

Isaiah 53
Good Friday
2018/22

Introduction:

In the last decade on planet earth...

Around 55 million people died each year.

Around 152,000 people die each day.

Around 6,500 people die each hour.

Around 105 people die each minute.

According to the population reference bureau over 108 billion people have died in the history of humanity.

In other words, people die all the time. So why are we gathered tonight to talk about the death of a man who died on a Friday evening, 2000 years ago, just outside of Jerusalem?

This one man was unique. He was not only a man he was also God. Therefore, his death affects all of us. But what exactly does his death accomplish? This is one of the most important questions you could ever ask.

This brings us to Isaiah 53.

The book of Isaiah was written 700 years before Jesus Christ was born. Amazingly this text describes in great prophetic detail exactly why Jesus died.

To help us understand this text I will ask three questions....

Why did Jesus die?

Who killed Jesus?

Why did his death achieve?

First, why did Jesus die?

He died for sinners!

Isaiah 53:4–6 (ESV) — **4** Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. **5** But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. **6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

These verses are some of the most important verses in the Bible. They are the Mt. Everest of OT theology...

They tell us exactly why Jesus died. He died for the sins of others or in the place of sinners.

One scholar writes,

“The emphasis in verses 4–6 is on the plural pronouns: *our* griefs and sorrows, *our* iniquities, *our* transgressions. *We* have gone astray, *we* have turned to our own way. He did not die because of anything *He* had done but because of what *we* had done.” (Wiersbe, 137)

Isaiah uses the first-person plural pronouns “our”, “we”, and “us” ten times...

Jesus died in our place on the cross.

Theologians call this penal substitution.

It is the crux of Christianity... without it there is no Christianity.

It is not only taught in Isaiah, it is taught everywhere.

Galatians 3:13 (ESV) — **13** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—

Hebrews 9:28 (ESV) — **28** so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

1 Peter 2:24 (ESV) — **24** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

1 Peter 3:18 (ESV) — **18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

Jesus Christ died in the place of sinners so that sinners could be forgiven and reconciled to God.

Why can't God just forgive?

Why did Christ have to die for us for us to be forgiven?

God is holy and just...

Isaiah 6:3 (ESV) — **3** And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!”

God is not like us...

He does not judge or grade on a curve...

Our biggest problem is not Joe Biden, recession, inflation, or cancer, or loneliness, or a bad employee review.

Our biggest problem is a holy God

For us to be forgiven, God must satisfy his love and his justice.

Penal substitution fully satisfies the love and justice of God...

What God requires, God richly supplies...

The bad news is, you can't save yourselves, the good news is that you don't have to.

Jesus died in our place as our substitute.

Illustration:

"In World War II, Ernest Gordon was a British captive in a Japanese prison camp by the River Kwai in Burma.... Where prisoners were tortured, starved, and worked to the point of exhaustion. Nearly 16,000 died.

Gordon survived the horrors of that experience and wrote about it in 1962 (it was later made into the movie *To End all Wars*).

He describes one occasion when, at the end of a workday, the tools were being counted before the prisoners returned to their quarters. A guard declared that a shovel was missing, he began to rant and rave, demanding to know which prisoner had stolen it.

Working himself in a paranoid fury, he ordered whoever was guilty to step forward and take his punishment. No one did. "All die!" the guard shrieked. "All die!" he cocked his rifle and aimed it at the prisoners. At that moment, one man stepped forward. Standing at attention he calmly declared, "I did it." The Japanese guard at once clubbed the prisoner to death. As his friends carried away his lifeless body, the shovels in the tool shed were recounted—only to reveal there was no missing shovel.

...This is a profound and moving story of sacrifice and heroism. Yet it falls short of being an adequate illustration of the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ—because there is no adequate illustration.

Unlike the situation of those prisoners staring into the cocked and loaded gun of a deranged guard, you and I face the righteous wrath of a holy God. In our case, the shovel is missing. We are indeed guilty of sin and deserving punishment. But the innocent one, the holy one—God the son—stepped forward to die for the rest of us. On that cross the Servant suffered for sinners like you and me, because of sinners like you and me—as the substitute for sinners like you and me." (Mahaney, 54-55)

Application:

Some of us are seldom amazed by grace... why?

We don't think that our sin really deserves crucifixion. We don't think we deserve to die. Sure, the murderer, the pedophile, and the rapist deserve to die but not me...

But Isaiah 53 tells us otherwise. It reminds us that-

We all deserve to suffer and die because of our sins...

We deserve to be scorned, whipped, beaten, mocked, and have nails driven through our hands and feet...

We deserve to experience the full weight of the wrath of God on us...

John Calvin wisely says,

"When we behold the disfigurement of the son of God, when we find ourselves appalled by his marred appearance, we need to reckon afresh that it is upon ourselves we gaze, for he stood in our place." (Calvin)

Yes, we deserve to die, we deserve to be punished... But that is not what we are getting...

Jesus took the guilt of our sins and then punishment on his shoulders

Because of penal substitution it would be unjust of God to withhold forgiveness for those who trusted in his son.

Do you understand what you deserve? If you don't come to grips with this reality, you will never be filled with love, wonder, and praise.

I understand why he died. But who killed him? This brings us to the second question...

Why did Jesus die?

Second, who killed Jesus?

Illustration:

Mel Gibson's film the Passion of the Christ grossed \$612 million worldwide, it is still the highest grossing Rated R movie of all time.

The Film graphically depicts the last 12 hours of the life of Jesus Christ. It starts in the Garden of Gethsemane and ends in Golgotha.

When it hit the theatres in 2004 controversy erupted!

Why? Some critics, newspapers, and Hollywood celebrities claimed that the film was anti-Semitic because it depicted Jews murdering Jesus. I can vividly remember watching several Hollywood celebs chastise Gibson and the film. They were angry!!!

The cover of Newsweek magazine had a close-up picture of actor Jim Caviezel as the bloodied and battered Christ with this blaring headline; "Who really killed Jesus?" (Mahaney, 56)

The film raised a very important question, who killed Jesus? Was it the Jews? Was it the Romans? Was it someone else?

Isaiah tells us exactly who was responsible for the murder of Jesus. The answer may surprise you.

Exposition:

Isaiah 53:10 (ESV) — 10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

At first, these words are disturbing. What good father would crush his own son??? Especially through the means of crucifixion?

No Father, unless it served a greater good. What could that greater good possibly be??? The salvation of the entire cosmos and the infinite and eternal glorification of Jesus!!!

Isaiah tells us.... it was God the father... who was ultimately behind the death of his own son. Why? Because God the father overflows with love for us.

In eternity past God devised the plan of salvation. Part of this plan was allowing his son to be crucified in our place. Although God planned this event he is not the author of evil.

Acts 2:22–23 (ESV) — 22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

Objection:

This sounds like cosmic child abuse!

Penal substitution is not child abuse because Jesus willingly went to the cross in full knowledge of what was going to happen. This was planned from eternity past according to Jn 10:17-18. Furthermore, according to John 17 Jesus died to bring Glory to himself, to save sinners, and to bring glory to his father.

Application:

Who killed Jesus? His own father!

Have you ever doubted that God the Father loves you??? Maybe when your life has been really hard? You lost your job, you were physically or sexually abused, your spouse left, your child died of cancer...

In Isaiah 53 God is saying, “I love you. I love you so much, that I had my own son crushed in your place.”

One theologian says, “It almost seems like in that moment God loved us more than his son...”

Are you persuaded of his love for you personally?

If not, let me ask one more question...

Why did Jesus die?

Who killed Jesus?

Third, what did his death achieve?

His death achieved several amazing things...

His death achieved peace!

Isaiah 53:5 (ESV) — 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

Romans 5:1 (ESV) — 1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

His death achieved healing!

Isaiah 53:5 (ESV) — 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

“The “healing” in Isaiah 53:5 refers to the forgiveness of sins, not the healing of the body (1 Peter 2:24; Ps. 103:3). Sin is not only like a burden, but it is also like a sickness that only God can cure (Isa. 1:4–6; Jer. 30:12; Nahum 3:19).” (Wiersbe)

His death achieved justification!

Isaiah 53:11 (ESV) — 11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

His death achieved Victory!

Isaiah 53:12 (ESV) — 12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

The one who suffered and died in the place of sinners will come back with the spoils of war... he shall divide the spoil with the strong...

His death defeated the powers of sin, death, and darkness. His death crushed the head of the great serpent Satan.

As a result, Christians should never fear sin, death, or the devil.

We looked at three questions-

Why did Jesus die?

Who killed Jesus?

What did his death achieve?

One scholar writes,

“On the morning of May 29, 1953, Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay conquered Mt. Everest, the highest mountain peak in the world. Nobody has yet “conquered” Isaiah 53, for there are always new heights to reach. The important thing is to *know personally* God’s righteous Servant, Jesus Christ, whose conquest of sin is the subject of this chapter.”¹

Do you know him personally? Have you turned away from your sin and placed all your confidence, hope, and trust in Jesus? If not, his death will do you no good. Each person must trust him personally.

Good Friday is called Good Friday not because Jesus was murdered. It is called good Friday because of the good things that were accomplished when Jesus was murdered.

Let’s pray...

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Comforted* (p. 141). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.