

March 19, 2025: (originally prepared by Jeffrey Schreck for March 10, 2022)



203 Surely-His Stripes-We Like Sheep.mp3

Isaiah 53: ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

As we enter into the Easter season, our thoughts are directed towards the experience of Jesus at the Cross. In doing so, we are faced with the immense agony that Jesus endured in order to see His mission to completion. For the first time in His eternal existence, Jesus was cut off from His father. Upon assuming all of humanity's transgressional debt, He no longer felt the approving gaze of His heavenly father which said "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Instead, Jesus felt the anger, hatred, fear, and selfishness, of all of humanity across time, weighing down on His shoulders. He experienced the sorrow that sin brings, in its rawest form.

The story of Jesus' suffering is one with which we are familiar. But how often have we placed ourselves in this story and associated ourselves with the afflictions of Jesus? "We esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted." The punishment that Jesus received was indeed from God as a result of His holiness. However, let us never lose sight of what Jesus brought with Him to the Cross. Jesus bore *our* griefs and carried *our* sorrows when He went to Calvary. He has experienced each of our sufferings as deeply and genuinely as we have experienced them. On the Cross, they were *His* sorrows and griefs. It is because Jesus has taken part in the full human experience, and because He became fully man, that we are able to commune with Him intimately as friends. Hebrews 4:15 states "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." Jesus bore our sufferings on the Cross, but He also wants to bear them daily if we are willing to let Him. As we walk and talk with Jesus as friends, let us place our sorrows and griefs on the one who can truly carry them.

Glory to Jesus, who was crushed for our iniquities! There was none other with the power to save us from the judgment that was our just inheritance through the law. It was only when God Incarnate was pierced for our transgressions that the gateway to salvation opened wide. For when He was pierced, the lifeblood that flowed from His side irrigated the ground in which the seed of life was buried. On the third day, that seed sprouted and the Tree of Life was raised in victory. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, the Tree of Life was once again made available to the offspring of Adam, and was never to be cut off.

Let us walk with Him this day and in this Easter season as with a friend who is eager to bear with us every joy and sorrow that life has to offer. As we commune with the Tree of Life himself, let us eat of the fruit that He has provided for us through the triumph of the Cross.