prejudiced mind. An inner work of grace alone will convince anyone of truth.

Jesus Christ was taken from Pilate's hall and brought before Herod (Luke 23). The whole multitude accused Him before Pilate (v. 1). They became more fierce when Pilate said he found no fault in Him (v. 4). Then, the chief priests and scribes vehemently accused Him (v. 10). Herod questioned the Lord with many words, but the Lord "answered him nothing" (v. 9). Herod had taken away Christ's voice—John the Baptist—and Christ refused to answer the person who had beheaded His voice. The Lord's silence before the Sanhedrin, Pilate, and Herod denotes His patience in suffering. Silence among men is often stoical. They fear that others may discover their true feelings.

The lamb led to the slaughter portrayed Christ as the "victim." This is a prophecy of the oblation of Jesus Christ. He voluntarily suffered without offering resistance. He had power to lay down His life, and He had power to take it again. The sheep dumb before her shearers represented Christ as the "example": "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Pet. 2:21). Christ came to be sheared. His people will also be sheared. Believers must remain still to prevent the shearers from injuring their skin. The Lord's suffering people need the example of the suffering Substitute.

THE SINLESS SAVIOUR SMITTEN UNTO DEATH (Isaiah 53:8-9)

Isaiah 53:8 and 9 have corresponding New Testament verses that serve as a Divine commentary on them: (1) “He was taken from prison and from judgment...” corresponds with “Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest” (John 18:24). (2) “...Who shall declare his generation...” corresponds with “Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said” (John 18:20-21). (3) “...He was cut off out of the land of the living...” corresponds with “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23). (4) “For the transgression of my people was he stricken” corresponds with “As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:15). (5) “And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death...” corresponds with “...A rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph ... begged the body of Jesus.... And laid it in his own new tomb...” (Matt. 27:57-60). (6) “...Because he had done no violence...” corresponds with “Who did no sin...” (I Pet. 2:22). (7) “...Neither was any deceit in his mouth” corresponds with “...neither was guile found in his mouth” (I Pet. 2:22).

The two verses under consideration are very controversial among men. Men’s interpretations of them differ. However, the context within which they are found will enable the sincere Christian to better understand the verses.

Several views of the phrase “He was taken from prison and from judgment...” are propagated: (1) The phrase is translated “without hindrance and without right, Jesus Christ was taken away.” (2) He was put to death without opposition from any quarter and in defiance of justice. (3) From oppression and from judgment He was taken away. (4) There is no evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ was ever incarcerated.

The latter view is the more feasible interpretation in the light of the context. The gospels record nothing that would indicate that Jesus Christ was ever placed in a prison cell. He appeared before the high priest, the governor, and the king; but they did not imprison Him. The order of His life from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross is recorded: (1) He was taken by Annas and delivered to Caiaphas (John 18:19-24; Matt. 26:59-68). (2) He was taken from Caiaphas to the hall of the Sanhedrin (Matt. 27:1). (3) He was taken from the Sanhedrin to Pilate (John 18:28-38; Luke 23:1-7; Mark 15:1-5; Matt. 27:11-14). (4) He was taken from Pilate to Herod (Luke 23:8-12). (5) He was taken from Herod back to Pilate (Luke 23:13-25; Matt. 27:15-26; Mark 15:13-16). (6) He was led from Pilate to Calvary (Matt. 27:27-50). In all the preceding incidents, Jesus Christ was not incarcerated.

The Lord Jesus was the holy One of Israel. He was free from unjustness, but He received unjust treatment without defense from the Father. This offers the most wonderful enigma in the government of God the Father. Why did eternal justice allow unsullied holiness thus to suffer? Why

did God give the power to perpetrate such enormities? Why did Jesus Christ Himself submit to such enormities? One outstanding principle is the providence of God in all the questions raised.

Jesus Christ was taken by distress and judgment. He was taken in a violent manner by the hands of wicked men under the pretense of justice. He suffered under the form of human law and was crucified on Calvary.

There are those who say the taking of Christ from prison and judgment was God the Father taking Christ unto Himself after He was released from death. This verse of Scripture does not teach that particular truth. That interpretation is out of context with the remainder of the verse. Christ's being cut off out of the land of the living was His cutting off in death (Dan. 9:26). If the first part of Isaiah 53:8 refers to Jesus Christ being released from death and taken unto the Father in glorious resurrection, the continuity of thought is destroyed—"...He was cut off out of the land of the living..." A Divine commentary on the verse was quoted to the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip: "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth" (Acts 8:33). Christ's humiliation refers to His condescension which included His whole earthly life. During that time, His judgment was taken away. He was treated violently, and His legal rights and justice were denied.

Four different interpretations that do not harmonize with Isaiah 53:8 have been given to the question, "Who shall declare his generation?" (1) Some say that it means, Who shall set it forth? They believe it refers to eternal generation, the Sonship of Jesus Christ. (2) Some say it means, Who shall declare Christ's life? They explain that none is capable of declaring the mystery of Christ. (3) Others say it means, Who can declare the number of His generation? They explain that none is competent of numbering the recipients of grace. They believe it refers to the spiritual seed. (4) Others say it means, Who can declare the length of His life hereafter? There is truth in each of the statements, but none of them is the teaching of this verse.

The "generation" of which Isaiah spoke was restricted to the race of Jews during the time Christ walked among the sons of men. The Lord Jesus Christ called them "this wicked generation" (Matt. 12:45). Christ came to His own generation—the Jews—but they did not receive Him (John 1:11). One Hebrew scholar translated the question, "Who shall think upon Christ's career?" The Septuagint renders it, "Who shall describe or recount His race or generation?" The former question refers to Christ's lifetime and the latter refers indirectly to His posterity, but both questions are answered in verse 10—"...he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days..." The simple meaning is that it does not refer to Christ's eternal generation, His incarnation, the mystery of His incarnation, or His holy seed, but to the Jewish people living at that time. They rejected Him, and the Lord called them a wicked and adulterous generation. The Jews took Him, mistreated Him, and turned Him over to the Roman court. The Roman court was simply the means of His death. The apostle Peter accused the Jews of crucifying the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:22-47). The custom was that some bear witness to the innocence of the condemned before His death. No one gave such witness for Christ, and this added to the injustice of His trial.

The Hebrew word for "generation" is translated two ways—(1) the time in which Christ lived and (2) the circle of His contemporaries. Christ's contemporaries are referred to in verse 8. Among them, none was willing to stand in His defense. He was cut off in death as a malefactor. The Lord

was crucified between two thieves. He was treated as a common criminal: "...He was cut off out of the land of the living..."

Two principle views are taught concerning the statement "for the transgression of my people was he stricken." The first view is that it refers to the vicarious work of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ did die for His people, but this statement is not teaching that particular truth. If it refers to Jesus Christ dying on behalf of His people, it proves that the repentant confession of the Jews was genuine. It would indicate that they have realized the purpose of Christ's death; their minds have been enlightened; they see things in their true perspective. The second view distinguishes "my people" from "my own" and asserts that it refers to "my people." Those who hold that view refer to John 1:11, saying that "his own" refers to the elect and the nonelect Jews; therefore, "my people" in Isaiah 53:8 refers to the elect people of God. There is truth in both views, but the truth is misapplied.

The truth of the statement "for the transgression of my people was he stricken" is discovered in the light of the context. The particle "for" signifies "on account of" or "through means of." The following things have already been discussed: Jesus Christ was treated violently. He was pretentiously judged fairly. His own people, the Jews, did not defend Him. He was crucified. The Jews esteemed Him not (Is. 53:3). They esteemed Him smitten by God for His own sin (Is. 53:4). That is what the Jews think of Him before they are regenerated. Isaiah was not repeating the vicarious sufferings of Jesus Christ. He was asserting that Jesus Christ was smitten by the wickedness of that generation. That is, "on account of" the wickedness of that generation, Christ was smitten. The Romans were simply the instruments in the hands of the Jews to cut Him off out of the land of the living.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the sinless sufferer (v. 9). The stroke of death came upon Him by His wicked countrymen. He was brought to a violent death by the wickedness of His contemporaries, a race of people whose wickedness is inconceivable. Some say the statement "he made his grave with the wicked" teaches that God made Christ's grave with the wicked. If this was God's act, it refers to the state of death rather than the place of death, because David prayed, "Gather not my soul with sinners..." (Ps. 26:9). If it was God's act, the Father delivered Jesus Christ into the hands of wicked men. Many have said that the word "grave" is a metaphorical statement for death, and the word "rich" stands for wicked as the word "poor" stands for godly. However, that is stretching the interpretation.

The wicked generation who had a part in Christ's death intended that His burial be as disgraceful as His death. Nevertheless, God intervened to cause Joseph of Arimathaea, a rich man, to beg the body of Jesus Christ and bury it in his own tomb (Matt. 27:57-60). The Lord was honored with a glorious burial because His humiliation ceased when He died. The Lord Jesus made His grave with the rich because He is the sinless One. In death, He was placed on the level with two malefactors, but in His burial, He was raised above them. Death could not hold the Lord Jesus Christ. He arose victorious over hell, death, and the grave. Satisfaction had been made; therefore, Christ could not be held by death. Men are in error to emphasize the anthropological over the soteriological sufferings of Christ.

Jesus Christ did no violence. He never disguised His abhorrence of evil. The prophet Isaiah applauded the holy character of Christ. This was done not only to defend Him against false charges but to reveal the benefit of His death. Peter spoke of Jesus Christ as the One "Who did no sin." In

this day, when religionists—not Christians—are talking about the peccability of Christ, it is necessary that such Biblical statements as “Who DID no sin” (I Pet. 2:22), “Who KNEW no sin” (II Cor. 5:21), and “in Him is NO sin” (I John 3:5) be constantly brought to the fore. Both prophets and apostles observed with much skill the holy characteristics which adorned Christ’s holy Person. This observation was under the direction of the Holy Spirit, because only such a Person could “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26).

THE SUBMISSIVE SAVIOUR (Isaiah 53:10)

There are New Testament verses that serve as a Divine commentary on Isaiah 53:10—(1) “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief...” corresponds with “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32). (2) “...When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin...” corresponds with “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Cor. 5:21). The Lord’s soul-suffering exceeded His flesh-suffering. (3) “...He shall see his seed...” corresponds with “...Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24). (4) “...He shall prolong his days...” corresponds with “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore...” (Rev. 1:18). He has the power of an endless life. (5) “...The pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand” corresponds with the entire chapter of John 17.

The following is an outline of Isaiah 53:10—(1) The cause of Christ’s death, (2) the nature of His death, and (3) the fruits of His death.

The suffering of Christ was decreed in the counsel of God. Although wicked men prompted by Satan inflicted the suffering, they acted according to the Divine purpose of God. Nevertheless, wicked men were held accountable. God controlled the evil men in all their actions. Those who possess the grace of God would never question the sovereign God like the unsaved do: (1) How can men be blamed for smiting and bruising the Lord Jesus Christ when God controlled their actions? (2) How can God be cleared if men are blamed? The Christian replies with the question, Was Jesus Christ the object or the subject of suffering? This question is answered in Isaiah 53.

God overruled and controlled the actions of the evil men putting to death His Son. The devil stirs wicked men to act deviously. Joseph’s brethren intended evil for Joseph, but God overruled to make their evil designs work for the good of all His people (Gen. 50:19-21). God purposed to save many men alive. Satan influenced Judas’ heart to betray the Lord (John 13:26-27). Evil men purposed to destroy the Lord Jesus Christ, the object of their hatred. They meant evil toward Him, but God intervened for good to save His elect.

Evil men are blamed, and God is cleared in the sufferings of Christ. The explanation is simple to a Christian but cannot be simplified for depraved man. Man is at fault because God’s secret thoughts and intents are not man’s rule of action: “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut. 29:29). Man’s rule of action is not the secret counsel of God but the revealed mind and thought of God. The hidden things belong to God, and He works according to His eternal counsel. God’s decree forces no man to evil. Man is left to follow his natural inclinations. Therefore, God’s justice can never be impeached.

Some are confused over the expressions “secret will” and “revealed will.” Are there two different wills? Which is the actual will of God? Some have gone so far as to reason in this manner: (1) If the revealed is not God’s actual will, we do not know His will. (2) If the revealed is God’s actual will, we are confronted with a contradiction. The fact is, there is only one Divine will, mind, or purpose. Job said, “But he is in one mind, and who can turn him?...” (Job 23:13). There can never be a new thought, intent, or purpose in God. God’s eternal purpose impresses the mind with awe (Eph. 3:11). The best way to illustrate the “secret” and “revealed” parts of God’s will, mind, or purpose is to use the terms sphere and hemisphere. As the planet earth is one sphere, so is the will of God. As there are two hemispheres, there are the secret and revealed aspects of God’s will. As only one hemisphere can be seen, only one aspect of God’s will is revealed. As man does not see or understand the sphere but only the hemisphere, which is revealed, he does not see or understand the sphere of God’s will but only the hemisphere of revealed truth. The secret hemisphere of God’s purpose belongs to Himself, but the revealed hemisphere of His purpose belongs to His people. The death of Christ is the revelation of God’s purpose to His own, but there is a mystery behind that death known only to God. Our concern, therefore, is the revealed, not the concealed, part of God’s will. This same principle applies to the doctrines of election, mercy, and other truths.

The cause of Christ’s death was the purpose of God. The mystery of all mysteries is God putting His Son to death. God the Father was righteous in His act. The suffering was not punishment of an innocent Son by an angry Father. The Godhead cooperated in the sufferings out of which redemption was born. The unity of the Godhead was displayed in Christ’s suffering. There is a distinctive must in His death: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (John 3:14).

The statements “...it pleased the LORD to bruise him...” of Isaiah 53:10 and “...I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked...” of Ezekiel 33:11 are staggering. The word pleasure does not refer to pleasure in the death-agonies themselves but to pleasure in the accomplishment of those death-agonies: “...Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). The solution to God taking pleasure in Christ’s suffering and death was in view of the accomplishment of His suffering and death. His joy was not in the death-agony itself but in the joy of accomplished redemption.

The Lord Jesus always did that which was pleasing to the Father (John 8:29). Nevertheless, the Father was pleased to put Christ to grief. He had no pleasure in the animal sacrifices under the Levitical system, because they could never take away sin. It pleased Him to bruise His Son because eternal redemption was accomplished by making His soul an offering for sin (Heb. 10:1-14). A prophecy that Satan would bruise Christ’s heel and Christ would bruise Satan’s head was given in Genesis 3:15. The Lord Jesus did receive a painful blow from His enemies, but the enemies influenced by Satan were controlled by the sovereign God.

Those who see only inflicted suffering do not see the true significance of Christ’s death. His death was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Men are first attracted by man’s infliction of punishment on Christ; but in conversion, they see God’s hand in it all. Men can inflict punishment only as they are given power from heaven. Pilate asked the Lord, “...knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above...” (John 19:10-11).

The Saviour did not suffer as a passive, involuntary victim. He was active in His departure from this world. The greatest activity in the utmost passivity was manifested in Christ's obedience unto death (Heb. 1:3; 9:26; 10:14). He knew His hour of departure from the world had come (John 13:1-3). Prior to His announcement that His hour had come, He stated that His hour had not yet come and His hour was not at hand. At the passover, the Lord said the hour of His departure from the world had come. Jesus Christ came from God and went to God (Luke 23:46). He commended His spirit to the Father. He could not be passive and know the time of His departure and thus commend His spirit to God in His death. Jesus Christ gave His life. He was as active in His death as God the Father. He gave His life for the sheep. He had power to lay down His life and to take it again (John 10:11, 15, 17, 18). All the preceding statements attest the activity of Jesus Christ in His death. Wicked men were simply the instruments.

There is no justification for dividing Christ's life into active and passive moments. Those who do have misunderstood the Lord's silence in Isaiah 53:7. The Lord's silence in the presence of His enemies was activity in passivity at the same time. There is a tendency to accept an active obedience only in a sense that denies the implication of passive obedience—namely, bearing punishment for sin in the wrath of God. The contrast between inward and outward that characterizes the individual Christian's life is absent in Jesus Christ. Christ's obedience cannot be divided into two parts. All the issues of His life were from His heart. Christ's active work of obedience cannot be excluded from His work of reconciliation accomplished on the cross (Heb. 10:7-9).

The dictionary describes passive as something that has been acted upon or affected by some external force, showing that it refers to object rather than subject. English grammar might teach that passivity is illustrated in Caesar being killed by Brutus. However, neither the dictionary nor English grammar can be trusted as a Divine commentary on Biblical doctrine. The simplicity of it is that the Persons of the Godhead cannot be divided in the obedience of Christ. God the Father gave His Son. The Son gave His life as a ransom for many. The Son offered Himself through the eternal Spirit. Conclusively, Christ's suffering cannot be divided into active and passive obedience. He was actively obedient unto death (Phil. 2:5-8).

There was progression in Christ's suffering: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8). How could He who spent eternity past with the Father learn? He came into the world and learned experimentally the things He suffered. He began suffering in infancy, and His suffering increased throughout His earthly life. He told the disciples that He desired to eat the passover with them before He suffered (Luke 22:15). He began to be sorrowful and heavy in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37). He suffered betrayal by Judas (Matt. 26:48). With each occasion of suffering, the Lord's isolation increased until even all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

Christ's suffering and isolation extended beyond being forsaken by men to climactic forsakenness by God the Father. That forsakenness occurred on the cross of Calvary while the soul of Jesus Christ was made an offering for sin. The Lord Jesus Christ experienced climactic forsakenness, but believers will never experience that forsaking, because the Lord promised He would never leave nor forsake His own.

The nature of Christ's suffering was that His soul was made an offering for sin. The following are the reasons the Father accepted the sufferings of His Son: (1) He accepted them that He might

execute His eternal purpose. (2) He accepted them that He might fulfill His pleasant promises. (3) He accepted them that He might redeem the chosen objects of His everlasting love. A time of His love's beginning and ending cannot be pinpointed. The Father loved His own with an everlasting love (Jer. 31:3). His love for the elect is so great that He spared not His only begotten Son (Rom. 8:32). (4) He accepted them that He might promote His darling One to highest honors. (5) He accepted them that His own glory might be exalted.

Christ's sufferings were acceptable to Himself: (1) They vindicated Divine law and upheld Divine government (Heb. 9:24-26). (2) They manifested Divine love and sympathy for and with His own—perfect as they were God's and brotherly as they were man's. (3) They exemplify His desire to see patience in all His disciples.

The climax to Jesus Christ's suffering is that He suffered as much during the three hours that darkness covered the earth as the waters cover the sea as though all the elect were suffering forever in endless torment. His soul made an offering for sin was more excruciating than physical suffering. The agony which Christ suffered was the totality of what the elect would have had to suffer throughout eternity had Christ not died.

The Godhead is indivisible. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were satisfied with the offering of Jesus Christ. There is Divine order in Christ's satisfying the just demands of the holy law. God is so holy that He cannot look upon sin: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity..." (Hab. 1:13). Therefore, He turned His back on His Son while Christ took the place of the elect. Justice protects God's holiness. Mercy desires to operate but cannot because justice protects God's holiness. In love, the Father bruised His Son that mercy might operate to bring salvation to the elect. Justice was satisfied in the suffering of Jesus Christ. The only way holiness could be satisfied was by Jesus Christ being made an offering for sin. Hence, the Father was satisfied to bruise His Son to satisfy justice. In love, the Son gave Himself to satisfy justice that the elect might be clothed in the righteousness of God. That righteousness is imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. An infinite sacrifice was required to satisfy infinite holiness. The unsaved will spend eternity in hell because sin is infinite. It is against the infinite God; therefore, it requires eternal punishment.

The sin offering denotes propitiation, and the trespass offering denotes satisfaction: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21). Satisfaction is the emphasis in the passage in Isaiah 53. There are similarities and dissimilarities between the sin and trespass offerings: (1) The sin offering recognized sinfulness as uncleanness and common to all. The trespass offering referred to specific acts of sin by any person among mankind. (2) The sin offering was for all who recognized their oneness in depravity. The trespass offering was for distinctive cases. (3) The sin offering conveyed the idea of propitiation. The trespass offering embodied satisfaction. (4) The sin offering had its aspect Godward. The trespass offering looked manward. (5) The sin offering was a covering, bearing away sin. The trespass offering was cleansing for sin.

Both Jews and Gentiles had some knowledge of the significance of the offering for sin. Before the Levitical system was inaugurated, Job offered his own sacrifices. Under the Levitical system, sacrifices were made by a third person standing between God and man. However, Jesus Christ is not

a third person. He is both Priest and Victim. He offered Himself, pouring out His soul unto death. Nevertheless, He has continuous life. He ever lives to intercede for His own.

The Lord Jesus bore the sins of the elect in His own body on the tree. Did Christ die for all the sins of mankind? No! Did He die for some of the sins of all mankind? No! Did He die for all the sins of some? Yes! The latter is the only statement that harmonizes with all the Scripture. Improvement cannot be made on this argument which was first given by John Owen, the puritan.

The fruit of Christ's death is that He shall see His seed. The spiritual prodigy He has begotten refers to the household of faith: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). Christ died two thousand years ago on the cross. Redemption was accomplished then and there. He saw all those the Father gave Him in the covenant of redemption. They included those who had already been brought into the ark of safety. He saw the physical birth of His own, and He saw them born again. Between their being born of the flesh and being born of the Spirit, He saw them preserved by prevenient grace. He saw His seed born again, brought into the ark of safety, edified, joined together, supported in life, brought through trials and temptations, perfected in glory, and reigning with Him eternally.

The Father prolonging Christ's days is seemingly paradoxical. Jesus Christ poured out His soul unto death, yet He has continuance of days: "He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever" (Ps. 21:4). "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore..." (Rev. 1:18). Prolonging Christ's days refers to the life of the world to come.

The pleasure of the Lord prospering in Christ's hand points to the mediatorial, high priestly work of Jesus Christ as well as His kingly authority. These are the fruits of His suffering. The pleasure of the Lord prospers in His hand because He has continuance of days. Jesus Christ was made after the order of Melchisedec instead of after Aaron, because He has the power of an endless life. Jesus Christ mediates for the sheep. He died for the sheep, and He now appears in heaven for them. Christ's elect are in view in His incarnation, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension, intercession, and coming again.

THE SAVIOUR'S SOUL MADE AN OFFERING FOR SIN (Isaiah 53:10-12)

The soul of Jesus Christ is mentioned three times in Isaiah 53:10-12. "...Thou shalt make his SOUL an offering for sin..." "He shall see of the travail of his SOUL, and shall be satisfied..." "...He hath poured out his SOUL unto death..." The soul of the Lord Jesus did not die. It was poured out unto death.

Christ's soul was made an offering for sin (Matt. 26:36-39). The language in Matthew 26:38 is the same as that used in Isaiah 53:12. Jesus Christ died physically. His body was buried and resurrected, but His soul did not die. His soul was sorrowful unto death (Matt. 26:37-38; Mark 14:33-34; Luke 22:44; John 12:27). The curse He endured for all the elect of God did not work death but sorrow unto death in His soul. His sorrow was not extensive but intensive, as though He had died. Hezekiah's sickness unto death is an analogy to Christ's soul being poured out unto death (Is. 38:1). Although Hezekiah was sick unto death, he did not die at that time. He could not have been any more ill had he died. Christ's soul was poured out unto death. His suffering was as great as though His soul had died.

The Jews by wicked hands slew Jesus Christ physically (Acts 2:23). However, they could not crucify His soul: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). The apostle Peter was quoting from Psalm 16 where the resurrection of Christ's soul and body is taught. Later in his message, Peter discussed the resurrection of the Lord's body: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32).

Jesus Christ did not suffer soul-death in an absolute sense, but He experienced the same soul-pain that the impenitent experience in hell. The Lord Jesus Christ lives to see His spiritual seed and be satisfied; therefore, His soul did not die. Death throes could not lay hold of His soul. It was unnecessary for Christ to go into hell bodily to suffer pains of hell as Surety for His elect. A person willing to become surety for someone serving the penalty for his crime in prison does not have to enter prison itself. He can pay the penalty without entering prison.

Jesus Christ experienced two resurrections—the resurrection of His body after three days and nights and the resurrection of His soul from the pangs of death. His soul suffered during finite time the torture the elect deserved to suffer eternally. As Jesus Christ experienced two resurrections, the recipients of grace experience a twofold resurrection. Spiritual resurrection occurs at regeneration. Sin cannot hold the souls of the regenerate. They are raised to sit in the heavenlies in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:4-6). As they have experienced the resurrection of soul, they shall experience the resurrection of their bodies (I Cor. 15:51-58). Their graves will not hold their bodies.

What is the meaning of Christ's forsakenness? "...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Matt. 27:46). His forsakenness did not apply to the essence of the Godhead. There can be no separation in that sense: "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). Furthermore, Christ's Godhead

was not separated from His Manhood. The hypostatic union was not surrendered. His Divine and human natures are inseparable. During the time His soul was poured out unto death, He experienced the fulness of the Godhead: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). However, Christ did experience the absence of God's gracious presence but not His essential presence.

Sin drove the nonelect angels from heaven. It drove Adam from the garden of Eden. It drove the Father to forsake His Son for a time. Consider the preceding truths in the light of David's assurance that God would never leave nor forsake him: "For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance" (Ps 94:14). Paul was persecuted but not forsaken by God (II Cor. 4:9). His comrades forsook him, but the Lord stood with him (II Tim. 4:16-17). The Lord never leaves nor forsakes His own (Heb. 13:5). But He forsook His only begotten Son that His own might not be forsaken. Scripture assures us that God's forsakenness of either Christ or His own people is not absolute. However, the difference between the forsakenness of Christ on behalf of His people and the forsakenness of God's favor because of the sins of His people is beyond our comprehension. Although it is beyond our complete understanding in this life, we shall give a suggestion as to what it seems to reveal that we may apprehend what we do not comprehend.

Jesus Christ did not use the endearing term of Father when He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Matt. 27:46). After His resurrection and before His ascension, He addressed Mary: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). God was the Father of Jesus Christ by eternal generation and Mary's Father by regeneration. God the Father was Christ's God by equality and Mary's God by inequality. The Lord Jesus Christ is the unique Person. He has been and always will be the Son of the Father. The twofold relationship of the Father with the Son is as Son and as Surety. God is the Son's Father. God is His God as Surety. Consequently, Christ addressed God as God in His forsakenness, because on the cross, He stood as Surety for the elect. God judged Him then. The Lord Jesus placed Himself under God's wrath for the sins of His people.

How could the loving Father manifest love and hate simultaneously on the Son? God also manifests love and hate simultaneously on His elect. He chose them before the foundation of the world in Christ. Jesus Christ saw His spiritual seed given to Him in the covenant of redemption. He saw them born physically, and He saw them between their physical and spiritual births as the children of wrath (Eph. 2:3). Although His wrath abode upon them, He loved them with everlasting love (Jer. 31:3). His wrath continued to abide upon them until it was removed by God's judgment on Jesus Christ, who took the place of His elect. God who judges cannot be bribed. The penalty for the sins of the elect must be paid. Jesus Christ became Surety for the elect on the cross, enduring God's wrath in their place.

Forsakenness by God is inexplicable. Christ alone experienced forsakenness by God for all the repentant. Although union in the Godhead remained unbroken, the communion Christ had always enjoyed with the Father was broken. Christ experienced separation from communion with the Father. Men cannot comprehend this because Jesus Christ alone understood eternal communion with the Father. Part of His humiliation was to experience broken communion. Nevertheless, the Lord was victorious and communion was restored.

The liberation of God's elect is brought about by Christ's condemnation. Their life is brought about by His death. Their deliverance is brought about by His anguish. He turned the shadow of the elect's death into the morning of eternal life. The elect ones forsook God and deserve to be forsaken by God. Jesus Christ was always one with the Father, but He was forsaken for the elect. The total darkness during His forsakenness indicated the cost to Him. The Saviour did not bear the eternity of punishment but the extremity of it. He did not suffer eternally because He is infinite, and infinity need not suffer eternally to pay the penalty. The eternity of punishment arises from man's finiteness. How humbling this is to the recipient of grace.

THE SAVIOUR'S SATISFACTION (Isaiah 53:11)

The following are New Testament verses that serve as a Divine commentary on Isaiah 53:11—(1) “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied...” corresponds with “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:2). (2) “...By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many...” corresponds with “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40). (3) “...He shall bear their iniquities” corresponds with “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (I Pet. 2:24).

Isaiah 53:11 is a departure from the penitential part of this chapter. God’s own seal on the confession is now recorded. God the Father is satisfied in the work of His Son, and the Son Himself is satisfied. That which satisfied the Father and the Son satisfies recipients of grace. Therefore, there is a threefold satisfaction in the work of Jesus Christ.

The travail of Christ’s soul includes all the suffering and sorrow of the Saviour. The travail culminated in Christ being cut off out of the land of the living. The word travail conveys the idea of trouble of any kind, not only in Christ’s death but all the trouble in His life on earth and its culmination in death. The two Old Testament references that help interpret the many statements about trouble are Job 5:7 and Genesis 41:51. The Hebrew word for “toil” in Genesis 41:51 is the same as the word for “trouble” in Job 5:7. It denotes strong effort attended with grief and pain. Christ looked out from His sorrow, trouble, and grief and was satisfied. His travail does not refer to physical torture. It was the travail of His soul. Soul-suffering is more excruciating than physical torture.

The average description of Christ’s crucifixion magnifies His physical sufferings. A detailed account is usually given concerning His trial, mistreatment, the cross itself, and the circumstances surrounding it. Nevertheless, all the physical suffering falls short of the extent of His suffering. Many martyrs have suffered, but they rejoiced in their dying moments because they relied on strength supplied by the Lord. The Saviour looked beyond the severe anguish of soul and was satisfied with the accomplishment of all He endured in agony of soul. Conclusively, the first part of Isaiah 53:11 goes beyond physical to soul-suffering. It has its seat within and explains such statements as “...My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death...” (Matt. 26:38) and “...My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me” (Matt. 27:46). In the midst of His sorrow, Jesus Christ looked above and beyond them.

The particle “of” used in the King James Bible in Isaiah 53:11 is rendered “from” in Isaiah 53:8 and can mean “on account of” or “because of.” “Because of” the travail of His soul, Jesus Christ looked beyond His sufferings and saw the fruit of them and was satisfied.

The word “travail” is used in the Scriptures to describe a woman’s birth pangs preceding the birth of her child. She looks beyond those pains and sees their fruit. That is not a good analogy, but it helps portray Jesus Christ looking beyond His sufferings to their fruit. Travail is also used as a figure of a husbandman. He tills the ground, works the soil, and weeds the crop, looking beyond his toil to the fruit of his labor. Contrary to a mother or a husbandman travailing, the Lord’s travail did not consist of impatience, confusion, or distrust. He saw the accomplishment of it and was satisfied. This was known before the foundation of the world, because it was preordained by God.

The Lord could not be satisfied if He saw one soul for whom He died going to hell for eternity. He died for every person the Father gave Him. The repetition of references to His own throughout Isaiah 53 proves that everyone for whom Christ died will come to Him and will spend eternity with Him. They are called sheep (v. 6), my people (v. 8), His seed (v. 10), many (v. 11), their (v. 11), many (v. 12), and transgressors (v. 12). The Lord does not intercede for all transgressors but for those given Him in the covenant of redemption (John 17:9). He saw His people and was perfectly, absolutely satisfied. “...To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called” (Jude 1). Sanctification by the Father is the same as election and preservation in Christ. The seed of Jesus Christ were elected in Him before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). Jude 1 teaches protection of the seed—His people—until they are effectually called by God. The seed were set apart by God in His eternal counsel and preserved by prevenient grace until they are born of the Spirit of God. The Saviour did not die for some who will not be saved. Every chosen one will be preserved until he is born again.

The Lord’s satisfaction signifies that He was not only contented but filled or abundantly supplied. He was satisfied with what He saw. His fullest realization of expectation was filled full. A mother’s and a husbandman’s goals are not always accomplished. Isaiah’s dissatisfaction was manifested in his questions, “WHO hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” (Is. 53:1). Finite satisfaction is imperfect, but infinite satisfaction is perfect. Finite comprehension cannot understand infinite satisfaction. Christ was perfectly satisfied with His finished work; therefore, He was ready to return to the glory He had with the Father before the foundation of the world (John 17:4-5).

The Lord Jesus saw justice satisfied. He saw grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life. He saw the works of the devil destroyed. He saw many sons brought to glory. He saw His own for whom He died reigning with Him throughout eternity in the endless kingdom. The fruit of Christ’s sacrifice includes additional glory to the Father from the new splendors reflected on the perfections of His character by the work of human redemption. It includes the reward that will accrue to the Saviour Himself. Moreover, it includes the benefit to the elect for whom Jesus Christ died.

The latter part of Isaiah 53:11 is very controversial. Some believe that “...by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many...” refers to the believer’s knowledge of Christ. Others say it refers to Christ’s knowledge. Some take a neutral view, saying there is difficulty in interpreting the verse. Scholars say that it is difficult to ascertain whether it refers to the subjective or the objective knowledge of the Servant of God.

The context seems to indicate that “By HIS knowledge” is the knowledge which Christ learned experimentally as He learned the path laid out for Him. Isaiah said, “The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he

wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned” (Is. 50:4). This prophecy of Christ was fulfilled in Luke 2:40—“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.” With all the personal pronouns which refer to the suffering Servant in Isaiah 53, it would seem a little strange to pick one out of the many (48 in the King James Bible) and say it refers to the objective knowledge of the justified. Justification by faith is not the subject of this chapter but justification of the elect by the Justifier (Rom. 3:24-26).

The Lord Jesus is presented as the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 52:13-15. His hypostatic union is in view, and that is connected with His first advent. He is the righteous Servant, the foundation from whom benefits flow to God’s elect. While the Person spoken of was on earth, He held a position of righteousness that was singular and operative. There is none righteous like Him. The righteousness signified is the inherent righteousness of the Godhead. That righteousness qualified Him to work out a righteousness by which His chosen ones are justified. The Lord Jesus has borne the iniquities of all who were given Him in the covenant of redemption.

The Saviour bore the sins of the “many” He justifies. The many are synonymous with His sheep, His people, His seed, the transgressors, etc., in the chapter. The justified elect love Christ because He first loved them. They seek Him because He first sought them. They find Him because He first found them. They come to Him because He first called them. Christ became interested in their demerits before the foundation of the world. They become interested in Christ’s merits in time. Lack of interest by professing believers indicates that they have not been born again.

A person cannot believe the message of Isaiah 53 without believing in particular redemption. The extent of Christ’s redemption is the subject of great debate. Those who believe in universal redemption teach that Christ died and paid the penalty for every man’s sins, thereby providing salvation in the same way and to the same degree for every man without exception; thus, it is up to the individual to either accept or reject, even though Christ still paid for his sins.

Universal redemptionists view Christ as having purchased potential but not actual salvation. Such a concept makes nothing definite in God’s purpose and is contrary to Scripture: “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” (Is. 46:10). “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (II Tim. 1:9). Their concept makes the efficacy of redemption dependent on the will of man. Hence, it denies depravity. Depraved man does not seek salvation (John 5:40; Rom. 3:11).

The universal redemption theory states that Christ died conditionally for all men but absolutely for none. To say that Christ made only a conditional purchase of man’s salvation is a low view of redemption. It would leave man’s actual deliverance from his sins in his own hands. However, man does not have the strength to deliver himself: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6). Their view of Christ’s redemption only exalts the pride of the sinner. It would indicate that the sovereign God can do nothing until depraved man lets him.

Universal redemptionists assume that Christ died to procure a covenant of grace with all mankind. Scripture nowhere speaks of a covenant of grace made bilaterally. The covenant of grace is not of

two parties—God and man. The word of God affirms that the covenant of grace is unilateral. God alone makes and sustains the covenant: “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (Heb. 13:20-21).

The assumption of those who believe in universal redemption would make the Persons of the Godhead work in different directions with distinct results. They believe that God the Father loves all men and Christ died for all men, but they must confess the Holy Spirit does not regenerate all men. The Father and Son did not love and redeem more than the Holy Spirit regenerates. Therefore, the Persons of the Godhead all have the same purpose and intention (Rom. 8:28-31; Eph. 1:3-14; I Pet. 1:2). The opinion of universal redemption, if consistent, must teach that all men shall be saved. If Christ paid the price of redemption for all men, the rules of justice demand deliverance of all. However, Scripture, history, and observation prove that all men are not saved. If Christ paid the price of redemption for all men, God, who is righteous in all His ways, cannot withhold from His Son what He purchased with His own blood: “The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works” (Ps. 145:17).

If the universal redemption theory is correct, the only logical conclusion is that Christ died in vain for some. This would mean that God failed in what He purposed. The heresy proclaimed by those who believe in universal redemption is demonstrated by one who was bold as well as consistent. He said he knew God through the revelation of God’s word, which told him God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. He interpreted this as the Triune God has done, is doing, and always will do all He can to save every man, woman, and child on earth. He blasphemously added that hell is a ghastly monument to the failure of the Triune God to save the multitudes who are in that place, and sinners go to hell because God Almighty cannot save them. He concluded that God did all He could and failed. Such a view is logical to those who believe in universal redemption, but it is despised by those who believe in the absolute sovereignty of God.

Those who believe in the truth of particular redemption embrace the view that the death of Christ is of infinite value; however, its purpose must be measured by its accomplishments. Redemption’s infinite value is the dignity of the sacrifice. Redemption is infinite in the sense that as the sun necessarily gives off as much heat even if only one plant is to grow, Christ necessarily suffered as much even if only one person was to be saved. It is infinite in the sense that the infinite Saviour purchased it. The only sacrifice that can compensate for sin against the infinite God is an infinite sacrifice provided by the infinite Saviour.

Christ did not purchase a conditional salvation for all men. He purchased an absolute salvation for the elect: “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). The entire chapter of John 17 teaches the same truth. The Saviour actually redeemed every person, without exception, for whom He died.

Jesus Christ did not overlay the foundation. In other words, He did not become Surety for more than the Father gave Him in the covenant of grace. To make redemption larger than electing love would be to overlay the foundation. The Father would not love all men enough to send Christ to die for them, then love them so little as to leave some to perish in their sins.

The sacrifice of Christ possessed an infallible efficacy. Salvation is not offered to “all” in order to make it sure to “some.” The infinite love that moved Christ to die for some men also moved the Holy Spirit to regenerate the same men.

Scripture speaks of the fruits of Christ’s death as certain. To say that the omniscient God should pay such a valuable price for that which He has no assurance is unthinkable (Is. 53:10-11). If God failed to do all He purposed to accomplish, He could never be satisfied. God did not will or purpose to save all men. If Christ equally died for all, Why is He not equally revealed to all? (Study Matt. 11:25-27; John 10:26; 12:40.) It would be incredible for God to give Christ to be a “ransom” for all men and not to give Him to be a “light” to all men.

God did not purchase a salvation dependent on the will of man to make it effectual. For God to will the salvation of all men, if they will, is not to will salvation at all. The will of God is never dependent on the will of man: “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13). “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy” (Rom. 9:16).

When the high priest went into the holy of holies to make atonement for Israel, he had on his breastplate twelve stones representing the twelve tribes of Israel (Ex. 28). He wore no stones to represent the other peoples—nations—of the world. Why? The reason was that Israel was chosen by God, and other nations were not (Deut. 7:6-8). When Jesus Christ went to the cross to become the Substitute and Surety, He carried the names of those whom the Father gave Him in the covenant of redemption and no more (John 6:37).

THE NECESSITY OF THE SAVIOUR'S DEATH (Isaiah 53:12)

A Divine commentary is given in the New Testament on Isaiah 53:12—(1) “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great...” corresponds with “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Phil. 2:9). (2) “...He shall divide the spoil with the strong...” corresponds with “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15). (3) “...Because he hath poured out his soul unto death...” corresponds with “...I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:15). (4) “...He was numbered with the transgressors...” corresponds with “And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left” (Mark 15:27). (5) “...He bare the sin of many...” corresponds with “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many...” (Heb. 9:28). (6) “...Made intercession for the transgressors” corresponds with “...He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

Isaiah befittingly began Isaiah 53 with the introduction of the suffering Saviour and closed with His being rewarded because of His vicarious suffering. All eternity cannot reveal the depths of truth contained in this chapter. Like Psalm 23, it is often memorized, but little is known about the significance of the truths contained therein. There are five parts to Isaiah 53:12—(1) Greatness was awarded Christ for His suffering. (2) Christ poured out His soul unto death. (3) He bore the sin of many. (4) He was numbered with the transgressors. (5) He made intercession for the transgressors.

Greatness was awarded Christ for His obedience unto death. The phrase “Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great” has been translated by a Hebrew scholar as “Therefore will I divide [or allot] to him a portion among [or in] the many [or great] and with the strong shall he divide the spoil.” Men disagree on the interpretation of this. The central question is, With whom does Christ divide the spoil? Confusion over this question has led to some strained interpretations and translations.

Some say that “dividing a portion with the great” means He shall have strength for a prey. Others say the word “strong” here represents the powers of darkness that have spoiled the human race, and the division of the spoil by the Messiah is the rescue of souls from their grasp. However, that is a strained interpretation. The first part of the verse portrays the Father speaking: “Therefore will I [the Father] divide him [Christ] a portion with the great...” Some have stated that it refers to Jesus Christ ascending and leading captivity captive (Eph. 4:8-10). Others assert that it indicates that the Father will assign the Lord Jesus Christ multitudes as His possession, and He shall have the mighty as His prey in exchange and reward for pouring out His soul unto death. The latter assertion, which was based on Isaiah 52:13, is truth. It is true that the time will come when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and He will reign forever. His coming in power will startle many nations and the great ones among them (Rev. 11:15; Ps. 2:8). Therefore, the latter assertion is truth; but is that the true interpretation of this particular portion of Scripture?

Jesus Christ gave His soul as a sacrifice, and He receives souls as His reward. Consequently, He sees His seed and is satisfied with His accomplishment on the cross. Dividing the spoil seems more likely to refer to cooperation among the Persons of the Godhead. The first part of the text shows what the Father gave the Son, and it is followed by Jesus Christ enjoying what was given Him by the Father. Christ enjoys what the Father gave Him not on His own account but on account of His elect. They will share with Him in the kingdom. They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17). That which the Father divided to Jesus Christ, Christ divided among His followers. Conclusively, there is cooperation among the Persons of the Godhead.

The question proposed for study at this point regards the necessity of Christ's death that God can forgive the offender of his sin: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory" (Luke 24:26). After the Lord had poured out His soul unto death, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus discussed "these things"—Christ's betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection. The Lord joined them and asked about their communications. They did not recognize Jesus Christ who had risen from the dead. One of them asked if He did not know about the things that had recently transpired. The Lord asked, "What things?" They answered His question, relating the events of the Lord's crucifixion and added that they hoped it had been the promised Messiah, but it had been three days since these things took place. The Lord told them they were foolish not to believe what the prophets had spoken concerning Him. It was necessary that He suffer these things to enter into His glory. He then expounded unto them the things which were written in the law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning Him that must be fulfilled (Luke 24:14, 18, 19, 26, 35, 44).

The death of Jesus Christ supposes an individual offending and a Person offended. It supposes that the Offended held the offender justly bound to suffer the penal consequences merited by the offense. Forgiveness of sin depends on the whole character of God. There are moral reasons requiring sin to be punished. They render the death of Jesus Christ necessary for the forgiveness of sins.

The statement "Ought not Christ to have suffered" was conditional and not absolute. God is sovereign. He is subject to no laws outside of Himself. He is not bound by the laws of men. God is necessarily holy, but He is not unwillingly holy. God was not compelled to forgive anyone his sin. The death of Christ was necessary for the forgiveness of sin, but God is not obligated to forgive anyone of his sins. Therefore, Christ's death was not an absolute necessity.

God was not absolutely but conditionally bound to give His Son in death. The necessity for the Father giving His Son in death did not occur until the covenant was made between the Father and the Son. The death of Christ was the only means by which the Father could forgive. He was not compelled to give His Son but chose in grace to do so. To say the death of Christ was an absolute necessity denies the sovereignty of God. The Lord does what He does out of the pleasure of His heart and not out of compulsion.

The punishment demanded was commensurate with the crime. The necessity for Christ's death was based on the Father's choice to forgive sinners of sin. There was no necessity on God's part for sin to enter the world, but wisdom thought it good that sin enter the world. God created man with the possibility of sinning but not with a necessity to sin. He created man upright (Eccl. 7:29). Justice demands punishment proportionate with the crime. Transgression against God demands no less than capital punishment, which is death. An infinite crime demands infinite punishment, which is eternal.

Man cannot pay for his crime because he is a finite creature. Therefore, after the covenant was made to redeem the elect, the Father necessarily sent His Son to die on the cross. The necessity was conditioned on the covenant made between the Father and the Son. The crime is against God. It is infinite and must be paid by the infinite Christ who alone in a short period of time could pay the debt against all those the Father had given Him. In His one death, He suffered the deaths of many.

The payment must be as great as the crime. To order punishment greater than the crime would be tyranny, and to order punishment less than the crime would be foolish government. To fail to see it as it is in its true perspective is to miss the point altogether. Sin against God would deny man of his greatest good, which is being with God throughout eternity enjoying His glory, majesty, and greatness, and praising Him. Sin against the infinite God deserves deprivation of man's greatest good.

The vileness of the offender is reflected in the dignity of the Offended. The death of Jesus Christ supposes that after transgression, God would forgive the offender. However, there was no necessity incumbent on God to redeem the sinner. As God was not obligated to prevent the fall, He is not compelled to redeem man after his fall.

Decreed death was absolutely necessary. It is based on the covenant made between the Father and the Son. Jesus Christ was free from all bonds until the covenant was established, then He was bound by the covenant (Heb. 13:20-21). After the covenant, the Son was absolutely bound to die. The Father was willing to give His Son to forgive sinners. Jesus Christ was willing to lay down His life to redeem them. He voluntarily gave His life and took it again.

Sin may be considered as (1) immoral quality in man, (2) transgression of the law, or (3) punishment in respect to its legal obligation. Only in the latter sense can it be said that the sin of one can be laid on another. In that sense, the sin of the elect was laid on Christ, and He bore it on the cross as Surety for the elect. He was counted by God as one with those for whom He died. Jesus Christ took them as His clients and paid their debt.

Satisfaction must be by death because death was threatened. The Father was not pleased with animal sacrifices, but He was pleased with the sacrifice of His Son. Christ alone, as the incarnate Son, could satisfy justice. Man is incapable of doing so.

All five of the offerings recorded in Leviticus 1-5 are found in Isaiah 53—(1) All the burnt offering went up to God. Divine justice was satisfied (Is. 53:11; Lev. 1; Eph. 5:2). (2) The meal offering displayed Christ's twofold nature, yet He remained impeccable (Is. 53:10; Lev. 2). His Person qualified Him to become the sin offering. If He had been peccable, His soul could not have been made an offering for sin, and He could not have satisfied justice. (3) In the peace offering, the chastisement of the peace of God's elect was upon Jesus Christ (Is. 53:5; Lev. 3). (4) The sin offering was fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Is. 53:6, 10, 12; Lev. 4). (5) In the trespass offering, Jesus Christ was wounded for the transgression of His elect (Is. 53:5; Lev. 5). The sin offering was for the nature of sin, and the trespass offering was for the sins of nature.

The Lord Jesus Christ bore the sin of many but not all (Is. 53:12). The theme of John 17 is that Christ came for His own, died for His own, and prays for His own. General providence and particular redemption are taught in that chapter. Christ came from the throne of God to the depth of

woe and ascended back to the throne after finishing the work of redemption. The Father's election is stressed in Scripture. Those the Father gave the Son are referred to seven times in John 17. The Father's election, the Son's redemption, and the Spirit's application are of equal extent. The Holy Spirit applies salvation to no more than the Son purchased with His blood. The redemption by Jesus Christ is as extensive as the grace of the Father. As grace is not experienced by all men, Jesus Christ did not die for all men. The Bible does not speak of the possibilities of Christ's work but of the certainty of it (Is. 53:10-12). God's purpose in eternity and Christ's accomplishment in time are of equal extent (Rom. 8:26-31). Christ did not procure forgiveness for those who can never be forgiven. Some cannot be forgiven, because they have committed the unpardonable sin. Christ died absolutely for some and not conditionally for all.

The fulfillment of Christ being numbered with the transgressors is recorded in Mark 15:27-31. The Lord Jesus was abused by three different classes of persons during His personal ministry, and He continues to be abused by the same classes: the ignorant (v. 29), the condemned (Matt. 27:42), and the religionists (Mark 15:31).

Jesus Christ made intercession for the transgressors. The transgressors for whom He made intercession are either all the transgressors for whom He died (Is. 53:6) or the transgressors by whom He suffered. Were the transgressors for whom Christ made intercession those who physically mistreated Him or were they those for whom He died? If the transgressors are those for whom Christ died, He continues interceding for them. If they were those by whom He suffered, He does not now intercede for them. Some say that Luke 23:34 is the fulfillment of Christ making intercession for the transgressors. Without exception, all Arminians teach that this was a general intercession for all men that they might believe.

The first cry, "...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do..." from the cross was particular and not general. The phrase "...they know not what they do..." does not include all men but those who were ignorant of what they were doing. A study of the sin offering in Leviticus 4:3 and 13 shows that there is hope for the ignorant. Peter's message concerning the death of Christ revealed that some of the ignorant who had a part in the crucifixion of Christ had been saved since that time (Acts 2:12-17; 6:7; I Cor. 2:8). They did it in ignorance. Judas was not ignorant, and Jesus Christ did not intercede for him. Christ's intercession was not general. It was for those who were ignorant of what they were doing.

Christ's intercession was restricted. He never prayed in vain. He was always heard. There is no indication that Jesus Christ prayed for all, even those by whom He was crucified. If He did, His intercession is unsuccessful. Although some aided in Christ's crucifixion in ignorance and were later saved, there is no indication that Christ prayed that they might believe. That would have been indefinite.

Christ's praying must be considered from two points of view: (1) It must be considered by virtue of His Manhood subject to the law, in which He could forgive the wrongs done to Him and pray for His enemies, leaving His people an example. (2) It must be considered by virtue of His office as Mediator who makes intercession for only His own.

To say that Christ's prayer was for the forgiveness of all men would cause one of two absurdities to follow: (1) The Father does not hear Him when He prays. (2) All men shall be forgiven. However,

the Father always hears Him (John 11:42). All men are not forgiven. Conclusively, Christ's intercession is particular and not general.