

EASTER SUNDAY INTERLUDE
Assured Living Amid Christ's Sure Resurrection
(Isaiah 52:13-53:12)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) This Easter Sunday, we face a variety of significant challenges in today's world:

(a) We face potentially harmful hatred for holding to Biblical truth: "(T)he shooting at the Christian school in Nashville" by a "gender-confused woman" occurred "just days before a 'Trans Day of Vengeance' in Washington, D. C. that was widely publicized by trans activists." The editor thus added that such disturbed people should not be told they are "societal victims who deserve an opportunity to seek 'vengeance' against institutions such as churches and religious schools." ("Culture, radicalization lead to violence," Republican-American, March 31, 2023, p. 6A)

(b) We face ideological bullying in regard to our public schools: "The contemporary left doesn't believe that parents have any say in which state-run school their children attend or what they are taught in them . . ." (David Harsanyi, "There are no banned books," Ibid., April 3, 2023, p. 6A)

(c) We face oppressive business overregulation: "George McGovern, the Democratic Party's 1972 presidential nominee" and "liberal icon" as "a U. S. senator . . . championed loads of regulations, taxes and mandates in the name of the public good. But . . . (i)n 1988 . . . McGovern took over the lease of the Stratford Inn in Connecticut. For the first time" he "experienced what it meant to operate a business while obeying government dictates and shouldering business taxes designed by people with little firsthand experience in the market-place. In the end, the inn failed, leaving McGovern with many observations about the disconnect between politicians' dreams and business owners' realities." (Veronique DeRugy, "Are progressives coming around on overregulation?" Ibid., March 31, 2023, p. 6A)

(d) We face evils in our justice system: "Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg . . . who ran on the vow that he would prosecute former President Donald Trump, has delivered on his promise," and "laid bare what many have known since" former "FBI Director James Comey admitted then-presidential candidate Hillary Clinton broke the law as he announced he would not recommend charges against her: The American justice system exists not as a vehicle for neutral enforcement of the law, but as a political bludgeon." ("Politicized 'justice,'" Ibid., April 1, 2023, p. 8A)

(2) Our Church has have long taught that Scripture gives the insight to handle such challenges like 2 Timothy 3:17 asserts, but the Bible's truthfulness is itself being contested in our area as to its divine inspiration and authority:

(a) We received a report that some children in a state public school became upset in hearing a classmate report that his family converted to Islam from the Christian faith lest they go to hell because they were Christians! Other concerned students then went home and asked their parents if they should convert to Islam to escape hell, too!

(b) I also recently heard that some people claim that Jesus and others around Him deceptively manufactured events to make it appear that He was the promised Old Testament Messiah, that Christianity is thus a false religion!

Need: *So, we ask, "This Easter, how do we know if the Bible is God's Word, useful in handling life's challenges?"*

- I. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 in the Hebrew Old Testament that predicted the ministry, death, burial and resurrection of a promised Hebrew Messiah has been scientifically shown to have existed at least 120 years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth and over 150 years before His death, burial and resurrection:**
- A. "(S)everal scrolls [of the Dead Sea scrolls] were carbon-14 tested in the 1990s. The results confirmed the ancient dates ascribed by paleography [the science of dating a manuscript by the style of its letters]" and the date of "the Great Isaiah Scroll . . . dated to 125 B. C. . . . was confirmed by two independent tests." (Jeremy D. Lyon, "Dead Sea Scrolls – Timeless Treasures from Qumran," Answers, October-December, 2012, p. 40)
 - B. This Great Isaiah Scroll closely matches the "Masoretic Text . . . which modern Hebrew and English Bibles are based upon, confirming the Old Testament text has been faithfully preserved for all these centuries," Ibid.
 - C. Jesus was born in "5/4 B. C." and "crucified" on "April 3, A. D. 33" (H. W. Hoehner, Chron. Aspects of the Life of Christ, 1979, p. 27, 139), so Isaiah 52:13-53:12 existed over 120 years before the earthly life of Christ.
- II. This Isaiah 52:13-53:12 prediction of the ministry, death, burial and resurrection of a Promised Hebrew Messiah also matches the New Testament record of the ministry, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus:**
- A. Isaiah 52:13-15 predicts that the Messiah would one day be highly exalted by God for facing mistreatment so bad that His face would hardly be recognizable as that of a human, but by His sacrifice He would sprinkle many nations like a Hebrew priest to purify them. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Isaiah 52:13-15)
 - B. Isaiah 53:1-3 predicted that miracles performed by Messiah would not cause Israel to believe in Him, that He would have a lowly background, be physically unimpressive and despised in Israel, Ibid., fn. to Isaiah 53:1-3.

- C. Isaiah 53:4-6 predicted that Messiah would suffer vicariously for the sins of others, Ibid., ftn. to Isaiah 53:4-6.
- D. Isaiah 53:7 predicted the Messiah would passively not open His mouth in facing this suffering. [Matthew 26:63-64 shows Jesus opened His mouth only when charged under an oath in God's name by Israel's High Priest to answer him, what Jesus was forced to do in order to avoid sinning, Ibid., ftn. to Isaiah 53:7-9.]
- E. Isaiah 53:8 predicted the Messiah would be "cut off," a reference to His being killed, and Isaiah 53:9 predicted He would be buried with the rich for being sinless, Ibid. Jesus' body was buried in a rich man's stone tomb!
- F. Isaiah 53:10 predicted that though Messiah's whole being would be involved in His offering as a "trespass offering," His days would yet be prolonged, necessitating His bodily resurrection, Ibid., ftn. to Isa. 53:10-12.
- G. Isaiah 53:11 NIV predicted that God's wrath against the sins of man that would be placed on Messiah would be satisfied, and (*beda'to*) "by the knowledge of him' upon the part of others," that is, "practical experimental knowledge, involving faith and a self-appropriation of the Messiah's righteousness," God would justify many. (Ibid.; Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica*, p. 684; Joseph A. Alexander, *Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, 1974, Volume II, p. 305) This matches Jesus' gospel of justification by faith in Romans 3:21-28 and John 3:16.
- H. Isaiah 53:12 then predicted how God in the end would greatly honor the Messiah along with His many people who would be justified by faith in Him, Ibid.

III. Also, Jesus and His supporters could not have deceptively produced a man-authored "fulfillment" of these prophecies, for the vast majority of them require acts that are authored or energized by God, Jesus' enemies, or unbelievers over whom Jesus and His supporters had no human influence or control!

IV. Thus, the Bible is God's Word, and no one should convert to any other religion to avoid hell, for Isaiah 53:11 teaches that faith in Christ leads one to be justified by God, what completely saves one from hell!

***Lesson:* Since Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 52:13-53:12 that is scientifically shown to have existed at least 120 years before His earthly life, the vast majority of which fulfillments could not possibly have been humanly, deceptively authored by Jesus and His supporters, and since that passage exactly foretold Christ's Substitutionary Atonement and the Christian Gospel to be believed for salvation, the Christian faith and Bible were authored by God!**

***Application:* (1) May we trust in Christ Who died as our Atoning Sacrifice for sin that we might receive God's gift of eternal life, John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11. (2) May we be assured that the Christian Bible is God's inspired and authoritative Word, that we then use it in complete confidence to handle the challenges that we face today!**

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

We thus apply Scripture truths to the issues of concern in our introduction for God's assured solutions for us:

(1) On facing hatred for our Bible beliefs, (a) in John 15:18-16:5, Jesus said that we would face hatred because our lives and words convict the world of sin, so we should not be offended in facing such hatred. (b) Also, we need to partake of the afflictions of the gospel by relying on the Holy Spirit, 2 Timothy 1:8. (c) Finally, we find peace though facing tribulations in the world by fellowshiping with Christ (John 16:32-33) in heeding Scripture (I John 1:5-7).

(2) On the ideological bullying of parents in public schools by progressives, (a) John 14:26 promises that the Holy Spirit will bring all things to our remembrance as believers, and (b) Matthew 10:18-20 promises that if we face confrontations with civil leaders of this world, the Holy Spirit will speak through us effectively in addressing them.

(3) On facing oppressive business overregulation, (a) God materially blessed Jacob when he worked for Laban regardless of Laban's unfair business restrictions on him in Genesis 30:29-43 ESV with 31:4-13 ESV. (b) This blessing was based on God's earlier promise to bless Jacob (Genesis 31:11-13 with 28:10-15), so God will supply all we materially need to fulfill His will for us regardless what business restrictions we face from rulers, Hebrews 13:5-6.

(4) On facing evils in our justice system, (a) in Luke 18:1-8, Jesus told a parable of a socially helpless widow who constantly pleaded with an unjust judge for justice to where he gave in to her begging to administer justice in her behalf. The parable taught that God's people should always pray in faith to God for justice, Luke 18:1, 6-8. (b) Also, Acts 18:12-16 with 18:9-10 illustrates in Paul's life and ministry our need to rely on God's will for our lives and ministries and He will function in sovereignty over even threatening and formidable secular judges and courts. In Paul's case, before he could open his mouth to defend himself, the secular judge Gallio was led by God to dismiss the case against Paul due to Gallio's belief that Paul's faith was part of Judaism, a protected religion under Roman law.

May we believe the Bible's divine inspiration and authority by Christ's certain fulfillment of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 that predicted His death, burial and resurrection long before His earthly life. May we thus trust the Gospel presented in Isaiah 53:8-11 on Christ's substitutionary atonement for sin that we might be justified by God and receive eternal life. May we then confidently use God's Word to handle the challenges we face today!