

Main Idea: According to Isaiah 53:10-12, when we think of the Cross of Jesus we should think of two things.

- I. There was pain at the cross (10a).
 - A. The Lord crushed the Messiah.
 - B. The Lord caused the Messiah to suffer.
 1. He endured physical agony.
 2. He endured spiritual alienation.
- II. There is gain because of the cross (10b-12).
 - A. There is vindication (10b).
 1. The Messiah will have a people.
 2. The Messiah will have a future.
 3. The Messiah will fulfill God’s plan.
 - B. There is justification (11).
 1. The Messiah satisfied God’s justice.
 2. The Messiah justified His people.
 - C. There is exaltation (12a).
 1. God will honor the Messiah.
 2. The Messiah will honor His people.
 - D. There is intercession (12b).
 1. We have a sin-bearer.
 2. We have an advocate.

Make It Personal: Because of what the Messiah Jesus did...

1. We can experience hope.
2. We can give God what He deserves.

If we’re going to appreciate the significance of Easter, we must go back first to Good Friday. You’ll never understand the empty tomb until you grasp what happened previously to the One who was placed in that tomb.

And what happened? Simply put, *He took our place*. Ponder those four words. It’s beyond imagination, yet true. At the cross, *Jesus took our place!* A substitution occurred, a spiritual transfer. As the hymn-writer put it...

*In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood.*

This morning we’re going to look at the final three verses of Isaiah 53. The context takes us back to 52:13 where we meet a person who is identified as “my servant.” The nation Israel was supposed to be God’s servant in the world. God chose her for that task, but Israel failed. Israel did what we all do. She went her own way. She disobeyed her Master.

So in the eighth century B.C., God announced through Isaiah the prophet that He was going to do two things. One, He was going to judge Israel. And two, He was going to send another servant, “My Servant,” He calls Him. He would not only succeed, but would take care of Israel’s failure, and beyond that, the *world’s* failure. He would be the Messiah.

There are five sections in this prophecy about the Messiah, as recorded in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. In section one Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would *reign*. In sections two through four, he foretold that before the Messiah would reign, He would *redeem*.

In the final section, verses 10-12, Isaiah mixes the two elements. He describes both the redeeming and reigning activities of the Servant. But He does so from a different slant. In the previous verses Isaiah emphasized what the cross would mean *for us*. In the final section He highlights what the cross meant *for God*.

*** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

From God's perspective, what really happened when the Messiah died on the cross? Perhaps no text in the Bible answers that question more vividly than Isaiah 53:10-12. When we look at the cross from God's perspective, we see two things.

I. There was pain at the cross (10a).

You say, "That's for sure. I saw the movie *The Passion of the Christ*. I could hardly watch it. Jesus suffered incredibly at the hands of the wicked people who killed Him." Indeed He did, but that's not the only source of the pain He experienced. Who else caused our Savior pain? Hold on to your seats. *God did*. God Himself inflicted pain on His chosen One. In verse 10, Isaiah specifies two divinely initiated actions.

A. The Lord crushed the Messiah. Verse 10—"Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him." Ponder those words.

Why did Jesus die such a horrid death? One might say, "It's because Judas betrayed Him. That's why He died, because of Judas." Granted, Judas was guilty of a great crime, but that's not why He died.

Another might say, "He died because Caiaphas was a self-seeking, power-loving, apostate high priest. If Caiaphas had been a righteous man, the crucifixion wouldn't have occurred." Not so. Oh, yes, Caiaphas was a wicked man, but that's not why Jesus died.

"Pilate was the reason," another might suggest. "If Governor Pilate had been more interested in justice than in protecting his position, the cross would have been avoided. It was *Pilate's* fault." No, not ultimately.

Another might say, "It was the soldiers. They drove the spikes into his hands and feet. They caused His death." Again, no. They contributed, but they didn't cause it.

You say, "Well, it must be the crowd's fault. After all, the crowd forced Pilate's hand and chose the guilty man, Barabbas, over the innocent Jesus." Once again, no.

"Well then," you ask, "why did it happen? Who caused the Messiah to die?" Listen to Isaiah's answer, "It was the LORD's will to crush Him." Yes, it's true that Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and the rest committed an unthinkable crime, and they are responsible for it. Correction—we are responsible for it, for *our* sins put Him there. But ultimately, it was God Himself who willed it.

Did you realize that according to Revelation 13:8, the Messiah was "slain from the creation of the world"? From eternity past, God designed the event that occurred at the cross. In case you're struggling with that thought, listen to Jesus' own words in John 6:38-40: "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but **to do the will of him who sent me**.³⁹ And this is **the will of him who sent me**, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.⁴⁰ For **my Father's will** is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Why did Jesus die? It was the Lord's will.¹

But He didn't just *die*. Isaiah says, "It pleased the LORD to *bruise* Him (KJV)." The NIV uses the verb "crush." The Hebrew word can be translated "break in pieces." God willed to *crush* His elect Servant.

¹ Another text that emphasizes the divine design in the cross is John 12:27-33, "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.

²⁸ Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."²⁹ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.³⁰ Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine."³¹ Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.³² But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."³³ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die."

The prophet Zechariah spoke of this in Zechariah 13:7 “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!” declares the LORD Almighty. “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.”

Isaiah mentions a second, divinely-initiated activity. “Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him *and cause him to suffer.*” First, the Lord *crushed*. Second...

B. The Lord caused the Messiah to suffer. “He hath put Him to grief,” is how the KJV puts it. What kind of suffering did Messiah experience? Two kinds...

1. *He endured physical agony.* Most people are familiar with this. They’ve heard about the thorny crown on the brow, the whipped flesh, the exposed bones, and the agonies of death by crucifixion. And as bad as the physical agony was, it pales in comparison with a second kind of suffering.

2. *He endured spiritual alienation.* Notice the next phrase in verse 10. “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.*” The Servant died as a what? A guilt offering. Or as the KJV indicates, God made his soul “an offering for sin.”

Know this, my friend. Jesus didn’t die just to give us a moral example. He died to make a payment. He died as a *guilt offering*.

You say, “Just what is a *guilt offering*?” You’ll find the answer in Leviticus 5:14-19. There God gave His people a provision for guilt. He said that a guilty person should bring to the priest a ram without blemish. The priest would offer it to make an atonement for the sinner. The ram would be a “guilt offering.”

You see, in God’s universe sin has a penalty. It’s death. But God’s provision for the removal of sin is the death of a substitute. That’s what a guilt offering is, an offering which the Lord accepts in the place of the person offering it. And that’s what happened at the cross. God made Jesus, His perfect Son, a guilt offering.

Would you do that? Would you offer your child to die for the crime of another? And if you were that child, would you agree to give your life? Not one of us would. Yet that’s exactly what God did at the cross.

Paul marvels at this staggering expression of love in Romans 5:6-8: “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Yes, He died as a *guilt offering*. He died for the *ungodly*. He died for *us*. That’s why we gather in this place every Lord’s Day, to worship the One who became a guilt offering for us. He’s worthy of our worship and thanks, isn’t He? If you don’t have a church home where you are presently worshiping Him and learning how to live for Him, you are welcome here. Join us as we marvel at His love, my friend.

God crushed The Servant. God caused His Beloved to suffer. There was pain at the cross. That’s what we see when we look at the cross from God’s perspective.

II. There is gain because of the cross (10b-12).

You’ll notice a shift in the tense of the verbs at the middle of verse 10, from past tense to future tense. The past tense verbs speak of the pain. The future tense verbs speak of the gain. According to Isaiah, the pain would not be the end. The Servant’s pain would result in gain.

What kind of gain has resulted from Messiah’s pain? Isaiah reveals four benefits.

A. There is vindication (10b). Verse 10 continues, “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.”

There’s quite a change in tone from the beginning of verse 10 to the end of it. For the Messiah, first came the humiliation, then the vindication. Isaiah says that after God makes Him a guilt offering, He will vindicate His Messiah in three ways.

1. *The Messiah will have a people.* Jesus once said (John 12:24) “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

That’s what Isaiah predicted. “He will see His offspring [‘seed’ in the KJV].” He who was alone will have a people! And who are His people? That’s us, beloved. We who believe in Him are His seed, His offspring, His people. We are not our own. We are *His*.

2. *The Messiah will have a future.* The Lord will “prolong his days.” When He comes, the Messiah is going to die. That’s true. But death won’t be the end. Isaiah predicts the Messiah’s resurrection in verse 10.

David made a similar prophecy in Psalm 16:9-10, “Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.”

The Messiah will die, yes, but He won’t decay. To the contrary, He will have a glorious future. Listen to Jesus’ declaration in Revelation 1:18, “I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”

3. *The Messiah will fulfill God’s plan.* Isaiah says, “The will [KJV, ‘pleasure’] of the LORD will prosper in his hand.” Notice how verse 10 both begins and ends emphasizing the Lord’s will. It was the Lord’s will to *crush* Messiah, and it will be the Lord’s will to *prosper* Him. In other words, God determined to judge His Son, and God also determined to exalt Him. He will vindicate His Son.

There’s a story told by Warren Wiersbe about a frontier town where a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon carrying a little boy. Seeing the child in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop the wagon. The child who was saved grew up to become a lawless man, and one day he stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge as the man who, years before had saved his life; so he pled for mercy on the basis of that experience. But the words from the bench silenced his plea: "Young man, then I was your savior; today I am your judge, and I must sentence you to be hanged."²

Wiersbe explains, “One day Jesus Christ will say to rebellious sinners, "During that long day of grace, I was the Savior, and I would have forgiven you. But today I am your Judge. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!"”³

My friend, if you know not Christ, you are in serious trouble. God will vindicate His Son. As surely as He crushed Him at Calvary, He will vindicate Him by judging those who reject Him. Because of the cross there is vindication.

B. There is justification (11). “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.”

² Story told in Warren Wiersbe's *Meet Yourself in the Psalms*

³ As told by [Doug Van Essen](#).

The doctrine of justification is one of the most important truths in Scripture. The doctrine of justification answers the question, “How can a person ever stand in the presence with a holy God?” There are only two options. Either, one, you are perfect. Or two, you are justified. *Perfect* people and *justified* people, those are the only two types of people who can abide in the presence of God Almighty. And since none of us are perfect, that leaves only option two. You must be justified. How does that happen? Isaiah tells us in verse 11 by highlighting two accomplishments of the Messiah.

1. *The Messiah satisfied God’s justice.* What did Isaiah say would occur after The Servant suffered? Look again at the beginning of verse 11, “After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life *and be satisfied.*” Who will be satisfied? Who is the “he” mentioned here? Is Isaiah saying that after the suffering of the cross is over, *the Messiah himself* will be satisfied? Certainly Jesus was satisfied after He completed His redemptive work, but I don’t think this “he” refers to the Messiah. I believe it refers to God the Father.

“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be *satisfied,*” is the rendering of the KJV. When God the Father sees the cross, He is satisfied. Why? Because at the cross His Son met the righteous demands of His justice. Sin must be judged. And at the cross, it was. That’s good news if you have ever sinned.

But that’s not all. Isaiah highlights a second accomplishment. At the cross the Messiah satisfied God’s justice. In addition...

2. *The Messiah justified His people.* “By his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.” The term “justify” means “to declare or make righteous.” In fact, in the Hebrew text the phrase reads, “My righteous servant will make righteous many.”

That’s what Jesus did. By dying for sinners, He “*justified*” them. While on the cross, God imputed the sins of His people to His Son, and imputed the righteousness of His Son to His people. God treated His Son the way we deserve to be treated—because of our sin—and He treats us the way Jesus deserves to be treated—because He is righteous.

This is the good news, beloved. The God of the Bible justifies sinners. This very moment you are either justified or you aren’t. This isn’t a process. It’s a one time event.

You say, “How does it happen?” Listen to Paul in Acts 13:38-39, “Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is *justified* from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.”

There’s the basis of justification. It’s *Christ*. It’s not our goodness—we have none before a holy God. It’s not our works—they are as filthy rags to a perfect God (Isa 64:6). But when a person believes in Jesus Christ and His atoning work, God *justifies* that person. He declares the person to be right with Him on the merit of Christ.

You say, “I want to know more about this thing called ‘justification’.” Great! I recommend a book to you. No book explains it any more clearly than *Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*. Let me get you started...

Romans 3:22-26 “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are *justified* freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who *justifies* those who have faith in Jesus.”

Romans 5:9-11 “Since we have now been *justified* by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

Rom. 5:18-20 “Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was *justification* that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be *made righteous*.”

O dear friend, let this sink in. Because of the cross there is justification. We can be right with God and know we are right with God! We can sing with William Cowper:

*There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains;
Lose all their guilty stains;
Lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.*

*E’er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die;
And shall be till I die;
And shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die.*

Now a third benefit. Because of the cross, there is vindication, justification, and...

C. There is exaltation (12a). Isaiah speaks for God once again, “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.”

There are two aspects to this exaltation ...

1. *God will honor the Messiah.* He says He will “give Him a portion among the great.” When the Messiah came the first time, He entered the world in obscurity and experienced rejection. There was no red carpet, only a cross. That’s what man gave Him.

But God says, “Because My Servant was willing to endure this shame, I will give Him a portion with the great.” And so He did. It began when He raised Jesus from the dead. Then He gave Him a choice seat at His right hand in heaven. And one day He will exalt Him on the earth—and every knee will bow before Him. Yes, God will honor the Messiah.

2. *The Messiah will honor His people.* Isaiah says, “He will divide the spoils with the strong.” In Bible times, when a military leader conquered a foe, it was not uncommon for him to return home and share the fruit of his effort with his subjects. That’s what Isaiah predicted the Messiah would do. And He did.

Listen to Ephesians 4:7-8, “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ⁸This is why it says: ‘When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and *gave gifts to men.*’” What a gracious Savior we have! In His exaltation He shares with His people.

Hebrews 2:14-15 also speaks of this sharing, “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— ¹⁵and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”

Now, one more benefit. Because of the cross, there is vindication, justification, exaltation, and...

D. There is intercession (12b). “For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

What an amazing conclusion to this section! In it we learn that we who know Christ have two things that make intercession possible.

1. *We have a sin-bearer.* The word “bore” means “to carry a load on your back.” That’s what Jesus did. He bore the sin of many. Notice the word is “many.” As in verse 11, it’s not “all” but “many.” He will justify *many* (11). He bore the sin of *many* (12). He did not die merely to make salvation possible for the world in general. He died to justify and save *a people*. When He died He bore the sin of His people. Granted, His atonement is sufficient to save any who will call upon Him, but it’s efficient to save His people.

On the cross, Jesus had specific people in mind. He bore their sin. He died, not simply for sin in general, but as their sin-bearer.

Peter he marvels at this powerful truth (and in fact quotes from Isaiah 53) in 1 Peter 2:24, “He himself *bore our sins* in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”⁴

Charles Spurgeon said this in a sermon entitled, “*The Precious Blood of Christ:*” “Christ, therefore, came and was punished in the place and stead of all His people. Ten thousand times ten thousand are the souls for whom Jesus shed His blood... I may make sacrifices; I may mortify my body; I may be baptized; I may receive sacraments; I may pray until my knees grow hard with kneeling; I may read devout words until I know them by heart; I may celebrate masses; I may worship in one language or in fifty languages; but I can never be at one with God, except by blood; and that blood, ‘the precious blood of Christ.’”⁵

2. *We have an advocate.* Isaiah 53 concludes with these words, “And made intercession for the transgressors.” Years before Isaiah penned these words, Moses offered Himself to God for the same purpose. In Exodus 32:32 He *made intercession* for Israel. But Moses had a problem, as we do. He made intercession for his wayward people, yes, but he too was a sinner. He needed—the world needed—someone sinless to make intercession.

And God sent Him.

⁴ Other significant NT texts: **Hebrews 2:17** “For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.”

Hebrews 9:26b “...But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

⁵ Charles Spurgeon, *Twelve Sermons on the Passion and Death of Christ*, p. 36.

Romans 8:34 “Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also *interceding for us.*”

Hebrews 7:25 “Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to *intercede for them.*”

1 John 2:1 “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who *speaks to the Father in our defense*—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”

Because of the cross, we have an advocate.

I began this message by suggesting that you will never understand the empty tomb unless you first understand what happened to the person who was placed in that tomb. We’ve just seen Isaiah’s answer. We’ve seen the pain and gain of the cross. Now let’s make it personal...

Make It Personal: Because of what the Messiah Jesus did...

Two things can happen in our lives...

1. *We can experience hope.* We can know that we are right with God. God said He crushed His Son. And God says He is *satisfied* with what His Son accomplished at the cross. The question is, *are you?*

You can experience the hope of God today, but to do so you must accept His Son as your Savior and Lord. That means you must admit that your sins took Him there and that God judged Him in your place. You must stop trying to reach God on your own efforts and put your total trust in the Risen Savior who died for you.

You say, “I need help. What should I say to God?” Say something like this...

*Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save from wrath and make me pure.*

*Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law’s demands;
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone:
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.*

*While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyes shall close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.*

Are you looking for hope this morning? Look no further. Because of what Messiah Jesus did, we can experience hope. And once we do, this follows...

2. *We can give God what He deserves.* And what’s that? Our *everything!* Our worship, our praise, our lives, our *everything.* How could it be less? How could He give His all for us and we respond by giving less than our all to Him?