

AN ISAIAH PROCLAMATION

Isaiah wrote the following words more than seven hundred years before the Messiah was born one night in a Bethlehem manger when there was no room at the inn.

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. 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. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the

light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.¹

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.²

No one . . .
spoke as He spoke
lived as He lived
died as He died
gave as He gave.

He gives one . . .
reason to live
reason to love
reason to write.

He is . . .
the essence of giving
the reason
for the Season.

To know Him is . . .
to love Him and
to wish for everyone
that blessing.

And indeed, by faith
we offer Him to you
the greatest Gift to give
at Christmastime.

Merry *Christmas* from

Jim & Dale Ash

¹The complete 53rd Chapter of Isaiah from the New International Version of the Bible.

²Isaiah 7:14.