

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this series about sharing from our quiet times you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. We are two teachers and every day during the past week we had a quiet time from 7 selected chapters from ISAIAH in the Old Testament. Once a week we come together to share what we have learned from our quiet times. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's topic is A DISCIPLE SHARES WHAT HE LEARNS FROM ISAIAH - part 3.

(S) **SHARING FROM SELECTED CHAPTERS FROM ISAIAH**

This past week we have read, meditated and prayed from Isaiah chapters 48, 52, 53, 55, 58, 59 and 61. We will use our notes to share important truths and lessons from these chapters and discuss some difficult passages.

Sharing quiet times from Isaiah chapter 48.

God foretold the past, directs the present and foretells the future.

First. God foretold the past. In Isaiah 48:3-5 God says, "I *foretold* the former things long ago, my mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. ... I told you these things long ago; before they happened I announced them to you so that you could not say, 'My idols did them; my wooden image and metal god ordained them'." The unique characteristic of the God of the Bible is that in the past he predicted what would happen in the future and later in history he fulfilled everything he had predicted. No god of any other religion in the world has ever been able to do this! The living God is the sovereign God of all events in human history. He determines everything that happens now and everything that will happen in the future.

Second. God directs the present. In Isaiah 48:17 God says, "I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who *directs* you in the way you should go." Another unique characteristic of the God of the Bible is that he guides his people from day to day to what would be the best for them and into the way they should go. God guides his people through the Bible, through the Holy Spirit and through his servants. God's people, who listen to what God says in the Bible, listen to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and to the wise counsel of God's servants, experience that God guides them to what is the very best for them, their families and their work.

Third. God foretells the future. In Isaiah 48:6-7, God says, "From now on I will *tell you new things*, of hidden things unknown to you. They are created now, and not long ago; you have not heard of them before today." Because the people of Israel have already experienced how God's prophecies of the past have been fulfilled, they will be more convinced that God's prophecies concerning the future would also be fulfilled! These prophecies in Isaiah 40-66 have been spoken before the exile, but take their historical point of view during the exile. When the people would later live in exile in Babylon, they would be reminded that long ago God foretold them that a mighty king would destroy Babylon and cause the people of Israel to return to the land of Israel. In Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1, even the name of this king is mentioned. He would be king Cyrus of Persia. No human being could ever have known this plan of God. In his own good time, God created a new plan and in his own good time, he revealed that plan to his people. And finally, in his own good time, God will execute that plan exactly as he had predicted he would do.

I am very much comforted and encouraged that God, who predicted the past and it was sovereignly fulfilled, directs my present life in a direction that is absolutely the best for me and my family, and that he also sovereignly determines what will happen in my future. Yes, I believe in the sovereign God who holds the future of my life in his almighty hands!

(T) **Sharing quiet times from Isaiah chapter 52:13 to 53:12.**

A prophecy about the Coming Messiah, especially his death and resurrection. This passage consists of 5 stanzas.

The first stanza, Isaiah 52:13-15 introduces the theme of this prophecy: The coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, would be exalted only through suffering. In this stanza, the Lord himself is speaking.

Verse 13 says, "See, my servant will act wisely" or prosperously; "he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted." Verse 13 describes the exaltation of Jesus Christ, that is, his resurrection, ascension and enthronement at the right hand of God.

Verse 14 says, "Just as there were many who were appalled at him - his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness -". Verse 14 describes the humiliation of Jesus Christ. The maltreatment of the people would mar him beyond recognition.

Verse 15 says, “So will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.” Verse 15 describes the glorification of Jesus Christ. It contrasts the humiliation of verse 14 with his future glorious exaltation above everyone. The word *sprinkle* may also be translated *jump up*. Nations and kings would jump up in utter bewilderment and silently marvel at beholding his glory. With the coming of Jesus Christ, they would see, hear and understand things, which were never told to them before. The astonishing change in the lot of Jesus Christ at his First Coming would cause many to marvel at God’s plan.

(S) The second stanza, Isaiah 53:1-3, describes the humiliation of the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ: He would be doubted, despised and abused. Here, the prophet Isaiah is speaking as representative of the true people of God.

Verse 1 says, “Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” Verse 1 says that Jesus Christ was religiously doubted. The prophet says that this prophecy was a direct revelation from the Lord. No human being could have devised such a plan of salvation. And this revelation should be accepted by faith. However, verse 1 shows that the prophet and later the Lord Jesus Christ himself encountered much unbelief. God revealed himself through his servant, Jesus Christ, and yet there were many who doubted.

Verse 2 says, “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.” Verse 2 says that Jesus Christ was socially despised. It describes the low and humble origin of Jesus Christ. He would be like a tender shoot growing out of a root buried under the dry ground. His family and his people would not give him any power or greatness. His ancestors were not great saints, but great sinners instead. For example, Rahab, the mother of Boaz, was a harlot and king David was an adulterer. Moreover, he was raised in Nazareth, a town in the despised region of Galilee. He lived at a time in history when Israel, as God’s people, was spiritually dry and dead. Jesus Christ would have no physical beauty or any outward attraction whatsoever. Nobody would feel naturally attracted to him. However, he grew up before the eyes of the Lord. The Lord himself watched and protected him and saw to it that he reached his destiny!

Verse 3 says, “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.” Verse 3 says that Jesus Christ was physically abused. It vividly describes his maltreatment by people, until he looked almost inhuman. In Matthew 26:67 we read how the people of the Sanhedrin spit in his face and struck him with their fists. In Matthew 27:28-30 we read how the soldiers stripped him naked, set a crown of thorns on his head, and struck him on his head again and again with a staff. He must have been so marred, that people could not look at his disfigured face! The people of Israel, through their spokesman Isaiah, confess the evil they did to Jesus Christ.

(T) The third stanza, Isaiah 53:4-6, is the centre or heart of this prophecy. It foretells God’s wonderful plan of salvation: The coming Messiah or servant of the Lord, Jesus Christ, would suffer (substitutionally) in the place of people. The contrast is between “our” sins and “his” suffering.

Verse 4 says, “Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.” Verse 4 says that Jesus Christ carried our sicknesses and sorrows. It describes how Jesus Christ would serve people in their needs. In Matthew 8:16-17 we read, “Many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases’.” The words *infirmities* and *sorrows* together describe all kinds of human suffering. He would willingly carry our sufferings on himself. And in spite of the fact that he healed the sick and empathised with the sorrowing, at his trial and death, people regarded his suffering as if he were stricken by the plague! They regarded his suffering as his deserved punishment by God. Israel was very religious and regarded suffering as a punishment for sin. But, like the Pharisees, they viewed his suffering as a punishment for his own sins, not for their sins!

Verse 5 says, “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.” Verse 5 says that Jesus Christ was crucified for our sins. It foretells his death by crucifixion as well as the meaning of his death. This prophecy is extraordinary, because *crucifixion* as a means of punishing criminals was only introduced 600 years later by the Romans. At his crucifixion, people hammered long iron nails through his hands and feet onto a cross, erected the cross and then let him hang on the cross by these nails! This was an extremely painful way of suffering. He was finally crushed to death by this violent act.

Why did Jesus Christ have to die? The prophet Isaiah says that he was crucified for our transgressions. That is, his death was the punishment for our deliberate overstepping of God’s commands and prohibitions. He was crushed for our iniquities. That is, he was brought to a violent death because we are guilty of violating God’s truths! He was punished, not to better us, but to pay for our guilt. Jesus Christ not only died for us but he died *in our place*! By his death, he took

our sins onto himself onto the cross and suffered the condemnation of our sins in our place! Therefore, we who believe in Jesus Christ, will not be condemned anymore, but are declared righteous in God's eyes and are reconciled to God. The substitutional death of Jesus Christ gives us God's peace, that is, his complete salvation, blessings and happiness. The wounds caused by humans bring us God's healing, that is, his salvation from all the distress, misery and suffering, which our sins brought into our lives.

Verse 6 says, "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." Verse 6 says that Jesus Christ was punished for our wilful independence. It describes man's sin as wilful independence of God and as deliberate twisting of God's truth. Man's sin makes him therefore guilty in God's eyes. Just like sheep that refuse to follow the shepherd, so all people in the world have refused to follow God. Each person has turned to a different way, a way that he devised for himself and that he chose for himself. All these ways have one thing in common: they are independent from God! It was for these sins that Jesus Christ died. The sins of all those who believe in Jesus Christ are laid on Jesus Christ and their guilt is paid for by the death of Jesus Christ.

(S) The fourth stanza, Isaiah 53:7-9, describes in detail the Messiah's complete submission to his suffering.

Verse 7 says, "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." Verse 7 describes the suffering of Jesus Christ as a lamb. It describes how he responded to his suffering. He suffered without resisting those who persecuted him. *Oppressed and afflicted* mean that he was maltreated by people and allowed people to humiliate him. During his life, he was accused of being mad and demon-possessed and yet he did not retaliate! During his trial he was falsely accused and beaten, and yet he did not seek revenge! In meekness he submitted to the humiliation of being beaten until he was disfigured. He submitted to the humiliation of being robbed of his clothes and being crucified naked. He submitted to the humiliation of being mocked and rejected publicly. Not even once did he seek to say a word in self-defence!

Verse 8 says, "By oppression and judgement 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." Verse 8 describes the death of Jesus Christ as a criminal. After being oppressed by the agonies of Gethsemane, the maltreatment of the people and after being judged by the unjust judges of his time, Jesus Christ was taken away to be crucified. He was crucified between two other criminals, thus making everybody believe that he was a criminal too. He really died, cut off from the land of the living. The sentence "who can speak of his descendants" can be better translated with "who can find his dwelling place?" The prophet laments that Israel has rejected and killed their Messiah and now he is removed to a place they don't know. During the Old Testament time up to the time the disciples lamented the death of Jesus, little was known about life after death.

Verse 9 says, "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." Verse 9 describes the burial of Jesus Christ as a rich man. Because Jesus Christ was condemned as a criminal, the authorities planned to give him a very dishonourable burial. That was one of the most terrible things that could happen in those days. However, God overruled and instead Jesus Christ was buried in a rich man's grave. That was a great honour! In Matthew 27:57-60 we read, "As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away." His honourable burial was the first indication that God regarded him as blameless! He had done no violence and he had not spoken any deceit. Although he was completely innocent, Jesus Christ willingly submitted to all his suffering.

(T) The fifth stanza, Isaiah 53:10-12, describes the Messiah's reward from God and his final glory.

Verse 10 says, "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." Verse 10 describes the suffering of Jesus Christ as God's plan. This is the turning point of this prophecy. The question is if Jesus Christ was completely innocent, then why did he have to die? The answer is that God's wonderful purposes are being fulfilled through his suffering and death. The Messiah's suffering was God's eternal plan. The death of Jesus was on the one hand the unjust judicial sentence by the worldly courts and on the other hand the just judicial sentence by God of the sins of the world! Although substitutional guilt offerings were pictured in the Old Testament sacrifices, in contrast, the personal and moreover willing sacrifice of God's own Son was unthinkable! Through his death and resurrection Jesus Christ would multiply his spiritual offspring destined for eternal life. In John 12:32 Jesus says, "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself." Through his resurrection, he will be alive for ever and ever (Rev 1:18) and God's salvation plan will be realised through him as the Mediator.

Verse 11 says, "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." Verse 11 describes the work of Jesus Christ as

God's High Priest after his resurrection. Again the Lord himself is speaking. Jesus' work of salvation brought deep satisfaction to him. From that time onwards, the knowledge of God and his plan of salvation in Christ would be preached and taught everywhere in the world. By hearing this knowledge and by believing in Jesus Christ, he would justify very many people on earth!

Verse 12 says, "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." Verse 12 describes the reward of Jesus Christ from God. It describes the Messiah as the Great Patriarch, who would really inherit all the promises of God, and describes him as the strong King, who would have a great army of people as the reward for his victorious work of salvation. All those he justifies would belong to him. Jesus Christ is right now interceding for them without ceasing.

(S) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Every day have a quiet time from one chapter from Jeremiah. The selected chapters are Jeremiah 1, 2, 4, 10, 17, 18 and 23. Record the meditations of all your quiet times in a notebook. Once a week meet with a friend or with a house fellowship or discipleship group and share your discoveries, lessons and blessings.

Second. See the workbooks "Go and preach God's kingdom" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".