

**Vicarious Sacrifice: Introduction: Glorification of Messiah, Isa 52:13; Humiliation of Messiah, v. 14; Physical Assaults on Messiah: Brutalized, Mocked, Scourged; a Parenthesis Describing His Humiliation Explains Why People Were Shocked**

9. A summary of these three verbs is provided by Franz Delitzsch:

If we consider that *rum* ["He shall be raised up": resurrection] signifies not only to be high, but to rise up and become exalted, and that *nasa'* ["He shall lift Himself up": ascension], according to the immediate and original reflective meaning of the *Niphal*, signifies to raise one's self, whereas *ghavah* ["be very highly exalted": ascension] expresses merely the condition, without the subordinate idea of activity, we obtain this chain of thought: he will rise up, he will raise himself still higher, he will stand on high. The three verbs (of which the two perfects are defined by the previous future) consequently denote the commencement, the continuation, and the result or climax of the exaltation ...the three principle steps of ... the resurrection, the ascension, and the sitting down at the right hand of God [ session ].

The addition of the word *me'oth* ["very"] shows very clearly that *ghavah* is intended to be taken as the final result: the servant of Jehovah, rising from stage to stage, reaches at last the immeasurable height, that towers above everything.<sup>1</sup>

10. Thus we see in verse 13 the prophecy of the glorification of Messiah through humility, resurrection, ascension, and session. This glorification is mentioned in the New Testament including:

**Philippians 2:8** - Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

**v. 9** - For this reason also, God highly exalted [ ὑπερυψώω (*hyperupsōō*): session ] Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name.

**Acts 2:32** - "God has raised [ ἀνίστημι (*anístēmi*): resurrection ] this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses to the fact."

**v. 33** - "Therefore having been exalted [ ὑψώω (*hupsōō*): session ] to the right hand of God ..."

**Ephesians 1:20** - ... which He [ God ] brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead [ resurrection ] and seated Him at His right hand [ session ] in heavenly places.

**Isaiah 52:13** - Behold, My servant will be caused to prosper [ true humanity ]. He shall be raised up [ resurrection ] and He shall lift himself up [ ascension ] and be very highly exalted [ session ]. (EXT)

## 2. The Humiliation of Messiah, v. 14

**Isaiah 52:14** - Just as many were astonished at You (His face was disfigured more than any man and His body more than any other man.) (EXT)

1. The parenthesis in this verse is perhaps the most graphic description in prophetic Scripture of the sufferings of Christ.
2. This verse contains in one statement the events of the final 24 hours before the cross.
3. Several New Testament passages describe the specific instances:

<sup>1</sup> Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, trans. James Martin (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969). 2:305.

**Matthew 26:67** - Then they [ members of the 71-man Sanhedrin<sup>2</sup> ] spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him.

**Matthew 27:26** - Then he [ Pilate ] released Barabbas for them [ Jewish rabble ]; but after having Jesus scourged [ φραγελλώω (phragellōō): to scourge; whip with a cat-o'-nine-tails<sup>3</sup> ], he handed Him over to be crucified.

**v. 27** - Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus to the Praetorium<sup>4</sup> and gathered the whole Roman cohort [ σπεῖρα (speíra): around 600 soldiers ] around Him.

**v. 28** - They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.

**v. 29** - And after twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand; and they knelt down before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

**v. 30** - They spat on Him, and took the reed and began to beat Him on the head.

**v. 31** - After they had mocked Him, they took the scarlet robe off Him and put His own garments back on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. (NASB)

4. These verses may be better understood by supplementing their several events with historical information about the gruesome customs practiced by the Romans:

- (1) Jesus was stripped and then dressed in a short red cloak worn by Roman soldiers and officials.
- (2) The "crown of thorns" was made of palm spines or acanthus (prickly herbs of the Mediterranean region) that was crushed down into the Lord's scalp.
- (3) The crown was a mocking imitation of the crown worn by vassals of Rome and was intended as a scornful tribute.
- (4) Putting the reed, or scepter in His hand and the exclamation, "Hail, King of the Jews!" imitated the Roman acclamation, "Ave, Caesar!" (Hale, Caesar!)"
- (5) After spitting on Him, the soldiers took the scepter and beat him over the head with it.
- (6) Further mocking ensued after which they took off the cloak, redressed him in His own garments, and led Him away for crucifixion.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "In the time of Christ the Great Sanhedrin at Jerusalem enjoyed a very high measure of independence. It exercised not only civil jurisdiction, according to Jewish law, but also, in some degree, criminal. It had administrative authority and could order arrests by its own officers of justice. It was empowered to judge cases which did not involve capital punishment, which latter required the confirmation of the Roman procurator (John 18:31)" (Paul Ledertoff, "Sanhedrin," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed., James Orr [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956], 4:2689).

<sup>3</sup> "Horace calls it *horribile flagellum*. It consisted of a handle, to which several cords of leather thongs were affixed, which were weighted with jagged pieces of bone or metal, to make the blow more painful and effective. The victim was tied to a post and the blows were applied to the back and loins. (Acts 22:25)" (Henry E. Dosker, "Scourge," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 4:2704).

<sup>4</sup> "... the statements of Josephus make it almost certain that the headquarters of the procurator were at Herod's palace" (E. W. G. Masterman, "Praetorium," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 4:2428).

- (7) An interesting summary of the Roman act of mockery is the subject of this excerpt:

Roman soldiers in Jerusalem at the time were known to play a cruel game with condemned prisoners, especially revolutionary brigands. The prisoner was dressed up like a burlesque king and used as a game pawn. (His “scarlet robe” was the outer cloak of a Roman soldier, thorns were twisted into a crown and the “staff” was his mock scepter.) With each roll of the “dice,” the prisoner “king” moved around a game board etched in the floor. For the entertainment of the troops, they hurled verbal and physical abuse at the mock king.<sup>6</sup>

5. Isaiah 52:14 begins with the observation, “Many were astonished at you.” The word astonished is the Qal perfect of the verb **שָׁמַם (shamem)**: “shocked.”
6. What caused this shock? The following parenthesis describes the result of the brutal attacks on the Lord’s person.
7. “His face was marred more than any man.” The word “marred” is the Hophal stem: He was caused to receive “disfigurement.”
8. Jesus was slugged in the face by the seventy-one members of the Sanhedrin and then pounded on the head with a scepter by the Roman cohort. This resulted in his face and head becoming so thoroughly disfigured that Isaiah describes it as being worse than any other man had suffered.
9. Pontius Pilate had Jesus scourged. Scourgings by the Jews consisted of no more than 40 lashes and, to be sure not to violate the mandate of the Mosaic Law, they were always shortened to 39 (Deuteronomy 25:3).
10. This practice is euphemistically described in:  
**Psalm 129:3** - “The plowers plowed upon my back; they lengthened their furrows.”
11. “His form more than the sons of men,” the last phrase being an idiom referencing the entire human race. After all the physical abuse, Isaiah reports that the body of our Lord was so terribly brutalized that His wounds were more extensive than any man had ever suffered and remained alive.
12. We know from John’s Gospel that Jesus could never die from natural causes but only from His own volition:  
**John 10:18** - “No one has taken it [ **physical life** ] away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.” (See Luke 23:46)
13. Yet this inhuman treatment was a part of satanic influence to try and kill Messiah before He could get to the cross.
14. People were shocked because they couldn’t comprehend how a person in such a brutalized condition could continue to live.
15. It is commentary such as this that informs us that the Lord was an extremely strong and powerful man who had a physical constitution superior to ordinary men.

<sup>5</sup> Points (1)–(6) are developed from: D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Regency, 1984), 8:573.

<sup>6</sup> *Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk through Biblical History and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 1614n27:28–31.