

"ARE YOU CRUSHED?" – A MEDITATION for GOOD

"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer..." (Isaiah 53:5, 10)

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah is a book that reveals the full dimensions of God's judgment and salvation, His punishment and reconciliation, His condemnation and restoration. In a sense, it is like a miniature Bible with sixty six chapters, corresponding to the total number of books in the whole Bible. It is also readily divided into two sections, with 39 chapters in the first section and 27 chapters in the second, just like the Old and New Testaments. Some authorities would consider chapters 36-39 as a historical interlude, which concludes the first section and introduces the following chapters.

The book is extensively quoted in the New Testament, no less than sixty six times. It was from chapter 61 of Isaiah that Jesus read in the synagogue at the outset of his public ministry. It was as if he

had received the prophecy from the hand of God. He thus assumed the role of the servant.

THE SUFFERING SERVANT

This is the theme of this famous fifty third chapter. After proclaiming the pending judgment that would be unleashed upon Israel, God promises rescue. He will have compassion on His people. Indeed the theme of a highway for the return of exiles is a major theme in both parts of the book. This promise will usher in the new Messianic age. A king from the line David will reign and all nations will come to the holy mountain of Jerusalem, which will be called the "City of the Lord".

But following all these promises is an anticlimax. This Messianic King to come would suddenly appear on the scene as a suffering servant! The expected glorious king would have no beauty or majesty to attract us to him. There would be nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. There would be no honour or esteem waiting for him. Instead of being crowned, he would be despised.

FRIDAY

Clement Yeung

In the end, he would be crushed!

Crushed, both physically and in spirit.

Physically, he would be pierced and bruised, tortured and scourged, smitten and stricken. He would be cut off from the land of the living with no descendants.

Crushed in spirit too. He would be disgraced and rejected, humbled and humiliated, wounded and tormented. He would become "a man of sorrows".

In a literal sense, he would be made a sacrifice for sin.

The suffering servant would be crushed!

THE CONTRITE HEART

"I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and humble in spirit," says the Lord (Isaiah 57:15)

The word "contrite" literally means being "broken" or "crushed".

The Lord who created the whole universe promises to live with those who are broken and crushed! These are people who are conscious of the enormous weight of the sins they have

committed and the vast extent they have failed our holy and lofty God.

They are crushed because they realize that sin has forcefully separated them from their loving Father. They are crushed because they appreciate the tremendous sacrifice Christ has offered on their behalf. Grace is free but not cheap. That is why the Messianic King had to become the suffering servant. This is God's wisdom revealed.

Because the Messiah was crushed on our behalf, our bodies and spirits do not need to be crushed.

However, our hearts should learn to be "crushed" and contrite, so that we dare not sin again. So that we will be humble before our Saviour. So that we will serve the Lord with gratitude. So that the high and lofty God will live with us as He has promised.

According to the record in chapter 6, that was how the prophet Isaiah began his ministry - as a crushed penitent.

Such is the crushing lesson for Good Friday. 