

March 18, 2025: (originally prepared by Stephen Henriquez for March 9, 2022)



202 He Was Despised-Aria.mp3

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. - Isaiah 53:3

I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. - Isaiah 50:6

In his "Songs of the Suffering Servant," God sings of Deity becoming man, but not as one would expect. Where ancient ballads place their gods in high esteem among humanity, these ballads sing of God coming in the lowest. In Jesus, God is made like his brothers in every respect. There exists nothing in his humanity to blunt his emotions or numb his sensitivity. His suffering was a flesh and blood reality. He hears the swearing and blasphemy of his day. He observes and confronts disease, mortality, sadness, injustice, and squalor. He feels the natural, mental, and spiritual weariness of the body, soul, and mind. And under an olive tree he yields, carrying all of that fear, hurt, sin, and death on a lonely cross. Yet, enduring such anguish of his soul, with joy set before him, he sees us and is satisfied.

With singing, God empties himself of all but love and takes the form of a servant. Being found in human form, he reduces himself to ruin by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. With loud singing, God spares not his own Son but gives him up as a ransom for us all.

May we never forget the hope we have in the man of sorrows who sings over us. In our distress, in our fearfulness, in our quiet desperation this is our hope: Jesus **knows** all about our struggles! There is not a note of the human experience that does not play on Christ's exalted human instrument. When a chord is struck in the weakness of our human instrument, it resonates in his! This is why it was fitting for him to suffer. So that he could become a great, merciful, and faithful high priest in the service of God who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive limitless mercy and boundless grace, to help in our time of need.

Perhaps Bliss wouldn't mind if we sing his hymn in this way,

"Man of sorrows!" what a name for the Son of God who came ruined, sinners to reclaim.

Hallelujah, what a Savior!

"On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with

*gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.” - Zephaniah
3:16-17*