

## **Advent Reading for Friday, December 22, 2017** ***“The Sacrificial Lamb of God” (Isaiah 53:6-7)***

In our reading today, we come to the decisive verse in Isaiah’s incomparable description of the *suffering Servant*. With relatively few words, the prophet captures the very essence of the unparalleled news of the gospel: *“All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him”* (53:6). Throughout this amazing chapter, Isaiah repeatedly emphasizes that the Messiah, though He had done no wrong, would mercifully bear the consequences for the sin of mankind; He would willingly become our substitute, and the recipient of the holy wrath of God.

The MacArthur Study Bible beautifully summarizes the unequalled truths in this verse, and I include it with gratitude: *“Every person has sinned (Romans 3:23), but the Servant has sufficiently shouldered the consequences of sin and the righteous wrath deserved by sinners (I Timothy 2:5-6; 4:10; I John 2:2). The manner in which God laid our iniquity on Him was that God treated Him as if He had committed every sin ever committed by every person who would ever believe, though He was perfectly innocent of any sin. God did so to Him, so that wrath being spent and justice satisfied, God could then give to the account of sinners who believe, the righteousness of Christ, treating them as if they had done only the righteous acts of Christ!”* This, my friends, is the gospel; this is why Jesus came from eternity as an infant to Bethlehem’s manger. This is the hour for which He was born. This is the good news. Because of the grace of God, we have been blessed to hear it and believe! It is also the good news God has entrusted us to share with others.

Isaiah includes other complimentary and instructive phrases to the magnificent news encapsulated in verse 6. Here are two related examples: *“But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if he would offer Himself up as a guilt offering”* (53:10), and again: *“He would see the anguish of His soul and be satisfied”* (53:11). Though Jesus was undeserving of death, it was the Father’s eternal plan for Him to experience it; this is why He came.

As amazing as it seems, His death was the guilt offering that brought *pleasure* and *satisfaction* to His Father; it accomplished what was in the Father's heart from eternity past.

From the Passover onward, each sacrificial lamb was pointing to Jesus. This is why John the Baptist identified Him as *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29), and why the Apostle Paul reminded the church: *"Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us"* (I Corinthians 5:7). As the Apostle John describes the worship that will take place in heaven, the Lamb is appropriately preeminent: *"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing"* (Revelation 5:12).

Isaiah would later describe the imputed righteousness at the heart of the Gospel: *"I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me in a robe of righteousness"*

(61:10). The Apostle Paul captures this identical truth: *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"* (II Corinthians 5:21).

**Giving Thanks – A humble thank You now is not sufficient; only in eternity will we begin to grasp Your free gift of salvation!**