

International Conversation Cafe

Old Testament: The Suffering Servant, Isaiah 53

Prophets in the Old Testament had a two-part message for their listeners. The first message told people to turn back to God and worship him only. They were to stop their evil and practice justice and mercy towards others.

The second message was a promise. God was going to send them a ruler who would be just and merciful. The nation of Israel looked forward to such a person to deliver them from the oppression of the nations around them.

There are other descriptions of this king. He is also described as a suffering servant of God.

Isaiah 53

² His servant grew up like a tender young plant.

He grew like a root coming up out of dry ground.

He didn't have any beauty or majesty that made us notice him.

There wasn't anything special about the way he looked that drew us to him.

This description of a young plant and dry ground is the Bible's way of speaking of humility. This servant did not look like a king.

Why do you think God's servant is introduced in a humble way?

Isaiah wrote this Scripture between 701-681 BC. Isaiah endured the overthrow of Israel by Assyria and then the Babylonians.

NIV Study Bible

³ Men looked down on him. They didn't accept him.

He knew all about sorrow and suffering.

He was like someone people turn their faces away from.

We looked down on him. We didn't have any respect for him.

⁴ He suffered the things we should have suffered.

He took on himself the pain that should have been ours.

But we thought God was punishing him.

We thought God was wounding him and making him suffer.

Tell what you notice in the painting. Explain the emotions on the faces. What do you think is the message of Rembrandt?



Sometimes things appear one way when something else is happening. Can you think of a story where a person is misunderstood because people do not understand all the facts?

⁵ But the servant was pierced because we had sinned.

He was crushed because we had done what was evil.

He was punished to make us whole again.

His wounds have healed us.

⁶ All of us are like sheep. We have wandered away from God.

All of us have turned to our own way.
And the Lord has placed on his servant
the sins of all of us.

Explain this section in your own words.

Who do you think "the servant" is and why?

What does this section say about what people are like?

Do you agree? Why or why not?

⁷ He was beaten down and made to suffer.
But he didn't open his mouth.
He was led away like a sheep to be killed.
Lambs are silent while their wool is being cut off.
In the same way, he didn't open his mouth.
⁸ He was arrested and sentenced to death.
Then he was taken away.

He was cut off from this life.
He was punished for the sins of my people.
Who among those who were living at that time
could have understood those things?

*Explain how Jesus endured suffering as a lamb endures suffering.
Sometimes events happen that are completely misunderstood at the
time.*

How do you think the death of Jesus like that?

¹¹ After he suffers, he will see the light that leads to life.
And he will be satisfied.
My godly servant will make many people godly
because of what he will accomplish.
He will be punished for their sins.

*Christians believe that "the light that leads to life" speaks of how Jesus rose from the dead. If that is true,
what does the death and resurrection of Jesus accomplish according to verse 11?*

What do you want to remember from Isaiah 53?

How do you think Jesus' death affects your life?

Dead Sea Scrolls - Isaiah 53

The Dead Sea Scrolls have provided phenomenal evidence for the credibility of biblical scripture. Specifically, the nearly intact Great Isaiah Scroll is almost identical to the most recent manuscript version of the Masoretic text from the 900's AD. (Scholars have discovered a handful of spelling and tense-oriented scribal errors, but nothing of significance.) Remember, this text was dated 100 to 335 years before the birth of Jesus Christ!

All About Archeology

<http://www.allaboutarchaeology.org/dead-sea-scrolls-2.htm>

The Temple Scroll

ZevRadovan/www.biblelandpictures.com