

Readings for Good Friday – Isaiah chapter 53, verses 1 – 12:-

In using these verses for a meditation on Good Friday we have the example in the New Testament for our authority! Read the Acts of the Apostles chapter 8 verses 26 – 38. The verses in Isaiah, written over 700 years before the event, describe the trial and suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ in vivid language. It could be an eyewitness account of the events of that first Good Friday with hints of the reason behind the suffering and the glory to come in verses 10 – 12.

As we begin this special day read through the whole of chapter 53 of the prophet Isaiah.

Verses 1 – 3:- Remember that the Lord Jesus grew up in Nazareth see John chapter 1, verse 46 and John chapter 7, verses 40 – 44. His earthly father Joseph was the village carpenter. Nazareth itself was in the outlying province of Galilee. This part of Judea had a mixed population, lying as it did to the north of Samaria. The Galilaeans were held in scorn by many of the southern Jews. The comment in Isaiah chapter 9 verse 1 also reflects this idea. Galilee was seen as a Gentile area and the Lord Jesus was despised and rejected by some on these grounds. The ultimate rejection was by everyone involved on that first Thursday evening and Good Friday. Judas, his friends and disciples, Peter, the religious leadership and the Roman justice system. Would you have denied knowing him? Would I?

Verses 4 – 6:- These verses speak for themselves! The Suffering Servant has borne our ‘soul sicknesses’. Many of those who saw his suffering thought that he was getting what he deserved, punishment for presumption and blasphemy. The Lord Jesus Christ literally took our punishment upon himself. *“He carried our sins up to and onto the tree”*. (1 Peter chapter 2, verse 24).

Verses 7 – 9:- Read Mark chapter 15, verses 1 – 20. The Lord Jesus made no excuses and no denial of the charges against him. He accepted his sentence even though it was obviously unjust and Pilate himself thought that he was innocent (Luke chapter 23, verse 4 and John chapter 19, verse 6). Notice, in Isaiah 53, that in all these verses the acknowledgement of universal guilt comes again and again – e.g. in verses 2; 4; 5; 6 and 8.

They crucified the Lord Jesus between two wicked thieves. He was buried in the grave of a rich man – Joseph of Arimathea see Mark chapter 15, verses 42 – 46. *“In life no house, no home my Lord on earth might have; in death no friendly tomb but what a stranger gave. What may I say? Heav’n was his home but mine the tomb wherein He lay.”* (lines from the hymn *“My Song is Love Unknown”*, Samuel Crossman, 1664)

Verses 10 – 12:- Because the Lord Jesus Christ was willing to sacrifice himself for us, he was fully vindicated in the trust he placed in his heavenly Father. See Hebrews chapter 2, verses 10 – 13. It was the obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ and his willingness to go to the cross, to suffer and to die for us that led to his victory over sin and death.

Chapter 53 in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah describes what the Servant of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, suffered, and what he won, for all who believe in him and accept him as Saviour and Lord.

*Because the sinless Saviour died
My sinful soul is counted free
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.
To look on Him and pardon me.*

*(From “Before the throne of God above”
Charitie Lees Bancroft 1860*

*Look, Father, look on His anointed face,
and only look on us as found in Him;
look not on our misusings of thy grace,
our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim:
for lo, between our sins and their reward
we set the Passion of thy Son our Lord.*

*(From “And now O Father mindful of the love”
William Bright 1874*