

# Isaiah 53:11

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/isa/isa-53/isaiah-5311/>

*Isaiah predicts that the Messiah's suffering and death will produce good results that He will live to see. This will include justifying many and removing the stain of sin from Israel. This is one of the ways the Messiah will serve the LORD.*

*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).

From the beginning of this chapter until the middle of the previous verse, Isaiah 53:10, Isaiah has prophesied these things in a prophetic-past tense which speaks of future events as though they have already occurred. He used the prophetic past to foretell of the bad things that are to happen to the Messiah. But once Isaiah begins speaking of the good things that are to happen to the Messiah, he shifts to using a simple future. One reason that Isaiah may do this is to indicate that the good things that happen to the Messiah come after His grief and suffering. 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).

Isaiah 53:1-10a speak of the Messiah's suffering and death. Isaiah 53:10b-12 speak of the Messiah's resurrection and reward.

This verse reiterates at least two of the things Isaiah has already prophesied in this chapter, namely that:

1. The LORD will be pleased with the Messiah's sacrificial suffering.
2. The Messiah's sacrifice will atone for the sins of Israel.

This verse also describes the Messiah in two new terms: *the Righteous One* and *My Servant*.

The first prophecy Isaiah states reiterates a previous point, that Messiah will suffer, but *His* suffering will result in God's pleasure:

*As a result of the anguish of His soul,  
He will see it and be satisfied.*

*His soul* refers to the Messiah's *soul*. And *the anguish of His soul* refers to the grief, sorrows, and affliction that the Messiah suffered when *He* was misunderstood and abused by men (Isaiah

53:4, 7). But Isaiah prophesies the Messiah's *anguish* will have a satisfying *result*. This means from out of *His anguish* something good will follow.

Moreover, *He will see it and be satisfied*. The *He* in this instance could refer to the LORD, or the Messiah, or both. (Jesus, was both LORD and Messiah).

It is not entirely clear what the—*it*—in this sentence is referring to. The Hebrew text for this line literally reads, "*He will see and be satisfied.*"

*It* could refer to *the anguish* of the Messiah's *soul*. In this case, it is likely it is the LORD who sees this and is *satisfied* knowing the good results to come. This could include the fact that Jesus represented our Passover Lamb, crucified for our sins, which atoned for our sins. If so, this would be a repeated thought from the first half of Isaiah 53:10, "But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief if He would render Himself as a guilt offering."

But—*it*—could also refer to the *result of the anguish*. In this case, either the Messiah or the LORD (or both) is *the One* who *will see* the good *result* from the Messiah's suffering. If the Messiah sees *it*, then this would be a possible resurrection prophecy. Because *the anguish* included the Messiah's death (Isaiah 53:8-9), and for Him to *see* the good *result* would imply that *He* is alive to *see it*. This could also refer to the fact that Jesus was highly exalted, and His name was put above every name, as a result of His obedience, even to death (Philippians 2:9-11).

In the final prophetic lines of this verse, Isaiah describes what the good *result of the Messiah's anguish* will be—*My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities*:

This is part of the next thing Isaiah prophesies.

*By His knowledge the Righteous One,  
My Servant, will justify the many,  
As He will bear their iniquities.*

In this context, the term *the Righteous One* and *My Servant* are both Messianic references.

Isaiah previously used this term in Isaiah 24 when prophesying about the impending day of judgment. In that prophesy, Isaiah mysteriously said how self-righteous sinners hypocritically sing, "Glory to the Righteous One" (Isaiah 24:16), as their judgment approaches.

By referring to the Messiah as *the Righteous One*, Isaiah reaffirms that the Messiah is *righteous*, that *He* obeys the LORD and *His* commands. And that the Messiah is righteous even though everyone else misunderstands Him to be smitten of and afflicted by God (Isaiah 53:4). In fact, the Messiah is the only *One* who is *Righteous*. Everyone else's condition fits with "all of us like sheep have gone astray" in our sin (Isaiah 53:6).

The deacon Stephen and the Apostle Paul each refer to Jesus, the Messiah, as *the Righteous One* at different moments in the book of Acts (Acts 7:52; 22:14).

The term *My Servant* means, the LORD's *Servant*. A *servant* is someone who serves and does the will of his master. The reason the Messiah is called *My Servant* by the LORD is because *He* faithfully carries out the will of the LORD.

Jesus, the Messiah, was the LORD's *Servant*. *He* obeyed the LORD *His* Father in all things. He came in His Father's name, and He served the will of the LORD (John 5:43). And many times, Jesus the Messiah told people that *He* came to do *His* Father's will (Matthew 26:39; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38). It is interesting to note that those who believe in Jesus are also called *His* servants (Revelation 1:1). Each believer also has the opportunity to decide whether to be a faithful or unfaithful servant (Matthew 25: 21, 23, 25). We are to be servants of *The Servant* and to serve one another (Mark 10:43-45; Matthew 22:37-39; John 15:12-17; Philippians 2:5-9).

The phrase *by His knowledge* could mean "in *His* wisdom" or "by *His* skill."

*By His knowledge* and skill, the Messiah *will justify the many*. To *justify* something means to align it in proper harmony according to a standard. When we *justify* lines and words on a page we align them according to an acceptable margin. When we try to *justify* our behavior, we often explain how our actions were in line with cultural norms.

But we cannot *justify* our *iniquities* and sin on our own.

Our righteousness is like filthy garments in the sight of God (Isaiah 64:6). Our lips are unclean (Isaiah 6:5). And we all have sinned and fall short of God's glorious standard of righteousness (Romans 3:23). We are out of harmony with God and His good standards. We have no *knowledge*, skill, or wisdom to *justify* us or make us *righteous*, nor can we acquire any on our own.

Only *the Righteous One*, the LORD's *Servant*, the Messiah, can *justify* us.

Isaiah prophesies *He will justify the many*. The expression *the many* means "everyone who is justified": "Thus He will sprinkle [atone for the sins of] many nations" (Isaiah 52:15a).

Jesus the Messiah has justified *the many*. Christ has given us His righteousness, which we receive by faith in Him and are restored to harmony and justified to God (John 3:14-15; Romans 5:1).

This is what Paul was talking about when he wrote:

"But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe."  
(Romans 3:21-22)

Paul also wrote how we are:

“justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”  
(Romans 3:24-26)

Finally, Isaiah repeats the idea of the Messiah bearing our sin, which he first prophesied in Isaiah 53:5-6. Here Isaiah says *He will bear their iniquities*. The pronoun *their* refers to *the many* who believe in Him and whom the Messiah *will justify*.

Jesus the Messiah justifies us by bearing our *iniquities* (2 Corinthians 5:21). All sins were nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14). All who believe receive forgiveness of their sins (John 3:14-16).

### **Biblical Text**

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