

# The Suffering Savior

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**Text: Isaiah 53 (NIV)**

1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

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.

3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

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 its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.

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.

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

11 After he has suffered, 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.

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.

## Introduction

In his book *Written In Blood*, Robert Coleman tells the story of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. She had a rare blood type which she shared with her little brother. The fact that he had recovered from the same disease two years earlier made the chances of success even greater. The doctor carefully explained all this to the little boy, pointing out that without the transfusion his sister would die.

“Would you be brave and give your blood to your sister?” the doctor asked. Johnny hesitated. His lower lip began to tremble. Then he smiled and said, “Sure, for my sister.” The two children were wheeled into the hospital room – Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and healthy. He smiled at his sister, then watched as the blood travelled out of his body, down the clear plastic tube. Johnny’s smile faded, and as he lay there feeling weak he looked up at the doctor and said, “Doctor, when do I die?”

Johnny thought that giving his blood to his sister meant giving up his life. Yet because of his great love for her he was prepared to pay the price.

Source: quote excerpted from Robert Coleman, *Written in Blood*.

Traditionally, Saviors aren't the ones who suffer—instead they save the suffering. The great paradox is that Christ saved the suffering (us) through His suffering.

Consider the *facts* about how His suffering saves all who call upon Him.

## **I. He was Revealed as Savior Through His Suffering (v.1-5).**

**1** Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? **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. **3** He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. **4** Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. **5** But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

### **A. The Father brought Him to us through humble beginnings (v.1-3).**

### **B. He identified Himself with the suffering to bring an end to our suffering (4-5).**

## **II. He was Revealed as Savior Because of Our Sin (v.6-9).**

**6** We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. **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 its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. **8** By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. **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.

### **A. His suffering was the result of the sinfulness of humanity (v.6-7).**

### **B. His suffering identified him with his creation He came to redeem (v.8-9).**

## **III. He was Revealed as Savior Through His Sacrifice (10-12).**

**10** Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. **11** After he has suffered, 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. **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.

A. Only the Savior/Messiah could have offered Himself for our sin (v.10-11).

B. Only the Savior/Messiah will be exalted as the victorious conqueror (v.12).

## Conclusion

An article in National Geographic several years ago provided a penetrating picture of God's love. After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked it over with a stick.

When he struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings.

The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings. She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies.

When the blaze arrived and the heat scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast. Because she had been willing to die, those under the cover of her wings would live.

Likewise Christ gave his life to save us from the disastrous fire of sin.