

# Isaiah 53:12

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/isa/isa-53/isaiah-5312/>

*Isaiah predicts that because the Messiah will be a Righteous Servant of the LORD that obeyed Him even to death, that the LORD will richly reward Him. And even though the Messiah will unjustly be regarded as sinner, He interceded on behalf of sinners to take away their reproach.*

*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).

Isaiah finishes his prophecy about the Messiah using the simple future tense, instead of the prophetic past tense which was used to describe the Messiah’s sufferings. He does this perhaps as a way to show how this portion of the Messianic prophecy will be fulfilled sometime after the Messiah’s suffering,

*Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,  
And He will divide the booty with the strong;*

The final verse begins with the word, *therefore*. This indicates that what follows is a result of what preceded it. In other words, because the Messiah obeyed the LORD and remained righteous as He was forsaken, abused, and killed, *therefore* the LORD will reward *Him*.

Isaiah quotes the LORD: *I will allot Him a portion with the great*. The LORD *Himself*, will reward the Messiah for His faithfulness. And the Messiah’s reward will be *great*. The language Isaiah uses here is kingly and militaristic. After a victory, the king would divide the spoils of war and assign each ally a *portion of the booty*. *Great* and *strong* warriors would be given a *great portion*. To be allotted a *portion with the great* and *booty with the strong* demonstrated how that warrior was *strong and great*.

In this scenario, the LORD is the victorious King and *He will allot* for the Messiah, His Servant and Righteous One (Isaiah 53:11) *a portion of the booty with the great and strong*.

The *I*, the LORD, declares the reason that *He will* do this is *because* the Messiah:

- *poured out Himself to death*
- *and because He was unjustly numbered with the transgressors*

Jesus, the Messiah, *poured out* and emptied *Himself* of His divine privilege when *He* became a human. And *He* did so even unto *death* (Philippians 2:7-8).

At His final Passover Seder with His disciples, Jesus, the Messiah took the cup and said to them: “Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:27-28).

And Jesus the Messiah *was numbered with the transgressors* when *He* was executed between two criminals (Matthew 27:38). He became sin for us, in order to make us righteous in God’s sight (2 Corinthians 5:21). Even though the Messiah obediently suffered these things, *yet He Himself bore the sin of the many and interceded for the transgressors*.

Once again Isaiah reminds us that the Messiah suffered all of these things on our behalf and in our place. *He personally bore the penalty of sin* that was due to us so we would not have to suffer and pay its horrible cost. In doing this, the Messiah *interceded for the transgressors*.

To intercede means to step between. The Messiah stepped between *the transgressors* (which is every other human) and their due penalty. In this fourth and final Servant Song of Isaiah, *He interceded* as a priest: “Thus He will sprinkle [atone for the sins of] many nations” (Isaiah 52:15a). And He interceded as a sacrifice by bearing the penalty of *sin Himself*: “like a lamb that is led to slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7b).

Jesus, the Messiah, *interceded for* us when we were *transgressors* and personally *bore* our due penalty of *sin* (death) on our behalf (Romans 5:8). It was because of this love and service that God gave Jesus His immense reward.

Jesus’s *portion with the great and booty with the strong* turns out to be a reward of being granted the entire earth as His possession,

- Jesus was granted all authority, in heaven as well as upon the earth (Matthew 28:18).
- His reign *will* be over the entire earth, above all peoples (Hebrews 1:8; Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 19:16).
- His kingdom *will* be forever (Luke 1:33).
- *He will* create a new heaven and earth, and reside in a New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem *will* need no temple, because Jesus, *Himself will* be the temple (Revelation 21:22).

Jesus gains this immense reward because *He poured out Himself to death*. In like manner, Jesus invites all His servants to be faithful witnesses, and not fear loss, rejection, or death. Jesus promises immense rewards to those who overcome death, loss, and rejection as He overcame. In fact, Jesus promises to share His reign with those of His servants who are faithful, following His example of service (Revelation 3:21).

Through Jesus the Messiah/Christ, humanity *will* be restored. Jesus *will* reconcile all things to Himself (Colossians 1:20). Humans were created to rule the earth in harmony with God, nature, and one another (see our commentary on Psalm 8 ). In Psalm 8, this is described as the “glory and honor” that was bestowed on humans. However, right now, rather than harmony, we see division and disharmony. But what we do see is Jesus, who for the suffering of death was

crowned with glory and honor (Hebrews 2:9). This life is our opportunity as believers to follow His example, and share His glory (Hebrews 2:10).

The great reward for Jesus's servants who follow His example of sacrificial service to others, obeying the will of the Father, is to share His reign with them (Matthew 7:21; 2 Timothy 2:12a; Revelation 3:21).

Isaiah ends his remarkable prophecy of the Suffering Servant—which is about the Messiah's rejection, suffering, death, resurrection, and work of redemption on behalf of Israel—in a similar fashion to how he began it.

Isaiah begins and ends this Servant song by celebrating the Messiah's victory,

“Behold, My servant will prosper,  
He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.”  
(Isaiah 52:13)

*Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,  
And He will divide the booty with the strong;  
Because He poured out Himself to death,  
And was numbered with the transgressors;  
Yet He Himself bore the sin of many,  
And interceded for the transgressors.*  
(Isaiah 53:12)

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>12</sup> Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great,  
And He will divide the booty with the strong;  
Because He poured out Himself to death,  
And was numbered with the transgressors;  
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