

## Isaiah – Dealing With Rejection

**Isaiah 53:1-3 HCSB** Who has believed what we have heard? And who has the arm of the LORD been revealed to? (2) He grew up before Him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or splendor that we should look at Him, no appearance that we should desire Him. (3) He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. He was like one people turned away from; He was despised, and we didn't value Him.

**Name of God:** El Tsur – My Strength / My Rock (Deuteronomy 32:18; Psalm 18:2; 144:1; Isaiah 30:29) another variant is Zur

### **Peshat – The Facts of the Matter**

#### **Picture of icon of Isaiah**



Isaiah, son of Amoz, is often thought of as the greatest of the writing prophets. His name means “The Lord Saves.” His ministry began around 740 BC so he prophesied at the same time that Amos, Hosea and Micah did. Isaiah was married, had at least two sons<sup>1</sup> and lived most of his life in Jerusalem.

#### **Picture of Assyrian Empire**



Isaiah lived and ministered during the stormy period marking the expansion of the Assyrian empire and the decline of Israel.

#### **Picture of Tiglath-pileser III relief**



Under King Tiglath-pileser III (745-727 BC) the Assyrians swept westward into Aram (modern day Syria) and Canaan. About 733 the kings of Aram and Israel tried to pressure Ahaz the king of Judah into joining a coalition against Assyria. Ahaz chose instead to ask Tiglath-pileser for help, a decision that Isaiah roundly condemned<sup>2</sup> because once Assyria assisted Judah and conquered the northern kingdom, Judah became even more vulnerable.

#### **Picture of Sennacherib**



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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 7:3; 8:3

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 7:1

And, as Isaiah predicted, King Sennacherib of Assyria threatened Jerusalem around 701 BC. King Hezekiah prayed and God responded mercifully by forcing the Assyrians to withdraw.<sup>3</sup>

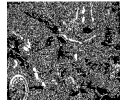
### Picture of Angel of the Lord killing Assyrians by Gustave Dore



God's tactful and gentle method was to send the angel of the Lord who killed 185,000 soldiers in the span of a single night.<sup>4</sup> King Sennacherib found this slightly unsettling and decided to withdraw.

As a side note, in order for you to understand the power of the angel of the Lord, he killed 185,000 professional soldiers in a span of about 8 hours.

### Picture of Angel killing Assyrians



That means 23,125 men an hour.

That means 385 men per minute.

That means one angel killed 6 professional soldiers every second for 8 hours straight and there is no evidence that it even tired him.

### Picture of Babylonian King



But Isaiah warned Judah that her sin would be her undoing under Babylon. As Isaiah predicted, the king of Babylon visited, Hezekiah foolishly displayed his wealth which instigated the Babylonian's greed. Though the final fall did not come until 586 BC, Isaiah, through his prophetic gift witnessed it all. He had to live with that terrible knowledge every day of his life. His message was not well received as you may well imagine. He lived most of his life telling people painful truth that they didn't want to hear. He uttered prophecies that would not be fulfilled until well after his own death so that he had to live with constant doubt as to the veracity of his message. Isaiah understood rejection.

He lived until around 681<sup>5</sup> so he was probably around 60 years old when he died.

### Picture of Isaiah being sawn in two



According to a non-biblical Jewish source<sup>6</sup> titled "The Ascension of Isaiah" he was sawed in half during the reign of Manasseh.

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<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 37:6-7

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 37:36-37 cp 2 Kings 19:35-36

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 37:38

<sup>6</sup> The Ascension of Isaiah

## Picture of Two Ascension quotes

"And when Isaiah was being sawn in sunder, Belchira stood up, accusing him, and all the false prophets stood up, laughing and rejoicing because of Isaiah." (The Ascension of Isaiah 5:2)

"And when Isaiah was being sawn in sunder, he neither cried aloud nor wept, but his lips spake with the Holy Spirit until he was sawn in twain." (The Ascension of Isaiah 5:14)

Hebrews 11:37 reads,

### Picture of Hebrews 11:37

"They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated."

This "sawed in two" may be a reference to Isaiah's fate.

## Derash – Life Applications

Isaiah knew all about rejection and he prophesied that the Messiah would too. Isaiah correctly prophesied that Christ would be despised and rejected.

1. He prophesied that Christ would have no beauty or majesty to attract people to Him.
2. He prophesied that He would be despised and rejected by men.
3. He prophesied that He would be a man of sorrows, that Jesus would experience suffering, that men would hide their faces from Him.

And as we read the NT, we see that what Isaiah saw was exactly right. Jesus kept insisting that He would suffer and be rejected. Certainly when Christ was on the cross, He felt rejection! The Pharisees capped a three-year pursuit of Him by getting Him convicted and sentenced to death in a sham trial. He was beaten by a cat-of-nine-tails within an inch of his life, He had a mock crown or thorns thrust into His head, He was crucified, which was death by torture, and while on the cross, He even felt that His Heavenly Father had rejected him and He cried out in anguish, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

This was the ultimate in rejection (by God), but Jesus was rejected all of His life.

- Matthew 2:16 (NIV) When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.
- Matthew 2:13-15 (NIV) an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."<sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt,<sup>15</sup> where he stayed until the death of Herod.
- Matthew 13:54-57 (NIV) Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked.<sup>55</sup> "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?<sup>56</sup> Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"<sup>57</sup> And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor."

Christ suffered rejection. And he said that we would also be rejected.

## Picture of John 15:18-21

"If the world hates you, understand that it hated Me before it hated you.<sup>19</sup> If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I

have chosen you out of the world, this is why the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember the word I spoke to you: 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours. <sup>21</sup> But they will do all these things to you on account of My name, because they don't know the One who sent Me. John 15:18-21 HCSB

### **Picture of First Application**

God does not promise us an easy life; quite the contrary.

### **Picture of Second Application**

Though our life may be difficult, we have a High Priest who understands our needs.

### **Picture of Third Application**

No matter how difficult our life may get,  
He will never let it get too difficult  
He will give us the resources we need  
He will never tempt us with sin

### **Sod – Spiritual application**

There are some things that only God can do. There are some things that He simply will not do because He expects us to. A wise person will learn the difference. There are some burdens He insists we carry. God will not remove all difficulties just yet.

He will not remove pain until after the Great White Throne of Judgment. He will not remove suffering until then. He wants us to live with suffering because it improves our character.

### **Picture of James 1:2-4**

James 1:2-4 Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. But endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

Look at Isaiah 53:10-12 It says that the Lord was PLEASED to crush Jesus, and He made Him sick. But when we look to Him and ask for forgiveness, making our lives into a restitution offering, the Lord Jesus gets to see His offspring. In His anguish He sees us and is satisfied with the knowledge that He has justified many and carried their iniquities.

### **Picture of last point**

God may not remove the burden of rejection from your shoulders. But He can turn it into a useful load.

He can make your trials valuable, worthwhile, useful and healing.