

Dr. Ernest Martin's Home Study Course: Lesson 15

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These notes, composed from 2013 on, are based on taped Home Study Course made between 1977-98 by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D. Former Head of Theology for the Worldwide Church of God; he resigned in January 1974 because of his unresolved doctrinal issues with the administration. Sadly Dr. Martin died in January 2002, a great loss to the world and to those who seek Biblical truth.

BIBLE STUDY LESSON 15 THE REAL CHRIST JESUS OF THE SCRIPTURES

We construct Images of people we have never met, and then get a real surprise when we do meet them. We have been bombarded all our lives with false images of Christ. The traditional good looking, tanned fellow with long hair pictures by almost all denominations is not in the least like the real Christ of the Bible.

When we study His Word, we get an entirely different picture, and it is this we should focus on, and banish the other from what we read in His Word. If we retain that false image, it hinders our relationship with who He really was and what He actually looked like.

Isaiah 53 is called 'the suffering servant'. It gives a dramatically different view of the man. Some have said that the description is more like just that, rather than a prophecy. Almost as if Isaiah was present at the crucifixion. The translators of the King James version masked the true meaning of many of the words in this chapter. Ignore the chapter and verse notations as they are not inspired, merely of some use in navigating the Book.

This could be called the Gospel according to Isaiah, which is *almost* in chronological order, and includes some details that are not recorded in the New Testament.

The disciples were with Him for many months night and day, and they wrote things down. They knew that Jesus was the Messiah and that he matched the prophecies in Isaiah in every detail. We need to go over Isaiah's writings with a fine toothed comb. When you see the real Christ depicted as He was, it changes our view. In some cases it is important to check some words in the original language.

When we picture a 'sinless' individual, and imagine what they might look like, we need to strip away false images and ideas.

The 53rd chapter of Isaiah is called the 'suffering servant'. This prophecy was written 700 years before the birth of Christ. At some juncture, the Jewish

religious hierarchy forbade all Jews to read this chapter under pain of punishment. Indeed one wonders if the same constraints apply now.

Isaiah 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

Despite the miracles Christ performed, few believed that He was indeed 'the 'Arm of the Lord' sent to deliver human beings from death. The Jews were blinded to Him by their sin, and only a few people low on the social scale believed in Him.

Isaiah 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

Plants struggle to grow in desert, parched dry ground, and are often tender and sickly compared to those in well watered soil. Christ was not a strong looking, handsome man. Nobody wanted to be around Christ because of His appealing appearance. His appearance was so very far from the conquering hero that the Jews were expecting.

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Despised by those who thought He was born out of wedlock, rejected by one and all in the population. He was a man who was carrying the sorrowful burden of the sins of the world from His youth. Isaiah in verse 4-6 is expressing his admiration and appreciation for Christ.

Acquainted with grief, the Hebrew word *cholee* from a root word *chalah* which actually means so much more than grief, and includes many aspects that debilitate, as in 'to be rubbed or worn', weak, to grieve and become sickly, malady, sickness, disease, afflicted with calamities.

Not a happy list of words to describe our Saviour.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

Christ was wounded to cover our law breaking activities, and bruised for our sins, more than bruised by the terrible beating with the cat of nine tails with lead cleats which tore His back to shreds. The beating that He endured was for us to have peace, and by those awful stripes from the whip, our sickness

to death is healed.

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Because all human beings had gone astray, deserted God, broken all His Laws of Love, God laid the sin of us all on His beloved Son.

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

He took all this terrible experience without complaint.

Isaiah 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Christ should have been properly tried, but He was taken from prison after only a very brief hour or so. Who shall be able to explain his 'generation' or the time He spent on Earth, or the manner of His life.

Isaiah 53:9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

A grave had been set aside for Him and the two criminals that were crucified with Him, but the rich Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for His body, which he readily granted, so Christ was with the rich in His death.

Some unhappy people, God denying souls, have suggested that Christ organised the events surrounding His death in order to fulfil this prophecy. How insane to entertain such a notion, as if anyone during the procedure Christ endured could have had any control over the situation whatsoever.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

It sounds strange to our ears that it pleased God to bruise Him and put Him to grief, but God sees all, and the result and outcome of Christ's willingness to put Himself through this dreadful torture and death was to bring "many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Hebrews 2:10. God and His Son had planned this before the foundation of the world, and were prepared to pay the awesome price to create their future family.

Isaiah 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

Christ had the same sense of satisfaction knowing that the result of his pain and suffering would result in all human beings being saved to eternal life.

Isaiah 53:12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

This chapter is a powerful demonstration of the truth and authority of prophecy, history written in advance, that the events of Christ's sacrifice were so accurately laid out hundreds of years in advance, and have stood the test of time over the last 2000 years.

When Christ was crucified, He was not 'dressed' as depicted on images and statues, he was stark naked. Not only was Christ subjected to the cruel Roman death of crucifixion, which often took several days for the person to die. But He was also subjected to the punishment of the Jews according to Law of Moses concerning blasphemy, He was stoned.

He was stoned by the Rabbis, the Pharisees, and religious Jews for six hours until He died. One can only imagine with horror the damage to the front side of His body. It is quite possible that He might have been blinded or partially blinded, but Isaiah 52:13 makes it clear that the result of the stoning rendered His visage, His face, more marred,

(Hebrew moshchath, mosh-khawth'; from 7843; disfigurement: marred.) ...

Isaiah 52:14 As many were astonished (astonished) at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

So His suffering was unspeakable. Knowing more about how He really looked is traumatising, but it enables us to know and appreciate Him better.

Isaiah 52:15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

Isaiah 53:1 Who (which of the kings from the previous verse?) hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

Not many kings in history have really known or appreciated Christ as the 'arm of the Lord'. The kings, governments, and peoples of this world are oblivious to the level of suffering Christ went through, and are incapable of appreciating what He did for us. Who will believe? Only the 'few', the very 'few' whose minds God the Father draws to Him.

A lot of people read the Bible, but they do not, and cannot believe what they read, or what they hear. They think they do understand, but their blindness obscures clarity, and their stopped ears ensure that they only 'hear' what they

want to hear. The majority are blinded, and deafened for now.

In time to come, millions will be astonished to learn what was really there in the Bible those more than two thousand years.

All kings who oppose Christ at His coming will be overcome. Those who had not been told about the Gospel will see Him in glory, and will be forced to consider what they had not known. He will sprinkle the nations with His blood and water.

Who has this authentic image of Christ in their minds? Very few one might think. Most visualize Him very differently. All the gods of the ancient world, both male and female were beautiful to look at. The 'gods' of our present era, the stars of stage, screen, and television are generally most glamorous. We worship the 'Adonis', the nice looking people by and large, and are not so interested in the downtrodden and ugly.

All His life, Christ was far from a beautiful sight. He was sickly, suffered disease, pain, distress, sorrow as He grew up. He was aware of the part He was to play in the Master Plan as He was very familiar with the writings of Isaiah!

Matthew 8:16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

When Christ was reading from Isaiah in the synagogue and told the Pharisees that today, is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears, they wanted to kill him.

Luke 4:23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

This is a long time before His death, and He looked sickly then, so they mocked Him because of it.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; 26 But unto none of them was Elias sent,

save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. 28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, 29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. 30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

Matthew 21:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

The 'Stone' was not imperfect, but the 'builders' rejected it (Him) because all they saw were His imperfections, His weakness of sickness and sorrows, and because He was not what they were looking for or expecting. They wanted an handsome Adonis, a conquering hero on a white horse, to come and put down the oppressive Roman government.

Matthew 21:43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. (Daniel 2:35 chaff) 45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they (the multitude) took him for a prophet.

Daniel 2:35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Psalms 118:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. 23 This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

Ephesians 2:20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

1 Peter 2:6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock

of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Had they known Who Christ really was, they would not have attacked, crucified and stoned Him.

1 Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Christ was a sin offering, 'outside the gate'.

Hebrews 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

By our accepting His calling to us, we can go to Him 'without the camp' knowing that our reproaches are washed away.

Christ Jesus was 'cut off', His life cut short, killed and sacrificed for us, a seed planted to be resurrected from the dead. Destined for a criminal's grave, He was buried in a rich man's grave as prophesied,

Isaiah 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

God and Christ were pleased to go through this incredible act of love in order to establish Their Family.

Isaiah 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

God's 'arm', the 'arm of the Lord' is revealed now in the 21st Century to those who God is calling at this time. God is reaching out with His 'arm', the Holy Spirit to those of us who are responding to His personal call.

Hebrews 13:14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to

come. 15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Our part of the 'Work' is to continually give the sacrifice of praise, the 'fruit of our lips' always giving thanks to His name. Selah.