

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 9 April 2023. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

The Risen Messiah

Isaiah 53:8-12

All over the world this morning, Christians are celebrating the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, *every* Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection of Christ. We call it *kuriakon*—“the Lord’s Day”—because it was on that day that Jesus conquered death for us!

My friends, If Jesus had *not* risen from the grave, then we would have no hope for this life, nor for the life to come. We would be “*of all men most miserable.*” If Jesus had *not* risen from the dead, then our meeting together this morning would be to no purpose. If Jesus had not risen from the grave, then the twelve men who took the Gospel throughout the world were the biggest fools in history. Of course, there have always been deceivers who were willing to tell people fabulous lies, and to risk life and limb in order to promote their lies, so that they can win fame, glory, and wealth in the end; but what did the Apostles have to gain? If they had made up the story about a risen Jesus, and an empty tomb, what did they have to gain by doing so? They had just seen their Master die a horrible, brutal death, with the official sanction of Imperial Rome. All of them had fled for their lives; and Peter was so afraid for his life, that he denied that he even knew Jesus of Nazareth. Why would *all twelve* men have conspired to go all over the Roman world, and far beyond, telling people that a lowly carpenter from an insignificant town in Israel is the God-Man, and that he died a criminal’s death on the cross, but then rose again to life? What would motivate them to tell such a ridiculous lie, when they knew that sooner or later, they would die a horrible death for it? According to the historical records that are available to us, most of the 12 Apostles (as well as most of their close associates) ended up dying brutal deaths for their preaching of the Gospel; and none of them gained any fortune in this world before coming to their violent end. **James**, the brother of John, was beheaded by King Herod in A.D. 42. **Andrew** was crucified in Petrae, Greece, in A.D. 60. **Paul** was beheaded, and **Peter** was crucified upside down, on June 27, A.D. 67, in Rome. **James**, the half-brother of the Lord, was thrown off a pillar in Jerusalem. **John Mark** was dragged to death behind a team of horses in Alexandria. **Philip** was crucified upside-down in Hieropolis during the reign of Emperor Domitian. **Bartholomew** is believed to have been crucified upside-down in Armenia. **Thomas** was speared to death by a Hindu priest in Calamene, India. **James**, the son of Alphaeus, was stoned to death in Jerusalem. All these men lived lives of great hardship and toil, and of fierce opposition from people who hated them. Why did they do all this? Because they had seen the risen Jesus! They *knew* that Jesus is alive; and because He lives, we have a sure hope for the future! They wanted the world to know that they could be saved from sin, death, and hell through the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ!

This morning, we will be finishing our study of **Isaiah 52 and 53**. As we study these last verses of this great prophecy, we will see what Isaiah had to say about the Messiah’s trial and death sentence; about His burial and resurrection; about His justification of sinners; and about His victory over sin, death, and hell. The title of this message is *The Risen Messiah*.

Read Isaiah 53:8-12.

I. The Servant’s trial and death sentence (53:8)

(Read Isaiah 53:8 again.) In this verse, Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would spend time in “*prison.*” Now, in the New Testament, the Gospel writers don’t mention anything about the time that Jesus spent in prison; but they do tell us that He was arrested, and was taken to the house of the high priest Caiaphas. We also know that there was a small *dungeon* inside Caiaphas’s house. (This house and dungeon were discovered by archaeologists back in the

1880's.) Jesus was in Caiaphas's house for several hours during the night; thus, most likely, part of His time would have been spent in this dungeon.

With this in mind, let's look again at **verse 8**, and see what happened next. (**Read verse 8.**) Isaiah says that the Servant was "**taken from prison and from judgment.**" What does this mean? It means that Christ was "taken away" from all the injustices that He was suffering, by way of death. This is how Philip explained this passage. As Philip was witnessing to the Ethiopian eunuch, he paraphrased **Isaiah 53:8**; and here is how he paraphrased it. He said, "***In his humiliation his judgment was taken away.***" In other words, God the Father delivered His Son from the humiliation that He was undergoing; and the way He delivered Him was by *dismissing His spirit from His body*, so that He could go to Paradise. We see this same idea in **Psalm 22**. In this prophecy, Christ is crying out to God the Father, as He is hanging on the cross; and in His prayer, He asks God to "deliver" Him from His suffering. The Father answered that prayer, by allowing Him to depart this world, in death.

Read Psalm 22:1-21.

Read Luke 23:39-43.

Folks, the last verse that we read is extremely important. First, it shows that salvation is entirely of God's grace, and not by any good work of our own. The thief on the cross didn't have any time to "reform himself," or to do some good deed to outweigh his bad deeds. Yet, Jesus promised him that *that day* he would be with Him in Paradise. He was saved by *Jesus' grace and mercy alone*, because he simply asked for it, in faith! The other thing that this verse shows us is that Christ went to *Paradise*—the place of rest, for believers. Many preachers these days say that Jesus went to *hell* (meaning, the place of fire and torment for unbelievers) to finish paying for our sins. Folks, this is heresy! The Bible says that the payment for our sin was finished on the cross! Christ did not have to make any further payment for our sins after His death. If Christ *had* spent time in the flames of hell, then what kind of "deliverance" would it have been for him to leave the suffering on the cross, only to enter the suffering of hell? His judgment wouldn't have yet been "taken away": rather, it would have *continued*! No, my friends: Jesus paid for our sins *in full* on the cross; and when He died, there was no more judgment for Him to endure!

Now, let's look again at **Isaiah 53:8**. (**Read Isaiah 53:8 again.**) In the last part of this verse, Isaiah asks a striking question. He says, "***And who shall declare his generation?***" The most literal way to read this is, "And His generation, who will declare?" What does this mean? Is Isaiah lamenting the fact that the Servant would die young, and never have a wife or children? No! The word "generation" has nothing to do with marriage, or biological children. Isaiah is simply saying that few people in *Christ's generation* would "declare," or consider, His death. They would think little of His life. Why? Because "***He was cut off out of the land of the living.***" Not only did He *die*, but He died what *seemed* like a disgraceful death; and because of this, most of the people of Israel considered His life to be cursed of God.

Yet, this Man whose death was so ill-considered by His generation *died* for that generation—and for every generation that has ever lived, or that ever will live. Isaiah says that He was stricken "***for the transgression of my people.***" Isaiah is saying that the Messiah would take the sins of His "***people***" upon Himself, so that they might be saved.

Now, remember that when Isaiah says "***my people,***" he is talking about *his* people, the nation of Israel. Yet, among the people of Israel, there are both believers and unbelievers. Sadly, most of Isaiah's people rejected their own Messiah, and are still rejecting Him to this day. Yet, Christ died for Israel, anyway. The same is true for all mankind. Jesus didn't die merely for the people who He knew would believe on Him: He died even for those who He knew would reject Him. **First John 2:2** says that Christ is the propitiation not only for our sins, but

also for the sins of the “*whole world*.” **First Timothy 4:10** says that Christ is the “*Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe*.” Christ provided salvation for *all* men; and in this sense, He is the “*Saviour of all men*.” However, Christ is Saviour “*specially*” to those who believe. Have *you* believed on Him? Have *you* considered the LORD’s Servant? Is He merely a good man, and a good teacher, to you? Or is He your personal Saviour, whom you have embraced by faith? How you answer that question will determine your eternal destiny!

II. The Servant’s burial (53:9)

(Read **Isaiah 53:9** again.) It’s not hard to see the meaning of this prophecy, is it? “*The wicked*” with whom Christ made His grave were the two thieves that were crucified on His right hand, and on His left. These two criminals would have been buried quickly, at about the same time that Jesus was buried, just before 6 p.m. on Passover day. In keeping with Jewish law, they had to be buried before the beginning of the first day of Unleavened Bread (which was considered a special Sabbath day of rest).

Now, who are “*the rich*” with whom Jesus was buried? That’s not a tough one to figure out either, is it? “*The rich*” were the family members of Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph gave his own family tomb as a burial place for Jesus. And why was Jesus buried in such a costly tomb? Isaiah says that it was “*because he had done no violence*.” God the Father gave His Servant an honourable burial because of His innocence. Men *dishonoured* Christ with a criminal’s death; but the Father saw to it that He was *honoured* in His burial.

Read Matthew 27:57-61.

Isaiah goes on to say that the Messiah did “*no violence*,” and that there was no “*deceit in his mouth*.” When Christ was arrested, He did no violence against the officers; and in His trial, he didn’t tell any lies in order to try to avoid the death sentence. Once again, we see that the “*Servant*” of **Isaiah 53** cannot possibly be the nation of Israel. Throughout the centuries, Israel *has* done much violence against their oppressors (both *with* God’s sanction, and *without* it); and they have told many lies. In fact, the people of Israel have often made lies their refuge. In **Isaiah 28:15**, Isaiah says that his people have hidden themselves in “*falsehood*,” and have made a “*covenant with death*,” and an “*agreement with hell*”! In contrast, Christ did no violence to His oppressors, and told no lies.

By the way, in **1 Peter 2:22**, Peter applies this Scripture to believers. He points out that Christ “*did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*”; and likewise, he says, we who know Him should *also* be prepared to face persecution without violence, threatening, or deceit. When the time came for Jesus to be arrested, He instructed Peter to put his sword back into its sheath. He then *healed* Malchus's ear, even though Malchus was taking part in His arrest. In this, Christ was setting the pattern for us. Christian, the day may come when we will *really* have to suffer for Jesus’ name. When that day comes, don’t revile or threaten your enemies. Instead, follow in Jesus’ steps. Prepare yourself *now*, by allowing the Lord to control your tongue when someone slips into that parking spot that you were about to take, or when the people in the drive-through mess up your order! Don’t curse: instead, bless!

Now, there is one more important thing to point out here in **verse 9**. (Read **verse 9** again.) Folks, that word “*death*” is actually a plural word. It is the word *mothaw*, which literally means “*deaths*.” Obviously, this doesn’t make sense in the English language; and thus, it is simply translated as “*death*.” However, there is a reason why God used the plural. It may be that God used the word “*deaths*” in order to show the *intensity* of Jesus’ death. In the Hebrew language, singular nouns are often made plural in order to show the intensity, or greatness, of something. It certainly is true that no other death in history has been as intense as Christ’s death was. The redemption of all mankind was being accomplished in those six hours when Jesus hung on the cross. That’s intense! However, the plural word “*deaths*” has even deeper

meaning. It means that Christ experienced spiritual death (separation from God the Father) for *every single soul* in the human race. The Bible says that **“the wages of sin is death”**; and Jesus experienced that death for us!

Read Hebrews 2:9.

When Christ took our sins upon Himself, it was as though He died *billions* of spiritual “deaths.” In His human nature, He was separated from His Father; and He paid the sin debt of every single person who has ever lived, or ever will live. Because Christ is God, the Giver of life, His life is infinitely valuable, and is far more than enough to atone for all our lives. Though Jesus was on the cross for only six hours, the separation from God that He suffered in that time was *infinite* in value. There is not a man or woman in history whose spiritual death Jesus did not endure. Jesus experienced spiritual death for six hours of *earth* time in order that *we* would **not** have to experience *eternal, unending* spiritual death in the Lake of Fire!

Folks, the atonement for sinners will never be in short supply. The only condition for receiving God’s pardon is that we humble ourselves, and, by faith, receive His free gift. Christ provided the gift of salvation for all, so that every soul might be bought back from sin and death. Have *you* received it? If not, what are you waiting for?

III. The Risen Servant (53:10)

(Read Isaiah 53:10 again.) Folks, of all the prophecies of Christ in the Bible, this is probably one of the most stunning. Isaiah says that it **“pleased”** the LORD to **“bruise”** His Servant! The word “bruise” (from the Hebrew *daka*) literally means “to crush.”

The fact that that the Father was **“pleased”** to crush His beloved Son shows us two things. First, it shows how great His love toward man really is! He willingly allowed His Son to be crushed so that we might be saved. Secondly, it shows that man did not really have the power to take Jesus’ life in the first place. Ultimately, even Satan himself did not truly bruise Christ. Rather, the *Father allowed* Satan to bruise His Son. In **Zechariah 13:7**, the LORD Himself said, **“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of host; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.”** Think of that! The Lord used Satan, Pilate, Herod, and the Sanhedrin to **“smite”** His Shepherd! He wielded these wicked men like a sword, to pierce His own Son! Why? Because He loves us!

As Isaiah continues to describe the Messiah’s atoning work, he says, **“When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.”** That word **“soul”** reminds us that Jesus is 100% Man. He has a human soul, just as we do! Christ did not merely appear in the guise of a man. He wasn’t just a phantom who looked like a man. No, He was fully Man.

The next phrase, **“offering for sin,”** is extremely important, too. In Hebrew, the word that is used is *asham*, which refers to a “trespass offering.” There were five different kinds of offerings in the Old Testament; but the trespass offering emphasised the *personal injury* of our sin against God, and against others. What does this teach us about Christ, then? It shows that in order to be saved, you must admit that your sin is a “trespass” against God—that your sin has *hurt and injured* a holy God! You must also believe that Christ took your trespasses upon Himself, and that He became your trespass offering *for* you. Christ never committed any trespasses; yet, He became your “trespass offering.”

Now, let’s read **verse 10** again. **(Read verse 10.)** After declaring that the Messiah would be made an “offering for sin,” Isaiah goes on to say that **“he shall see his seed.”** Who are the **“seed”** that Isaiah is talking about? He’s talking about those who would place their trust in Christ, and become children of God. Even as Christ was hanging on the cross, He saw His spiritual “seed”; and despite the great suffering that He was undergoing, He was filled with

joy! **Hebrews 12:2** says that Christ, “*for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”

Yet, the Servant's redemptive mission did not end with His suffering and death! Isaiah says that Jehovah's Servant would “*prolong his days.*” Simply put, He would come back to life! Jesus prolonged His days by rising from the grave, never to die again.

Now, think on that one for a moment! As God, Christ is not limited to time. Yet, when He became a Man, He willingly became locked into time; and in His humanity, He will be locked into time forevermore! This phrase “*prolong his days*” implies the existence of *time*. (It's only in the realm of time that you have “days”!) As God, Christ is outside of time; yet, as a Man, He was born into time, died in time, rose back to life in time, and lives forever more, in time!

Christ is risen forever more; and *He* is the one who raised Himself. Isaiah says that “*he shall prolong his days.*” The word “*he*” refers to Christ! Christ raised Himself up from the grave, and “prolonged his days,” by His own power. Jesus claimed the power to raise Himself from the dead when He said, “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*”

Read John 10:15-18.

Read Matthew 28:1-10.

In the last part of this verse, Isaiah makes another important statement about the Messiah's work. He says, “*And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*” This sounds just like the prophecy of Christ's resurrection in **Psalm 16:10-11**. In that passage, Christ, speaking to His Father, declares that he would not remain in the grave, and that His body would not “*see corruption.*” He then says, “*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*” Brethren, the “*pleasure*” that Christ is enjoying at His Father's right hand is the “*pleasure*” of saving sinners who come to Him. It is also His “*pleasure*” to sanctify those who are saved. If God created man for His pleasure in the first place, how much greater pleasure must it be to *buy us back* to Himself, and sanctify us!

Brethren, if Christ take that much pleasure in us, we ought to take pleasure in Him!

Spend time talking to Him in prayer, and reading His Word! If you don't know Christ as your Saviour, please realise that Christ loves you, and desires to bring you into His spiritual family. It is His pleasure to save sinners; and He will save you, if you will let Him!

IV. The Justifying Servant (53:11)

(Read Isaiah 53:11 again.) In this verse, Isaiah prophesied that Christ would see the travail of His own soul, and would be “*satisfied*” with it. Like a craftsman who has finished his handiwork, and is pleased with it, so Christ sees His finished work on the cross, and is satisfied with it. *The Father* is satisfied with it, too. The Bible teaches that Christ is the “*propitiation*” (“*satisfaction*”) for our sins.

Read 1 John 2:2.

Now, let's read **verse 11** again. **(Read verse 11.)** At this point, the speaker has changed. The Father is now speaking; and He is speaking about His Servant (His Son, Jesus Christ). As He speaks about His Son, He declares that “*by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.*” Because Christ is God, and has infinite knowledge, He is able to discern which sinners have come to Him in true faith and repentance; and He “*justifies*” every one of them. This means that He declares them to be righteous. Not one repentant sinner is overlooked or

misjudged! Everyone of them is **“justified”** before God! Yet, it is not because of any righteousness in *us* that Christ justifies us. Faith isn’t some meritorious “good work” which earns us salvation; rather, faith is a gift which God grants to those who will have it! That is why the LORD says that His **“righteous servant”** would justify many. In Hebrew, this literally reads, “By his knowledge, the righteous One, my Servant, shall justify many.” Christ is the “Righteous One,” and we are the “unrighteous ones”; yet, Christ willingly died in our place. Christ justifies sinners by imputing *His* righteousness to their account, as though it were their own. It is on this basis, and this basis alone, that sinners are saved.

In the last part of the verse, Isaiah says that the Servant **“shall bear their iniquities.”** This is the basis of our justification. Our sin was laid upon Christ, and He paid our debt; and in return, His perfect righteousness is placed on our account. Has Christ’s righteousness been placed on *your* account? Are you trusting in *His* righteousness?

V. The Victorious Servant (53:12)

(Read Isaiah 53:12 again.) At the beginning of the Servant Song (in **Isaiah 52:13**), God the Father declared that **“My servant...shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high.”** Now, as the song is drawing to its close, we understand *why* He will receive all this exaltation. Because the Lord Jesus Christ has suffered for our sins, and has purchased our salvation, the Father has now exalted Him, and has divided to Him a **“portion with the great.”**

Now, what does Isaiah mean when he says that the Messiah **“shall divide the spoil”**? Does this mean that there was an *enemy* whom Christ fought, defeated, and “spoiled”? Yes! That enemy is Satan—the one who once held the **“power of death.”** You see, before Christ died and rose again, man’s sin problem was not settled; and Satan *seemed* to have the legal right to keep men in *his* spiritual family. Before Jesus rose from the grave, believers did not go to God’s immediate presence in Heaven. Instead, they went to a place called *sheol*, Paradise, or “Abraham’s bosom”—a place of comfort for the righteous dead, in a spiritual realm in the heart of the earth. Their souls were at rest: but they weren’t in God’s presence, because their sin had not yet been paid for. Can you imagine how Satan must have boasted whenever he appeared before God to accuse the saints down on earth? He probably bragged, again and again, that “Those souls down in sheol are *mine*. You don’t have the right to keep them, God. Man rejected you, and chose to follow *me*. They’re *mine*! Release them, and hand them over to *me*!” Little did Satan know what the Son of God was going to do to buy those souls back; and little did he know that he would play his own part in making it happen, by inciting the mob to crucify God’s Son! Through Christ’s death and resurrection, Satan was defeated! Satan’s seemingly valid claim upon the souls of believers was demolished. Through Christ’s victory on the cross, Satan has been “spoiled.” **Colossians 2:13-15** says that Christ has **“spoiled principalities and powers,”** and has **“made a shew of them openly.”**

Now, if Satan and his demons be the enemy who was “spoiled,” the next question is: Who are the **“great ones”** and the **“strong ones”** with whom Christ *shares* the spoils? It’s believers—Christ’s spiritual **“seed”** (those who have been saved). We who know Christ are His soldiers, fighting under His command in the battle against Satan; and Christ has graciously given His warriors the “spoils” of His victory on the cross.

This, of course, raises another question: “What, exactly, *are* the ‘spoils’?” The “spoils” are the spiritual gifts that Christ gives to Christians. In **Psalm 68:18**, it was prophesied that the Messiah, after His resurrection, would **“receive gifts for men.”** In **Ephesians 4:8**, Paul cited this verse, and applied it to Jesus; and by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he changed the word **“received”** to **“gave.”** Let’s compare these two Scriptures.

Read Psalm 68:18.

Read Ephesians 4:7-12.

These two verses from the Old and New Testaments complement each other perfectly. The Father gave the spiritual gifts to His Son; and the Son, in turn, gives those gifts to those who are saved. And what *are* these gifts? They are many things! For one thing, they are the *gifted men* whom God has given for the perfecting and edifying of His church (namely, the Apostles and prophets of the early church age, and then evangelists, pastors, and teachers). These “gifts” also include the seven spiritual gifts which God has given to believers. They include the spiritual riches that believers have in Christ (such as wisdom, prudence, knowing the mystery of his will, etc.). They also include the rewards that believers will one day receive for their service to Christ (crowns, and positions of authority in the future 1,000-year Kingdom of Christ). Christ’s redeemed ones will join their Lord in fighting against the Antichrist and his armies at the Battle of Armageddon; and when the battle is over, they will receive positions of power and authority in the glorious 1,000-year Kingdom that will follow. Christ’s resurrected saints will sit upon thrones, and will reign over cities and nations in His Kingdom!

Yet, why will all this exaltation be possible? Isaiah answers this question at the end of **verse 12**. Christ was exalted (and we will be exalted with Him) because He ***“poured out His soul unto death.”*** Once again, we are reminded that no man took Jesus’ life from Him: instead, He willingly gave up His life for our sakes. This took incredible humility on Christ’s part. Not only did He give up Himself to be crucified, but He also allowed Himself to be ***“numbered with the transgressors.”*** Christ was perceived to be a criminal; He was treated as a criminal; and He died alongside criminals.

The hours when Jesus was on the cross were the darkest in history—not only spiritually, but physically. In several ancient records, it is recorded that in A.D. 33, there was darkness over all the land. In A.D. 52, a **Samaritan** historian named Thallus recorded that “Upon the whole world there came a most fearful darkness. Many rocks were split in two by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down.” In A.D. 137, a Greek named **Phlegon** recorded that “In the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad, there was ‘the greatest eclipse of the sun,’ and that it became night in the sixth hour of the day, so that stars even appeared in the heavens. There was a great earthquake in Bithynia, and many things were overturned in Nicaea.” Even the Chinese recorded an unnatural darkness in 7th year of Han Emperor Guang Wu. The annals say that “In the day of Gui Hai, the last day of the month, there was a solar eclipse...[The emperor] avoided the Throne Room, suspended all military activities, and did not handle official business for five days.” No wonder they were afraid, since a solar eclipse is not even possible during a full moon! It was an unnatural darkness; and everyone knew it! The annal went on to say, “The sun and the moon were eclipsed. *The sins of all the people are now on one man.* [The emperor] proclaims pardon to all under heaven.”

The Chinese, of course, had no idea who Jesus of Nazareth is; but they were right when they said that “the sins of the people are now upon one man”! Several times in **Isaiah 53**, we are told that our sins were laid upon Jehovah’s Servant; and now, in the last part of **verse 12**, this truth is stated again. Isaiah says that the Servant ***“bare the sin of many.”*** But that’s not all. Not only did He bare our sins, but He ***“made intercession for the transgressors.”*** At this very moment, as Christ sits on His throne in Heaven, He is interceding to the Father on the behalf of the redeemed. Christian, He is interceding for *you*; and it is all because He lives!

Conclusion: For 2,000 years now, sinners have been struck by the power and conviction of **Isaiah 52 and 53**, and have placed their faith in Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, Lord, and Saviour. The atonement that Christ accomplished was not merely for the Jews, but for all nations. Many people have, by faith, been “sprinkled” with Christ’s blood; and many more will yet consider the Saviour of whom they had not heard.

However, the question is: “Have *you* considered Jesus of Nazareth?” Have you personally placed your faith in the One who has won the victory over sin, death, and hell? Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost; and He will save your soul, if you will have Him. Jesus said, ***“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.”***

Christian, are you serving Him with all your heart? Jesus gave His life for you: what are you giving for *Him*?