

The “Un” Christmas - Part Three

Christ’s Coming was Undesirable and Unpopular, but Irreplaceable

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 53:1-12

Our Scripture reading starts with a testimony that many will not believe. It will require Divine intervention to reveal it to carnal man (Matthew 11:27; 16:15-17; John 6:44-45; I Corinthians 2:12-14; Galatians 1:15-16 cp. John 1:10-13). Here is a brief outline of this most amazing chapter (*written around 700 years before Christ came*).

Isaiah 53

- Vs. 1 The Messiah is the LORD’s arm, accomplishing His will. Yet, His testimony is incredulous to man.
- Vs. 2 The Messiah will appear to man as weak, unimportant, and unattractive.
- Vs. 3 The Messiah is not merely unpopular, He is hated and rejected, bearing many sorrows and being treated grievously.
- Vs. 4 The Messiah is carrying the burdens of others. Yet, He is not understood, and not appreciated. Israel’s official conclusion is that He is also vile in God’s eyes.
- Note: “**griefs**” = sicknesses and pain that is physical. “**Sorrows**” = pain and suffering of the mind.
- Vs. 5-6 The Messiah is dealing with more than physical and mental suffering. He is dealing with our sins before a righteous God.
- Vs. 7 The Messiah will suffer willingly, submissively, and quietly. He is compared to a lamb being slaughtered or a sheep, quietly being sheared.
- Vs. 8-9 The Messiah will be innocent. Yet He will suffer and die as if he were wicked.
- Vs. 10 The Messiah will please the LORD by making Himself a substitute sacrifice for us. The LORD will accept His offering on our behalf and give Him life after death. The Messiah will continue to do the will of the LORD.
- Vs. 11-12 The Messiah will see the multitude of people that He has redeemed and justified. He will have satisfaction and be honored for the great sacrifice that He made.

What a contrast: rejection, suffering and death – then life, honor and salvation for multitudes of sinful people! This is not just **a** way of Salvation. This is describing **the only** way of salvation for any people in this world!

The Undesirable and Unpopular Christ

The Jewish scholars knew of two kinds of Messiah: one who would suffer and die (Isaiah 53 cp. John 11:49-51; 18:14) and one who would be a prophet, priest and king – a triumphant leader (Psalm 24 cp. John 1:35-50; 4:7,25; 6:14-15). It was thought that there might be two separate people being described in the Scriptures. The one that everyone was excited about and was anticipating was the victorious leader. Whoever was going to die for the nation could be figured out later. Jesus did not fit the agenda of the leaders of Israel. He was a threat to their plans to survive in the Roman Empire. So, they sought to eliminate Him (John 11:46-57; Mark 14:55-65).

Today, people use the name of Jesus to describe what ever values or hopes that they hold dear. Jesus is associated with love, peace and tolerance. However, when the real Jesus is preached, people recoil at one who stands for the standards of God's righteousness and who would die the horrible, bloody death of the cross to separate us from the wickedness of this world. See Matthew 10:32-39; John 3:18-21; Galatians 1:4; 6:14 cp. I Corinthians 1:18-31; I John 2:15-17; 4:1-6; 5:1-5,18-21.

The Irreplaceable Christ

The Apostles would learn through many infallible proofs that Jesus was the one and only Savior, sent by the Father to deliver us from the bondage of sin and to bring us to God. See John 3:14-18,36; 5:22-27; 6:66-69; 8:12-24; 14:1-11; 11:25-27; Luke 24:44-48; Acts 1:1-3,8; 3:1-26; 4:8-12; 17:30-31; I Peter 3:18; I John 2:20-27; 5:10-13.

There are people who would preach "another Jesus" (II Corinthians 11:2-4). We must preach the one and only Christ, the irreplaceable Christ (Hebrews 13:8). The one who suffered and was reviled and killed is the same one who is alive forever more and highly esteemed of God and His saints. See Isaiah 53:10-12; 50:4-7; 52:13-15; 45:21-25 cp. Philippians 2:5-11.

Christ has won the victory! We therefore should not be ashamed, but rather proclaim His name. Confess the irreplaceable Christ to men by spreading the Gospel. Expect resistance. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is undesirable to many and you will become unpopular with many. Yet others will find Him irresistible. Jesus Christ is just what sinners need and no one else can replace Him. We who suffer for His sake shall experience great joy and reward for our labors. See Romans 1:14-16; 8:15-18,28-39; II Timothy 1:7-12; 2:8-13; 3:10-17; 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:8-15; I Peter 4:10-16; Revelation 22:17,20.