

# Isaiah 53:10

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*Isaiah predicts that the Messiah will willingly lay down His life as a guilt offering which will please the LORD. Isaiah also predicts that the Messiah will rise and continue to accomplish the LORD's good will.*

*This Messianic prophecy is commonly known as the Suffering Servant prophecy.*

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 is commonly referred to as “The Suffering Servant” prophecy. This description is derived from the suffering the passage foretells will fall upon the Messiah, who is described by the LORD as “My Servant” (Isaiah 52:13; 53:11).

This verse marks a pause from Isaiah's prophecy describing what will happen to the Messiah. Perhaps the reason Isaiah pauses here is because he just revealed in the previous verses what would have been one of the most horrifying things an Israelite could imagine—that the Messiah would be killed, and no less appalling, that no one in Israel would be upset by *His* disgrace (Isaiah 53:8-9). Such an abominable prophecy demands an explanation.

Isaiah 53:10 is the prophet's explanation.

The verse begins with the word—*But*—to help designate a shift from describing the things that the Messiah will suffer and die to explaining why *He* must undergo these dreadful things.

The prophet affirms that the Messiah will die because it was *the LORD's* good will. Earlier in this prophetic chapter, Isaiah revealed how the Messiah's suffering was part of God's plan of redemption when he said, “the LORD caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him” (Isaiah 53:6). Now Isaiah includes the Messiah's death as part of *the LORD's* plan. Jesus came into the world for the express purpose of doing *His* Father's will (Psalm 40:6-8; Hebrews 10:5-7):

*But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief.*

*To crush*, in this context, means to put to death. And the expression *putting Him to grief* likely describes the painful manner in which the Messiah's death was to occur.

Isaiah says *the LORD was pleased* at the Messiah's death and *grief*. The Hebrew word translated as *pleased* is נָחַם (H2654—pronounced “khaw-fates”). The word means to “take delight or pleasure in.” This indicates that the Messiah's suffering and death *was not the LORD's* reluctant plan or permissive will, but it made *Him pleased*. The word translated *pleased* can also be rendered “delighted.”

Isaiah is prophesying that *God was* glad when the Messiah died. *It pleased the LORD* that the Messiah *was* crushed and put *to grief*. This too would have been difficult for a son of Israel to understand. How could *the LORD* be *pleased* that His Messiah was killed?

We shall soon see, that this does not mean *the LORD* takes pleasure in the Messiah's suffering for the sake of suffering. Far from it. The LORD is loving and kind,

“The LORD is gracious and merciful;  
Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.”  
(Psalm 145:8)

The Messiah will *render Himself as a guilt offering* on behalf of Israel to be crushed and grieved. And it was *His* sacrificial gift *as a guilt offering* to atone for the sins of *His* people that *pleased the LORD*—and not *His* mere suffering by itself. (More on this in just a moment.)

The Messiah's *grief* and crushing was part of *the LORD's* plan before Adam and Eve ever left the Garden of Eden in exile. When God judged the serpent for tempting Adam and Eve to disobey *His* command, *He* told him that the woman's seed (the Messiah) and the serpent would be enemies. The serpent would be defeated, but the Messiah would be injured,

“And I will put enmity  
Between you and the woman,  
And between your seed and her seed;  
He shall bruise you on the head,  
And you shall bruise him on the heel.”  
(Genesis 3:17)

Isaiah 53 shows how grievous this injury would be to the Messiah. It would be grievous enough to kill *Him*, but as Isaiah predicts in the second half of this verse and in 53:11, the Messiah will not remain dead.

The reason the Messiah's death and *grief pleased the LORD* was because the Messiah would *render Himself as a guilt offering* to reconcile the world to God. This prophecy predicts that the Messiah will willingly undergo these sorrows and pains—and that *He* will do so on behalf of others. Because the Messiah willingly sacrifices *Himself*—even to the point of a painful death—it pleases *the LORD*. God loved the world, and the Son's sacrifice pays for the sin of the world (John 3:16).

That is why the word *if* is included in the statement, *If He would render Himself as a guilt offering*.

The word *if* indicates a conditional statement. The Hebrew word translated *if* can also be translated as “when” (also indicating a conditional statement).

*The LORD* is *pleased if* the Messiah will choose to lay down *His* life on behalf of “us all” (Isaiah 53:6). *The LORD* was *pleased* upon this conditional clause being met. Even though this is phrased as a conditional statement in English, the prophecy presumes that the Messiah will choose to suffer and die *as a guilt offering*.

*Guilt* offerings are explained in Leviticus 5.

*A guilt offering* is an offering to *the LORD* for the atonement of sin. They require a blood sacrifice, typically a lamb, as compensation for trespassing against God's law. The Hebrew word for *guilt offering* is חַטָּאת (H817—pronounced “aw-shawm”). It means compensation for guiltiness. *Guilt offerings* were accepted after confession that the one making the offering had sinned against *the LORD* (Leviticus 5:5). *Guilt offerings* were to be made whether the sin was intentional or accidental.

Here, Isaiah is prophesying that the Messiah will:

- *render Himself as a guilt offering* on behalf of Israel.
- and that *His* sacrifice will please *the LORD*, meaning that God would receive this sacrifice as an atonement for our sins.

The Messiah will suffer and die to sacrifice *Himself* for our sins. *His* sacrifice of *Himself* will please *the LORD* and redeem *His* people from their sins (Hebrews 10:12). *His* death will be because of “our transgressions” and *He* will be “crushed for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5).

And as Isaiah prophesies in Isaiah 53:12, “He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.”

Jesus, the Messiah, rendered *Himself as a guilt offering* and it pleased *the LORD* to crush Him and put Him to grief,

“The Lord Jesus Christ... gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”  
(Galatians 1:3b-4)

At *His* first advent, Jesus, the Messiah came to suffer and die *as a guilt offering* to redeem *His* people,

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”  
(Matthew 20:28)

“[Caiaphas] being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.”  
(John 12:51-52)

Jesus, the Messiah, was “our Passover” who “has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7b) and “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

At *His* first advent, Jesus the Messiah also came to please *the LORD*, *His* Father (John 5:30; 6:38). Consider the following interaction between Jesus and His Father as *He* was nearing the end of *His* earthly life as recorded in John 12:27-28,

Jesus: “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.”

The Father: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

To reiterate, then, Isaiah prophesied that *the Lord was pleased to crush the Messiah, putting Him to grief, if He would render Himself as a guilt offering*. And Jesus the Messiah fulfilled this conditional clause. Jesus the Messiah did *render Himself as a guilt offering* when *He* willingly laid down *His* life to pay the penalty of death for everyone on the cross. This sacrifice of *Himself* *pleased* the Father, and atoned for the sins of the world.

Quite poetically, this conditional clause in Isaiah’s prophecy—*if He would render Himself as a guilt offering*—is a double hinge. It is first the conditional requirement for what preceded it, namely for *the LORD* to be *pleased*; but it is equally the conditional requirement for what follows from it, which are three things.

The three results that follow the conditional clause are:

1. For *He* will see *His* offspring
2. For *He* will prolong *His* days
3. And for the good pleasure of the *LORD* to prosper *His* hand.

If the Messiah will render *Himself as a guilt offering* on behalf of Israel, all three of these positive consequences *will* happen, in addition to *the LORD* being *pleased* at the Messiah’s sacrificial death.

Notice also how Isaiah shifts from using a prophetic past tense to a simple future in the latter half of this verse. Instead of speaking as if these future events have happened, Isaiah simply prophesies that they *will* happen. Isaiah may be doing this to indicate that the three consequences that follow the conditional remark *will* take place at a later time than the preceding consequence. In other words, this may indicate that *the LORD* was immediately pleased at the Messiah’s sacrifice, but the consequences of 1. seeing; 2. prolonging; and 3. prospering *will* happen later.

Another possible reason for the shift from prophetic past to a simple future tense is that much of the work to prosper the Messiah’s kingdom is done by servants of The Servant, in partnership with Him (Matthew 28:18-20).

The first consequence that is triggered from the Messiah’s sacrifice is *He will see His offspring*.

The *He* in this instance could refer either to *the LORD* or to the Messiah, or both. (Jesus was both LORD and Messiah). Likewise, *His* could refer either to *the LORD* or to the Messiah; or both.

The Hebrew word for offspring is זָרַח (H2233—pronounced “zeh’-rah”). It can mean “seed,” “fruit,” “child,” or “descendant.”

Because both pronouns (*He/His*) can refer to two persons, this prophecy could be taken to mean one of four things.

1. *The LORD will see the LORD’s fruit/child.*
2. *The LORD will see the Messiah’s fruit/child.*
3. *The Messiah will see the LORD’S fruit/child.*
4. *The Messiah will see the Messiah’s fruit/child.*

If *He* refers to the Messiah (meaning *the Messiah* is the one *who will see*), then this verse implies some sort of resurrection or afterlife for the Messiah to be able to *see His offspring* after *He* was in the grave (Isaiah 53:9).

In all cases, the upshot of this prophecy is that *good* and/or life will result from the Messiah’s sacrificial death.

This prophecy is fulfilled in the New Testament by many people believing in Jesus the Messiah and becoming *His offspring*. Both *the LORD* and the Messiah see this.

The Apostle John says that the divine and resurrected Word (Jesus), “gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12). All who believe in Jesus are placed into God’s family as *His* children (Romans 8:14-17a). This shows how *He will see His offspring* applies to those who believe in Jesus and are placed into *His* family.

The *offspring* can also apply to fruit. The Apostle Paul writes that Jesus the Messiah “has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20). And he goes on to explain how believers in Jesus are the later fruits who will also be resurrected and joined to Christ upon *His* return (1 Corinthians 15:22-24, 51-57).

The second prophetic consequence that will be triggered from the Messiah’s sacrifice is *He will prolong His days*.

In this case, *He* most likely represents *the LORD*, and *His* most likely represents the Messiah.

The prophecy *He will prolong His days* indicates that the Messiah will live a long life and/or have a long reign (after *His* death and sacrifice).

This prophecy is fulfilled when Jesus the Messiah came back to life after *He* sacrificed *Himself as a guilt offering* and died on the cross (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

It was also fulfilled when Jesus the Messiah was given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18) and when *He* sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).

Because *His* kingdom *will* have no end, this prophecy has been, is, and *will* be fulfilled every moment from *His* resurrection unto eternity (Revelation 11:15). *His* reign has already begun, because all authority is given unto Jesus, but at this time *His* kingdom is not of this world. But it will be. Jesus will reign on the earth as the King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16).

*And* the third prophetic consequence that will be triggered from the Messiah's sacrifice is that *the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand*.

In this case, it is obvious that *His hand* refers to the Messiah's *hand*. The term *His hand* refers to the Messiah's capabilities and/or whatever work or enterprise the Messiah undertakes. The term *good pleasure of the LORD* means anything *the LORD* desires. It is what God wants or wills. *The LORD's pleasure* and will is always, and by God's very nature, *good*.

The prophetic expression *the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand* then means that *the LORD* will entrust *His will* and desires to the Messiah who *will* faithfully bring them to full fruition. *The LORD's pleasure will* be accomplished by the Messiah and *His* capable *hand*.

The Messiah proved *Himself* capable to carry out *the LORD's will* as *His* servant, to do *His* will. *He* did the Father's will when *He rendered Himself as a guilt offering* and allowed *Himself* to be despised and forsaken of men (Isaiah 53:3); pierced through, crushed, and scourged for our sin (Isaiah 53:5-6); and unjustly killed (Isaiah 53:8-9).

Because *the LORD was pleased* with the Messiah's sacrifice, *the LORD will* also entrust *His good pleasure* in *His* capable *hand* where it *will prosper*.

Again, notice how this prophecy is uttered in a simple future tense instead of the prophetic past as all of the prophecies about the Messiah's suffering are presented. This possibly indicates that the prospering of *the LORD's good pleasure* in the *hand* of the Messiah comes after the Messiah's suffering and sorrows.

And what is *the LORD's good pleasure*?

*The LORD's good pleasure* is that God's name will be exalted in all the heavens and earth (Psalm 46:10; 148:13), and that many will find eternal life through the Messiah, and His kingdom will thrive (Isaiah 9:1-7).

This prophecy is and will continue to be fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah.

*The LORD's good pleasure* prospers *in the Messiah's hand*.

Jesus, the Messiah came to do the *will of His* Father (John 6:38; Hebrews 10:5-7). He accomplished doing the *will of His* Father (John 17:4-5). *He* was obedient to *His* Father's *will*

and chose to humbly *render Himself as a guilt offering* even unto death on a cross (Philippians 2:8).

Because of *His* obedience, the LORD (God the Father) has rewarded Jesus by exalting the Messiah and LORD (God the Son). The Father has “bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

Likewise, Jesus the Messiah came to make peace with humanity and offer eternal life (John 3:16-17; 2 Peter 3:9). This prophecy about the Messiah’s *offspring* has also been fulfilled as Jesus the Messiah’s kingdom has been enlarged from the time of *His* resurrection until now. Since that time, the good news of *His* kingdom has been proclaimed from Jerusalem to all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:8). And it has prospered.

*The LORD’s good pleasure* has indeed prospered *in the hand* of Jesus the Messiah, and it *will* continue to *prosper in His hand* forever (Jude 1:25).

For those who have believed in Jesus the Messiah and seek *His* kingdom and righteousness, there is a blessing in this for them also (Matthew 6:33). In Jesus, we are rescued from the penalty and futility of our sin (Colossians 1:13-14). We are restored to our divine inheritance and destiny (Ephesians 1:11; Revelation 1:6).

Then as we believe daily and walk in faith, following Jesus the Messiah in prospering the good pleasure of the LORD, *His* kingdom comes and *His will* is done on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10), and we share in *His* prosperity.

### **Biblical Text**

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To crush Him, putting Him to grief;  
If He would render Himself as a guilt offering,  
He will see His offspring,  
He will prolong His days,  
And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.**