Isaiah 53 Introduction, the Setting of the Jewel pt. 2

By Charles Feinberg

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We now come to another division of this first message on the gem of Old Testament prophecy. We've seen the place of the prophecy of Isaiah in the scripture and looked at it in the large all 66 chapters. Then we focused in on the last 27 chapters chapters 40 to 66 of the prophecy of Isaiah. Now we want to come directly even pinpoint a little more precisely a little more limitedly in a central fashion. The prophecy of Isaiah 52 13 to 53 12. I'd like to read it from what I consider to be a very clear translation and very very close to the original language. Isaiah 52 13 to 53 12 in the American Standard Version translated in nineteen hundred and one at the beginning of our century. Now this beautiful portion of fifteen verses reads in this way Behold! (What a way to start). Behold the very first servant song Isaiah 42 1 began. Behold my servant. Here it is. Behold my servant shall deal wisely he shall be exalted and lifted up and shall be very high like as many were astonished at thee His visage was so marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of men.

So shall he sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at him for that which had not been told them shall they see and that which they had not heard shall they understand. Who hath believed our message and to whom had the arm of the Lord been revealed for he grew 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 see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and
rejected of men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and as one from whom men hide their face. He was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely, he hath borne our grief and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted but he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes, we are healed. Oh, we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth as a lamb that is led to the slaughter. And as a sheep that before its shears is dumb.

So he opened not his mouth by oppression and judgment. He was taken away. And as for his generation who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due. And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death although he had done no violence neither was any deceit in his mouth. 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 he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied by the knowledge of himself shall my righteous servant justify many and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore, will I divide him a portion with the great and he shall divide the spoil with the strong because he poured out his soul unto death and was numbered with the transgressors. Yet he bear the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors. The prophecy of Isaiah 52 13 to 53 12. I've just read it for you. This has well been called the holy of holies of Isaiah the sanctum sanctorum in Latin or in Hebrew [inaudible], it is the holy of holies of Isaiah refreshing and exhaustless.
It's been well said that Moses was permitted by God a vision of Palestine from the Mount Nebo. Abraham saw Christ's death. We read in John 8 he saw Christ's day. Rejoiced and was glad Jacob looked into heaven at Bethel saw God as Jacob wrestled a Jabbok. Paul the Apostle was lifted to the third heaven and saw things not lawful to utter the Apostle John in the revelation was transported to heaven and saw the glorious unfolding of God's purpose for the ages. But it was Isaiah mark you it was Isaiah who saw deeper into the unfathomable depths of Calvary than any other of God's servants. The great writer who defended Christianity a great apologist a great defender of Christianity was Paley. In his defense of Christianity based his whole argument from prophecy on Isaiah 53 alone someone has well said Isaiah is the gospel prophet and the fifty third chapter is the keystone of his prophecy.

The summary of the Gospel. St. Augustan in the early church said Christ crucified is milk for babies and meat for strong men. He went on to say me thinks Isaiah writes not a prophecy but a gospel and it was Polycarp. Dear Polycarp who would not recant though he was urged upon to do it threatened finally became a martyr. Polycarp who was a disciple of the Apostle John called Isaiah 53 the golden passional suffering portion the golden passional related to our Lord's passion on Calvary the golden passional of the Old Testament. Martin Luther said every Christian should be able to repeat it by heart. I wonder how many Christians even know what's in it. It has supplied more texts of the Gospel preaching than any other portion of the Old Testament. We've already said there were 80 references there are 80 references to The Book of Isaiah in the New Testament but over 60 of those references from Isaiah are from this chapter.

Over 60 references to Isaiah 53 found in the New Testament. Beyond question as it's been stated this chapter is the heart. It's the very lifeblood of the Hebrew prophetic writings. It's a great connecting link between and it's the great interpretation of Psalm 22 The Psalm of the cross
and psalm 110, The Psalm of the Crown or the coronation of the great coming King conqueror it's been called the most central the deepest the loftiest production of Old Testament prophecy which has here surpassed itself. The great professor Delage said every word here is as it were written under the cross on Golgotha. Now many sadly enough are able to read it only in English translation. Thank God, we have that but no English translation can do justice could give you any idea of the cadence. The sad minor tones that weep and sob through its chords now as for the interpretation of this portion the Talmudic and rabbinical literature is quite confused in the interpretations that are given of this passage.

The older Jewish interpretation before modern times held strongly and without doubt held that it was messianic referred to the coming it referred strictly clearly without question to a coming Messiah. The difficulty is that after the first century when our Lord Jesus came and undoubtedly fulfilled it in himself then in the time of controversy time of what we called polemics then there was a swerving away from it from that time on and so that the modern Jewish interpretation now refers it to the Jewish nation. We're going to see why that cannot be in just a moment. Among Christians, it was the last quarter of the seventeenth century and when I say Christians here, I mean both Hebrew Christians and Gentile Christians. It was in the last quarter of the seventeenth century that there came the rejection of the messianic interpretation that was because of the deadly unbelieving literary criticism that began in Germany with the school of Waldhausen as we call it that century saw the rejection of the messianic interpretation, of course it got its beginning at that time and went on through Julius Waldhausen even into our day and they have assumed Christians now generally have assumed if they are not conservative Christian Orthodox Christians they assume the same view as that of the Jews.
Now what's wrong with that view? Why can't this servant of Jehovah the servant of the Lord in Isaiah 52 13 to 53 12 why can it not be Israel the nation. Well first of all friends and very carefully mark these the servant is distinguished from Israel. Notice Isaiah 53 8. We read by oppression and judgment. He was taken away. And as for his generation who among them consider that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people. Now if the servant hear it if the servant is Israel then who are the my people of Isaiah. It's a certain individual bearing the brunt bearing the punishment for his people. No my friends. It's impossible that the servant should be Israel. He is clearly distinguished from Israel. The people of Isaiah. And then secondly not only distinguished from Israel he is an innocent victim notice verse nine they made his grave with the wicked and with the rich man in his death although he had done no violence neither was any deceit in his mouth.

That wouldn't be true of any nation not of Israel. Not of any nation that has ever existed on Earth. Now that does not mean that Israel is more blameworthy more wicked than any nation by far. That's afield that's wrong. But they can no more say that they are innocent victims than any other one any other individual in any nation on earth. So this servant is distinguished from Israel must be someone apart from Israel. This servant is an innocent victim. The nation Israel can't come under that category. Further this servant is a voluntary victim in verse 12 therefore will I divide him with a portion with the great he shall divide the spoil with the strong because he poured out his soul unto death and was numbered the original means he allowed himself to be numbered with the transgressors yet he bear the sin of many made intercession maketh intercession be even better for the transgressors. Think of it he is a voluntary victim. Israel has suffered much oh the agony. All the way through the centuries through the Hitler Holocaust and
even to our day where we're seeing genocide on a quiet scale supposedly in Russia under the communist scourge the devilish persecutions there.

He this servant is a voluntary victim poured out his soul. Now Israel has suffered but they are not a voluntary victim. They have been forced to suffer and then this servant is a submissive victim. Notice verse 7 he was oppressed yet when he was afflicted he opened not his mouth as the lamb that's led to the slaughter and as a sheep that before its shearsers is dumb so open not his mouth. He is a submissive victim. He allows it. Now Israel would never be called a submissive victim and we don't blame them whenever we were oppressed whenever there was oppression in our country as we felt it economic or political or otherwise we have taken up arms. We don't care to be submissive victims and Israel no more than we is a submissive victim. Not only that this more than anything else shows that the servant cannot be Israel the servant in this passage is a dying victim his sufferings close in death. Verse 9.

And they made is grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death bless God. That Israel is not dead. Jeremiah we read I will make a full end of all the nations wither I have scattered you I'll make a full end of all the nations but I will not make a full end of you. God has called them [inaudible] the everlasting nation. No there was someone who died a personal death. He's a dying victim. His sufferings close in death. Verse nine now this chapter then cannot be speaking of Israel. There are five valid reasons why it cannot be Israel the servant is distinguished from Israel. He's an innocent victim, voluntary victim, submissive victim, a dying victim. I have heard it numbers of times from well-meaning folk who do not read the Old Testament scriptures and do not know what goes on in the reading of scriptures in the synagogue. I heard a number of them tell me that the fifty third chapter of Isaiah is cut out of the Hebrew Scriptures by the Jews.
Nothing could be farther from the truth. An observant godly Israelite would rather have his right arm cut off than to cut out any portion of the word of God. This much is true. This chapter is omitted hear it. That's a different thing from cutting it out. This chapter is omitted from the public readings of the synagogue in the synagogue Moses is read every Sabbath second Corinthians three states it correctly then correctly now they have reading of the law and along with it a corresponding portion of the prophets. They do read Isaiah 51 through 52 11. The next time they read out of it out of Isaiah not necessarily consecutively, they come to Chapter 54. They do not read Isaiah 52 13 to 53 12 it's left out not cut out of their Bibles but left out in the reading. Somebody has called it the bad conscience of the synagogue.

It's been well said there's only one brow that this crown of thorns of Isaiah 53 will fit and the Ethiopian eunuch found it there in Acts 8 34 and 35 as Philip explained it to him from that scripture he began to teach him concerning the Christ where he was led as a lamb to the slaughter and he asked Philip of whom speaketh the Prophet is he saying this of himself or some other because Philip had asked him Do you understand what you're reading. He said how can I accept someone explains. And he did. This chapter is beautifully full of sacrifice. We talked about redemption it's full of sacrifice and we shouldn't be surprised to find that all five Levitical offerings are found here. The burnt offering was the offering which was offered up totally unto the Lord and we have that in Isaiah 52 13 where we read this one so shall he sprinkle. Many nations Kings shall shut their mouths at him.

Excuse me I should go to the 13th verse Isaiah 52 13 behold my servant shall deal wisely shall be exalted lifted up and shall be very high. He sets aside all his independent use of his attributes and the visibility of his glory he becomes a servant. There you have the total commitment that's the picture in the burnt offering. The old law the entirely burned up offering
the burnt offering is there by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many that's Isaiah 53 11 my righteous servant the one who is lord of all becomes a servant. He gave up although equal with the father he willingly gives up his all to become the servant of Jehovah. That's the picture in the burnt offering. Then the meal offering spoke of the humanity of our Lord and notice Isaiah 53. Verse three he was despised and rejected of men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief a man his perfect humanity grieved over man's sins and in the meal, offering the bruising of the fine flower for the meal offering is beautifully illustrated in the tenth verse of Isaiah 53.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him just as they bruise the fine flower for the meal offering you have the meal offering spoken of. And then Isaiah fifty-three five you have the peace offering. He was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities the punishment that had to be endured so that we could have peace. Our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are heal the chastisement of our peace. He is the peace offering. And then there's the trespass offering in Leviticus chapters one through Chapter 7 the trespass offering. Here it in Isaiah fifty 53 five he was wounded for our transgressions our trespasses. He was bruised for our iniquities and then verse ten we read it pleased the Lord bruise him. Put him to grief when thou shall make his soul an offering for sin, an offering for sin. If you have the American standard version the margin will correctly show you.

It's a trespass offering, he's wounded for our transgressions that's a trespass offering but also in verse ten wounded for our transgressions make his soul an asham. That's a trespass offering that's an offering for sin. And then the sin offering itself. Look at it in verse six, Isaiah fifty-three six. All we like sheep have gone astray we've turned everyone to his own way and the Lord had laid on him the iniquity the sin of us all. There it is and then verse twelve he makes
intercession for the transgressors because he bore the sin of many laid on him the iniquity of us all, poured out his soul unto death in the sin offering in Leviticus the blood was poured out of the bottom of the altar the sin offering of the Day of Atonement also suggested in verses 11 and 12. The bearing of their iniquities carrying them away he bears the sin of many, dying he saved us living he loved us. Dying he saved us, buried he carried he bore away the sin of all of us just as the goat in Leviticus 16 bore all all the sin of the people. That's why it's called the scapegoat. The five strophes. The chapter really begins as we said 52 13. The five strophes are comparable to the Pentateuch Isaiah 52 13 to 15. Reminds us of Genesis.

It's the seed plot of everything. Oh how much you can find in Genesis. You have justification there you have said salvation by blood. You have marvelous things in Gen- well the seed plot of it all is Isaiah 52 13 to 15 you have him exalted you have him marred. You have Kings shutting their mouths at him. You have him victorious. You have it all. You have every bit of it the seed plot. All the main elements then in Isaiah 53 13 you have the exodus portion, announcement of redemption completed a deliverance from the bondage of sin who believed our message to whom had the arm of the Lord been revealed. Then Isaiah 53 4-6. We have Leviticus the sanctuary with its offering as we're going to see in this series those three verses have more to say by way of strong forceful words about suffering. They have more to say about the sanctuary with its offerings than any comparable place in the Bible. Isaiah 53 7-9 numbers the book of Numbers speaks of testings of the desert of the earth. Here he's oppressed and he was taken away from judgment no semblance of true judicial procedure. Numbers portion and then Isaiah 53 10 to 12 is the Deuteronomy portion.

It's a summary with a desert journey the testings of man now passed. Here's a picture of repentant Israel as has been said. Sad at heart and sorrowful that it is loved so late. Zechariah 12
10 is the occasion. When is this going to be stated? This is Israel at the mourner's bench this is Israel's great National Day of Atonement come to fulfillment when the spirit of the Lord pours out upon him the spirit of grace and supplication and they mourn and look upon him they had pierced they mourn for him as for an only son they are in bitterness for him. As for a first-born and that's when they say oh how senseless and bedarkened we were not to realize that when he was wounded for our transgressions why didn't we see it. Why didn't we realize it? Why didn't we accept it? The great Hebrew believer Adolf Safer said blessed precious chapter How many of God's ancient covenant people have been led by thee to the foot of Christ's cross that cross over which was written Jesus Christ the King of the Jews and oh, said Safer.

Oh, what a glorious commentary shall be given of thee When In the latter days repentant and believing Israel looking unto him whom they have pierced shall exclaim. Surely, he hath borne our grief and carried our sorrow. Yet we did esteem him stricken smitten of God and afflicted it's stated that once when Handel was working on the oratorio of the Messiah he was found by a friend with his face resting on the table before him and his whole body shaken with sobs. The friend looked over his shoulder and he saw what Handel had before him before Handel lay the score open at the place where it is written he was despised. He was rejected. My dear friend all too lightly we regard the cross of Christ. May that not be true of you. May you esteem it highly so highly that you say I flee to the cross of the Lord Jesus. I flee to him for salvation as he pleads with me come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

May we under the searchlight of the Spirit of God reevaluate Christ's cross his death as we search this blessed scripture, which so eloquently speaks of him. May the Lord abundantly bless you. As we have together studied something concerning the introduction to this precious
gem of the Old Testament we see the setting of the jewel. Lord willing the next tape, next study will be Isaiah 52 13 to 15. [End]