

Saturday Night Presence

February 19, 2011

Jesus, Savior of the World

From our text in Isaiah, chapter 53, the Prophet Isaiah foretold Christ's death and resurrection, which would also become God's perfect plan for salvation. With impeccable accuracy, Isaiah captured our Savior's passion by describing Jesus' rejection by men and being smitten by God. But it was actually for *our* transgressions that He died. Furthermore, He was "cut off" from the land of the living, meaning that He would forfeit the right to father children who would bear His Name. Yet, scripture declares that He shall "see" His seed.

In Chapter 3, John records a late night visit between Jesus and Nicodemus, a devout Pharisee. This conversation becomes our first glimpse of how Isaiah's prophecy would be fulfilled. This amazing "new birth" Jesus spoke about would permit Him to have a mighty host of spiritual sons and daughters—but not until after He was resurrected from the dead. Of course, you and I are also included in this great spiritual heritage. When we believe the Good News about Jesus Christ, we not only can see Him, but we can know Him and become one with Him—just as a vine is one with its branches.

Before Isaiah's prophecy could become a reality, Jesus had to be "cut off" from the land of the living. Without leaving a natural posterity, He had to die so that we might enter this glorious Kingdom as His spiritual offspring. Having studied Isaiah's writings as a child, Jesus was fully aware of the price that would be required for this new birth. Long before His horrible, abusive death, He knew that His naked, broken body would be nailed to a cross and that His appearance would be marred more than any man.

So, why would He endure such shame and degradation? . . . Perhaps it was for the healing of those grateful lepers . . . or the restoration of that Pharisee's daughter . . . or for His friend, Lazarus, who would rise from the dead. Before the trembling woman with an issue of blood could regain her health, Jesus knew that in just a few months, He would pay the terrible price at Calvary which would remove every sin, sickness, and disease.

Sin had penetrated so deeply into the very fiber and core of humanity, not one soul was exempt from its clutches. Throughout Jewish history, a High Priest was required to enter into the Holy of Holies once a year to make atonement for sin. How tragic that a member of this same priestly office would persuade Pontius Pilate to sentence Jesus to death by crucifixion.

Why, then, would Jesus submit to this awful fate? He knew that offering His blood as the sacrifice for our sins was the only way man could live forever. He also knew it was in His power to forever change the destiny of mankind. Those who believe, or God's elect, would become sons of God, who would faithfully serve Jesus Christ, the Lord of lords and King of kings! What a wonderful plan of salvation for all who believe!

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