

Isaiah's Message to America

How Can You Know That Jesus Is the Only Way of Salvation?

INTRODUCTION: Early in Jesus' ministry He went back to His home town of Nazareth. As was His custom, Jesus went to church, or specifically the synagogue. Already words about His fame had come back to his family and friends. "Jesus cured this sick man; Jesus healed this blind man." So, when Jesus came back to church, the pastor, or more specifically the rabbi, asked Jesus to read the Scripture. He handed Jesus the Book of Isaiah, and left it to Jesus to pick the passage. Jesus turned to one of the passages we read this week.

Isaiah 61:1-2

¹ "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,

Because the LORD has anointed Me

To preach good tidings to the poor;

He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,

To proclaim liberty to the captives,

And the opening of the prison to *those who are bound*;

² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, ...

And you know what happened? Jesus' friends and most of His family did not believe Him. In fact, the Scripture says the crowd was filled with wrath. They thrust Jesus out of the city and led Him to a cliff where they were going to throw Him to His death. All because they did not believe.

Jesus said, "God has anointed Me as Messiah, and I bring good news to the poor, I can heal the broken hearted, and set the captives free;" but they did not believe.

Many today don't believe.

There are probably some here this morning who do not believe that Jesus is even alive, much less that He is the Son of God living in heaven. And since you don't believe that, you do not believe He offers any good news for you, that He can heal your hurts and fix what is wrong in your life, or give you eternal life so you can live with Him forever. You just don't believe that.

And even for the many of you here today who do yourselves believe that about Jesus, you know people who do not. Some of them that you know who do not believe are dear to you: parents, sons, daughters, grandchildren, really close friends.

Let me tell you that I am really glad that you who do not believe in Jesus as the Savior of mankind and the Lord of the Universe are here today. I am glad that you who have people who are important to you but who do not believe are here today. Because this morning I am going to take you to a passage of Scripture from the prophet Isaiah that will tell you or anyone how you can know absolutely, positively for sure that Jesus is the Messiah and is the only way of salvation.

I. BECAUSE THE AUTHENTICITY OF THIS PROPHECY HAS BEEN INDEPENDENTLY VERIFIED.

In 1947, a young Bedouin goat herdsman found some strange clay jars in caves in a valley near the Dead Sea. Inside the jars were some leather scrolls. The scrolls revealed that a commune of monastic farmers flourished in the valley from 150 B.C. to 70 A.D. It is believed that when this commune saw the Romans invade the land, they put their cherished leather scrolls in the jars and hid them in the caves on the cliffs northwest of the Dead Sea. These ancient writings came to be called the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Dead Sea Scrolls include a complete copy of the Book of Isaiah. Especially because of the passage of Isaiah I am going to take you to this morning, critics of the Bible and critics of Christianity had long said that the Biblical text of Isaiah had been perverted by Christians who had added and taken away portions to make it say what they wanted.

But this copy of Isaiah preceded the birth of Christ. Various dating technologies, including carbon-14 dating place the date of the scroll between 334 and 100 B.C. That means **this scroll was written at least 95 years before Jesus was born and 128 years before He was crucified.**

So how does the ancient copy of Isaiah compare with the best Hebrew copies we had before this discovery? Well, in the passage I am going to take you to, **there were 17 letters in the whole passage that were different.**

10 of these were differences in spelling of the same word like “honor” verses “honour.”

4 letters were a difference like a conjunction that made no change at all in meaning.

3 letters composed the word “light” that was added in the more recent text, but still did not alter the meaning.

And all of this examination was not done merely by Christians trying to protect their favorite Old Testament passage, but by Jews, who if they had their preference would cut the passage from Isaiah and cast it out of the Old Testament.

But they cannot. There it is. Preserved across the centuries for all to see. And although there is every historical reason to believe the prophecy was written around 700 B.C., there is absolute, undeniable proof that the prophecy dates at least a full century before the events it predicts happened.

So, what is this passage that will tell you or anyone how you can know absolutely, positively for sure that Jesus is the Messiah and is the only way of salvation?

II. ISAIAH 53 CLEARLY IDENTIFIES JESUS AS THE MESSIAH AND HIS CRUCIFIXION AS THE MEANS OF OUR SALVATION.

Actually, the full passage begins at 52:13.

| Isaiah 52:13–53:12 | |
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| <p>¹³ Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.</p> | <p>John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,</p> |
| <p>¹⁴ Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men;</p> | <p>Literally, “his appearance was so disfigured that he did not look like a man.”</p> |
| <p>³ He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, <i>our</i> faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.</p> | <p>Jesus’ home town tried to kill him. His brothers in the flesh refused to believe in Him. His disciples betrayed, denied, or abandoned Him. The religious leaders despised and mocked Him. He was the Creator, come in the flesh, but the men and women He created did not honor Him.</p> |
| <p>⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.</p> | <p>When Peter’s mother in law was ill, Jesus cured her. When the paralytic was lowered through the roof by his friends, Jesus forgave his sins and told him to walk. When Mary and Martha were overwhelmed with grief at the death of their brother Lazarus, Jesus called him out of the grave. But when Jesus was Himself beaten and nailed to a cross, the crowd said, “Let him save himself!”</p> |

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| <p>⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;</p> <p>The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.</p> | <p>Jesus never did anything wrong. He never sinned against God or man. Even Pilate said, "I find no fault in him."</p> <p>2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.</p> |
| <p>⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.</p> | <p>Put this verse with John 3:16 and you have the John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Bible in a nutshell.</p> |
| <p>⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.</p> | <p>Every evil thing done to Jesus during His life and at His death was undeserved. Yet He never reviled in return. He opened not His mouth. Pilate marveled that Jesus refused to defend himself when the priests sought his death. "He was led as a lamb" is more literally rendered, "He was brought as the lamb to the slaughter." When John the Baptist first saw Him, he declared, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."</p> |
| <p>⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.</p> | <p>Over and over the prophet declares this truth in the prophecy, because it is the central point, Jesus was stricken and died not for His own sin, but for the transgressions of others.</p> |
| <p>⁹ And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth.</p> | <p>Is it not interesting that Joseph of Arimathea steps up to request from Pilate the body of Jesus? He was a very rich man, a member of the Sanhedrin, making this request by him even more unlikely.</p> |

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| <p>¹⁰ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put <i>Him</i> to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see <i>His</i> seed, He shall prolong <i>His</i> days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.</p> | <p>Why did this please the Lord? Because the plan of the Trinity to redeem mankind was being accomplished. People who otherwise would have spent eternity in hell would now live forever with God. But for that to be done, Jesus had to bear the grief. We see a glimpse of what it means for the soul of Jesus to be an offering for sin when He cries from the cross, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” How did the Father “prolong His days?” Through the resurrection!</p> |
| <p>¹¹ He shall see the labor of His soul, <i>and</i> be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.</p> | <p>What is the labor of His soul? Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. His labor is to pay the penalty for sin and purchase the gift of eternal life! By doing that, many, many, many shall live with Him in eternity. Revelation 7:9–10 ⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation <i>belongs</i> to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” And how did they get there? Revelation 7:14 And I said to him, “Sir, you know.” So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.</p> |
| <p>¹² Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.</p> | <p>Philippians 2:8–11 ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to <i>the point of</i> death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and <i>that</i> every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ <i>is</i> Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</p> |

**My friend, search the world far and wide,
Search history, ancient and modern,
You will never find a man like Jesus
Nor an event like the cross
That so perfectly mirrors the description of the prophecy of Isaiah.**

Isaiah 53 clearly identifies Jesus as the Messiah and His crucifixion as the means of our salvation.

Finally, how can you know absolutely, positively for sure that Jesus is the Messiah and is the only way of salvation?

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL ALSO GIVE YOU INTERNAL CONFIRMATION THAT JESUS IS THE WAY TO YOUR SALVATION.

Jesus said concerning the Holy Spirit,

John 16:8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

- **The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin and our need for Christ.**
- **He also convinces us that Jesus is the only way of being made righteous.**
- **The Spirit warns us of a judgment to come.**

If you have not yet believed in Jesus as your own personal Savior and Lord, and you sense a thought in your mind or a feeling in your soul that says, "This is true." "You need to trust in Jesus today." That is the Holy Spirit drawing you to faith in Christ.

You need to act upon that today, respond in faith today, while the Holy Spirit is speaking to you.

Jesus also said,

John 6:44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; ...

None of us comes to the Lord on our own time table or schedule. We come when He draws us or we do not come at all.