

LIKE A LAMB

The Cross from a Distance #3

Notes

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. 1 Peter 1:10-11

As Isaiah pores over the things he has written, he draws some conclusions not only about the servant himself but also about those whose lives will be affected by his coming.:

1. **He shall act wisely.**
2. **He'll be high and lifted up and exalted.**
3. **His physical appearance will be in sharp contrast to what the people would expect from the servant of the Lord.**
4. **His mission will have a global impact.**
5. **Those for whom this servant comes will reject him.**
6. **His mission will be filled with unimaginable pain, physically, mentally, emotionally.**
7. **Everything that he endures will be substitutionary in nature.**
8. **The mission for which he comes will be successful.**

Today's scripture:

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief. (vv.7-10a)

Why should we consider the suffering and death of the servant in Isaiah 53?

Verse 7:

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. (v. 7)

“(This) is not a victim caught in the great gears of a remorseless destiny, but a person of worth and dignity even in the most degrading of circumstances.” (John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, p. 391)

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down

from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. Luke 9:51-55

Upon arriving in Jerusalem, when given so many opportunities to do so, he did not open his mouth:

- Before Caiaphas, at the mock trial held in the middle of the night, Jesus is accused by false witnesses of planning to destroy the Temple:
The high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" But Jesus remained silent. Matthew 26:62-63
- A few hours later he is brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor:
Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?" But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Matthew 27:13-14
- Pilate then sends him to Herod:
When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. Luke 23:8-9

Metaphor that runs throughout of sheep - v. 6, the wayward, rebellious people are described as sheep who have gone astray; v. 7 the servant will be like a lamb that is led to the slaughter. One would have to believe that John had this verse in mind when he first saw Jesus approaching him at the River Jordan and exclaimed,

"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29

The last phrase –

"like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth."

Jesus was sheared. They stripped him of his clothes, his dignity, his honor. John Piper writes, "No one has ever been as naked as Jesus on Golgotha on Good Friday. No one has ever been as sheared of everything pleasant and beautiful – except love."

Verse 8 –

By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? (v. 8)

His treatment was unjust from start to finish.

"as for his generation, who considered (who has thought about the fact, who has pondered this) that he was cut off out of the land of the living" – it's happening right in front of us, and we haven't thought about what it is that is happening. Oswalt says this may be suggesting the idea that "the Servant was left without children in a culture where to die childless was to have lived an utterly futile existence" (Oswalt, 395).

"stricken for the transgression of my people" -

The people had watched as many Passover lambs had been slaughtered over the centuries. This one would be slaughtered not for his own transgressions but for those of his people. This is the recurring theme that runs throughout the entire chapter

- He has borne our griefs
- He has carried our sorrows

- He was wounded for our transgressions
- He was crushed for our iniquities
- Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace
- By his stripes we are healed
- The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all

Verse 9 –

And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. (v. 9)

No deceit in his mouth. Not only was he not defensive or self-justifying, there was no deceitful word, no lies, no half truths, nothing ever intentionally fell from his lips or slipped out in uncontrolled anger or frustration. His mouth was pure. He was innocent, completely, perfectly.

How can someone suffer for others? Only if he is someone who has no sins or need for reconciliation in himself. Only someone who did not deserve punishment for his own transgressions, someone who had never gone astray and had turned to his own way, someone who had never rebelled against God.

Then he is buried...

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb. Matthew 27:57-60

So the Author of Life, the Alpha and the Omega, the Son of God, the Lion of the tribe of Judah has become a Lamb, that would be wounded and crushed, stricken and slaughtered for the iniquities and transgression of his people. Do you know him? Have you trusted him?

John in Revelation chapter 5, gets to see the Suffering Servant and the Lamb of Isaiah 53 as he will be seen at the end of the age:

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain... And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" Rev. 5:6-13