

How a Jew Learned the Meaning of Isaiah 53



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Isaiah 53:1-12

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

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.*

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.*

53:4 *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

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.*

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.*

(continued on inside back cover)

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*Scripture quotations are from the
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Even though I was taught the Bible in Synagogue as a Jewish child, I never understood the meaning of Isaiah 53. But the story of a Japanese boy helped me understand the full and beautiful meaning of this Scripture passage.

The following is a true story of a boy in Japan named Nozomi. Nozomi and his fellow beginning schoolmates were very nervous on their first day of school and the teacher was nervous also. Suddenly, Nozomi stood up and ran out of the classroom. He returned with a bucket of cold water and poured it all over the girl sitting next to him.

The teacher was astonished and strongly scolded him! She asked him repeatedly why he did such a silly thing, but Nozomi refused to give her any explanation.

After many months passed, that class of students graduated. All during that time Nozomi was ridiculed for what he had done on the first day of school. The teacher watched Nozomi during those months and saw that Nozomi was truly an exemplary boy. This made the teacher wonder why he did such an outlandish thing on that first day of school.

“I will not get angry with you anymore, but please tell me why you did such a crazy thing,” the teacher pleaded with Nozomi. Only then did Nozomi tell her the whole story.

“On the first day at school we were all so nervous.” The boy explained. “I noticed that the girl next to me was crying. Looking down, I saw a puddle and I realized that she had lost control and actually had an accident, and the

only thing I could think of was to pour cold water all over her so that no one would realize that she was crying because she had a mishap.”

Nozomi took all the blame and the accusations of being crazy and stupid on himself just to cover for the little girl.

Even though the Lord Jesus Christ made us, we all turned to our own way and said “good bye” to God. We all sinned against God and sin took its toll against us. Isaiah 53 speaks of when God set aside His power and glory and came in human form (in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ) to save us by paying for our sins. The Lord Jesus Christ was the only human who ever lived a sinless life, so He and He alone was qualified to become our sacrifice and to pay for our sins by

dying on a cruel cross. What the Lord Jesus Christ did for us is described in Isaiah 53:4-5:

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 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.”

On the cross He took the punishment for our sins. He had no sin of His own, but He suffered and died for our sins.

Just as Nozomi quickly thought and hatched his plan of what he could do to shield and protect his classmate, God, the Father devised a salvation plan to save us from our sins. Just as Nozomi’s plan involved him having to take all of the scorn and derision, so

God the Father's plan meant He would have to painfully give up His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to take all of the scorn and derision we deserved. Just as Nozomi became bad to cover for the little girl, the Lord Jesus Christ became sin for us to cover for us from having to pay for our sins. The Bible describes how the Lord Jesus Christ took our sins on Himself so we could be shielded from the penalties of our sins in II Corinthians 5:21 :

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Just as Nozomi paid the price of being ridiculed in order to shield his class-mate, the Lord Jesus Christ paid the price of being put to shame and ridicule in order to shield us. This is

described in Psalm 22 which perfectly described the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, even though it was written nearly 1000 years before He was actually crucified for our sins. Psalm 22:6,7, & 16:

“But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head...they pierced my hands and my feet.”

Just as Nozomi loved his classmate and was willing to suffer to protect her, so God was motivated by love when He sent His Son to die for our sins to protect us from the hell we deserve as stated in John 3:16-17:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should

not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.”

Just as that little girl did nothing but sit there and receive Nozomi’s protection, so we can do nothing to earn God’s salvation. It is a free gift as stated in Romans 6:23:

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

But, a gift remains in the hand of the giver until it is received. We must open our heart and receive God’s free gift of salvation in order for us to be saved from our sins. This can be done by praying a simple prayer such as: “Lord Jesus, save me — a lost sinner. Forgive me as I now receive you as my

Lord and Savior.”

Just as that little girl cried over the puddle of her shame, we all have sinned and have our own puddles of shame. Some of us have puddles of immorality, lying, hating, stealing, etc. We have a choice. We can look straight ahead and deny that we have puddles of our own sin or say that everyone has puddles of sin so we are no worse than anyone else. Or we can look down at our puddles and become depressed and forlorn with our sins. God wants us to look up to our Nozomi, the Lord Jesus Christ, who stands ready and willing to protect and save us from the penalty of our sins. Our “Nozomi”, the Lord Jesus Christ, does not cover with water – He covers our sin with His own blood. This is stated in Leviticus 17:11 and

Leviticus 17:11

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”

Revelation 1:5:

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”

When God brought the Jewish people out of Egypt, He told them that the firstborn would be saved from death only if the blood of a lamb was placed on the door posts of the house. If the blood was on the door posts then God said he would pass over that house and not kill the firstborn in that house

as described in the book of Exodus:
Exodus 12:13 :

“And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.”

God said that when He saw the blood, He would pass over that house and not kill the first born — which is where the word “Passover” comes from. Every year, Jewish people celebrate the Passover holiday, but I never understood the importance of the blood.

In Hebrew the word for Passover is “Pessach.” Pessach is used in common Hebrew today to mean to skip or jump over. If there is a list of people and you want to skip over one on the list

you would say “pessach”. Every single one of us have sinned and that has put each one of us on God’s judgment list to be cast into hell. But, God, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, shed His blood to make a way for us to be reconciled to Him. If we are willing to accept His free gift of salvation, then God sees the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ over our name and skips over us.

Later in life, Nozomi understood how, if he would accept God's salvation, God, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, would protect and shield him from his sins just the way that Nozomi protected his classmate. Nozomi received the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior and told the above story in a church in Japan.

Whenever I travel to Japan I am impressed with how Japan is a country of punctuality where trains run exactly on time, appointments start precisely on time, etc. Oftentimes I have heard Japanese people use a common saying of “time is limited” which is a polite way of saying “hurry up.”

For receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior – “time is limited.” You should not put off this decision as you have no assurance that there will be a future opportunity.

When God calls you, that is the time to respond to Him. The Bible explains just how limited time is when it comes to asking God to save you from your sins in II Corinthians 6:2:

“Behold now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

The Lord Jesus Christ has been resurrected and is in Heaven as God, the very God— and is waiting for you to call on Him for salvation. Will you let Him become your Nozomi and shield you from the penalties of your sin? He wants to save you now from the penalty of being cast into hell for your sins. Won't you receive Him now as your Lord and Savior?



Contact Information →

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The story of Nozomi was related by David Verwey of Nara, Japan.

Galations 3:13:

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:”

(continued from front inside cover)

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.*

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.*

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.*

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.*

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.*

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.*

