

Isaiah 53 - The Life And Death Of Messiah Prophesied

The following chapter was written around 700BC. From the earliest days Isaiah 53 was interpreted by the Jews as applying to the Messiah. However, with its clear fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ, many Jewish synagogues have carefully avoided reading this passage! But in this most amazing passage, God has given us not only the details of the life and death of the Messiah, but also the reasons and results from His death! Here are the 12 verses of Isaiah chapter 53 (in blue), followed by my own comments (in black italic).

1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
Indicates that few would believe in Jesus. (John 6:66, 12:37-38)

2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
Jesus had humble and poor beginnings, not coming as a royal King, but as a commoner. (Luke 2:7)

3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
Jesus was despised, rejected, and suffered at the hands of His own people! (Mathew 27:21-23)

4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.
Even though Jesus would heal many, and take the sorrows for others, yet the Jewish people would consider Him cursed by God for it is written in Deuteronomy 21:23 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree' (Luke 19:41-42)

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
Though Jesus was cursed, it was for a reason! He was crushed for our sins so that we could be healed and have peace with God! Note also that this prophecy says that the Messiah would be 'pierced'. The Jewish method of execution is stoning, though God spoke through the prophet Isaiah and said He would be 'pierced' because He knew that Jesus would be crucified, having His hands and feet nailed (pierced) to the cross!

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
It would be God the Father's will that all sin would be laid upon Jesus! (Gal 1:4)

7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.
This verse shows how Jesus, the sacrificial lamb, would be silent before His accusers. This happened as recorded in Mathew 27:12.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

Jesus was judged and died without having any physical descendants. (Mathew 27:35)

9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Jesus died alongside common criminals but was given a rich man's tomb in which He was buried! (Mathew 27:57)

10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

Even though verse 8 says that Jesus was cut off and had no descendants (physically) yet this verse says that after being made a guilt offering (crucified), Jesus would 'see his offspring and prolong his days'! Amazing prophecy showing that even though Jesus would be killed, He would rise from the dead, live again and that spiritually He would have many offspring! (Mark 16:16)

11 After the suffering of his soul, He will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

God the Father saw the suffering of Jesus and was fully satisfied. Sin demanded a sacrificial death and in doing so, Jesus opened the way so that through knowledge of what happened on the cross, humankind could again be justified! (seen as perfect and spotless in God's sight.) (Romans 5:8-9, 2 Cor 5:21)

12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Jesus is now exalted by the Father, for He bore our sins, dying on a cross, and even when He was dying He interceded for those who crucified Him saying 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do!' Amazing! (Luke 23:32-34)

With all this in mind, can there actually be any doubt as to who Jesus was? We have seen that He didn't just claim to be a teacher, or a spiritual leader. He claimed to be the one and only Messiah, God in the flesh! His birth, life, and death all accurately and specifically fulfill prophecies recorded hundreds of years earlier. So God has not left us without a means of knowing who the Messiah is! But you have to decide - for Jesus is either a lunatic, a great liar, or He is the Lord to whom we all have to bow.