

## **We Shall See Him in His Beauty**

*"When we shall see him, there is no beauty, that we should desire him"—Isaiah 53:2*

IS it not by the way we ourselves feel, by the way we think, and the way we act, that causes something or someone to appear to us as a thing of beauty?—while we can let others pass by and we are quite unmoved and have no appreciation.

We know that is how it is with us in the Truth. There has never been, and there never will be any person or thing of greater true, inward beauty than Jesus Christ. He was designed and created by God and was perfection.

And yet, such is the wickedness of human nature with its warped and twisted ideas and worldly outlook, that Jesus, "was despised and rejected of men."

Can we who have come here this morning fully appreciate our position? Do our hearts burn with a sense of happiness and thankfulness to God for His goodness? We have read, we have heard, and we believe all that the prophets and apostles have written for our learning. To you, and to me, the arm of the Lord has been revealed. The doctrine of the prophets and apostles have been accepted by us.

Like the Ethiopian eunuch, many times we asked —

"Of whom speaketh the prophet this?"

What we had read had no meaning or understanding for us. Then in the mercy of God He sent a Philip who said—

"Understandest thou what thou readest?"

And we answered—

"How can we?"

Then Philip joined himself to us to answer our questions and what had been a clouded and misunderstood picture became clear to us in all its unsurpassed beauty and meaning. We could see the Lord Jesus with our hearts and our minds with understanding. And in due time we believed with all our heart. And like the eunuch we said—

"Here is water; what hindereth us to be baptized?"

So let us enjoy the position of privilege that is ours. The Father said to us by His Word—

"This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

And through the inspired Word we understood and believed. Now we are able to picture Jesus Christ with a full appreciation from this chapter 53 of Isaiah. Our minds give the picture. We see what happened in Eden; and the covenants of promise given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We see the prophets as they laboured and suffered through the sins of Israel. That forms the background of the picture.

And in the foreground we see a hill outside a city; and on that hill there stands a cross. We can see it in all its importance, and what was accomplished by it; the work of the Lord Jesus in all its beauty. What men could not do, and what they did not deserve; the merciful Father in heaven saw. He saw there was none to save an evil world.

The God of heaven revealed His arm, and by that arm He made salvation possible. Men did not know the way out; but the arm of the Lord spoken of by the prophets was Israel's Messiah. But a Messiah to please them would have been a man like Saul, of great stature and strength, and of

superficial beauty. A man skilled in war and able to go out and fight their battles. A king to live in a great palace, with slaves and servants.

But that was not such a man as God gave them. This man was a quiet, meek, humble man; whose origin was as "a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." And his mother was a humble daughter of Israel.

He was born and laid in a manger "because there was no room for them in the inn." But this tender plant was nurtured by God, out of the dry ground that could produce nothing of itself but weeds and thorns and thistles. Yet God produced a plant of exquisite beauty.

But what did man do? They plucked up the plant and trampled upon it. And that is what the world is doing today with their ignoring of God, and their man-made ways of worship.

Thus we see the perversity of human nature, who in all their generations have scorned the beauty and the sinless perfection of God's Son. They prefer the honours and praise and the vain-glorious philosophy and pride of men.

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THAT we may fully appreciate the Lord Jesus in all his beauty, it is important that we see the picture clearly. For we can see that Jesus showed anxiety towards his twelve disciples. Several times he asked them questions such as—did they really see him? Did they see him in God's plan of salvation? He asked—

"What think ye of Christ?"

"Whom say ye that I am?"

"Hast thou not known me, Philip?"

*And Philip really had not known him.*

From Genesis to Malachi, from Matthew to the Revelation, we can read, we can see and know Jesus. And more so when we come to the table of remembrance. Here the words of this Isaiah 53 take on a full meaning. The prophet declares—

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows."

And only a few of our generation really understand the meaning of those words. But such was Jesus—

"He who hath borne our griefs."

And he stood and cried—

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

How true that can be! If we will but close our eyes and open our hearts before the throne of grace, then will our griefs and our sorrows seem to fade away. Yes, even though they be as bitter as ugly human nature can make them.

If we take our trials and our sufferings before him in earnest prayer, we know they will be shared, they will be borne by him, and eventually they will be taken away.

The perfection of inward and outward health is the divine promise given through the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet—

"He was taken by wicked hands and crucified."

Do we clearly understand all that was meant by these actions? Do we understand that it was the great love of God the Father Who permitted it?

The outside world cannot see it. Many say, "How could a God of love allow it?" Others say it was God Himself, therefore He couldn't have suffered.

But how much of the picture presented to us do WE understand? And all that was involved in the wicked hands taking Jesus and crucifying him? We know it was the love of God and the love of Jesus, because there were more than twelve legions of angels at hand that could have crushed the mighty power of Rome. They could have caused the tormentors of Jesus to fall down dead in an instant.

But in the great love of God, he allowed the body He had prepared to be broken. A loving Father allowed the only blood to be shed that could save mankind.

Let us look at the foreground of the picture, and see the sacrifice as it is presented to us by these emblems. Let us "Behold the man!" See him in all his beauty even while he suffers agony. Tormented and tortured—

"Yet as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

The Father required it of him, and he obeyed. So let us take the exhortation and let us take the encouragement. Should we worry even if troubled in mind and body? The days are swiftly flying, and the return of the Lord Jesus may be very soon. That will reveal all that was meant by the sufferings we may have had.

Let us consider the beauty of the mind of Jesus as we study the picture and the cross. Recall his words to his two disciples—

"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory?"

Jesus knew what was required, he knew all that was involved. He knew the cup could not pass from him unless he drank of it. Let us consider as we behold this man of beauty; and the love of God by the words of Isaiah —

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities."

Yes, he was bruised in the heel, so that he might bruise the sin-power in the head. Glance again at the background of the picture. There we see the happenings in Eden; also the covenants of promise.

Thus we see that Jesus accepted the chastisement laid upon him by an all-wise Father; not only for Jesus' eternal good, but also for ours. He knew that eternal peace for all the Household depended upon his bearing that chastisement. He knew it was with these stripes that he and we should be healed. All had turned away from God and there was none to save. So —

"God laid upon him the iniquities of us all."

There we have the beautiful picture. Are we fully appreciative of it? When thanks is given for the bread and for the wine, do the words have a real meaning in our ears, in our hearts, and in our minds? Do we experience that wonderful feeling that God is close and watching us as we eat the bread and drink the wine—knowing these are the symbols of the broken body of Jesus, and his blood shed for the sins of many?

Also in the forefront of the picture we see the Son of God, the heir of the world, "brought as a lamb to the slaughter." And the spikes pierce his hands and his feet. Yes, he was suffering for you and for me.

Knowing it, does it guide us any in our manner of life as we seek the Kingdom? When we are ill we have gentle hands to care and nurse us. He had none but his mother to mourn for him; and she stood afar off.

"He was cut off out of the land of the living."

Weakened by scourging, the breath returned to God Who gave it. He had given himself for the sins of many—

"For the transgressions of God's people was he stricken."

In John 19 we have the fulfilment of the words written hundreds of years before. Year after year on the first day of the week we come to the table of remembrance.

*Do we ever give a thought how easy it could be to give our hands to those who crucify Christ? Without thinking, it is easy to again crucify the Son of God.*

Would any of us lend ourselves to be smiters? Yet, if we smite our fellow-servants we smite Christ. If we speak evil of brother or sister we speak without love to the devoted Son of God. Can we turn from those for whom Christ died? If we do, he will take it as done to himself.

Let us take a long look at the Son of God in the picture—his weakness, his strength, his sufferings and his patience. As we do, let our hearts be filled to overflowing with gratitude and thanksgiving, with hope, with determination that for us he did not die in vain.

Have we ever thought how it must have pleased God to bring His Son forth from the tomb? And there were also two angels to attend to him.

"That he might prolong his days, and see the travail of his soul."

For almost 2000 years Jesus has lived with immortal power at the right hand of God. He has seen and will see of the "travail of his soul." In this sinful world he can see just a few who recognize the perfection of his beauty.

Let us be sure we understand the reality of it all. Isaiah wrote several hundred years before—

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive."

And in due time the root out of the dry ground sprang forth. Jesus the Christ was born. Later, John beheld Jesus coming towards him and said—

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

And God has appointed another day when He will "divide him a portion with the great." In the fulfilment the scene will be changed. The twelve legions will be there in power and great glory to put all things under his feet.

When Jesus was taken by wicked hands, and brought as a lamb to the slaughter, we were not there. But we will be there when God sends Jesus to finish his work. These are the realities made sure by his death and resurrection!

What comfort, what encouragement, that in God's mercy each one of us can share the realities of that future glory! Let us make use of our opportunity, that we may see Jesus in his beauty. To know Jesus is life eternal to everyone of us. So let us eat of that bread and drink of that cup. We know that:—

"He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

But those who eat and drink with their hearts pleading to God for forgiveness; for help; for encouragement—they will eat and drink with discernment. They shall see the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, in all his beauty.

*Beauty never surpassed, and never to be surpassed.*

"Thy body then may we discern,  
And cheered and strengthened be;  
That strong in faith our hearts may burn  
And agonize for thy return  
To reign on earth with thee."

— C.H.T.