



# Lessons from the Old Testament

*The Suffering Saviour—Isaiah 53*

*His Suffering People—1 Peter 4:12–19; Psalm 34:4, 15–22; Isaiah 61:1; Matthew 10:16–42*

*The Important Night Watch—The Prayer Life of Jesus*

# Isaiah 52:13–53:12

The sixty-first chapter of Isaiah testifies that Christ was to do the very work He did. Chapter fifty-three sets forth His rejection and sufferings in the world, and chapter fifty-nine describes the character of the priests and rabbis. (*DA* 458.2)



In preaching to the Thessalonians, *Paul* appealed to the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. *Christ* in His ministry had opened the minds of His disciples to these prophecies; “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” Luke 24:27. *Peter* in preaching Christ had produced his evidence from the Old Testament. *Stephen* had pursued the same course. And *Paul* also in his ministry appealed to the scriptures foretelling the birth, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. By the inspired testimony of Moses and the prophets he clearly proved the identity of Jesus of Nazareth with the Messiah and showed that from the days of Adam it was the voice of Christ which had been speaking through patriarchs and prophets. (AA 221.2)

*Plain and specific prophecies* had been given regarding the appearance of the Promised One. To *Adam* was given an assurance of the coming of the Redeemer. The sentence pronounced on Satan, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15), was to our first parents a promise of the redemption to be wrought out through Christ. (AA 222.1)

◆ Adam—Genesis 3:15

To Abraham was given the promise that of his line the Saviour of the world should come: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:16. (AA 222.2)

- ◆ Adam—Genesis 3:15
- ◆ Abraham—Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:16

Moses, near the close of his work as a leader and teacher of Israel, plainly prophesied of the Messiah to come. "The Lord thy God," he declared to the assembled hosts of Israel, "will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken." And Moses assured the Israelites that God Himself had revealed this to him while in Mount Horeb, saying, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him." Deuteronomy 18:15, 18. (AA 222.3)

- ◆ Adam—Genesis 3:15
- ◆ Abraham—Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:16
- ◆ Moses—Deuteronomy 18:15, 18

The Messiah was to be of the royal line, for in the prophecy uttered by Jacob the Lord said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Genesis 49:10.  
(AA 223.1)

- ◆ Adam—Genesis 3:15
- ◆ Abraham—Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:16
- ◆ Moses—Deuteronomy 18:15, 18
- ◆ Jacob—Genesis 49:10

Isaiah prophesied: “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.” “Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given Him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee.” Isaiah 11:1; 55:3–5. (AA 223.2)

- ◆ Adam—Genesis 3:15
- ◆ Abraham—Genesis 22:18; Galatians 3:16
- ◆ Moses—Deuteronomy 18:15, 18
- ◆ Jacob—Genesis 49:10
- ◆ Isaiah—Isaiah 11:1–3; 55:3–5; 61:1–3; 42:1–4; 53:1–12

The Saviour of prophecy was to come, not as a temporal king, to deliver the Jewish nation from earthly oppressors, but as a man among men, to live a life of poverty and humility, and at last to be despised, rejected, and slain. The Saviour foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures was to offer Himself as a sacrifice in behalf of the fallen race, thus fulfilling every requirement of the broken law. In Him the sacrificial types were to meet their antitype, and His death on the cross was to lend significance to the entire Jewish economy. (AA 227.3)

As with holy boldness Paul proclaimed the gospel in the synagogue at Thessalonica, a flood of light was thrown upon the true meaning of the rites and ceremonies connected with the tabernacle service. He carried the minds of his hearers beyond the earthly service and the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, to the time when, having completed His mediatorial work, Christ would come again in power and great glory, and establish His kingdom on the earth. Paul was a believer in the second coming of Christ; so clearly and forcibly did he present the truths concerning this event, that upon the minds of many who heard there was made an impression which never wore away. (AA 228.3)

For three successive Sabbaths Paul preached to the Thessalonians, reasoning with them from the Scriptures regarding the life, death, resurrection, office work, and future glory of Christ, the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Revelation 13:8. He exalted Christ, the proper understanding of whose ministry is the key that unlocks the Old Testament Scriptures, giving access to their rich treasures. (AA 229.1)

Many Jewish and Christian theologians deny that the suffering servant set forth in Isaiah 53 applies to the Messiah and instead apply Isaiah 53 to the sufferings of the Jews at the hands of their enemies or to the experience of an individual Jew in Isaiah's time or even to Isaiah himself. However, Matthew 8:17 and John 12:38 clearly apply Isaiah 53 to Christ.

The wrong views which the ancient Jews held in regard to sin and suffering caused them to reject Christ because they believed if a man suffered, it was because he had sinned, but the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah corrects this. Christ was smitten of God, and he suffered, but he was not a sinner. Instead. . .

“Christ consented to die in the sinner’s stead, that man, by a life of obedience, might escape the penalty of the law of God. His death did not make the law of none effect; it did not slay the law, lessen its holy claims, nor detract from its sacred dignity. **The death of Christ proclaimed the justice of His Father’s law** in punishing the transgressor, in that He consented to suffer the penalty of the law Himself in order to save fallen man from its curse” (2T 200.2).

# The Suffering Saviour

## Isaiah 52:13–53:12

- ◆ Deal prudently—to prosper, Jeremiah 23:5  
(understand, comprehend)
- ◆ Extolled—to be taken and lifted upward
- ◆ Astonied—appalled, tremble
- ◆ Visage—appearance
- ◆ Marred—deformed, disfigured
- ◆ Sprinkle many nations—uncertain meaning,  
could be to cause to marvel or gaze

- ◆ V. 2—Mark 6:3
- ◆ V. 3—John 1:10–11, 6:66; Matthew 26:56
- ◆ V. 4—Hebrew 4:15; John 11:35

# God's Suffering People

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; (John 15:20)

And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. . . . And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (Revelation 13:15, 17)

1 Peter 4:12–19; Psalm 34:4, 15–22; Isaiah 61:1; Matthew 10:16–42; 2 Corinthians 1:5, 7; Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 1:5–7; Matthew 5:11; John 15:21

—The Nightly Petitioner—  
Christ's Need of Prayer

When Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, He was led by the Spirit of God. He did not invite temptation. He went to the wilderness to be alone, to contemplate His mission and work. By fasting and prayer He was to brace Himself for the bloodstained path He was to travel. How should He begin His work of freeing the captives held in torment by the destroyer? **During His long fast, the whole plan of His work as man's deliverer was laid out before Him. (1SM 227.2)**

When Jesus entered the wilderness He was shut in by the Father's glory. Absorbed in communion with God, He was lifted above human weakness. But the glory departed, and He was left to battle with temptation. It was pressing upon Him every moment. His human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited Him. For forty days He fasted and prayed. Weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony, "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (**Isaiah 52:14**). Now was Satan's opportunity. Now he supposed that he could overcome Christ. (*1SM 227.3*)

As the human was upon Him, He felt His need of strength from His Father. **He had select places of prayer.** He loved to hold communion with His Father in the solitude of the mountain. In this exercise His holy, human soul was strengthened for the **duties and trials** of the day. Our

Saviour identifies Himself with our needs and weaknesses, in that He became a suppliant, a nightly petitioner, seeking from His Father **fresh supplies of strength**, to come forth invigorated and refreshed, braced for duty and trial. He is our example in all things. He is a brother in our infirmities, but not in possessing like passions. (2T 201.2)

As the sinless One, His nature recoiled from evil. He endured struggles and torture of soul in a world of sin. His humanity made prayer a necessity and privilege. He required all the stronger **divine support** and **comfort** which His Father was ready to impart to Him, to Him who had, for the benefit of man, left the joys of heaven and chosen His home in a cold and thankless world. Christ found comfort and joy in communion with His Father. Here He could **unburden His heart of the sorrows** that were crushing Him. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

(2T 201.2)

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly:  
(Luke 22:44)

Christ wrestled in earnest prayer; he offered up his supplications to the Father with strong crying and tears in behalf of those for whose salvation he had left heaven, and had come to this earth. Then how proper, yea, how essential that men should pray and not faint! How important that they should be instant in prayer, petitioning for the help that can come only from Christ our Lord! **If you will find voice and time to pray, God will find time and voice to answer.** (*RH* April 1, 1890)

As one with us, a sharer in our needs and weaknesses, He was wholly dependent upon God, and in the secret place of prayer He sought divine strength, that He might go forth braced for duty and trial. In a world of sin Jesus endured **struggles and torture of soul**. In communion with God He could unburden the **sorrows** that were crushing Him. Here He found comfort and joy. (*DA 362.4*)

In Christ the cry of humanity reached the Father of infinite pity. As a man He supplicated the throne of God till His humanity was charged with a **heavenly current** that should connect humanity with divinity. Through continual communion He received life from God, that He might impart life to the world. His experience is to be ours. (*DA 363.1*)

Satan was upon his path every moment. The strength of Christ was in prayer. He had taken humanity, and he bore our infirmities and became sin for us. Christ retired to the groves or mountains with the world and everything else shut out. He was alone with his Father. With intense earnestness, **he poured out his supplications, and put forth all the strength of his soul in grasping the hand of the Infinite.** When new and great trials were before him, he would steal away to the solitude of the mountains, and pass the entire night in prayer to his Heavenly Father. (*YI* April 1, 1873, par. 2)

With strong crying and tears He sent His petitions to heaven, that His human nature might be **strengthened**, that He might be **braced** to meet the wily foe in all his deceptive workings, and **fortified** to fulfill His mission of uplifting humanity. To His workers He says, “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done.”  
John 13:15. (*MH 500.4*)

It was in hours of solitary prayer that Jesus in His earth life received **wisdom and power**. (*Ed 259.1*)

Jesus, when preparing for some great trial or some important work, would resort to the solitude of the mountains and spend the night in prayer to His Father. A night of prayer preceded the **ordination** of the apostles and the **Sermon on the Mount**, the **transfiguration**, the agony of the **judgment hall** and the cross, and the resurrection glory. (MH 509.1)

Not for himself, but for others, he lived and thought and prayed. From hours spent with God he came forth morning by morning, to bring the light of heaven to men. Daily he received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit. **In the early hours of the new day the Lord awakened him from his slumbers,** and his soul and his lips were anointed with grace, that he might impart to others. **His words were given him fresh from the heavenly courts,** words that he might speak in season to the weary and oppressed. “The Lord God hath given me,” he said, “the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.” (*RH* August 11, 1910, par. 1)

. . . everyone needs to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. (*DA 363.3*)

He has given us evidence that prayer is essential in order to receive strength **to contend with the powers of darkness**, and **to do the work** allotted us. Our own strength is weakness, but that which God gives is mighty and will make everyone who obtains it more than conqueror. (2T 203.1)

- ◆ Divine support
- ◆ Comfort
- ◆ Joy
- ◆ Strength for duties and trials of the day
- ◆ Unburdened his heart of sorrows that was crushing him

Through the day He labored earnestly **to do good** to others, **to save men from destruction**. He **healed** the sick, **comforted** the mourning, and brought **cheerfulness and hope to the despairing**. He **brought the dead to life**. After His work was finished for the day, He went forth, evening after evening, away from the confusion of the city, and His form was bowed in some retired grove in supplication to His Father. At times the bright beams of the moon shone upon His bowed form. And then again the clouds and darkness shut away all light. The dew and frost of night rested upon His head and beard while in the attitude of a suppliant. He frequently continued His petitions through the entire night. He is our example. If we could remember this, and imitate Him, we would be much stronger in God. (2T 202.1)

- ◆ To do good
- ◆ To save men from destruction
- ◆ Heal the sick
- ◆ Comfort the mourning
- ◆ Bring cheerfulness and hope to the despairing
- ◆ Give life to the dead

Christ felt much as sinners will feel **when the vials of God's wrath** shall be poured out upon them. Black despair, like the pall of death, will gather about their guilty souls, and then they will realize to the fullest extent the sinfulness of sin. Salvation has been purchased for them by the suffering and death of the Son of God. It might be theirs, if they would accept of it willingly, gladly; but none are compelled to yield obedience to the law of God. If they refuse the heavenly benefit and choose the pleasures and deceitfulness of sin, they have their choice, and at the end receive their wages, which is the wrath of God and eternal death. They will be forever separated from the presence of Jesus, whose sacrifice they had despised. They will have lost a life of happiness and sacrificed eternal glory for the pleasures of sin for a season.

(2T 210.1)

# The Important Night Watch

He had taken them with Him that they might be a strength to Him [at Gethsemane], and **that the events they should witness that night, and the lessons of instruction they should receive, might be indelibly printed upon their memories.** This was necessary **that their faith might not fail, but be strengthened for the test just before them.** (2T 204.2)

They lost much by thus sleeping. **Our Saviour designed to fortify them for the severe test of their faith to which they would soon be subjected.** If they had spent that mournful period in watching with the dear Saviour, and in prayer to God, Peter would not have been left to his own feeble strength to deny his Lord in the time of trial. (2T 204.3)

Jesus has left us this warning: “**Watch** ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping.” **The church of God is required to fulfill her night watch**, however perilous, whether long or short. **Sorrow is no excuse** for her to be less watchful. **Tribulation** should not lead to carelessness, but to double vigilance. Christ has directed the church by His own example to the Source of their strength in times of need, distress, and peril. The attitude of **watching** is to designate the church as God’s people indeed. By this sign the waiting ones are distinguished from the world and show that they are pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. (2T 205.2)

If they had remained watching they would not have lost their faith as they beheld the Son of God dying upon the cross. This **important night watch** should have been **signalized by noble mental struggles and prayers**, which would have brought them **strength** to witness the unspeakable agony of the Son of God. (2T 205.3)

It would have **prepared** them, as they should behold His sufferings upon the cross, to **understand** something of the nature of the overpowering anguish which He endured in the Garden of Gethsemane. And they would have been better able to **recall** the words He had spoken to them in reference to His sufferings, death, and resurrection; and, amid the gloom of that terrible, trying hour, some rays of **hope would have lighted** up the darkness and sustained their faith. (2T 205.3)

Christ had told them before that these things would take place, but they did not understand Him. The scene of His sufferings was to be a fiery ordeal to His disciples, hence the **necessity of watchfulness and prayer.** (2T 206.1)

Watchfulness—watching or observing someone or something closely, being alert and vigilant

Mockings and jeerings are mingled with the coarse oaths of blasphemy. His lowly birth and humble life are commented upon by unfeeling wretches. His claim to be the Son of God is ridiculed by the chief priests and elders, and vulgar jests and insulting derision are passed from lip to lip. Satan was having full control of the minds of his servants. In order to do this effectually, he commences with the chief priests and elders, and imbues them with religious frenzy. (2T 207.2)

Close to the cross are the blind, bigoted, faithless priests and elders, taunting, mocking, and jeering: “Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, **save Thyself.** (2T 208.1)

Nature sympathized with the suffering of its Author. The heaving earth, the rent rocks, proclaimed that it was the Son of God who died. There was a mighty earthquake. (2T 211.1)

Jesus did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and exclaimed with His departing breath: "It is finished." Satan was then defeated. He knew that his kingdom was lost. Angels rejoiced as the words were uttered: "It is finished." **The great plan of redemption**, which was dependent on the death of Christ, had been thus far carried out. And there was joy in heaven that the sons of Adam could, through a life of obedience, be finally exalted to the throne of God. Oh, what love! What amazing love! that brought the Son of God to earth to be made sin for us, that we might be reconciled to God, and elevated to a life with Him in His mansions in glory. Oh, what is man, that such a price should be paid for his redemption! (2T 211.2)

Here is a theme, poor formalist, which is of sufficient importance to excite you. Eternal interests are here involved. **Upon this theme it is sin to be calm and unimpassioned.** The scenes of Calvary call for the deepest emotion. Upon this subject you will be excusable if you manifest enthusiasm. That Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should suffer such a painful death, bearing the weight of the sins of the world, our thoughts and imaginations can never fully comprehend. The length, the breadth, the height, the depth, of such amazing love we cannot fathom. The contemplation of the matchless depths of a Saviour's love should fill the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character. (2T 212.3)

With many the story of the condescension, humiliation, and sacrifice of our divine Lord awakens no deeper interest, and stirs the soul and affects the life no more, than does the history of the death of the martyrs of Jesus. Many have suffered death by slow tortures; others have suffered death by crucifixion. In what does the death of God's dear Son differ from these? It is true He died upon the cross a most cruel death; yet others, for His dear sake, have suffered equally, so far as bodily torture is concerned. Why, then, was the suffering of Christ more dreadful than that of other persons who have yielded their lives for His sake? If the sufferings of Christ consisted in physical pain alone, then His death was no more painful than that of some of the martyrs. (2T 214.1)

But bodily pain was but a small part of the agony of God's dear Son. The **sins of the world** were upon Him, also the sense of **His Father's wrath** as He suffered the penalty of the law transgressed. It was these that crushed His divine soul. It was **the hiding of His Father's face**—a sense that His own dear Father had forsaken Him—which brought despair. The separation that sin makes between God and man was fully realized and keenly felt by the innocent, suffering Man of Calvary. (2T 214.2)

Their faith needed to be sustained by an unseen strength as they should **experience the triumph of the powers of darkness.** (2T 206.1)

- ◆ It will be urged that the few who stand in opposition to an institution of the church and a law of the state ought not to be tolerated; that it is better for them to suffer than for whole nations to be thrown into confusion and lawlessness. The same argument many centuries ago was brought against Christ by the “rulers of the people.” “It is expedient for us,” said the wily Caiaphas, “that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” John 11:50. (GC 615.2)

- ◆ The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. "Thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.... All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jeremiah 30:5–7. (GC 616.1)

As Satan accuses the people of God on account of their sins, the Lord permits him to try them to the uttermost. Their confidence in God, their faith and firmness, will be severely tested. . . . He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield to his temptations and turn from their allegiance to God. (GC 618.3)

- ◆ They afflict their souls before God, pointing to their past repentance of their many sins, and pleading the Saviour's **promise**: "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." **Isaiah 27:5**. Their faith does not fail because their prayers are not immediately answered. Though suffering the keenest **anxiety, terror, and distress**, they do not cease their intercessions. They lay hold of the strength of God as Jacob laid hold of the Angel; and the language of their souls is: "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." (GC 619.3)

◆ Had not Jacob previously repented of his sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud, God would not have heard his prayer and mercifully preserved his life. So, in the time of trouble, if the people of God had **unconfessed sins** to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have **no concealed wrongs to reveal**. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance. (GC 620.1)

◆ Satan leads many to believe that God will overlook their unfaithfulness in the minor affairs of life; but the Lord shows in His dealings with Jacob that He will in no wise sanction or tolerate evil. **All who endeavor to excuse or conceal their sins**, and permit them to remain upon the books of heaven, **unconfessed and unforgiven**, will be overcome by Satan. The more exalted their profession and the more honorable the position which they hold, the more grievous is their course in the sight of God and the more sure the triumph of their great adversary. Those who delay a **preparation for the day of God** cannot obtain it in the time of trouble or at any subsequent time. The case of all such is hopeless. (GC 620.2)