

Isa. 53 is one of the greatest chapters in the O.T. The doctrine of substitutionary atonement is repeatedly expressed in this chapter in as clear language as it could possibly be stated. This chapter gives a marvelous glimpse into the very heart of the basic teaching of the N.T. in its wonderful prediction of the accomplishment of the Lord, who will give Himself a ransom for many and who by His death will purify all those who put their trust in Him.

Actually this chapter begins at verse 13 of chapter 52. It is unfortunate that the chapter division was ~~put~~ put where it was. On account of this, thousands of Christians who have memorized chapter 53 in its entirety, have neglected the previous three verses which are an important part of the chapter.

As we have noticed this chapter comes immediately after a definite prediction of the return from the Babylonian captivity. There is a sharp break between discussion of the return from the Babylonian captivity and a presentation of the atoning work of the servant of the Lord. Yet while the break in subject is sharp the connection is very close. Ever since chapter 40 we have been gradually noticing the repeated emphasis on the sinfulness of Israel. God is going to deliver His people, and yet he stresses the fact that the exile is the result of their sin. He is going to carry out His wonderful promises and to set them free from the oppression. Yet every now and then the prophet again calls our attention to the fact is because of their sin and that even now ~~is~~ it is necessary that God be most explicit in His prophecies, if they are to be correctly interpreted and not twisted in favor of some idol. Man is incorrigibly sinful. Something must be done to cure him of ~~his~~ his sin. If this is not accomplished, return from exile will not do much ^{in the end,} because there will of necessity be further exiles and later captivities. This we know from history has actually occurred. Deliverance of the people from the Babylonian exile is a wonderful blessing, but more important is, it is far more important that in some way the sin question be dealt with. How can man be free from sin, which has become such an integral part of his nature?