

will make the laws and will enforce the laws through His appointed governors and judges. The Word of the Lord from Zion will be the law (Isa. 2:3).

Health and healing will accompany forgiveness of sin (Isa. 33:24). There will still be death in the millennial kingdom, but longevity will be the rule (Isa. 65:20).

Isaiah 34-35

This section concludes the first part of Isaiah. It summarizes the first part by describing worldwide judgments followed by the establishment of Christ's kingdom.

1. The judgments (Isa. 34)

This is a description of "the day of the LORD's vengeance" (Isa. 34:8). It is "the day of the Lord."

God will recompense for the controversy of Zion (Isa. 34:8). Jerusalem in particular and the land of Israel in general belong to the Lord, and He gave it to Abraham and his descendants. Today the land is claimed by the "Palestinians," but it is not theirs. The nations are clamoring for Israel to return even more of the land to the Palestinians. But God gave it to Israel as an everlasting possession. Ultimately, the Antichrist will claim the land, but God will redeem it from the hands of the Gentiles and judge them for their rebellion against His will.

God calls upon the nations to hear His Word (Isa. 34:1). He has been calling for 6,000 years from the time of the first prophet Abel (Lu. 11:50-51). Today God is calling to the nations through the preaching of the gospel (Acts 1:8). He calls men to come near to Him, and He has made this possible by Christ's atonement. Even in the midst of the final judgments, God will continue to call to the nations through the Jewish evangelists (Mt. 24:14; Re. 7:4-10; 14:6), and multitudes will be saved. God loves to save.

The judgment of God will fall upon all nations (Isa. 34:1-3). His indignation or wrath will fall upon men because of their sin and impenitence. Though God loves to save, He does not hesitate to judge when the time comes, and his anger is described in strong terms. The Hebrew word for "indignation" (*qetseph*) is usually translated "wrath" (Jer. 10:10). It is also translated "sore displeased" (Zec. 1:2, 15). The Hebrew word translated "fury" (*chemah*) is elsewhere translated "wrath" (De. 19:23), "hot displeasure" (De. 9:19) and "poison" (De. 32:24). Men have rebelled against God and broken His holy law and rejected His salvation in Christ. He has waited; He has been patient; but in the day of His vengeance, the time of His patience will be finished, and He will pour out judgments on this wicked world.

The carcasses and blood point to Gog and Magog (Eze. 32:3-6; 39:4-5, 11; Joel 2:20) as well as to Armageddon (Re. 14:20; Eze. 32:4-6).

The signs in the heavens (Isa. 34:4) are mentioned in many prophecies. Compare Isa. 13:10; Jer. 4:23; Eze. 32:7-8; Joel 2:30-31; 3:15; Mt. 24:29; Mk. 13:24-25; Ac. 2:19-20; Re. 6:12-14; 8:12. It appears that the darkening of the heavens will occur at the beginning and end of the Tribulation. Compare Revelation 6:12-14, which occurs at the opening of the first seal judgment, with Matthew 24:29, which occurs "immediately after the tribulation."

Idumea or Edom is singled out for special judgment (Isa. 34:5-17). Edom, the descendants of Lot, is an ancient enemy of Israel. At this time, the land of Edom, which is south and southeast of Israel, belongs to Jordan. Apparently that land will again be associated with a special hatred of Israel in the last days and will become a permanent desolation. It is described as waste, empty, thorns and nettles. It will be like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. 34:9-10). Compare Genesis 19:28; Deuteronomy 29:23. "In the last days there will be a people in the land of Idumea where once

the Dukes of Edom reigned, whose envy of and hatred toward the sons of Jacob will be as great as that of the Edomites of old. Upon these, unsparing judgment will fall” (Ironsides).

Not all of the wild beasts mentioned in this prophecy can be identified. The Hebrew word translated “**satyr**” is usually translated “goat,” such as the goats of the day of atonement (Le. 16:9-10). The “**unicorn**” is identified in various commentaries as the wild ox, the rhinoceros, and the oryx, but it is probably an animal that is currently extinct. Job describes the unicorn as having great strength and as being untamable (Job 39:9-12). In mythology the unicorn is a horse-like creature with a single horn in the center of its forehead, but there is no indication that such a creature has anything to do with the Bible’s references. “All this is descriptive of utter and perpetual desolation--of a land that should be full of old ruins, and inhabited by the animals that usually make such ruins their abode” (Barnes).

God’s Spirit is in control of creation (Isa. 34:16). Compare Psalm 104:27-30. God finished creating on the sixth day, but He has never abandoned the creation. He upholdeth all things (Heb. 1:3). By Him all things consist (Col. 1:17). Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without God’s knowledge (Mt. 10:29). This explains how the world could be rejuvenated after the Flood. It was not left to chance for the animals and vegetation to survive and repopulate the world (Psa. 104:30).

All of this is certain because it is God’s Word (Isa. 34:16). Believing the Bible is not blind faith. One of the many “infallible proofs” that the Bible is the Word of God is its amazing prophecies. The individual who trusts the Bible and builds his life upon its precepts and promises will never be disappointed. “Jehovah’s word is absolutely sure. No prophecy of the Scriptures will fail of final and complete fulfillment” (Ironsides).

2. The blessing (Isa. 35)

The first section of Isaiah (1-35) ends with yet another description of Christ's kingdom. It is one of the most beautiful passages in Scripture.

This will be fulfilled when Christ comes to save Israel and to have vengeance upon her enemies (Isa. 35:4).

It will be a time of blossoming (Isa. 35:1-2, 7).

This is an oft-repeated theme. There will be streams and blossoms in the desert. Israel became a desert because of the people's sin against God (De. 28:23-24; 29:22-23), but when Israel is converted, the land will be restored to its former beauty and fruitfulness. Formerly it was a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Ex. 3:8 and 19 other verses) and was called "the glory of all lands" (Eze. 20:6). It will again be a land of milk and honey, but the former condition will be exceeded greatly.

The glory of Lebanon and the excellency of Carmel and Sharon will extend to the whole land (Isa. 35:2). Lebanon, Carmel, and Sharon are on the coast in the north of Israel and this was the most beautiful part of Israel. That region continued to receive rain through Israel's time of judgment and did not become a desert, though it was covered with thistles and cursed with malarial swamps. In Christ's kingdom, the glory of this part of the land will extend through the kingdom.

It will "blossom as a rose." The Creator loves gardens. He made man to live in a garden paradise, not in a wilderness. The God of Eden is the God who will beautify Israel when He returns. "Every fruitful field or orchard, every lovely garden, presents a foretaste of what in Messiah's day will be everywhere prevalent, when the parched deserts will give place to verdant meadows, and the thorns and thistles brought in by the curse will vanish, and trees and shrubs bearing fruits to appeal to the appetite and flowers to delight the eye, will spring up instead" (Ironsides).

There will be streams in the desert (Isa. 35:6-7). Isaiah 35 does not refer to what is happening in Israel today. Since the Jews began to return to the land at the turn of the 20th century, they have done an amazing job of restoring it to agricultural use. As described *Let There Be Water* by Seth Siegel, Israel has used the available water to best advantage, creating new reservoirs, recycling water, inventing low-water agricultural techniques such as drip irrigation and more efficient methods of desalinization. What modern Israel has done with an arid land has been called a miracle, but it is more genius than miraculous, and Israel's condition today is not the object of Isaiah's prophecies. Most of Israel's land remains a desert. In Christ's kingdom, there will be no need for drip irrigation, for "in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isa. 35:6). "And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water" (Isa. 35:7). There will be rivers and fountains and pools (Isa. 41:17) and floods of water (Isa. 44:3).

This blessing will extend beyond Israel, but not every part of the earth will be a paradise in the Millennium. We have seen that the region of Edom will be a permanent desolation (Isa. 34:9-15). And Christ will withhold rain from disobedient nations as part of His rule with a rod of iron (Zec. 14:17-19).

It will be a time when the glory of God will be seen. In this context, glory refers to kingly splendor, beauty, and wealth. Jesus spoke of Solomon in his glory (Mt. 6:29), but the glory of Solomon will seem as nothing compared to the glory of Christ. Since man's fall, God has veiled His glory and hidden Himself, as it were, and He has required that men approach Him on the basis of faith (Heb. 11:6). But in that day Christ will come with His holy angels and the whole world will see the glory of the Almighty Creator God sitting on the throne of this world in His temple in Jerusalem (Mt. 16:27; 19:28; 25:31; Eze. 43:5; 44:4). The beauty of Christ's capital and the shining of it will be visible for miles and miles through the clear air of the millennial kingdom. Peter, James, and John were given a glimpse of this glory on the Mount of

Transfiguration, when Christ “was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light” (Mt. 17:2).

It will be a time of healing (Isa. 35:3-6). The miracles that Christ did in His first coming were a foretaste of this. They proved that He is the promised Messiah (Joh. 5:36; 20:30-31). It is not clear to what extent healing will be extended beyond Israel in the Millennium. There will still be death (Isa. 65:20).

It will be a time of returning (Isa. 35:8-10).

The highway is mentioned in many places. See Isa. 11:16; 19:23; 49:11-12; 57:14; 62:10; Jer. 31:22.

The highway or a series of highways will be for returning Jews as well as for all of the redeemed in their pilgrimages to the world's capital. The highways will doubtless be lovely since they will be the work of God. The return is described in many prophecies. See De. 30:3-5; Isa. 10:21-22; 11:10-12; 14:1-3; 27:12-13; 35:8-10; 42:16; 43:5-6; 49:11-12, 22; 51:11; 54:7; 57:13; 60:4, 9; 66:20-21; Jer. 3:18; 23:3, 7-8; 24:4-7; 30:3, 10-11, 18; 31:7-9, 21; 32:37-38; 46:27-28; 50:4-5, 19-20; Eze. 11:17-21; 20:33-38; 34:11-17; 36:23-32; 37:12-14, 21-22; 39:25-29; Hos. 3:5; Amos 9:14-15; Mic. 2:12-13; Zep. 3:18-20; Zec. 8:6-8; 10:6-12.

The highway will be called “the way of holiness.” It will be for a holy people who have been redeemed and justified. It will be holy because those who travel it will love holiness and obey God's Word.

It will be a highway of safety (Isa. 35:9). In Christ's kingdom, travelers will not have to fear any danger by wild animals or wicked men.

It will be a highway that leads to Zion (Isa. 35:10). According to Isaiah 49:11, there will be multiple highways coming from different directions. It was said in the Roman Empire that “all roads lead to Rome,” and in Christ's kingdom it will be said that all roads lead to Zion. Jerusalem will be the glorious capital where the Son of God will live. From there the law of

God will go throughout the earth. The nations will come to Zion to worship and to learn.

It will be a highway of joy and singing (Isa. 35:10). We can barely begin to imagine the constant joy that will be the reality of the redeemed in Christ's kingdom. This is emphasized by a three-fold repetition of joy and gladness. The joy will be "everlasting." The term "everlasting joy" appears three times in the Bible, and all three are in Isaiah in the context of Christ's kingdom (Isa. 35:10; 51:11; 61:7). The joy will last into the eternity of the new heaven and the new earth. The joy will be "upon their heads," meaning they will be crowned and anointed with joy. The joy will not be intermingled with sorrow or sighing. Those things shall flee away. Unlike in this present world, wherein the believer's joy is always tempered with longing and groaning (Ro. 8:23; 2 Co. 5:2), the joy of the resurrected saints will be pure and perfect.

In the midst of the prophecy is an exhortation to the weak and fearful who are waiting on Christ's kingdom (Isa. 35:3).

Fear is a reality in this fallen world. The apostle Paul said, "we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Co. 7:5).

Fear can be crippling (Isa. 35:3). It can weaken the hands of service and make the knees feeble to pray. This reminds us of Hebrews 12:12-13.

But fear can be overcome. The child of God can be strong. Fear is overcome by focusing one's attention upon God and His greatness and goodness and by considering the promises of God's Word. Isaiah encourages the weak by the reminder that God is in control and by the promise that He will come. We see this in Peter's episode of walking on the water. When he had his eyes on Christ, he had great faith, but as soon as he focused his attention on the storm rather than Christ, he began to sink (Mt. 14:28-30). This is why the sound preaching and teaching and studying of the Bible is so important in the Christian life. Through it the Lord's people receive faith and spiritual strength to continue in the battle.

Roman whip (Mt. 27:26). He was crucified by the piercing of His hands and feet (Ps. 22:16). His side was pierced with a spear (Joh. 19:23).

Christ's Sprinkling (Isa. 52:15). The sprinkling refers to the sprinkling of blood in the Levitical system (Ex. 24:8; Le. 8:30). It refers to salvation through faith in Christ's blood (1 Pe. 1:2). The sprinkling of many nations refers first of all to the preaching of the gospel to the nations in the church age (Acts 1:8). For 2,000 years Christ has been sprinkling every sinner who has received Him. The sprinkling of the nations refers, ultimately, to Christ's return when He will sprinkle all nations that enter into His kingdom. The day will come when the One who has been despised and rejected will be welcomed by kings (Isa. 49:7). All nations will come to His throne to worship and learn (Isa. 2:2-3). The nations will witness the sacrifices on the altar of the Millennial Temple and will be instructed by the priests about Christ's atonement and God's character (Eze. 43:18-27; 45:27; 46:13-15).

Christ's Relationship with Kings (Isa. 52:15). Christ is the head of every king, and every king will answer to Him. The prophet says, "the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see." This will occur when Christ comes in power and glory. Every eye shall see Him (Re. 1:7). Every king will bow before Him (Phi. 2:10). The kings have no excuse for not having heard. The gospel of Christ has been preached to the ends of the earth over the past 2,000 years. End-time technology has made the gospel available to everyone with a mobile phone, which is almost everyone! The kings have not heard, because they have not cared to hear and have not sought God as they are obligated to do as God's creatures (Acts 17:26-27). But the time will come when every ruler of every nation will consider Him.

Christ the Arm of the Lord (Isa. 53:1). The "arm of the Lord" signifies God's almighty strength. The Suffering

Servant is the grandest manifestation of God's power. It is in Christ's incarnation and suffering and resurrection that we see "the arm of the LORD" in its greatest glory. It was by this means that God revealed His holiness and love to the highest degree, and we will never cease to learn new lessons. On the cross, God made it possible for His holy law to be established and yet for rebels to be redeemed. The universe is the work of God's fingers (Ps. 8:3), but the atonement is the work of His arm! "There we see divine power in its noblest form, in its grandest operation, in its widest sweep, in its loftiest purpose. That humble man, lowly and poor, despised and rejected in life, hanging faint and pallid on the Roman cross, and dying in the dark, seems a strange manifestation of the 'glory' of God, but the Cross is indeed His throne, and sublime as are the other forms in which Omnipotence clothes itself, this is, to human eyes and hearts, the highest of them all. In Jesus the arm of the Lord is revealed in its grandest operation. Creation and the continual sustaining of a universe are great, but redemption is greater" (Alexander MacLaren). "When God made the universe, He used His fingers (Ps. 8:3), and when He delivered Israel from Egypt, it was by His strong hand (Ex. 13:3). But to save lost sinners, He had to bare His mighty arm" (Warren Wiersbe).

Christ a Root out of a Dry Ground (Isa. 53:2). A root out of a dry ground is miraculous. Christ was a root out of the dry ground of humanity in that He was the sinless man who came out of a sinful people. It refers to the virgin birth by which the Son of God became a man yet without sin. Christ was a tender plant that did not belong to this world. He is the second man, the last Adam, the Lord from heaven (1 Co. 15:45-47). Normally a plant springing from a dry ground soon dies, but Christ did not derive His life from the soil of this fallen world; He was intimately connected with God. The root out of a dry ground also depicts Christ coming out of the deadness of Israel's religion, "out of the dry ground of

formalistic Israel.” This Root will grow and spread and blossom and fill the whole universe with holy fruit forever!

Christ a Tender Plant (Isa. 53:2). Jesus grew up before the Father as a tender plant. The Son has dwelt with the Father and has been the special object of the Father’s delight from all eternity (Joh. 1:1). He is in the bosom of the Father, referring to a place of special affection (Joh. 1:18). Even as a babe, Jesus hoped in God (Ps. 22:9-10). He grew up under the special watchcare of God, and when He was twelve, He was already about His Father’s business (Lu. 2:49). He was well pleasing to the Father in every way. Twice the Father said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mt. 3:17; 17:5). “But the veil is falling from the eyes of our hearts, and we remember that our paschal lamb is never marked out and set apart until the tenth day of the month (Ex. 12:3). For the first ten days of our year, that lamb is before Jehovah alone, and His Eye alone rests upon it with delight, but no other knows it! So with our Messiah. He too was hidden, and not marked out as God’s Lamb till thirty years had passed” (F.C. Jennings).

Christ’s Lack of Comeliness (Isa. 53:2). This probably means that Jesus was common in appearance and didn’t have movie star good looks, unlike the films about Him such as Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*. Christ was probably not like Absalom, who was praised for his beauty (2 Sa. 14:25). But Christ’s lack of comeliness particularly means that He was undesirable in the eyes of the Jewish nation who wanted a worldly savior rather than a suffering one. He came as a lowly carpenter’s son from an insignificant and despised town. His main disciples were fishermen and hated publicans. He did not wear regal robes and live in luxury. Therefore, Israel despised him. To unbelievers, Jesus Christ has no desirable beauty, but for those who have eyes to see, He is altogether lovely! “The tender plant; the sucker painfully pushing its way through the crust of the caked

ground; the absence of natural attractiveness. Such imagery awaits and receives its full interpretation from the New Testament, with its story of Christ's peasant parentage, his manger-bed, and lowly circumstances--fisherfolk his choice disciples; poverty his constant lot; the common people his devoted admirers; thieves and malefactors on either side of his cross; the lowly and poor the constituents of his Church. This were humiliation indeed" (F.B. Meyer). Christ came without worldly comeliness because God requires that men come to Him by faith rather than by sight (Heb. 11:6). In Christ's incarnation, we learn to see things through God's eyes and to measure things by God's standard. Whereas the world worships physical beauty, wealth, and pomp, God delights in the beauty of holiness. In God's eyes, Christ is "fairer than the children of men" (Ps. 45:2).

Christ's Rejection (Isa. 53:3). Jesus applied Isaiah 53:1-3 to the unbelief of the nation Israel (Joh. 12:37-38). He came unto His own and His own received him not (John 1:11). He was rejected by His hometown of Nazareth (Lu. 4:28-30). He was rejected by His own brothers (Joh. 7:5). He was rejected by Jerusalem (Lu. 19:41). Christ went about doing good and showing the love of God to everyone He met, yet His own people demanded that He be crucified (Mark 15:13-14). His life of sorrowful rejection is emphasized in Isaiah 53:3 by a series of powerful, pithy statements. It is only 11 words in Hebrew.

He is despised (bazah)
 and rejected of men (chadel iysh)
 a man of sorrows (iysh makob)
 and acquainted with grief (yada choliy)
 and we hid as it were our faces from him (macter paniym)
 he was despised (bazah)
 and we esteemed him not (chashab)

Paul applied Isaiah 53:1-3 to the unbelief of the nations to whom the gospel has been preached (Ro. 10:15-16). The

prophecy is fulfilled in every sinner who rejects Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Christ a Man of Sorrows (Isa. 53:3). Christ is anointed with the oil of gladness (Psa. 45:7), but in this world He was a man of sorrows. He had sorrow because of his rejection by Israel. He had sorrow at Lazarus' grave (Joh. 11:35). He had sorrow in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:37-38) and when He was betrayed by His own disciple (Mt. 26:47-50). The hymnodist Philip Bliss caught the essence of this from the perspective of those who believe in Jesus as Christ: "*Man of Sorrows, what a name/ for the Son of God who came;/ Ruined sinners to reclaim!/ Hallelujah! what a Saviour!/ Bearing shame and scoffing rude,/ In my place condemned He stood;/ Sealed my pardon with His blood; Hallelujah! what a Saviour!*" "All His life He walked in the solitude of uncomprehended aims, and at His hour of extremest need appealed in vain for a little solace of companionship, and was deserted by those whom He trusted most. His was a lifelong martyrdom inflicted by men. His was a lifelong solitude which was most utter at the last. And He brought it all on Himself because He *would* be God's Servant in being men's Saviour. ... We shall not rightly estimate the sorrowfulness of Christ's sorrows, unless we bring to our meditations on them the other thought of His joys. How great these were we can judge, when we remember that He told the disciples that by His joy remaining in them their joy would be full. As much joy then as human nature was capable of from perfect purity, filial obedience, trust, and unbroken communion with God, so much was Jesus' permanent experience. The golden cup of His pure nature was ever full to the brim with the richest wine of joy. And that constant experience of gladness in the Father and in Himself made more painful the sorrows which He encountered, like a biting wind shrieking round Him, whenever He passed out from fellowship with God in the stillness of His soul into the contemptuous and hostile world.

His spirit carrying with it the still atmosphere of the Holy Place, would feel more keenly than any other would have done the jarring tumult of the crowds, and would know a sharper pain when met with greetings in which was no kindness. Jesus was sinless, His sympathy with all sorrow was thereby rendered abnormally keen, and He made others' griefs His own with an identification born of a sympathy which the most compassionate cannot attain. The greater the love, the greater the sorrow of the loving heart when its love is spurned. The intenser the yearning for companionship, the sharper the pang when it is repulsed. The more one longs to bless, the more one suffers when his blessings are flung off. Jesus was the most sensitive, the most sympathetic, the most loving soul that ever dwelt in flesh. He saw, as none other has ever seen, man's miseries. He experienced, as none else has ever experienced, man's ingratitude, and, therefore, though God, even His God, 'anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows,' He was 'a Man of Sorrows,' and grief was His companion during all His life's course" (Alexander MacLaren).

Christ Esteemed as Smitten of God (Isa. 53:4). Compare Mt. 27:41-43. Jesus *was* smitten of God, but it was not as the unbelievers thought. He was smitten, not for His own sins, but for those of others.

Christ's Atonement (Isa. 53:4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12). Twelve times this passage emphasizes the fact that Christ suffered in the place of sinners. This is obviously the emphasis and focus of the great prophecy. To make atonement means to satisfy a debt, and Christ paid the full sin debt for every sinner who receives Him. Christ's atonement is called vicarious, meaning it was done in the place of another. It is called substitutionary, because He was the substitute for the sinner.

Notice the emphasis of this in Isaiah 53:

He hath borne our griefs (v. 4)

and carried out sorrows (v. 4)
 He was wounded for our transgressions (v. 5)
 He was bruised for our iniquities (v. 5)
 the chastisement of our peace was upon him (v. 5)
 and with his stripes we are healed (v. 5)
 the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (v. 6)
 for the transgression of my people was he stricken (v. 8)
 thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin (v. 10)
 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied (v.
 11)
 He shall bear their iniquities (v. 11)
 He shall bear the sin of many (v. 12)

We see the necessity of the atonement. The atonement was necessitated by man's sin against God. There are many facets to sin, and this passage describes it in a multitude of ways. (1) Sin is **transgression**, which means to break God's law (Isa. 53:5). See 1 John 3:4. This is the essence of sin. (2) Sin is **iniquity**, which refers to the evil of our fallen nature and the evil of our sinful acts (Isa. 53:5). David spoke of "the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. 32:5). His sin was iniquity; it was vile in God's eyes. David said he was "shapen in iniquity" (Ps. 51:5). This refers to his fallen character. Iniquity is first of all a description of the corrupt condition of man's heart. Compare Jeremiah 17:9. Then, iniquity refers to the sinful deeds that we commit and how evil they are in God's eyes. (3) Sin is **to go astray from God** (Isa. 53:6). It is a rejection of the loving, holy Creator God. It is spiritual adultery. (4) Sin is **to turn to my own way** rather than to submit to God's way (Isa. 53:6). All of this is what Adam and Eve did when they ate of the forbidden fruit. All of this is what Christ bore on Calvary. Repentance consists of returning to God and acknowledging my sin and rebellion against Him. "Instead of walking obediently in God's way, we have turned wilfully and stubbornly to our own way, the way of our own heart, the way that our own corrupt appetites and passions lead us to. We have set up for ourselves, to be our own masters, our own

carvers, to do what we will and have what we will. Some think it intimates our own evil way, in distinction from the evil way of others. Sinners have their own iniquity, their beloved sin, which does most easily beset them, their own evil way, that they are particularly fond of and bless themselves in” (Matthew Henry).

We see the price of the atonement. Christ was **bruised** (Isa. 53:5). Christ was **wounded** (Isa. 53:5). Christ was beaten (Isa. 53:5). Christ was **stricken** (Isa. 53:8). Christ **endured travail of soul** (Isa. 53:10-11). Christ’s soul was made an offering for sin in the sense that He was abandoned by the Father to bear in the very essence of His being the sin of the world. Compare Matthew 27:46, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” The answer is that He was forsaken to bring to pass God’s eternal plan to redeem the creation from the fall. This is why it “behoved Christ to suffer” (Lu. 24:46). Christ **died** (Isa. 53:8). All of this was the price of the atonement. “What motive could have moved that almighty Arm to strike with blows that brought ‘grief’ indeed to that beloved One? What could have induced Jehovah to inflict such suffering on Himself as a father would have in causing suffering to a son who was dear to Him? His love for poor sinful man was such, that for him he spared not His own beloved Son” (F.C. Jennings). “His cry of loneliness is the key to the deeper suffering of those hours when God, the righteous Judge, had to abandon Him to the inward spiritual suffering as the Surety for sinners. It was then that His soul--not merely His body--was made an offering for sin. ... It was not His physical sufferings alone that made propitiation for sin, but what He endured in His inmost being when His holy, spotless soul became the great Sin Offering. In other words, it was not what man did to Him that made reconciliation for iniquity, but what He endured at the hand of God, leading to Immanuel’s orphaned cry, ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’” (Ironsides).

We see the means of the atonement (Isa. 53:6). The means was by Christ bearing our sins. God laid on Christ the sins of the world. He bore the just punishment due for the sins we have committed against God. Christ's atonement was made to the Father, because it is God's law that man has broken, and it is God who must be propitiated (satisfied, as by the paying of a debt). This was depicted in the Levitical offerings when the sacrifice was killed *before the Lord*, who was dwelling in the tabernacle (Le. 4:4-5). This points to Christ's cross, where the Son of God suffered before the Father and made the acceptable sacrifice by His own blood and death. The Lord laying upon Christ our iniquity was signified on the Day of Atonement when the high priest laid his hands on the goat and confessed all the iniquities of the children of Israel (Le. 16:21-22).

We see God's pleasure in the atonement (Isa. 53:10). God was pleased to bruise Christ because of His great love for sinners. The atonement had to be made. The price had to be paid. God's holy law demanded it, and His great love performed it. The Father sent the son to be the Saviour of the world (1 Joh. 4:14). This explains the enigma of why the sinless Son of God suffered and died. The preeminent Old Testament type of this is Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac (Ge. 22). "As the most wonderful enigma in the government of God, I know of nothing more wonderful in the universe than the sight of Jesus in bonds. Why does Eternal Justice allow unsullied holiness thus to suffer? Why does Almighty God give men the power to perpetrate such enormities? Why does All-powerful Emanuel Himself submit to these enormities? Does not the vicarious principle stand out in sunny prominence?" (David Thomas).

We see the sufficiency of the atonement (Isa. 53:11). The Father was satisfied with Christ's atonement. If God, the One against whom we have sinned, is satisfied, who can condemn! See Romans 8:33-34.

We see the result of the atonement (Isa. 53:5). First, the result is peace with God, which is the most wonderful aspect of salvation. Sin separated us from our lovely Creator, and by Christ's atonement we have peace with Him. We are reconciled. We are brought into the new position of adopted sons in Christ. Second, the result is healing. The healing begins in this life by the sanctifying power of the indwelling Spirit, and the healing will be complete at the resurrection when the sinner will be saved from the very presence of sin. The "old man" will be gone and the believer will live forever in sinless perfection.

We see the reach of Christ's atonement (Isa. 53:6). Just as all men are sinners, all men can be saved through Christ's atonement. As the condition of sin is universal, so the offer of salvation is universal. This is why the gospel is to be preached to every creature (Mr. 16:15). Once I had a conversation with a Calvinist, a preacher for whom I have high regard, who likes to contrast his "moderate" position with that of "hyper-Calvinism" in that he believes that God loves all men. I asked, "Do you believe that *any* man can be saved?" He could not answer this in the affirmative, because he believes in "sovereign election," yet the Bible is very clear on the fact that Christ died for the sins of the world and that any sinner *can* be saved through faith in Christ. Christ's death is available for all, but it is applied only to those who receive Him as Lord and Saviour. Thus, there is a sense in which Christ died for *all* (verse 6), and there is a sense in which He died for *many* (verse 12). "Isaiah 53:6 begins with all and ends with all. An anxious soul was directed to this passage and found peace. Afterward he said, 'I bent low down and went it in at the first all. I stood up straight and came out at the last.' The first is the acknowledgement of our deep need. The second shows how fully that need has been met in the Cross of Christ" (Ironsides).

Christ's vicarious atonement is the central event of history and the foundation for God's eternal salvation. Christ is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Re. 13:8). His atonement is emphasized throughout the New Testament Epistles.

"Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Ro. 3:25).

"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Ro. 4:25).

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Ro. 5:6).

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Co. 5:7).

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Co. 15:3).

"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" (2 Co. 5:21).

"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Ga. 1:4).

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Ga. 3:13).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph. 5:2).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:14).

“Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Ti. 2:6).

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit. 2:14).

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*” (Heb. 9:12).

“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26).

“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12).

“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. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls” (1 Pe. 2:24-25).

“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” (1 Pe. 3:18).

“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*” (1 Jo. 2:2).

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jo. 4:10).

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” (Re. 5:9).

Christ’s Submission (Isa. 53:7). He submitted to the Father in everything, including death. “But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Php. 2:7-8).

Christ’s Silence in the Face of Affliction (Isa. 53:7). We think of Jesus’ actions throughout His arrest, trial, mocking, beating, and crucifixion. He did not resist any of the injustice or cruelty that was meted out to Him (Mt. 26:52-54, 63; 27:12-14; Joh. 19:9; 1 Pe. 2:23). He did not complain. He expressed no anger or bitterness. “With no word of complaint He gave Himself into the hands of wicked men to be crucified because there was no other way whereby guilty sinners could be saved” (Ironsides).

Christ’s Imprisonment (Isa. 53:8). Christ was a prisoner in the sense that He was bound and held captive by the authorities. The following is from the *Biblical Illustrator*: “1. He was first taken a prisoner from Gethsemane (Joh. 18:13). 2. He was then taken as a prisoner from Annas to Caiaphas (Joh. 18:19-24; Mt 26:59-68). 3. He was next taken a prisoner from the palace of Caiaphas to the hall of the Sanhedrim. 4. He was next taken as a prisoner from the hall of the Sanhedrim to Pilate (Joh. 18:28-38; Lu. 23:1-7; Mr. 15:1-5; Mt. 27:11-14). 5. He was then taken as a prisoner from Pilate to Herod (Lu. 23:8-12). 6. He was then taken as a prisoner back from Herod to Pilate (Lu. 23:13-25; Mt. 27:15-26; Mr. 15:6-15). 7. He was finally taken as a prisoner from Pilate to Calvary (Mt. 27:27-50). The cross is the culmination of the whole.”

Christ's Unjust Trial (Isa. 53:8). Christ was taken from judgment in that His trial was a mockery of justice from beginning to end. (1) Though He had never broken one law or done one unjust or unkind deed against any person, He was condemned to die. He was condemned contrary to Roman law as well as to Jewish law. (2) The witnesses were false (Mt. 26:59-60). Compare what these witnesses said with what Jesus actually said: The false witnesses' version: "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." What Jesus really said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). He was referring, of course, to His body. (3) The false witnesses were not punished. According to the Mosaic Law, if a person brought false witness against someone in an attempt to do him harm, he must be punished with the same punishment (De. 19:15-21). (4) Caiaphas swore (Mt. 26:63), which was contrary to the law of Moses (Le. 5:1). (5) Caiaphas tore his clothes (Mt. 26:65), which was contrary to the law of Moses (Le. 21:10; 10:6). "No high priest was ever to rend his garments. When Caiaphas in his excitement and indignation rent his clothes, the priesthood passed away from the house of Aaron. And with it went the entire legal economy which was superseded by the marvelous dispensation of the grace of God" (Ironsides, *Hebrews and Titus*). (6) Christ's own judge repeatedly declared Him just, yet he ordered Him to be beaten and crucified contrary to Roman law (Joh. 18:38; 19:4, 6; Mt. 27:24-26).

Christ's Generation (Isa. 53:8). The unbelieving Jews did not know Jesus' generation. They thought He was a mere man who was born in lowly Bethlehem and grew up in despised Nazareth. But we know His true generation as the eternal Son of God. His generation is traced through the pages of Scripture. He is the son of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and David. He is the inheritor of David's eternal throne. In

another sense, Christ's generation is eternal. He is the Son of God, the Alpha and Omega.

Christ's Grave (Isa. 53:9). He made His grave with the wicked in that He died between two criminals and was buried with sinners. He made His grave with the rich in that He was buried in the tomb of a rich man named Joseph (Mt. 27:57-60).

Christ's Sinlessness (Isa. 53:9). Jesus was falsely charged with committing treason against Caesar and stirring up rebellion, but in fact He did no violence. His voice was not heard in the street, meaning He was not a revolutionary (Isa. 42:2). The fact that there was "no deceit in his mouth" points to His absolute sinlessness. Every sinner has deceit in his fallen heart (Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21). Sinners speak lies from the womb (Isa. 57:3). James says that the "tongue can no man tame" (Jas. 3:8), but Christ tamed it. Not only did Christ do no sin (1 Pe. 2:22), He knew no sin (1 Co. 5:21) and in Him is no sin (1 John 3:5).

Christ's Prosperity (Isa. 53:10-12). The end of the prophecy views Christ's resurrection. It is not described as such, but it is assumed, because the One who dies is now seen living and prospering. Through His atonement, Jesus has provided the foundation upon which God's eternal kingdom is built. When Christ returns in power and glory, He will be exalted and extolled (Isa. 52:13). Immediately after the prophecy of the Suffering Servant, we see the glory of the kingdom in Isaiah 54. We see the barren nation singing and inheriting the Gentiles and the desolate cities rebuilt (Isa. 54:1-3), Israel's Lord is called "the God of the whole earth" (Isa. 54:5), and Jerusalem is glorified (Isa. 54:11-12). The contrast between this section of the prophecy (Isa. 53:10-12) and the previous section is why many Jewish rabbis thought there might be two Messiahs, a suffering one and a victorious one.

Christ's Greatness ("Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great," Isa. 53:12). Not only will Christ be among the great, He is the greatest of the great.

Christ's Seed (Isa. 53:10). Christ's seed or offspring will be like the sand of the seashore, forever increasing. This is the fulfillment of the promise God gave to Abraham (Ge. 22:18).

Christ's Prolonged Days (Isa. 53:10). Christ's days are prolonged for eternity. Though He died, He rose from the dead and is alive forevermore.

Christ's Justification (Isa. 53:11). Here we see the definition of justification, which is to be declared righteous through faith on the basis of Christ's atonement. The believing sinner is justified because Christ bore his iniquities. Compare Romans 3:24-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Christ's Power Over Death (Isa. 53:12). He 'poured out his soul unto death.' He was not killed; He gave Himself to death. See John 10:17-18. Christ said, "It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (Joh. 19:30). Ec. 8:8 says, "*There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death...*" But Christ had such power.

Christ's Intercession (Isa. 53:12). Jesus prayed for sinners even when He was on the cross (Luke 23:34), and He continues to pray for His people (Ro. 8:34). The verb translated "made intercession" is "an instance of the imperfect or indefinite future, and expresses a work begun, but not yet ended" (David Baron). Christ died for our sins and ever lives to make intercession for His people (Heb. 7:25). What a great salvation! God's people, too, are instructed to pray for all men, because it is God's will for them to be saved (1 Ti. 2:1-6). "Let us not then for one moment do Him the dishonor of thinking that the 'intercession for transgressors' is to win for them the favor of a stern, austere God. Not the intercession of Blastus with

'highly displeased' Herod (Acts 12) affords the divine illustration to *His* intercession; rather turn to Queen Esther, who in her own personal beauty, and adorned with her royal splendors, moved the affections of the king, so that when the golden sceptre was held out to her, every single one of her countrymen was as safe as she herself (Esther 5)" (F.C. Jennings).

Isaiah 54 God's New Covenant with Israel

Immediately after the prophecy of Christ's suffering, the prophet contemplates Israel's restoration and glorification. This is the ultimate fruit of Christ's atonement. God will establish a new covenant with Israel ("the covenant of my peace," Isa. 54:10). The eternal kingdom is the joy that was set before Christ during His suffering (Heb. 12:2).

1. There will be joyful singing (Isa. 54:1).

The great joy that will permeate Christ's kingdom is emphasized by the prophets. See the commentary on Isaiah 35:10.

God made man to be a musical, singing creature, but after the fall this great gift has more often been used for sensual, evil purposes. In Christ's kingdom, music and singing will be restored to its intended purpose of being an expression of holy and righteous sentiments for the glory of God.

2. There will be dramatic increase (Isa. 54:1).

The barren and the married wife refer to Israel in captivity and Israel restored. The seed of Israel will be greater in Christ's kingdom ("the children of the desolate") than in former times ("the children of the married wife"). It also refers to Israel under the law and Israel under the covenant of grace. This is how Paul applied it in Galatians 4:21-31.

3. There will be enlargement (Isa. 54:2-3).