

DOTA 113 BIBLE STUDY 23
A DISCIPLE KNOWS THE PROPHECY ABOUT THE FIRST COMING OF CHRIST
INTO THE WORLD (ISAIAH 52:13 – 53:12)

Copyright Dota T = teacher 1 S = teacher 2

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this Bible study series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will do Bible study together about one important aspect of being a disciple of Jesus Christ. We will use a very easy Bible study method called the five steps method. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. The fifth series of 2 Bible studies is about the first and second coming of Christ. Today's Bible study is: A DISCIPLE KNOWS THE PROPHECY ABOUT THE FIRST COMING OF CHRIST INTO THE WORLD. The prophet Isaiah prophesied this prophecy 700 years *before* the first coming of Jesus Christ!

(S) **STEP 1. READ**

Please read Isaiah chapter 52:13 to chapter 53:12 for yourself. We will read it during the questions.

(T) **STEP 2. DISCOVER**

“Which truth in this passage is important for you?”

(S) An important observation for me is that this passage is *the most complete prophecy about the Messiah*, Jesus Christ, in the whole Bible. Everything he prophesied was literally fulfilled 700 years later! This fact proves that the Bible is God's word. Only God can predict the future exactly hundreds of years before.

(T) An important observation for me is that this passage is divided into *five stanzas of three verses each* and they are arranged symmetrically. Both the first and the last stanza describe the exaltation and glory of Jesus Christ. Both the second and the fourth stanza describe his suffering. The middle stanza is the heart of this prophecy and describes his death in our place!

(S) **STEP 3. QUESTION**

“Which question about anything in this passage would you like to ask?”

1st Question. What does the first stanza, Isaiah 52:13-15, describe?

(T) Isaiah 52:13-15 introduces the theme of this prophecy. It describes *the Messiah's exaltation through suffering*. Jesus Christ would be exalted, but 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. He would be resurrected from the dead, ascend into heaven and sit enthroned 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 people would maltreat him and mar his countenance 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 his 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 when they look at his glory. They would see, hear and understand things, which were never told to them before. The astonishing change in the lot of Jesus Christ during his first coming would cause nations and their leaders to marvel at God's plan.

2nd Question. What does the second stanza, Isaiah 53:1-3, describe?

(S) Isaiah 53:1-3 describes *the Messiah's humiliation*. 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 *spiritually 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 people 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*. The prophecy 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*. The prophecy 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, the prophet Isaiah, here confess the evil they did to Jesus Christ.

3rd Question. What does the third stanza, Isaiah 53:4-6, describe?

(T) 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 as a substitute in the place of his 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. The prophecy describes how Jesus Christ would serve people in their needs. Matthew 8:16-17 says, “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. Jesus Christ would willingly carry our sufferings on himself. Nevertheless, 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 from God 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. The prophecy foretells us *how he would die*. He would die by being crucified. This prophecy is extraordinary, because the Romans only introduced crucifixion as a means of punishing criminals 600 years later! 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.

The prophecy also foretells *why he would have to die*. Jesus Christ would have to die because of our transgressions! He would be pierced on the cross as God’s punishment for all the times we have deliberately stepped over God’s commands and prohibitions! Jesus Christ would be crushed for our iniquities. He would be brought to a violent death because we have so often twisted his words and violated his truths in the Bible! Seven hundred years after this prophecy, Jesus Christ was crucified. He did not die for his own sins, because he was completely sinless. He died for our sins as a substitute in our place! By his death, he took our sins onto himself and onto the cross and suffered the condemnation and doom of our sins in our place! Therefore God will never condemn or doom anyone who believes in Jesus Christ! Therefore God will declare every believer in Jesus Christ 100% righteous in his eyes. God will reconcile himself to the believer. God will always regard and treat the believer as 100% righteous. God will always look at the believer as being “in Jesus Christ”. The death of Jesus Christ as a substitute in our place will give us *God’s peace*, that is, his complete salvation, blessings and happiness. The wounds that Jesus received at his crucifixion will bring us *God’s healing*, that is, his salvation from every distress, misery and suffering, which our sins bring 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. The prophecy describes sin as wilful independence of the God of the Bible and as deliberate twisting of God’s truth in the Bible. Sin makes a person *guilty* in God’s eyes and will cause him to suffer eternal *shame* at the Final Judgement Day. Just like sheep that have gone astray, so all the people in the world have turned away from the God of the Bible, they have become independent and they have followed their own religion and their own way in life. All people are like lost sheep. Jesus Christ must go and look for them and bring them back again to the God of the Bible. But in order to do that, all the sins of all people who believe in Jesus Christ must be laid on Jesus Christ and he must die as a substitute in their place!

4th Question. What does the fourth stanza, Isaiah 53:7-9, describe?

(S) 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*. The prophecy describes how he took his suffering. He suffered without resisting those who persecuted him. “Oppressed” means that people maltreated him. “Afflicted” means that he 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 his humiliation when they robbed his clothes and crucified him naked. He submitted to his humiliation when they mocked and rejected him 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 the people had maltreated him and the unjust judges had judged him, the people took him away to be crucified. He was crucified between two other criminals, thus making everybody believe that he was a criminal too. He really died, because “he was cut off from the land of the living”. The words “who can speak of his descendants” can be better translated by “who can find his dwelling place?” The prophet laments that Israel had rejected and killed their Messiah and now the Messiah had been removed to a place they did not 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.” The honourable burial of Jesus Christ was the first indication that God regarded him as blameless! Jesus Christ had done no violence and he had not spoken any deceit. Although he was completely innocent, Jesus Christ willingly submitted to all his suffering.

5th Question. What does the fifth stanza, Isaiah 53:10-12, describe?

(T) 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. On the one hand, the death of Jesus was the *unjust* judicial sentence by the worldly courts. On the other hand, the death of Jesus Christ was the *just* judicial sentence by God of the sins of the world! Guilt offerings as a substitute were known in the Old Testament animal sacrifices. But that God Himself would bring the final sacrifice for sins, that the sacrifice would be a human being, who would be completely sinless and completely willing to die, was absolutely unthinkable! Jesus would be resurrected from the dead, because “he would prolong his days”. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was the “will” or plan of the Lord. Through this plan, God would bring salvation to an uncountable great number of people.

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. After his suffering, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ would be completely satisfied. From that time onwards, the knowledge of God and his plan of salvation in Jesus Christ would be preached and taught everywhere in the world. By hearing this knowledge and by believing in Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ 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*. The prophecy describes Jesus Christ as the *great* Patriarch, who would really inherit all the promises of God. It 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 as “his spoils” and he would intercede for them without ceasing.

(S) **STEP 4 and STEP 5. APPLY and PRAY**

Don’t forget to make applications and don’t forget to pray.

(T) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Make very sure that you have received Jesus Christ into your heart and life as Saviour and Lord.

Second. Prepare next week’s Bible study from 1 Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11. Join a house fellowship that does Bible study. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www. Etc

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.