

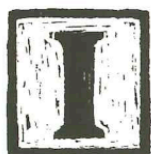
## JESUS IS THE SUFFERING SERVANT

"WHO IS JESUS?" FAMILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE - Week 35, April 8

### JESUS IS THE SUFFERING SERVANT

He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.

ISAIAH 53:3A



It's no surprise that our next story is the crucifixion. This story, along with the resurrection, is the heart of the gospel, and what all our other stories have been pointing towards. Without the crucifixion and resurrection there would be no salvation, no hope for sinners. Jesus had to suffer to save us.

But to the people of Jesus's day, it was a surprise. You might remember a conversation Jesus had with Peter. Jesus explained that he must suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed, and on the third day be raised to life.

Did Peter say, "Yes, Lord! That's the plan!"?

No, instead Peter rebuked Jesus. "Never, Lord!" he said, "This shall never happen to you!" (Matthew 16:22).

The disciples didn't understand that Jesus had to suffer. It didn't make sense to them. To them the promised Messiah was an exalted king who was powerful, mighty, and victorious, not someone who would suffer a humiliating death.

And yet it was all there in the Scriptures. Isaiah speaks of a Suffering Servant. He wrote, "He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar



with pain. . . Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:3–5).

And Jesus did indeed suffer. He was betrayed by Judas, and the rest of the disciples deserted him and fled. He was ridiculed, slapped, and spat upon. They put on him a purple robe and a crown of thorns, mocking him as the “King of the Jews.” They gave him a staff and pretended to kneel before him, and then they took the staff and hit him with it again and again. They then led him outside the city to crucify him, forcing him to carry his own cross. Jesus was crucified alongside two criminals. The soldiers divided his garments and cast lots for his clothing. Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46b). Then darkness came over the land, the curtain in the temple was torn in two, and Jesus gave up his spirit. The earth shook and the rocks split. Tombs broke open and dead were raised to life. The centurion guarding Jesus was terrified and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!” (27:54).

Suffering was God’s plan for his Son from the beginning. When Isaiah speaks of the Suffering Servant, he writes, “He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted” (Isaiah 52:13).

It seems a strange thing to us, hard to wrap our minds around, but when Jesus was lifted up on that cross with the nails in his hands and feet, humiliated and suffering beyond our comprehension, he was highly, highly exalted! By suffering for unworthy sinners like you and me, the glory of God’s grace was displayed for all to see. It’s a scene that will make God’s people rejoice for eternity.

We can see this so clearly when we read of the Lamb in the book of Revelation. The Lamb is Jesus, and what does he look like? He’s a lamb that’s been slain (5:6)! And everyone is worshiping the Lamb *because* he was slain! It is in his suffering that he is exalted and we are healed.<sup>8</sup>

We can join with the saints, singing, “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:9–10).

Jesus, the Lamb of God, suffered and died for me and for you. He is the final Passover Lamb, slaughtered for us. He took on the suffering and punishment that we deserved, and by his wounds we are healed.



## REFLECT

1. In what ways did Jesus suffer for us?
2. Was there ever a day when more prophecies were fulfilled than the day that Jesus died? If time permits, explore a list of prophecies concerning Jesus’s death that were fulfilled on Good Friday.
3. God’s plan to save us through his Son’s suffering and death was not an afterthought. It was planned before the Creation of the world. What is the full name of the book of life? See Revelation 13:8, *ESV*.

**BIBLE REFERENCE** MATTHEW 27:27–54; REVELATION 5:1–14

**KEY VERSE** ISAIAH 53:3A