

Commentary on Isaiah 52 and 53 by Chuck Smith 10.18.23

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

November memory verse **Isaiah 7:14 (NKJV)** Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Commentary on Isaiah 52 and 53 by Chuck Smith 10.18.23

Chapter 52

Now again God cries for them.

Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem ([Isa 52:1](#)),

There's a day coming of just, "Put on your glorious garments and get ready for the big celebration, O Jerusalem."

the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean ([Isa 52:1](#)).

Now, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean." This is the day when the Lord has returned and establishes His kingdom.

Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the LORD, Ye have sold yourselves for nothing; but you will be redeemed without money ([Isa 52:2-3](#)).

"We have been redeemed," Peter said, "not with silver and gold. Not with money, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ" ([I Peter 1:18-19](#)). You sold yourselves for nothing. And how true that is of people today. They're selling themselves for nothing. Jesus said, "What should it profit a man, if he gained the whole world, and lost his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" ([Mark 8:36-37](#)) Interesting question.

Commentary on Isaiah 52 and 53 by Chuck Smith 10.18.23

For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there ([Isa 52:4](#));

That is the time of Jacob.

and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nothing? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name is continually blasphemed every day. Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I ([Isa 52:4-6](#)).

Jesus came to His own; His own received Him not. They did not recognize Him. But the day will come when they will.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings ([Isa 52:7](#)),

And the word good tidings is the word gospel.

that publisheth peace; that bringeth the gospel of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Your God reigns! ([Isa 52:7](#))

Oh, how beautiful on the mountain the feet of those that bear good tidings, the gospel of Jesus Christ, that publish forth the good news of peace that man can have with God. "That saith to Zion, Your God reigns!"

Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion ([Isa 52:8](#)).

When God brings again the captivity of Zion, we were as those who were in a dream, it said. Then they will see eye to eye.

Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Depart ye, depart ye, go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go you out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD ([Isa 52:9-11](#)).

Commentary on Isaiah 52 and 53 by Chuck Smith 10.18.23

For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be behind you ([Isa 52:12](#)).

God will be in front of you, behind you. So God's glorious leading and protection from the rear.

When men made chapter and verse divisions, they did make mistakes. The Word of God is divinely inspired; it's inerrant. But men, for the sake of helping us to find scriptures and to memorize passages, divided the Bible into chapter and verses. And it's a very convenient way to reference. However, many times they made the divisions in the wrong place, and in our reading we are prone to read to an end of a chapter and then quit until the next reading. And sometimes the thought carries right through, so that in the dividing of the chapters, they should have ended chapter 52 with verse 12. And they should have started chapter 53 with verse 13, because the last three verses here definitely fit in with [Isaiah 53](#). And so that we might see the relationship with 53, we will begin our study of chapter 53 with verse 13 of 52.

As God now speaks about His servant, His only begotten Son, "who was in the form of God, and thought it not something to be grasped to be equal with God: and yet He humbled Himself and took on the likeness of man or the form of man and came in likeness of man. And being humbled, He came as a servant" ([Philippians 2:6-8](#)). And so Jesus said, "I came not to do My own will but the will of the One who sent Me" ([John 6:38](#)). And in the garden He said, "Not My will, Thy will be done" ([Luke 22:42](#)), as He submitted as a servant unto the Father.

Now Isaiah begins to prophesy here concerning God's servant that was to come.

Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled ([Isa 52:13](#)),

The Hebrew word extolled is the word lifted up. It is the very same word that Jesus used in the New Testament when talking to His disciples said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me" ([John 12:32](#)). Now Jesus when He was referring to being lifted up was referring to the death that He was to die upon the cross, as He would be lifted up upon a cross. "And I, if I be lifted up." And the idea is being lifted up on a cross, I will draw all men

Commentary on Isaiah 52 and 53 by Chuck Smith 10.18.23

unto Me. Now that scripture has been carelessly interpreted by many people as just lifting up Jesus. If you'll just lift up Jesus, He'll draw all men to Him, you see. So in your ministry, just lift up Jesus, and they even have choruses, "Let's lift Him higher, let's lift Him higher. That all the world may see." Well, whoever wrote that chorus doesn't have a real understanding of scripture, because they have taken it out of its context. In the context, the gospel writer said, "This said He signifying the manner of death that He was going to die" ([John 12:33](#)). That is, signifying the cross, lifted up on a cross.

And so here the cross is predicted, prophesied in Isaiah. "He shall be exalted and lifted up, and be very high."

As many were astonished at thee; his visage [or face] was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men ([Isa 52:14](#)):

In the Hebrew this reads more literally, "His face was so marred that He could not be recognized as a man or as a human being."

Now we are told in the gospel that they covered His face and they began to buffet Him. That is, with His face covered they began to hit Him. Now as a general rule our bodies have an automatic reflex kind of an action, when we see a blow coming we give with the blow so it cushions the blow. You don't get the full brunt of it. If you don't cushion the blow, a surprise blow that you don't see coming, that's where you get hurt. You guys that watch the Monday night football, you know that. When a quarterback gets blindsided, he's in trouble. If he can see the guy coming, you just sort of, you reflex action to it and you sort of go with it. And you may get bounced all over, but you're reacting and coordinating with it and thus it's a lot easier to take. But if you don't see that big tackle barreling in on you, and he hits you without your having any ability to defend yourself by the feigning that a person does, that's when you get the broken bones. And that's when you get laid out of the game. Those blindsides are really the thing that will put you out.

Now with Jesus as they covered His face and began to buffet Him, no way to feign or to give with the blow, and thus His face must have been horribly disfigured. Here Isaiah declares that it was so shocking. "As many as looked upon you was shocked when they saw how marred your face was. So marred that you could not be recognized as a man, as a human being."

Commentary on Isaiah 52 and 53 by Chuck Smith 10.18.23

So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them they shall see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. But who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: now he has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him ([Isa 52:15,53:1-2](#)).

Interesting prophecies concerning Jesus Christ. He has no beautiful form or comeliness. There is no beauty there that we should desire. In other words, we'll not be attracted to Him by the physical beauty. So often we have in our minds sort of a mental picture of what a person may look like. And we sort of automatically do this even though we haven't seen a person.

So we have in our mind sort of a mental image of what Jesus is going to look like and we sort of imagine just being enthralled with the physical beauty of Christ. But as many as looked upon Him were astonished because really, there is no form or comeliness that is really attractive when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. It isn't for the beautiful form that we will be attracted. And I think that this is, I think that this is rather great that it will not be the beautiful form that we're attracted to. Because face it, the majority of the people are ugly. Very few beautiful people, really beautiful people. Most of us are in the category of we can get by. But it isn't our looks that really attract people.

Now when John was in heaven and he saw the scroll in the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne, and he heard the angel proclaim with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to take the scroll and loose the seals?" And as he observed that no one was found worthy in heaven and earth to take the scroll or to loose the seals, he began to weep. And one of the elders said unto John, "Don't weep, John. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to take the scroll and to loose the seals." And John said, "And I turned and I saw Him as a lamb that hath been slaughtered" ([Revelation 5:2-6](#)). No beauty that we should desire Him.

So as many as saw Him were astonished. "He has no form nor comeliness." That is, really an attractive, desirable or attracting feature. "When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

Commentary on Isaiah 52 and 53 by Chuck Smith 10.18.23

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ([Isa 53:3](#)):

Now you probably have in your mind mental pictures of what Paul must have looked like. I read the epistles of Paul and I think of him as a giant. Surely he's a spiritual giant. I read in one of the apocrypha books, one of the early writings, a description of Paul the apostle. And it describes him as a skinny little runt about five feet tall with a horribly large hooked nose and eyes that were red, swollen and constantly running, and it gave this horrible... And I was upset because that's not how I pictured Paul at all. I'm in love with Paul. My, what this man has given to us of his great depth of understanding and background. And I so love the writings of Paul that I've been drawn to him

Now, "He is despised and rejected of men; He is a man of sorrows, He's acquainted with grief."

and we hid as it were our faces from him ([Isa 53:3](#));

he was despised ([Isa 53:3](#)),

He's rejected.

and we didn't esteem him ([Isa 53:3](#)).

But surely in that suffering, in that death,

He bore our griefs, and he carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions ([Isa 53:4-5](#)),

Now this is why it is so ridiculous to try to hold the Jews responsible for the death of Jesus Christ and to blame them and to persecute them as has been the history of the church; persecute them for the death of Jesus Christ. That's sheer unscriptural idiocy. They are no more responsible for the death of Jesus Christ than you or I. We are all equally responsible for His death. For He was wounded for our transgressions. It was my sin that put Him on the cross. It was my sin that brought Him that suffering and that beating and that shame and that reproach. I'm guilty! And we shouldn't seek to blame someone else for our own guilt and to persecute someone

Commentary on Isaiah 52 and 53 by Chuck Smith 10.18.23

else for that for which we are ourselves responsible. Surely He hath borne our griefs, carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions.

he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed ([Isa 53:5](#)).

So we are the ones responsible for the suffering and the death of Jesus Christ, because He suffered and died for me that He might bring me the forgiveness of my sins. That He might bring me into fellowship with God. You see, God created man in the beginning for fellowship. That was the purpose of God when He created man-that God might be able to fellowship with man. But when man turned his back upon God and sinned, fellowship with God was broken. And fellowship with God who is holy and righteous cannot be restored until something is done about my sin. And that is why Jesus came that He might take the guilt of my sin. That He might bear my iniquities, my transgressions, my guilt, die in my place in order that through His death I can now come to God and have fellowship with God.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Jesus Christ the iniquities of us all ([Isa 53:6](#)).

You remember Jesus cried on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Crying out the twenty-second psalm, and in the verse 3 the answer is given, "For Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Thy people." God forsook His Son when your sin was placed upon Him. For that's the effect of sin. It's being forsaken of God. Being separated from God. And when your sin was placed upon Jesus Christ, He was separated from the Father. And thus the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But He was forsaken of God in order that you won't have to be forsaken by God. "For God laid on Him the iniquities of us all."

He was oppressed, he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth ([Isa 53:7](#)):

You remember before Pilate, Pilate marvelled that He didn't answer. He said, "Answerest Thou not me? Don't You know that I have power to free Thee, the power to put Thee to death?" Jesus said, "You don't have any power except that which My Father gives you. But don't worry, those that turned Me over to you have the greater sin than you do. I know you're

Commentary on Isaiah 52 and 53 by Chuck Smith 10.18.23

troubled, Pilate." He didn't know what he had on his hands and he did his best to free Him. But, "He opened not His mouth."

he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth ([Isa 53:7](#)).

All of the accusations. "Hear not all these things they accuse Thee of? What do You say for Yourself?" Jesus didn't answer.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off ([Isa 53:8](#))

You see, without any children, who's going to declare His generation?

He was cut off out of the land of the living ([Isa 53:8](#)):

Now that's an interesting phrase, "Cut off out of the land of the living." You remember that Daniel prophesies, "From the time the commandment goes forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the Messiah the Prince will be seven sevens and sixty-two sevens, three score and two sevens. And the wall shall be built again in troublous times, and after the three score and two sevens shall the Messiah be cut off. But not for Himself, but for the people" ([Daniel 9:25-26](#)). For He's cut off. He'll be crucified. Out of the land of the living. And God cries out,

for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death ([Isa 53:8-9](#));

You remember Joseph of Arimathaea, a very rich man, came and begged Pilate for the body of Jesus that he might bury it. And here it is. He's with the rich in His death.

because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when he shall make his soul an offering for sin ([Isa 53:9-10](#)),

So Christ became the sin offering for us. According to the will of God because God loved us.

Commentary on Isaiah 52 and 53 by Chuck Smith 10.18.23

he shall see his seed, and prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied ([Isa 53:10-11](#)):

That is, He travailed in order that you might be born again. And in seeing your redemption, in seeing you in fellowship with God, He's satisfied. He looks upon Him and says it was worth it all because of the redemption that He is able to offer to us. That fellowship that He can bring to us with the Father. And so, "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

and by his knowledge ([Isa 53:11](#))

That is, by the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

my righteous servant shall justify many ([Isa 53:11](#));

So how many of us tonight have been justified before God through the knowledge of Jesus Christ? So God declares, "By his knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many."

for he shall bear their iniquities ([Isa 53:11](#)).

Now all of this written 700 years before Christ was born. That is why when Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost and talked to the people who were involved in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, he said unto them, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was proved to be of God by the signs and the wonders which He did while He was still living with you, whom you according to the predeterminate counsel and foreknowledge of God with your wicked hands have crucified and slain" ([Acts 2:22-23](#)). But when he talks about the crucifixion, he speaks about the predetermined counsel and the foreknowledge of God. God knew it. God had planned it in order that He might demonstrate to you how much He loves you. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins" ([1 John 4:10](#)). Paul said, "For a righteous man some might dare to die: for a good man peradventure some would even give their lives. But herein is God's love manifested, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly" ([Romans 5:7-8](#)). He bore your iniquities. He bore your sins.

Therefore [the Father says] will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong ([Isa 53:12](#));

Commentary on Isaiah 52 and 53 by Chuck Smith 10.18.23

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and if sons, then heirs, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ" ([Romans 8:16-17](#)), as He divides the spoil with the strong.

because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors ([Isa 53:12](#));

Two thieves on either, one on either side. "He was numbered with the transgressors."

and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors ([Isa 53:11](#)).

You remember even as they were nailing Him, He said, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do" ([Luke 23:34](#)). Interceding for the transgressors. All of these things prophesied in advance. All of them fulfilled through the death of Jesus Christ. Surely it sets Him alone in history as the only man who could ever qualify to be the Messiah, the suffering servant. If Jesus is not the Messiah, there is no Messiah. No other man can qualify. But Jesus has qualified in all 300 points of prophecy that spoke about His life, His ministry, His death. And here in Isaiah, outstanding example of clear-cut prophecy. And if it doesn't refer to Jesus Christ, it can't refer to any other person in history. He stands alone as the only One who has fulfilled these things. And to reject Him after the basis of this kind of evidence is to sin against your own conscience and to sin against the truth, which becomes even a greater evil.