Jesus: The Suffering, Exalted Servant

Zanesville, OH | September 1, 2019 | John Pollard | Sermon Notes

**Foundational Scripture:** Isaiah 52:13-53:12

**Intro**:

* During the course of the series we have entitled: **Doubts, Questions and Evidences**, we have discussed the question of whether or not the bible as God’s word is true and reliable. We have talked about the main character of the bible investigating whether or not He was just a myth or if He was a historical figure that lived and walked on earth. Recently we have been dealing with the question of whether Jesus was just a great prophet/teacher or if He indeed is God.
* Tonight’s lesson will hopefully show several things: (1) The Bible is true and reliable (2) Jesus Fulfills the OT (3) Jesus was a real historical figure (4) Jesus is God (5) Jesus died to save man from sin. There is no chapter or chapters in the bible that combine all these aspects more intricately yet so simply than that of Isa. 52:13-53:12. The servant song of Isaiah, as it is sometimes called, is a Messianic prophecy largely regarded as one of the more emotional and moving prophecies in all of the OT. But more importantly, it brilliantly details the mission and purpose of the Messiah as He fulfills God’s plan of salvation prepared before the foundation of the world.

**The Servant Song of Isaiah:**

1. **Jesus was a real historical figure**
   1. During the early centuries following the establishment of the church, several interpretations began to circulate as to the identity of this servant. Suggestions included that it was the Israelite nation. Others stated it was the righteous remnant to return from Babylonian captivity.
   2. But based on the nature of the song, neither of these interpretations would fit. That the servant was representative of the Israelite nation falls apart rather easily given several reasons.
   3. It cannot be that the servant was the righteous remnant either since according to Isa. 53:8 the servant must suffer for the sins of *“my people.”* It is impossible that Israel suffers for their own sins since they would require a third party for reconciliation.
   4. Thus, the only appropriate interpretation is that the servant was a single individual who was sent from God. This individual is identified as Jesus in the NT called the Christ (cf. Gal. 4:4).
2. **The Bible is True and Reliable / Jesus Fulfills OT / Jesus is God**
   1. Some 39 prophecies concerning the Messiah are laid out in the 15 verses of the servant song. Peter stoner states that it is an approximately 1 in 1017 chance for 8 prophecies to be fulfilled by a single individual.
   2. Such a probability is without a doubt humanly impossible but that it was in fact fulfilled points to the reality that there is a God. In addition it shows us that His word is true and reliable since He Himself laid out these prophecies and they all came true.
   3. What’s more is that all 39 of these prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus over the course of His life as attested to by numerous witnesses including His disciples and His enemies. These 39 fulfillments alone are more than enough to prove that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the OT thereby consummating God’s plan of salvation.
3. **Jesus died to save man from sin**
   1. The most important aspect of this song illustrates the entire theme of the bible: God’s fellowship with man. Such fellowship was broken because of our desire to sin (Isa. 53:5-6). God’s plan to reconcile that relationship was to break His Son (Isa. 53:10-11).
   2. Jesus became a guilt offering and a sin offering precisely because of His innocence and His righteousness. He wasn’t anybody important from a physical standpoint and the truth is no one was physically drawn to Him (Isa. 53:2-3).
   3. He held His silence before His oppressors and was crucified among sinners despite the fact that He did nothing wrong. His death and suffering was so severe that His appearance was marred more than any man (Isa. 52:14).
   4. God made sure all that was done and everything worked to perfection for our spiritual benefit. How can we look at Jesus, the suffering, exalted servant and not be overwhelmed with self-less love? How can we look at the cross and not take advantage of His saving grace?

**Sources:**

McDowell, J. *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999.

Stoner, P. W., & Newman, R. C. (1976). Science Speaks: Scientific Proof of the Accuracy of Prophecy and the Bible. Chicago: Moody Press.