

Come Follow Me
Elo Viz foundation
Week 40
Isaiah 50-57

This week marks the 40th week we have been studying the Old testament. It has been a wonderful journey that has led us to this climax. The most important chapter for us to study of all the Old testament. This is the peak, the pinnacle of all that was written. This week we will get to study Isaiah's vision of our Savior, Jesus Christ and His eternal sacrificial atonement for us.

Isaiah begins in chapter 53: "Who hath believed our report?" This may seem like a strange phrase, but it's a moment of excitement and passion. He is saying: Can you believe it! Have you heard the exciting news?

The Jews in that time and still today believe that they are looking for some military leader that is going to save them from their bondage, deliver them from their enemies. This revelation shows them then, and us now that God's plan for Christ to save his children was not as they hoped. Isaiah outlines his life very clearly.

"2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender **plant**, and as a **root** out of a **dry** ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is no beauty* that we should desire him."

The phrase tender plant has another definition of infancy. Isaiah saw how Christ would come into this world. The angel in Nephi's vision described it as "the Condescension of God" (1 Nephi 11:13-17) He would leave His royal throne on the right hand of God and come down to earth as a baby, a child, an innocent infant. And He would come at a time when there was no faith or belief in Him or His mission at that time. Isaiah put it this way: He would come "as a **root** out of a **dry** ground" Dry ground is an analogy of the state of the earth when He would come. This next part though is a bit confusing. I'm sure all of us have had the thoughts about what Christ looks like. Would we recognize Him if we saw Him walking down the street. Isaiah's answer to us is "no", He has no "comeliness" meaning a quality of being attractive or pleasing in appearance. "There is no beauty that we should desire Him." Perhaps this is why so many people missed Him during His earthly ministry. This principle is clear as we read the stories of His life. The woman at the well was hesitant to even talk to Him. He wasn't taller than normal, He wasn't shorter than normal. I think this is important because sometimes, especially today in our social media world, we seek after people or follow people that we are attracted to, either physically or because of their personality. Not Christ! We follow Him and seek after Him because of who He is and what He did for us. And what He did was very clear in this revelation from Isaiah.

"He is **despised** and rejected of men; a man of **sorrows**, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we **esteemed** him not."

That sounds awful. Could you imagine? Or in the words of Isaiah. "Can you believe this?" He was despised: He was hated. Remember He was perfect. He never sinned, never offended any one. Was never mean or selfish or angry toward anyone and yet they hated Him. He lived in

sorrow, experiencing constant grief: meaning sadness, anguish, pain, agony. Not because of anything He did, but because of what we did and will do. And because of what He did for us we turned our faces away from him. We turned away from Him in shame or embarrassment. Could you imagine how that must have felt for Him? And that was just the emotional pain He endured.

“4 ¶ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he *was* wounded (literally pierced, injured, hurt) for our transgressions, *he was* bruised (meaning: Crushed) for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes (His whippings or beatings) we are healed.”

It tells us very little in the 4 Gospels of the New Testament about what Christ had to go through between the Garden of Gethsemane and the grueling crucifixion of the cross because in that day the Jews were regularly persecuted, beaten and torched by the Romans. They didn't think that it was out of the ordinary what Jesus endured. But to us it's hard to imagine all that He really had to go through. We know that after all the beatings and whippings, and the crown of thorns He was hardly even recognizable as a man. Pilot said: “Behold the man”. Stating: Do you see this figure, this is a man though you may not recognize Him as one because of all the beatings he has gone through. And during all this. “He opened not His mouth” He didn't speak a word. He did it willingly.

“[The] Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” “for the transgression of my people [God's people. His Children] was he stricken.

“10 ¶ Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.”

Though it is not recorded this way. Many scholars believe that when Jesus was hanging on the cross and He utters a verse contained in Psalms 22:

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

It is believed that He actually quoted all of Psalms 22 not just the first line. After reading it, it would seem appropriate that He actually would. Listen to these words as you imagine your Savior about to die for you:

“1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so* far from helping me, *and from* the words of my roaring?

2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

3 But thou *art* holy, O *thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

6 But I *am* a worm, and no man; a **reproach** of men, and **despised** of the people.

This may sound a little strange imagining Jesus on the cross stating “I am a worm”, at least until we really understand the power of this statement.

In the middle east they don't have worms like we have in America. We think of a worm as a slimy creature in the ground that comes out when it rains. In the Middle East the Hebrew word in this verse is called a Tola'ath. A tola'ath is more like a grub, like we would see in the states. A gross looking little creature also known as the Crimson worm. This worm only reproduced offspring one time in its life. When its life has come to an end it will climb up a tree and facing east it will attach itself to the bark of the tree in a way that it can never be removed. It will lay its eggs and its babies will eat the mothers flesh in an excruciating sacrifice. Once the babies are healthy enough to live on their own the Mother will die leaving a large red stain on the tree and the red gel will also stain all of its offspring. The offspring will carry the red or crimson color with them for the rest of their lives. But get this; the tree only stays stained in red for 3 days. On the 4th day it turns white.

<https://citylightnyc.com/blog/the-crimson-worm/>

Coincidence you say? I think not.

This was all part of God's plan. And yet, we struggle to understand the meaning and purpose of all this. Why did He have to suffer? Why did He have to be beaten so badly that no one would recognize Him? Why did everyone of His friends have to abandon Him?

Put simply; God treated Jesus the way you and I deserve to be treated, so that God could treat us the way that Jesus deserved to be treated.

In this light our prospective changes from selfish commandment keeping to gratitude filled following, of Him who went through it all, gave up it all so that we didn't have to suffer as He did. I for one am astounded that God would make a deal for me. One that seems way out of balance to me. He asks us for our battered, old, beat up lives, and in return He offers us the pure, sinless, Innocent life of Jesus Christ. This offer should collapse us to our knees in gratitude from such a generous, Loving Father. These two most powerful beings in the universe gave it all to save your broken soul.

My I conclude with a verse from one of my favorite hymns:

And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing;
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.
Then sings my soul, My Savior God, to Thee,
How great Thou art, How great Thou art. (Hymn 86)

In the sacred name of Jesus Christ, Amen.