

Suffering Servant Rejected

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Preacher: Lee Roberts

[0 : 00] As we continue to dig into each section of Isaiah 52, 13 to 53, 12, we need to remember the big picture for the entire passage.

! Our study last week of the final three verses in Isaiah 52 gave us a preview of the details that we'll see in chapter 53.

We will see the humiliation and exaltation of Christ along with the salvation provided by Christ to true believers. Tonight's three verses, the first three in Isaiah 53, focus on some of the humiliation of Christ.

So let's go ahead and read those verses. Here are Isaiah 53, verses 1 through 3. Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

For he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

[1 : 25] He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

These verses prophesy that the Messiah would be rejected by his own people. And that's the main idea for this stanza in the suffering servant passage. The Messiah would be rejected by his own people.

As we go through tonight's text and the cross references, we will see that the unbelief caught neither Isaiah nor Jesus by surprise. That unbelief was predicted more than 700 years before Jesus came to earth.

That unbelief provides even more proof that Jesus was and is who he claims to be. Jesus is the Messiah sent by God to redeem God's people from their sins.

Before we start digging into tonight's section, we need to realize something about the next 12 verses, including tonight's. These verses are written as a prophecy about what the nation of Israel will say on the day that Israel realizes that Jesus really is the Messiah.

[2 : 39] This passage represents the confession that all Israel will make on that day when the nation finally turns to Christ. The words we'll see will be a suitable expression of repentance for anyone who has known about Christ but spurned him for some time before embracing him as our Lord and Savior.

But in this context, it's a remarkable confession of national repentance for Israel. Most Gentiles also say no to the gospel. We know that unbelief is the dominant response to the gospel in virtually every culture worldwide.

That's because proud, sinful people refuse to confess their need for forgiveness. They will suppress or mock any mention of sin or guilt or God's wrath.

And they recklessly dismiss the good news of salvation as foolish and offensive. As we look at tonight's text, we'll see three things about Israel's unbelief.

In verse 1, we see unbelief expected. So unbelief expected is the first section for your lesson. Look at verse 1 again.

[3 : 52] It says, So we see that verse 1 has two questions.

And verse 1 causes some questions too. One of those questions concerns the identity of the speakers here. Actually, conservative scholars disagree about who is speaking in these verses. Some think that only Isaiah is speaking. In that view, they say that Isaiah pluralized the pronouns to avoid calling too much attention to himself. Others think that Isaiah is speaking about himself and about anyone else who has proclaimed the gospel.

This second view seems more likely because of the context and because of a New Testament cross-reference that we'll look at in a minute. First, though, we only need to look back a few verses

to see the immediate context of what Isaiah is saying here.

Check out what Isaiah said in Isaiah 52, verse 7. He said, Isaiah is speaking there, of course, of someone who proclaims the gospel.

[5 : 19] Now listen to Paul. Apply Isaiah 52, 7 and also Isaiah 53, 1 to anyone who proclaims the gospel. And these verses are Romans chapter 10, verses 14 through 16.

Paul wrote in Romans 10, 14 through 16, How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?

And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us? These verses in Romans tie together Romans 10, 14, 15, or actually Isaiah 52, 7, Isaiah 53, 1, and the unbelief of the people.

And based upon Isaiah 52, 7, the Romans passage and the wording in Isaiah 53, 1, Isaiah is speaking about more than just himself when he says, Who has believed what he has heard from us?

[6 : 30] Isaiah is speaking there about himself and about anyone else who has shared the gospel. Isaiah asks another question in verse 1, And that question is, And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

To understand that question, we need to understand what Isaiah means when he talks about the arm of the Lord. The arm of the Lord is a symbol of his divine power.

Here it refers to God's power demonstrated in the miracles of Jesus and ultimately revealed in his power to save through the good news about the Messiah. Isaiah's focus is still firmly fixed on the gospel message.

Let's look at Old and New Testament cross-references to see how the arm of the Lord refers to God's divine power and also the salvation from God. Listen to what Moses said to the people in Deuteronomy 4, verse 34.

He said, Or has any God ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

[7 : 52] And here are Psalm 44, verses 1 through 3. It says to the choir master, a descendant of the sons of Korah, O God, we have heard with our ears.

Our fathers have told us what deeds you performed in their days, in the days of old. You with your own hand drove out the nations, but them you planted. You afflicted the peoples, but you set them free.

For not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arms save them, but your right hand and your right arm, and the light of your face, for you delighted in them.

Psalm 98 starts like this, O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.

The arm of the Lord also was a favorite expression of Isaiah. Isaiah 51, 9 says, Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord.

[8 : 58] Awake as in days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon? Rahab in that verse is a reference to Egypt, rather than the Old Testament harlot, who turned to Christ and became part of the Messiah's line.

Then later in Isaiah, Isaiah 59, 15, and 16 say, Truth is lacking, and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.

The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice. He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intercede. Then his own arm brought him salvation, and his righteousness upheld him.

So there you see a reference to the arm of God and the salvation of God again. And then in Isaiah 62, 8, Isaiah wrote this, The Lord is sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm.

I will not again give your grain to be food for your enemies, and foreigners shall not drink your wine for which you have labored. Moving to the New Testament, listen to Luke 1, verse 51.

[10 : 11] It's a verse from Mary's Magnificat. And Mary said, He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. Going back to our text tonight, look at

Isaiah 53, 1 again.

Again, that verse says, Who has believed what he has heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Paraphrasing the questions, Isaiah asks who has believed him and other messengers of God, and who has experienced God's salvation?

The answer to both questions is the same. That answer is that very few have believed the messengers of God. Very few have experienced God's salvation because very few have believed in God's method of salvation, and of course, that is Jesus the Messiah.

We will see that from the other verses we'll cover tonight, and particularly verse 3. If you doubt that the answer to Isaiah's questions is that very few will believe, we have even stronger proof of that answer in the New Testament.

Listen to John chapter 12, verses 35 through 38. Again, these are John chapter 12, verses 35 through 38. So Jesus said to them, The light is among you for a little while longer.

[11:37] Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.

When Jesus said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. Though he had done so many signs before him, they still did not believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled, Lord who has believed what he has heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed.

The verse quoted there in Luke 12, 38 is of course Isaiah 53, 1. So listen to Luke chapter 12, verses 37 and 38 again. Speaking about Jesus, here's what Luke wrote.

Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled, Lord who has believed what he has heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed.

So we see from Isaiah 53, 1 that Israel's unbelief in that Messiah was expected. And the second section of our lesson gives us some reasons for that unbelief.

[12:55] In Isaiah 53, 2, we see unbelief explained. So unbelief explained is your second section. Here is verse 2 again.

How many of you have seen those pictures and paintings supposedly of Jesus that depict him on earth with this glow around him?

Seems like almost everyone you see or at least more than half of the ones you see have that glow. And you would think from those pictures and paintings that Jesus walked around with a type of heavenly spotlight shining on him.

Isaiah 53, 2 actually debunks that notion. Isaiah 53, 2 says that Jesus was an outsider from nowhere who had no physical characteristics that would draw people to him.

Let me say that again because the statement is so different from what most people would like to think. Jesus was an outsider from nowhere who had no physical characteristics that would draw people to him.

[14:10] Before you get angry with me over that statement, look again at Isaiah 53, 2. It says, For he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him.

Verse 2 says that Jesus grew like a young plant and the word translated young plant in the ESV is a specific Hebrew word.

That Hebrew word refers to a sucker branch. That's a useless, uncultivated, and unwanted parasitic shoot off the main plant which is removed so that it can't drain resources from the main branches.

Those shoots called water spouts tend to be prolific on olive trees. They grow from the base of the tree trunk and they siphon off moisture and nutrients. They also make the tree more susceptible to harmful insects and disease so they need to be removed.

So when you think about that, Jesus' beginnings seemed irrelevant, insignificant, and totally uncompromising. Think about how he came to this world. His parents were common people without any social status.

[15:26] His first cradle was an animal's feed trough nearly a hundred miles from home. He grew up in the small village of Nazareth off the beaten track in Galilee, far from the centers of Jewish culture and religion.

Nazareth is never mentioned in the Old Testament, the Talmud, or the writings of Josephus, the Jewish historian. Christ lived there in complete obscurity for thirty years, working as a carpenter until the start of his public ministry.

And if you have doubts that Jesus' hometown and circumstances caused people to doubt whether Jesus could be the Messiah, just listen to what the Bible records elsewhere. These verses are John chapter 1, verses 43 through 46, and they're verses in which Jesus is calling his disciples.

John 1, 43 through 46 say this, The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, Follow me.

Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

[16:45] Nathanael said to him, Can anything good come out of Nazareth? And Philip said to him, Come and see. So do you hear the disdain for Nazareth in Nathanael's words?

He said, Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Now are you starting to see why Isaiah really is telling us that Jesus was an outsider from nowhere who had no physical characteristics that would draw people to him?

Isaiah still has more to say about the humble human beginnings and the unremarkable appearance of the suffering servant. Isaiah said that he's like a root out of dry ground.

And root out of dry ground translates a four-word Hebrew phrase. That phrase literally means a root in a parched wilderness portion of the earth.

It describes a sapling that no one purposely planted and that no one cares about. Obviously, if they'd cared about it, they would have watered it. The phrase also could refer to a parched root just jutting up out of the ground that may trip somebody.

[17:53] It's another way of saying that Jesus was unwanted, unimpressive, and maybe even perceived as feeble and fragile in appearance, uncared for by the people and someone they wanted to avoid.

He gained nothing in their eyes from his family origin, his social status, or his education. Remember that he was not trained in the rabbinic schools. Even his closest followers were largely unrefined, uneducated working men who lacked any kind of social prestige or influence.

So if you think I'm overstating how insignificantly his own people viewed Jesus, let the people who knew Jesus tell you themselves. These verses are Mark 6, verses 1-3.

Mark 6, 1-3 say, he, talking about Jesus, went away from there and came to his hometown and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue and many who heard him were astonished, saying, Where did this man get these things?

What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon?

[19:14] And are not his sisters here with us? And listen to this, it says, And they took offense at him. Luke chapter 4, verses 29 and 30 record how the people of Nazareth wanted to throw Jesus off a cliff.

And Isaiah still has more to say about how Jesus was perceived by most people. Isaiah 53, 2 ends with these words. It says, He had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him.

What we see there is that Jesus' appearance was completely unimpressive. He looked like any other normal Jewish man. The glory of Jesus was visible only to believers and Jesus' ordinary appearance as a man was the essence of the stumbling block that he presented to the Jews.

That's why we say that Jesus was an outsider from nowhere who had no physical characteristics that would draw people to him. So, so far we have seen unbelief expected and unbelief explained.

In the third section of tonight's lesson we see unbelief expressed. Unbelief expressed is the last section. look at verse 3 again of Isaiah 53.

[20:39] It says, He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not.

The Hebrew word translated despised is used frequently in the Old Testament and it's used as an expression of disdain and contempt. It's also used of the servant of the Lord in Isaiah 49.7 where Isaiah described him as one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers.

Isaiah 53.3 applies that word to Israel's general impression of the Lord's servant and it has all those connotations. They deemed Jesus to be vile, contemptible, worthy of shame and derision mainly because instead of leading the nation to triumph over the Romans, he died.

And worse yet, his earthly life ended in sorrow, disappointment, and execution by those Roman officials that they hoped he would deliver them from. The word translated as rejected there also has a deeper meaning.

The idea is that he was rejected by mankind in general, symbolically excommunicated from the human race by his public crucifixion. Andrew Davis wrote, Jesus' own people legally condemned him when he was on trial before Annas and again before Pilate.

[22 : 07] So also today, Jesus is the most despised and rejected man in history. The people of Israel in Jesus' day, though, had plenty of evidence that Jesus was the Messiah.

They should have known better. Various Old Testament prophecies about the Messianic deliverer were full of specific details that fit Jesus precisely. In the earliest chapters of Genesis, for example, Adam and Eve were promised that the one who would ultimately defeat Satan and overthrow the curse of sin would be a man, the offspring of a woman.

That comes, of course, from Genesis 3.15. The Old Testament also said that he would be a descendant of Abraham, and so did the New Testament.

Said he would come from the tribe of Judah and in the bloodline of David. Several verses in the Old Testament showed that the Messiah also would be both man and God.

Micah 5.2 is a verse that we hear often around Christmas time. It says, But you, Bethlehem or Fratha, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be a ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from old, from ancient days.

[23 : 30] The King James Version properly translates it as from of old, from everlasting. The actual Hebrew expression means from eternity past.

So the one who comes forth from Bethlehem who is to be ruler in Israel would be someone who did not have his origins in the human realm. In other words, he existed before the beginning of time. And of course, for that to be true, he had to be God. In Psalm 110, verse 1, David referred to his future descendant as his Lord. Listen to Psalm 110, verse 1.

It says, The Lord says to my Lord, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. There we know that David was also referring to the Messiah as God because no Middle Eastern father, least of all the king, would address his own son as Lord.

Think also about Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 714. It showed that the Messiah would be God. Isaiah 714 is another verse we hear often around Christmas time.

[24 : 42] It says, Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel. We know that Isaiah was calling the Messiah God because of what the name Emmanuel means.

Matthew told us the meaning of Emmanuel in Matthew 123 when he wrote what the angel told Joseph about Mary. Here is the familiar verse. That's Matthew 123.

Actually, I'm starting in verse 21 to get the context. She will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.

Here is verse 23. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel which means God with us. So, Isaiah directly called the Messiah mighty God in Isaiah 9-6 as well.

Isaiah said in 9-6 for to us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace.

[26 : 02] So, picture the scene here. After centuries of waiting, the Lord Jesus Christ finally came, born of a virgin as Isaiah had predicted. He was born in Bethlehem as predicted.

He was a descendant of Abraham and David. His deity was confirmed by his unparalleled words and works. His messianic credentials were impeccable which caused many who saw and heard him to wonder, can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ?

That verse is actually John 7-26. And here's John 7-31. And when the Christ appears, he will do more signs than this man has done.

Or when the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done? So, after witnessing his miracle working power, a mob consisting of thousands even attempted to take him by force to make him king.

We learn that in John 6-15. And we know that on Palm Sunday, frenzied crowds hailed him as the Messiah when he made his final journey to Jerusalem. Despite the overwhelming evidence, though, most people of Israel continued to despise and reject their Messiah, just as Isaiah prophesied that they would.

[27 : 21] Most of the people of Israel following their religious leaders ultimately did reject him as their Messiah. They crucified and killed him by the hands of lawless men, which were, of course, the Roman authorities.

Just as Isaiah predicted, the suffering servant was despised and rejected by men. And then verse 3 of Isaiah 53 goes on to say that Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Depending upon which translation you're looking at, your Bible may also have a footnote about the word translated as sorrows. That word also can be translated as pains.

And the word speaks of extreme anguish that was inflicted upon Jesus through unspeakable torment. We have even more to see in verse 3.

The end of verse 3 says, And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, so there's that despised word again, and we esteemed him not. The torment of Jesus' body and soul was so appalling that he literally became one from whom men hide their faces.

[28 : 30] Remember what we studied last week. Isaiah started this prophecy by saying that Jesus' appearance was so marred beyond human semblance and is formed beyond that of the children of mankind.

It would certainly have been hard to look at him suffering in extreme agony and sickening disfigurement during those final hours before Jesus died. Such misery simply didn't fit Israel's expectation of how their Messiah would come, so Isaiah says that they esteemed him not.

The Hebrew word translated esteemed is an accounting term and it means imputed or reckoned. It's a vital word when we talk about the Bible doctrine of justification.

Here it simply means that the people wrongly reckon that God's faithful servant was a nobody. From their perspective, the view that Jesus was the Messiah just didn't add up.

It was the ultimate expression of scorn for them to think that he was a nothing or a non-entity and that was the attitude of those who called for his death. That's essentially the perspective of everyone who hears the gospel and turns away, including most of the Jewish nation.

[29 : 46] David Gooding wrote this. He said, Death and resurrection form no part of their concept of Messiah's office and program. They were hoping for a Messiah who would break the imperialist domination of the Romans by force of arms.

A Messiah who managed to allow himself to be caught by the Jewish authorities, handed over to the Romans, and crucified before he had even begun to organize any guerrilla operations, popular uprising, or open warfare, what use was he?

If the Old Testament prophesied a liberator who should not die, but was triumphant, Jesus was already disqualified. He had died, and after that, it was almost irrelevant to talk about a resurrection. The people of Israel could have looked upon the death of Jesus with all its horrors and recognized it for what it was, God's sacrifice of his son, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. They could have viewed it as the sacrifice pictured when God provided Abraham with a ram to offer as a substitute in place of Isaac. They could have seen Christ's death foreshadowed in the Passover lamb whose blood on the doorpost saved the people from God's wrath.

[31 : 01] They ought to have been able to understand that he was offering the final and only true sacrifice that takes away sin, and of course that's something that the countless millions of animals sacrificed over the centuries could never do.

Jesus had, after all, repeatedly spoken of his death as a ransom for sinners. The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

That is Matthew 20, 28. But think about why most people fail to see Jesus as the Messiah. The answer is probably more simple than you might think.

Quite simply, the people fail to see themselves as sinners in need of a Savior. Instead, they saw themselves as oppressed good people in need of someone to set things right for them.

Because they didn't really see themselves as sinners, the people of Israel evidently thought that the endless offerings of the Old Testament sacrificial system were sufficient to deal with their transgressions.

[32 : 05] Instead, what those were were symbols of something better. The people of Israel did not appreciate their need for any greater atonement than the blood of bulls and goats. Again, they were not looking for a Savior.

They were hoping for a political and military hero. And when the Messiah turned out to be a man of sorrows, even though he had been prophesied to be that, they held him in contempt.

And many people today, of course, still hold him in contempt. The irony is that through their treatment of the Messiah, the Israelites ultimately helped prove that Jesus is the Messiah.

Israel's treatment of the Messiah proved the main idea of tonight's passage. And, of course, that is that these verses prophesy that the Messiah would be rejected by his own people. We talked about Genesis 3.15 earlier, and as far back as Genesis 3.15, we learn that the penalty for sin is death.

Because of his holiness, it was impossible for God to be indifferent concerning human sin. He either has to inflict punishment for it or bear it himself.

[33 : 16] Because he chose to do the latter, we may speak gladly of God's grace, because God's own body was shattered on the cross for our sins. What the scholars of Jesus' time failed to consider was the theme of Isaiah 53.

Before conquering the last of his enemies and establishing his throne in Jerusalem, the Messiah would first shed his own blood to pay the redemption price for sin and thereby ransom people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

There was no place in Jewish messianic theology for a sacrificed, dead, or even a risen Messiah. Fortunately for true Christians, we do have a place and a need for a sacrificed, dead, and risen Messiah.

Peter echoed Isaiah 53 when he wrote 1 Peter 2.24. Listen to 1 Peter 2.24. It says, 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. Regardless of what happens in this life, we as believers should take comfort that God himself bore the penalty for our sins on that tree.

[34 : 40] However, we believers also can take comfort in something else. Jesus has done more than just provide the sacrifice for our sins, although that is more than we could ever deserve.

Jesus also has experienced what it is like to be human. Jesus understands what it is like to suffer. Here is a quote from John Stott.

He said, I could never believe in God if it were not for the cross. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?

He laid aside his immunity to pain. He suffered for us. Our sufferings become more manageable in the light of his. There is still a question mark against human suffering, suffering, but over it we boldly stamp another mark, the cross, which symbolizes divine suffering.

We must never lose track of the fact that God himself has experienced the whole spectrum of human suffering. He personally knows what it is like to suffer and by which we should draw some measure of consolation.

[35 : 51] Jesus took a man's heart back to heaven so that he might become a truly compassionate high priest for us. Listen to what Isaiah later says about God in Isaiah 63, verses 7 through 9.

Isaiah 63, 7 through 9 say, I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them, according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. For he said, surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely, and he became their savior. And verse 9 is what I really want us to focus in on.

It says, in all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them. He lifted them up and carried them from all the days of old.

The New Testament says something similar. Listen to Hebrews chapter 4, verses 14 through 16. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God.

[37 : 06] Let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Although Isaiah knew great sorrow and persecution, he was encouraged by his vision of the Holy One of Israel made sin for him, and by also the hope contained in God's promise.

For Isaiah, the future dominates the present. His thoughts of what is to come undergird him in a world of unremitting turmoil. We know that the servant is none other than the Davidic Messiah, the undisputable Lord of history.

Jesus is the true Messiah, and he one day will return to reign as king over all the earth. But he could not establish his kingdom with all its promised blessings for Jews and Gentiles alike until he had provided salvation.

People can't be delivered from their suffering until they are delivered from their sin. The countless millions of sacrificed animals offered under the sacrificial system did not atone for sin.

[38 : 25] Otherwise, they would not have ceased to be offered. The constant offering of those sacrifices was designed to remind people of their sin and the need for inadequate atonement. In these sacrifices, there is a reminder every year, and that comes from Hebrews 10.3.

Those sacrifices pointed to Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. We read that earlier. That's John 1.29. Only the death of a perfect substitute would truly satisfy the demands of God's justice and pay the penalty for sin.

Isaiah 53 is God's promise that he himself would provide a suitable lamb. We all love Romans 8.1, but listen to that verse along with the three verses that follow it.

Here are Romans 8.1-4. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

[39 : 50] Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this reminder tonight that even though Jesus was and still continues to be rejected by most people, we should not be surprised by that.

We should know that you predicted this would happen centuries before it actually did. We thank you also that through his suffering you provided a sacrifice for our sins.

And we thank you also that you provided a high priest who knows what it's like for humans to suffer. Regardless of whether people believe it or not, let those facts make us more boldly proclaim the gospel to everyone.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.