

SMITTEN OF GOD, AND AFFLICTED (Is. 53:4)

The Gospel is the theme of Heaven, **Rev. 5:12** Worthy is the Lamb that was slain ...
9 ... thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; **10** And hast made us unto our God kings and priests. Christ's death and victory on the cross is the foundation of our salvation. Its truth and plan is so vast it extends across the everlastingness of eternity. And yet, it is put into the words, Jesus loved me and died for me. Long before it happened at Calvary, Isaiah has already described our Saviour as **4** smitten of God, and afflicted.

HIS SOLITARINESS Listen to Him crave His Father's attention, **Ps. 102:1** Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee. **2** Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily. **3** For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. **4** My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread. **5** By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin ... **8** Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me. **9** For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, **10** Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

As He hung *alone* on the cross, His Father had forsaken Him. His Father had turned away His face. ... It's not that the Father *couldn't* look ... the Father *wouldn't* look. It wasn't because of sadness or grief, but *because of wrath*. God wouldn't look at His Beloved because He was angry with Him for He was dying as a sinner, died in the sinner's place. The wrath of God came upon our Saviour on the cross for He became as a hell-deserving sinner when He took our place!

For the first time, - even in eternity, - His Father rejected Him. It was an experience He had never known before as our Saviour was laden with all our sin. He pleaded for His Father not to forsake Him. He implored His Father to listen to His cry and accompany Him through those dark lonely hours of that afternoon of torment on the cross, **Ps. 35:1** Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me. ... But His Father had turned away. He had even 'pulled the blinds down over the sun' so it would not shine, and He withheld the moon. In complete and utter darkness, our Saviour suffered more pain than anyone could imagine, His Father exacted such punishment that was rightly ours ... and would have been ours if Jesus had not taken it upon Himself.

He was *overladen* (v.3) with grief and pain, **Ps. 31:9** Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly. **10** For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. **11** I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. **12** I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. ... **His solitariness** ...

HIS SHAME **Ps. 69:19** Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee. **20** Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. **21** They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink ... **26** For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten. His Father had lifted Him up, to cast Him down ... publicly disgraced on the cross and utterly humiliated, **Ps. 22:7** All they that see me laugh me to scorn.

Look at Him ... The psalmist tells us of Christ at Calvary, and how reproach (scorn, taunting) had broken His heart. ... The word *shabar* explains how it was broken in pieces, violently torn apart, and in tatters. ... It's like hounds chasing the fox, catching it and pulling it to pieces ... At Calvary, the 'hounds', - the religious leaders, - set upon Jesus ... but our sins shattered Him even more.

He says, *I am full of heaviness* ... the word indicates He is *sick* with the weight of unbearable pain. It began in the Garden of Gethsemane but reached its limits on the cross. ... And He looked for someone to show Him mercy ... even pity, **20** *but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.* He was in such desperate straits. His mother was standing at the foot of the cross, but she could not give Him relief. And He looked to His Heavenly Father, and there was no relief either because it was for this reason He came to this world ... to suffer and die as the sinless Son of God in the place of sinners.

In their cruelty they gave Him a vinegar-substance to drink ... They would have known in the intense heat of suffering it would have added to His agony. But far worse than anything which was happening to Him physically, was the knowledge, **Ps. 69:26** *they persecute him whom thou [- God the Father -] hast smitten.* The reason Christ was on the cross to bear **the shame** of Calvary was **Is. 53:10** *it pleased the Lord [it was the Lord's will in His plan of salvation save sinners] to bruise him; he hath put him to grief ... His solitariness, His shame ...*

HIS SORROW Ps. 13:1 How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? ² How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me? ³ Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; ⁴ Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

If we had been there, we could not have taken our eyes off Him. It may be just a simple thing, but it is important to realise the romantic picture of a cross high on a hillside was probably not reality. Instead, His cross would have been among the people ... so close to them they could spit on His face, pull the hairs of His beard ... so close He could hear their insults and blasphemies. He wasn't lifted six feet off the ground ... He was nailed to a cross where He could hear and feel the people vent their contempt for Him, and their derision.

And, in the midst of it all, He continued to plead with His Father ... The multitudes would have heard His noises, His pleas, His cries ... He had the sins of murderers laid upon Him, and torturers, and haters of the Name of His Father. He bore the sins of paedophiles, the sexually perverse and the rapists. The Father burdened upon His shoulders the iniquities of thieves and robbers, - even one of the thieves who hung on a cross beside Him. And He also carried the sins of caring and respectable people, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. The sins, also, of His mother, and of John, and the disciples.

Each of them suffered their own grief at Jesus' death ... but it was nothing in comparison to those tears of sorrow our Saviour wept. Look again at His words ... *How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever?* ... That is what it seemed. Those hours on the cross were like an eternity! Those hours of suffering on the cross was like *for ever* ... as if they would never come to an end! ... All alone. He had never experienced anything like it before.

And for a time, in the will and purposes of God, it *did* seem as if His enemy had been exalted over Him, Ps. 13:3 *lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;* ⁴ *Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.* ... **His solitariness, His shame, His sorrow, but ...**

HIS SAVING POWER Is. 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. The purpose of God for His suffering was the redemption of His people ... he hath borne *our* griefs. The eternal suffering and torment He took upon Himself within those

hours was all within the plan of God for their perfect salvation. What He did on Calvary completed that work. His death *once* was sufficient ... never needing to be repeated, eternally guaranteed. He washed away your sins at Calvary, and if you are not saved you need to believe He did it there for you.

It sounds awful but for God's grace towards sinners to be effective Christ *had* to suffer at Calvary for His Father promise to be fulfilled, [Is. 53:11](#) *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*

This then is the Gospel. It is all of grace, God's grace, for through grace alone you are saved. Grace is a gift from God. You cannot earn it. You don't deserve it. You are not born with it. It is not due to you ... and yet such is God's grace that when you hear His voice calling you to salvation, He opens the door of your heart and He comes in and you receive Him gladly.

He suffered the **solitariness** of being cut off from His Father's presence. He endured the **shame** as the crowds abused Him. He agonised, - physically, emotionally, spiritually, and every other way possible, - in **sorrow** ... But He did not suffer in vain for the cross became *empty* and "up from the grave He arose"! Death could not hold Him. The nails could not keep Him, neither could the stone at the entrance to His tomb. He went from being the Victim to the Victor, and He is soon to return when [every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him \(Rev. 1:7\).](#)

When Jesus returns, the multitudes across the earth will want to hide from Him, but in vain. However, there will be another multitude of people and they will rise to meet Him in the air, - what a day that will be! Millions from across the world rising to meet Jesus. And then He will come to this earth and He will reign in righteousness and justice, unchallenged for a thousand years from the city of Jerusalem, from Mount Zion. "They" look at us if we are mad when we talk about these things, but surely I would be mad *not* to believe God's promises! I would be mad if all I had to look forward to was what this world has to offer ... but I know there's much more awaiting the child of God ...

I am going to a city
Where the streets with gold are laid,
Where the tree of life is blooming
And the roses never fade.

Make sure you will be there too! Amen.

And that is why Jesus died on Calvary, **Is. 53:4** smitten of God, and afflicted ... to fulfil His Father's purpose in purchasing lost Hell-deserving sinners.